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# **Ansible Tower Upgrade and Migration**

*Release Ansible Tower 3.6.0*

**Red Hat, Inc.**

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Thank you for your interest in Red Hat Ansible Tower. Ansible Tower is a commercial offering that helps teams manage complex multi-tier deployments by adding control, knowledge, and delegation to Ansible-powered environments.

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**Note:** You must upgrade your Ansible Tower 2.4.4 (or later) system to Ansible Tower 3.0 before you can upgrade to Ansible Tower 3.1.0.

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The *Ansible Tower Upgrade and Migration Guide* discusses how to upgrade your Ansible Tower 2.4.4 (or later) system to the 3.0 version. The Ansible Tower 3.0 release introduced many updates and changes to Tower, including changes to the way upgrades run and a completely rewritten RBAC system. This guide covers these and other related changes that you should keep in mind as you plan to migrate your data and prepare for this upgrade.

### **We Need Feedback!**

If you spot a typo in this documentation, or if you have thought of a way to make this manual better, we would love to hear from you! Please send an email to: [docs@ansible.com](mailto:docs@ansible.com)

If you have a suggestion, try to be as specific as possible when describing it. If you have found an error, please include the manual's title, chapter number/section number, and some of the surrounding text so we can find it easily. We may not be able to respond to every message sent to us, but you can be sure that we will be reading them all!

Ansible Tower Version 3.6.0; November 13, 2019; <https://access.redhat.com/>

## RELEASE NOTES FOR ANSIBLE TOWER VERSION 3.6.0

### 1.1 Ansible Tower Version 3.6.0

- Added the ability to activate Tower Licenses and subscriptions by entering a Red Hat username and password
- Added the the ability to run Tower jobs in a remote OpenShift or Kubernetes cluster with ephemeral containers
- Added a new [CLI tool](#)
  
- Added the ability to listen for webhooks sent by events in GitHub or GitLab, using them to launch job templates or workflow templates
- Added the ability to disable SSL verification for webhook notifications
- Added the ability to enable SSL for PostgreSQL and RabbitMQ (not on by default)
- Added the ability to emit verbose file-based logs using a setting in the UI
- Added the ability to disable hosts from dynamic inventory sources in the UI
- Added the ability to allow specifying project branch in job template, or prompting for project branch
- Added the ability to copy the project source (shallow clone in case of git) for every job run
- Added the ability to allow using a custom refs spec with git projects
- Added the ability to install Collections specified in `collections/requirements.yml` file
- Added support for custom notification content
- Added the ability to create approval nodes in workflow job templates
- Added the ability to collect performance data in the SOS report
- Added the ability to map org auditors in the same way org admins can
- Deprecated the *Administrator Alert* functionality in the Tower settings, which will be removed in a later release
- Deprecated *Inventory Scripts*. Users who use custom inventory scripts should migrate to [sourcing these scripts from a project](#).
  
- Removed the deprecated `ask_` fields in the Job Details view to reduce confusion. This does not affect the functionality of prompting.
- Removed the ability to use Ubuntu as a Tower platform
- Removed the OAuth2 Implicit grant type. Existing “implicit” Applications will persist, but new ones cannot be created.

- Removed v1 of the api (/api/v1). All queries must be made in /api/v2.
- Removed the following API endpoints:
  - Job template credential field (in either v1 or v2)
  - Corresponding credential field on workflow job template nodes
- Removed restriction of automation when license expires or host count is over the license count
- Fixed the OpenStack credential type so that it applies to SCM inventory updates as well
- Updated PostgreSQL to version 10
- Updated Django to version 2.2.4 and Django REST Framework to 3.9.4
- Updated OAuth2 implicit grant type applications as it is no longer recommended to use them
- Updated the Automation Analytics data collection feature
- Updated job template runs to use a private copy of the project for each run. Attempting to store state between playbook runs by writing to the project repository will no longer work.

## UPGRADING ANSIBLE TOWER

This section covers each component of the upgrading process:

- *Upgrade Planning*
- *Obtaining Ansible Tower*
- *Setting up the Inventory File*
- *The Setup Playbook*

---

**Note:** All upgrades should be no more than two major versions behind what you are currently upgrading to. For example, in order to upgrade to Ansible Tower 3.6.x, you must first be on version 3.4.x; i.e., there is no direct upgrade path from version 3.3.x. Refer to the [recommended upgrade path article](#) off your customer portal.

In order to run Ansible Tower 3.5 on RHEL 8, you must also have Ansible 2.8 or later installed.

