

Application-Level Regression Testing Framework using Jenkins

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Abstract—This paper will explore the challenges of regression testing and monitoring of large scale systems such as NCSAs Blue Waters. Our goal was to come up with an automated solution for running user-level regression tests to evaluate system usability and performance. Jenkins was chosen for its versatility, large user base, and multitudes of plugins including plotting test results over time. We utilize these plots to track trends and alert us to system-level issues before they are reported by our partners (users). Not only does Jenkins have the ability to store historical data, but it can also send email or text pages based on results of a test. Other requirements we had include two-factor authentication for accessing the Jenkins GUI with administrator privileges and account management through LDAP. In this paper we describe our experience in deploying Jenkins as a user-level system-wide regression testing and monitoring framework for Blue Waters.

Keywords—Performance; Benchmarking; Computer architecture

I. INTRODUCTION

Monitoring large and complex high-performance computing systems have many challenges. Layers and multiple versions of the software stack, system-level configurations, (parallel) file systems, diversity in users need and usage, and variable network traffics all interact to increase the system’s complexity. Although there exist monitoring systems for each of these components, they often do not capture the behavior of the system in aggregate, which in fact is what users and their applications experience. Therefore an application-level system monitoring framework is needed to give us a more complete picture of the system behavior.

Over time, either due to configuration and software changes or hardware aging, performance of such complex system may regress. To identify and correct such regression, one must have some method to do regression testing of the system performance. This requires a systematic record of the system performance over time.

These two requirements can be concisely summarized as an “application-level regression testing”. Our goal was then to come up with an automated solution for running these user-level regression tests to evaluate system usability and performance. For this purpose we have chosen to use Jenkins¹.

¹<http://jenkins.io>

Jenkins is an open source automation server. Although it is typically used as a continuous integration tool in the software development process, its wide-ranging features makes it suitable for any task that can be automated. These tasks may include building applications, executing them, deploying software, and running various custom-written tests and scripts. We chose Jenkins as the tool for our regression testing framework because of its active development, wide community support, and the readily available “plugins” to perform various specific tasks.

In this paper we describe in details our experience in using Jenkins to perform application-level regression testing on high-performance computing systems such as the Blue Water supercomputer at the National Center for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA), Darter and Beacon at the National Institute for Computational Sciences (NICS). These systems are Cray XE, XK, XC, and CS series. The outline of this paper is as follows. [NEED TO WRITE THIS]

II. JENKINS CONFIGURATION

Jenkins is typically available from the package repository of most major linux distribution of choice. One can also download and install Jenkins directly from its website. We used the RPM package to install Jenkins on a CentOS virtual machine (VM). Jenkins comes with its own web server so that managing and accessing Jenkins can be done via any web browser (in the next section we discuss using Apache HTTP Server in front of Jenkin’s for better security). Typically Jenkins’s web server listen to port 8080, but this is configurable.

Jenkins has an implicit assumption that the machine on which it is installed is also the primary machine being used to build and test the software. In our case, this is not what we would want. In fact, our applications will be built on the HPC system on which we intent to run the tests (typically on the login nodes), and will be run on the compute nodes of the HPC system (i.e. via batch job submission to the job queueing system). This is because not only do we want to test the runtime performance of the applications, but also we want to ensure that the software and programming environment of the system can still build the applications correctly. Incidentally, the latter also informs us

of any user-level problem such as slow or overloaded login nodes, slow file system access, erroneous or incompatible default software (library, compilers, etc) versions. In short, we want our tests to simulate typical workflow of a user on the system being testing.

Therefore what we need is a mechanism to execute a “project” — a user-configured description of work which Jenkins should perform such as building a piece of software, in Jenkins jargon — on remote machines (“remote” from the perspective of Jenkins). In this case, the Jenkins machine simply manages the automation scheduling, shows status of projects in execution (“builds” in Jenkins jargon) , and archives results of the tests (i.e. “artifact”). It also provides the user interface (via its own web server) to create and configure projects. These tasks are sufficiently light weight such that Jenkins can be installed on a VM with sufficient disk space for the artifacts, since the truly heavy lifting of building and executing the application tests are performed on the remote machine.

