

# Contents

<b>Foreword</b> . . . . .	<b>i</b>
<b>Preface</b> . . . . .	<b>iii</b>
Who is this book for? . . . . .	iv
Typographic conventions . . . . .	iv
Please help improve this book! . . . . .	v
Current Published Book Version Information . . . . .	vi
About the Author . . . . .	vi
<b>Introduction</b> . . . . .	<b>vii</b>
In the beginning, there were sysadmins . . . . .	vii
Modern infrastructure management . . . . .	vii
Ansible and Red Hat . . . . .	viii
Ansible Examples . . . . .	x
Other resources . . . . .	x
<b>Chapter 1 - Getting Started with Ansible</b> . . . . .	<b>1</b>
Ansible and Infrastructure Management . . . . .	1
On snowflakes and shell scripts . . . . .	1
Configuration management . . . . .	2
Installing Ansible . . . . .	3
Creating a basic inventory file . . . . .	6
Running your first Ad-Hoc Ansible command . . . . .	7
Summary . . . . .	8
<b>Chapter 2 - Local Infrastructure Development: Ansible and Vagrant</b> . . . . .	<b>9</b>
Prototyping and testing with local virtual machines . . . . .	9
Your first local server: Setting up Vagrant . . . . .	10

## CONTENTS

Using Ansible with Vagrant . . . . .	11
Your first Ansible playbook . . . . .	12
Cleaning Up . . . . .	16
Summary . . . . .	16
<b>Chapter 3 - Ad-Hoc Commands . . . . .</b>	<b>17</b>
Conducting an orchestra . . . . .	17
Build infrastructure with Vagrant for testing . . . . .	18
Inventory file for multiple servers . . . . .	20
Your first ad-hoc commands . . . . .	22
Discover Ansible's parallel nature . . . . .	22
Learning about your environment . . . . .	24
Make changes using Ansible modules . . . . .	27
Configure groups of servers, or individual servers . . . . .	28
Configure the Application servers . . . . .	29
Configure the Database servers . . . . .	30
Make changes to just one server . . . . .	31
Manage users and groups . . . . .	32
Manage packages . . . . .	33
Manage files and directories . . . . .	34
Get information about a file . . . . .	34
Copy a file to the servers . . . . .	34
Retrieve a file from the servers . . . . .	35
Create directories and files . . . . .	35
Delete directories and files . . . . .	36
Run operations in the background . . . . .	36
Update servers asynchronously with asynchronous jobs . . . . .	37
Check log files . . . . .	38
Manage cron jobs . . . . .	40
Deploy a version-controlled application . . . . .	41
Ansible's SSH connection history . . . . .	42
Paramiko . . . . .	42
OpenSSH (default) . . . . .	43
Faster OpenSSH with Pipelining . . . . .	43
Summary . . . . .	44

## CONTENTS

<b>Chapter 4 - Ansible Playbooks</b> . . . . .	<b>45</b>
Power plays . . . . .	45
Running Playbooks with <code>ansible-playbook</code> . . . . .	50
Limiting playbooks to particular hosts and groups . . . . .	50
Setting user and sudo options with <code>ansible-playbook</code> . . . . .	51
Other options for <code>ansible-playbook</code> . . . . .	52
Real-world playbook: CentOS Node.js app server . . . . .	53
Add extra repositories . . . . .	55
Deploy a Node.js app . . . . .	58
Launch a Node.js app . . . . .	60
Node.js app server summary . . . . .	61
Real-world playbook: Ubuntu LAMP server with Drupal . . . . .	62
Include a variables file, and discover <code>pre_tasks</code> and <code>handlers</code> . . . . .	62
Basic LAMP server setup . . . . .	64
Configure Apache . . . . .	66
Configure PHP with <code>lineinfile</code> . . . . .	68
Configure MySQL . . . . .	69
Install Composer and Drush . . . . .	70
Install Drupal with Git and Drush . . . . .	73
Drupal LAMP server summary . . . . .	75
Real-world playbook: Ubuntu server with Solr . . . . .	76
Include a variables file, and more <code>pre_tasks</code> . . . . .	76
Install Java 8 . . . . .	77
Install Apache Solr . . . . .	78
Apache Solr server summary . . . . .	80
Summary . . . . .	81
<b>Chapter 5 - Ansible Playbooks - Beyond the Basics</b> . . . . .	<b>82</b>
Handlers . . . . .	82
Environment variables . . . . .	84
Per-play environment variables . . . . .	85
Variables . . . . .	87
Playbook Variables . . . . .	87
Inventory variables . . . . .	89
Registered Variables . . . . .	90
Accessing Variables . . . . .	91

