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Constellation
RESEARCH

Oracle Boosts DevOps Velocity With Oracle Linux Automation Manager

Automation Matters for Next-Generation Application
Success, Fueling Enterprise Acceleration

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INTRODUCTION

Oracle released Oracle Linux Automation in August 2021[1]. The new capabilities Oracle Linux Automation Manager[2] delivers to enterprises are substantial in terms of making their DevOps process more scalable and repeatable—and therefore more successful. Nothing is more costly for an enterprise than to sit idle with transformative code that has been created but cannot be released into production due to DevOps complications. Oracle Linux Automation Manager gets even more interesting for CxOs, because Oracle makes it free to use—as long as the enterprise is using Oracle Linux Premier Support.

This blog post explains what Oracle Linux Automation Manager is all about, explores what sets it apart from its competitors in the market, presents key differentiators, and concludes with actionable recommendations for CxOs.

WHAT ARE THE KEY TRENDS?

Data has been at the center of moving into a digital economy. It is very much the currency that guarantees the success of digital transformation projects enterprises are pursuing when building next-generation applications, and getting code into production environments via DevOps tools and platforms is key for overall enterprise success. Often, meeting this need for code velocity means automating DevOps processes. The following are five primary drivers for DevOps automation (see Figure 1):

1. **Create formality for DevOps.** DevOps is a very young discipline across IT functions. Like all other new processes, as it emerges from its "Wild West" phase, it needs to achieve a more formal approach—quickly. CxOs are looking for offerings that can power as many platforms as possible as holistically as possible, because the key criterion is to have (ideally) a single pane of glass for managing all of DevOps—to achieve as much visibility into automation as they can.

2. **Ensure repeatability for DevOps processes.** Much as with the lack of formality, early DevOps processes lack the maturity to achieve repeatability—in other words, to achieve the same outcome upon repetition. Putting DevOps processes in code is a key step for making sure these processes

are repeatable, and that is what is powering the ability for enterprises to operate in a hybrid and multicloud environment.

3. **Bring stability to the overall release and operations process.** Another key challenge in the DevOps field is to achieve stability for DevOps processes. Far too often, process quality and outcomes depend on individuals and their tools. CxOs are looking to standardize the code artifacts (often called scripts) and the platforms that operate those artifacts.

4. **Achieve observability from a script automation perspective.** The next Holy Grail for DevOps is to achieve observational quality (aka observability) for all DevOps processes, meaning that there is both a platform and possible human awareness of what is happening in an enterprise's software landscape. The next step after achieving (ideally complete) observability will be achieving manageability of the entire software supply and production processes of an enterprise.

Figure 1. Five Drivers for DevOps Automation

Source: Constellation Research

5. **Realize higher velocity for DevOps and, with that, for your next-generation applications.**
Enterprises need to become more agile and move faster than ever. To achieve Enterprise Acceleration[3], enterprises need to include their software infrastructure and the code-related supply and production processes in the acceleration strategy and execution. The higher velocity of DevOps processes needs to account for the overall need for acceleration in the enterprise in general and, particularly when it comes to code, to the higher developer velocity that enterprises are achieving with their developer tooling. Nothing is more costly to enterprises than having production-quality and production-ready code and not being able to ferry that code across its release process into production, where it makes a difference for the enterprise.

WHAT IS ORACLE LINUX AUTOMATION MANAGER?

