

Cloud Native

Next evolution of abstracting away infrastructure?

Guest Lecture

Cloud Computing SS2023

Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences

21st June 2023

About



- Diploma in **computer science** with focus on networking technologies and operating systems
- Studied **philosophy** with focus on normative & meta ethics
- **20 years of experience** in the IT industry
- Obsessed with **innovation, automation & tooling**
- **Leading an international team** of cloud-, devops-, kubernetes-, software engineers

Fabian Dörk

Director Cloud Native Services
Claranet GmbH

About: Claranet group

At a glance

- Founded in 1996
- Owner-managed
- 600 Mio € annualised revenues
- More than 10.000 B2B customers
- Global reach with operations in 11 counties
- More than 3.500 employees

We are experts for modernizing and running
critical applications, data and infrastructures 24/7



About: Claranet DACH



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Trainings

Claranet: Experten für
Cloud Services
Container/Kubernetes
Cyber Security
Network Services

KHETO: Experten für
SAP Business Intelligence
SAP Business Warehouse
SAP Analytics

2000
Claranet Gründung
in Frankfurt

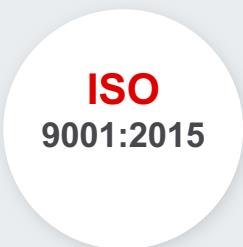
200+
Mitarbeitende

5
Standorte
in DACH

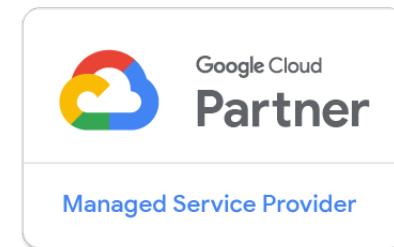
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Rechenzentren
in Deutschland

Highly accredited with cloud vendors

Compliance



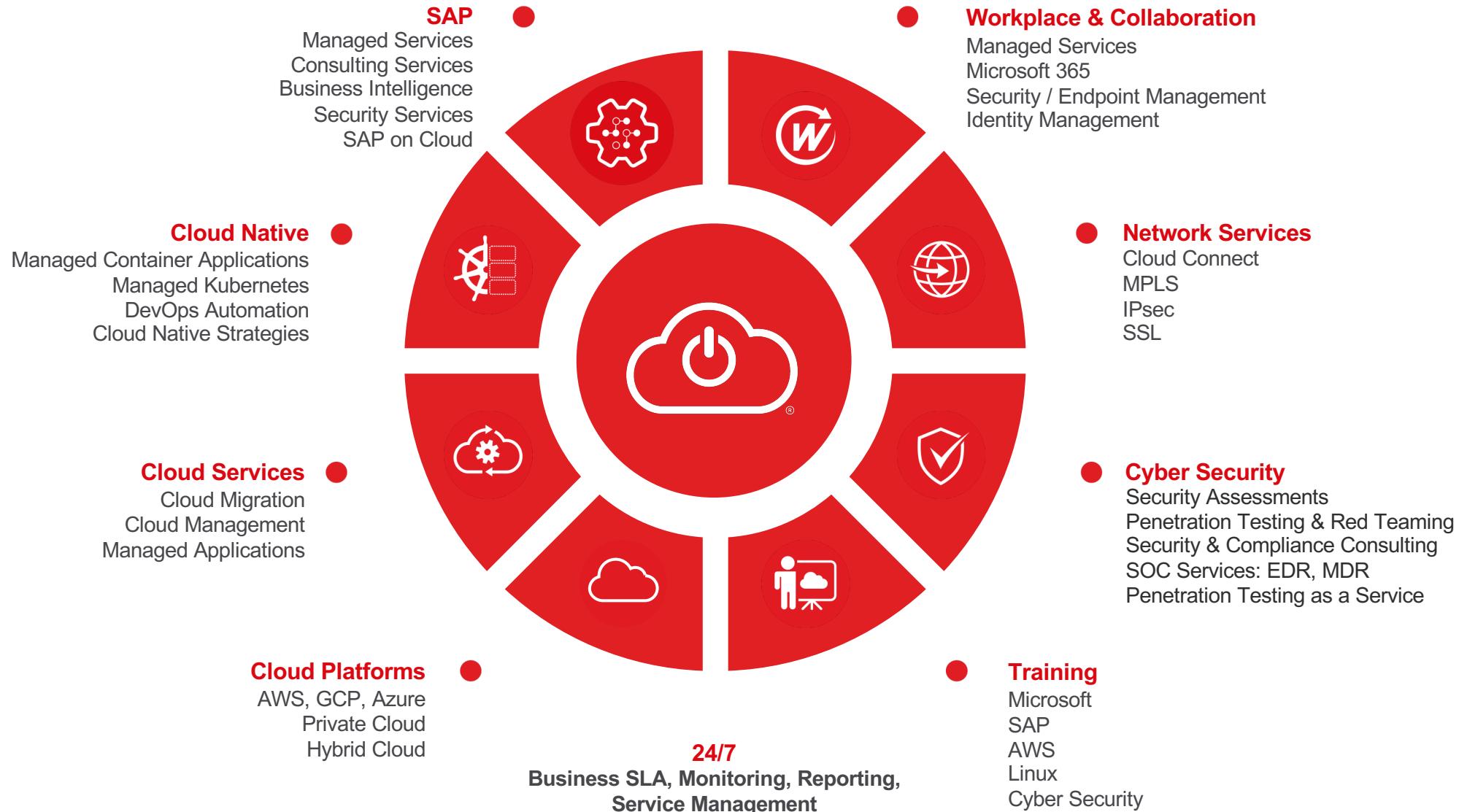
Partnerships



Azure
Expert
MSP



Claranet Service Portfolio



What expects you in this lecture?

- Cloud is everywhere and it is well researched, well discussed, and well defined. Beyond the sheer fact of using someone else's computers new approaches are emerging every day. One of them is the cloud native movement. This lecture gives a little bit of historic background where we are coming from and why something like cloud native exists in order to understand what the distinct traits compared to cloud based workload are.
- Aim of this lecture are
 - to make ourselves familiar with the **underlying concepts**
 - to realise what different kinds of **abstractions Kubernetes** introduces
 - to judge if the **introduced complexities** are for the good or for the bad
- Disclaimer: **It is an opiniated view on Cloud Native**, because we will focus on Kubernetes as the driver for cloud native approaches only. Serverless is for another occasion to be discussed.



Who heard of Kubernetes outside of this lecture?

Who already gained real-world experience with Kubernetes?

Who thinks Kubernetes is a useful technology?

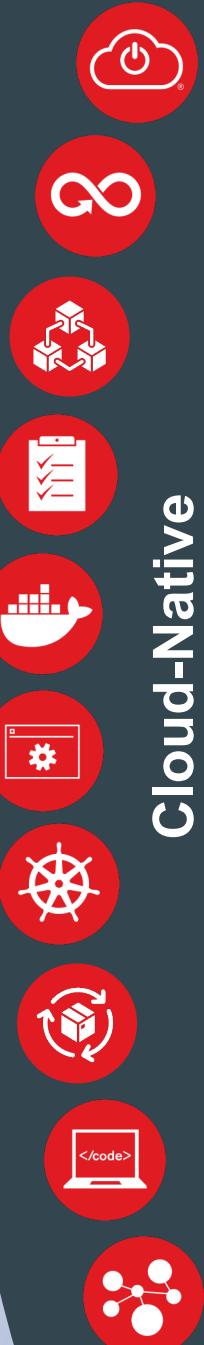
What is Cloud Native?

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Premises

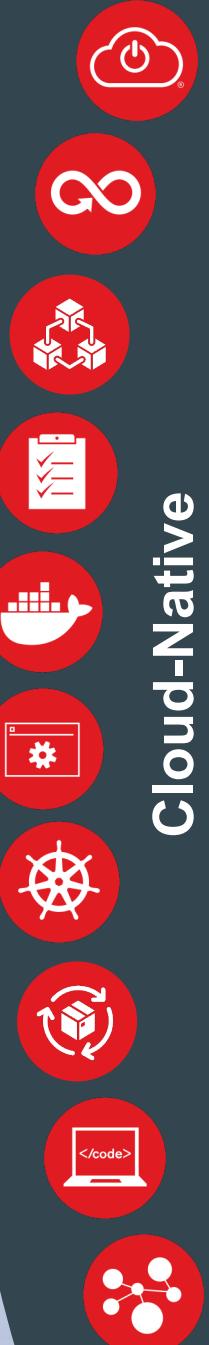
- **Software** generally considered as **competitive advantage** and therefore as essential mean for **value creation**
- Software development enters center stage
- **Agility** fosters **innovation** and **flexibility**
- **Microservices** architecture decouples subsystems which then could be developed, released, deployed independently
- **Parallelization** leads to increased **pace**
- **Infrastructure abstraction** enables developers to **focus** on **value creation**



Definition: Cloud Native

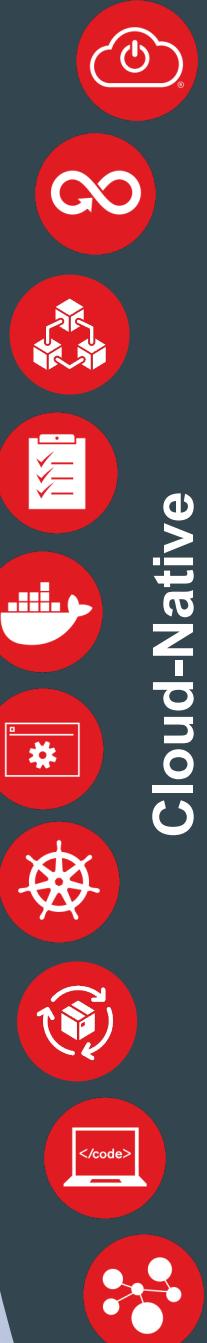
**“Cloud Native
is structuring **teams**, **culture**, and **technology**
to utilize **automation** and **architectures**
to **manage complexity** and **unlock velocity**.**

— Joe Beda (co-founder of Kubernetes)



Guiding principles

- Design for **performance** (responsiveness, concurrency, efficiency)
- Design for **automation** (of infrastructure and development tasks)
- Design for **resiliency** (fault-tolerance, self-healing)
- Design for **elasticity** (automatic scaling)
- Design for **delivery** (minimise cycle time, automate deployments)
- Design for **observability** (cluster-wide logs, traces, and metrics)



A bit of history

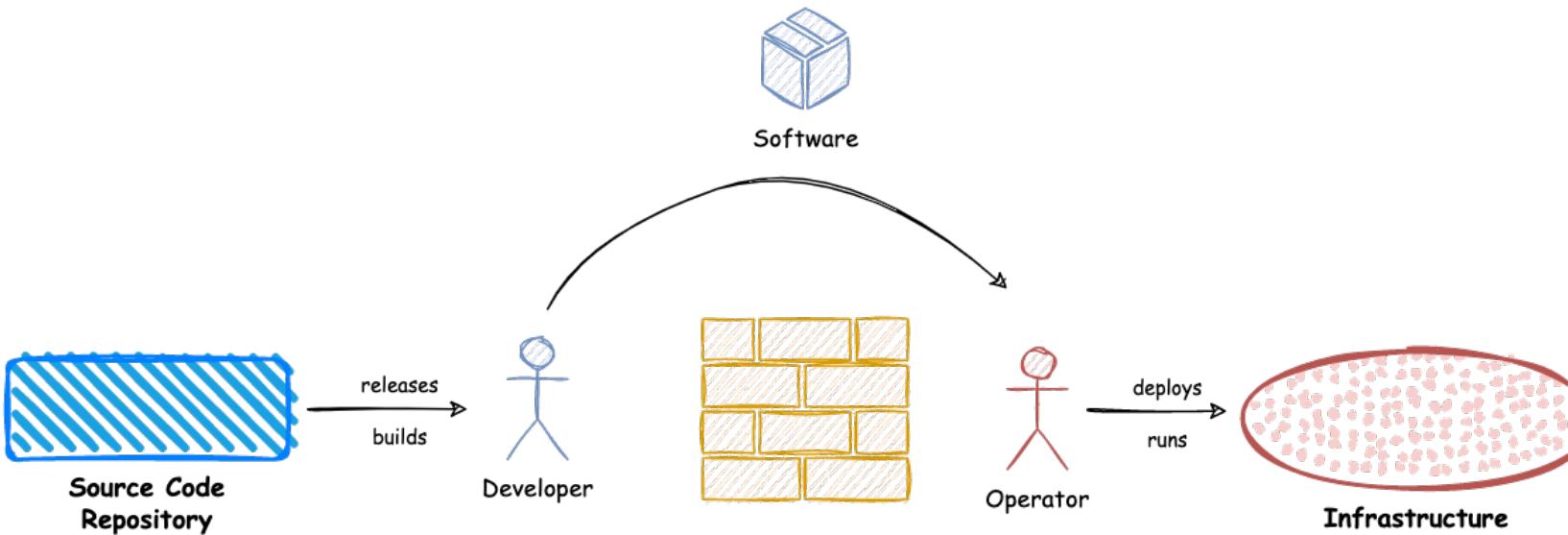
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Silos, the old fashioned way

