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Automating ACI with Ansible

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BRKACI-1619

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How

1. Find this session in the Cisco Events Mobile App
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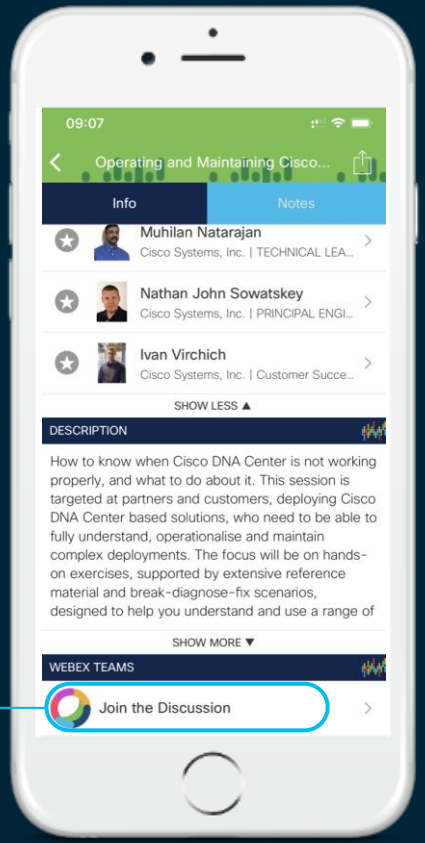


Agenda

- Introduction – What is Automation?
- Overview of Ansible
- Automating ACI with Playbooks
- Signature Based Authentication
- A Three Tier Application
- ACI REST module

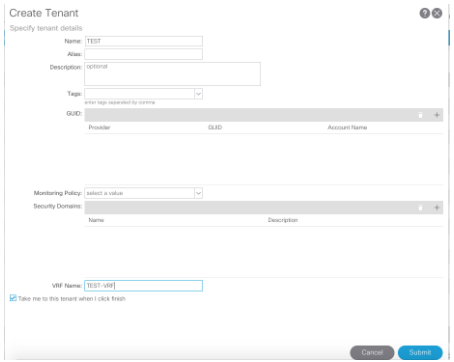
What is Automation?
(Why ACI Automation?)

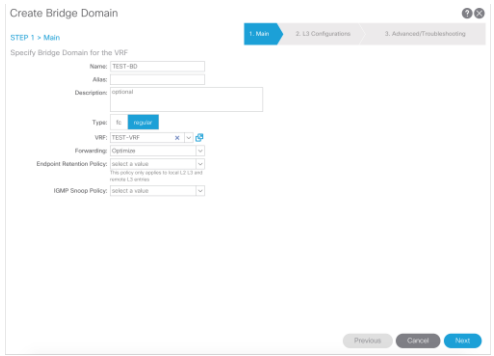
What is automation?

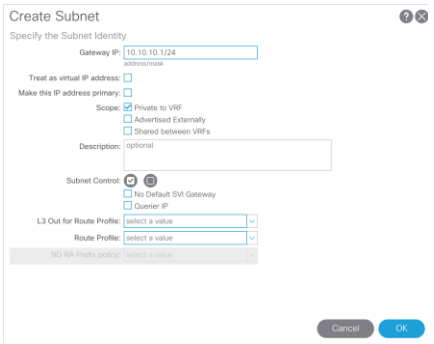
- Exists to make repeatable things easier
- Uses tools to create process and instructions
  - Replaces manual work
- Benefits – speed, efficiency, $$$

Why automation with ACI?

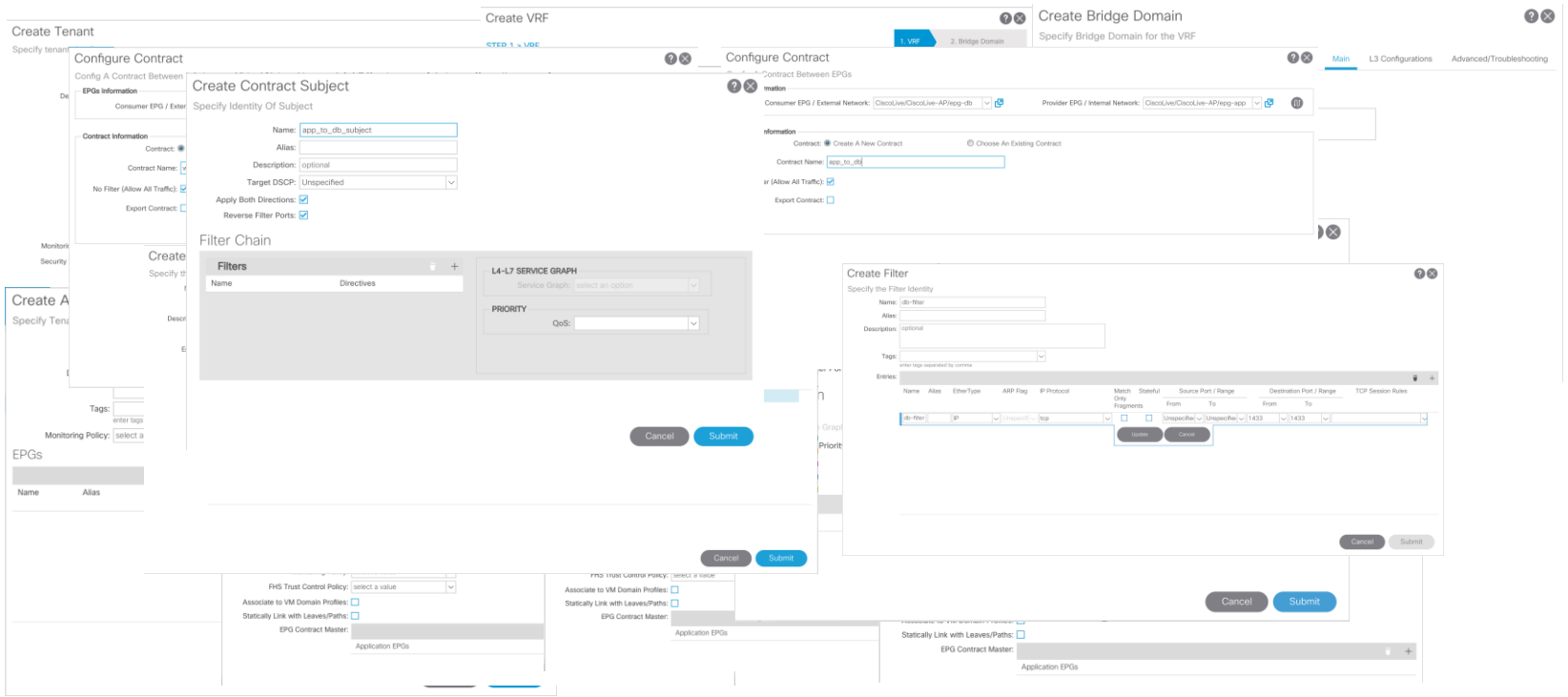
- GUI Point-and-click for configuration – one at a time
- Repetitive Tasks
- Does not scale when deploying large configurations
- ACI APIC provides robust API
  - Automation tools can leverage