---

### 2.1 Upgrade Planning

This section covers changes that you should keep in mind as you attempt to upgrade your Ansible Tower Instance

- If you need to upgrade RHEL and Ansible Tower, you will need to do a backup and restore of your Tower data. Refer to [Upgrading an Existing Tower Installation](#) in the *Ansible Tower Installation and Reference Guide* for further detail.
- Because Ansible Tower runs with Python 3 starting in 3.5, custom settings files in `/etc/tower/conf.d` must be valid Python3 prior to upgrading to Ansible Tower 3.5.
- Any custom settings added in `/etc/tower/settings.py` must be either set in the Configure Tower User Interface, or moved to a file in `/etc/tower/conf.d`, before upgrading to Ansible Tower 3.5.
- Ansible Tower 3.0 simplified installation and removed the need to run `./configure/` as part of the initial setup.
- The file `tower_setup_conf.yml` is no longer used. Instead, you should now edit the **inventory** file in the `/ansible-tower-setup-<tower_version>/` directory.
- Earlier version of Tower used MongoDB when setting up an initial database; please note that Ansible Tower 3.0 has replaced the use of MongoDB with PostgreSQL.
- Clustered upgrades require special attention to instance and instance groups prior to starting the upgrade. Refer to the [Setting up the Inventory File](#) section.

- Changes in API authentication were made in Ansible Tower 3.3 to accommodate additional OAuth2 functionality. For more information, refer to [Token-Based Authentication](#) in the *Ansible Tower Administration Guide*.

## 2.2 Obtaining Ansible Tower

You may install standalone Tower or use the bundled installer:

- if you set up Tower on an environment with a direct Internet access, you can download the standalone Tower installer
- if you set up Tower on an environment without direct access to online repositories, or your environment enforces a proxy, you must use the bundled installer

Download and then extract the Ansible Tower installation/upgrade tool: <http://releases.ansible.com/ansible-tower/setup/>

```
root@localhost:~$ tar xvzf ansible-tower-setup-latest.tar.gz
root@localhost:~$ cd ansible-tower-setup-<tower_version>
```

To install or upgrade, start by editing the inventory file in the `ansible-tower-setup-<tower_version>` directory, replacing `<tower_version>` with the version number, such as `3.5.6` or `3.6.0` directory.

## 2.3 Setting up the Inventory File

As you edit your inventory file, there are a few things you must keep in mind:

- The contents of the inventory file should be defined in `./inventory`, next to the `./setup.sh` installer playbook.
- For **installations and upgrades**: If you need to make use of external databases, you must ensure the database sections of your inventory file are properly setup. Edit this file and add your external database information before running the setup script.
- For **upgrading an existing cluster**: When upgrading a cluster, you may decide that you want to also reconfigure your cluster to omit existing instances or instance groups. Omitting the instance or the instance group from the inventory file will not be enough to remove them from the cluster. In addition to omitting instances or instance groups from the inventory file, you must also [deprovision instances or instance groups](#) before starting the upgrade. Otherwise, omitted instances or instance groups will continue to communicate with the cluster, which can cause issues with tower services during the upgrade.
- For **clustered installations**: If you are creating a clustered setup, you must replace `localhost` with the hostname or IP address of all instances. All nodes/instances must be able to reach any others using this hostname or address. In other words, you cannot use the `localhost ansible_connection=local` on one of the nodes *AND* all of the nodes should use the same format for the host names.

Therefore, this will *not* work:

```
[tower]
localhost ansible_connection=local
hostA
hostB.example.com
172.27.0.4
```

Instead, use these formats:

```
[tower]
hostA
hostB
hostC
```

OR

```
hostA.example.com
hostB.example.com
hostC.example.com
```

OR

```
[tower]
172.27.0.2
172.27.0.3
172.27.0.4
```

- **For all standard installations:** When performing an installation, you must supply any necessary passwords in the inventory file.

---

**Note:** Changes made to the installation process now require that you fill out all of the password fields in the inventory file. If you need to know where to find the values for these they should be:

```
admin_password='' ← Tower local admin password
pg_password='' ← Found in /etc/tower/conf.d/postgres.py
rabbitmq_password='' ← create a new password here (alpha-numeric with no special characters)
```

---

**Warning:** Do not use special characters in `pg_password` as it may cause the setup to fail.

### Example Inventory file

- For **provisioning new nodes:** When provisioning new nodes add the nodes to the inventory file with all current nodes, make sure all passwords are included in the inventory file.
- For **upgrading a single node:** When upgrading, be sure to compare your inventory file to the current release version. It is recommended that you keep the passwords in here even when performing an upgrade.

### Example Single Node Inventory File

```
[tower]
localhost ansible_connection=local

[database]

[all:vars]
admin_password='password'

pg_host=''
pg_port=''

pg_database='awx'
```

(continues on next page)



(continued from previous page)

```
pg_username='awx'
pg_password='password'

rabbitmq_port=5672
rabbitmq_username=tower
rabbitmq_password='password'
rabbitmq_cookie=rabbitmqcookie

# Needs to be true for fqdns and ip addresses
rabbitmq_use_long_name=false
# Needs to remain false if you are using localhost
```

**Warning:** Do not use special characters in `pg_password` as it may cause the setup to fail.

### Example Multi Node Cluster Inventory File

```
[tower]
clusternode1.example.com
clusternode2.example.com
clusternode3.example.com

[database]
dbnode.example.com

[all:vars]
ansible_become=true

admin_password='password'

pg_host='dbnode.example.com'
pg_port='5432'

pg_database='tower'
pg_username='tower'
pg_password='password'

rabbitmq_port=5672
rabbitmq_username=tower
rabbitmq_password=tower
rabbitmq_cookie=rabbitmqcookie

# Needs to be true for fqdns and ip addresses
rabbitmq_use_long_name=true
```