Risk loving software developer **incentivised to introduce changes**

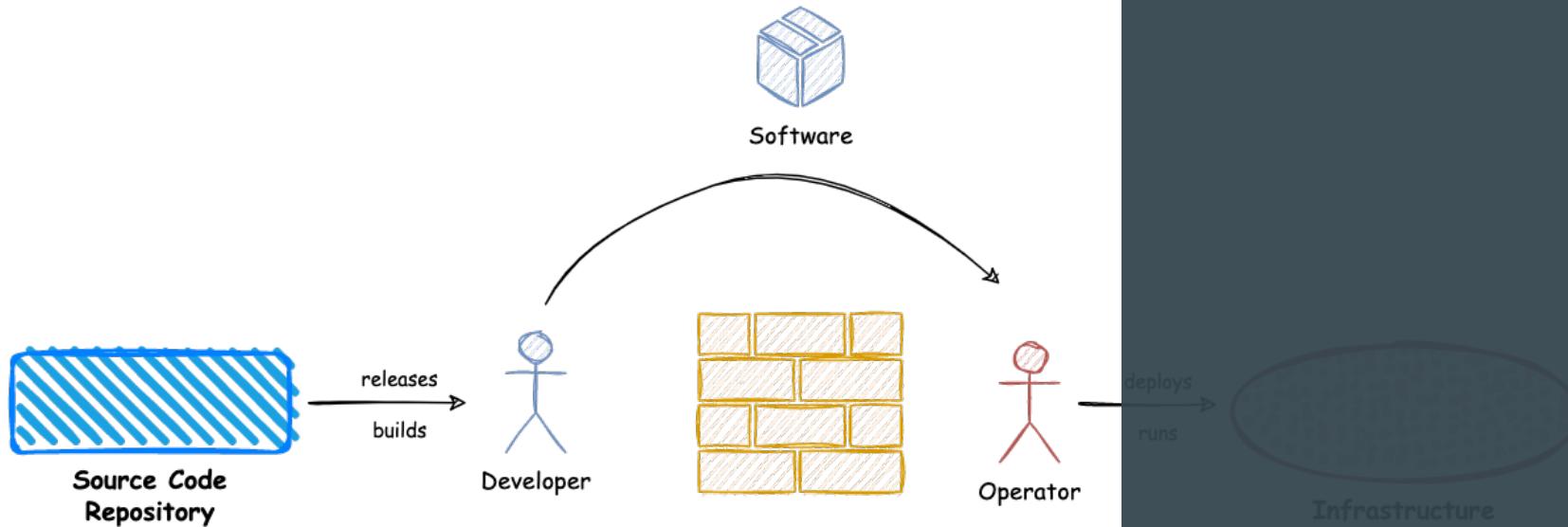
Risk averse IT operators **incentivised to maintain stability**



Silos, the old fashioned way

Risk loving software developer **incentivised to introduce changes**

Risk averse IT operators **incentivised to maintain stability**



Downsides:

- Blame game: “It is your machines, not my code!”
- Way too slow

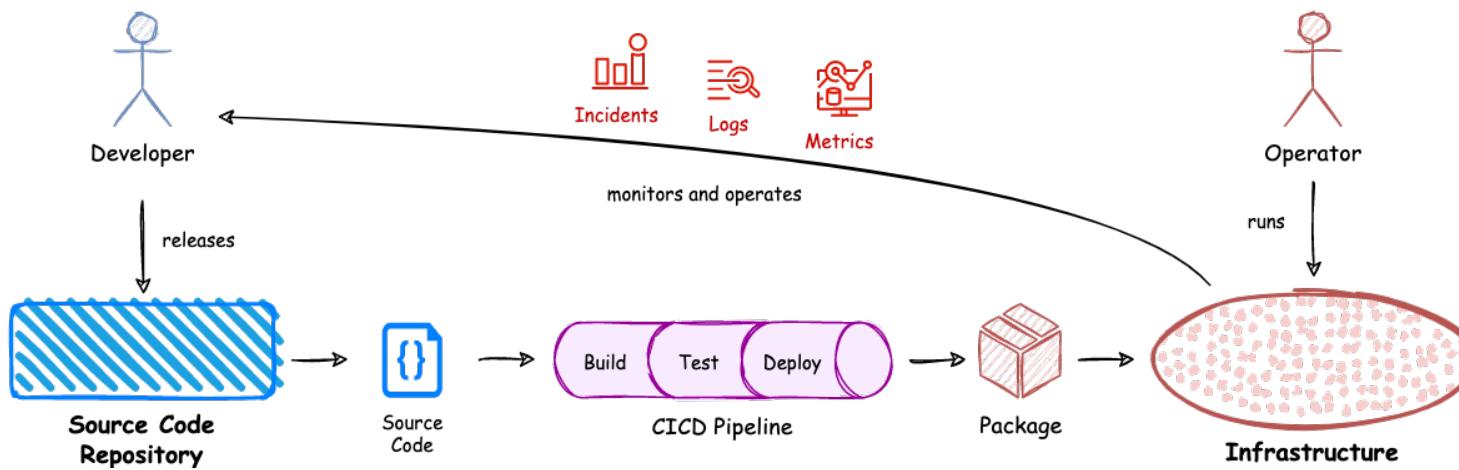
DevOps through Automation

Bridging the gap through tooling and automation

Brings together **skills, processes, and tools**

CICD pipelines ensures transparency, repeatability, and reliability

Feedback loop enables developers to react on incidents



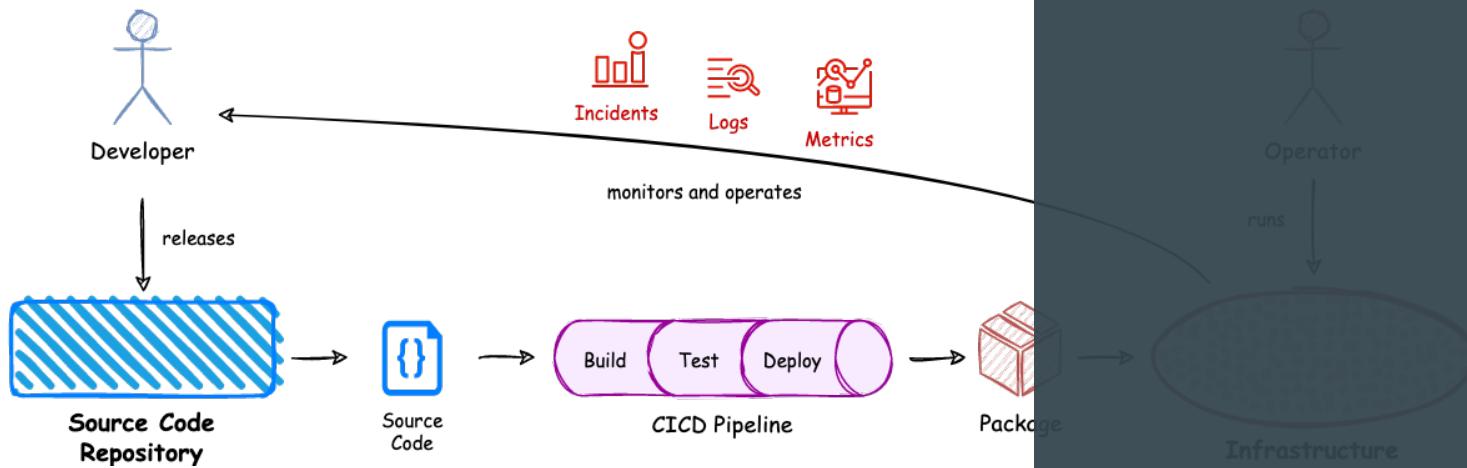
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Brings together **skills, processes, and tools**

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Downsides:

- Demarcation line between Ops and Dev remains blurry
- Still too slow

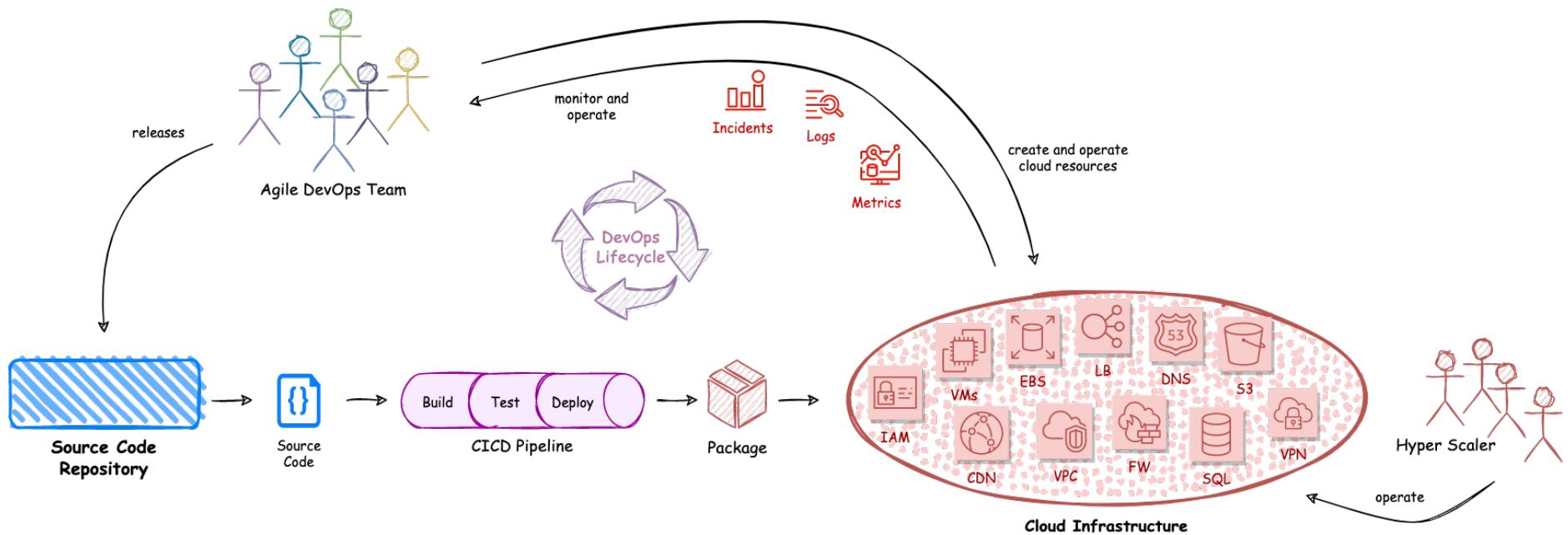
DevOps by Self Empowerment: You build it, you run it!

Cultural shift where teams embrace an **agile software engineering approach**, workflow, and toolset

Delivering business value by **tearing down silos**

Ownership of the entire stack belongs to a single **cross-functional team**

Continuous effort throughout the whole **software development lifecycle**



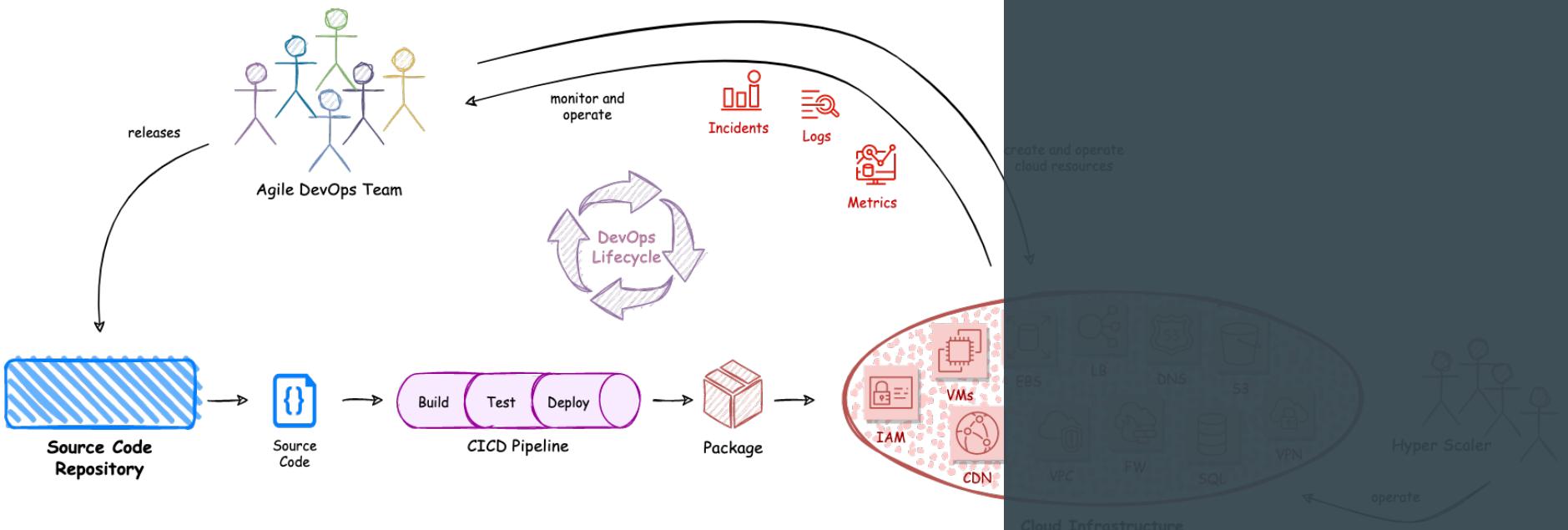
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Ownership of the entire stack belongs to a single **cross-functional team**

Continuous effort throughout the whole **software development lifecycle**



Downsides:

- Puts lots of burden onto developers
- Alignment across teams difficult without trading pace and flexibility
- Does not scale!

