

COMPARING AWX AND RED HAT ANSIBLE TOWER

DATASHEET

INTRODUCTION

Ansible® automation can be used across IT teams—by system and network administrators, developers, and managers. Red Hat® Ansible Automation is a family of offerings that provides enterprise-ready solutions to automate your entire application and IT environment life cycle—from servers to clouds to containers and everything in between. This piece provides a comparison between Red Hat Ansible Tower, part of the Red Hat Ansible Automation family, and the AWX Project.

RED HAT ANSIBLE TOWER

Red Hat Ansible Tower is a commercial offering that helps teams manage complex, multitier deployments by adding control, knowledge, and delegation to Ansible-powered environments. Red Hat Ansible Tower helps you scale IT automation, manage complex deployments, and speed productivity. You can centralize and control your IT infrastructure with a visual dashboard, role-based access control (RBAC), job scheduling, integrated notifications, and graphical inventory management. Plus, it is easy to embed Ansible Tower into existing tools and processes.

Red Hat Ansible Tower is best for:

- Controlling and running Red Hat Ansible Engine at scale.
- Protecting and delegating access to automation credentials.

AWX PROJECT

The AWX Project is the fast-moving upstream project from which Red Hat Ansible Tower is derived. The AWX Project is similar to a nascent upstream community in terms of project stability and velocity. But, unlike Fedora, where there are maintained releases, AWX does not have separately maintained releases.

AWX is best for developers who want to:

- Participate in the AWX community.
- Evaluate new features.

AWX MATURITY GOALS

Red Hat's aim is to help AWX mature with a model similar to that of Fedora, where the product will be used for new features, not all of which will make it into Red Hat Ansible Tower. There are multiple reasons that Red Hat does not recommend or support AWX in production.



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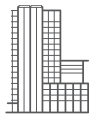
TABLE 1. AWX AND RED HAT ANSIBLE TOWER IN PRODUCTION

| | AWX | RED HAT ANSIBLE TOWER |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| Stability | AWX is a development branch. Frequent changes are introduced and can be released with only minimal testing. This can limit adoption across an enterprise. | Customers can count on receiving the latest product versions with the stability and security they have come to expect from Red Hat. |
| Security | AWX code has not gone through full quality engineering (QE) testing and does not include signed or security-hardened images. To protect against risk, most security professionals expect a signed image and will not sanction unsigned images for enterprise use. AWX does not provide security fixes for prior releases. Any security fixes are only applied to the development stream. | Customers can rely on security patches and bug fixes being delivered for the entire life of the product. |
| Access to Red Hat expertise | Users do not have access to Red Hat's world-class support. In addition, there are no training or consulting services available from Red Hat on AWX. | Customers have access to information and support services that span the entire application infrastructure, life cycle, and architecture. Red Hat has helped customers implement some of the largest and most complex Ansible Tower deployments, sharing that knowledge to the benefit of Ansible Tower customers. Ansible Tower customers also may choose to use expert Red Hat resources for training, consulting, and building their automation practice. |
| Upgrades | AWX contains only minimal support for upgrades between versions, and is not tested for upgrades across multiple versions. Users may have to rebuild and reconfigure every time. This includes credentials, Lightweight Directory Access Protocol (LDAP) authentication, data extraction, etc. | Because of clear and manageable upgrade paths and product life cycles, customers are not caught off guard with mandatory updates. |

FUTURE PLANS

Red Hat Ansible Tower will continue to add enhancements. When choosing the best solution for your organization, consider these points:

- AWX stability is heavily reliant on the Red Hat Ansible Tower release cycle. If Ansible Tower is released more frequently, then AWX will naturally be less stable.
- Future Ansible ecosystem updates will provide a tighter direct integration to Ansible Tower. That same integration will not necessarily exist with AWX.
- AWX has multiple development branches. To get the latest features, a user might have to manually integrate code versions to access multiple functionalities in the same installation.
- Because the AWX code base moves rapidly, it is possible that two AWX downloads in the same day may result in different feature sets, capabilities, and issues.



ABOUT RED HAT

Red Hat is the world's leading provider of open source software solutions, using a community-powered approach to provide reliable and high-performing cloud, Linux, middleware, storage, and virtualization technologies. Red Hat also offers award-winning support, training, and consulting services. As a connective hub in a global network of enterprises, partners, and open source communities, Red Hat helps create relevant, innovative technologies that liberate resources for growth and prepare customers for the future of IT.



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