**Warning:** Do not use special characters in `pg_password` as it may cause the setup to fail.

### Example Inventory file for an external existing database

```
[tower]
node.example.com ansible_connection=local

[database]
```

(continues on next page)

(continued from previous page)

```
[all:vars]
admin_password='password'
pg_password='password'
rabbitmq_password='password'

pg_host='database.example.com'
pg_port='5432'

pg_database='awx'
pg_username='awx'
```

**Warning:** Do not use special characters in `pg_password` as it may cause the setup to fail.

### Example Inventory file for external database which needs installation

```
[tower]
node.example.com ansible_connection=local

[database]
database.example.com

[all:vars]
admin_password='password'
pg_password='password'
rabbitmq_password='password'

pg_host='database.example.com'
pg_port='5432'

pg_database='awx'
pg_username='awx'
```

**Warning:** Do not use special characters in `pg_password` as it may cause the setup to fail.

Once any necessary changes have been made, you are ready to run `./setup.sh`.

---

**Note:** Root access to the remote machines is required. With Ansible, this can be achieved in different ways:

- `ansible_user=root ansible_ssh_pass="your_password_here"` inventory host or group variables
- `ansible_user=root ansible_ssh_private_key_file="path_to_your_keyfile.pem"` inventory host or group variables
- `ANSIBLE_BECOME_METHOD='sudo' ANSIBLE_BECOME=True ./setup.sh`
- `ANSIBLE_SUDO=True ./setup.sh` (Only applies to Ansible 2.7)

The `DEFAULT_SUDO` Ansible configuration parameter was removed in Ansible 2.8, which causes the `ANSIBLE_SUDO=True ./setup.sh` method of privilege escalation to no longer work. For more information on become plugins, refer to [Understanding Privilege Escalation](#) and the [list of become plugins](#).

## 2.4 The Setup Playbook

---

**Note:** Ansible Tower 3.0 simplifies installation and removes the need to run `./configure/` as part of the installation setup. Users of older versions should follow the instructions available in the v.2.4.5 (or earlier) releases of the Tower Documentation available at: <http://docs.ansible.com/>

---

The Tower setup playbook script uses the `inventory` file and is invoked as `./setup.sh` from the path where you unpacked the Tower installer tarball.

```
root@localhost:~$ ./setup.sh
```

The setup script takes the following arguments:

- `-h` – Show this help message and exit
- `-i INVENTORY_FILE` – Path to Ansible inventory file (default: `inventory`)
- `-e EXTRA_VARS` – Set additional Ansible variables as `key=value` or YAML/JSON (i.e. `-e bundle_install=false` forces an online installation)
- `-b` – Perform a database backup in lieu of installing
- `-r` – Perform a database restore in lieu of installing (a default restore path is used unless `EXTRA_VARS` are provided with a non-default path, as shown in the code example below)

```
./setup.sh -e 'restore_backup_file=/path/to/nondefault/location' -r
```

---

**Note:** Please note that a issue was discovered in Tower 3.0.0 and 3.0.1 that prevented proper system backups and restorations.

If you need to back up or restore your Tower v3.0.0 or v3.0.1 installation, use the v3.0.2 installer to do so.

---

## SYSTEM TRACKING MIGRATION

System tracking feature was deprecated starting with Ansible Tower 3.2. However, you can collect facts by using the fact caching feature. Refer to [Fact Caching](#) for more detail. If you upgrade from a version earlier than Ansible Tower 3.0, you will find that your system tracking data (historical facts) has been migrated from MongoDB to PostgreSQL.

If you want to delete the old data in MongoDB, you can do so manually. First, connect to your mongo database using the mongo command line client, then run the following commands:

```
$ use system_tracking
$ db.runCommand( { dropDatabase: 1 } )
```

At this point, you can also remove the MongoDB packages.

## ROLE-BASED ACCESS CONTROLS

Ansible Tower 3.0 has changed significantly around the way that the Role-Based Access Control (RBAC) system works. For the latest RBAC documentation, refer to the [Role-Based Access Controls](#) section in the Tower User Guide.

### 4.1 Enhanced and Simplified RBAC System

Based on user feedback, Ansible Tower both expands and simplifies its role-based access control. No longer is job template visibility configured via a combination of permissions on inventory, projects, and credentials. If you want to give any user or team permissions to use a job template, just assign permissions directly on the job template. Similarly, credentials are now full objects in Tower's RBAC system, and can be assigned to multiple users and/or teams for use.

A new 'Auditor' type has been introduced in Tower as well, who can see all aspects of the systems automation, but has no permission to run or change automation, for those that need a system-level auditor. (This may also be useful for a service account that scrapes automation information from Tower's API.)

