

# First Impressions of Saltstack and Reclass as our new Configuration Management System

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In the Autumn of 2016 the Nikhef data processing facility (NDPF) found itself at a junction on the road of configuration management. The NDPF was one of the early adopters of Quattor, which served us well since the early days of the Grid. But where grid deployments were uniquely complex to require the likes of Quattor then, nowadays a plethora of configuration systems have cropped up to fulfill the needs of the booming industry of cloud orchestration.

Faced with the choice of an overhaul of our Quattor installation to bring our site up-to-date, or an investment to adopt a brand new system, we opted for the latter. And among the many candidates like Chef, Puppet, and Ansible, we chose Saltstack and partnered it with Reclass.

This led to hours of discussions designing the flows and processes of the new system, as well figuring out how to do the transition from the old to the new. And many more were spent trying out these ideas, pioneering as it were to find a way forward that would work for us.

We like to present the insights we've gained about Saltstack and configuration management in general, and our design choices in particular. This is very much a work in progress, as we are getting to know our new system while we are implementing more and more of the moving parts. We are gaining invaluable experience with tasks that are otherwise rarely among the day-to-day business of the system administrator, and we like to share it with our peers.

## Desired length

20

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