There are two ways to achieve an executing build on a remote machine. Each have their own benefits, and your selection is a matter of choice. One may use Jenkin’s core feature of adding “Nodes“ to its environment. One may also use a Jenkins plugin called ”SSH Plugin“ to allow execution on a remote machine via SSH protocol. At NICS our setup uses the former, while at NCSA our setup uses the latter. In the following we briefly discuss the setup of these two mechanisms.

A. Master-Node Configuration

We added a standard user account to our cluster that will execute the Jenkins tests. Unique ssh keys were generated on the Jenkins Server for accessing the user account on production and test environments. The keys on the server are located in Jenkins home directory (/var/lib/jenkins/.ssh). Using the GUI management console, the keyfile location and passphrase was entered under Manage Jenkins, Configure System, SSH remote hosts section. A unique SSH site is configured for our TDS, production and development login nodes.

B. Accessing Login Nodes

The ssh public key generated on Jenkins Server was deployed in the login node user account. The login node sshd_config was modified to allow Public Key Authentication from the Jenkins Server IP.

III. AUTHENTICATION AND AUTHORIZATION

A. Security Considerations

Enabling Jenkins access to Blue Waters posed some unique security hurdles that we had to overcome. Blue Waters is an OTP only restricted access system. Jenkins has the ability to execute user-level commands on our login nodes. Jenkins has some unfortunate default settings. The

access control is set to ”Jenkins’ own user database,” and the ”Allow users to sign up” option is enabled, so if you don’t have an account, you can create one by providing your name, e-mail and a password. Additionally, there’s an authorization option enabled which says ”Logged-in users can do anything.” So, once signed in, you have full admin access to the Jenkins system instance. This required us initially to test the deployment with our test and development (TDS) CRAY. This resulted in the following requirement: restricted OTP access to the physical system hosting Jenkins. In addition, OTP only access to the Jenkins GUI command console must be contained within our IP space. The Jenkins GUI will also restrict the command console access to our Blue Waters LDAP server.

B. Configuration Choices

The Jenkins instance was deployed on a vSphere managed VM running Centos 6.8. The VM allows restricted host-based ssh access from two secure OTP only administrative systems. The Jenkins GUI presented additional challenges. The Jenkins GUI is configured to log in as a standard user account with password-less access (commands to the login nodes can be input via Jenkins GUI) using ssh keys scoped to the VM. We restrict access to the physical VM (bwjenkins) and the Jenkins GUI utilizing iptables, SSL and OTP. A reverse proxy was used to run Jenkins behind Apache HTTP Server with SSL for access to the administrative console. All the configuration is in /etc/httpd/conf.d/ssl.conf. Anonymous access to the Jenkins GUI was allowed for limited read only view of test status and historical plots. The Anonymous access view is not restricted.

(Jenkins sever configuration file snippets below)

/etc/ssh/sshd_config:

```
Match Host bwbh1.ncsa.illinois.edu,
bwbh2.ncsa.illinois.edu
HostbasedAuthentication yes
```

/etc/sysconfig/iptables:

```
-A INPUT -s 141.142.0.0/16 -m state --state NEW -m tcp
-p tcp --dport 22 -j ACCEPT
-A INPUT -s 172.16.0.0/15 -m state --state NEW -m tcp
-p tcp --dport 22 -j ACCEPT
-A INPUT -m state --state NEW -m tcp -p tcp --dport 80
-j ACCEPT
-A INPUT -s 141.142.0.0/16 -m state --state NEW -m tcp
-p tcp --dport 443 -j ACCEPT
```

