



RED HAT®
ANSIBLE®
Network Automation

Workshop

Housekeeping

- Timing
- Breaks
- Takeaways

What You Will Learn

Ansible is capable of handling many powerful automation tasks with the flexibility to adapt to many environments and workflows. With Ansible, users can very quickly get up and running to do real work.

- What is Ansible, its common use cases
- How Ansible works and terminology
 - Playbook Basics
 - Running Ansible playbooks
- Network modules
 - Backup and Restore network devices
 - Self documenting networks
- Using roles
- Extending Ansible to the Enterprise with Ansible Tower



**MANAGING NETWORKS
HASN'T CHANGED
IN 30 YEARS.**



Managing networks hasn't changed in 30 years

- Networks are mission critical
- Every network is a unique snowflake
- Ad-hoc changes that proliferate
- Vendor specific implementations
- Testing is expensive/impossible

According to Gartner

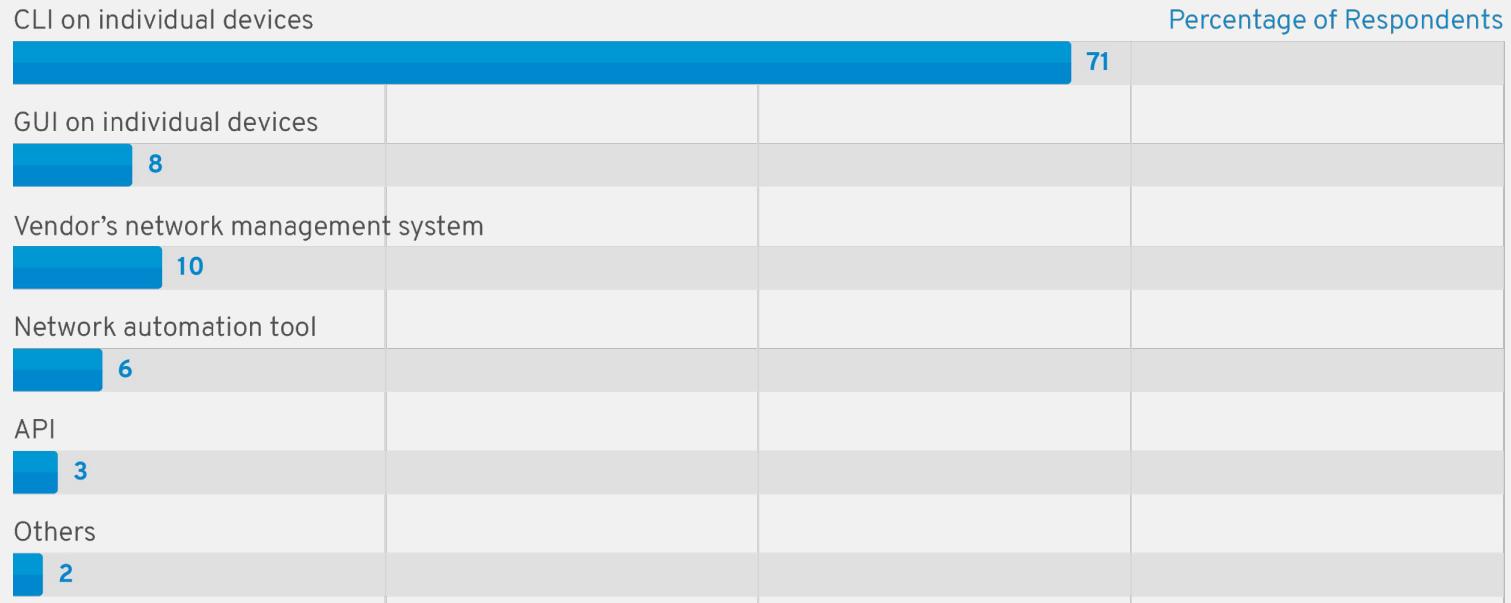


Figure 1

Primary Method for Making Network Changes

Source: Gartner, *Look Beyond Network Vendors for Network Innovation*. January 2018. Gartner ID: G00349636. (n=64)

Automation considerations

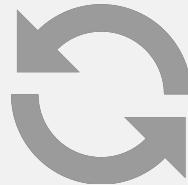
- Compute is no longer the slowest link in the chain
- Businesses demand that networks deliver at the speed of cloud
- Automation of repeatable tasks
- Bridge silos

What is Ansible?

- Red Hat Ansible network automation is **enterprise software** for automating and managing IT infrastructure.
- It's an **automation engine** that runs Ansible Playbooks
- As a **vendor agnostic framework** Ansible can automate F5 (BIG-IP, BIG-IQ), Arista (EOS), Cisco (IOS, IOS XR, NX-OS), Juniper (JunOS), Open vSwitch and VyOS.
- Ansible Tower is an **enterprise framework** for controlling, securing and managing your Ansible automation with a UI and RESTful API.