Deploy Three Tier Application – APIC GUI



Overview of Ansible

Inventory, Playbooks, and Modules

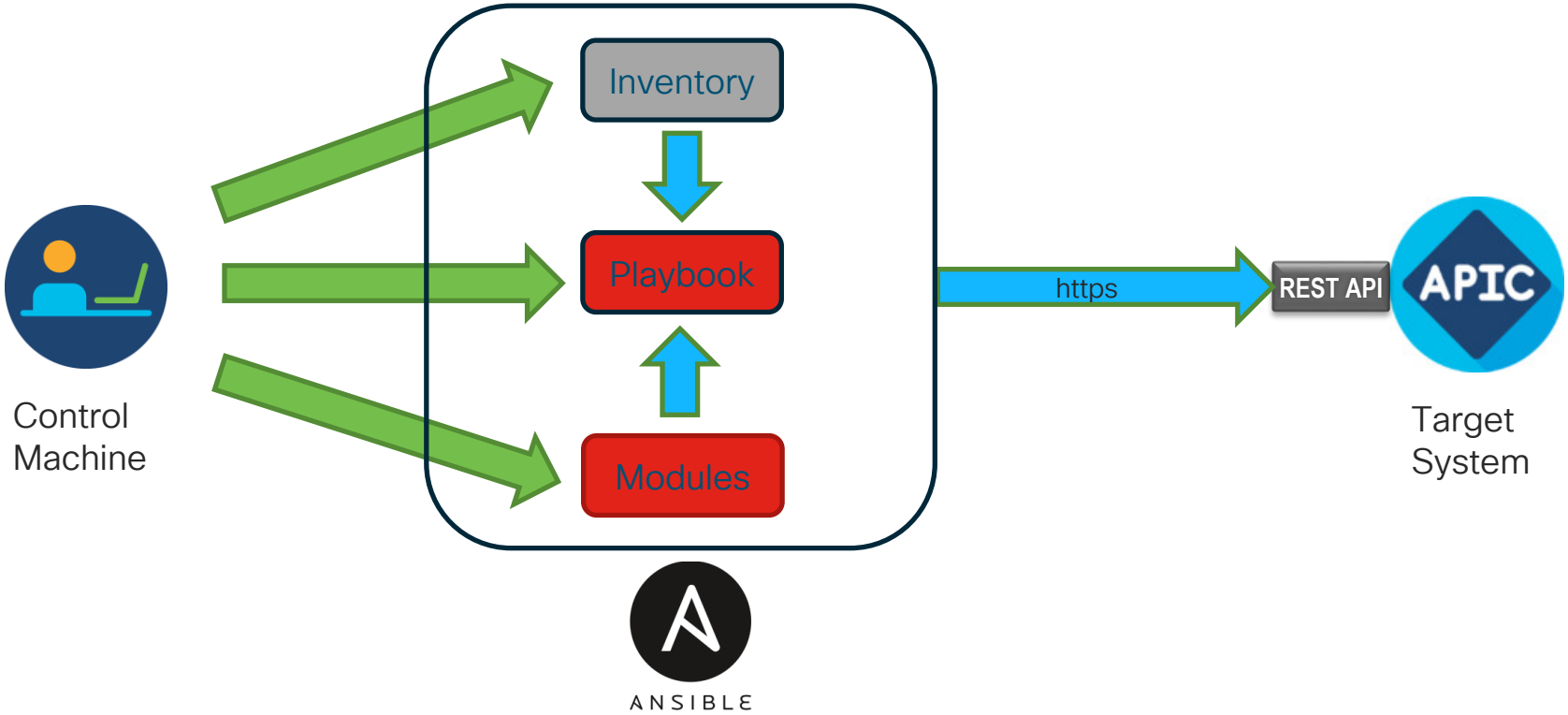
What is Ansible?

- Open Source
- Automation, Configuration & Orchestration
- Version 2.9
  - 2.8 & 2.7 also available
  - ACI support – 2.4
- Supported on UNIX/Linux
  - Windows Subsystem for Linux
- Can manage different systems
  - ACI, IOS, NX-OS, IOS-XR

What is Ansible?

- Agentless
  - Push Model
- Idempotent
- YAML based
  - Easily Readable
- APIC REST API interface
  - Same as GUI
- Requires no programming skills
  - Python is helpful – not required

What makes up Ansible?



Example ACI Ansible Inventory

YAML inventory file

```
all:
  hosts:
    Fabric1:
      inventory_hostname: 10.50.62.1
      username: admin
      password: cisco
    Fabric2:
      inventory_hostname: 10.51.92.1
      username: admin
      password: cisco
```