Oracle built Oracle Linux Automation Manager and Oracle Linux Automation Engine to address the demands of the modern enterprise for managing code assets and platform infrastructure. The offering brings together the following key capabilities necessary for an efficient and successful DevOps platform (see Figure 2):
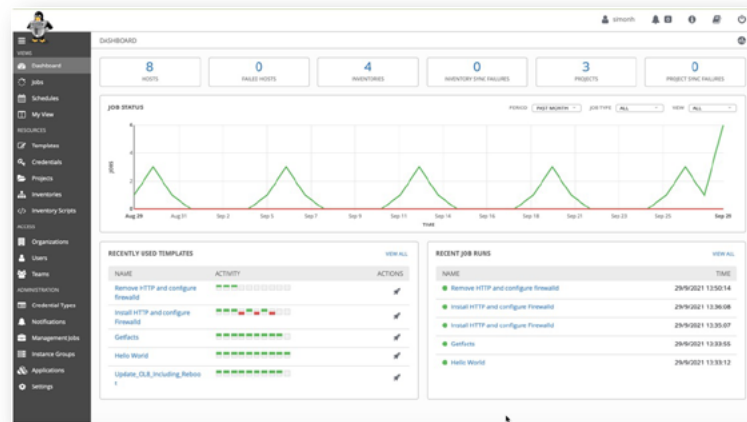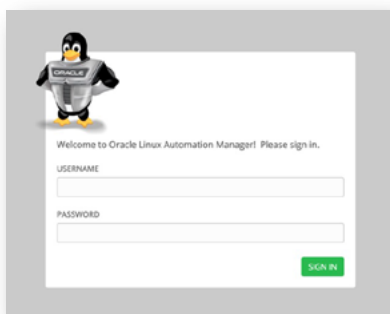
Figure 2. Oracle Linux Automation Manager Offerings

ORACLE
Linux
Automation Manager

Oracle Linux Automation Manager/Engine
Released August 18, 2021

Enables modern provisioning, deployment, configuration management, and task automation
- Oracle Linux Automation Manager is based on AWX
- Oracle Linux Automation Engine is based on Ansible
- Included with Oracle Linux Premier Support at no extra cost

Source: Oracle

- **Oracle Linux Automation Manager leverages AWX.** Oracle decided to leverage open source for the creation of Oracle Linux Automation Manager and chose Ansible WorX (AWX), leveraging its web-based user interface, REST API, and task engine. AWX also provides centralized management of roles and responsibilities, allowing for role-based access control (RBAC). Oracle leverages AWX to enable job scheduling, inventory management, reporting, workflow automation, credential sharing, and more tooling for Oracle Linux Automation Manager.

- **Oracle Linux Automation Engine is based on Ansible.** Oracle also chose to leverage Ansible for its complete automation framework and orchestration capabilities. Ansible simplifies software provisioning, enables configuration management, and supports application deployment. Thanks to its push architecture, Ansible enables Oracle Linux Automation Engine to create an agentless push of code. Finally, Ansible provides highly desirable playbook capabilities to Oracle Linux Automation Manager.
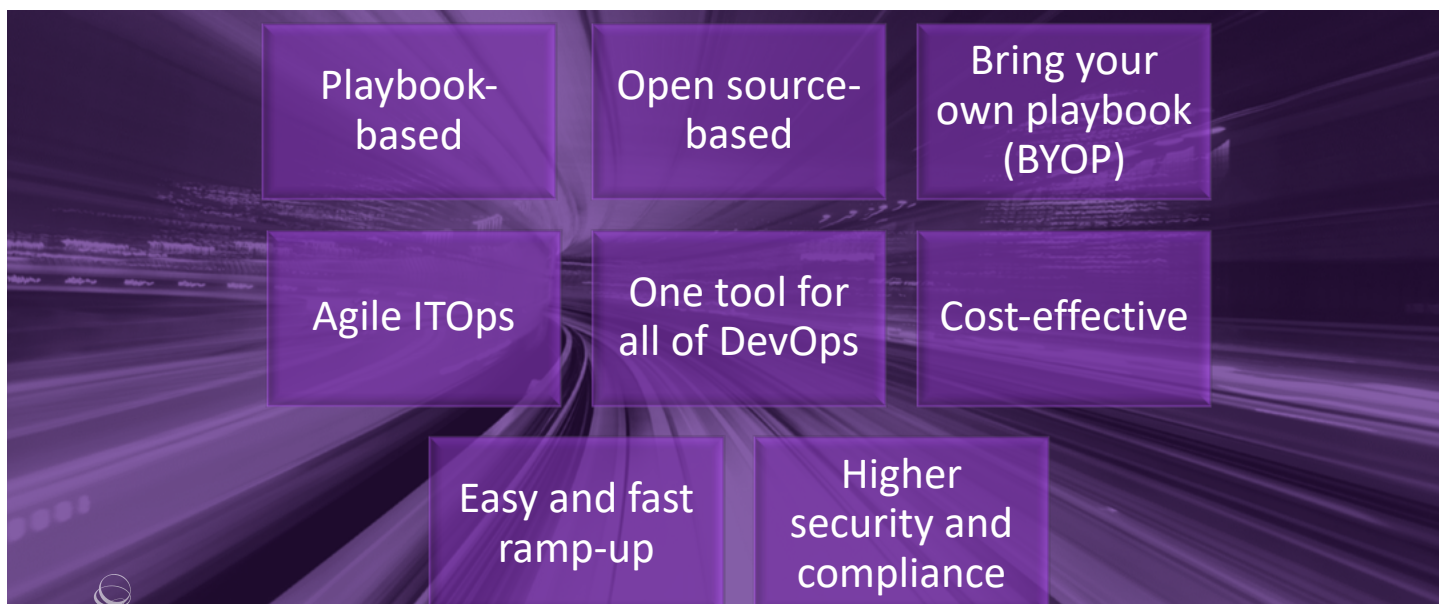
Oracle provides Oracle Linux Automation Manager to enterprises at no extra cost as long as they are using Oracle Linux Premier Support. This effectively enhances the value of Linux Premier Support for enterprises.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Figure 3 shows the following eight key value drivers of Oracle Linux Automation Manager:

