Ansible Handbook

V 1.0

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Ansible

Ansible is an open-source automation tool used to automate tasks in IT systems. It works as a remote controller for managing computers, servers, and other devices. Ansible can be used to setting up software, configuring systems, or running commands on each device.

It works by using simple ad-hoc commands or by using book of instructions called playbooks written in a language called YAML. These playbooks tell Ansible what actions to perform on host devices.

It connects to target systems via SSH or WinRM. It's agentless, meaning no special software needs to be installed on the managed nodes.

It is push-based this means that the control node pushes out configurations or tasks to the host nodes when you execute an ad-hoc command /playbook.

It is known for its scalability, ease of use, and ability to manage diverse environments, including servers, cloud platforms, and network devices, all while ensuring consistency and reliability across systems.

Key terms of Ansible:

- **Ansible Controller**: The machine from which Ansible is run.
- Module: A unit of work Ansible uses to perform tasks.
- **Task**: A single action within a playbook.
- **Role**: A reusable set of tasks and configurations.
- **Fact**: Information about a system gathered by Ansible.
- Play: A section of a playbook targeting specific hosts with specific tasks.
- Host: A target machine managed by Ansible.
- **Inventory**: A file listing all hosts and groups of hosts for automation

Setting up Ansible

It can be divided in 3 parts:

- 1. Configuring Ansible Controller
- 2. Configuring Ansible hosts
- 3. Setting up SSH

1. Configuring Ansible Controller

1st we create ansible user and provide it sudo privileges with following commands (for debian based system):

Creating user ansible:

>> sudo adduser ansible

```
ubuntu@ip-192-168-102-161:~$ sudo adduser ansible
Adding user `ansible' ...
Adding new group `ansible' (1006) ...
Adding new user `ansible' (1005) with group `ansible' ...
Creating home directory `/home/ansible' ...
Copying files from `/etc/skel' ...
New password:
Retype new password:
passwd: password updated successfully
Changing the user information for ansible
Enter the new value, or press ENTER for the default
    Full Name []: ansible
    Room Number []:
    Work Phone []:
    Home Phone []:
    Other []:
Is the information correct? [Y/n] y
ubuntu@ip-192-168-102-161:~$
```

Giving ansible user sudo privileges:

>> sudo usermod -aG sudo ansible

```
ubuntu@ip-192-168-102-161:~ - ▷ ⊗

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ubuntu@ip-192-168-102-161:~$ sudo usermod -aG sudo ansible

ubuntu@ip-192-168-102-161:~$
```

Switching to ansible user:

>> su ansible

```
ansible@ip-192-168-102-161:~

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ubuntu@ip-192-168-102-161:~$ su ansible

Password:

To run a command as administrator (user "root"), use "sudo <command>".

See "man sudo_root" for details.

ansible@ip-192-168-102-161:/home/ubuntu$ cd ~

ansible@ip-192-168-102-161:~$ pwd

/home/ansible

ansible@ip-192-168-102-161:~$
```

Now we have created ansible user on controller now we need to install and configure ansible on controller with following commands:

Installing ansible:

- >> sudo apt install software-properties-common
- >> sudo add-apt-repository --yes --update ppa:ansible/ansible
- >> sudo apt update
- >> sudo apt install ansible

```
ansible@ip-192-168-102-161: ~
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Hit:4 http://security.ubuntu.com/ubuntu jammy-security InRelease
Hit:5 https://ppa.launchpadcontent.net/ansible/ansible/ubuntu jammy InRelease
Reading package lists... Done
Building dependency tree... Done
Reading state information... Done
22 packages can be upgraded. Run 'apt list --upgradable' to see them.
ansible@ip-192-168-102-161:~$ sudo apt install ansible
Reading package lists... Done
Building dependency tree... Done
Reading state information... Done
The following packages were automatically installed and are no longer required:
apache2-bin apache2-data apache2-utils libaprutil1-dbd-sqlite3 libaprutil1-ldap liblua5.3-0
Use 'sudo apt autoremove' to remove them.
The following additional packages will be installed:
  ansible-core python3-jmespath python3-kerberos python3-nacl python3-ntlm-auth python3-paramiko
  python3-requests-kerberos python3-requests-ntlm python3-resolvelib python3-winrm python3-xmltodict
  sshpass
Suggested packages:
python-nacl-doc python3-gssapi python3-invoke
The following NEW packages will be installed:
  ansible ansible-core python3-jmespath python3-kerberos python3-nacl python3-ntlm-auth python3-paramiko
  python3-requests-kerberos python3-requests-ntlm python3-resolvelib python3-winrm python3-xmltodict
0 upgraded, 13 newly installed, 0 to remove and 22 not upgraded.
Need to get 18.9 MB of archives.
After this operation, 208 MB of_additional disk space will be used.
Do you want to continue? [Y/n]
```