INI inventory file

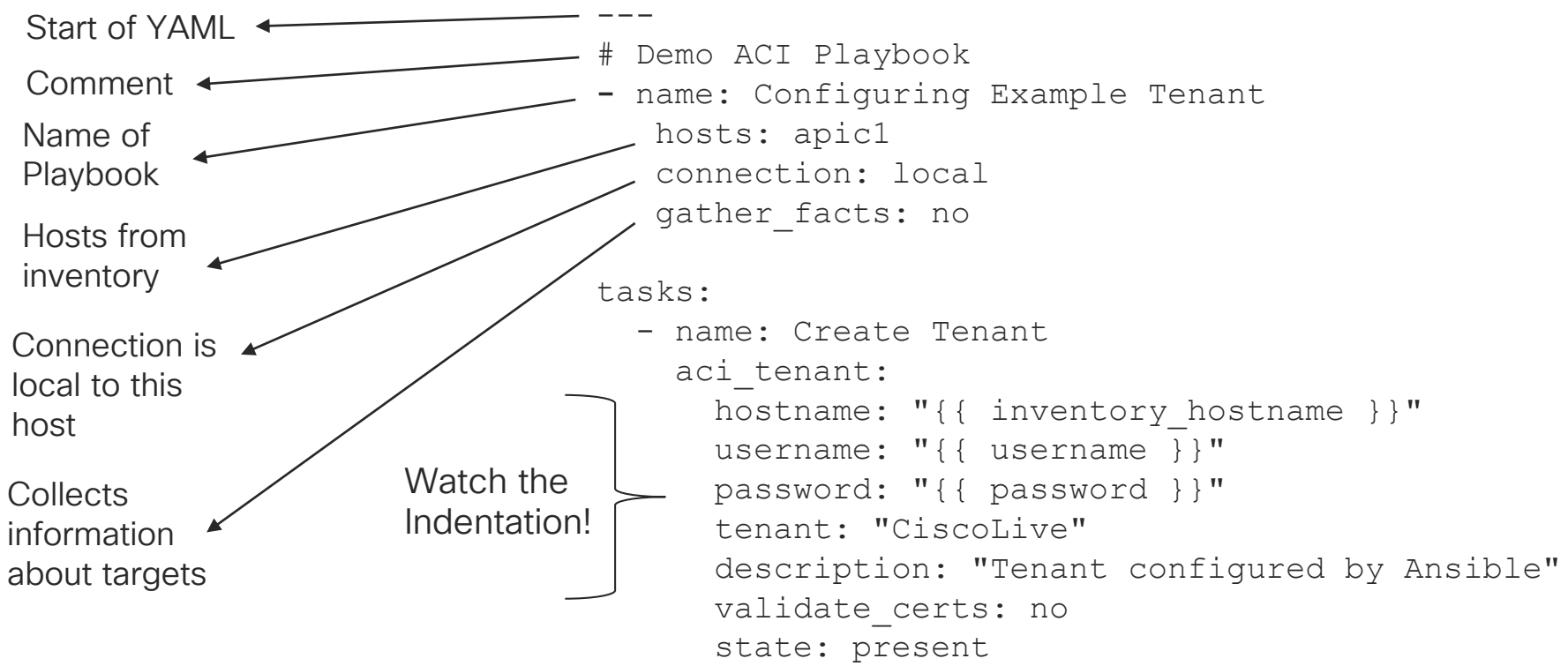
```
[Fabric1]
la-apic1 username=admin password=cisco

[Fabric2]
ny-apic1 username=admin password=cisco
```

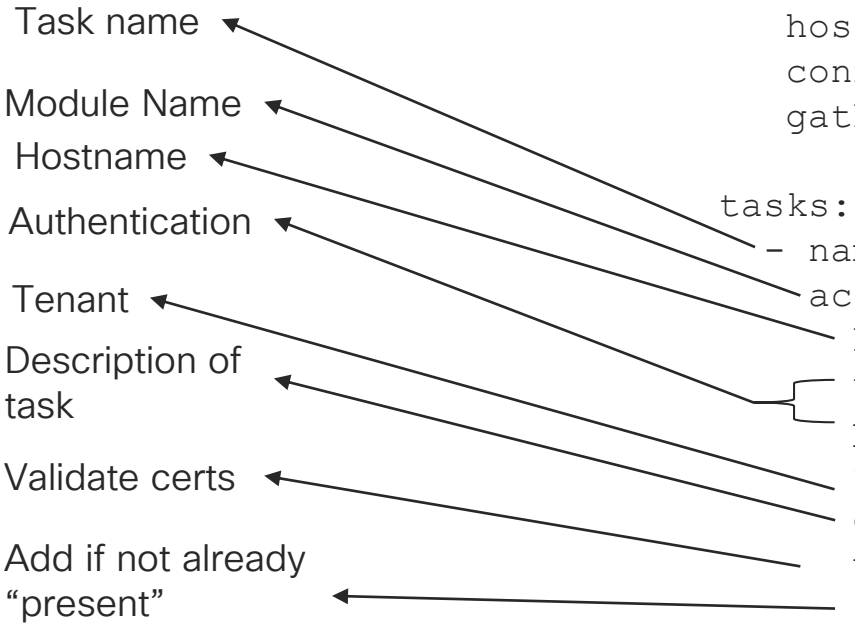
Ansible Playbooks Breakdown

- Contains a list of plays
  - Series of tasks to be performed on target systems
- Tasks are executed in order
- Built on YAML
- Proper Indentation is required
- “---” exists at the start of every playbook
- Apply specific roles to targets