## CONTENTS

Host and Group variables . . . . .	93
Automatically-loaded <code>group_vars</code> and <code>host_vars</code> . . . . .	94
Magic variables with host and group variables and information . . . . .	95
Facts (Variables derived from system information) . . . . .	96
Local Facts (Facts.d) . . . . .	97
Ansible Vault - Keeping secrets secret . . . . .	99
Variable Precedence . . . . .	103
If/then/when - Conditionals . . . . .	104
Jinja Expressions, Python built-ins, and Logic . . . . .	104
register . . . . .	106
when . . . . .	107
changed_when and failed_when . . . . .	109
ignore_errors . . . . .	110
Delegation, Local Actions, and Pauses . . . . .	110
Pausing playbook execution with <code>wait_for</code> . . . . .	111
Running an entire playbook locally . . . . .	112
Prompts . . . . .	113
Tags . . . . .	114
Blocks . . . . .	116
Summary . . . . .	118
<b>Chapter 6 - Playbook Organization - Roles, Includes, and Imports . . . . .</b>	<b>120</b>
Imports . . . . .	120
Includes . . . . .	122
Dynamic includes . . . . .	123
Handler imports and includes . . . . .	124
Playbook imports . . . . .	124
Complete includes example . . . . .	125
Roles . . . . .	128
Role scaffolding . . . . .	128
Building your first role . . . . .	129
More flexibility with role vars and defaults . . . . .	131
Other role parts: handlers, files, and templates . . . . .	134
Handlers . . . . .	134
Files and Templates . . . . .	134
Organizing more complex and cross-platform roles . . . . .	135

## CONTENTS

Ansible Galaxy . . . . .	138
Getting roles from Galaxy . . . . .	138
Using role requirements files to manage dependencies . . . . .	139
A LAMP server in nine lines of YAML . . . . .	140
A Solr server in seven lines of YAML . . . . .	142
Helpful Galaxy commands . . . . .	143
Contributing to Ansible Galaxy . . . . .	143
Summary . . . . .	143
<b>Chapter 7 - Inventories . . . . .</b>	<b>145</b>
A real-world web application server inventory . . . . .	146
Non-prod environments, separate inventory files . . . . .	150
Inventory variables . . . . .	151
host_vars . . . . .	153
group_vars . . . . .	154
Ephemeral infrastructure: Dynamic inventory . . . . .	155
Dynamic inventory with DigitalOcean . . . . .	156
DigitalOcean account prerequisites . . . . .	156
Connecting to your DigitalOcean account . . . . .	157
Creating a droplet with Ansible . . . . .	157
DigitalOcean dynamic inventory with digital_ocean.py . . . . .	163
Dynamic inventory with AWS . . . . .	164
Inventory on-the-fly: add_host and group_by . . . . .	165
Multiple inventory sources - mixing static and dynamic inventories . . . . .	166
Creating custom dynamic inventories . . . . .	166
Building a Custom Dynamic Inventory in Python . . . . .	168
Building a Custom Dynamic Inventory in PHP . . . . .	173
Managing a PaaS with a Custom Dynamic Inventory . . . . .	176
Summary . . . . .	177
<b>Chapter 8 - Ansible Cookbooks . . . . .</b>	<b>178</b>
Highly-Available Infrastructure with Ansible . . . . .	178
Directory Structure . . . . .	180
Individual Server Playbooks . . . . .	180
Main Playbook for Configuring All Servers . . . . .	192
Getting the required roles . . . . .	192