Verifying ansible installation

>> ansible --version

```
ansible@ip-192-168-102-161:~

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ansible@ip-192-168-102-161:~$ ansible --version

ansible [core 2.17.6]

config file = /etc/ansible/ansible.cfg

configured module search path = ['/home/ansible/.ansible/plugins/modules', '/usr/share/ansible/plugins/modules']

ansible python module location = /usr/lib/python3/dist-packages/ansible

ansible collection location = /home/ansible/.ansible/collections:/usr/share/ansible/collections

executable location = /usr/bin/ansible

python version = 3.10.12 (main, Sep 11 2024, 15:47:36) [GCC 11.4.0] (/usr/bin/python3)

jinja version = 3.0.3

libyaml = True

ansible@ip-192-168-102-161:~$
```

Basic Configuration:

- >> cd /etc/ansible #Create this directory if not existed
- >> sudo su
- >> ansible-config init -t all --disabled > ansible.cfg
- >> exit

```
ansible@ip-192-168-102-161:/etc/ansible

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ansible@ip-192-168-102-161:~$ cd /etc/ansible
ansible@ip-192-168-102-161:/etc/ansible$ ls
ansible.cfg hosts roles
ansible@ip-192-168-102-161:/etc/ansible$ sudo su
root@ip-192-168-102-161:/etc/ansible# ansible-config init -t all --disabled > ansible.cfg
root@ip-192-168-102-161:/etc/ansible# exit
exit
ansible@ip-192-168-102-161:/etc/ansible$
```

>> sudo nano /etc/ansible/ansible.cfg

#Added the following configuration settings after the [defaults]:

- >> remote_user=ansible >>host_key_checking=False
- >>become = yes
- >>become_user = ansible
- >>become_method = sudo
- >>become_flags = '-H'

```
ansible@ubuntu-server: ~
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  GNU nano 4.8
                               /etc/ansible/ansible.cfg
                                                                          Modified
;system tmpdirs=/var/tmp, /tmp
  (boolean) This makes the temporary files created on the machine world-readabl>
;allow world readable tmpfiles=False
;yaml valid extensions=.yml, .yaml, .json
remote user=ansible
host_key_checking=False
become = yes
become user = ansible
become method = sudo
become flags = '-H'
[privilege_escalation]
  Get Help
             ^O Write Out <sup>^W</sup> Where Is
                                            Cut Text
                                                                     C Cur Pos
                                                       ^J Justify
```

Adding host group & host IPs in inventory

>> sudo nano /etc/ansible/hosts

```
Ansible@ip-192-168-102-161:~

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(SNU nano 6.2 /etc/ansible/hosts *

# EX 3: A collection of database servers in the 'dbservers' group:

## [dbservers]

## ## db01.intranet.mydomain.net

## 10.25.1.56

## 10.25.1.57

# EX4: Multiple hosts arranged into groups such as 'Debian' and 'openSUSE':

## [Debian]

## alpha.example.org

## beta.example.org

## peren.example.com

## blue.example.com

[hosts]

[hosts]

[hosts]

[157.241.59.119]
```

2. Configuring Ansible hosts

Creating ansible user with sudo privileges and installing ansible in host systems with following commands (for debian based system):

- >> sudo adduser ansible
- >> sudo usermod -aG sudo ansible
- >> su ansible
- >> sudo apt install software-properties-common
- >> sudo add-apt-repository --yes --update ppa:ansible/ansible
- >> sudo apt update
- >> sudo apt install ansible

Setting up password-less sudo privileges on host

- >> sudo visudo
- # Adding following in file
- >> ansible ALL=(ALL) NOPASSWD: ALL

```
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GNU nano 7.2 /etc/sudoers.tmp *

# Host alias specification

# User alias specification

# User privilege specification

# Allow members of group sudo to execute any command

% sudo ALL=(ALL:ALL) ALL

# See sudoers(5) for more information on "@include" directives:

@includedir /etc/sudoers.d

ansible ALL=(ALL) NOPASSWD: ALL
```

