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Status of Centralized Config Management at the RACF

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It's simple enough to instantiate a new process in an existing environment; it can be much more challenging to foster acceptance of such a process in IT environments and cultures that are traditionally stagnant and resistant to change, and to maintain and optimize that process to ensure it continues to realize optimal benefit. To enhance our computing facility, we've already taken considerable strides toward simplifying, optimizing, and automating our technical deployment and maintenance procedures by analyzing, adopting, and implementing policies and technologies. As our facility evolves, so does technology change: we continuously revisit our environment and needs, evaluate our current tools and processes, and watch the horizon of the IT landscape for new and more optimal technology and solutions.

Our configuration management core relies in part upon Puppet: Puppet Labs has developed a new server model, which we have tested and evaluated against our existing Puppet deployment. We've developed an automated testing process based upon Jenkins CI, a continuous integration tool that validates pending changes before they can be pushed into our production environment. We've begun evaluating MCollective, an orchestration framework that may prove useful to our current automation processes by adding functionality such as resource grouping and reporting. We're working with other organizations at our site that share our interest in configuration management to share ideas and refine solutions.

In this talk, we present an overview of the current state of configuration management environment in our facility, the technical challenges we currently face, the technology we're evaluating and using to address those challenges, and the direction in which we plan to steer our future efforts.

Summary

An overview of our Puppet deployment at the RACF.

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