## CONTENTS

Vagrantfile for Local Infrastructure via VirtualBox . . . . .	193
Provisioner Configuration: DigitalOcean . . . . .	198
Provisioner Configuration: Amazon Web Services (EC2) . . . . .	203
Summary . . . . .	209
ELK Logging with Ansible . . . . .	210
ELK Playbook . . . . .	211
Forwarding Logs from Other Servers . . . . .	217
Summary . . . . .	223
GlusterFS Distributed File System Configuration with Ansible . . . . .	224
Configuring Gluster - Basic Overview . . . . .	225
Configuring Gluster with Ansible . . . . .	226
Summary . . . . .	233
Mac Provisioning with Ansible and Homebrew . . . . .	233
Running Ansible playbooks locally . . . . .	234
Automating Homebrew package and app management . . . . .	234
Configuring Mac OS X through dotfiles . . . . .	236
Summary . . . . .	238
<b>Chapter 9 - Deployments with Ansible . . . . .</b>	<b>239</b>
Deployment strategies . . . . .	239
Simple single-server deployments . . . . .	240
Provisioning a Ruby on Rails server . . . . .	241
Deploying a Rails app to the server . . . . .	244
Provisioning and Deploying the Rails App . . . . .	249
Deploying application updates . . . . .	251
Zero-downtime multi-server deployments . . . . .	254
Ensuring zero downtime with <code>serial</code> and integration tests . . . . .	263
Deploying to app servers behind a load balancer . . . . .	265
Capistrano-style and blue-green deployments . . . . .	272
Additional Deployment Features . . . . .	274
Summary . . . . .	275
<b>Chapter 10 - Server Security and Ansible . . . . .</b>	<b>276</b>
A brief history of SSH and remote access . . . . .	276
Telnet . . . . .	277
rlogin, rsh and rcp . . . . .	278

## CONTENTS

SSH . . . . .	279
The evolution of SSH and the future of remote access . . . . .	281
Use secure and encrypted communication . . . . .	282
Disable root login and use <code>sudo</code> . . . . .	284
Remove unused software, open only required ports . . . . .	286
Use the principle of least privilege . . . . .	286
User account configuration . . . . .	287
File permissions . . . . .	287
Update the OS and installed software . . . . .	289
Automating updates . . . . .	289
Automating updates for RHEL systems . . . . .	290
Automating updates for Debian-based systems . . . . .	290
Use a properly-configured firewall . . . . .	292
Configuring a firewall with <code>ufw</code> on Debian or Ubuntu . . . . .	292
Configuring a firewall with <code>firewalld</code> on RHEL, Fedora, or CentOS . . . . .	294
Make sure log files are populated and rotated . . . . .	295
Monitor logins and block suspect IP addresses . . . . .	296
Use SELinux (Security-Enhanced Linux) or AppArmor . . . . .	297
Summary and further reading . . . . .	299
<b>Chapter 11 - Automating Your Automation - Ansible Tower and CI/CD . . . . .</b>	<b>301</b>
Ansible Tower . . . . .	301
Getting and Installing Ansible Tower . . . . .	302
Using Ansible Tower . . . . .	304
Other Tower Features of Note . . . . .	307
Tower Alternatives . . . . .	307
Jenkins CI . . . . .	308
Build a local Jenkins server with Ansible . . . . .	308
Create an Ansible playbook on the Jenkins server . . . . .	311
Create a Jenkins job to run an Ansible Playbook . . . . .	311
Unit, Integration, and Functional Testing . . . . .	313
Debugging and Asserting . . . . .	314
The <code>debug</code> module . . . . .	314
The <code>fail</code> and <code>assert</code> modules . . . . .	316
Checking syntax and performing dry runs . . . . .	317
Automated testing on GitHub using Travis CI . . . . .	318