Ansible Playbook breakdown



Ansible Playbook breakdown



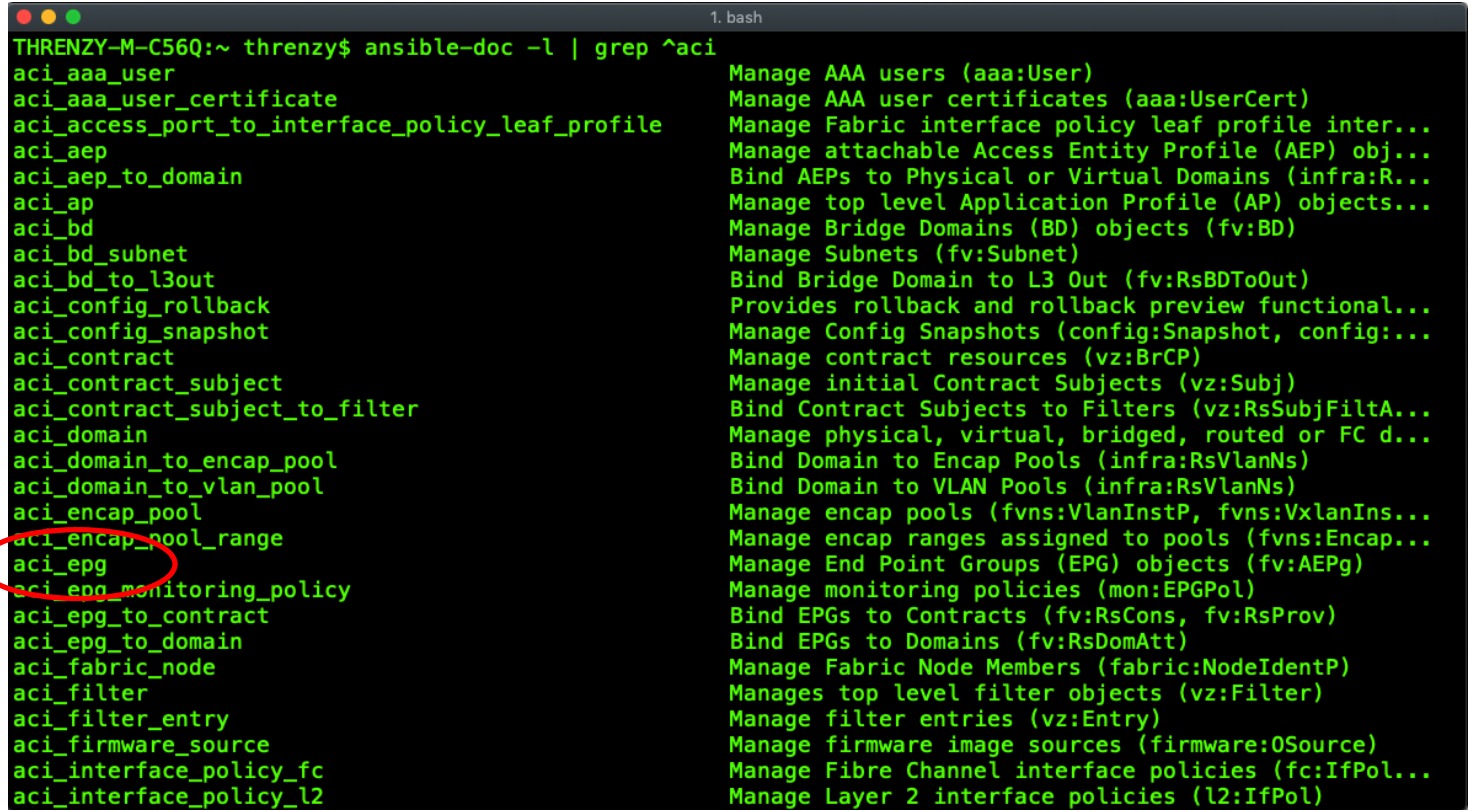

```
---
# Demo ACI Playbook
- name: Configuring Example Tenant
   hosts: apic1
   connection: local
   gather_facts: no

tasks:
  - name: Create Tenant
    aci_tenant:
      hostname: "{{ inventory_hostname }}"
      username: "{{ username }}"
      password: "{{ password }}"
      tenant: "CiscoLive"
      description: "Tenant configured by Ansible"
      validate_certs: no
      state: present
```

Ansible ACI Modules

- Perform specific tasks (Create Tenant/VRF/BD)
- Already installed when you install Ansible
- Written in Python
  - Can develop your own modules
- 60+ ACI modules as of 2.9
  - 30+ Multisite Orchestrator Modules
- To see all Ansible Modules – ansible-doc -l
  - ACI specific ones – ansible-doc -l | grep ^aci

Ansible ACI Modules



Ansible ACI Modules

```
1. less
THRENZY-M-C56Q:~ threnzy$ ansible-doc aci_epg
> ACI_EPG    (/usr/local/lib/python2.7/site-packages/ansible/modules/network/aci/aci_epg.py)

        Manage End Point Groups (EPG) on Cisco ACI fabrics.

OPTIONS (= is mandatory):

= ap
        Name of an existing application network profile, that will contain the EPGs.
        (Aliases: app_profile, app_profile_name)

= bd
        Name of the bridge domain being associated with the EPG.
        (Aliases: bd_name, bridge_domain)

- certificate_name
        The X.509 certificate name attached to the APIC AAA user used for signature-
        based authentication.
        It defaults to the `private_key' basename, without extension.
        (Aliases: cert_name)[Default: (null)]

- description
        Description for the EPG.
        (Aliases: descr)[Default: (null)]

= epg
        Name of the end point group.
        (Aliases: epg_name, name)

- fwd_control
```

Ansible ACI Modules

1. less

```
EXAMPLES:

- name: Add a new EPG
  aci_epg:
    host: apic
    username: admin
    password: SomeSecretPassword
    tenant: production
    ap: intranet
    epg: web_epg
    description: Web Intranet EPG
    bd: prod_bd
    preferred_group: yes
    state: present
  delegate_to: localhost

- aci_epg:
    host: apic
    username: admin
    password: SomeSecretPassword
    tenant: production
    ap: ticketing
    epg: "{{ item.epg }}"
    description: Ticketing EPG
    bd: "{{ item.bd }}"
    priority: unspecified
    intra_epg_isolation: unenforced
    state: present
  delegate_to: localhost
```

Ansible ACI Modules

aci_epg – Manage End Point Groups (EPG) objects (fv:AEPg)

New in version 2.4.

Synopsis

- Manage End Point Groups (EPG) on Cisco ACI fabrics.

Parameters

Parameter	Choices/Defaults	Comments
ap string / required		Name of an existing application network profile, that will contain the EPGs. aliases: app_profile, app_profile_name
bd string		Name of the bridge domain being associated with the EPG. aliases: bd_name, bridge_domain
certificate_name string		The X.509 certificate name attached to the APIC AAA user used for signature-based authentication. If a `private_key` filename was provided, this defaults to the `private_key` basename, without extension. If PEM-formatted content was provided for `private_key`, this defaults to the `username` value. aliases: cert_name
description string		Description for the EPG. aliases: descr

Automating ACI with Playbooks

Running an ACI Playbook

- Ansible command
  - Good for running single commands – ad-hoc
  - **`ansible 10.15.20.101 --user=admin --ask-pass -a "uptime"`**
- Command to run our playbooks
  - **`ansible-playbook –i {inventory file} {Playbook file}`**
  - **`ansible-playbook –i hosts ciscolive.yml`**
- Check mode(--check)
  - Run through playbook without making changes
  - **`ansible-playbook –i hosts tenant.yml --check`**

