

NetOps is on the Move and You Can Help Give it Directions



Lori MacVittie, 2017-06-10

For three years now, my cohort Cindy Borovick and I have been tracking the app services, trends, and technology that ultimately shape the lives of folks in the trenches. It sometimes takes a while (almost ten years for cloud) before the winds of change manage to make their way into the daily workflow of folks who design, deploy, and manage the panoply of systems, services, and devices that make apps go, but it does get there, eventually.

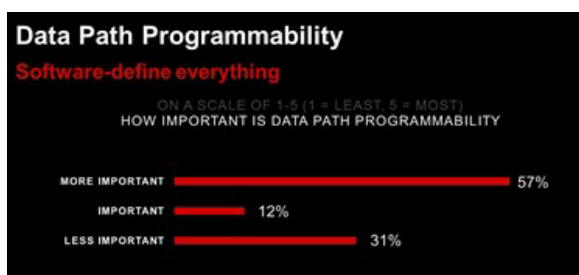
DevOps became a thing just a few years after cloud began its ascent to the top of the technology mountain. And as it gained steam, so did a comparable and complementary movement on “the network” side of the house. That’s you folks – the DevCentral Community - in case you were wondering. The NetOps who are just as nimble and willing to take advantage of toolchains and programmability as your counterparts in app dev to solve challenges and help IT keep up with the pace business wants (needs) to move.

In the past, our [State of Application Delivery](#) surveys have included DevOps-related insights with a leaning toward NetOps. We’ve found a preference for VMware and [Cisco ACI](#), as well as [OpenStack](#). A healthy love of Python, too, seems to dominate at least those of you who identify as being in network/infrastructure roles. A look at the Code Share and forums here makes that pretty obvious.

	VMware	Cisco	OpenStack	Python	Puppet
2016	23%	16%	7%	8%	7%
2017	55%	35%	21%	14%	11%

Percentage of respondents using frameworks

Source: F5, State of Application Delivery 2017



And of course it’s no surprise to me (at least) having been involved with DevCentral for over a decade now, that NetOps were always aware of the importance of programmability, particularly that of technology like [iRules](#) (scripting) and [iApps](#) (templates).

Right now I’m seeing NetOps as a “movement” comparable to DevOps and its rising rather fast. So when we sat down to update the survey for 2018, one of the things we did was to expand questions and focus our “automation and programmability” on NetOps. I’m excited to see what the results are, not only because it gives us the ability to evangelize and promote the importance of both, but because it gives us (internally) a clear view of what real, live NetOps want to see from vendors like us.

And it’s important that we make that distinction – because DevOps is not NetOps. There’s a lot of shared similarities, but the differences are profound, particularly when you consider the blast radius in the network versus a dev environment. So making sure that toolchains and technologies are being driven by the folks who use them as not just by what’s popular in the DevOps community is paramount. Because they’re not necessarily going to be the same. But to figure that out, we need to dig into ourselves and ask those questions.

Do you want virtual machines? Cloud? Containers? If so, which orchestration environment? Are you satisfied with Python or do you prefer JuJu? Ansible or Vagrant? Puppet or Chef?

Just how much automation do you – and for what? Because automating a push of changes into production is different than automating incident response, or handling tickets.

It’s answers to these questions that cause me to write today; to ask for a little bit of your time to share your thoughts on NetOps (and other topics) by participating in our annual survey. It’s totes **anon** – unless you want to give up an e-mail address so you can be entered in a drawing for something cool and expensive. It’s your call, because from our point of view the most valuable data in this survey is your opinion, not your contact info.

We really do pay attention to the results, and not just because I use them like a hammer to pound on that programmability drum internally and externally. Your participation helps us form a clearer picture of where the market is and wants to be, and helps us figure out how to get you there.

If you're so inclined, you can cruise on over and let your voice be heard. We'll be publishing the results in January and then you can use them like a hammer to pound on the NetOps drums inside *your* organization, too.

[Click here to participate in the SOAD 2018 survey](#)

Many thanks and Happy Friday!

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