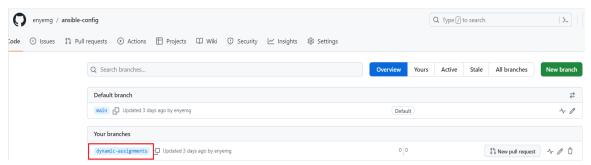
PROJECT 13: ANSIBLE DYNAMIC ASSIGNMENTS (INCLUDE) AND COMMUNITY ROLES

My experience with projects 11 and 12 has given me some understanding and expertise in Ansible, enabling me to conduct configurations using playbooks, roles, and imports. Now it is time to continue configuring your UAT servers by using the include module to introduce dynamic assignments. Static assignments use the import Ansible module while the module that enables dynamic assignments is include. However, **import = Static** and **include = Dynamic.** When the import module is used, all statements are pre-processed at the time playbooks are parsed. Meaning, when I execute the site.yml playbook, Ansible will process all the playbooks referenced during the time it is parsing the statements. This also means that, during actual execution, if any statement changes, such statements will not be considered. Hence, it is static.

On the other hand, when the include module is used, all statements are processed only during the execution of the playbook. Meaning, after the statements are parsed, any changes to the statements encountered during execution will be used. It is recommended to use static assignments for playbooks because it is more reliable. With dynamic ones, it is hard to debug playbook problems due to their dynamic nature. However, one can use dynamic assignments for environment-specific variables as we will be introducing in this project.

Step 1 - Introducing Dynamic Assignment into our Structure

1. In the https://github.com/<your-name>/ansible-config GitHub repository start a new branch and call it dynamic-assignments.



2. Create a new folder, and name it dynamic-assignments. Then inside this folder, create a new file and name it env-vars.yml. We will instruct site.yml to include this playbook later.

```
ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-224:~/ansible-config$ mkdir dynamic-assignments
```

```
ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-224:~/ansible-config/dynamic-assignments$ touch env-vars.yml ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-224:~/ansible-config/dynamic-assignments$ ls env-vars.yml
```

3. The GitHub shall have the following structure by now.

```
ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-224:~$ tree ansible-config/
ansible-config/
   README.md
    dynamic-assignments
      - env-vars.yml
    inventory
      — dev.yml
       prod.yml
        staging.yml
       - uat.yml
    playbooks
      site.yml
       - webserver
          - README.md
           defaults
            └─ main.yml
            handlers
            └─ main.yml
            └─ main.yml
            └─ main.yml
           templates
    static-assignments
      — common-del.yml
        common.yml
        uat-webservers.yml
11 directories, 15 files
```

4. Since we will be using the same Ansible to configure multiple environments, and each of these environments will have certain unique attributes, such as servername, IP-address etc., we will need a way to set values to variables per specific environment. Therefore, I created a new folder env-vars, and then for each environment, create new YAML files which we will use to set variables.

```
ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-224:~/ansible-config$ mkdir env-vars
ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-224:~/ansible-config$ cd env-vars
ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-224:~/ansible-config/env-vars$ touch dev.yml prod.yml staging.yml uat.yml
```

5. Your layout should now look like this.

```
ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-224:~$ tree ansible-config/
ansible-config/
    README.md
    dynamic-assignments
       env-vars.yml
    env-vars
        dev.yml
        prod.yml
        staging.yml
        uat.yml
    inventory
        dev.yml
        prod.yml
        staging.yml
        uat.yml
    playbooks
       - site.yml
    roles
       - webserver
           - README.md
            defaults
               - main.yml
            handlers
               - main.yml
            meta
                - main.yml
                main.yml
            templates
    static-assignments
        common-del.yml
        common.yml
        uat-webservers.yml
12 directories, 19 files
```

6. Now paste the instruction below into the env-vars.yml file.

```
---
- name: collate variables from env specific file, if it exists hosts: all tasks:
- name: looping through list of available files include_vars: "{{ item }}"
    with_first_found:
- files:
- dev.yml
- staging.yml
- prod.yml
- uat.yml
```

```
paths:
- "{{ playbook_dir }}/../env-vars"
tags:
- always
```

ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-224:~/ansible-config/dynamic-assignments\$ sudo vi env-vars.yml

```
---
- name: collate variables from env specific file, if it exists hosts: all tasks:
- name: looping through list of available files include_vars: "{{ item }}"
with_first_found:
- files:
- dev.yml
- staging.yml
- prod.yml
- uat.yml
paths:
- "{{ playbook_dir }}/../env-vars"
tags:
- always
```