- **Delight DevOps users with playbooks.** Playbooks are the latest automation construct for DevOps, enabling richer and deeper DevOps automation by allowing for situational automation. Oracle Linux Automation Manager uses Ansible playbooks, which are written in simple human-readable YAML format. Users can pull from the large set of existing playbooks in the open source community or write new ones. Example playbooks are included with this first release.

- **Take advantage of open source innovation.** Open source has won as the source of automation and innovation for platform software, and Oracle is acknowledging that

Figure 3. Oracle Linux Automation Manager's Eight Key Value Drivers

trend by using AWX as well as Ansible to serve as the foundation for Oracle Linux Automation Manager.

- **Jump-start the journey with BYOP.** Nothing is closer to the heart of a DevOps professional than a working playbook that provides proven automation to enterprise software environments. The ability to "bring your own playbook" (BYOP) is a key win for Oracle Linux Automation Manager, because it enables DevOps professionals to bring along what is working and trusted: their playbooks from previous automation platforms.

- **Deliver on agile ITOps.** Agility has always been important for enterprises—increasingly so in times of widespread and unprecedented change such as during a pandemic. Formalizing processes and procedures helps enterprises scale better with their DevOps activities, which contributes to more agility.

- **Standardize on one tool for all of DevOps.** Standardizing on a single platform for DevOps reduces complexity for enterprises and thus increases agility to cope with the challenges ahead while increasing the velocity of DevOps operations.

- **Take advantage of a cost-effective offering.** By making the offering effectively free for customers already using Oracle Linux Premier Support, Oracle makes it hard for them to ignore Oracle Linux Automation Manager. At the same time, Oracle Linux Premier Support becomes more attractive to enterprises by providing more automation for no additional cost.

- **Start fast and smooth.** With the ability to use proven playbooks and given the no-extra-cost price, it is easy for enterprises to quickly start and derive benefits from operating Oracle Linux Automation Manager.

- **Achieve higher levels of security and compliance.** As with all standardizations on a single platform, certain benefits are easier to realize with Oracle's new offering. Most prominently, enterprises can achieve higher levels of security and compliance by standardizing on Oracle Linux Automation Manager and using its features such as RBAC.

ADVICE FOR CXOS

Constellation has the following recommendations for CxOs regarding the new Oracle Linux Automation Manager offering:

1. **Understand the DevOps need of your enterprise.** IT investments are critical for enterprises in a world that is characterized by more dynamic demand changes and supply chain fluctuations than ever, and it is not a question of *if* but a question of *when* enterprises need to invest in IT. This makes DevOps critical for every enterprise that has realized that software is a strategic weapon for its success.