SIMPLE



POWERFUL



AGENTLESS

Human readable automation

No special coding skills needed

Tasks executed in order

Get productive quickly

Gather information and audit

Configuration management

Workflow orchestration

Manage ALL IT infrastructure

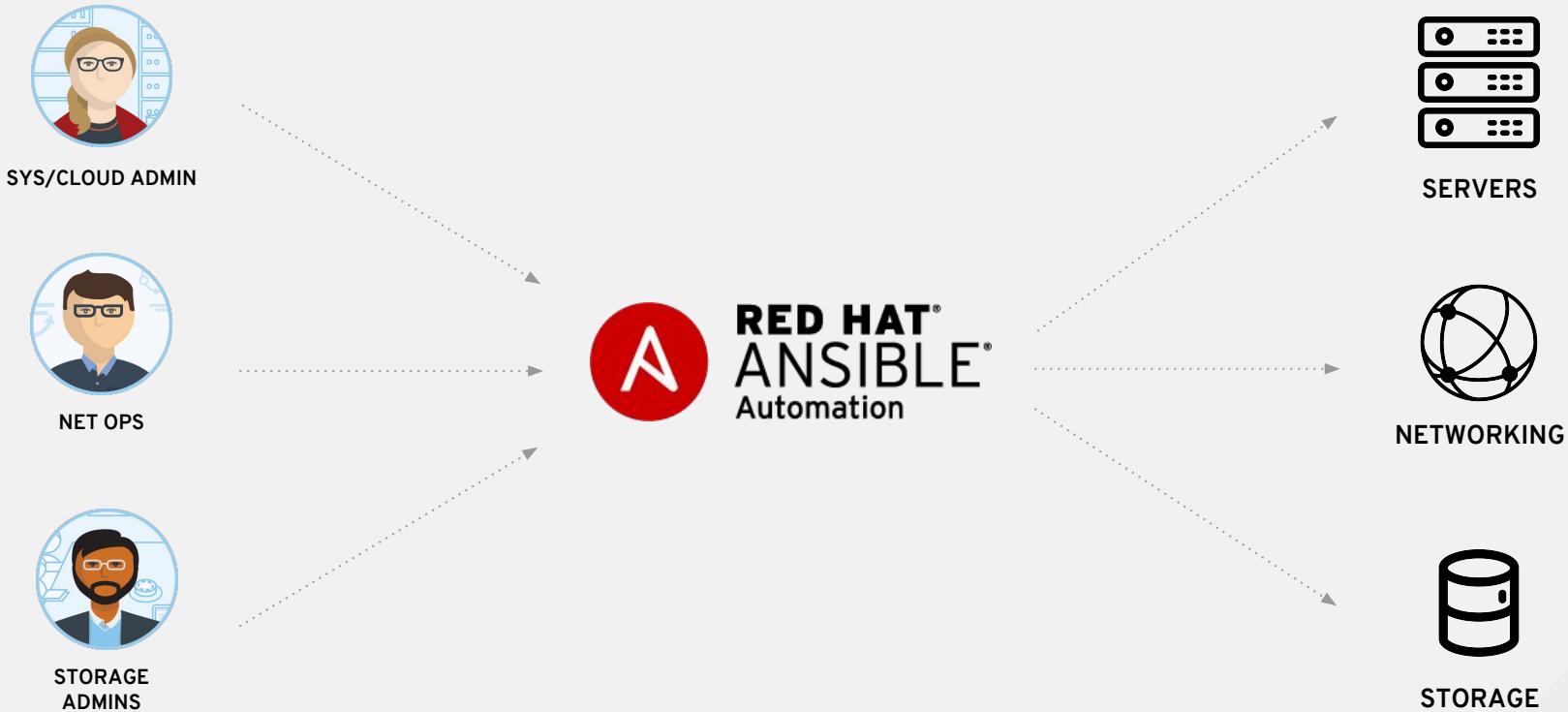
Agentless architecture

Uses OpenSSH and paramiko

No agents to exploit or update

More efficient & more secure

MANAGE YOUR ENTIRE ENTERPRISE



ANSIBLE NETWORK AUTOMATION

50

Network
Platforms

700+

Network
Modules

12*

Galaxy
Network Roles

ansible.com/networking
galaxy.ansible.com/ansible-network

Ansible Network modules comprise 1/3 of all modules that ship with Ansible Engine

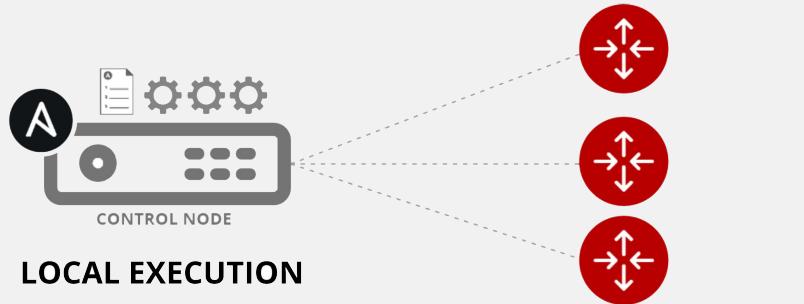
Common use cases

- Backup and restore device configurations
- Upgrade network device OS
- Ensure configuration compliance
- Apply patches to address CVE
- Generate dynamic documentation
- Discrete Tasks
 - Ensure VLANs are present/absent
 - Enable/Disable netflow on WAN interfaces
 - Manage firewall access list entries

Basically anything an operator can do manually, Ansible can automate.

