Ansible

# Tips and tricks

## Separate production and staging inventory

You can keep your production environment separate from development, test, and staging environments by using separate inventory files or directories for each environment. This way you pick with -i what you are targeting. Keeping all your environments in one file can lead to surprises!

## Keep vaulted variables safely visible

You should encrypt sensitive or secret variables with Ansible Vault. However, encrypting the variable names as well as the variable values makes it hard to find the source of the values. You can keep the names of your variables accessible (by grep, for example) without exposing any secrets by adding a layer of indirection:

1. Create a group\_vars/ subdirectory named after the group.
2. Inside this subdirectory, create two files named vars and vault.
3. In the vars file, define all of the variables needed, including any sensitive ones.
4. Copy all of the sensitive variables over to the vault file and prefix these variables with vault\_.
5. Adjust the variables in the vars file to point to the matching vault\_ variables using jinja2 syntax: db\_password: {{ vault\_db\_password }}.
6. Encrypt the vault file to protect its contents.
7. Use the variable name from the vars file in your playbooks.

When running a playbook, Ansible finds the variables in the unencrypted file, which pulls the sensitive variable values from the encrypted file. There is no limit to the number of variable and vault files or their names.