Running our Tenant Playbook

```
(2.9) THRENZY-M-F1G3:BRKACI-1619 threnzy$ ansible-playbook -i hosts ciscolive.yml

PLAY [Configuring Example Tenant] **********************************************

TASK [Create a New Tenant] *****************************************************
changed: [10.95.33.231]

PLAY RECAP *********************************************************************
10.95.33.231               : ok=1    changed=1    unreachable=0    failed=0    skipped=0
  rescued=0    ignored=0

(2.9) THRENZY-M-F1G3:BRKACI-1619 threnzy$
```

- Runs through each task.
- Let's you know how many tasks were OK, changed, failed, etc.
- To see more output use "-v", "-vvv", or "-vvvv"

Tenant Playbook with verbose output

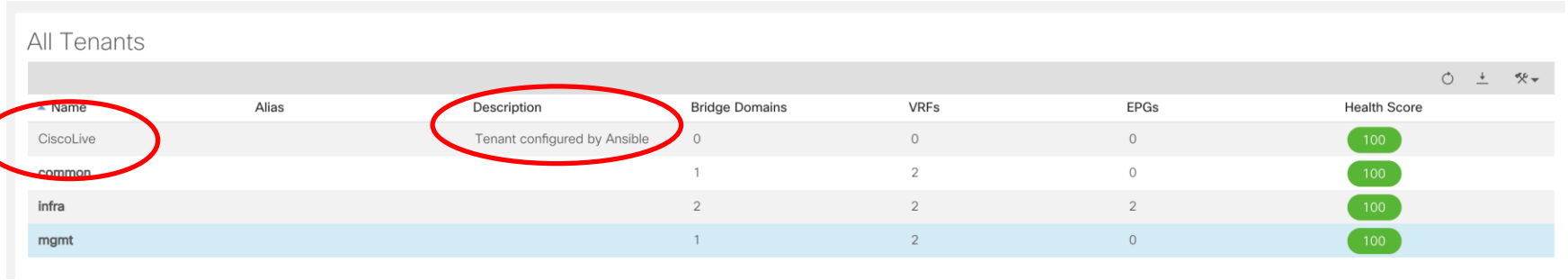
```
(2.9) THRENZY-M-F1G3:BRKACI-1619 threnzy$ ansible-playbook -i hosts ciscolive.yml -v
Using /Users/threnzy/Ansible/2.9/BRKACI-1619/ansible.cfg as config file

PLAY [Configuring Example Tenant] ***********************************************

TASK [Create a New Tenant] ******************************************************
ok: [10.95.33.231] => {
    "changed": false,
    "current": [
        {
            "fvTenant": {
                "attributes": {
                    "annotation": "",
                    "descr": "Tenant configured by Ansible",
                    "dn": "uni/tn-CiscoLive",
                    "name": "CiscoLive",
                    "nameAlias": "",
                    "ownerKey": "",
                    "ownerTag": ""
                }
            }
        }
    ]
}

PLAY RECAP **********************************************************************
10.95.33.231               : ok=1    changed=0    unreachable=0    failed=0    skipped=0
  rescued=0    ignored=0
```

Verifying the APIC



Signature-Based Authentication

A Note about Authentication

- Authentication using username/password
  - Not very secure
- Large playbooks with lots of tasks can fail
  - Especially with iteration
- Can cause sessions to get throttled
  - NGINX throttling – ACI 3.1
- Workarounds
  - Disable APIC session throttling
  - Add pause in tasks
  - Signature-based authentication***

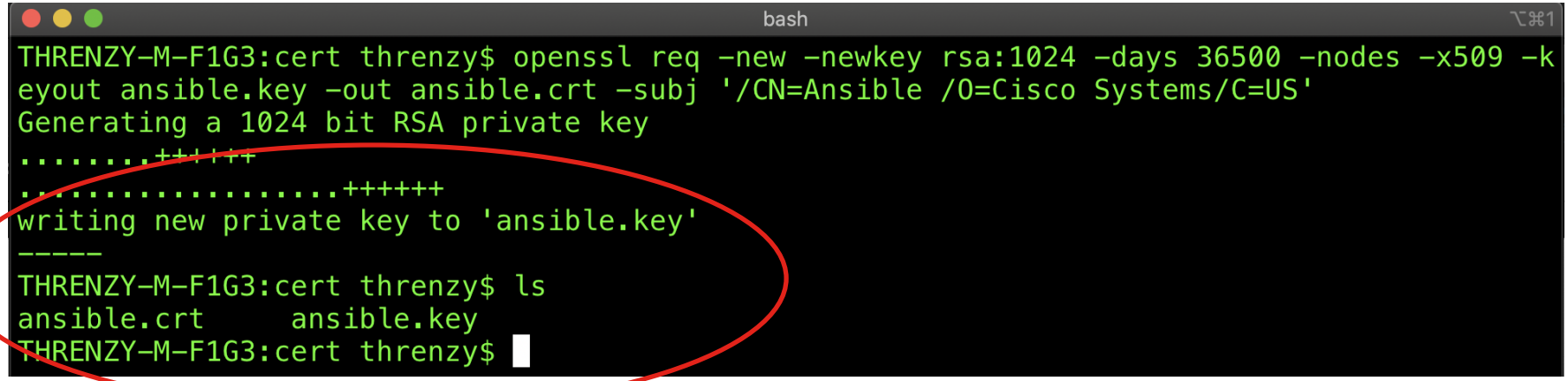
Signature-based Authentication

- Available as of 2.5
- Generate certificate using **`openssl`**
- Create a local user on APIC
  - Ansible Module - **`aci_aaa_user`**
- Push Certificate up to APIC
  - Ansible Module - **`aci_aaa_user_certificate`**
- Modify your tasks to leverage new Key
  - Replace username/password - private_key: keyname.key

Generate Self Signed Certificate

- Use “openssl” to generate your cert

```
openssl req -new -newkey rsa:1024 -days 36500 -nodes -x509 -keyout admin.key -out admin.crt -
subj '/CN=Admin/O=Your Company/C=US'
```