/etc/httpd/conf.d/ssl.conf:

```
# -- The following sets ReverseProxy for Jenkins
ProxyRequests Off
ProxyPreserveHost On
AllowEncodedSlashes On
<Proxy *>
    Order deny,allow
    Allow from all
</Proxy>
ProxyPass / http://localhost:8080/ nocanon
ProxyPassReverse / http://localhost:8080/
```

```
ProxyPassReverse / http://bwjenkins.ncsa.illinois.edu/
RequestHeader set X-Forwarded-Proto "https"
RequestHeader set X-Forwarded-Port "443"
```

```
# -- OTP for Jenkins SSL connection
DefineExternalAuth pwauth+session pipe
/usr/local/bin/pwauth+session
<LocationMatch / >
  AuthType Basic
  AuthBasicProvider external
  AuthName "NCSA_RSA_OTP_login"
  AuthExternal pwauth+session
  require valid-user

  RequestHeader unset "X-Forwarded-User"
  RequestHeader set "X-Forwarded-User" (REMOTE_USER)
```

```
</LocationMatch>
```

NOTE: Install mod_authnz_external native package

```
/etc/pam.d/pwauth:
#%PAM-1.0
auth required /lib64/security/pam_secuid.so
account include password-auth

/usr/local/bin/pwauth+session:
https://github.com/reubendb/BasicAuthOTPSession
/blob/master/BasicAuthOTPSession.py#L1
```

C. LDAP with Jenkins

Figure 1: Use LDAP with Jenkins

To enable LDAP, the LDAP Plugin was installed. To configure, from the console view, select Manage Jenkins, then select Configure Global Security. In the Security Realm section select the Advanced... tab. Input your LDAP server name and root DN. Click the Test Button.

My first stab at this failed as an anonymous connection to our LDAP because we are using a local CA. WARNING: Failed to search LDAP for username, sun.security.provider.certpath.SunCertPathBuilderException: unable to find valid certification path to requested target

We had to add our certificate to the keystore: `/usr/java/default/jre/bin/keytool -list -keystore cacerts -imle /etc/openldap/cacerts/cacert.pem` Enter keystore password: Trust this certificate? [no]: yes Certificate was added to keystore

D. Configure Global Security

Figure 2: Configure Global Security

We are allowing access by username and LDAP groups. The permissions can be scoped for individuals and groups. An example is removing Job delete permissions to prevent one user or group from deleting each other's jobs.

IV. ANATOMY OF A TEST

New software projects are required to be tested on our TDS and approved before deployment on Blue Waters and this is one of our key best practices. Once a test is deployed it is assigned to a specific Jenkins tab via the "Edit View" link associated with that tab. Tests still in development reside in the "All" tab view until they have been peer reviewed by at least one other test developer.

A. test description

We require a description for each test to describe: what is tested, resources used by the test, intent of the test, and scheduling frequency.

B. limits log files

The Jenkins test VM filled to capacity after the first few weeks of intensive use and an influx of several new tests that output long source code build detail. We retroactively modified all tests to limit the number of old build logs retained (max 50 for most tests).

C. ssh to a login host

There are several target ssh hosts which may be selected from our instance: the test rack JYC, the main system, and the new software deployment login node within the main system. None of our tests run locally within the Jenkins VM.

D. run shell commands

A test is composed of shell command and where possible we try to be as transparent with our test construction as possible. We prefer commands in the Jenkins configuration over running a script in the filesystem on the remote ssh target. Scripts that are remote run with verbose mode or are displayed via "cat -n" to save output to the Jenkins console log and make for simpler debugging when a test fails.

1) *test completes on login node:* Some tests run only on the ssh login node and return more or less immediately. Examples include tests for batch system functionality, ssh functionality, and filesystem functionality. These tests are very similar in style to unit tests which target a limited set of functionality.

2) *test is submitted to batch system:* More comprehensive tests typically build and run an application or benchmark through the batch system. These tests exercise multiple aspects of the system: (filesystem, compilers and modules, high-speed network, external connectivity to the internet...). They block to completion so that we do not overburden the batch system with tests. Unlike tests that run entirely on a login node, completion time can be highly variable depending on the queue depth and available backfill windows for the batch system.