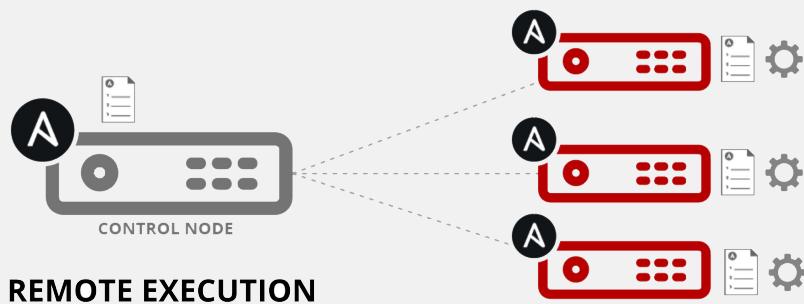
How Ansible Works

Module code is executed locally on the control node

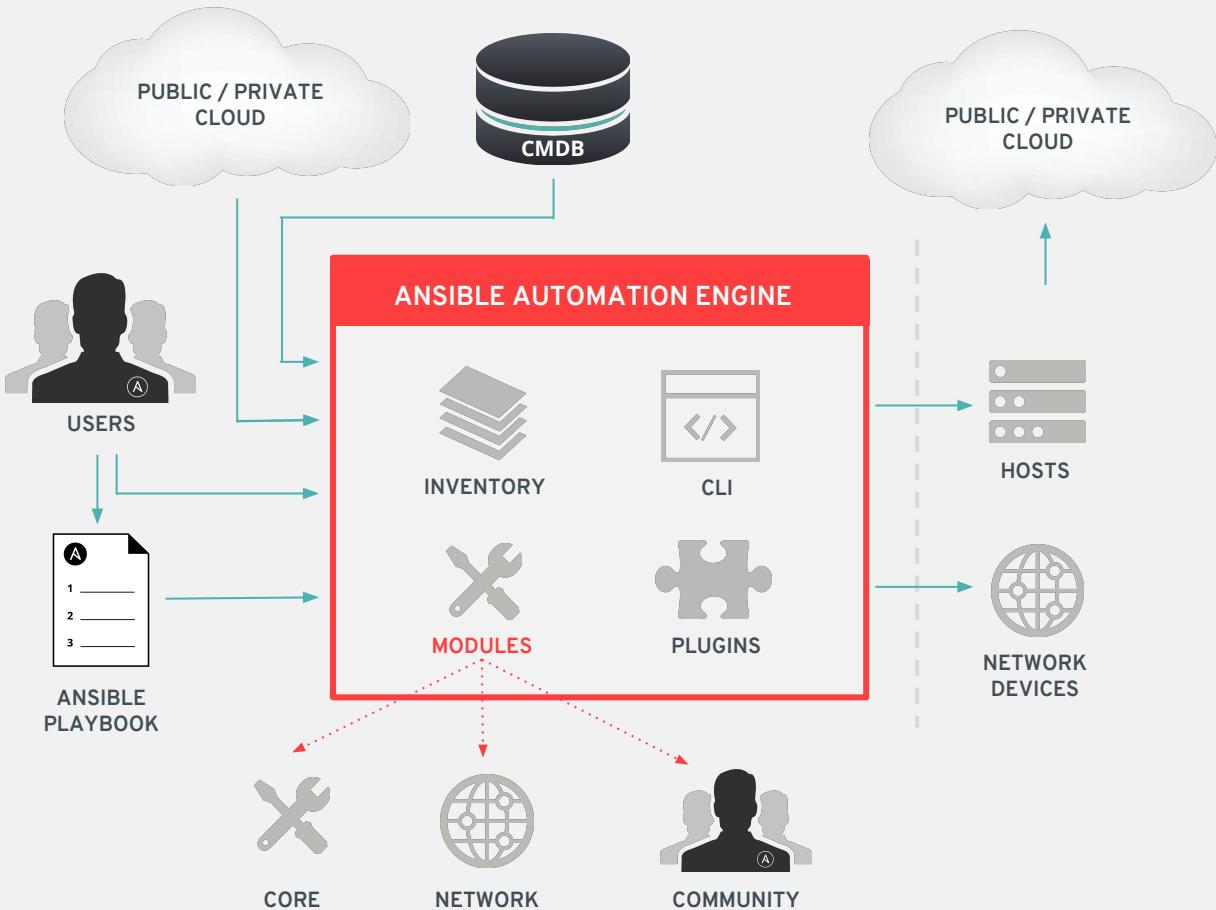


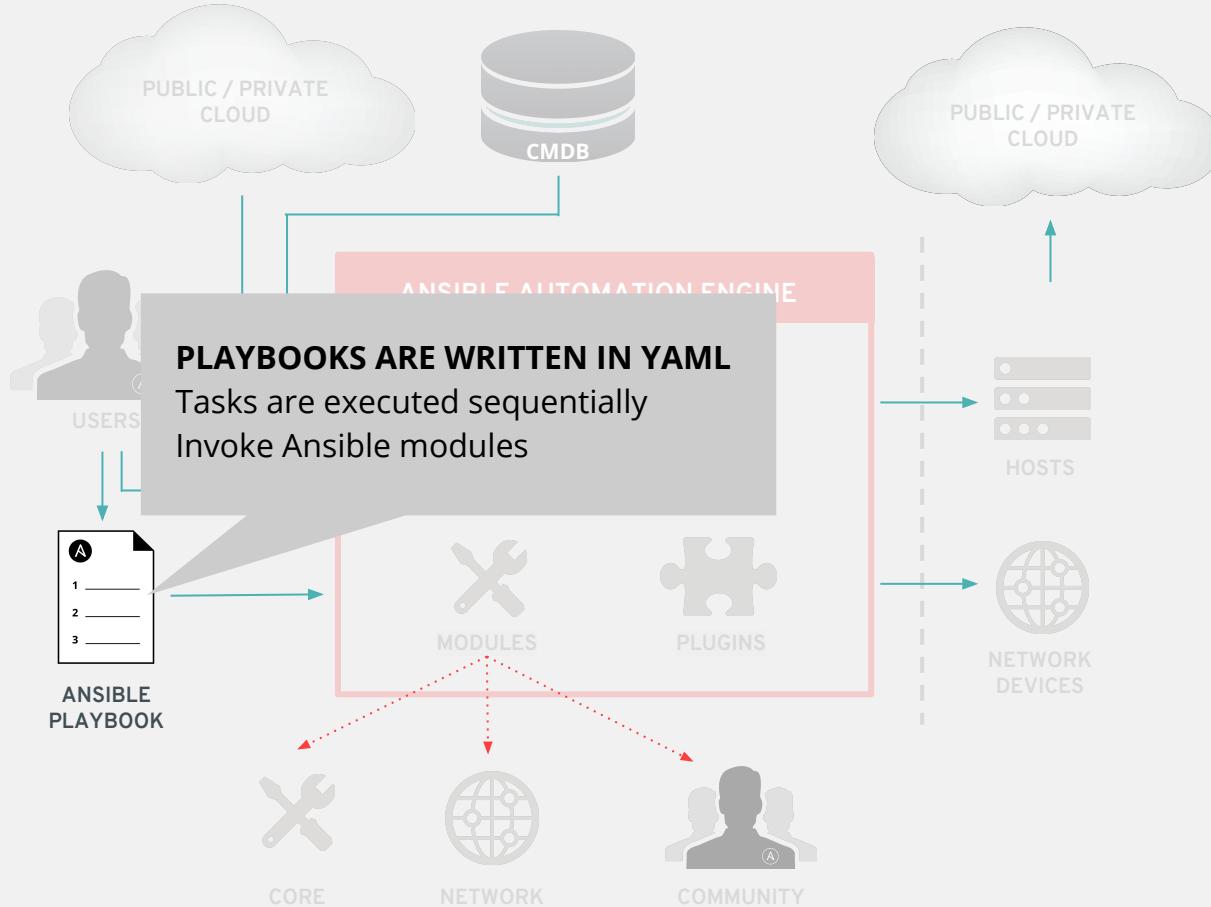
**NETWORKING
DEVICES**

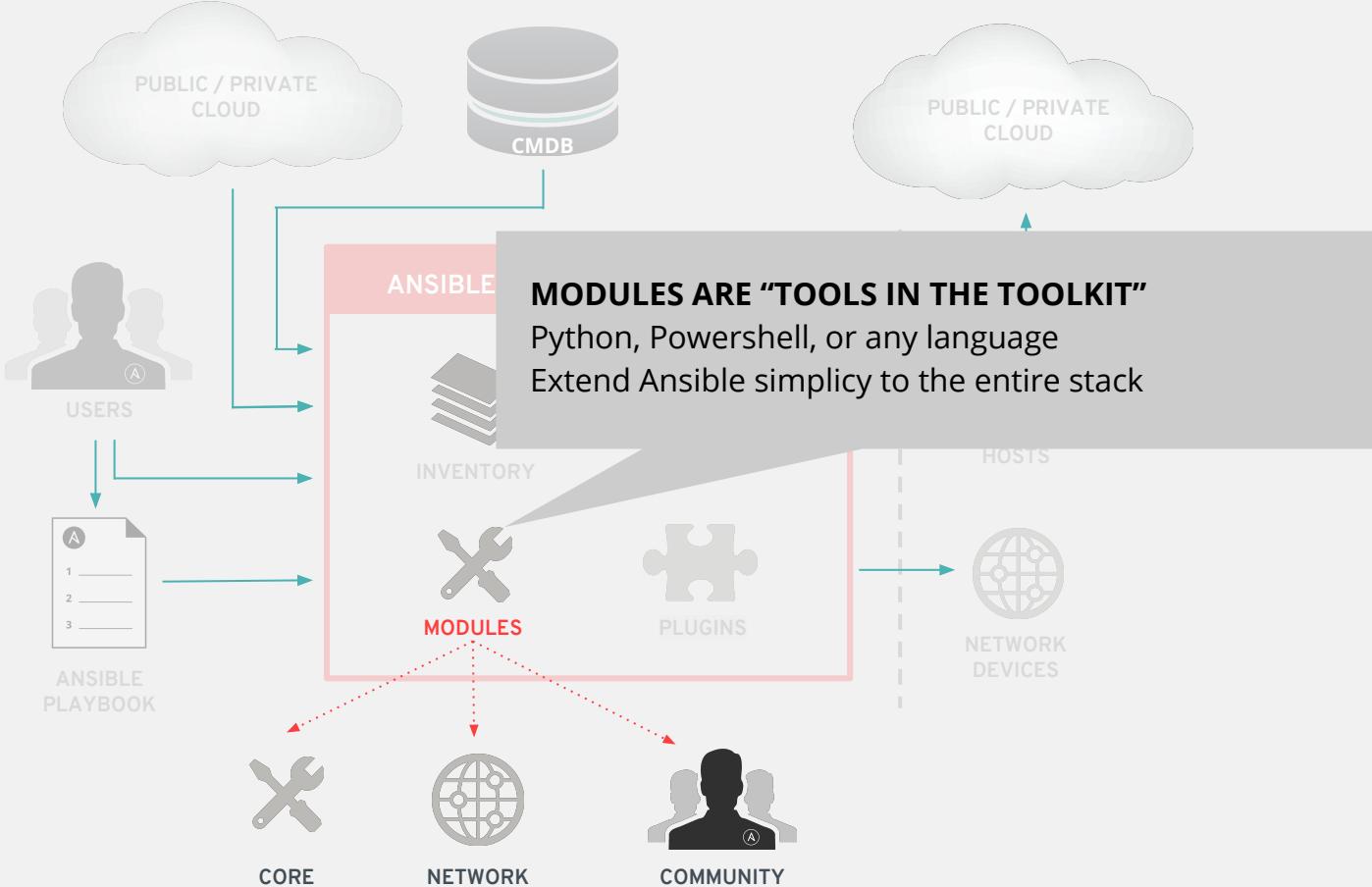
Module code is copied to the managed node, executed, then removed