Notice 3 things to notice here:

- a. I used include_vars syntax instead of include, this is because Ansible developers decided to separate different features of the module. From Ansible version 2.8, the include module is deprecated and variants of include_* must be used. These are:
- include_role
- include_tasks
- include_vars

In the same version, variants of import were also introduced, such as:

- import role
- import tasks
- b. I made use of special variables { playbook_dir } and { inventory_file }. { playbook_dir } will help Ansible to determine the location of the running playbook, and from there navigate to another path on the filesystem. { inventory_file } on the other hand will dynamically resolve to the name of the inventory file being used, then append .yml so

that it picks up the required file within the env-vars folder.

c. I am including the variables using a loop. with_first_found implies that looping through the list of files, the first one found is used. This is good so that we can always set default values in case an environment-specific env file does not exist.

Step 2 - Update site.yml with dynamic assignments

Update the site.yml file to make use of the dynamic assignment. The site.yml should now look like this.

--- hosts: all
- name: Include dynamic variables
tasks:
import_playbook: ../static-assignments/common.yml
include: ../dynamic-assignments/env-vars.yml
tags:

always

- hosts: webservers

- name: Webserver assignment

import_playbook: ../static-assignments/webservers.yml

ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-224:~/ansible-config/playbooks\$ sudo vi site.yml

```
---
- hosts: all
- name: Include dynamic variables
tasks:
import_playbook: ../static-assignments/common.yml
include: ../dynamic-assignments/env-vars.yml
tags:
    - always
- hosts: webservers
- name: Webserver assignment
import_playbook: ../static-assignments/webservers.yml
```

Step 3 - Community Role

Create a role for MySQL database – it should install the MySQL package, create a database and configure users. There are roles that are actually production ready, and dynamic to accommodate most of Linux flavours. With Ansible Galaxy again, we can simply download a ready-to-use Ansible role, and keep going. I will be using a MySQL role developed by geerlingguy from the community roles

1. Download Mysgl Ansible Role

```
ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-224:~$ ansible-galaxy install geerlingguy.mysql - downloading role 'mysql', owned by geerlingguy - downloading role from https://github.com/geerlingguy/ansible-role-mysql/archive/4.3.3.tar.gz - extracting geerlingguy.mysql to /home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/geerlingguy.mysql - geerlingguy.mysql (4.3.3) was installed successfully
```

2. To preserve your GitHub in its actual state after you install a new role – make a commit and push to main your 'ansible-config' directory. On the Jenkins-Ansible server make sure that git is installed with git --version, then go to the ansible-config directory and run

```
git init
git pull https://github.com/<your-name>/ansible-config.git
git remote add origin https://github.com/<your-name>/ansible-config.git
git branch roles-feature
git switch roles-feature
```

Inside the roles directory create your new MySQL role with ansible-galaxy install geerlingguy.mysql and rename the folder to MySQL

```
ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-224:~/ansible-config/roles$ ansible-galaxy install geerlingguy.mysql
[WARNING]: - geerlingguy.mysql (4.3.3) is already installed - use --force to change version to unspecified
ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-224:~/ansible-config/roles$ ansible-galaxy install geerlingguy.mysql --force
- changing role geerlingguy.mysql from 4.3.3 to unspecified
- downloading role 'mysql', owned by geerlingguy
- downloading role from https://github.com/geerlingguy/ansible-role-mysql/archive/4.3.3.tar.gz
- extracting geerlingguy.mysql to /home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/geerlingguy.mysql
- geerlingguy.mysql (4.3.3) was installed successfully

ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-224:~/ansible-config/roles$ mv geerlingguy.mysql/ mysql
ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-224:~/ansible-config/roles$ ls
mysql webserver
```

 Read README.md file, and edit the roles configuration to use the correct credentials for MySQL required for the tooling website.

```
ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-224:~/ansible-config/roles/mysql$ ls
LICENSE README.md defaults handlers meta molecule tasks templates vars
ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-224:~/ansible-config/roles/mysql$ sudo vi README.md

## Role Variables
Available variables are listed below, along with default values (see `defaults/main.yml`):
```

5. To set the role variables, go to defaults/main.yml and uncomment the database and users field to have the values on the right.

ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-224:~/ansible-config/roles/mysql/defaults\$ sudo vi main.yml

```
# Databases.
mysql_databases: []
# - name: example
# collation: utf8_general_ci
# encoding: utf8
# replicate: 1

# Users.
mysql_users: []
# - name: example
# host: 127.0.0.1
# password: secret
# priv: *.*:USAGE
# Databases.
mysql_databases: []
- name: tooling
collation: utf8_general_ci
encoding: utf8
replicate: 1

# Users.
mysql_users: []
- name: webaccess
host: 0.0.0.0
password: secret
priv: **.*:ALL,GRANT`
```

6. Now it is time to upload the changes into your GitHub. I also created a Pull Request and merged it to the main branch on GitHub.

git add.

git commit -m "Commit new role files into GitHub"

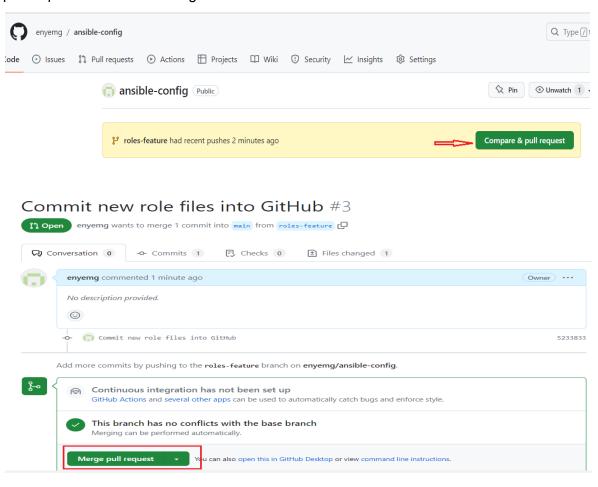
git push --set-upstream origin roles-feature

```
ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-224:~/ansible-config/roles/mysql/defaults$ git add .
ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-224:~/ansible-config/roles/mysql/defaults$ git commit -m "Commit new role files into GitHub"
[roles-feature 5233833] Commit new role files into GitHub

1 file changed, 134 insertions(+)
create mode 100644 roles/mysql/defaults/main.yml
```

```
ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-224:~/ansible-config/roles/mysql/defaults$ git push --set-upstream origin roles-feature
Username for 'https://github.com': enyemg
Password for 'https://enyemg@github.com':
Enumerating objects: 8, done.
Counting objects: 100% (8/8), done.
Compressing objects: 100% (4/4), done.
Writing objects: 100% (6/6), 1.90 KiB | 1.90 MiB/s, done.
Total 6 (delta 1), reused 0 (delta 0)
remote: Resolving deltas: 100% (1/1), completed with 1 local object.
remote:
remote: Create a pull request for 'roles-feature' on GitHub by visiting:
remote: https://github.com/enyemg/ansible-config/pull/new/roles-feature
remote:
To https://github.com/enyemg/ansible-config.git
 * [new branch] roles-feature -> roles-feature
Branch 'roles-feature' set up to track remote branch 'roles-feature' from 'origin'.
```

7. Click on compare & pull request. Select Create pull request and then merge, merge the pull request and confirm merge.



Commit new role files into GitHub #3



Step 4 - Load Balancer Roles

I want to be able to choose which Load Balancer to use, Nginx or Apache, so we need to have two roles respectively: Nginx and Apache. Decide if you want to develop your own roles, or find available ones from the community. I used the available ones from the community roles here: https://galaxy.ansible.com/home and updated both static-assignment and site.yml files to refer to the roles. Since one cannot use both Nginx and Apache load balancer, I added a condition to enable either one —with the help of variables.

1. Install Apache and Nginx

```
ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-224:~/ansible-config/roles$ ansible-galaxy install geerlingguy.nginx -p . - downloading role 'nginx', owned by geerlingguy
- downloading role from https://github.com/geerlingguy/ansible-role-nginx/archive/3.1.4.tar.gz
- extracting geerlingguy.nginx to /home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/geerlingguy.nginx
- geerlingguy.nginx (3.1.4) was installed successfully

ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-224:~/ansible-config/roles$ ansible-galaxy install geerlingguy.apache -p .
- downloading role 'apache', owned by geerlingguy
- downloading role from https://github.com/geerlingguy/ansible-role-apache/archive/3.3.0.tar.gz
- extracting geerlingguy.apache to /home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/geerlingguy.apache
- geerlingguy.apache (3.3.0) was installed successfully

ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-224:~/ansible-config/roles$ mv geerlingguy.nginx/ nginxRole

ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-224:~/ansible-config/roles$ mv geerlingguy.apache/ apacheRole

ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-224:~/ansible-config/roles$ ls
apacheRole mysql nginxRole webserver
```

