

Name: Erebete, Jan Kenneth F.	Date Performed: 9/12/25
Course/Section: CPE31S4	Date Submitted: 9/12/25
Instructor: Engr. Robin Valenzuela	Semester and SY: 2025-2026

Activity 5: Consolidating Playbook plays

1. Objectives:

- 1.1 Use **when** command in playbook for different OS distributions
- 1.2 Apply refactoring techniques in cleaning up the playbook codes

2. Discussion:

We are going to look at a way that we can differentiate a playbook by a host in terms of which distribution the host is running. It's very common in most Linux shops to run multiple distributions, for example, Ubuntu shop or Debian shop and you need a different distribution for a one off-case or perhaps you want to run plays only on certain distributions.

It is a best practice in ansible when you are working in a collaborative environment to use the command git pull. git pull is a Git command used to update the local version of a repository from a remote. By default, git pull does two things. Updates the current local working branch (currently checked out branch) and updates the remote-tracking branches for all other branches. git pull essentially pulls down any changes that may have happened since the last time you worked on the repository.

Requirement:

In this activity, you will need to create a CentOS VM. Likewise, you need to activate the second adapter to a host-only adapter after the installations. Take note of the IP address of the CentOS VM. Make sure to use the command **ssh-copy-id** to copy the public key to CentOS. Verify if you can successfully SSH to CentOS VM.

Task 1: Use when command for different distributions

1. In the local machine, make sure you are in the local repository directory (**CPE232_yourname**). Issue the command git pull. When prompted, enter the correct passphrase or password. Describe what happened when you issue this command. Did something happen? Why?

```
erebete@workstation:~/CPE232_Erebete$ git pull
Already up to date.
```

- It seems it doesn't change and saying already up to date

2. Edit the inventory file and add the IP address of the Centos VM. Issue the command we used to execute the playbook (the one we used in the last activity): `ansible-playbook --ask-become-pass install_apache.yml`. After executing this command, you may notice that it did not become successful in the Centos VM. You can see that the Centos VM has failed=1. Only the two remote servers have been changed. The reason is that Centos VM does not support "apt" as the package manager. The default package manager for Centos is "yum."

```
erebete@workstation:~/CPE232_Erebete$ ansible-playbook --ask-become-pass instal
l_apache.yml
SUDO password:

PLAY [all] ****
*
TASK [Gathering Facts] ****
*
ok: [192.168.56.101]
ok: [192.168.56.102]
ok: [192.168.56.103]
[WARNING]: Module invocation had junk after the JSON data:
AttributeError("module 'platform' has no attribute 'dist'")

ok: [192.168.56.109]

TASK [update repository index] ****
*
fatal: [192.168.56.109]: FAILED! => {"changed": false, "cmd": "apt-get update",
"msg": "[Errno 2] No such file or directory: 'apt-get'", "rc": 2}
changed: [192.168.56.103]
changed: [192.168.56.102]
changed: [192.168.56.101]
```

3. Edit the `install_apache.yml` file and insert the lines shown below.

```
---  
- hosts: all  
  become: true  
  tasks:  
  
    - name: update repository index  
      apt:  
        update_cache: yes  
      when: ansible_distribution == "Ubuntu"  
  
    - name: install apache2 package  
      apt:  
        name: apache2  
      when: ansible_distribution == "Ubuntu"  
  
    - name: add PHP support for apache  
      apt:  
        name: libapache2-mod-php  
      when: ansible_distribution == "Ubuntu"
```

Make sure to save the file and exit.

Run *ansible-playbook --ask-become-pass install_apache.yml* and describe the result.

If you have a mix of Debian and Ubuntu servers, you can change the configuration of your playbook like this.

```
- name: update repository index  
  apt:  
    update_cache: yes  
  when: ansible_distribution in ["Debian", "Ubuntu"]
```

Note: This will work also if you try. Notice the changes are highlighted.