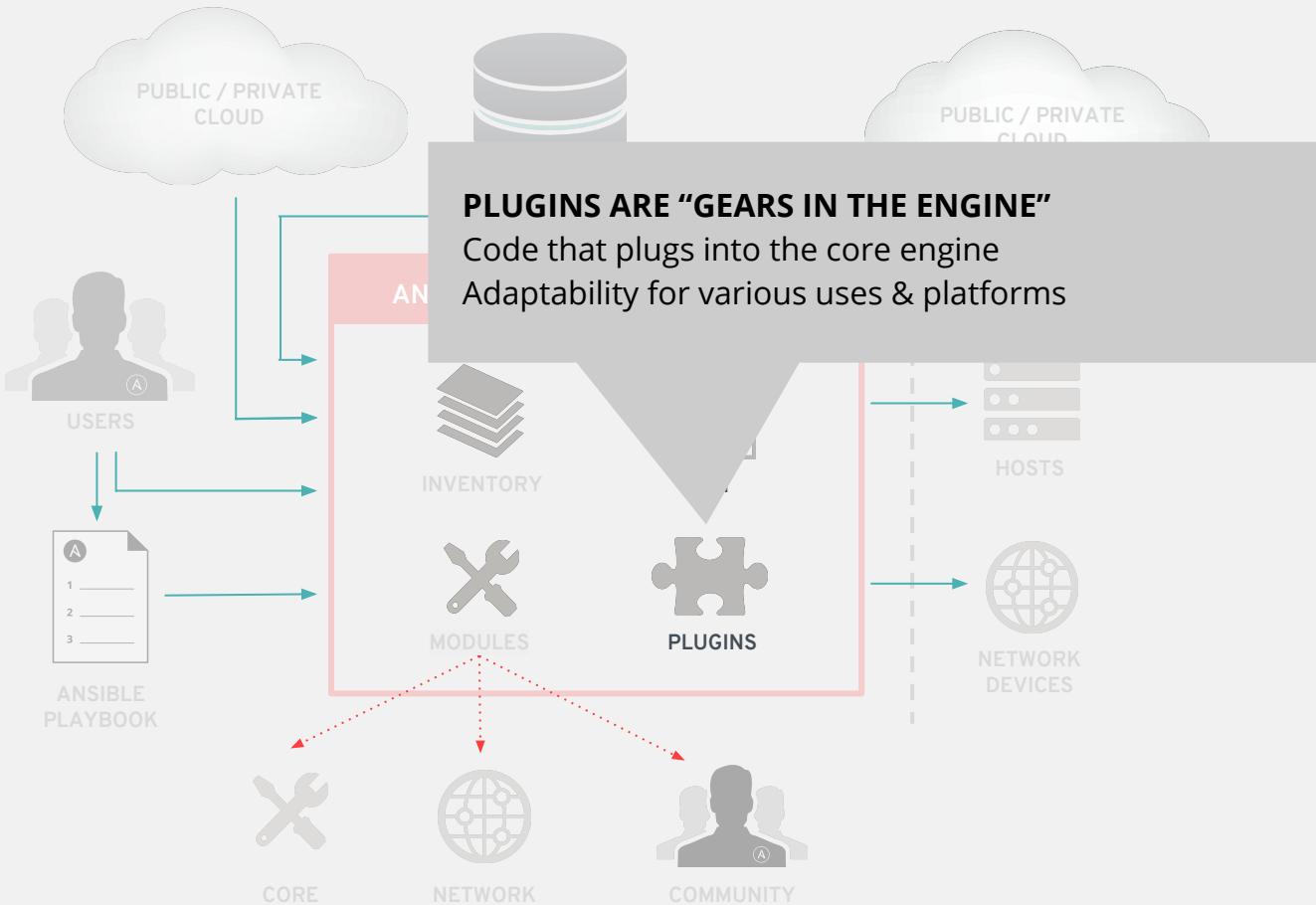


**LINUX/WINDOWS
HOSTS**









Understanding Inventory

```
10.1.1.2  
10.1.1.3  
172.16.1.1  
172.16.1.2  
192.168.1.2  
192.168.1.3
```

Understanding Inventory - Groups

There is always a group called "all" by default

```
[atl]
access1.atl.com ansible_host=10.1.1.2
access2.atl.com ansible_host=192.168.1.2

[core]
core1.nw.com
core2.nw.com

[access]
access1.nw.com
access2.nw.com
```

Groups can be nested

```
[DC:children]
core
access

[east-coast:children]
DC
atl

[atl]
access1.atl.com ansible_host=10.1.1.2
access2.atl.com ansible_host=192.168.1.2

[core]
core1.nw.com
core2.nw.com

[access]
access1.nw.com
access2.nw.com
```

Inventory - variables

```
[all:vars]
ansible_username=admin
ansible_password=pa55w0rd
snmp_ro=public123
snmp_rw=private123

[east-coast:vars]
ntp_server=10.99.99.99
anycast=169.1.1.1

[DC:children]
core
access

[east-coast:children]
DC
atl

[atl]
access1.atl.com ansible_host=10.1.1.2 snmp_ro=atl1123
access2.atl.com ansible_host=192.168.1.2

[core]
core1.nw.com snmp_ro=corepub123 snmp_rw=corepri123
core2.nw.com
```

Group variables apply for all devices in that group

Host variables apply to the host and override group vars

A Sample Playbook

```
---
- name: DEPLOY VLANS
  hosts: access
  connection: network_cli
  gather_facts: no

  tasks:

    - name: ENSURE VLANS EXIST
      nxos_vlan:
        vlan_id: 100
        admin_state: up
        name: WEB
```

- Playbook is a list of plays.
- Each play is a list of tasks.
- Tasks invoke modules.
- A playbook can contain more than one play.