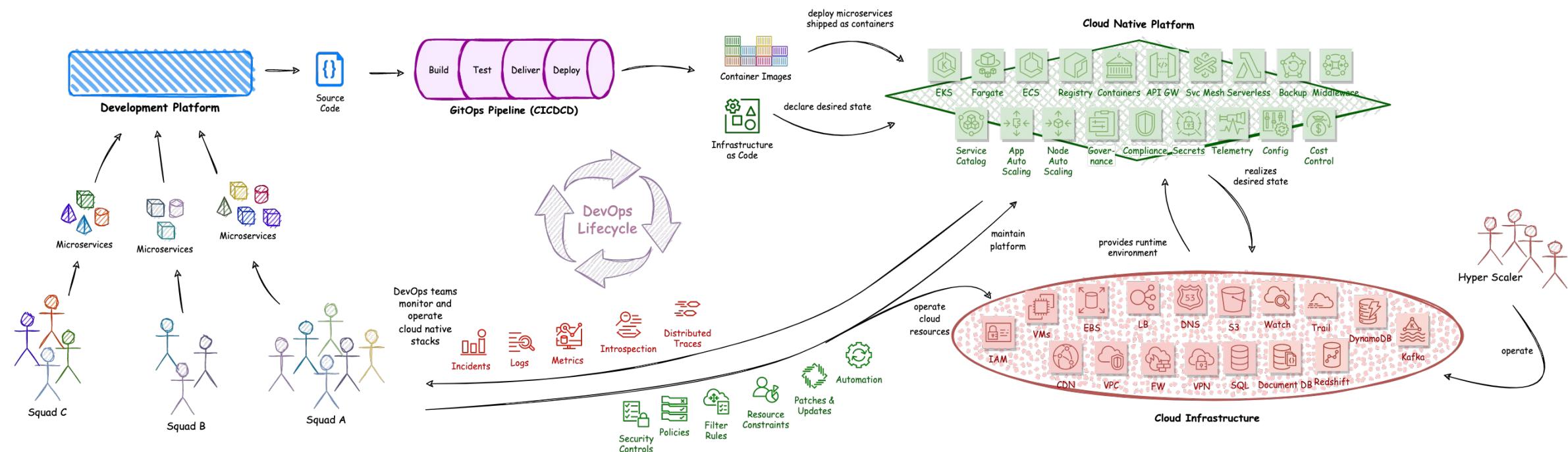
Cloud Native: Unlock the full potential of the cloud

The promise: shortening the path to business value by **abstracting away infrastructure** through automation

Cloud infrastructure and resources are consumed **indirectly through platform**

Software is shipped and deployed as **standardized containers**

Changes to infrastructure are introduced on a frequent basis through **GitOps pipelines**



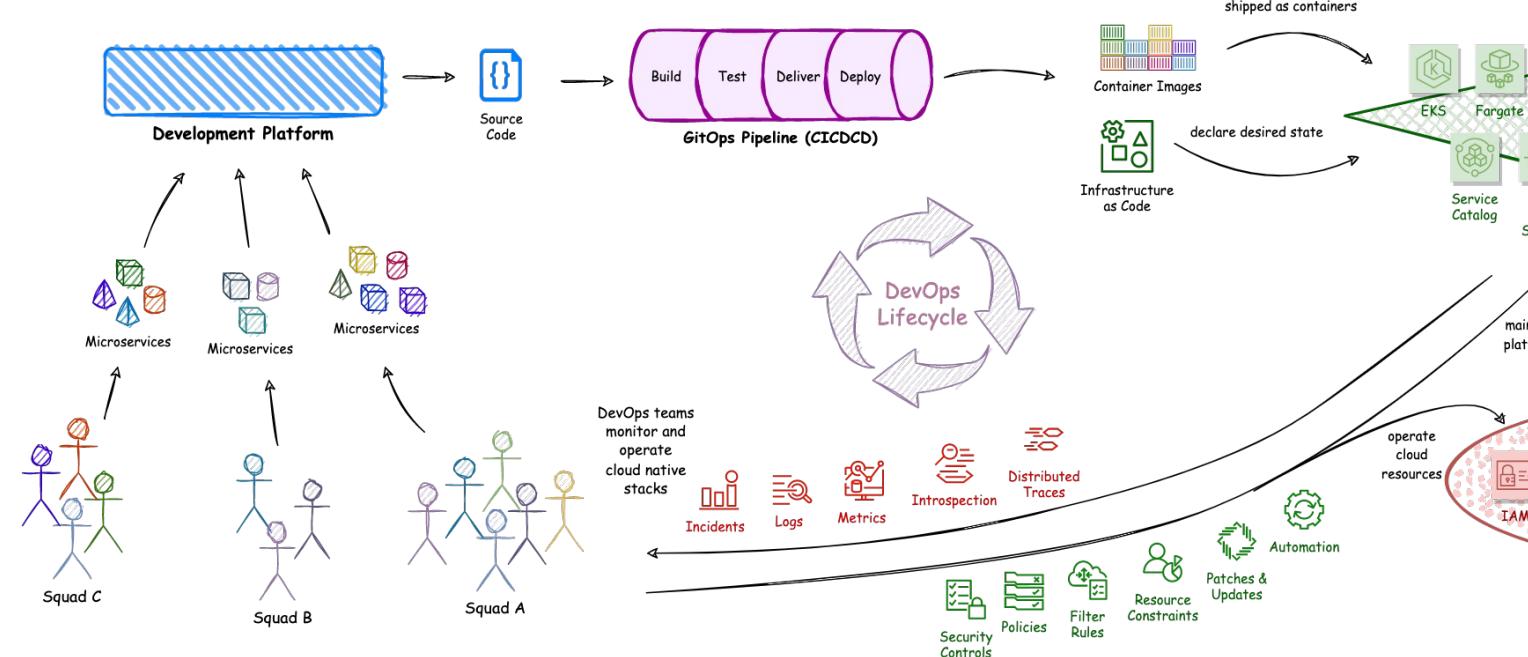
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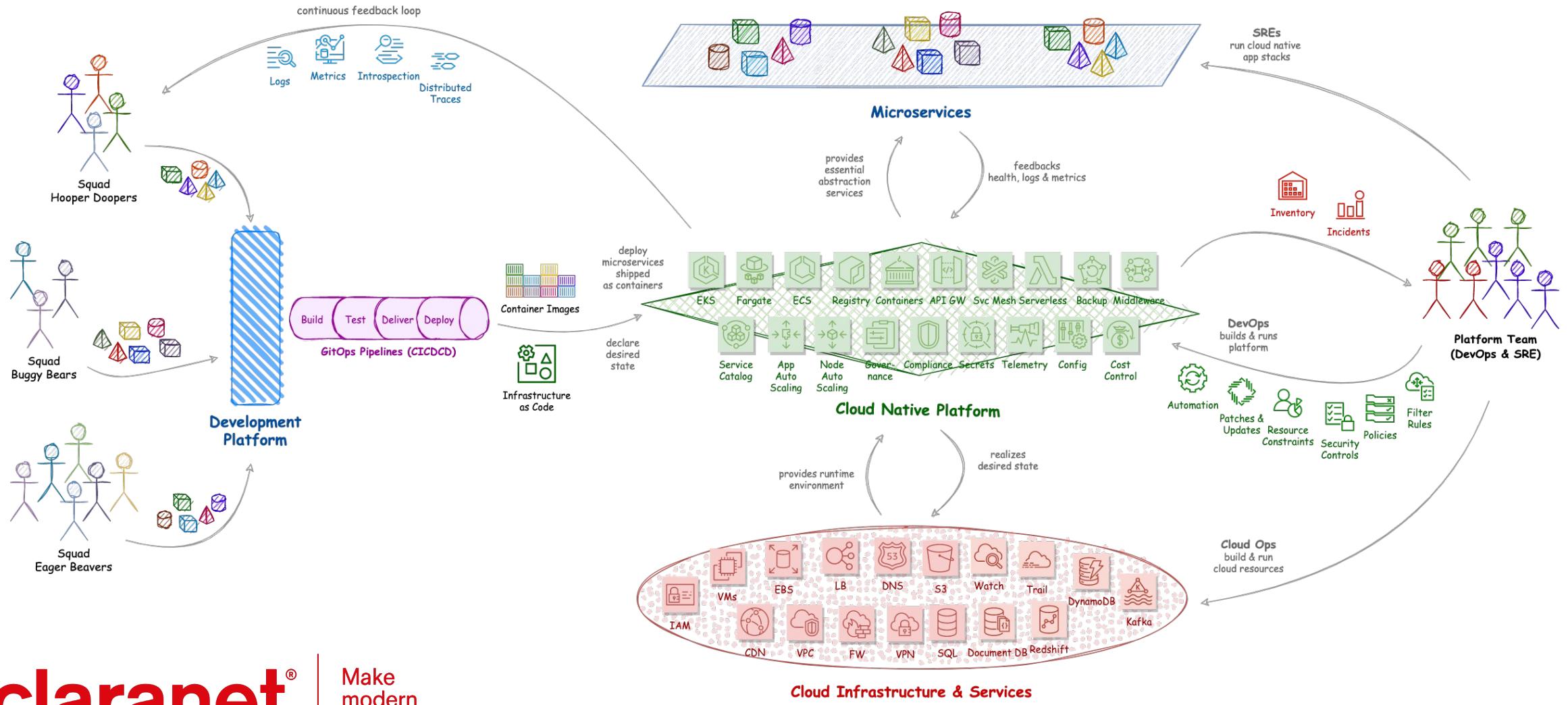
Downsides:

Workload

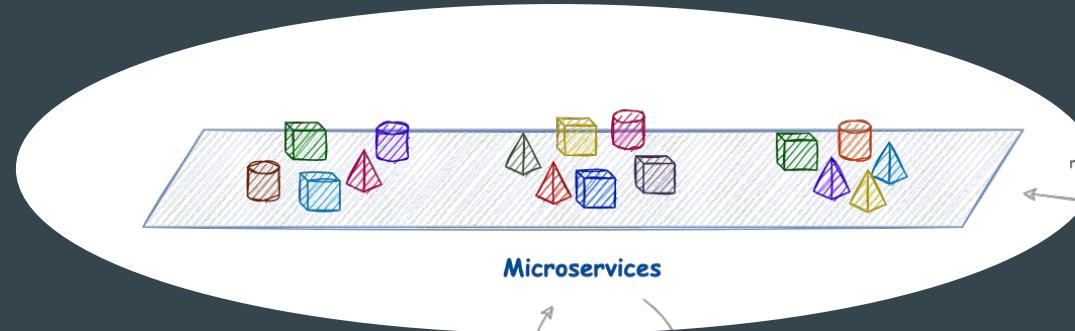
- Considerable complexity
- Day 2 operations covered by developers
- Who is responsible for compliance and security?

Focus on value creation jeopardized

Cloud Native Reference Model



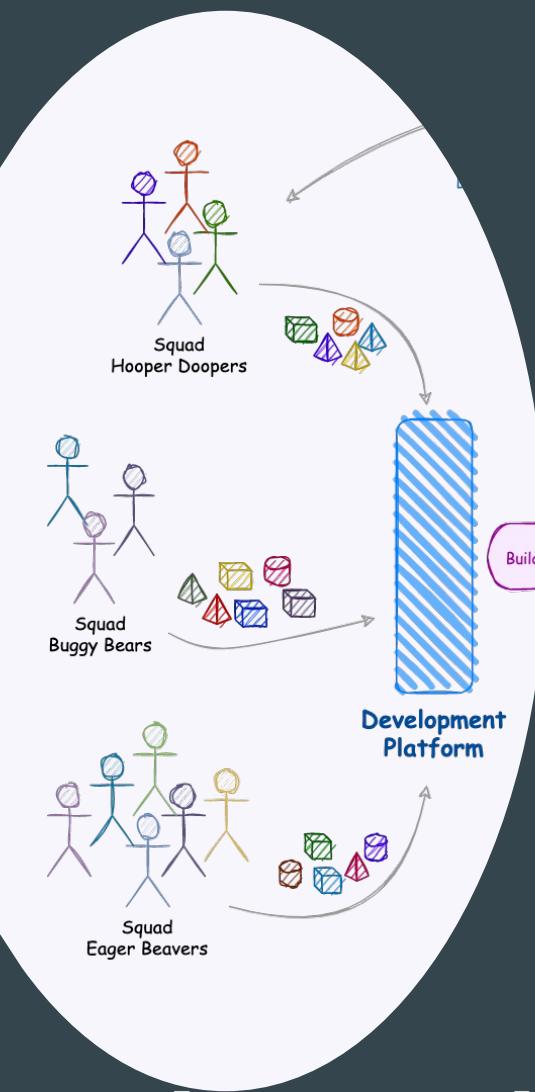
**Application first,
Infrastructure second!**



Divide & Conquer: Decomposition of monoliths into microservices

Decoupling of software subsystems to minimise deadlocks and increase pace

Event-driven, asynchronous, scale-out technologies



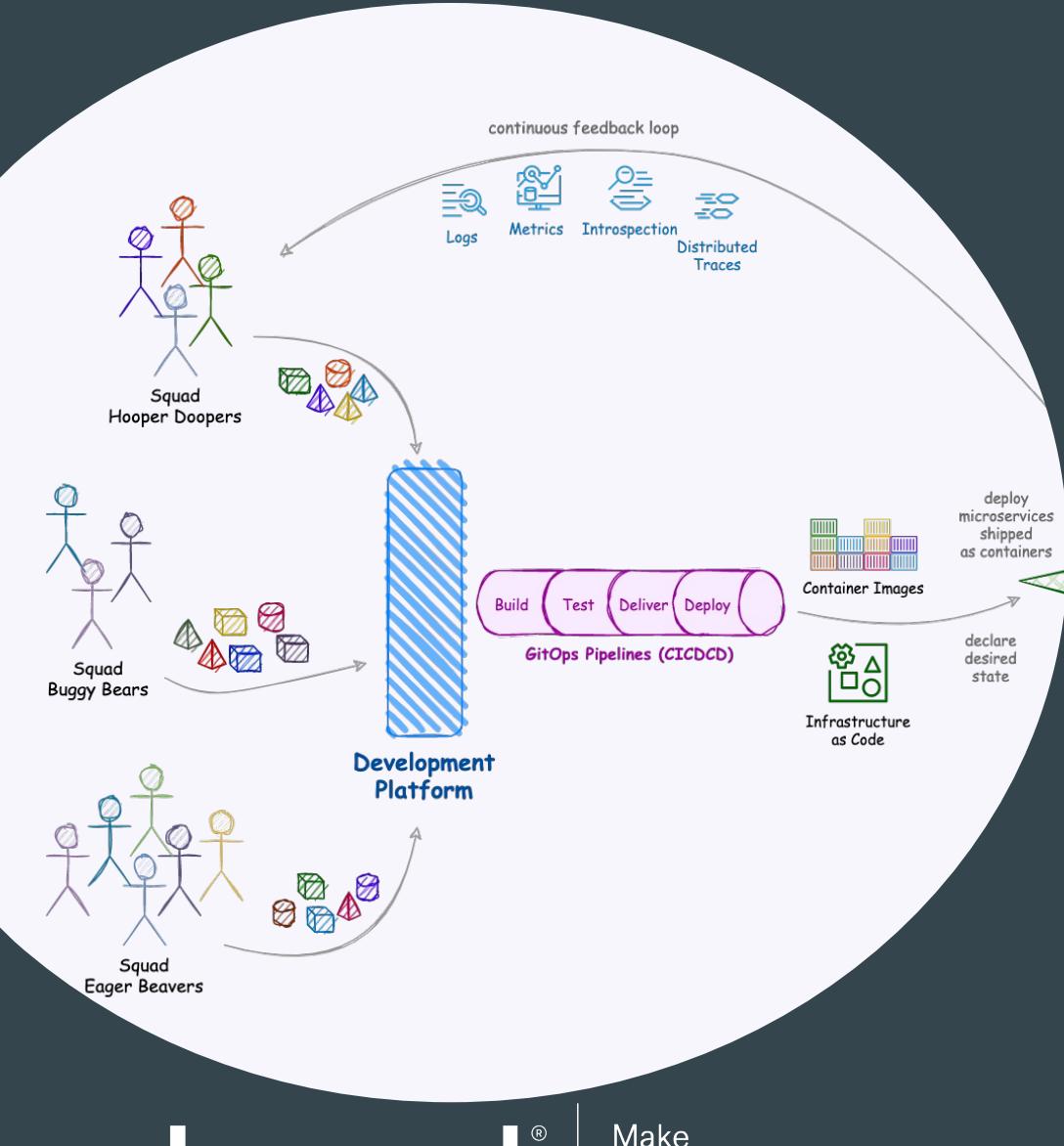
Effectiveness over Efficiency!

