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Guided Exercise: Running Ad Hoc Commands



In this exercise, you will execute ad hoc commands on multiple managed hosts.

Outcomes

You should be able to execute commands on managed hosts on an ad hoc basis using privilege escalation.

You will execute ad hoc commands on workstation and servera using the devops user account. This account has the same sudo configuration on both workstation and servera.

Log in to workstation as student using student as the password.

On workstation, run the `lab deploy-adhoc start` command. This script ensures that the managed host servera is reachable on the network. It also creates and populates the `/home/student/deploy-adhoc` working directory with materials used in this exercise.

```
[student@workstation ~]$ lab deploy-adhoc start
```

Procedure 2.3. Instructions

1. Determine the sudo configuration for the devops account on both workstation and servera.
 - 1.1. Determine the sudo configuration for the devops account that was configured when workstation was built. Enter student if prompted for the password for the student account.

```
[student@workstation ~]$ sudo -l -U devops
...output omitted...
User devops may run the following commands on workstation:
(ALL) NOPASSWD: ALL
```

Note that the user has full sudo privileges but does not require password authentication.

- 1.2. Determine the sudo configuration for the devops account that was configured when servera was built.

```
[student@workstation ~]$ ssh devops@servera.lab.example.com
[devops@servera ~]$ sudo -l
...output omitted...
User devops may run the following commands on servera:
(ALL) NOPASSWD: ALL
[devops@servera ~]$ exit
```

Note that the user has full sudo privileges but does not require password authentication.

2. Change directory to `/home/student/deploy-adhoc` and examine the contents of the `ansible.cfg` and `inventory` files.

```
[student@workstation ~]$ cd ~/deploy-adhoc
[student@workstation deploy-adhoc]$ cat ansible.cfg
[defaults]
inventory=inventory
[student@workstation deploy-adhoc]$ cat inventory
[control_node]
localhost

[intranetweb]
servera.lab.example.com
```

The configuration file uses the directory's inventory file as the Ansible inventory. Note that Ansible is not yet configured to use privilege escalation.

3. Using the `all` host group and the `ping` module, execute an ad hoc command that ensures all managed hosts can run Ansible modules using Python.

```
[student@workstation deploy-adhoc]$ ansible all -m ping
servera.lab.example.com | SUCCESS => {
  "ansible_facts": {
    "discovered_interpreter_python": "/usr/libexec/platform-python"
  },
  "changed": false,
  "ping": "pong"
}
localhost | SUCCESS => {
  "ansible_facts": {
    "discovered_interpreter_python": "/usr/libexec/platform-python"
  },
  "changed": false,
  "ping": "pong"
}
```

4. Using the `command` module, execute an ad hoc command on `workstation` to identify the user account that Ansible uses to perform operations on managed hosts. Use the `localhost` host pattern to connect to `workstation` for the ad hoc command execution. Because you are connecting locally, `workstation` is both the control node and managed host.

```
[student@workstation deploy-adhoc]$ ansible localhost -m command -a 'id'
localhost | CHANGED | rc=0 >>
uid=1000(student) gid=1000(student) groups=1000(student),10(wheel) context=unconfined_u:unconfined_r:unconfined_t:s0-s0:c0.c1023
```

Notice that the ad hoc command was performed on the managed host as the `student` user.

5. Execute the previous ad hoc command on `workstation` but connect and perform the operation with the `devops` user account by using the `-u` option.

```
[student@workstation deploy-adhoc]$ ansible localhost -m command -a 'id' -u devops
localhost | CHANGED | rc=0 >>
uid=1001(devops) gid=1001(devops) groups=1001(devops) context=unconfined_u:unconfined_r:unconfined_t:s0-s0:c0.c1023
```

Notice that the ad hoc command was performed on the managed host as the `devops` user.

6. Using the `copy` module, execute an ad hoc command on `workstation` to change the contents of the `/etc/motd` file so that it consists of the string "Managed by Ansible" followed by a newline. Execute the command using the `devops` account, but do not use the `--become` option to switch to root. The ad hoc command should fail due to lack of permissions.

```
[student@workstation deploy-adhoc]$ ansible localhost -m copy \
> -a 'content="Managed by Ansible\n" dest=/etc/motd' -u devops
localhost | FAILED! => {
  "ansible_facts": {
    "discovered_interpreter_python": "/usr/libexec/platform-python"
  },
  "changed": false,
  "checksum": "4458b979ede3c332f8f2128385df4ba305e58c27",
  "msg": "Destination /etc not writable"
}
```

The ad hoc command failed because the devops user does not have permission to write to the file.