Erebete_Ubuntu CN [Running] - Oracle VirtualBox

File Machine View Input Devices Help

Activities Terminal Fri 15:43

erebete@workstation: ~/CPE232_Erebete

GNU nano 2.9.3 install_apache.yml

```
---
- hosts: all
  become: true
  tasks:
    - name: update repository index
      apt:
        update_cache: yes
      when: ansible_distribution in "Ubuntu"
    - name: install apache2 package
      apt:
        name: apache2
      when: ansible_distribution == "Ubuntu"
    - name: add PHP support for apache
      apt:
        name: libapache2-mod-php
      when: ansible_distribution == "Ubuntu"
```

[Read 19 lines]

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4. Edit the *install_apache.yml* file and insert the lines shown below.

```
---
```

```
- hosts: all
  become: true
  tasks:

    - name: update repository index
      apt:
        update_cache: yes
      when: ansible_distribution == "Ubuntu"

    - name: install apache2 package
      apt:
        name: apache2
        state: latest
      when: ansible_distribution == "Ubuntu"

    - name: add PHP support for apache
      apt:
        name: libapache2-mod-php
        state: latest
      when: ansible_distribution == "Ubuntu"

    - name: update repository index
      dnf:
        update_cache: yes
      when: ansible_distribution == "CentOS"

    - name: install apache2 package
      dnf:
        name: httpd
        state: latest
      when: ansible_distribution == "CentOS"

    - name: add PHP support for apache
      dnf:
        name: php
        state: latest
      when: ansible_distribution == "CentOS"
```

Make sure to save and exit.

Run `ansible-playbook --ask-become-pass install_apache.yml` and describe the result.

5. To verify the installations, go to CentOS VM and type its IP address on the browser. Was it successful? The answer is no. It's because the httpd service or

the Apache HTTP server in the CentOS is not yet active. Thus, you need to activate it first.

5.1 To activate, go to the CentOS VM terminal and enter the following:

systemctl status httpd

The result of this command tells you that the service is inactive.

```
Active: active (running) since Fri 2025-09-12 16:01:51 PST; 3min 52s ago
  Docs: man:httpd.service(8)
Main PID: 38571 (httpd)
  Status: "Total requests: 0; Idle/Busy workers 100/0;Requests/sec: 0; Byte
    Tasks: 177 (limit: 10506)
  Memory: 13.8M
    CPU: 112ms
  CGroup: /system.slice/httpd.service
          └─38571 /usr/sbin/httpd -DFOREGROUND
              ├─38578 /usr/sbin/httpd -DFOREGROUND
              ├─38583 /usr/sbin/httpd -DFOREGROUND
              ├─38584 /usr/sbin/httpd -DFOREGROUND
              ├─38585 /usr/sbin/httpd -DFOREGROUND
```

5.2 Issue the following command to start the service:

sudo systemctl start httpd

(When prompted, enter the sudo password)

```
[erebete@Server3 ~]$ sudo systemctl start httpd
```

sudo firewall-cmd --add-port=80/tcp

(The result should be a success)

```
[erebete@Server3 ~]$ sudo firewall-cmd --add-port=80/tcp
success
```

5.3 To verify the service is already running, go to CentOS VM and type its IP address on the browser. Was it successful? (Screenshot the browser)

Task 2: Refactoring playbook

This time, we want to make sure that our playbook is efficient and that the codes are easier to read. This will also makes run ansible more quickly if it has to execute fewer tasks to do the same thing.

1. Edit the playbook ***install_apache.yml***. Currently, we have three tasks targeting our Ubuntu machines and 3 tasks targeting our CentOS machine. Right now, we try to consolidate some tasks that are typically the same. For example, we can consolidate two plays that install packages. We can do that by creating a list of installation packages as shown below:

```
---
- hosts: all
  become: true
  tasks:

    - name: update repository index Ubuntu
      apt:
        update_cache: yes
      when: ansible_distribution == "Ubuntu"

    - name: install apache2 and php packages for Ubuntu
      apt:
        name:
          - apache2
          - libapache2-mod-php
        state: latest
      when: ansible_distribution == "Ubuntu"

    - name: update repository index for CentOS
      dnf:
        update_cache: yes
      when: ansible_distribution == "CentOS"

    - name: install apache and php packages for CentOS
      dnf:
        name:
          - httpd
          - php
        state: latest
      when: ansible_distribution == "CentOS"
```

Make sure to save the file and exit.