10:00

Lab Time

Exercise 1.0 - Exploring the lab environment

In this lab you will explore the lab environment and build familiarity with the lab inventory.

Approximate time: 10 mins

Playbook definition for network automation

- Target play execution using `hosts`
- Define the connection : `network_cli`
- About `gather_facts`

Running a playbook

```
---  
- name: GATHER INFORMATION FROM ROUTERS  
  hosts: cisco  
  connection: network_cli  
  gather_facts: no  
  
  tasks:  
    - name: GATHER ROUTER FACTS  
      ios_facts:
```

```
[student1@control-node networking-workshop]$ ansible-playbook gather_ios_data.yml  
  
PLAY [GATHER INFORMATION FROM ROUTERS] *****  
  
TASK [GATHER ROUTER FACTS] *****  
ok: [rtr1]  
ok: [rtr4]  
ok: [rtr3]  
ok: [rtr2]  
  
PLAY RECAP *****  
rtr1                  : ok=1    changed=0    unreachable=0    failed=0  
rtr2                  : ok=1    changed=0    unreachable=0    failed=0  
rtr3                  : ok=1    changed=0    unreachable=0    failed=0  
rtr4                  : ok=1    changed=0    unreachable=0    failed=0  
  
[student1@ip-172-16-101-121 networking-workshop]$
```

Displaying output

Use the optional **verbose** flag during playbook execution

Increase the level of verbosity by adding more "v's" -vvvv

Limiting Playbook execution

Playbook execution can be limited to a subset of devices using the --limit flag.

```
$ ansible-playbook gather_ios_data.yml -v --limit rtr1
```

Forget a flag / option ?
Just type ansible-playbook then press enter

A note about variables

Other than the user defined variables, Ansible supports many inbuilt variables. For example:

Variable	Explanation
ansible_*	Output of fact gathering
inventory_hostname	magic inbuilt variable that is the name of the host as defined in inventory
hostvars	magic inbuilt variable dictionary variable whose key is <code>inventory_hostname</code> e.g. <code>hostvars[webserver1].my_variable</code>

Displaying output - The “debug” module

The **debug** module is used like a "print" statement in most programming languages. Variables are accessed using "{{ }}" - quoted curly braces



10:00

Lab Time

Exercise 1.1 - Writing your first playbook

In this lab you will write your first playbook and run it to gather facts from Cisco routers. You will also practice the use of "verbose" and "limit" flags in addition to working with variables within a playbook.

Approximate time: 10 mins

Modules

Modules do the actual work in Ansible, they are what gets executed in each playbook task.

- Typically written in Python (but not limited to it)
- Modules are idempotent
- Modules take user input in the form of parameters

Network modules

Ansible modules for network automation typically references the vendor OS followed by the module name.

- *_facts
- *_command
- *_config

More modules depending on platform

Arista EOS = eos_*

Cisco IOS/IOS-XE = ios_*

Cisco NX-OS = nxos_*

Cisco IOS-XR = iosxr_*

F5 BIG-IP = bigip_*

F5 BIG-IQ = bigiq_*

Juniper Junos = junos_*

VyOS = vyos_*

Modules per network platform

```
tasks:
  - name: configure eos system properties
    eos_system:
      domain_name: ansible.com
      vrf: management
    when: ansible_network_os == 'eos'

  - name: configure nxos system properties
    nxos_system:
      domain_name: ansible.com
      vrf: management
    when: ansible_network_os == 'nxos'
```

Modules Documentation

<https://docs.ansible.com/>

Docs » Module Index

Module Index

- [All Modules](#)
- [Cloud Modules](#)
- [Clustering Modules](#)
- [Commands Modules](#)
- [Crypto Modules](#)
- [Database Modules](#)
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- [Identity Modules](#)
- [Inventory Modules](#)
- [Messaging Modules](#)
- [Monitoring Modules](#)
- [Network Modules](#)
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- [Packaging Modules](#)
- [Remote Management Modules](#)
- [Source Control Modules](#)
- [Storage Modules](#)
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- [Web Infrastructure Modules](#)
- [Windows Modules](#)

service - Manage services.

- Synopsis
- Options
- Examples
 - Status
 - Support

Synopsis

Controls services on remote hosts. Supported init systems include BSD init, OpenRC, SysV, Solaris SMF, systemd, upstart.

Options

parameter	required	default	choices	comments
arguments	no			Additional arguments provided on the command line aliases: args
enabled	no		* yes * no	Whether the service should start on boot. At least one of state and enabled are required.
name	yes			Name of the service.
pattern	no			If the service does not respond to the status command, name a substring to look for as would be found in the output of the ps command as a stand-in for a status result. If the string is found, the service will be assumed to be running.
runlevel	no	default		For OpenRC init scripts (etc Gentoo) only. The runlevel that this service belongs to.
sleep	no			If the service is being restarted, then sleep this many seconds between the stop and start command. This helps to work-around badly behaving init scripts that exit immediately after stopping or a process to quickly.
state	no		* started * stopped * restarted * reloaded	<i>started</i> / <i>restarted</i> / <i>stopped</i> are idempotent actions that will not run commands unless necessary. <i>reloaded</i> will always bounce the service. <i>reloaded</i> will always reload. At least one of state and enabled are required. Note that <i>reloaded</i> will start the service if it is not already started, even if your chosen init system wouldn't find it.
use	(added in 2.2)	auto		The service module actually uses system specific modules, normally through auto detection. This setting can force a specific module. Normally it uses the value of the 'ansible_service_mgr' fact and falls back to the old 'service' module when none matching is found.

Modules Documentation

Documentation right on the command line

```
# List out all modules installed
$ ansible-doc -l
...
ios_banner                                Manage multiline banners on Cisco IOS devices
ios_command                                 Run commands on remote devices running Cisco IOS
ios_config                                  Manage Cisco IOS configuration sections
...

# Read documentation for installed module
$ ansible-doc ios_command
> IOS_COMMAND

    Sends arbitrary commands to an ios node and returns the results read from the
    device. This module includes an argument that will cause the module to wait for a
    specific condition before returning or timing out if the condition is not met. This
    module does not support running commands in configuration mode. Please use
    [ios_config] to configure IOS devices.

Options (= is mandatory):
...
...
```

Limiting tasks within a play

- Tags allow the user to selectively execute tasks within a play.
- Multiple tags can be associated with a given task.
- Tags can also be applied to entire plays or roles.

```
- name: DISPLAY THE COMMAND OUTPUT  
  debug:  
    var: show_output  
  tags: show
```

Tags are invoked using the --tags flag while running the playbook

```
[user@ansible]$ ansible-playbook gather_ios_data.yml --tags=show
```

This is useful while working with large playbooks, when you might want to "jump" to a specific task.