2. **Realize that Oracle Linux Automation Manager is an attractive offering.** The ability to bring tried-and-tested playbooks to Oracle Linux Automation Manager, combined with the offering's open source foundation, which provides high guarantees of future-proofing, makes Oracle Linux Automation Manager an attractive candidate for enterprises looking to effectively manage their DevOps processes.

3. **Evaluate Oracle Linux Automation as an existing Oracle Linux customer.** Existing Oracle Linux customers should evaluate Oracle Linux Automation Manager immediately: A native tool from the same vendor is always an attractive candidate for infrastructure automation. This is particularly true if the enterprise is using Oracle Linux Premier Support, which makes Oracle Linux Automation Manager practically a free-of-charge offering.

4. **Consider Oracle Linux Automation Manager for next-generation application deployments.** Enterprises need to build next-generation applications that reflect the new best practices in the era of Infinite Computing[4]. Being able to manage infrastructure from a single centralized platform such as Oracle Linux Automation Manager is a key success factor for the successful deployment of next-generation applications.

MyPOV

Enterprises need to improve their automation levels, and automating their software infrastructure is a top priority for CxOs. Nothing is more costly for an enterprise than valuable code assets' not being delivered to production systems, where they can make a difference for the enterprise.

It is good to see Oracle adding an automation offering with Oracle Linux Automation Manager, effectively enabling enterprises to run with an offering that is provided by their Linux vendor on the platform they use. A strong foundation based on open source ensures innovation in the future for this Oracle DevOps platform. And the BYOP ability makes a quick start possible for Oracle Linux Automation Manager, making the offering attractive to CxOs as well as operational DevOps professionals. When it comes to the scale and reliability of processes, nothing is more powerful than running something proven on a proven platform.

Oracle Linux Automation Manager is a new offering, but it is off to a good start, based on a DNA of open source, BYOP, inclusion in Oracle Premier Linux Support, and—as with every other Oracle offering—a commitment to lower TCO.

RELATED RESEARCH

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For information on enterprise application platforms, see: Holger Mueller, "Constellation ShortList™ Enterprise Application Platforms," Constellation Research, February 10, 2021. https://www.constellationr.com/research/constellation-shortlist-enterprise-application-platforms

RELATED RESEARCH CONTINUED

For more on next-gen databases, see: Holger Mueller, "Constellation ShortList™ Next-Gen Databases: RDBMS for On-Premises," Constellation Research, February 10, 2021. https://www.constellationr.com/research/constellation-shortlist-next-gen-databases-rdbms-premises-4

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Oracle-Related Research

For information on Oracle Application Express (Oracle APEX), see: Holger Mueller, "Oracle Makes Its Great Database Even Better—and Adds Low Code to It," Constellation Research, February 10, 2021. https://www.constellationr.com/research/oracle-makes-its-great-database-even-better-and-adds-low-code-it

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ENDNOTES

[1] *The announcement blog post can be found here: Simon Hayler, "Announcing Oracle Linux Automation Manager," August 21, 2021.* https://blogs.oracle.com/linux/post/announcing-oracle-linux-automation-manager

[2] *Find the data sheet of Oracle Linux Automation Manager here:* https://www.oracle.com/a/ocom/docs/oracle-linux-automation-manager-ds.pdf

[3] Enterprise Acceleration *refers to the need for enterprises to move faster and become more agile. For more, see: Holger Mueller, "Why the C-Suite Must Embrace Enterprise Acceleration," May 2, 2019.* https://www.constellationr.com/research/why-c-suite-must-embrace-enterprise-acceleration

[4] *The term* Infinite Computing *describes how computing resources have become nearly infinite for enterprise purposes, effectively eliminating the need to size hardware resources. For more details, see: Holger Mueller, "The Era of Infinite Computing Triggers Next-Generation Applications," Constellation Research, June 1, 2018.* https://www.constellationr.com/research/era-infinite-computing-triggers-next-generation-applications

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