Erebete_Ubuntu CN [Running] - Oracle VirtualBox

File Machine View Input Devices Help

Activities Terminal Fri 16:20

erebete@workstation: ~/CPE232_Erebete

GNU nano 2.9.3 install_apache.yml

```
---
- hosts: all
  become: true
  tasks:
    - name: update repository index Ubuntu
      apt:
        update_cache: yes
      when: ansible_distribution == "Ubuntu"
    - name: install apache2 package and php packages for Ubuntu
      apt:
        name:
          - apache2
          - libapache2-mod-php
        state: latest
      when: ansible_distribution == "Ubuntu"
    - name: update repository index for CentOS
      dnf:
        update_cache: yes
      when: ansible_distribution == "CentOS"
```

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Run **ansible-playbook --ask-become-pass install_apache.yml** and describe the result.

```
erebete@workstation:~/CPE232_Erebete$ nano install_apache.yml
erebete@workstation:~/CPE232_Erebete$ ansible-playbook --ask-become-pass install_apache.yml
SUDO password:

PLAY [all] ****
*
TASK [Gathering Facts] ****
*
ok: [192.168.56.101]
ok: [192.168.56.102]
ok: [192.168.56.103]
[WARNING]: Module invocation had junk after the JSON data:
AttributeError("module 'platform' has no attribute 'dist'")

ok: [192.168.56.109]

TASK [update repository index Ubuntu] ****
*
fatal: [192.168.56.109]: FAILED! => {"msg": "The conditional check 'ansible_distribution == \"Ubuntu\"' failed. The error was: error while evaluating conditional (ansible_distribution == \"Ubuntu\"): 'ansible_distribution' is undefined\nThe error appears to have been in '/home/erebete/CPE232_Erebete/install_apache.yml': line 6, column 5, but may\nbe elsewhere in the file depending on the exact syntax problem.\n\nThe offending line appears to be:\n\n      - name: update repository index Ubuntu\n        ^ here\n"}
changed: [192.168.56.101]
changed: [192.168.56.103]
```

2. Edit the playbook *install_apache.yml* again. In task 2.1, we consolidated the plays into one play. This time we can actually consolidate everything in just 2 plays. This can be done by removing the update repository play and putting the command *update_cache: yes* below the command *state: latest*. See below for reference:

```

---
- hosts: all
  become: true
  tasks:

    - name: install apache2 and php packages for Ubuntu
      apt:
        name:
          - apache2
          - libapache2-mod-php
        state: latest
        update_cache: yes
      when: ansible_distribution == "Ubuntu"

    - name: install apache and php packages for Centos
      dnf:
        name:
          - httpd
          - php
        state: latest
        update_cache: yes
      when: ansible_distribution == "CentOS"

```

Make sure to save the file and exit.

Run `ansible-playbook --ask-become-pass install_apache.yml` and describe the result.

```

erebete@workstation:~/CPE232_Erebete$ ansible-playbook --ask-become-pass install_apache.yml
SUDO password:

PLAY [all] ****
*

TASK [Gathering Facts] ****
*
ok: [192.168.56.101]
ok: [192.168.56.103]
ok: [192.168.56.102]
[WARNING]: Module invocation had junk after the JSON data:
AttributeError("module 'platform' has no attribute 'dist'")

ok: [192.168.56.109]

TASK [update repository index] ****
*
fatal: [192.168.56.109]: FAILED! => {"msg": "The conditional check 'ansible_distribution == \"Ubuntu\"' failed. The error was: error while evaluating conditional (ansible_distribution == \"Ubuntu\"): 'ansible_distribution' is undefined\nThe error appears to have been in '/home/erebete/CPE232_Erebete/install_apache.yml': line 6, column 5, but may\nbe elsewhere in the file depending on the exact syntax problem.\n\nThe offending line appears to be:\n\n      - name: update repository index\n        ^ here\n"}
changed: [192.168.56.101]