Limiting tasks within a play - or skip them!

- --skip-tags allows you to skip everything

```
- name: DISPLAY THE COMMAND OUTPUT
  debug:
    var: show_output
  tags: show
```

```
[user@ansible]$ ansible-playbook gather_ios_data.yml --skip-tags=show
```

Registering the output

The **register** parameter is used to collect the output of a task execution. The output of the task is 'registered' in a variable which can then be used for subsequent tasks.

```
- name: COLLECT OUTPUT OF SHOW COMMANDS
  ios_command:
    commands:
      - show run | i hostname
      - show ip interface brief
  tags: show
  register: show_output
```



15:00

Lab Time

Exercise 1.2 - Module documentation, Registering output & tags

In this lab you will learn how to use module documentation. You will also learn how to selectively run tasks using tags and learn how to collect task output into user defined variables within the playbook.

Approximate time: 15 mins

The *_config module

Vendor specific config modules allow the user to update the configuration on network devices. Different ways to invoke the *_config module:

```
tasks:  
  - name: ENSURE THAT THE DESIRED SNMP STRINGS ARE PRESENT  
    ios_config:  
      commands:  
        - snmp-server community ansible-public RO  
        - snmp-server community ansible-private RW  
        - snmp-server community ansible-test RO
```

```
tasks:  
  - name: ENSURE THAT ROUTERS ARE SECURE  
    ios_config:  
      src: secure_router.cfg
```

Validating changes before they are applied

Ansible lets you validate the impact of the proposed configuration using the **--check** flag.

Used together with the **--verbose** flag, it lets you see the actual change being pushed to the device:

```
[student1@control-node networking-workshop]$ ansible-playbook router_configs.yml --check -v
Using /home/student1/.ansible.cfg as config file

PLAY [UPDATE THE SNMP RO/RW STRINGS] ****
TASK [ENSURE THAT THE DESIRED SNMP STRINGS ARE PRESENT] ****
changed: [rtr3] => {"banners": {}, "changed": true, "commands": ["snmp-server community ansible-test RO"], "updates": ["snmp-server community ansible-test RO"]}
```



Lab Time

Exercise 2.0 - Updating the router configurations using Ansible

In this lab you will learn how to make configuration changes using Ansible. The exercise will demonstrate the idempotency of the module. Additionally you will learn how to validate a change before actually applying it to the devices.

Approximate time: 20 mins

Scenario: Day 2 Ops - Backing up and restoring router configuration

Backing up router configuration

The backup parameter of the `ios_config` module triggers the backup and automatically stores device configuration backups within a `backups` directory

```
---
```

```
- name: BACKUP ROUTER CONFIGURATIONS
  hosts: cisco
  connection: network_cli
  gather_facts: no

  tasks:
    - name: BACKUP THE CONFIG
      ios_config:
        backup: yes
        register: config_output
```

Cleaning up the backed up configuration

The backed up configuration has 2 lines that should be removed:

```
Building configuration...
```

```
Current configuration with default configurations exposed : 393416 bytes
```

The **lineinfile** module is a general purpose module that is used for manipulating file contents.

Cleaning up (cont'd)

Cleaning up an exact line match:

```
- name: REMOVE NON CONFIG LINES
  lineinfile:
    path: "./backup/{{inventory_hostname}}.config"
    line: "Building configuration..."
    state: absent
```

Cleaning up (cont'd)

Matching using a regular expression:

```
- name: REMOVE NON CONFIG LINES - REGEXP
  lineinfile:
    path: "./backup/{{inventory_hostname}}.config"
    regexp: 'Current configuration.*'
    state: absent
```

Restoring the configuration

If any out of band changes were made to the device and it needs to be restored to the last known good configuration, we could take the following approach:

- Copy over the cleaned up configuration to the devices
- Use vendor provided commands to restore the device configuration

*In our example we use the Cisco IOS command **config replace**. This allows for applying only the differences between running and the copied configuration

Restoring (cont'd)

```
---
- name: RESTORE CONFIGURATION
  hosts: cisco
  connection: network_cli
  gather_facts: no

  tasks:
    - name: COPY RUNNING CONFIG TO ROUTER
      command: scp ./backup/{{inventory_hostname}}.config {{inventory_hostname}}:/{{inventory_hostname}}.config

    - name: CONFIG REPLACE
      ios_command:
        commands:
          - config replace flash:{{inventory_hostname}}.config force
```

Note the use of **inventory_hostname** to effect host specific changes



Lab Time

Exercise 2.1 - Backing up the router configuration

&

Exercise 2.2 - Using Ansible to restore the backed up configuration

In this lab you will implement a typical Day 2 Ops scenario of backing up and restoring device configurations.

Approximate time: 20 mins

Scenario: Creating living/dynamic documentation

Templates

- Ansible has native integration with the Jinja2 templating engine
- Render data models into device configurations
- Render device output into dynamic documentation

Jinja2 enables the user to manipulate variables, apply conditional logic and extend programmability for network automation.

Using templates to generate configuration

Data model:

```
vlans:
  - id: 10
    name: WEB
  - id: 20
    name: APP
  - id: 30
    name: DB
```

Jinja2 template

```
{% for vlan in vlans %}
vlan {{ vlan.id }}
  name {{ vlan.name }}
{% endfor %}
```

Tying it all together

```
- name: RENDER THE VLAN CONFIGURATION
  template:
    src: vlans.j2
    dest: "vlan_configs/{{ inventory_hostname }}.conf"
      leaf1.conf
        vlan 10
          name WEB
        vlan 20
          name APP
        vlan 30
          name DB
```

Using templates to build dynamic documentation

```
 {{ inventory_hostname.upper() }}  
---  
{{ ansible_net_serialnum }} : {{ ansible_net_version }}
```

RTR1

```
---  
9YJXS2VD3Q7 : 16.08.01a
```

RTR2

```
---  
9QHUCH0VZI9 : 16.08.01a
```

RTR3

```
---  
9ZGJ5B1DL14 : 16.08.01a
```

RTR4

```
---  
9TCM27U9TQG : 16.08.01a
```

- Generate documentation that never goes stale
- Build troubleshooting reports
- Same data to generate exec reports and engineering reports using different templates

Assembling the data

The **assemble** module is used to generate a consolidated file by combining fragments. This is a common strategy used to put snippets together into a final document.

```
- name: CONSOLIDATE THE IOS DATA
  assemble:
    src: reports/
    dest: network_os_report.md
    delegate_to: localhost
    run_once: yes
```

```
RTR1
```

```
---
```

```
9YJXS2VD3Q7 : 16.08.01a
```

```
RTR2
```

```
---
```

```
9QHUCH0VZI9 : 16.08.01a
```

```
RTR3
```

```
---
```

```
9ZGJ5B1DL14 : 16.08.01a
```

```
RTR4
```

```
---
```

```
9TCM27U9TQG : 16.08.01a
```



15:00

Lab Time

Exercise 3.0 - An introduction to templating with Jinja2

In this lab you will use a basic Jinja2 template to generate a markdown report that contains the device name, serial number and operating system version. You will create a report per device and then use the assemble module to consolidate them.