3. Setting up SSH

Creating ssh-keygen for ansible user on ansible controller:

>> ssh-keygen -t rsa

Viewing Ansible controller public ssh key >>cat .ssh/id_rsa.pub



Sharing ssh with following command:

>>ssh-copy-id ansible@host_ip

```
ansible@TMPC: ~
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ansible@TMPC:~$ ssh-copy-id ansible@192.168.0.121
/usr/bin/ssh-copy-id: INFO: Source of key(s) to be installed: "/home/ansible/.ss
h/id rsa.pub"
The authenticity of host '192.168.0.121 (192.168.0.121)' can't be established.
ED25519 key fingerprint is SHA256:b4tyQsAzSD2+mAICSPmexvwWy1V6l0bwxauNKuUj5mM.
This key is not known by any other names.
Are you sure you want to continue connecting (yes/no/[fingerprint])? yes
/usr/bin/ssh-copy-id: INFO: attempting to log in with the new key(s), to filter
out any that are already installed
/usr/bin/ssh-copy-id: INFO: 1 key(s) remain to be installed -- if you are prompt
ed now it is to install the new keys
ansible@192.168.0.121's password:
Number of key(s) added: 1
Now try logging into the machine, with: "ssh 'ansible@192.168.0.121'"
and check to make sure that only the key(s) you wanted were added.
ansible@TMPC:~$
```

Verifying ssh sharing

>>ssh ansible@host_ip

```
ansible@agent01:~

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ansible@TMPC:~$ ssh ansible@192.168.0.121

Welcome to Ubuntu 20.04.5 LTS (GNU/Linux 5.15.0-125-generic x86_64)

* Documentation: https://help.ubuntu.com

* Management: https://landscape.canonical.com

* Support: https://landscape.canonical.com

New release '22.04.5 LTS' available.

Run 'do-release-upgrade' to upgrade to it.

Last login: Tue Dec 3 21:04:02 2024 from 192.168.0.120

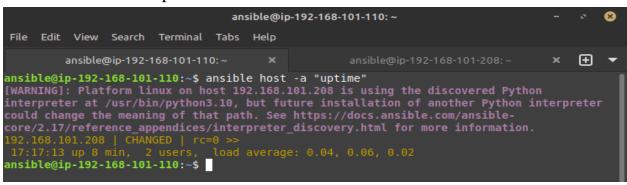
ansible@agent01:~$
```

Ansible ad-hoc Commands

In Ansible, an ad-hoc command is a one-time command that allows you to execute tasks on host systems without creating a full playbook. This is useful for quick, simple tasks. We can execute ad-hoccommands directly (without modules) with -a flag some example for those commands are followings:

>> ansible <hosts> -a "<shell command>"

i. ansible host -a "uptime"



ii. ansible host -a "mkdir /home/ansible/test"

Ansible Modules

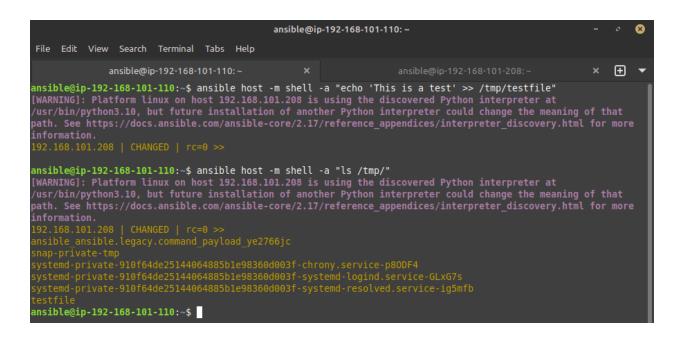
We can also use predefined modules to perform task easily some example are followings:

- >> ansible <hosts> -m <module> -a "<arguments>"
- i. ansible all -m copy -a "src=/home/ansible/test.txt dest=/home/ansible/test.txt"

```
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### ansible@ip-192-168-101-110:-  
### ansible@ip-192-168-101-10:-  
### ansible@ip-192-168-101-10:
```

ii. ansible host -m shell -a "echo 'This is a test' >> /tmp/testfile"



Ansible Playbook

An Ansible playbook is a YAML file that defines a series of tasks to be executed on host systems. It allows execution of series of task to multiple host in one go.