E. post test actions

1) *scp files back to Jenkins host:* Most comprehensive tests produce output that we use when debugging a failed test. They may also produce plot data. These files are copied back to the Jenkins host so that they can be viewed and/or incorporated into the plot feature of Jenkins.

2) *plots:* Successful tests save plot files and contribute a new data point to a plot. The Jenkins server accumulates the data as rows in a spreadsheet (under /var/lib/jenkins/jobs/) and plots them via the "Plots" link for a test.

F. email notification

When the state of a test changes, email notification is sent to the test owner. As a best practice we also use the email notification as a method of tracking authorship and each test has an email owner even if notifications are disabled for the test.

V. SWTOOLS INTEGRATION

A. SWTools with Jenkins

B. SWTools with Lammmps

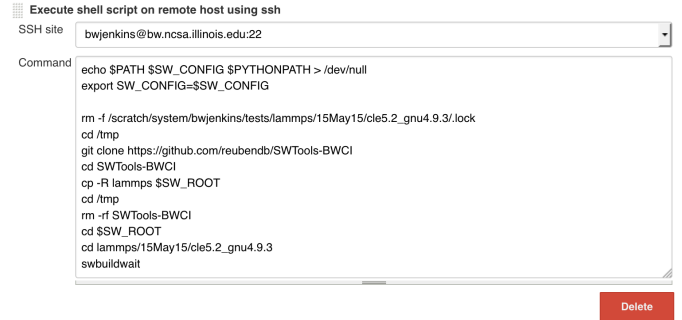


Figure 3: SWTools with Lammmps

VI. USE CASES

A. IOR Lustre scratch test

We created Jenkins tests to periodically run the IOR MPI parallel i/o benchmark at modest scale and validate filesystem functionality and performance for the scratch filesystem. The test is scaled to provide representative performance numbers for a typical small application while not creating performance issues with other jobs or the larger filesystem. One of our best practices is to provide a management level summary description for casual jenkins users who want to view the tests but do not need to understand the full Jenkins configuration and execution details.

Project IOR-bluewaters

IOR filesystem benchmark Scheduling frequency 6h , nodes=16:ppn=7:walltime=00:10:00

This is a small benchmark that matches the one on jyc: #PBS -lnodes=16:ppn=7:walltime=00:10:00 , using a stripe8/ directory created via "fs setstripe -c 8 stripe8". Performance should meet or exceed jyc's performance on average (jyc is typically dedicated while bluewaters is highly shared). The idea is to have a baseline of performance without being overly intrusive on the batch system or filesystem.

bwjenkins has been added to the acl for --arnold/ior and as a secondary objective, the ior binary is rebuilt for each trial -- testing the compilers and environment on blue waters.

Tests: automake, autoconf, and default build environment, Lustre striping and throughput for a small job, scratch

[edit description](#)

Figure 4: IOR description in jenkins

Where possible, tests build from source and exercise multiple user-facing system components such as: git for external connectivity and modules to test defaults in the environment. Where scripts on the remote SSH site are used, they are echoed and/or displayed with "cat -n" to make console output verbose and easy to debug in case of errors.

Execute shell script on remote host using ssh

SSH site `bwjenkins@bw.ncsa.illinois.edu:22`

```
Command
module load autoconf
module load automake
~/bin/myenv.sh
rm -rf jenkins-ior/
mkdir jenkins-ior
cd jenkins-ior
git clone https://github.com/LLNL/IOR
cd IOR
./bootstrap
./configure --host=x86_64 CC=cc
make -j 4
file src/ior
ls -l src/ior

cp src/ior ~arnoldg/ior/src/ior
#make clean; make
cat -n ~arnoldg/ior/compare_stripe.pbs # there is a iorscript input file
MYJOBID=`qsub ~arnoldg/ior/compare_stripe.pbs`
echo MYJOBID=$MYJOBID
~/bin/wait_for.sh $MYJOBID

echo "=== JOB RAN ON ==="
cat ~/scratch/stripe8/ior-compute-nodes
if [ -f ~/scratch/stripe8/ior-compute-nodes ]
then
: # it's all good
else
echo "Error: compute nodes not found, job has likely hit walltime"
```

Figure 5: IOR configuration sample

The IOR test is set to run as scheduled by Jenkins with a best-effort through our batch system. The test synchronously blocks such that the next test will not start until the previous one has completed. We employ a watchdog script to monitor the batch queue and keep the test active until the system marks it as finished. This has the side effect of making the minimum test time an integer multiple of the sleep time in the watchdog script. This may be adjusted to fit individual site needs.