7. Run the command again using privilege escalation. You could fix the settings in the `ansible.cfg` file, but for this example just use appropriate command-line options of the `ansible` command.

Using the `copy` module, execute the previous command on `workstation` to change the contents of the `/etc/motd` file so that it consists of the string "Managed by Ansible" followed by a newline. Use the `devops` user to make the connection to the managed host, but perform the operation as the `root` user using the `--become` option. The use of the `--become` option is sufficient because the default value for the `become_user` directive is set to `root` in the `/etc/ansible/ansible.cfg` file.

```
[student@workstation deploy-adhoc]$ ansible localhost -m copy \
> -a 'content="Managed by Ansible\n" dest=/etc/motd' -u devops --become
localhost | CHANGED => {
  "ansible_facts": {
    "discovered_interpreter_python": "/usr/libexec/platform-python"
  },
  "changed": true,
  "checksum": "4458b979ede3c332f8f2128385df4ba305e58c27",
  "dest": "/etc/motd",
  "gid": 0,
  "group": "root",
  "md5sum": "65a4290ee5559756ad04e558b0e0c4e3",
  "mode": "0644",
  "owner": "root",
  "secontext": "system_u:object_r:etc_t:s0",
  "size": 19,
  "src": "/home/devops/.ansible/tmp/ansible-tmp-1558954193.0260043-131348380629718/source",
  "state": "file",
  "uid": 0
}
```

Note that the command succeeded this time because the ad hoc command was executed with privilege escalation.

8. Run the previous ad hoc command again on all hosts using the `all` host group. This ensures that `/etc/motd` on both `workstation` and `servera` consist of the text "Managed by Ansible".

```
[student@workstation deploy-adhoc]$ ansible all -m copy \
> -a 'content="Managed by Ansible\n" dest=/etc/motd' -u devops --become
servera.lab.example.com | CHANGED => {
  "ansible_facts": {
    "discovered_interpreter_python": "/usr/libexec/platform-python"
  },
  "changed": true,
  "checksum": "4458b979ede3c332f8f2128385df4ba305e58c27",
  "dest": "/etc/motd",
  "gid": 0,
  "group": "root",
  "md5sum": "65a4290ee5559756ad04e558b0e0c4e3",
  "mode": "0644",
  "owner": "root",
  "secontext": "system_u:object_r:etc_t:s0",
  "size": 19,
  "src": "/home/devops/.ansible/tmp/ansible-tmp-1558954250.7893758-136255396678462/source",
  "state": "file",
  "uid": 0
}
localhost | SUCCESS => {
  "ansible_facts": {
    "discovered_interpreter_python": "/usr/libexec/platform-python"
  },
  "changed": false,
  "checksum": "4458b979ede3c332f8f2128385df4ba305e58c27",
  "dest": "/etc/motd",
  "gid": 0,
  "group": "root",
  "mode": "0644",
  "owner": "root",
  "path": "/etc/motd",
  "secontext": "system_u:object_r:etc_t:s0",
  "size": 19,
  "state": "file",
  "uid": 0
}
```

You should see SUCCESS for localhost and CHANGED for servera. However, localhost should report "changed": false because the file is already in the correct state. Conversely, servera should report "changed": true because the ad hoc command updated the file to the correct state.

- Using the `command` module, execute an ad hoc command to run `cat /etc/motd` to verify that the contents of the file have been successfully modified on both workstation and servera. Use the `all` host group and the `devops` user to specify and make the connection to the managed hosts. You do not need privilege escalation for this command to work.

```
[student@workstation deploy-adhoc]$ ansible all -m command \
> -a 'cat /etc/motd' -u devops
servera.lab.example.com | CHANGED | rc=0 >>
Managed by Ansible

localhost | CHANGED | rc=0 >>
Managed by Ansible
```

Finish

On workstation, run the `lab deploy-adhoc finish` script to clean up this exercise.

```
[student@workstation ~]$ lab deploy-adhoc finish
```

This concludes the guided exercise.

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