Agile teams develop, test, release and deploy software independent from each other

Agility promotes autonomy and decentralized decision-making

Gaining pace is the most important priority

Freeing developers from infrastructure and day 2 operations



Embrace GitOps!

Git is the single source of truth

Shipping software as containers

End to end automation from build, test, integration, delivery, deployment

Autonomy also in regard to infrastructure: software developers can easily deploy new services

Only way to introduce changes is through pipelines and well-defined gates

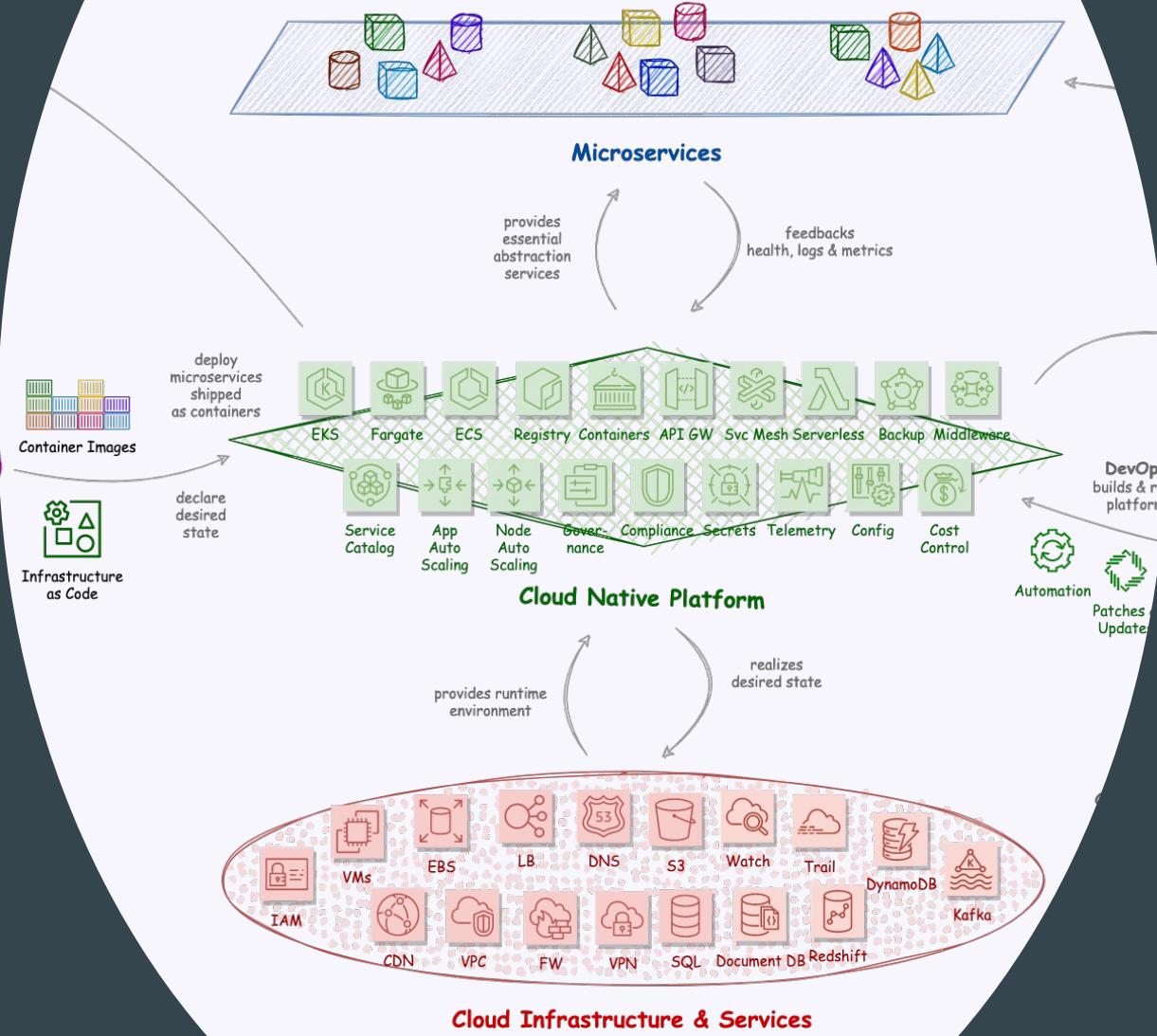
Versioned infrastructure expressed as declarative definitions of target state

Decouple workload from infrastructure!

Abstraction layer provides translation & realization

Kubernetes as a platform to build platforms

Platform sets boundaries, ensures alignment, enforces policies, checks compliance, and mitigates security risks



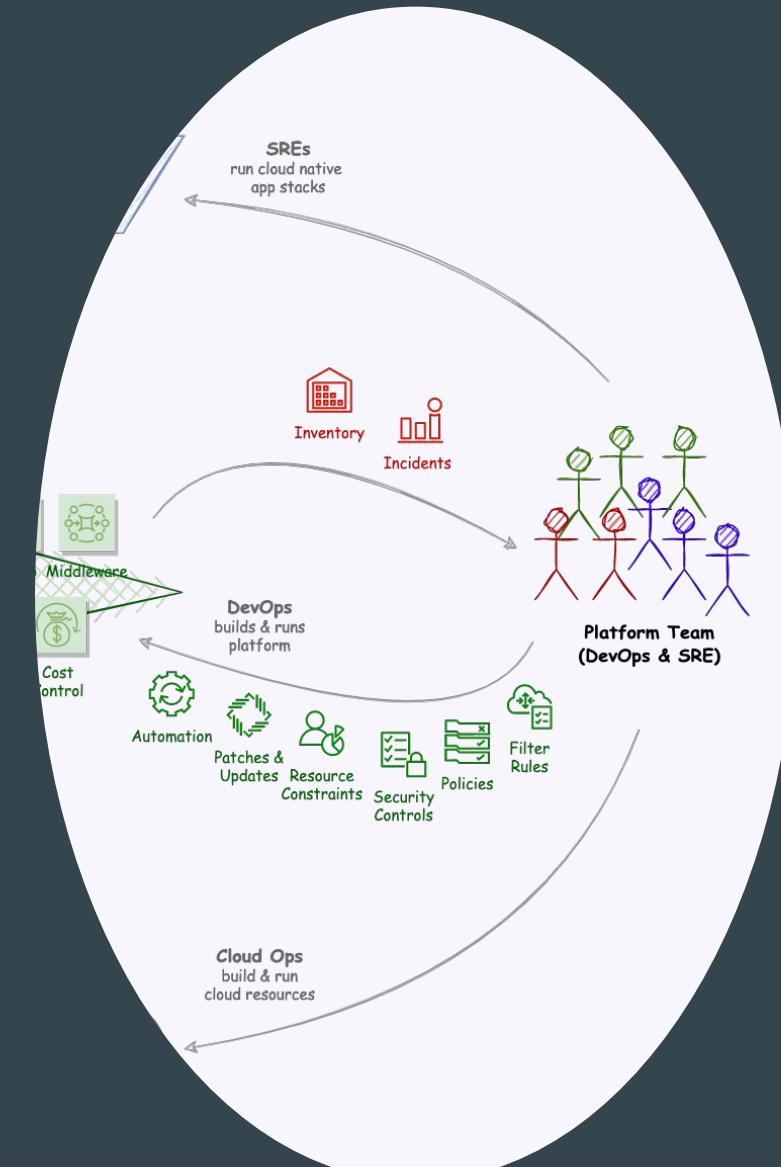
Tightly couple DevOps and SRE!

Specialized, cross-functional team operates platform and microservices stack

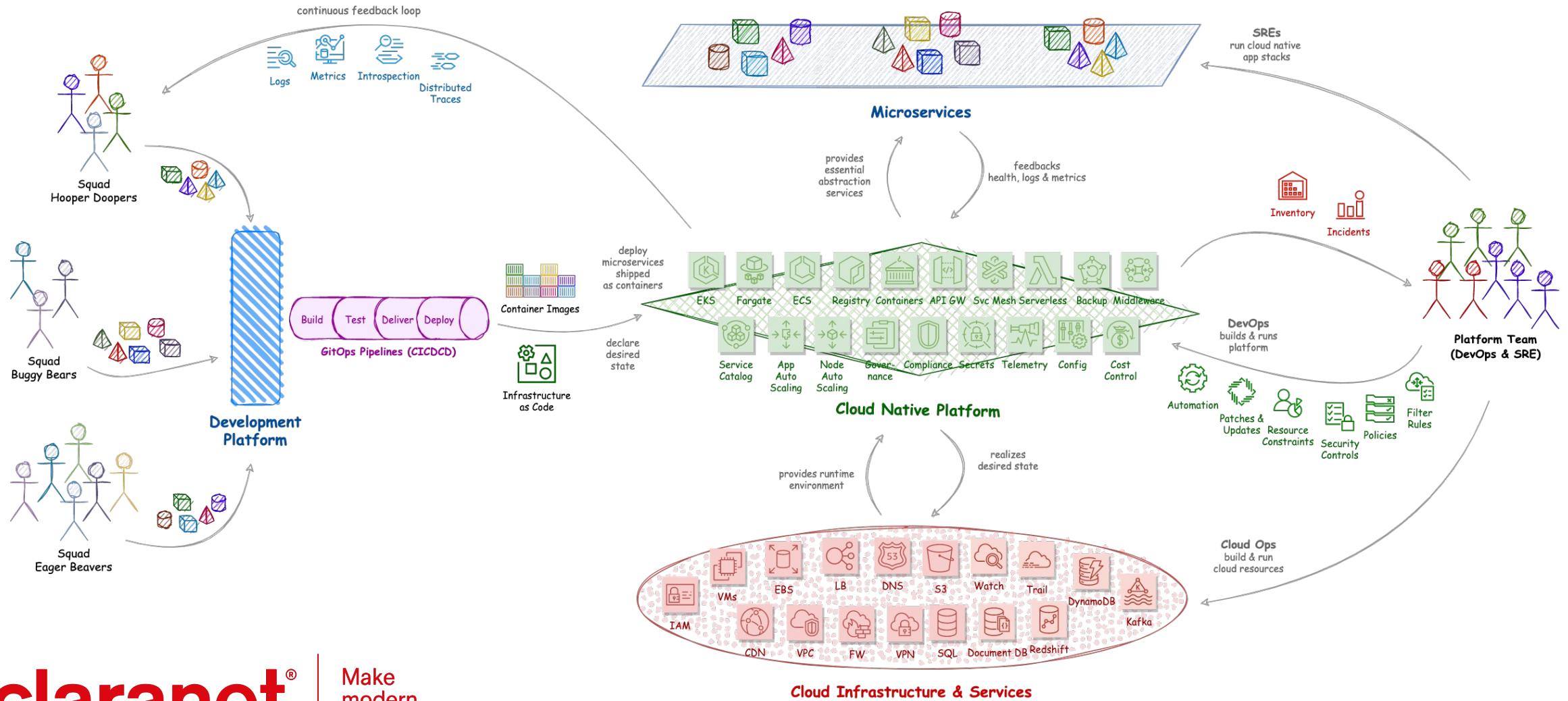
Co-management via shared responsibility model based on DevOps lifecycle

DevOps/SREs on both ends cooperate

Platform itself is subject of the software development lifecycle and requires permanent advancements and modifications



Application first, infrastructure second!



Cloud Native

Cloud

Flexible usage of infrastructure through automation
to build highly scalable stacks

DevOps

Agile methodology rooted in the idea of cross-functional teams with shared responsibilities throughout lifecycle continuously producing value to the customer

Microservices

Decomposition of monolithic applications into smaller building blocks to open up parallel development work streams

12 Factor App

Methodology for building SaaS apps that are suitable for deployment on modern cloud platforms

API First

A product centric approach to designing and developing consistent and reusable APIs which accelerates the development process, ensures interoperability, and fosters innovation

Containers

Ship applications as standardised packages and run them as portable and lightweight operational unit with a well-defined interface

Kubernetes

Platform to deploy any set of applications shipped as containers transparently across a fleet of compute nodes and run them reliably and scalable

Continuous Delivery

Accelerate value delivery by leveraging automation to reliably push code into production continuously in a greater frequency