### 4.2 Specific Changes to Note

There are a few changes you should keep in mind as you work with the RBAC system as redesigned for Ansible Tower:

- You no longer set the "team" or "user" for a credential. Instead, you use Tower's RBAC system to grant ownership, auditor, or usage roles.
- Deletion of job run data is now restricted to system and organization administrators.
- Projects no longer have multiple organizations. You *must* provide an organization when creating a new project through the API:

```
- projects/:id/organizations --> removed
```

- New Auditor type in Tower has been added which can see all aspects of the systems automation but does not have permission to run or change things.

## JOB TEMPLATE CHANGES

Job templates have been updated in Tower to allow you more flexibility when creating and working with them.

### 5.1 Scan Jobs

If you maintained scan job templates in Ansible Tower 3.1.x and then upgrade to Ansible Tower 3.2, a new “Tower Fact Scan - Default” project is automatically created for you. This project contains the old scan playbook previously used in earlier versions of Ansible Tower.

### 5.2 Prompt on Launch

In prior versions of Ansible Tower, you could set “Prompt on Launch” against Extra Variables that you want to potentially pass through the job template. Starting with version 3.0, Ansible Tower allows you to prompt for an inventory selection, job type, and more.

Selecting “Prompt on Launch” means that even if a value is supplied at the time of the job template creation, the user launching the job will be prompted to supply new information or confirm what was entered in the job template originally.

The following job template settings allow for prompting at the time of launch:

- Job Type (run or check type jobs only, as scan jobs cannot be changed at the time of launch)
- Inventory
- Credential
- Limit
- Verbosity
- Job Tags
- Skip Tags
- Show Changes
- Extra variables

Job template with slicing
✕

DETAILS
PERMISSIONS
NOTIFICATIONS
COMPLETED JOBS
SCHEDULES
ADD SURVEY

**\* NAME** ?

DESCRIPTION

**\* JOB TYPE** ?  PROMPT ON LAUNCH

**\* INVENTORY** ?  PROMPT ON LAUNCH

**\* PROJECT** ?

**\* PLAYBOOK** ?

CREDENTIALS ?  PROMPT ON LAUNCH

FORKS ?

LIMIT ?  PROMPT ON LAUNCH

**\* VERBOSITY** ?  PROMPT ON LAUNCH

JOB TAGS ?  PROMPT ON LAUNCH

SKIP TAGS ?  PROMPT ON LAUNCH

LABELS ?

INSTANCE GROUPS ?

JOB SLICING ?

TIMEOUT ?

SHOW CHANGES ?  PROMPT ON LAUNCH

OPTIONS

ENABLE PRIVILEGE ESCALATION ?

ENABLE PROVISIONING CALLBACKS ?

ENABLE WEBHOOK ?

ENABLE CONCURRENT JOBS ?

ENABLE FACT CACHE ?

EXTRA VARIABLES ? YAML JSON  PROMPT ON LAUNCH

```

1 ---
2 ansible_ssh_user: ec2
3 ansible_connection: local
                    
```

LAUNCH
CANCEL
SAVE

As you work with migrating your Tower 2.4.5 job templates to 3.x, please keep in mind the following:

- All **Prompt on Launch** fields are set to *False* by default after migrating to 3.x (new job templates created also have all **Prompt on Launch** fields set to *False* by default).
  - With one exception for those upgrading from 2.4.5 to 3.x: if a credential used in Tower 2.4.5 was null, the credential will be prompted for in 3.x.
- If you have Job Templates with a null credential, in the migration from 2.4.5 to 3.x, `ask_credential_on_launch` is set to *True*.
  - Note that there was no way to set a default credential in 2.4.5. However, in 3.x, you can set a default credential and select to prompt the user at launch time to confirm the default credential or change it to something new.
- All other `ask_xx_on_launch` prompts are set to *False*.
- Starting with Tower 3.x, if `ask_variables_on_launch` is set to *False*, extra variables passed at launch time (via UI or API) that are not part of an enabled survey are ignored.
- While there are no changes to how `ask_variables_on_launch` behaves, keep in mind that these variables combine with survey answers.

## 5.3 Permissions/RBAC Notes

Job template visibility is no longer configured via a combination of permissions on inventory, projects, and credentials. Admins who want to give any user or team permissions to use a job template can quickly assign permissions directly on the job template. Similarly, credentials are now full objects in Tower’s RBAC system, and can be assigned to multiple users and/or teams for use.

If a job template a user has been granted execution capabilities on does not specify an inventory or credential, the user will be prompted at run-time to select among the inventory and credentials in the organization they own or have been granted usage capabilities.

Users that are job template administrators can make changes to job templates; however, to make changes to the inventory, project, playbook, or credentials used in the job template, the user must also have the “Use” role for the project, inventory, and all credentials currently being used or being set.

## 5.4 Surveys

In prior versions of Ansible Tower, you had to select a checkbox to “Enable Survey” on the Job Template before a button appeared allowing you to “Create Survey”.

Enabling and creating surveys is much simpler in Ansible Tower.