## CONTENTS

Testing on multiple OSES with Docker . . . . .	319
Setting up the test . . . . .	320
Building Docker containers in Travis . . . . .	322
Testing the role's syntax . . . . .	325
Role success - first run . . . . .	326
Role idempotence . . . . .	326
Role success - final result . . . . .	327
Some notes about Travis CI . . . . .	328
Real-world examples . . . . .	329
Functional testing using serverspec . . . . .	329
Other server and role testing tools . . . . .	330
Summary . . . . .	331
<b>Chapter 12 - Automating HTTPS and TLS Certificates . . . . .</b>	<b>332</b>
Generating Self-Signed Certificates with Ansible . . . . .	332
Idempotent Nginx HTTPS playbook with a self-signed cert . . . . .	334
Automating Let's Encrypt with Ansible for free Certs . . . . .	342
Use Galaxy roles to get things done faster . . . . .	342
Create the playbook . . . . .	343
Create a server and configure DNS . . . . .	349
Point the playbook inventory at the server . . . . .	350
Access your server over HTTPS! . . . . .	350
Configuring Nginx to proxy HTTP traffic and serve it over HTTPS . . . . .	351
Modify the Nginx configuration to proxy traffic . . . . .	352
Summary . . . . .	355
<b>Chapter 13 - Docker and Ansible . . . . .</b>	<b>356</b>
A brief introduction to Docker containers . . . . .	356
Using Ansible to build and manage containers . . . . .	358
Building a Flask app with Ansible and Docker . . . . .	360
Data storage container . . . . .	366
Flask container . . . . .	367
MySQL container . . . . .	372
Ship it! . . . . .	373
Building containers with Ansible from the outside . . . . .	373
Build a Hubot Slack bot container with <code>ansible_connection: docker</code> . . . . .	374



## CONTENTS

Hubot and Slack . . . . .	374
Building a Docker container with Ansible . . . . .	375
Building the hubot-slack role . . . . .	378
Building and running the Hubot Slack bot container . . . . .	380
Summary . . . . .	381
Summary . . . . .	382
<b>Chapter 14 - Kubernetes and Ansible . . . . .</b>	<b>383</b>
A bit of Kubernetes history . . . . .	383
Evaluating the need for Kubernetes . . . . .	384
Building a Kubernetes cluster with Ansible . . . . .	385
Managing Kubernetes with Ansible . . . . .	393
Ansible's k8s module . . . . .	394
Managing Kubernetes Applications with Helm . . . . .	400
Interacting with Pods using the kubectl connection plugin . . . . .	405
Summary . . . . .	407
<b>Afterword . . . . .</b>	<b>409</b>
<b>Appendix A - Using Ansible on Windows workstations . . . . .</b>	<b>410</b>
Method 1 - Use the Windows Subsystem for Linux / Bash on Ubuntu . . . . .	410
Installing Ansible inside Bash on Ubuntu . . . . .	411
Method 2 - When WSL is not an option . . . . .	412
Prerequisites . . . . .	413
Set up an Ubuntu Linux Virtual Machine . . . . .	413
Log into the Virtual Machine . . . . .	414
Install Ansible . . . . .	416
Summary . . . . .	417
<b>Appendix B - Ansible Best Practices and Conventions . . . . .</b>	<b>418</b>
Playbook Organization . . . . .	418
Write comments and use name liberally . . . . .	418
Include related variables and tasks . . . . .	419
Use Roles to bundle logical groupings of configuration . . . . .	420
Use role defaults and vars correctly . . . . .	421
YAML Conventions and Best Practices . . . . .	422
YAML for Ansible tasks . . . . .	423

## CONTENTS

Three ways to format Ansible tasks . . . . .	424
Shorthand/one-line (key=value) . . . . .	424
Structured map/multi-line (key:value) . . . . .	425
Folded scalars/multi-line (>) . . . . .	426
Using   to format multiline variables . . . . .	427
Using ansible-playbook . . . . .	427
Use Ansible Tower . . . . .	428
Specify --forks for playbooks running on > 5 servers . . . . .	428
Use Ansible's Configuration file . . . . .	428
Summary . . . . .	429