Approximate time: 15 mins

A quick introduction to roles

The 2 basic files required to get started with Ansible are:

- Inventory
- Playbook

Roles

Roles are Playbooks

- Roles help simplify playbooks.
- Think of them as callable functions for repeated tasks.
- Roles can be distributed/shared; similar to libraries.

Example Playbook

```
# site.yml
---
- hosts: DC
  roles:
    - ntp
    - vlan
```

Directory Structure

```
site.yml
roles/
  ntp/
    tasks/
      main.yml
vlan/
  tasks/
    main.yml
```

Roles - really simple, but powerful

```
# site.yml
---
- hosts: routers
  roles:
    - ntp
    - vlan
```

```
ntp/
  tasks/
  vlan/
    tasks/
      main.yml
```

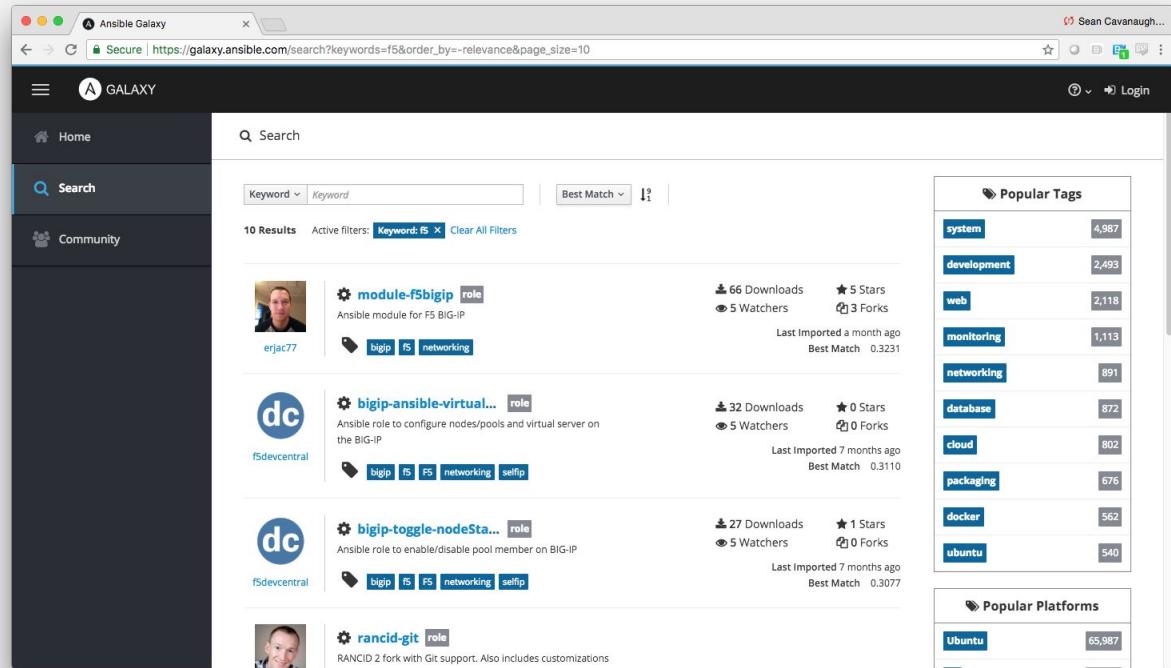
```
- name: CONFIGURE NTP
  ios_config:
    lines: ntp server 1.2.3.4
```

```
- name: CONFIGURE VLAN
  ios_vlan:
    vlan_id: 100
```

Ansible Galaxy

<http://galaxy.ansible.com>

- Ansible Galaxy is a hub for finding, reusing and sharing Ansible roles.
- Jump-start your automation project with content contributed and reviewed by the Ansible community.



Using parsers to generate custom reports

On most network devices, show command output is "pretty" formatted but not structured.

The Ansible **network-engine** role provides support for 2 text parsing engines:

- TextFSM
- Command Parser

```
----
- name: GENERATE INTERFACE REPORT
  hosts: cisco
  gather_facts: no
  connection: network_cli

  roles:
    - ansible-network.network-engine

  tasks:
    - name: CAPTURE SHOW INTERFACES
      ios_command:
        commands:
          - show interfaces
      register: output

    - name: PARSE THE RAW OUTPUT
      command_parser:
        file: "parsers/show_interfaces.yml"
        content: "{{ output.stdout[0] }}"
```



Structured data from show commands

```
rtr2#show interfaces
GigabitEthernet1 is up, line protocol is up
  Hardware is CSR vNIC, address is 0e56.1bf5.5ee2 (bia 0e56.1bf5.5ee2)
  Internet address is 172.17.16.140/16
  MTU 1500 bytes, BW 1000000 Kbit/sec, DLY 10 usec,
    reliability 255/255, txload 1/255, rxload 1/255
  Encapsulation ARPA, loopback not set
  Keepalive set (10 sec)
  Full Duplex, 1000Mbps, link type is auto, media type is Virtual
  output flow-control is unsupported, input flow-control is unsupported
  ARP type: ARPA, ARP Timeout 04:00:00
.
.
.
.
<output omitted for brevity>
```

```
TASK [DISPLAY THE PARSED DATA] *****
ok: [rtr1] => {
  "interface_facts": [
    {
      "GigabitEthernet1": {
        "config": {
          "description": null,
          "mtu": 1500,
          "name": "GigabitEthernet1",
          "type": "CSR"
        }
      },
      "Loopback0": {
        "config": {
.
.
.
.
<output omitted for brevity>
```



Lab Time

Exercise 3.1 - Building dynamic documentation using the command parser

The objective of this lab is to generate a dynamic documentation from the output of a device **show** command.