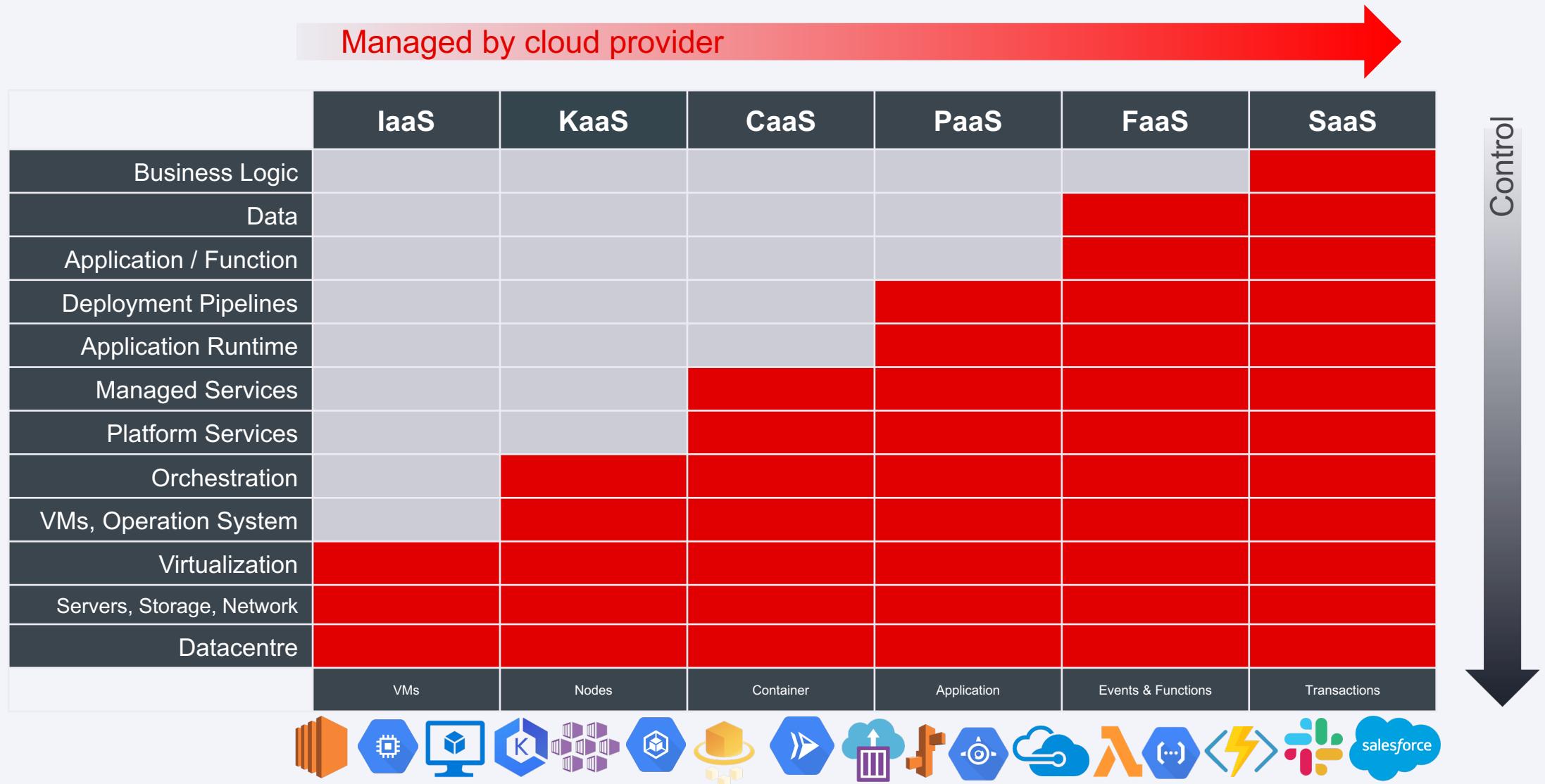
Infrastructure as Code

Managing and provisioning of cloud resources through declarative machine-readable definitions maintained in version control systems

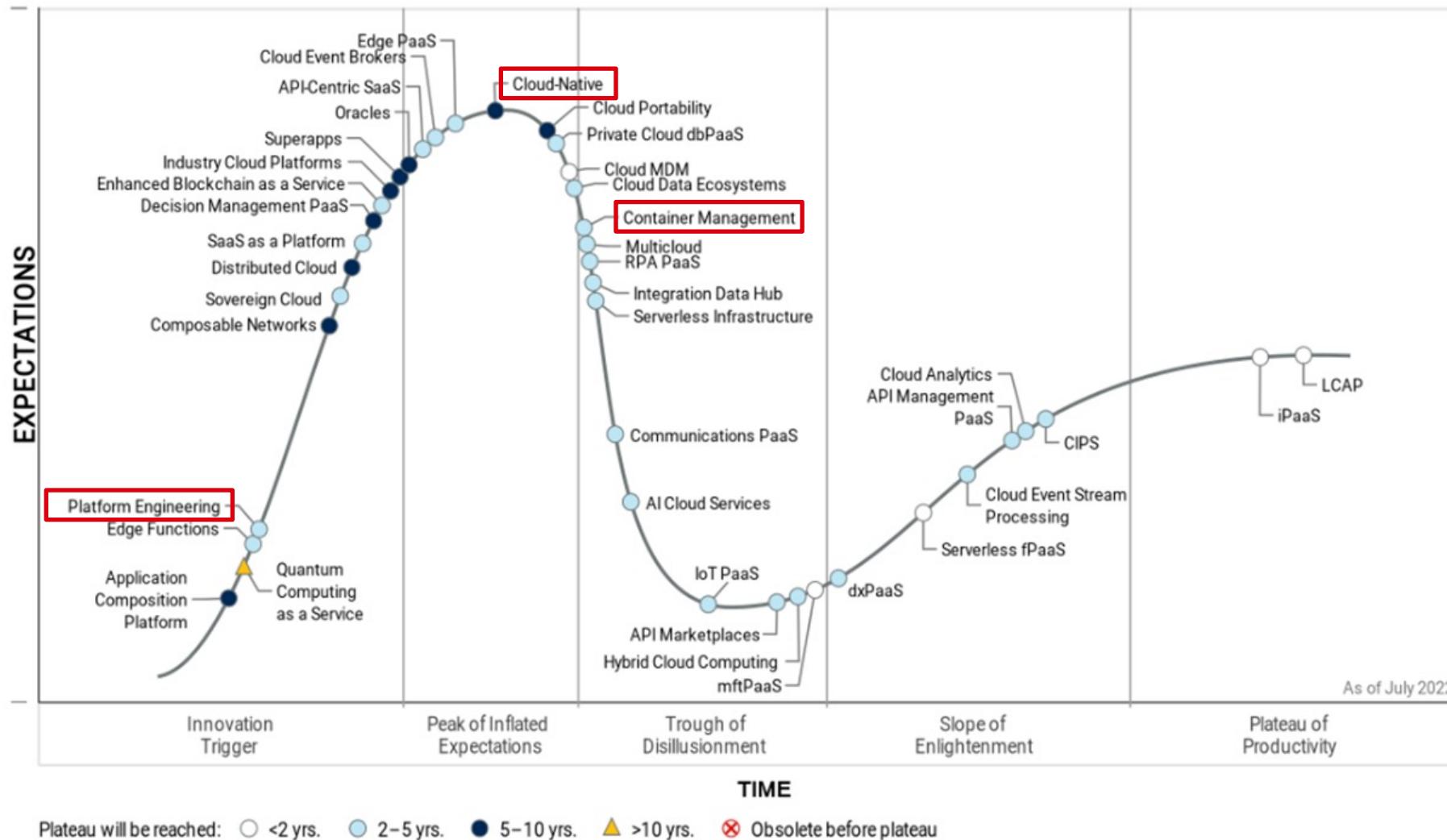
Service Meshes

A tool for adding observability, security, and reliability features by transparently inserting this functionality at the platform layer

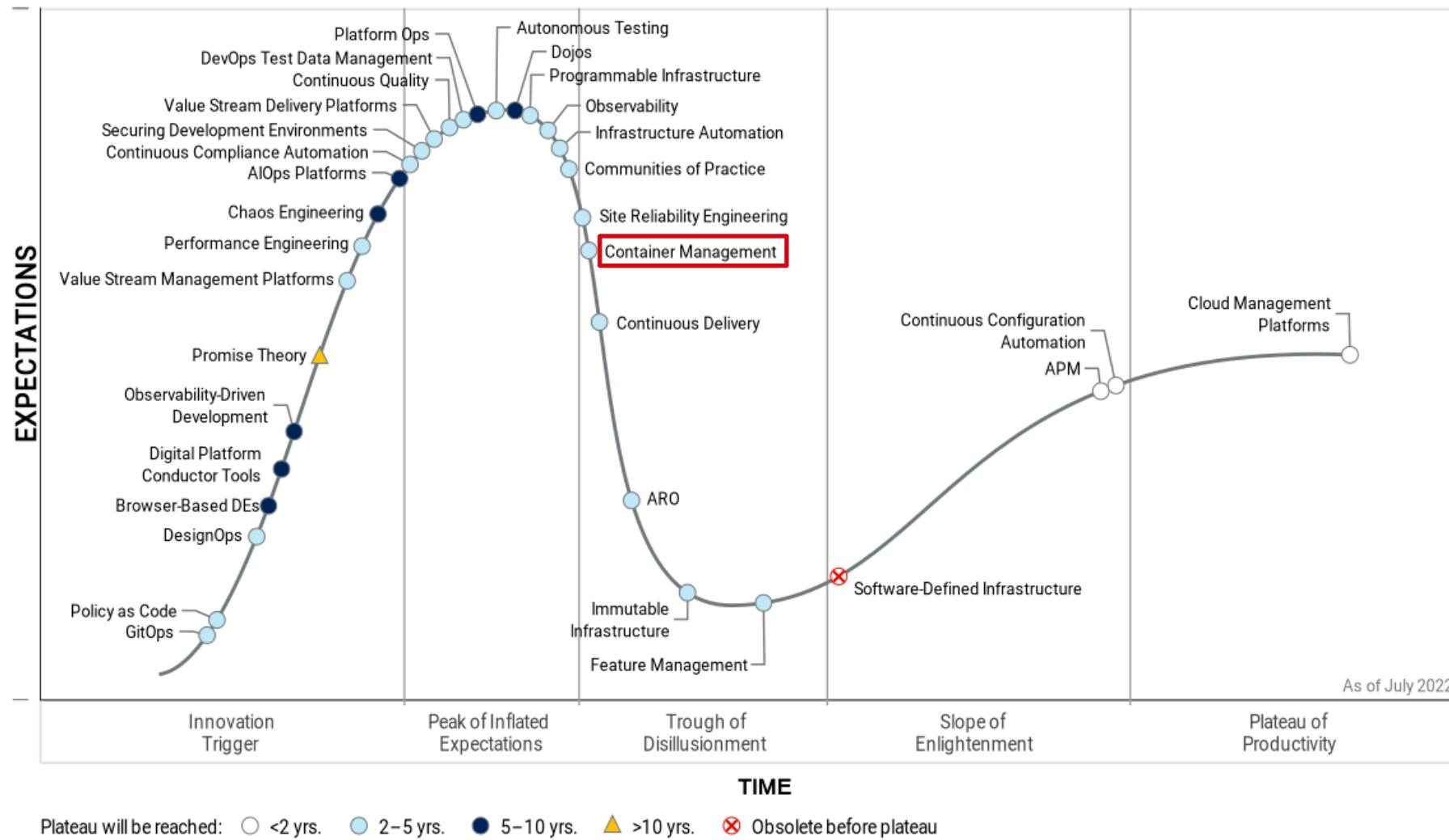
Cloud Service Models



Hype Cycle for Cloud Platform Services, 2022



Hype Cycle for Agile and DevOps, 2022



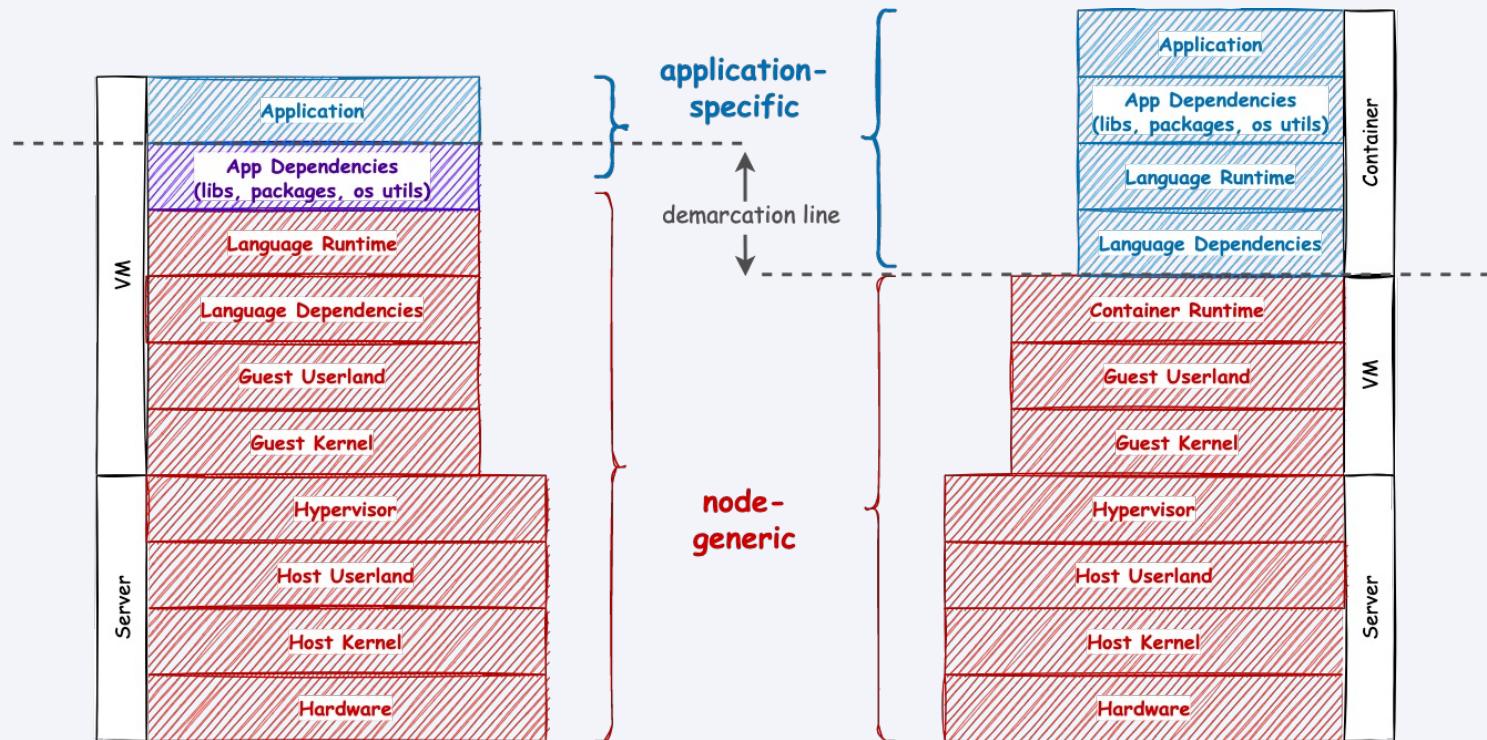
Kubernetes architecture

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Containers as universal shipping format

- Lightweight os-level virtualization
- Isolation of resources (cpu, memory, storage, network)
- Initially based on Linux **cgroup v2**, **namespaces**, and union filesystems
- Standardized interface and format (OCI)
- Clear demarcation line between Dev and Ops
- **Tight coupling of application and runtime (!)**



So, what the heck is Kubernetes?