Listing 1: pbs/torque watchdog script

```
#!/bin/bash
echo "===_RUNNING_$0_==="
if [ $# -lt 1 ]
then
echo "$0:_missing_argument_for_jobid"
exit 1
fi
while true
do
MYQSTAT=`qstat $1`
if test "$MYQSTAT" = ""
then
echo $1 finished
exit
else
DATE=`date`
echo "$DATE:_waiting_for_$1_to_finish"
fi
sleep 5m
done
```

```
Job submitted to account: jnc
MYJOBID=6281352.bw
=== RUNNING /u/system/bwjenkins/bin/wait_for.sh ===
Tue Mar 7 07:54:21 CST 2017: waiting for 6281352.bw to finish
Tue Mar 7 07:59:21 CST 2017: waiting for 6281352.bw to finish
Tue Mar 7 08:04:21 CST 2017: waiting for 6281352.bw to finish
qstat: Unknown Job Id Error 6281352.bw
6281352.bw finished
=== JOB RAN ON ===
nid14418
nid14416
nid14478
nid14417
nid14419
nid14477
```

Figure 6: IOR watchdog console output

For tests that produce an interesting performance metric like IOR, we save that output to the file format expected by Jenkins and use plotting feature to produce plots.

Listing 2: sample YVALUE output file

```
bwjenkins$ cat myiorREADnumber.dat
YVALUE=8352.71
```

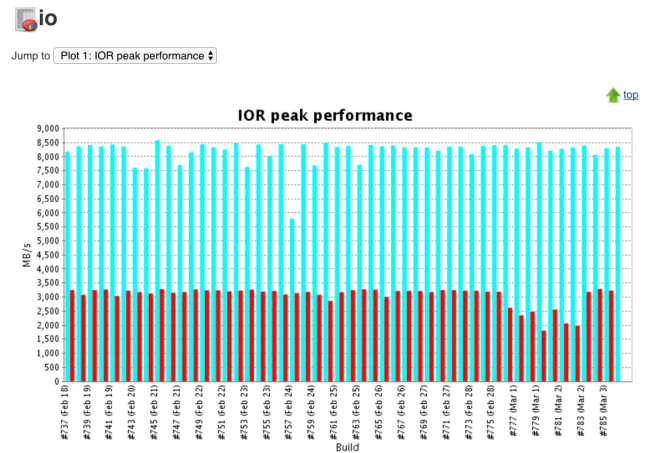


Figure 7: IOR plot view

A plot like this helps us with performance baselines and we can quickly react to changes in the software environment or filesystem configuration that adversely impact performance.

B. mdtest Lustre tests

The mdtest metadata test is run on the home and scratch filesystems to validate metadata server performance. The IOR and mdtest user-facing tests complement the fine-grained detail we are able to glean from the backed system-side counters in our OVIS database where we record details about individual server metrics and network traffic on the Cray Gemini fabric.

mdtest

Jump to Plot 1: mdtest file metadata performance

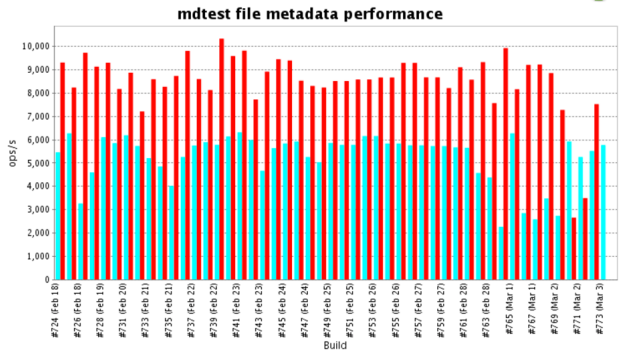


Figure 8: mdtest plot view

An additional best practice is to enable E-mail Notifications to the test author and/or other interested parties. Setting notifications for unstable builds will trigger an E-mail every time the test state changes (from successful to failing and once again when successful).