Automate Local User Creation

- Create a local user using `aci_aaa_user` module

```
---
# User certificate
- name: Push x509 cert and create user Ansible for signature based authentication
  hosts: apic1
  connection: local
  gather_facts: no

  tasks:
  - name: Add a user
    aci_aaa_user:
      hostname: "{{ inventory_hostname }}"
      username: "{{ username }}"
      password: "{{ password }}"
      aaa_user: ansible
      aaa_password: C1sco-321
      expiration: never
      expires: no
      email: threnzy@cisco.com
      phone: +1-650-248-1099
      first_name: Thomas
      last_name: Renzy
      validate_certs: no
      state: present
```

Add new Certificate to new Local User

- Can copy Cert to use **aci_aaa_user_certificate** Module

```
- name: Add a certificate to user ansible
  aci_aaa_user_certificate:
    use_proxy: no
    hostname: "{{ inventory_hostname }}"
    username: "{{ username }}"
    password: "{{ password }}"
    aaa_user: ansible
    certificate_name: ansible
    certificate_data: "{{ lookup('file', 'ansible.crt') }}"
    validate_certs: no
    state: present
```

Assign proper privileges to Local User

- Leverages the aci_rest module. – More later

```
- name: Add admin privileges to allow Ansible user to make changes
  aci_rest:
    hostname: "{{ inventory_hostname }}"
    username: "{{ username }}"
    password: "{{ password }}"
    validate_certs: no
    path: /api/node/mo/uni/userext/user-ansible/userdomain-all.json
    method: post
    content:
      {"aaaUserDomain":
        {"attributes":{
          "name":"all",
          "rn":"userdomain-all",
          },
          "children":[
            {"aaaUserRole":
              {"attributes":{
                "name":"admin","privType":"writePriv",
                "rn":"role-admin",
                },
                "children":[]
              }
            }
            ]
        }
      }
```

Demo – Deploy Signature-Based Authentication

Updated Tenant Playbook

```
---
# Demo ACI Playbook
- name: Configuring Example Tenant
   hosts: apic1
   connection: local
   gather_facts: no

tasks:
  - name: Create Tenant
    aci_tenant:
      hostname: "{{ inventory_hostname }}"
      username: ansible
      private_key: ansible.key
      tenant: "CiscoLive"
      description: "Tenant configured by Ansible"
      validate_certs: no
      state: present
```

Finally...

More complex Playbook – A Three Tier Application

A Sample Three Tier Application in Ansible

- We want to do the following:
  - Create a new Tenant – Ansible
  - New VRF – ansible-VRF
  - New BD – ansible-BD
  - Application Profile – ansible-AP
  - 3 EPGs
    - Web, App, DB
- 2 Contracts (and associated subjects/filters)
  - web_to_app – Communication between Web EPG and App EPG on http (tcp 80)
  - app_to_db - Communication between App EPG and DB EPG on sql (tcp 1433)

Variables in Three Tier Application

- Use of variables in Ansible
  - Can be used to substitute values in playbooks
  - Leverages jinja2 templating – “{{ Variable Value }}”
  - Defined in inventory, playbook, external
    - Variables have precedence

```
vars:
    mytenant: ciscolive
…
tenant: "{{ mytenant }}"
```

Variables in Three Tier Application

```
vars:
     tenant: Ansible
     vrf: ansible-VRF
     bd:
       name: ansible-BD
       ip: 10.255.255.1
       mask: 24
     app_profile: ansible-AP
     http_filter: http_ans
     http_filter_entry: http_ans_entry
     web_to_app_contract: web_to_app
     web_to_app_contract_subject: web_to_app_subject
     db_filter: db_ans_entry
     db_filter_entry: db_ans_entry
     app_to_db_contract: db_to_app
     app_to_db_contract_subject: app_to_db_subject
     epg1: web
     epg2: app
     epg3: db
```

Loops (iteration) with loop

- Repeat a task multiple times
  - Suppose you need to create 3 or more EPGs
  - Tedious to write out 3 or more additional tasks
  - with_items: Also a method

```
aci_epg:
  …
   epg: "{{ item.epg }}"
loop:
  - epg: "{{ epg1 }}"
  - epg: "{{ epg2 }}"
  - epg: "{{ epg3 }}"
```

Modules used in Three-Tier Application

- aci_tenant
- aci_vrf
- aci_bd
- aci_bd_subnet
- aci_ap
- aci_epg

- aci_contract
- aci_filter
- aci_filter_entry
- aci_epg_to_contract
- aci_contract_subject
- aci_contract_subject_to_filter

Demo – Deploy a Three Tier Application

The Ansible ACI REST Module

Ansible ACI Modules, XML and JSON

- Ansible is a great solution to automate ACI tasks
- ACI modules can do most common configurations
- Lots modules as of 2.9
  - Modules added to every version
  - Modules aren't 1-to-1 with all ACI features
- What if you are already using XML and JSON?

ACI REST Module (aci_rest)

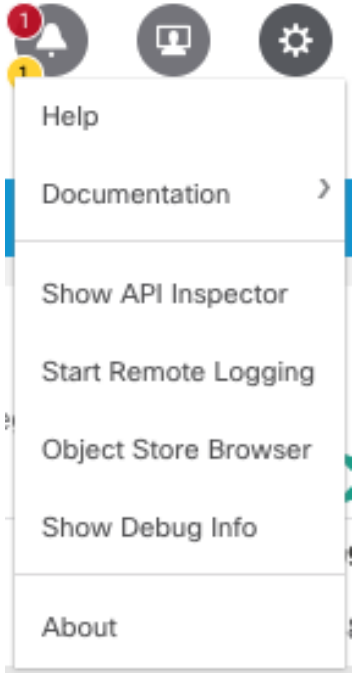
- Direct access and management to APIC REST API
- Can use JSON, XML, and even YAML
- Can POST, DELETE, GET
  - Similar to what you can do in POSTMAN
- Variables work with this as well
- Can grab GUI configurations through
  - API Inspector
  - Download JSON/XML configuration

Example aci_rest module task

```
tasks:
 - name: Add admin privileges to allow Ansible user to make changes
    aci_rest:
      hostname: "{{ inventory_hostname }}"
      username: "{{ username }}"
      password: "{{ password }}"
      validate_certs: no
      path: /api/node/mo/uni/userext/user-ansible/userdomain-all.json
      method: post
      content:
        {"aaaUserDomain":
          {"attributes":{
            "name":"all",
            "rn":"userdomain-all",
            },
            "children":[
              {"aaaUserRole":
                {"attributes":{
                  "name":"admin","privType":"writePriv",
                  "rn":"role-admin",
                  },
                  "children":[]
                }
              }
              ]
          }
        }
```