At the top of each job template is a button (  ) which opens a new dialog where you can enter your survey questions and responses.

NEW JOB TEMPLATE | SURVEY  ON ✕

**ADD SURVEY PROMPT**

\* PROMPT

DESCRIPTION

\* ANSWER VARIABLE NAME ?

\* ANSWER TYPE

MINIMUM LENGTH  MAXIMUM LENGTH

DEFAULT ANSWER

REQUIRED

**PREVIEW**

PLEASE ADD A SURVEY PROMPT ON THE LEFT.

Use the **ON/OFF** toggle button to quickly activate or deactivate this survey prompt.

Once you have entered the question information, click **Add** to add the survey prompt.



A stylized preview of the survey is presented, along with a **New Question** button. Click this button to add additional questions.

For any question, you can click on the **Edit** button to edit the question, the **Delete** button to delete the question, and click on the Up and Down arrow buttons to rearrange the order of the questions. Click **Save** to save the survey.

NEW JOB TEMPLATE | SURVEY ON

**ADD SURVEY PROMPT**

\* PROMPT

DESCRIPTION

\* ANSWER VARIABLE NAME ⓘ

\* ANSWER TYPE

Choose an answer type ▼

REQUIRED

**PREVIEW**

\* WHICH GROUP(S) SHOULD INCLUDE THIS USER?

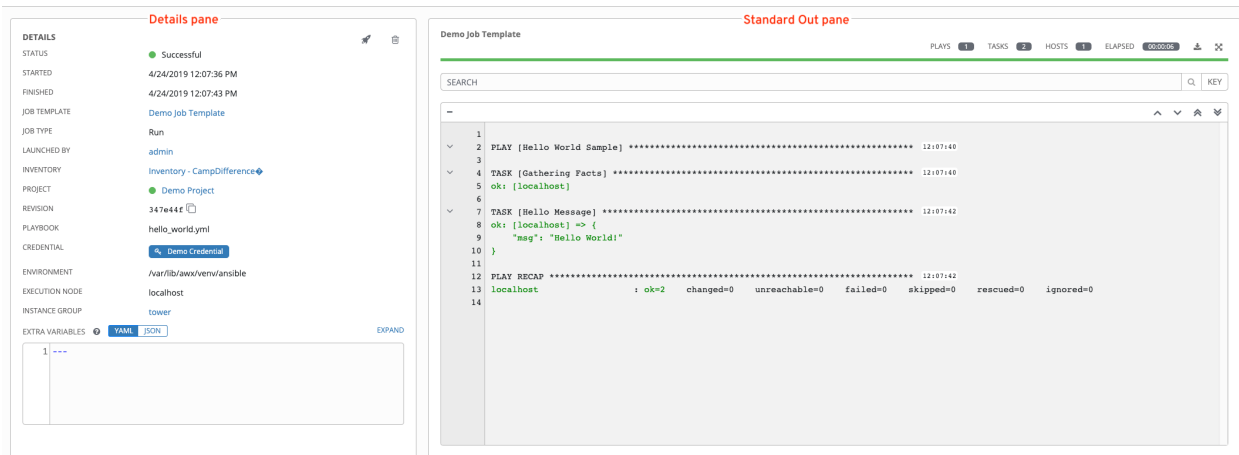
*Enter groups, one per line.*

⋮

## JOB OUTPUT VIEW CHANGES

With the update of the overall Tower user interface, it is worth noting the changes to how job results are displayed.

Job results for inventory syncs and SCM updates only show the Results and Standard Out of the job recently Run. Job results for playbook runs consist of Results, Standard Out, Details, and the Event Summary.





For more details regarding Job Results, refer to [Jobs](#) in the *Ansible Tower User Guide*.


### 6.1 Details

The **Details** area shows the basic status of the job (*Running*, *Pending*, *Successful*, or *Failed*), its start and end times, which template was used, how long the job run took, who launched it, and more. The buttons in the top right of the Details view allow you to relaunch or delete the job.

By clicking on these detail entries, where appropriate, you can view the corresponding job templates, projects, and other Tower objects.



## DETAILS

STATUS	● Successful
STARTED	4/24/2019 12:07:36 PM
FINISHED	4/24/2019 12:07:43 PM
JOB TEMPLATE	<a href="#">Demo Job Template</a>
JOB TYPE	Run
LAUNCHED BY	<a href="#">admin</a>
INVENTORY	<a href="#">Inventory - CampDifference</a> ⓘ
PROJECT	● Demo Project
REVISION	347e44f 
PLAYBOOK	hello_world.yml
CREDENTIAL	<span style="background-color: #0056b3; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; border-radius: 3px;">🔍 Demo Credential</span>
ENVIRONMENT	/var/lib/awx/venv/ansible
EXECUTION NODE	localhost
INSTANCE GROUP	<a href="#">tower</a>
EXTRA VARIABLES <span style="font-size: 0.8em;">?</span>	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; gap: 5px;"> <span style="background-color: #0056b3; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; border-radius: 3px;">YAML</span> <span style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 2px 5px; border-radius: 3px;">JSON</span> </div> <div style="text-align: right; margin-top: 5px;"><a href="#">EXPAND</a></div>