- „Kubernetes is a **portable, extensible, open-source platform for managing containerized workloads and services, that facilitates both declarative configuration and automation.**“ *



- Trivia
 - Name originates from Greek, meaning **helmsman** or pilot ([.ku:bər'neti:z])
 - Abbreviated by **k8s**
 - Open-sourced in **2014** by Google
 - Hit the first production-grade version **1.0.1** in July **2015**
 - Current version 1.27.1
 - Built upon **20 years of experience** Google has with running production workloads at **planet-scale**
- CNCF is a vibrant community
- Papers
 - „*Large-scale cluster management at Google with Borg*“
Abhishek Verma, Luis Pedrosa, Madhukar R. Korupolu, David Oppenheimer, Eric Tune, John Wilke; Proceedings of the European Conference on Computer Systems (EuroSys), ACM, Bordeaux, France (2015)
<https://research.google/pubs/pub43438/>
 - „*Borg, Omega, and Kubernetes - Lessons learned from three container-management systems over a decade*“
Brendan Burns, Brian Grant, David Oppenheimer, Eric Brewer, John Wilkes; ACM Queue Volume 14, Issue 1, pp 70–93 (2016)
<https://dl.acm.org/doi/10.1145/2898442.2898444>



Kubernetes Features

Automated rollouts and rollbacks

Kubernetes progressively rolls out changes to your application or its configuration, while monitoring application health to ensure it doesn't kill all your instances at the same time. If something goes wrong, Kubernetes will rollback the change for you. Take advantage of a growing ecosystem of deployment solutions.

Storage orchestration

Automatically mount the storage system of your choice, whether from local storage, a public cloud provider such as [AWS](#) or [GCP](#), or a network storage system such as NFS, iSCSI, Ceph, Cinder.

Secret and configuration management

Deploy and update secrets and application configuration without rebuilding your image and without exposing secrets in your stack configuration.

Batch execution

In addition to services, Kubernetes can manage your batch and CI workloads, replacing containers that fail, if desired.

IPv4/IPv6 dual-stack

Allocation of IPv4 and IPv6 addresses to Pods and Services

Service discovery and load balancing

No need to modify your application to use an unfamiliar service discovery mechanism. Kubernetes gives Pods their own IP addresses and a single DNS name for a set of Pods, and can load-balance across them.

Self-healing

Restarts containers that fail, replaces and reschedules containers when nodes die, kills containers that don't respond to your user-defined health check, and doesn't advertise them to clients until they are ready to serve.

Automatic bin packing

Automatically places containers based on their resource requirements and other constraints, while not sacrificing availability. Mix critical and best-effort workloads in order to drive up utilization and save even more resources.

Horizontal scaling

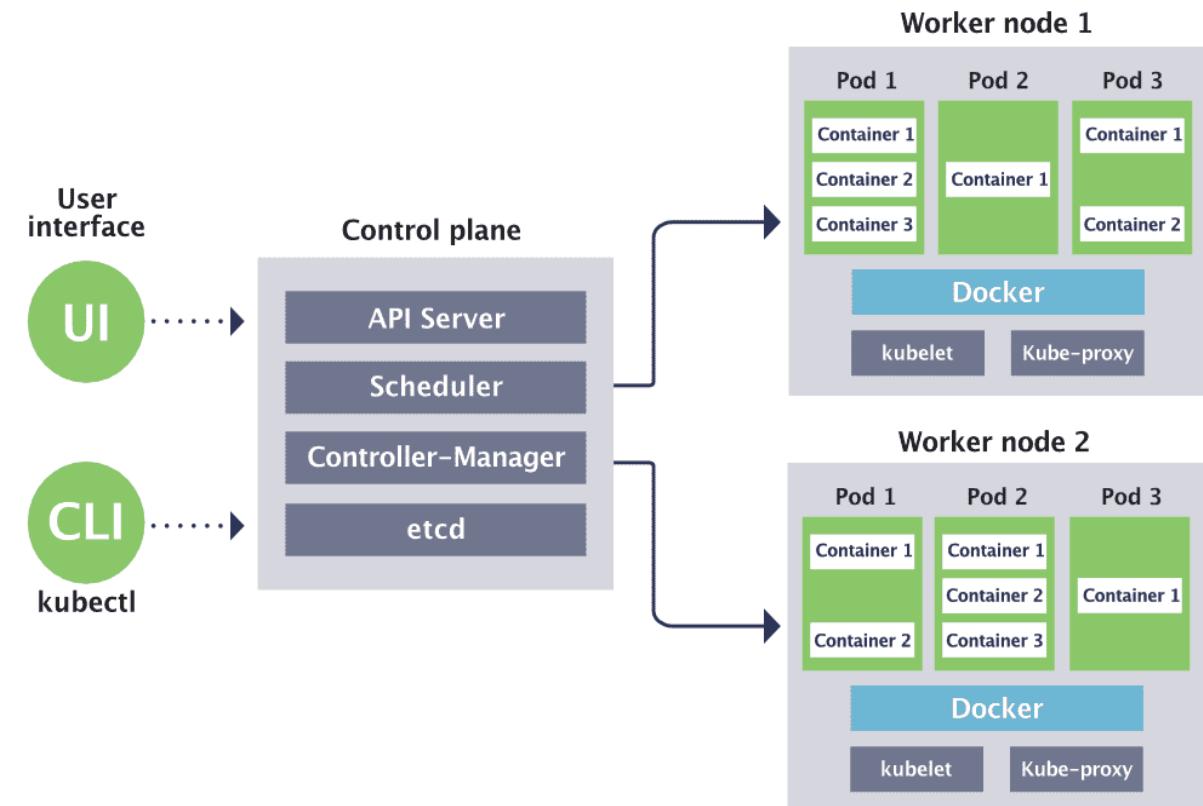
Scale your application up and down with a simple command, with a UI, or automatically based on CPU usage.

Designed for extensibility

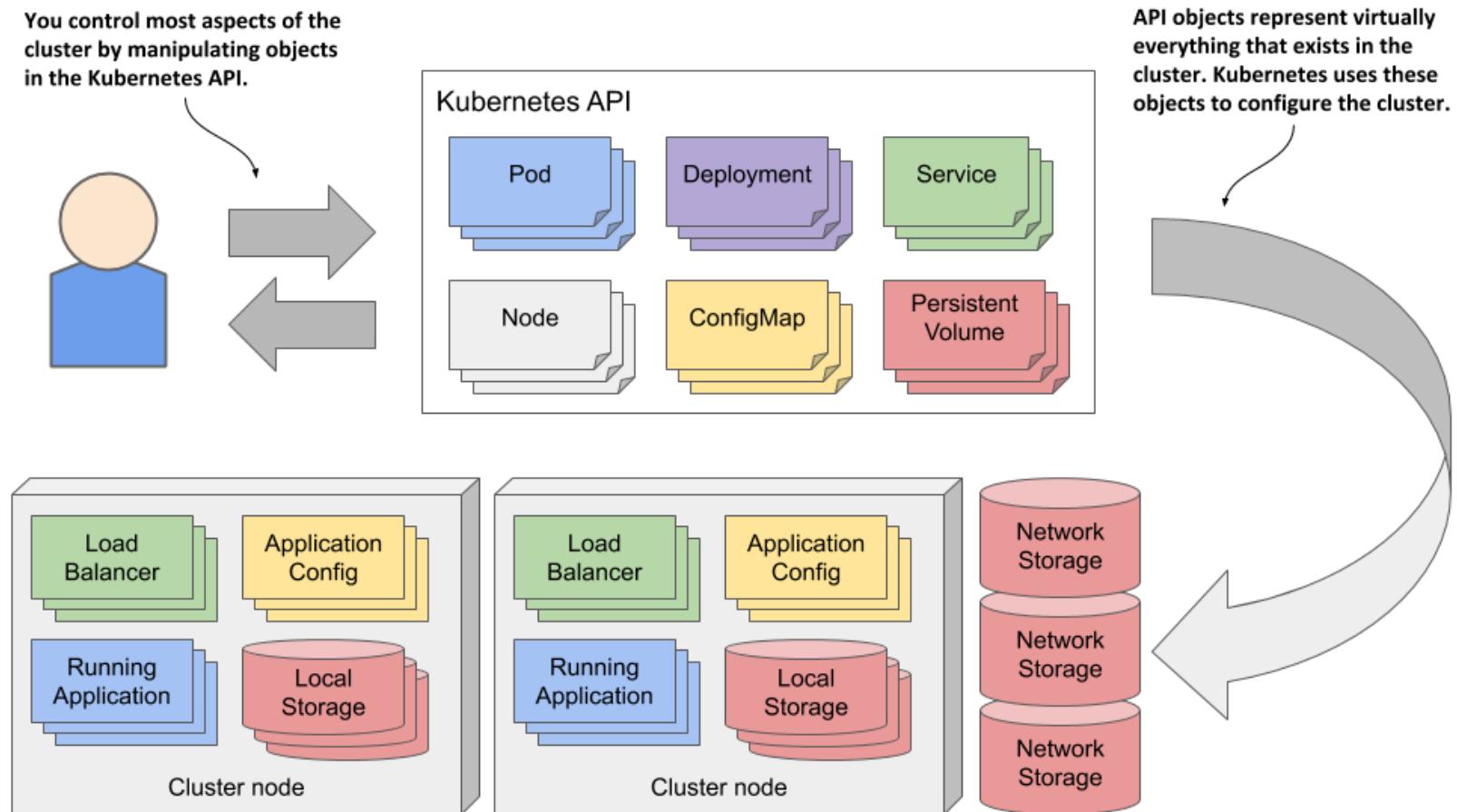
Add features to your Kubernetes cluster without changing upstream source code.

Kubernetes high level Architecture

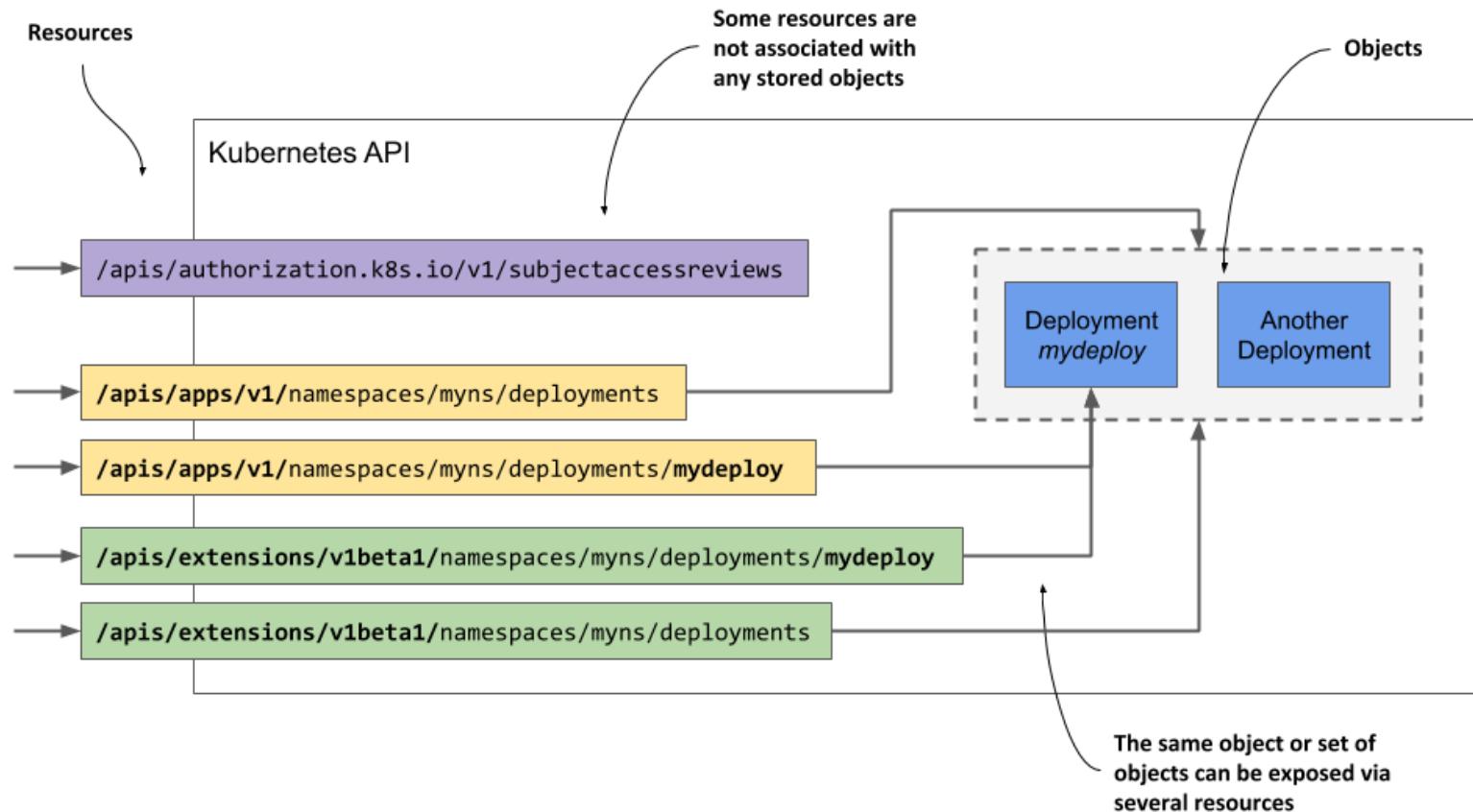
- **Highly distributed system**
 - Control loop pattern
 - Asynchronous / event-driven
 - Connect to API and listen to events
- Core of Kubernetes: **powerful API**
 - Every aspect is represented as API objects
 - Stores the serialized state of objects by writing them into etcd
 - Exposes REST API
 - Uses gRPC and protobuf for intra-cluster communication
 - Highly extensible
- Cloud provider specific integration due to **well defined interfaces**
 - CRI – Container Runtime Interface
 - CNI – Container Network Interface
 - CSI – Container Storage Interface