Configuration Example with aci_rest

- Set my COOP policy to strict
  - Enables authenticated MD5 only
- End Point Loop Protection
  - Specified how frequent MAC moves are handled
- Global Enforce Subnet Check
  - Limit IP learning at the VRF level
- Currently no Ansible modules
- Grabbed from API Inspector



COOP Policy with ACI REST module

```
path: /api/node/mo/uni/fabric/pol-default.json
        method: post
        content: |
          {
            "coopPol": {
              "attributes":{
                "type":"strict",
                "dn":"uni/fabric/pol-default"
                }
              }
            }
```

Enforce Subnet Check with ACI REST module

```
path: /api/node/mo/uni/infra/settings.json
        method: post
        content: |
          {
            "infraSetPol": {
              "attributes": {
                "enforceSubnetCheck":"true",
                "dn":"uni/infra/settings"
                }
              }
            }
```

End Point Loop Protection with ACI REST module

```
path: /api/node/mo/uni/infra/epLoopProtectP-default.json
        method: post
        content: |
          {
            "epLoopProtectP": {
              "attributes": {
                "action": "",
                "adminSt": "enabled",
                "loopDetectIntvl": "60",
                "loopDetectMult": "4",
                "dn":"uni/infra/epLoopProtectP-default"
              }
            }
          }
```