1	---
---	-----

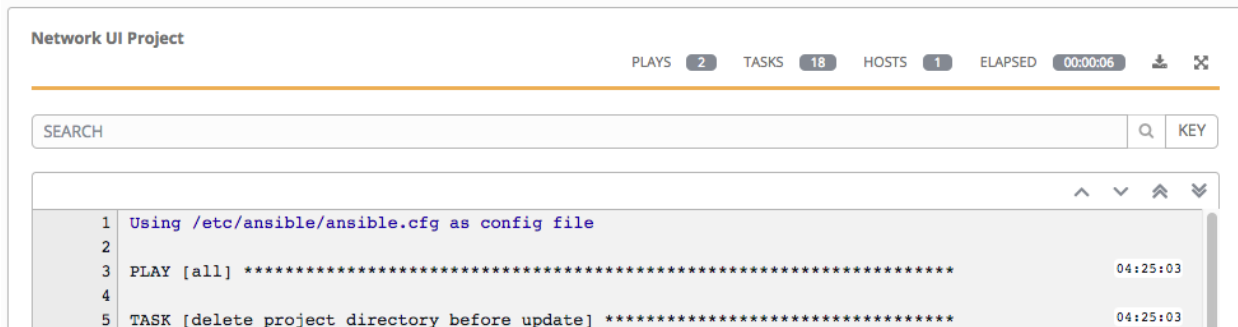
## 6.2 Standard Out Pane

The **Standard Out** pane shows the full results of running the Ansible playbook. This shows the same information you would see if you ran it through the Ansible command line, and can be useful for debugging. You can view the event summary, host status, and the host events. The icons at the top right corner of the Standard Out pane allow you to toggle the output as a main view (  ) or to download the output (  ).

### 6.2.1 Events Summary

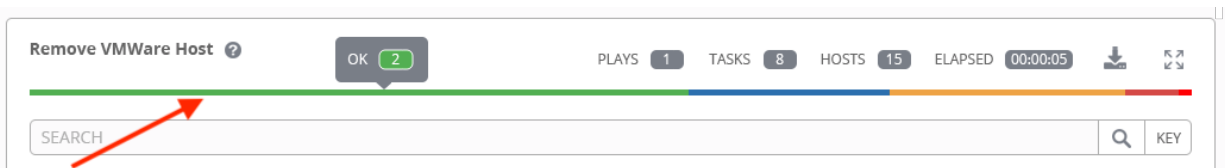
The events summary captures a tally of events that were run as part of this playbook:

- the number of plays
- the number of tasks
- the number of hosts
- the elapsed time to run the job template





### 6.2.2 Host Status Bar

The host status bar runs across the top of the **Standard Out** pane. Hover over a section of the host status bar and the number of hosts associated with that particular status displays.



### 6.2.3 Standard output view

The standard output view displays all the events that occur on a particular job. By default, all rows are expanded so that all the details are displayed. Use the collapse-all button (  ) to switch to a view that only contains the headers for plays and tasks. Click the (  ) button to view all lines of the standard output.

Alternatively, you can display all the details of a specific play or task by clicking on the arrow icons next to them. Click an arrow from sideways to downward to expand the lines associated with that play or task. Click the arrow back to the sideways position to collapse and hide the lines.

```

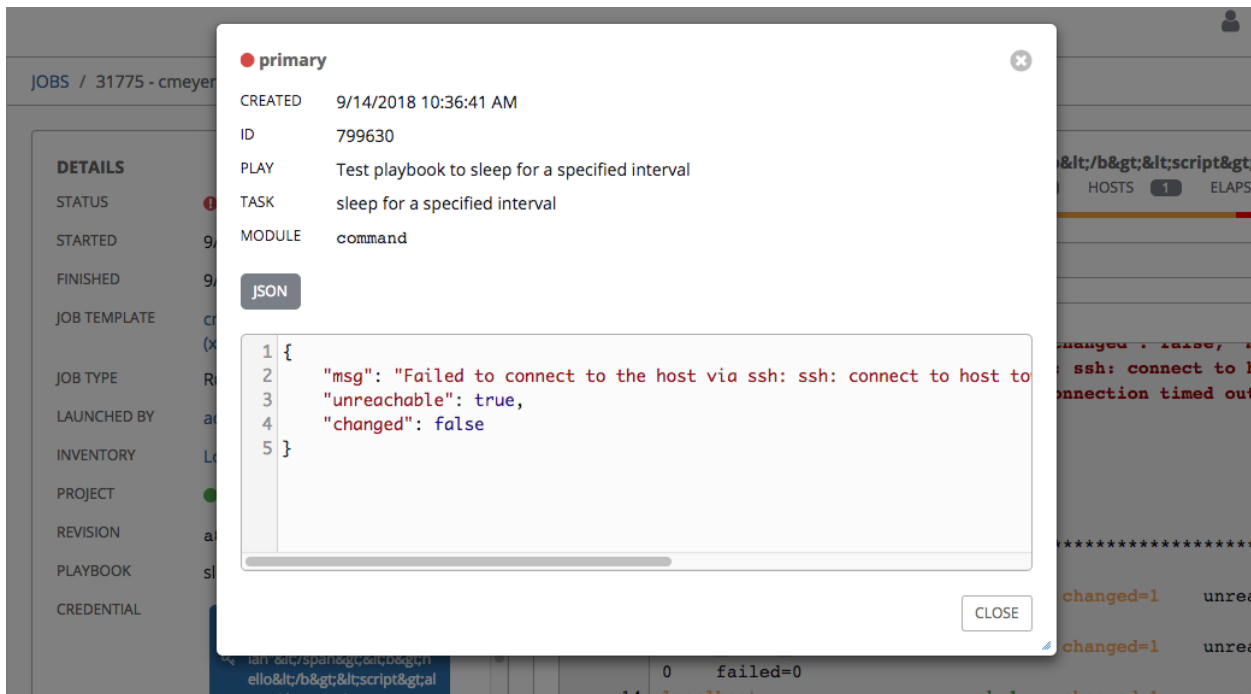
1
2 PLAY [localhost] ***** 22:02:46
3
4 TASK [Gathering Facts] ***** 22:02:46
5
6
7 TASK [Find stale ec2 instances] ***** 22:02:46
8 ok: [localhost] => (item=ap-northeast-1)
9 ok: [localhost] => (item=ap-northeast-2)
10 ok: [localhost] => (item=ap-southeast-1)