2. Declare a variable in defaults/main.yml file inside the Nginx and Apache roles. Name each variable enable_nginx_lb and enable_apache_lb respectively. Set both values to false like this enable_nginx_lb: false and enable_apache_lb: false.

```
ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-224:~/ansible-config/roles/apacheRole/defaults$ sudo vi main.yml ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-224:~/ansible-config/roles/nginxRole/defaults$ sudo vi main.yml
```

Now go to task/main.yml and make the below changes

ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-224:~/ansible-config/roles/nginxRole/tasks\$ sudo vi main.yml

```
# Nginx setup.
- name: Copy nginx configuration in place.
become: true
template:
    src: "{{ nginx_conf_template }}"
    dest: "{{ nginx_conf_file_path }}"
    owner: root
    group: "{{ root_group }}"
    mode: 0644
notify:
    - reload nginx
- name: Ensure nginx service is running as configured.
become: true
service:
    name: nginx
```

Delete the extra ansible_os_family and leave at red hat

```
# Setup/install tasks.
- include_tasks: setup-RedHat.yml
  when: ansible_os_family == 'RedHat'
```

3. Declare another variable in both roles load_balancer_is_required and set its value to false as well.

```
ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-224:~/ansible-config/roles/nginxRole/defaults$ sudo vi main.yml
ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-224:~/ansible-config/roles/apacheRole/defaults$ sudo vi main.yml
load_balancer_is_required: false
```

Note: The above changes are not sufficient, the exact changes to the roles can be found in my github repository: https://github.com/enyemg/ansible-config

Update both dynamic assignment and site.yml files respectively

loadbalancers.yml file

ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-224:~/ansible-config/static-assignments\$ sudo vi loadbalancers.yml

- hosts: lb

roles:

- { role: nginx, when: enable_nginx_lb and load_balancer_is_required }
- { role: apache, when: enable_apache_lb and load_balancer_is_required }

site.yml file

ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-224:~/ansible-config/playbooks\$ sudo vi site.yml

- name: Loadbalancers assignment

hosts: lb

- import playbook: ../static-assignments/loadbalancers.yml

when: load balancer is required

Now you can make use of env-vars\uat.yml file to define which load balancer to use in the UAT environment by setting the respective environmental variable to true. I will activate the load balancer, and enable nginx by setting these in the respective environment's env-vars file.

ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-224:~/ansible-config/env-vars\$ sudo vi uat.yml

enable nginx lb: true

load balancer is required: true

For my file to work, I added: **enable_apache_lb: true** and **load_balancer_is_required: true** to ansible-config/roles/apacheRole/defaults/main.yml. You can switch it by setting respective environmental variables to true and others to false for nginx. To test this, you can update the inventory for each environment and run Ansible against each environment.

Now run the playbook and you should have the below results. Note that in this instance, I am

only running the apacheRole so the nginxRole configuration will be skipped.

ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-224:~/ansible-config\$ ansible-playbook -i inventory/uat.yml playbooks/site.yml

```
PROBLEMS OUTPUT DEBUG CONSOLE TERMINAL PORTS

PLAY [webservers]

TASK [Gathering Facts]

Ok: [177.31.34.12]

Ok: [177.31.34.12]

TASK [/home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/webserver : install apache]

TASK [/home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/webserver : install git]

TASK [/home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/webserver : clone a repo]

TASK [/home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/webserver : clone a repo]

TASK [/home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/webserver : copy html content to one level up]

TASK [/home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/webserver : Start service httpd, if not started]

TASK [/home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/webserver : recursively remove /var/www/html/html/ directory]

TASK [/home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/webserver : recursively remove /var/www/html/mal/ directory]
```

```
TASK [/home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/nginxRole : include_tasks]

TASK [/home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/nginxRole : Remove default nginx vhost config file (if configured).]

TASK [/home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/nginxRole : Ensure nginx_vhost_path exists.]

***Skipping: [172.31.45.62]

TASK [/home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/nginxRole : Remove managed vhost config files.]

TASK [/home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/nginxRole : Set webservers host name in /etc/hosts]

**skipping: [172.31.45.62] > (item=['name': 'web1', 'ip': '172.31.34.12'])

**Skipping: [172.31.45.62] > (item=['name': 'web1', 'ip': '172.31.34.12'])

**TASK [/home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/nginxRole : Copy nginx configuration in place.]

**TASK [/home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/nginxRole : Ensure nginx service is running as configured.]
```

```
IASK [/home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/apacheRole : Include OS-specific variables.]

IASK [/home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/apacheRole : Include variables for Amazon Linux.]

IASK [/home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/apacheRole : Define apache_packages.]

IASK [/home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/apacheRole : Define apache_packages.]

IASK [/home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/apacheRole : include_tasks]

IASK [/home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/apacheRole : Update apt cache.]

IASK [/home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/apacheRole : Update apt cache.]

IASK [/home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/apacheRole : Ensure Apache is installed on Debian.]

IASK [/home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/apacheRole : Get installed version of Apache.]

IASK [/home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/apacheRole : Get installed version of Apache.]

IASK [/home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/apacheRole : Include Apache 2.2 variables.]

IASK [/home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/apacheRole : Include Apache 2.2 variables.]

IASK [/home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/apacheRole : Include Apache 2.4 variables.]

IASK [/home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/apacheRole : Configure Apache.]

IASK [/home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/apacheRole : Configure Debian.yml for 172.31.45.62
```

```
TASK [/home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/apacheRole : Enable Apache mods.]

TASK [/home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/apacheRole : Disable Apache mods.]

TASK [/home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/apacheRole : Disable Apache mods.]

TASK [/home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/apacheRole : Check whether certificates defined in vhosts exist.]

TASK [/home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/apacheRole : Add apache vhosts configuration.]

TASK [/home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/apacheRole : Add vhost symlink in sites-enabled.]

TASK [/home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/apacheRole : Remove default vhost in sites-enabled.]

TASK [/home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/apacheRole : Remove default vhost in sites-enabled.]

TASK [/home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/apacheRole : Ensure Apache has selected state and enabled on boot.]

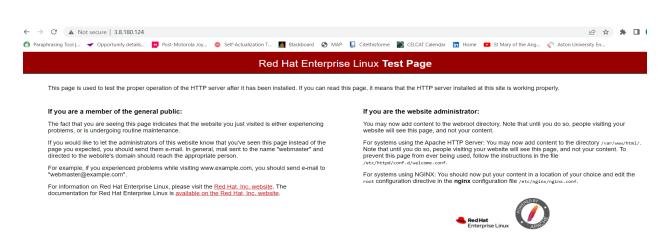
TASK [/home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/apacheRole : restart apache]

TASK [/home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/apacheRole : restart apache]

TASK [/home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/apacheRole : nestart apache]

TASK [/home/ubuntu/ansible-config/roles/apache
```

Now when you browse the webservers and load balancer IP's, you should have their respective pages as below. I have successfully used the Ansible configuration management tool to prepare a UAT environment for the Tooling web solution.



Apache *** is a registered trademark of the Apache Software Foundation in the United States and/or other countries.

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This page is used to test the proper operation of the HTTP server after it has been installed. If you can read this page, it means that the HTTP server installed at this site is working properly.

If you are a member of the general public:

The fact that you are seeing this page indicates that the website you just visited is either experiencing problems, or is undergoing routine maintenance.

If you would like to let the administrators of this website know that you've seen this page instead of the page you expected, you should send them e-mail. In general, mail sent to the name "webmaster" and directed to the website's domain should reach the appropriate person.

For example, if you experienced problems while visiting www.example.com, you should send e-mail to

For information on Red Hat Enterprise Linux, please visit the Red Hat. Inc. website. The documentation for Red Hat Enterprise Linux is available on the Red Hat, Inc. website.

If you are the website administrator:

You may now add content to the webroot directory. Note that until you do so, people visiting your website will see this page, and not your content.

For systems using the Apache HTTP Server: You may now add content to the directory /var/www/html/. Note that until you do so, people visiting your website will see this page, and not your content. To prevent this page from ever being used, follow the instructions in the file

For systems using NGINX: You should now put your content in a location of your choice and edit the root configuration directive in the **nginx** configuration file /etc/nginx/nginx.conf.



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