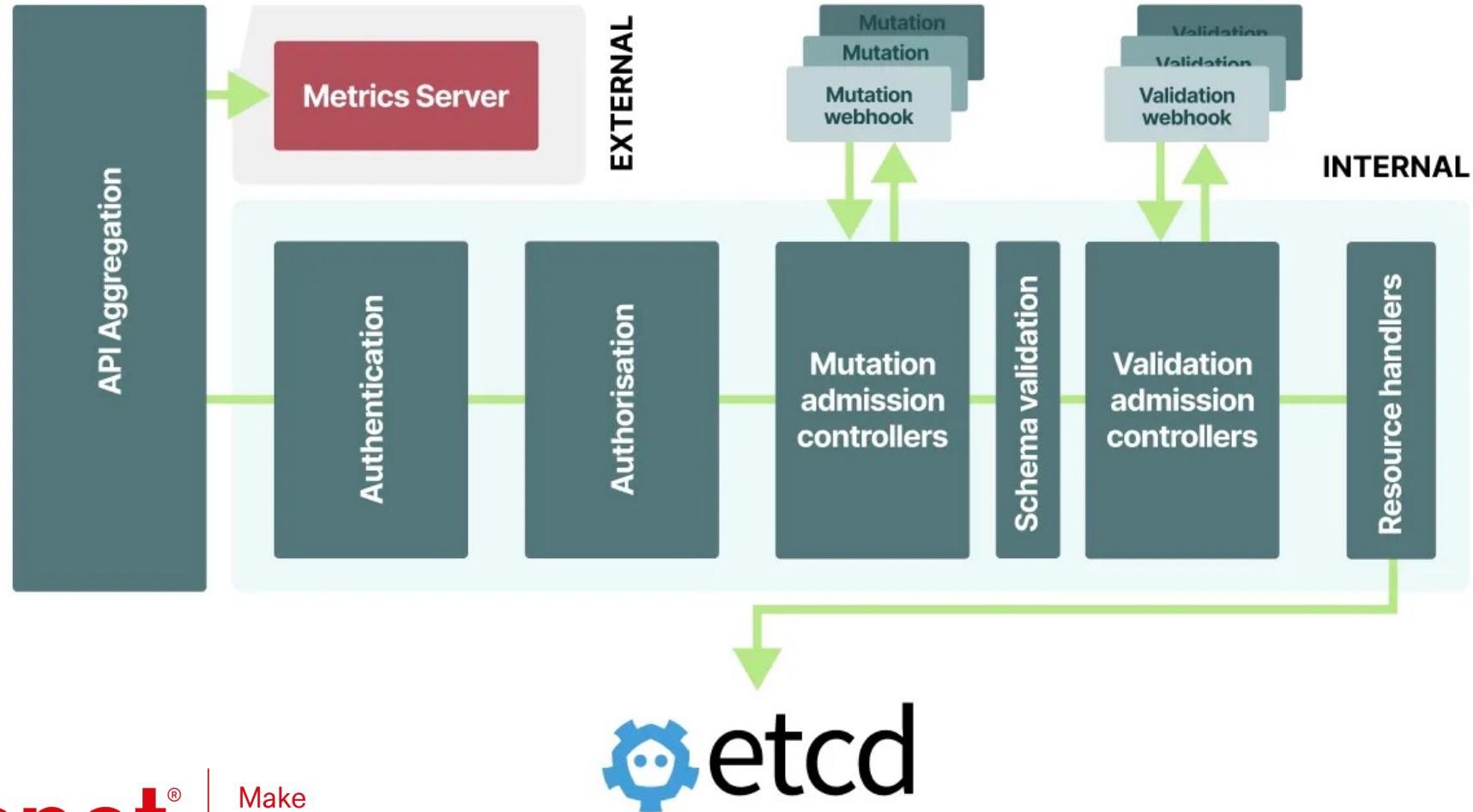
Kubernetes API: objects represent infrastructure



Kubernetes API: resources and objects



Kubernetes API: processing pipeline



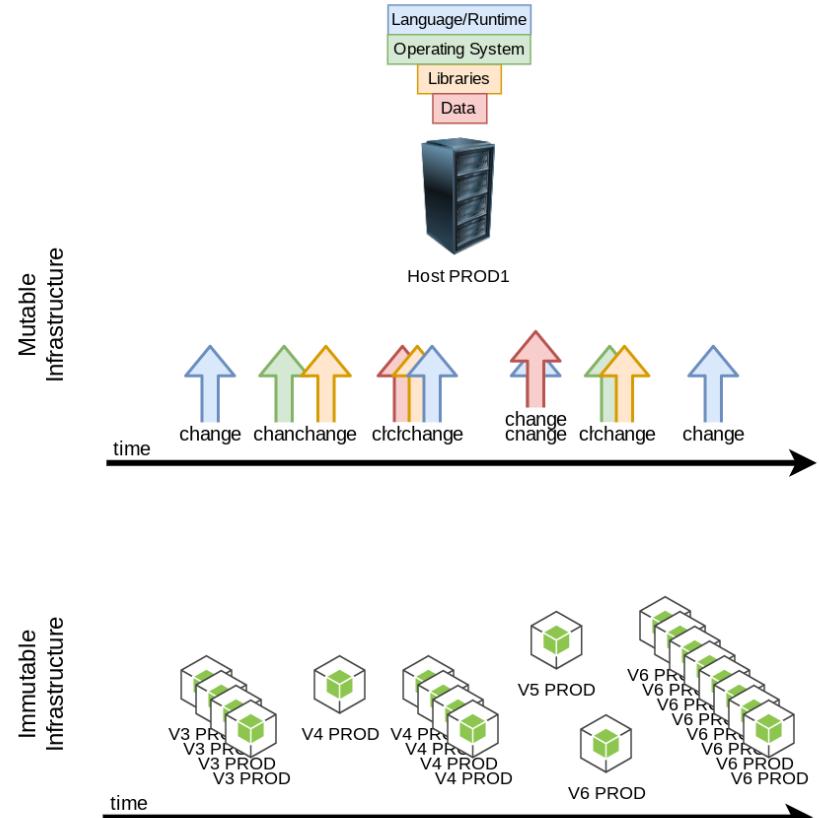
Underlying Concepts

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K8s and the state: immutable infrastructure

- No in-place modifications possible any more
- CRUD -> **Update operations yields Delete and Create operations**
- Strict separation between stateless components and persistency layer
- Requires a different operational model: **cattle over pets**
- **Why?**
 - Fully **versioned** infrastructure
 - End to end **testing** of infrastructure stacks
 - **Well-known** server states
 - No **configuration drifts**
 - Fewer deployment **failures**
 - Easy **rollbacks**
 - Reduced **complexity**
 - Reduced risk of unwanted **side effects**



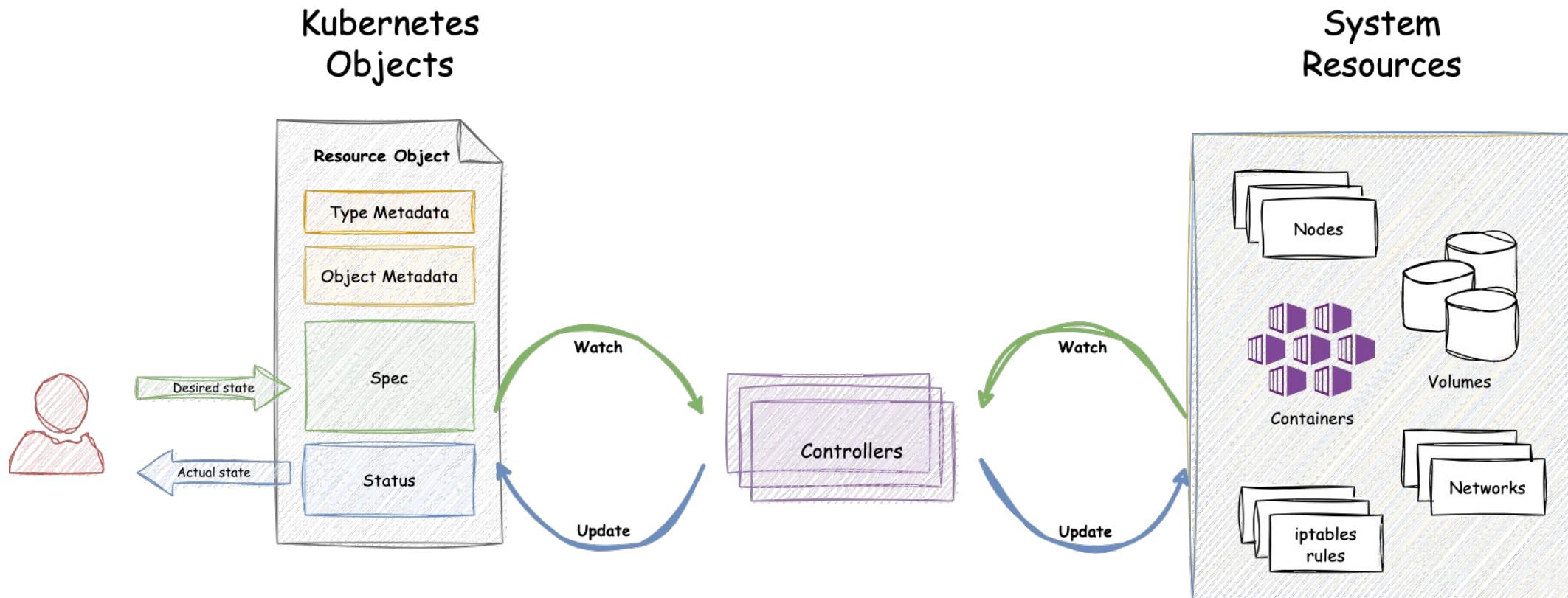
<https://software.danielwalters.com/immutable-infrastructure-production-release/>

K8s and the state: declarative code

- Declarative API
 - Express desired state in YAML
 - Controllers taking care for the fulfillment
- Decouples user from implementation details
- Frees user from dealing with state
- Reduces complexity for the user

Imperative	Declarative
Specify the how to get the desired result by providing detailed instructions	Specify the what result is expected from the program
Direct the control flow of the program	Define the expected result without directing the program's control flow
The developer makes the major decisions about how the program works	The compiler makes the major decisions about how the program works
Code needs to deal with current state	Code only needs to state the desired state ; controller implementation needs to deal with state
complex code	simple and clean code
It uses mutable variables , i.e., the values of variables can change during program execution.	It uses immutable variables , i.e., the values of variables cannot change

K8s and the state: controller

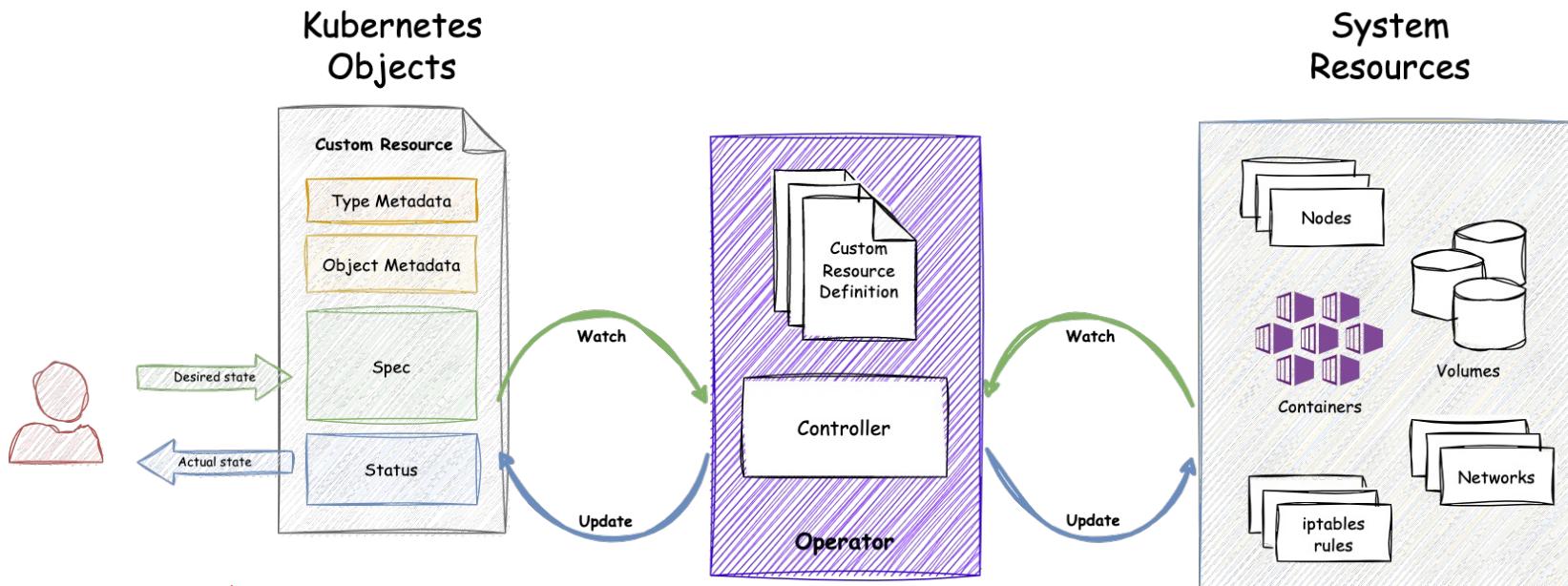


K8s and the state: common controllers

- Scheduler
 - watches for newly created Pods with no assigned node, and selects a node for them to run on
 - Factors taken into account for scheduling decisions include: individual and collective resource requirements, hardware/software/policy constraints, affinity and anti-affinity specifications, data locality, inter-workload interference, and deadlines
- Controllers
 - **Node controller:** Responsible for noticing and responding when nodes go down
 - **Job controller:** Watches for Job objects that represent one-off tasks, then creates Pods to run those tasks to completion.
 - **EndpointSlice controller:** Populates EndpointSlice objects (to provide a link between Services and Pods)
 - **ServiceAccount controller:** Create default ServiceAccounts for new namespaces.
- Cloud Controllers
 - **Node controller:** For checking the cloud provider to determine if a node has been deleted in the cloud after it stops responding
 - **Route controller:** For setting up routes in the underlying cloud infrastructure
 - **Service controller:** For creating, updating and deleting cloud provider load balancers
 - **Ingress controller:** For creating HTTP routing rules
 - **DNS Controller:** For creating A records in managed DNS zones to route traffic onto a certain domain