```

Click on a line of an event from the **Standard Out** pane and a **Host Events** dialog displays in a separate window. This window shows the host that was affected by that particular event.

## 6.2.4 Host Events

The **Host Events** dialog shows information about the host affected by the selected event and its associated play and task:



In the above example, this dialog box shows a single button for JSON, which is the only format given for the host event to view and display to you for this particular event. If Standard Out and Shell outputs are available, those buttons will display to allow you to see other output formats.

## USING VIRTUALENV WITH ANSIBLE TOWER

Ansible Tower 3.0 and later uses *virtualenv*. *Virtualenv* creates isolated Python environments to avoid problems caused by conflicting dependencies and differing versions. *Virtualenv* works by simply creating a folder which contains all of the necessary executables and dependencies for a specific version of Python. Ansible Tower creates two *virtualenvs* during installation—one is used to run Tower, while the other is used to run Ansible. This allows Tower to run in a stable environment, while allowing you to add or update modules to your Ansible Python environment as necessary to run your playbooks. For more information on *virtualenv*, see the Python Guide to [Virtual Environments](#) and the *Python virtualenv* project itself.

By default, the *virtualenv* is located at `/var/lib/awx/venv/ansible` on the file system but starting with Ansible Tower 3.5, you can create your own custom directories and use them in inventory imports. This allows you to choose how you run your inventory imports, as inventory sources use custom virtual environments.

Tower also pre-installs a variety of third-party library/SDK support into this *virtualenv* for its integration points with a variety of cloud providers (such as EC2, OpenStack, Azure, etc.) Periodically, you may want to add additional SDK support into this *virtualenv*, which is described in further detail below.

---

**Note:** It is highly recommended that you run `umask 0022` before installing any packages to the virtual environment. Failure to properly configure permissions can result in Tower service failures. An example follows:

```
# source /var/lib/awx/venv/ansible/bin/activate
# umask 0022
# pip install --upgrade pywinrm
# deactivate
```

---

In addition to adding modules to the *virtualenv* that Tower uses to run Ansible, you can create new *virtualenvs* as described below.

### 7.1 Preparing a new custom *virtualenv*

You can specify a different *virtualenv* for running Job Templates in Tower. In order to do so, you must specify which directories those *venvs* reside. You could choose to keep custom *venvs* inside `/var/lib/awx/venv/`, but it is highly recommended that a custom directory be created. The following examples use a placeholder directory `/opt/my-envs/`, but you can replace this with a directory path of your choice anywhere this is specified.

1. Preparing a new custom *virtualenv* requires the *virtualenv* package to be pre-installed:

```
$ sudo yum install python-virtualenv
```

2. Create a directory for your custom *venvs*:

```
$ sudo mkdir /opt/my-envs
```

3. Make sure to give your directory the appropriate write and execution permissions:

```
$ sudo chmod 0755 /opt/my-envs
```

4. Optionally, you can specify in Tower which directory to look for custom venvs by adding this directory to the CUSTOM\_VENV\_PATHS setting as follows:

```
$ curl -X PATCH 'https://user:password@tower.example.org/api/v2/settings/system/' \
-d '{"CUSTOM_VENV_PATHS": ["/opt/my-envs/"]}' -H 'Content-Type:application/json'
```

