

British Army Migrates Cloud Infrastructure to Red Hat Solutions

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Red Hat Enterprise Linux and Ansible Tower by Red Hat help British Army improve consistency and simplify management

LONDON--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Red Hat, Inc. (NYSE:RHT), the world's leading provider of open source solutions, today announced that the British Army has migrated its private cloud environment to Red Hat Enterprise Linux and is using Ansible Tower by Red Hat for automation and orchestration. With Red Hat Enterprise Linux and Ansible Tower by Red Hat, the British Army is able to deliver applications more quickly and efficiently, with less downtime, to better meet the needs of end users.

Headquartered in Andover, UK, the British Army has more than 19,000 soldiers deployed in commitments, in more than 27 countries across the globe. The Army's Information Application Services (IAS) team delivers large corporate applications, hosting and web services that provide support to military families, veterans and more. The IAS team has applications in production running on two main hosting environments: a joint server farm hosted in a private cloud, and a private hosting environment, which consists of two private clouds designated for secure data.

The IAS team was experiencing support and compatibility issues with the legacy stack, resulting in unplanned downtime for upgrades and delayed updates. The Army sought a solution that could not only deliver software more quickly and without downtime, but would also enable them to embrace DevOps methodologies.

As a result, the British Army migrated to Red Hat Enterprise Linux and moved from a physical infrastructure to a software-defined datacenter. Its main stack consists of five database servers and two applications servers, all of which have a central spine of a clustered file system. For this, the Army uses the Resilient Storage add-on for Red Hat Enterprise Linux, which offers robust file system capabilities that enable users to access the same storage device over a network—using either shared storage or a clustered file system—through a pool of data that's available to each server in a group.

To help with management, the Army deployed Ansible Tower by Red Hat, initially using the enterprise-grade agentless automation platform to automate the installation of routine patches and configuration updates to Red Hat Enterprise Linux. The British Army has expanded its Ansible Tower implementation, now using it to provide rapid patching and system reconfiguration for urgent requirements, and to provide other DevOps functionality for routine system administration.

With the new Ansible automation-based system, the Army has accelerated its pace of change by 75 percent. Upgrades that used to take a day can now be achieved with high availability in less than two hours, and can be scheduled after hours. Emergency patches that used to take approximately three days can be implemented in a matter of hours. Overall, delivering changes is now four times faster, on average, based on the British Army's internal calculations. With the time saved from automating tasks with Ansible Tower by Red Hat, the Army has been able to reallocate people to other parts of the organization.

The Army plans to extend the DevOps capability provided by Ansible, to include other platforms, as well as managing its network switches and servers.

Supporting Quotes

Lt Col. Dorian Seabrook, head of Operations, IAS Branch, British Army

"We want to deliver software quicker and more efficiently to meet the end users' requirements and we absolutely made the right choice with Ansible. It works for us on a number of levels, and the adoption throughout the organization is now starting to really take hold. Previously, communicating the delivery timescales for large projects could be quite stressful. Now, in most cases, we're delivering quicker than the users can actually absorb the changes. Our users are just staggered by the agility and the turnaround time and what we can now offer them."

Joe Fitzgerald, vice president, Management, Red Hat

"The British Army, like many organizations, is under constant pressure to deliver software and services quickly with no downtime. An increasingly large challenge IT organizations are facing is to modernize software development and IT operations while still operating and maintaining traditional applications and infrastructure. To keep up with the requests from its users, the British Army decided to enhance its DevOps capabilities by deploying Ansible. At the press of a button, Ansible Tower can deliver software and updates to the correct places, which can lead to fewer errors and help eliminate unplanned downtime."

Additional Resources

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