Demo – Configuration with aci_rest

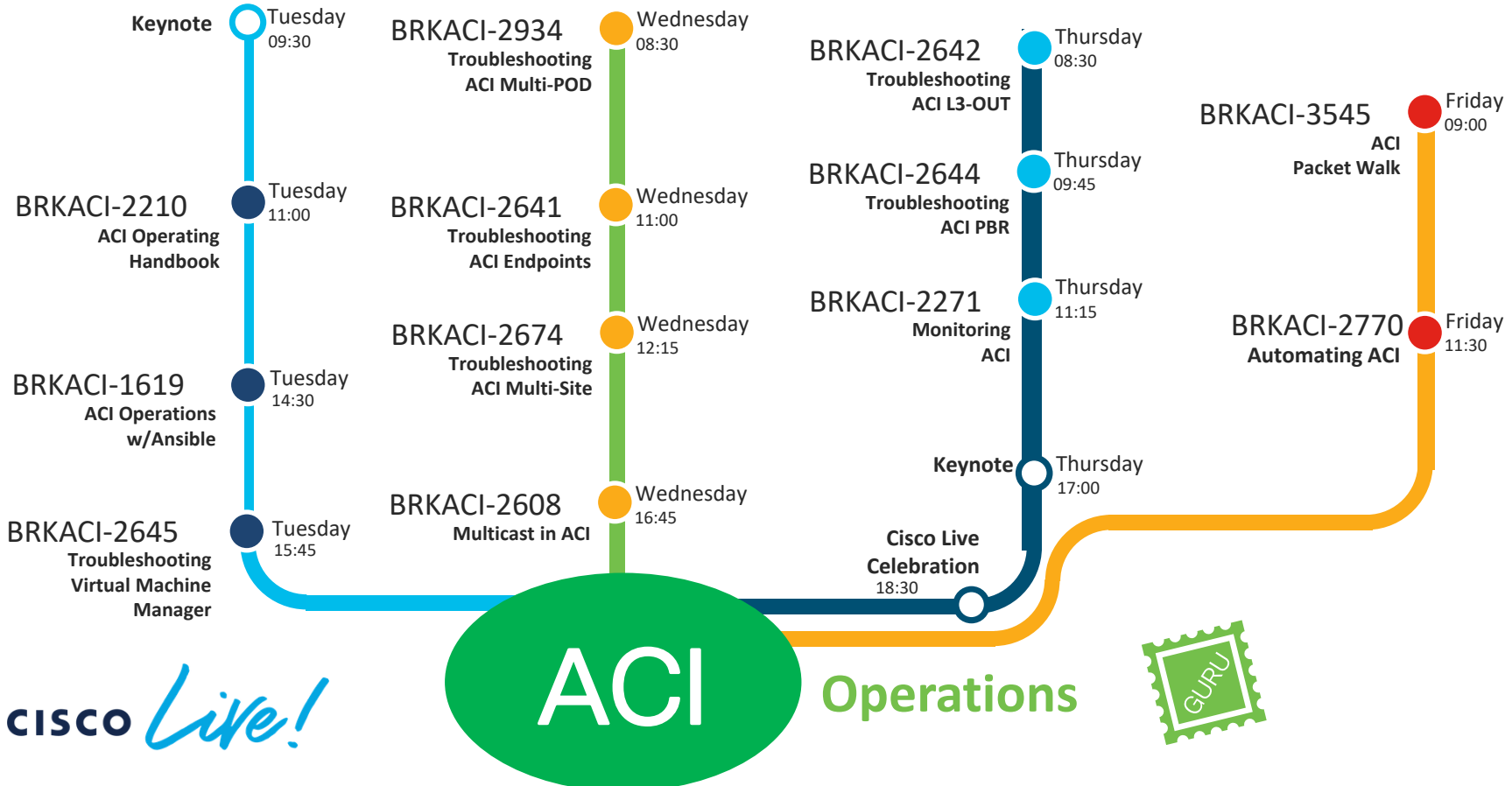
Summary

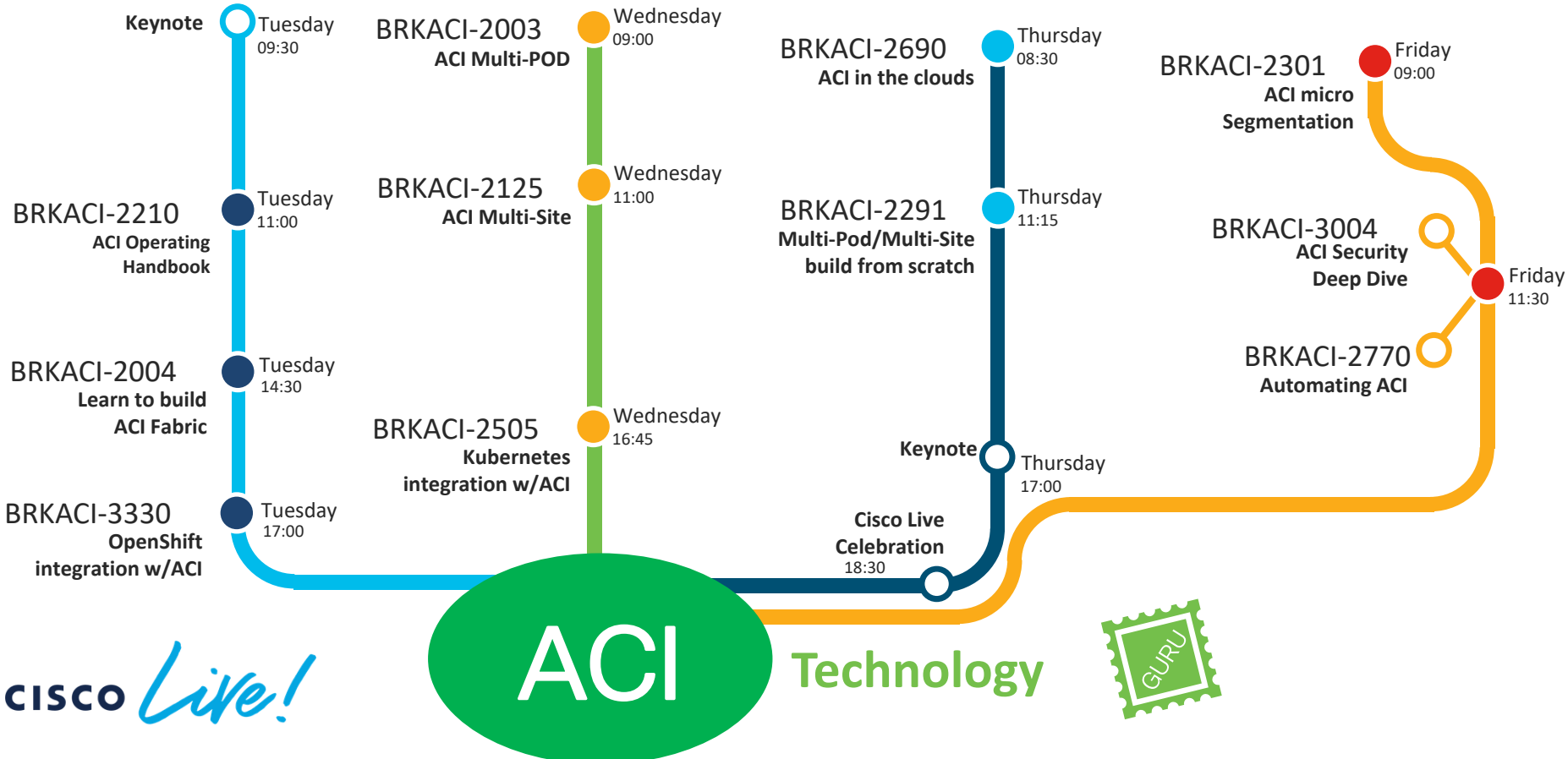
Benefits of Automating ACI with Ansible

- Automate repeatable tasks
- Saves time, efficient
- Ease of writing/reading inventory/playbooks
- No special programming skills needed
- Small learning curve
- Modules pre-built with most common tasks
- aci_rest module for leveraging JSON/XML
  - Can build tasks/plays not covered by a module

Hands on sessions

LABACI-1013 – Intro to Automating ACI with Ansible
LABACI-1001 – Introduction to the APIC
LABACI-1011 – Intro to Programming ACI with Python
LABACI-1007 – ACI Infrastructure as code with Terraform
LABACI-2148 - ACI Monitoring, Stats, Analytics and Notifications…
LABDCN-1258 – Network Automation with Ansible (NX-OS)
DEVWKS-2232 – Automate your ACI Multisite with APIs


Keynote
Tuesday
09:30
BRKACI-2210
ACI Operating Handbook
Tuesday
11:00
BRKACI-1619
ACI Operations w/Ansible
Tuesday
14:30
BRKACI-2645
Troubleshooting Virtual Machine Manager
Tuesday
15:45
BRKACI-2934
Troubleshooting ACI Multi-POD
Wednesday
08:30
BRKACI-2641
Troubleshooting ACI Endpoints
Wednesday
11:00
BRKACI-2674
Troubleshooting ACI Multi-Site
Wednesday
12:15
BRKACI-2608
Multicast in ACI
Wednesday
16:45
BRKACI-2642
Troubleshooting ACI L3-OUT
Thursday
08:30
BRKACI-2644
Troubleshooting ACI PBR
Thursday
09:45
BRKACI-2271
Monitoring ACI
Thursday
11:15
Keynote
Thursday
17:00
Cisco Live Celebration
18:30
BRKACI-3545
ACI Packet Walk
Friday
09:00
BRKACI-2770
Automating ACI
Friday
11:30
ACI
Operations
GURU


Keynote
Tuesday
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BRKACI-2210
ACI Operating Handbook
Tuesday
11:00
BRKACI-2004
Learn to build ACI Fabric
Tuesday
14:30
BRKACI-3330
OpenShift integration w/ACI
Tuesday
17:00
BRKACI-2003
ACI Multi-POD
Wednesday
09:00
BRKACI-2125
ACI Multi-Site
Wednesday
11:00
BRKACI-2505
Kubernetes integration w/ACI
Wednesday
16:45
BRKACI-2690
ACI in the clouds
Thursday
08:30
BRKACI-2291
Multi-Pod/Multi-Site build from scratch
Thursday
11:15
Keynote
Thursday
17:00
Cisco Live Celebration
18:30
BRKACI-2301
ACI micro Segmentation
Friday
09:00
BRKACI-3004
ACI Security Deep Dive
BRKACI-2770
Automating ACI
Friday
11:30
ACI
Technology
GURU

References

Ansible Documentation

http://docs.ansible.com/

Ansible ACI Documentation

https://docs.ansible.com/ansible/devel/scenario_guides/guide_aci.html

Ansible ACI Modules

http://docs.ansible.com/ansible/devel/modules/list_of_network_modules.html#aci

Ansible Variables (and precedence)

https://docs.ansible.com/ansible/latest/user_guide/playbooks_variables.html

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