RackN Newsletter Oct 2020

October, 2020 Subscribe Link

Audience: RackN Customers, Community, and Interested Parties

Welcome

We're excited to restart the RackN monthly newsletter! We want to share our news and provide some details about what we've been heads down building. Subscribe for more!

From the Founders

This month RackN celebrated our fifth anniversary! Looking back at some of our founding materials, it is amazing much of our original vision we've built and delivered. We've taken some time to write those core principles down in a simple and consumable way.

Community Activity

Our #community Slack channel continues to be a very active place to get help around Digital Rebar both from RackN support and other community members. Currently, there are 804 people registered (there were 451 in October 2019).

Stay tuned for Digital Rebar regular community meetings! We'll be talking about key features and getting input on our roadmap.

Several Digital Rebar users are regulars in the2030.cloud weekly discussions! Come and join the discussions about DevOps on Tuesday @ 11 am PT and General Industry on Thursday 8 am PT.

Product Updates

Security Alerts and Quality Metrics!

We've maintained a 57% code coverage rate for the v4.5 release.

We are updating our CVE process to ensure we can notify customers quickly after we become aware of vulnerabilities. Please let comm@rackn.com know who should be contacted!

Roadmap Feature Highlight: Universal Workflow

We [released v4.5 in September](#) and our [next release will be v4.6](#). That release includes the remarkable "universal workflow" components.

Universal Workflow dramatically extends Digital Rebar current workflow's ability to respond dynamically to environmental state from discovery and user choices. We've been refining it for several releases in customer scenarios where details about server configuration (such as which vendor or type of system) need to change the configuration steps. This allows Digital Rebar to add qualification, configuration or validation steps on-the-fly to otherwise generic workflows.

As a more general purpose feature in v4.6, Universal Workflow allows our standard operating system provisioning workflows to dynamically include classification, hardware and network configuration steps. Operators will be able to activate these new stages by simply including some predefined parameters to one or more system profiles.

Our goal is to make advanced self-configuration as easy as setting a few fields into a shared profile. We've been slowly adding the required features and testing the patterns to ensure we make this powerful feature simple to use.

News

Community Story Time!

Last month a new company showed up in the community with a completely manual provisioning process that was taking four days to get systems online. The RackN team had fun watching them learn DRP basics and quickly improve their delivery time down to just 3 hours. Since then, they've been working more closely with the RackN team and image deploy and image builder tooling to create a single pass install process. It looks like they're going to get full provision cycle time down to just 15 minutes!

We're always trying to make the padawan journey simpler and the interaction definitely resulted in some improvements to Digital Rebar documentation and tooling.

RackN "on the Road" and in the News

As leaders in the data center automation space, we work hard to build community and share best practices with other operators. Please join in and share information about the following
events:

News
- [Gartner](#) includes RackN as [Cool Vendor for Cloud2020](#) includes us in their [Infrastructure Automation Factory](#) for bare metal automation.
- [EdgeLab.digital](#) talks for [Open Network and Edge Summit](#) and [KubeVirtual Summit](#) (Week of Oct 1)
- Rob visited with [Mark Thiele on the Edgevana Podcast](#) about Edge, DevOps and Infrastructure.

Events
- Infrastructure as Code talks for [DCD on October 14](#) and [DevOps Experience on October 24](#)
- Deep dive on PXE Boot for [USENIX SREcon](#) (RackN is also a sponsor)
- Advanced JQ fu for [All Day DevOps (ADDO)](#) on November 12th

Ongoing Items
- Weekly DevOps and Industry discussions on [the2030.cloud](#)!
- Subscribe our podcast, the [L8istSh9y](#), to hear great discussions on DevOps, Edge, Infrastructure and more!

Industry Items of Note

- Significant consolidation occurred in the configuration management space where we saw [Chef acquired by Progress](#) & [SaltStack acquired by VMware](#).
- VMworld announced some important considerations for SmartNICs in [VMware Project Monterey](#). Rob participated in two recaps: [Rishdot](#) and [TFiR recap](#)
- In bare metal hosting news, Equinix rebranded [Packet.net to be Equinix Metal](#) and [IBM is splitting out their hosting business into another company (name pending)](#).

DYK? Tips and Tricks!

The RackN UX includes a [quick navigation short-cut via Control-K](#). From any screen in the UX, you can press Ctrl-K and type the name of the UX area you want to visit (such as Profiles). Once Ctrl-K has focus, you can chain searches together to quickly find specific items. For example Ctrl-K...Pro[files]...Tab...glo[bal]...Enter will navigate directly to the global profile! Check the [video animation](#) to see it in action!

DRPCLI has several optimized calls used to streamline wait and looping decisions in scripts. Using these calls can
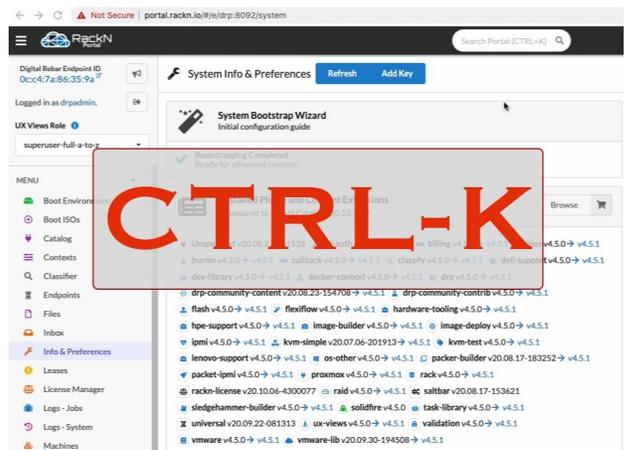
dramatically reduce the burden on the API when a polling operation is needed. Here are two of our favorites!

1. Instead of looping for a state change, use the "drpcli machines wait" command. In this mode, the drpcli will subscribe to updates for the selected item and watch for the value to change. No loop is needed!
2. Instead of parsing JSON output for a count, use the "drpcli machines count" command. In this mode, the drpcli uses the data indexes instead of returning all the JSON data.   Since filters are respected this can also be used to test for values or criteria in a script.

Thank you!

We hope this was interesting and helpful. Please let us know what you want to hear in the next one and, of course, follow @digitalrebar and @rackngo on Twitter or LinkedIn via https://www.linkedin.com/company/rackn