```

3. Finally, we can consolidate these 2 plays in just 1 play. This can be done by declaring variables that will represent the packages that we want to install. Basically, the apache_package and php_package are variables. The names are arbitrary, which means we can choose different names. We also take out the line when: ansible_distribution. Edit the playbook *install_apache.yml* again and make sure to follow the below image. Make sure to save the file and exit.

```
---
- hosts: all
  become: true
  tasks:

    - name: install apache and php
      apt:
        name:
          - "{{ apache_package }}"
          - "{{ php_package }}"
        state: latest
        update_cache: yes
```

Run *ansible-playbook --ask-become-pass install_apache.yml* and describe the result.

```
erebete@workstation:~/CPE232_Erebete$ ansible-playbook --ask-become-pass ins
l_apache.yml
SUDO password:

PLAY [all] ****
*
TASK [Gathering Facts] ****
*
ok: [192.168.56.101]
ok: [192.168.56.103]
ok: [192.168.56.102]
[WARNING]: Module invocation had junk after the JSON data:
AttributeError("module 'platform' has no attribute 'dist'")

ok: [192.168.56.109]

TASK [update repository index] ****
*
fatal: [192.168.56.109]: FAILED! => {"msg": "The conditional check 'ansible_
distribution == \"Ubuntu\"' failed. The error was: error while evaluating condi
tional (ansible_distribution == \"Ubuntu\"): 'ansible_distribution' is undefined
The error appears to have been in '/home/erebete/CPE232_Erebete/install_ap
e.yml': line 6, column 5, but may\nbe elsewhere in the file depending on the
act syntax problem.\n\nThe offending line appears to be:\n\n  - name: upda
repository index\n      ^ here\n"}
changed: [192.168.56.101]
```

4. Unfortunately, task 2.3 was not successful. It's because we need to change something in the inventory file so that the variables we declared will be in place. Edit the *inventory* file and follow the below configuration:

```
192.168.56.120 apache_package=apache2 php_package=libapache2-mod-php  
192.168.56.121 apache_package=apache2 php_package=libapache2-mod-php  
192.168.56.122 apache_package=httpd php_package/php
```

Make sure to save the *inventory* file and exit.

```
erebete@workstation:~/CPE232_Erebete$ ansible-playbook --ask-become-pass ins  
l_apache.yml  
SUDO password:  
  
PLAY [all] *****  
*  
  
TASK [Gathering Facts] *****  
*  
ok: [192.168.56.101]  
ok: [192.168.56.103]  
ok: [192.168.56.102]  
[WARNING]: Module invocation had junk after the JSON data:  
AttributeError("module 'platform' has no attribute 'dist'")  
  
ok: [192.168.56.109]  
  
TASK [update repository index] *****  
*  
fatal: [192.168.56.109]: FAILED! => {"msg": "The conditional check 'ansible_  
distribution == \"Ubuntu\"' failed. The error was: error while evaluating condi  
tional (ansible_distribution == \"Ubuntu\"): 'ansible_distribution' is undefine  
\nThe error appears to have been in '/home/erebete/CPE232_Erebete/install_ap  
ache.yml': line 6, column 5, but may\nbe elsewhere in the file depending on the  
act syntax problem.\n\nThe offending line appears to be:\n\n - name: upda  
repository index\n      ^ here\n"}  
changed: [192.168.56.101]
```

Finally, we still have one more thing to change in our *install_apache.yml* file. In task 2.3, you may notice that the package is assign as *apt*, which will not run in CentOS. Replace the *apt* with *package*. Package is a module in ansible that is generic, which is going to use whatever package manager the underlying host or the target server uses. For Ubuntu it will automatically use *apt*, and for CentOS it will automatically use *dnf*. Make sure to save the file and exit. For more details about the ansible package, you may refer to this documentation: [ansible.builtin.package – Generic OS package manager — Ansible Documentation](#)

Run *ansible-playbook --ask-become-pass install_apache.yml* and describe the result.

Supplementary Activity:

1. Create a playbook that could do the previous tasks in Red Hat OS.

Reflections:

Answer the following:

1. Why do you think refactoring of playbook codes is important?
 - The refactoring playbook code is essential for improving clarity, reducing redundancy, and making automation easier to maintain over time
2. When do we use the “when” command in playbook?
 - We use the when command in an Ansible playbook to conditionally execute tasks based on the value of variables, facts, or the outcome of previous tasks.