If you have venvs spanned over multiple directories, add all the paths and Tower will aggregate venvs from them:

```
$ curl -X PATCH 'https://user:password@tower.example.org/api/v2/settings/system/' \
-d '{"CUSTOM_VENV_PATHS": ["/path/1/to/venv/", "/path/2/to/venv/", "/path/3/to/
↪venv/"]}' \
-H 'Content-Type:application/json'
```

5. Now that a venv directory has been set up, create a virtual environment in that location:

```
$ sudo virtualenv /opt/my-envs/custom-venv
```

---

**Note:** Multiple versions of Python are supported, but the syntax for creating virtualenvs in Python 3 has changed slightly: `$ sudo python3 -m venv /opt/my-envs/custom-venv`

---

6. Next, install gcc so that psutil can be compiled:

```
$ yum install gcc
```

7. Your newly created virtualenv needs a few base dependencies to properly run playbooks (eg., fact gathering):

```
$ sudo /opt/my-envs/custom-venv/bin/pip install psutil
```

From here, you can install *additional* Python dependencies that you care about, such as a per-virtualenv version of Ansible itself:

```
$ sudo /opt/my-envs/custom-venv/bin/pip install -U "ansible == X.Y.Z"
```

Or you can add an additional third-party SDK that is not included with the base Tower installation:

```
$ sudo /opt/my-envs/custom-venv/bin/pip install -U python-digitalocean
```

If you want to copy them, the libraries included in Tower's default virtualenv can be found using `pip freeze`:

```
$ sudo /var/lib/awx/venv/ansible/bin/pip freeze
```

In a clustered Tower installation, you need to ensure that the same custom virtualenv exists on **every** local file system at `/opt/my-envs/`. Custom virtualenvs are supported on isolated instances. If you are using a custom virtual environment, it needs to also be copied or replicated on any isolated node you would be using, not just on the Tower node. For setting up custom virtual environments in containers, refer to the [Build custom virtual environments](#) section of the *Ansible Tower Administration Guide*.

## 7.2 Assigning custom virtualenvs

Once you have created a custom virtualenv, you can assign it at the Organization, Project, or Job Template level to use it in job runs. You can set the custom venv on an inventory source to run inventory updates in that venv. However, starting in Ansible Tower 3.5, Ansible 2.4 or later is required to run inventory updates. Jobs using that inventory follow their own rules and will not use this venv. If an SCM inventory source does not have a venv selected, it can use the venv of its linked project. You can assign a custom venv on the organization, but if you do, it will not be used by inventory updates in the organization, as it is only used in job runs.

The following shows the proper way to assign a custom venv at the desired level.

```
PATCH https://awx-host.example.org/api/v2/organizations/N/  
PATCH https://awx-host.example.org/api/v2/projects/N/  
PATCH https://awx-host.example.org/api/v2/job_templates/N/  
PATCH https://awx-host.example.org/api/v2/inventory_sources/N/  
  
Content-Type: application/json  
{  
    'custom_virtualenv': '/opt/my-envs/custom-venv'  
}
```

An HTTP GET request to `/api/v2/config/` provides a list of detected installed virtualenvs:

```
{  
    "custom_virtualenvs": [  
        "/opt/my-envs/custom-venv",  
        "/opt/my-envs/my-other-custom-venv",  
    ],  
    ...  
}
```

You can also specify the virtual environment to assign to an Organization, Project, and Job Template from their respective edit screens in the Ansible Tower User Interface. Select the virtualenv from the **Ansible Environment** drop-down menu, as shown in the example below:



ORGANIZATIONS / Default

**Default**

DETAILS USERS PERMISSIONS NOTIFICATIONS

\* NAME DESCRIPTION

Default

ANSIBLE ENVIRONMENT ⓘ

Use Default Environment

Use Default Environment

/opt/my-envs-1/custom-venv-1

/opt/my-envs-1/custom-venv-2

/opt/my-envs-1/custom-venv-3

/opt/my-envs-2/custom-venv-4

/opt/my-envs-2/custom-venv-5

Q KEY

When you launch a job template, you will also see the virtualenv specified in the Job Details pane:

### DETAILS 🚀 🗑️

STATUS	● Successful
STARTED	4/24/2019 12:07:36 PM
FINISHED	4/24/2019 12:07:43 PM
JOB TEMPLATE	<a href="#">Demo Job Template</a>
JOB TYPE	Run
LAUNCHED BY	<a href="#">admin</a>
INVENTORY	<a href="#">Inventory - CampDifference</a> ⓘ
PROJECT	● Demo Project
REVISION	347e44f 📄
PLAYBOOK	hello_world.yml
CREDENTIAL	<a href="#">🔍 Demo Credential</a>
ENVIRONMENT	<code>/var/lib/awx/venv/ansible</code>
EXECUTION NODE	localhost
INSTANCE GROUP	<a href="#">tower</a>
EXTRA VARIABLES ⓘ	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; gap: 5px;"> <span style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 2px 5px; background-color: #007bff; color: white;">YAML</span> <span style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 2px 5px;">JSON</span> </div> <div style="text-align: right; margin-top: 5px;"><a href="#">EXPAND</a></div>

1	---
---	-----

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