Approximate time: 20 mins

Extending Ansible to the Enterprise with Ansible Tower



RED HAT®
ANSIBLE®
Automation

RED HAT ANSIBLE TOWER

Scale + operationalize your automation

CONTROL

KNOWLEDGE

DELEGATION

RED HAT ANSIBLE ENGINE

Support for your Ansible automation

SIMPLE

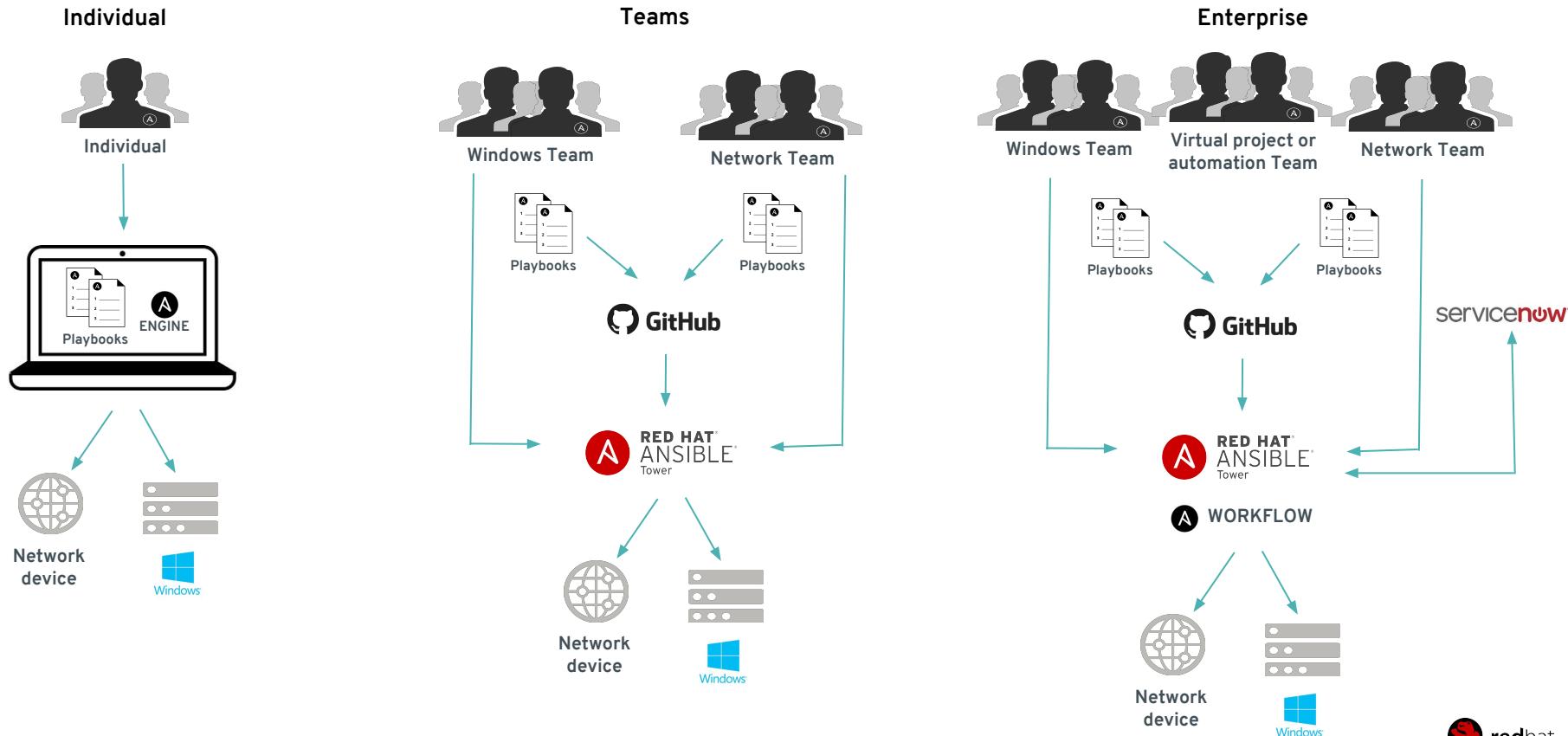
POWERFUL

AGENTLESS

FUELED BY AN INNOVATIVE **OPEN SOURCE** COMMUNITY

Extending Ansible to the Enterprise

ANSIBLE



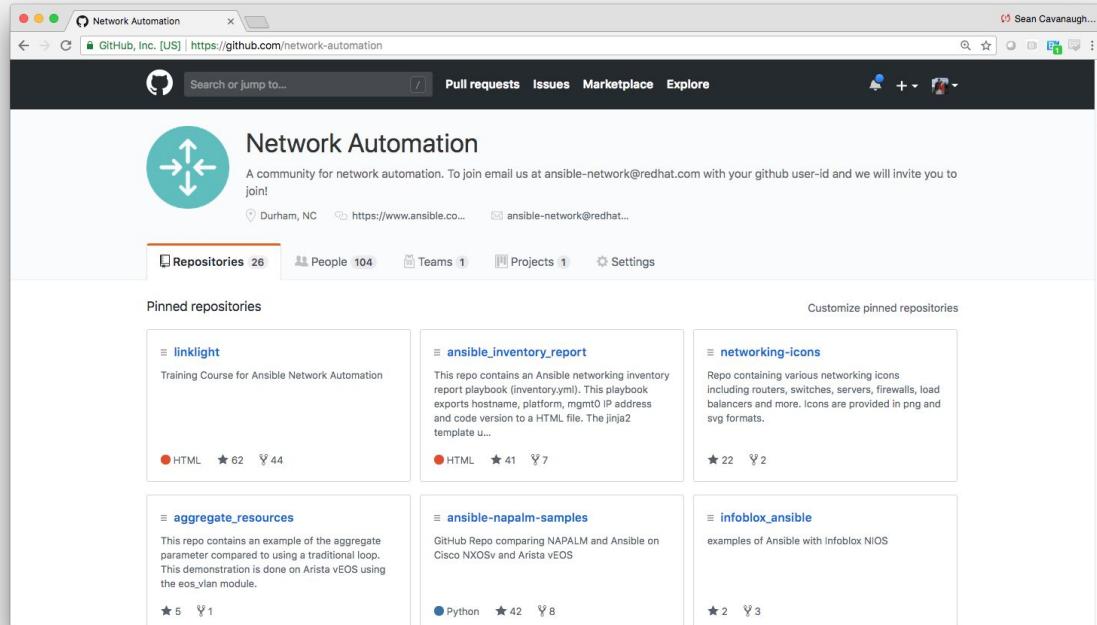
Next Steps

Thanks so much for joining the class. Here are some next steps on how to get more information and join the community!

Bookmark the GitHub Project

<https://www.github.com/network-automation>

- Examples, samples and demos
- Run network topologies right on your laptop



Chat with us

Engage with the community

- **Slack**

<https://ansiblenetwork.slack.com>

Join by clicking here <https://bit.ly/2OfNEBr>

- **IRC**

#ansible-network on freenode

<http://webchat.freenode.net/?channels=ansible-network>

Next Steps

- It's easy to get started

<https://ansible.com/get-started>

- Do it again

<https://github.com/network-automation/linklight>

<https://network-automation.github.io/linklight/>

- Instructor Led Classes

Class D0457: Ansible for Network Automation

<https://red.ht/2MiAgvA>



Batteries Included

Ansible comes bundled with hundreds of modules for a wide variety of automation tasks:

- cloud
- containers
- database
- files
- messaging
- monitoring
- networking
- notifications
- packaging
- system
- testing
- utilities

Ansible Modules control the things that you're automating. They can do everything from acting on system files, installing packages, or making API calls to a service framework.

The Ansible Way

CROSS PLATFORM – Linux, Windows, UNIX, Cisco, Juniper, Arista, Cumulus
Agentless support for all major OS variants, physical, virtual, cloud and network

HUMAN READABLE – YAML

Perfectly describe and document every aspect of your application environment

DYNAMIC INVENTORIES

Capture all the network hosts 100% of the time, regardless of infrastructure, location, etc.