E-mail Notification

Recipients:

Whitespace-separated list of recipient addresses. May reference build parameters like \$PARAM. E-mail will be sent when a build fails, becomes unstable or returns to stable.

☒ Send e-mail for every unstable build

☐ Send separate e-mails to individuals who broke the build

Add post-build action

Figure 9: mdtest email configuration

C. filesystem dashboard

Our Jenkins instance is a source of information for a filesystem dashboard display we maintain in our wiki. The "http://" urls for the plot images are shown on the dashboard and provide a recent-time display of filesystem metrics from a user point of view. We add a Jenkins test to track response time of /bin/lis on the login nodes—a reasonable metric of metadata server health and also the most common problem reported by users when we are having filesystem issues.

Jenkins Monitoring, see also : <http://bwjenkins.ncsa.illinois.edu/view/BlueWaters/>



Figure 10: filesystem dashboard displaying multiple Jenkins plots

D. special projects

The initial display tabs in our Jenkins instance are used to group tests and we add tabs for special projects. For example we clone existing tests for evaluating a new software stack on our test login node. Our test rack has a separate set of tests from our production system and is used as our Jenkins development mule. The sustained petascale performance benchmarks are in their own tab because they run at scale and are only run on-demand by staff (not scheduled by Jenkins).

The "All" category contains all tests, both those assigned to another tab (in production) and tests currently in development. [edit descriptor](#)

S	W	Name	Last Success	Last Failure	Last Duration
		awp-odc-spp	1 mo 26 days - #15	2 mo 10 days - #11	20 min
		awp-odc-topomapping	1 mo 19 days - #12	N/A	4 hr 10 min

Figure 11: tabs for project areas

VII. BEST PRACTICES

- Tests are developed on the JYC development rack and not assigned into a Jenkins tab until reviewed.
- Email notification is enabled for most tests and the field is always populated with a test owner.
- All tests contain a description that describes what is tested, resources required, scheduling frequency, and overall summary to be readable by the management team.
- Log file count is limited in the test configuration to keep from filling filesystem space with verbose logs.
- Tests are coded to be more verbose than necessary so that failures can be isolated quickly and easily.

VIII. CONCLUSION

A. reproducibility and regression testing

Jenkins provides the framework we need to maintain tests in a consistent fashion and track the results over time (logs and plots). Tests typically are not changed so that we get apples-apples comparisons. When a new test is needed for a particular activity, we attempt to derive it from an existing test to maintain consistency and simplify test creation. Reusable test components (watchdog scripts, plotting metrics) are employed to make construction of completely new tests straightforward.

B. rapid reaction

The notification feature keeps test owners engaged in the testing activity of Jenkins and they are often our first responders to system issues. This results in a shorter reaction time when the system is not performing to expectations—staff are notified automatically when the user experience is impacted.

C. caveats

1) *transient errors*: Transient errors with Jenkins sometimes occur—particularly with the Jenkins ssh subsystem. It's not unusual to get ssh failure rates of 1/100 which are completely transient (immediately running the test again manually clears the issue on the dashboard).

2) *test scale and frequency*: There is some subjectivity in the frequency and scale (resource utilization) of tests. Testing too often, too large, or some combination of the two may perturb the system such that other tests are impacted or create bottlenecks in the system for the real user community. This is the primary reason we require peer review for new tests.

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REFERENCES

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- [2] <https://jenkins.io/> Jenkins: open source automation server written in Java