K8s as framework: operator pattern

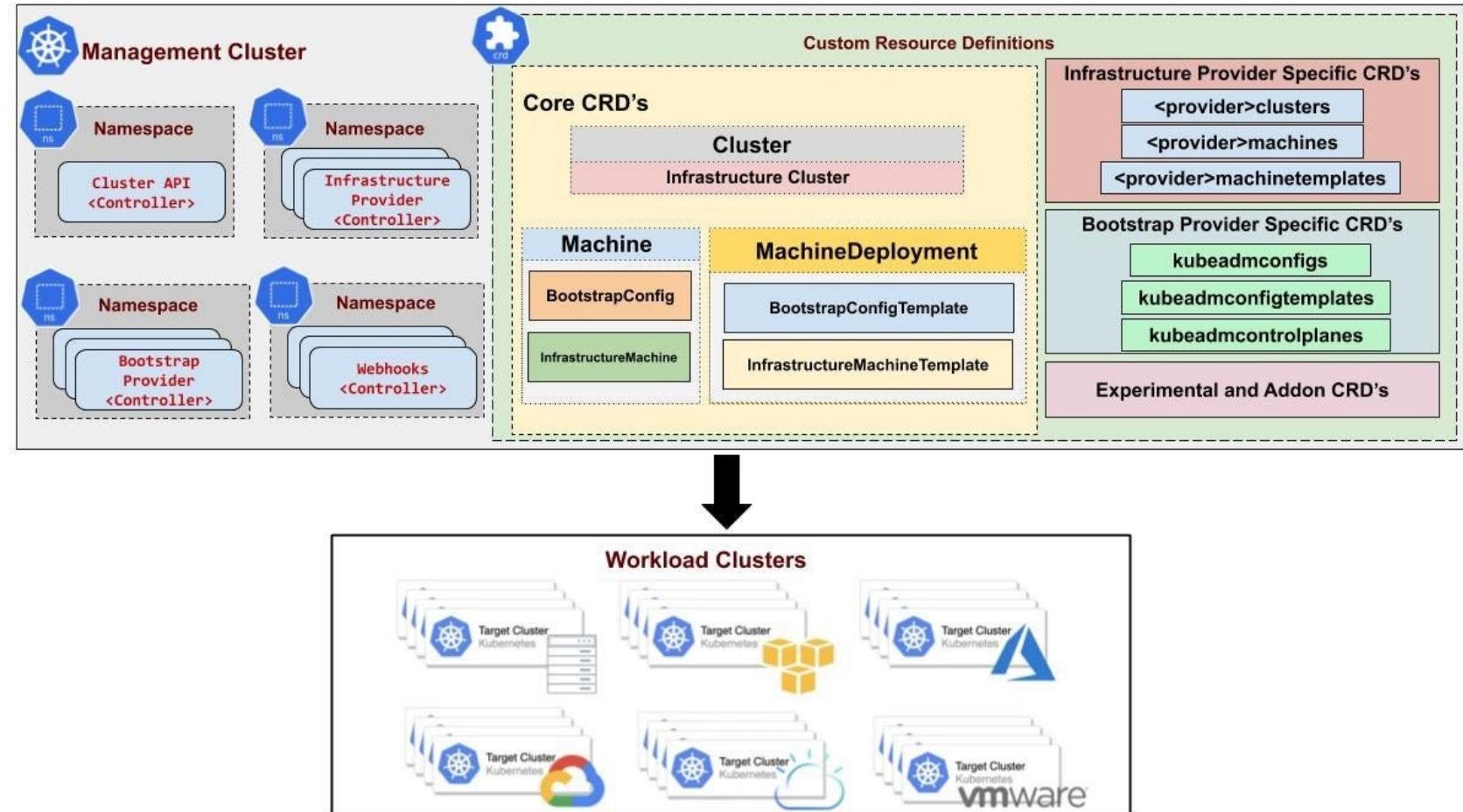
- Automate repetitive operational tasks
- Extend API and introduce Custom Resources
- Implement custom controllers
- Listening for appropriate events
- Implement operational procedures as code
- Lifecycle management through CRDs versioning
- Examples
 - Let's Encrypt
 - Prometheus Operator
 - Argo CD
 - Postgres Operator
 - Istio



K8s as framework: Cluster API

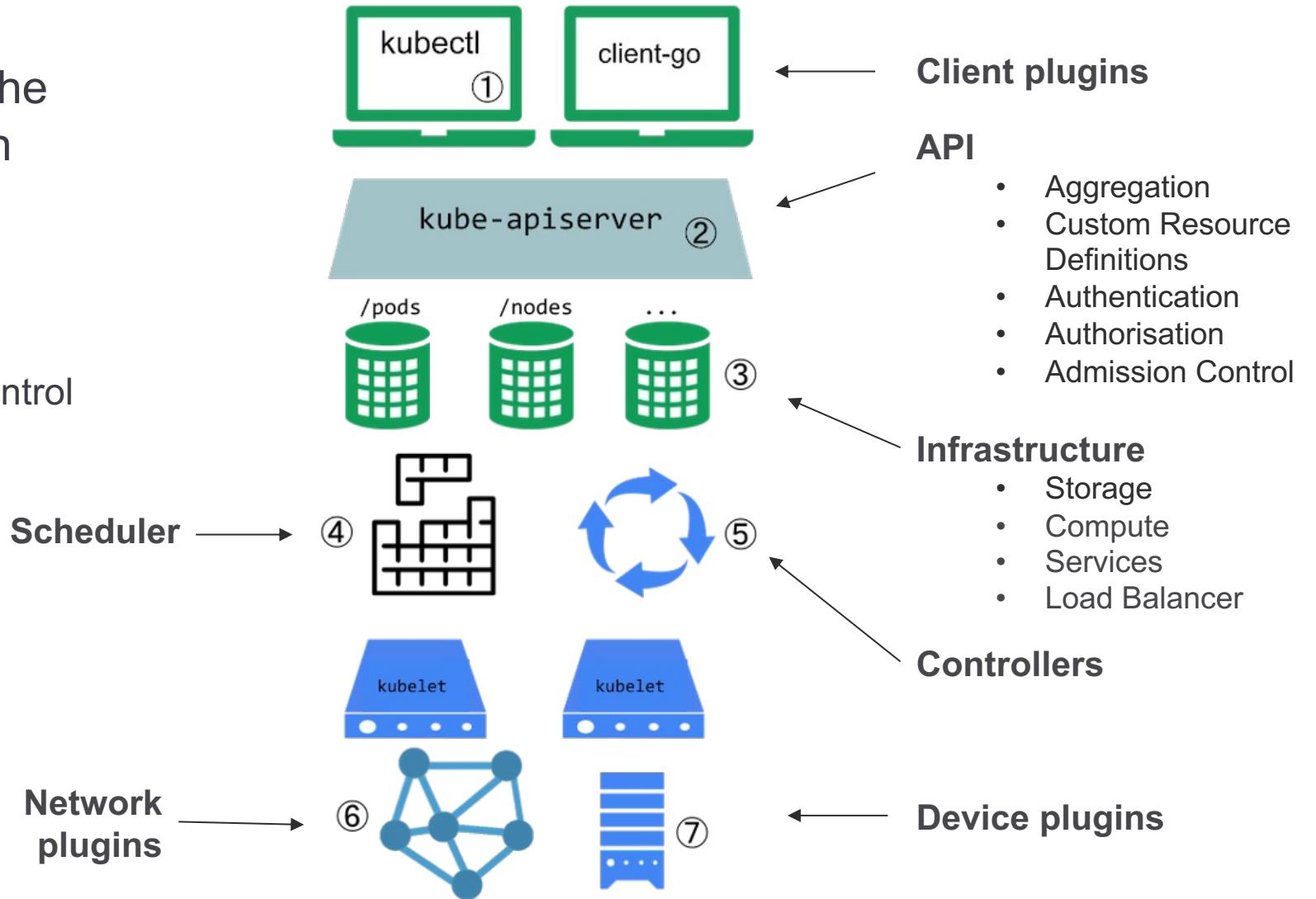
Utilize the operator pattern to manage k8s cluster with the help of k8s

Cluster as a set of machines and underlying infrastructure represented as API objects



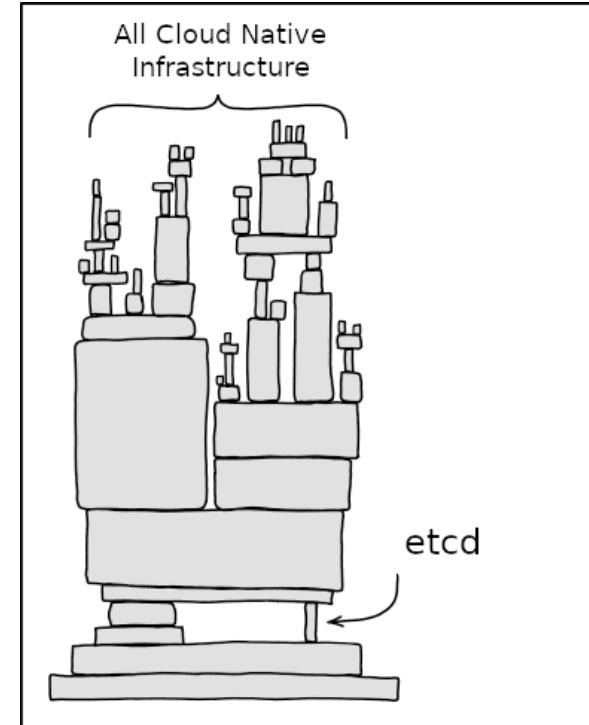
K8s as framework: extensibility

- Kubernetes extensibility is the reason why there is no such things as forks
- Projects
 - VMware Pacific: use k8s to control vSphere
 - Cross plane: use k8s for provisioning cloud services



K8s as framework: distributed systems

- **What is a distributed system?**
 - “The components of a distributed system interact with one another in order to achieve **a common goal**. Three significant challenges of distributed systems are: [1.] **maintaining concurrency** of components, [2.] **overcoming the lack of a global clock**, and managing the [3.] **independent failure of components**.”
 - Tanenbaum, Andrew S.; Steen, Maarten van (2002). Distributed systems: principles and paradigms. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall. ISBN 0-13-088893-1. Archived from the original on 2020-08-12. Retrieved 2020-08-28.
- A consensus protocol is needed for coordinating a multi-agent system to ensure reliability in case of failures. Consensus protocols allow a set of agents to agree on a shared state.
- Kubernetes uses etcd for storing API objects and for scaling the control plane
- Etcd implements Raft
- Raft is a consensus protocol which implements a distributed state machine
- Raft provides
 - leader election
 - log replication
 - cluster membership changes
- Kubernetes API provides
 - Leases – represents the distributed lock which coordinates activities between members
 - Endpoints - to represent set of candidates for becoming the leader
 - ResourceVersions - Every API object has a unique ResourceVersion, and you can use these versions to perform compare-and-swap on Kubernetes objects
 - Annotations - Every API object can be annotated with arbitrary key/value pairs to be used by clients



Is it worth all the fuss?

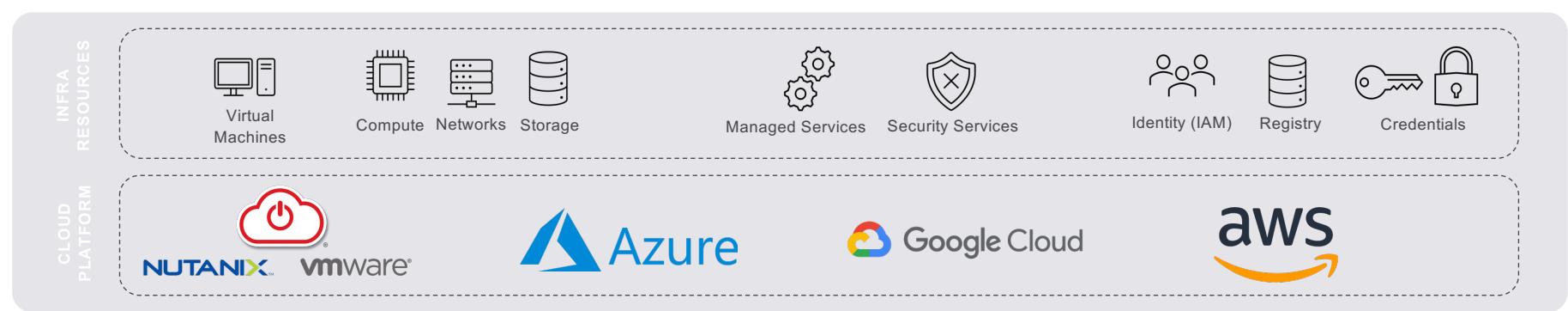
"Most people are capable of building systems that are twice as complex as the systems they are capable of maintaining."

[@casio_juarez](#)

Cloud Environment

Kubernetes Platform

Application Layer



Cloud Native Stack

Why is Kubernetes that complex?

- We deliberately **introduce complexity as a strategy to deal with complexity**, but **complexity does not simply disappear**, it merely moves between layers and parties
- Inherent nature of distributed systems
- Former application services went into the platform layer
- Extensibility is a two-edged sword
- Flexibility leaves a lot of knobs to turn
- Plethora of involved components
- Lifecycle management
 - Each cluster component is subject of lifecycle mgmt
 - Tight coupling of applications with runtime and dependencies puts developers in the drivers seat

Conclusions: complexity for the better or worse?

- Difficult to judge! By which standards by the way?
- TLDR; As always, it depends
- Occam's razor (principle of parsimony) transposed into this context: The simplest solution to achieve a given goal is the best one
 - Goal of having a generic platform -> Abstractions
 - Goal of having a scaling platform -> Distributed System
 - Goal of having a rich platform -> Breadth of involved technologies
- There are no perfect abstractions
 - By definition abstractions are inductions from concrete many to theoretical few (see latin word *abstrahere*)
 - See ISO OSI model: Send reliable TCP packets of unreliable IP datagrams
 - "*All non-trivial abstractions, to some degree, are leaky. Abstractions fail. Sometimes a little, sometimes a lot.*" Joel Spolsky, The Law of Leaky Abstractions (2002)

Conclusions: complexity for the good

- Harnessing immutable infrastructure paradigm **reduces complexity**
- Abstraction from infrastructure
 - A developer never needs to login to a particular node any more
 - But in order to assess performance, infrastructure categories are still relevant
- Allows to establish an explicit **shared responsibility model** between infrastructure-, platform-, and software engineering
- Degree of automation allows **new ways of thinking**

Conclusions: strategic relevance

- Strategic relevance
 - **Kubernetes is more than only a container orchestration engine!**
 - **Universal control plane** for consuming data center services (compute, network, storage, IAM, resource control, scaling)
 - **A platform to build platforms**
 - The operating system of the cloud
 - Complexity shift from apps into the platform
- Key features:
 - Decouples workload from infrastructure
 - **Enables differentiation and specialisation** by introducing well-defined and robust interfaces
 - Portable across cloud vendors
- Recommended scenarios
 - Boosts application modernisation initiatives
 - Map microservices onto a fleet of compute nodes
 - Build custom PaaS platform
 - Operational framework for building SaaS products
 - Run AI stacks – batch training jobs
 - Unified security layer
 - Edge computing



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