Key Elements of a Playbook:

- **Target**: Part of playbook that defines host & basic configurations.
- **Tasks**: Each task defines a specific action to be performed. Tasks use Ansible modules to perform actions.
- Variables: You can define variables to customize the behavior of your playbook.
- **Handlers:** These are special tasks that only run when notified by another task. They are typically used for tasks like restarting services or reloading configurations after changes.

Following is example of YAML ansible playbook

```
---
```

- host: webservers

become: yes # Run tasks with sudo privileges

tasks:

- name: Install nginx package

apt:

name: nginx state: present

- name: Start nginx service

service:

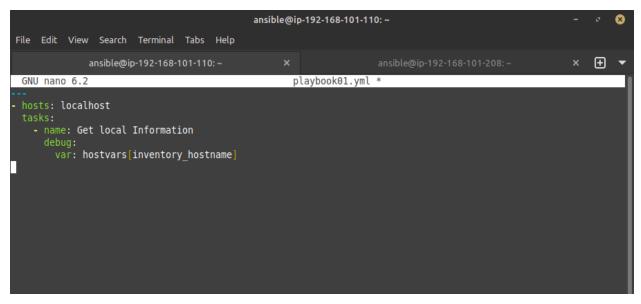
name: nginx state: started

Playbook can be executed with following command:

>> ansible-playbook <playbook.yml>

Ansible Playbook Examples:

i. Creating playbook01.yml which shows localhost's all the facts and variables:



Running playbook:

>> ansible-playbook playbook01.yml

ii. Creating playbook03.yml which install/verify multiple apps on host system:

Running playbook:

>> ansible-playbook playbook03.yml -b -ask-become-pass

```
ansible@ip-192-168-101-110: ~
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        ansible@ip-192-168-101-110: ~
                                                                 ⊕ ▼
ansible@ip-192-168-101-110:~$ ansible-playbook playbook03.yml -b --ask-become-pass
BECOME password:
[WARNING]: Platform linux on host 192.168.101.208 is using the discovered Python interpreter at
path. See https://docs.ansible.com/ansible-core/2.17/reference_appendices/interpreter_discovery.html for more
information.
changed: [192.168.101.208] => (item={'name': 'pwgen'})
changed: [192.168.101.208] => (item={'name': 'figlet'})
: ok=2 changed=1 unreachable=0 failed=0 skipped=0 rescued=0
ansible@ip-192-168-101-110:~$
```

Extra features of a Playbook:

1. Condition (when):

The when statement in playbook is used to execute a task only when a certain condition is met. The condition is typically a logical expression or variable value.

Example:

```
- name: Install nginx if the condition is true
ansible.builtin.yum:
  name: nginx
  state: present
when: ansible_facts['os_family'] == 'RedHat'
```

2. Loops:

You can use the loop directive to iterate over a list of items and apply the same task for each item.

Example:

```
name: Install multiple packages ansible.builtin.apt:
name: "{{ item }}"
state: present
loop:
nginx
git
vim
```

3. Tags:

Tags allow you to run specific parts of a playbook by assigning tags to tasks or plays. This helps you execute only certain parts of the playbook rather than running everything.

Example:

tasks:

- name: Install nginx ansible.builtin.yum:

name: nginx

state: present

tags:

- install

Ansible Vault:

Ansible Vault is a feature that allows you to securely store and manage sensitive data, such as passwords, API keys, and private keys, within Ansible playbooks, inventory files, or variables. Vault ensures that this sensitive information is encrypted and can be easily decrypted when needed during playbook execution.

How to Use Ansible Vault:

1. Creating an Encrypted File

You can create an encrypted file using the ansible-vault create command. For example, to create an encrypted file called secrets.yml:

>> ansible-vault create secrets.yml

This command will prompt you for a password, which you will need to decrypt the file later.

2. Viewing an Encrypted File

To view the contents of an encrypted file, use the ansible-vault view command:

>> ansible-vault view secrets.yml

3. Editing an Encrypted File

If you need to edit an encrypted file, you can use the ansible-vault edit command:

>> ansible-vault edit secrets.yml

4. Executing Encrypted File

To run the playbook that includes a vault-encrypted file, you would provide the vault password using the --ask-vault-pass option.

>> ansible-playbook --ask-vault-pass secrets.yml