

[DiscoPosse Review: Learning Chef](#)

I'm a big fan of Chef, and I always enjoy finding more reading resources for me and for those who are looking to adopt this great tool. The Learning Chef book is a great guide for people who have limited or no experience with this really powerful configuration management framework.

This truly is the soup to nuts (see what I did there?) guide to installing and using Chef for configuration management. This book takes you from the very beginning of explaining what configuration management is, and launching into a nicely illustrated installation guide for Chef. The good stuff is just beginning!

The book is laid out very nicely in clear sections, with focus on Ruby syntax, code samples, runbook authoring, testing, and environment creation. I would absolutely recommend this for readers getting started with Chef and even those with some familiarity. As a big fan of O'Reilly book formats and the great authors who create them, I am always happy when I have them available for learning and for future reference.

Click the image below to visit the O'Reilly site to order your copy, and I hope that you enjoy this book as much as I do ☐



[DiscoPosse Review: Test-Driven Infrastructure with Chef by Stephen Nelson-Smith](#)

☒ With all of the tools available for infrastructure automation, the next challenge is picking one to use and finding great resources to help you along the road of fully realizing the benefit. Look no further than Test-Drive Infrastructure with Chef by Stephen Nelson-Smith from O'Reilly Books because this is a phenomenal place to begin.

For those who haven't taken a look at Chef (www.opscode.com), I highly recommend that you get started. Whether running as a standalone implementation using chef-solo, or the full infrastructure (chef open source or chef hosted), there is a huge community behind the product and Stephen's book will get you diving into the code in no time!

Infrastructure as Code

The movement towards "infrastructure as code" is an important one. This isn't your typical way of doing things for systems administrators today, and we are taking a page from the book of agile organizations and lean startups by driving towards this new way of managing infrastructure.

Don't be afraid to be involved in the research process if you don't think that it is directly applicable


either. While you may not have the need for this today, it is almost inevitable that you will encounter orchestration platforms in your IT career, and what is even better is when you can drive towards the goal before it becomes something you've been told you missed out on.

Not just deployment

Test-Driven Infrastructure with Chef uses examples which show us how to write code, deploy machines, manage cookbooks, create unit testing strategies and more. This may seem like a hefty undertaking for some, but the truth of the matter is that you only finish a marathon by taking the first step.

The book has just had its full release so get on over to the download by clicking on the link below or the image above and get your chef on!

[Rackspace Private Cloud - Updated to OpenStack Grizzly Release!](#)

 Just in case you didn't spot this in the Twitter stream yesterday, there was some really cool news from the team at Rackspace! The Rackspace Private Cloud software is now updated with the Grizzly release of OpenStack.

(http://www.rackspace.com/knowledge_center/article/about-rackspace-private-cloud).

Dubbed the Rackspace Private Cloud v4.0, this is a great way to get your OpenStack cloud up and running with significantly less configuration required. The installation scripts will deploy onto Ubuntu 12.04 and CentOS 6.3 and includes the Chef server with cookbooks for simple management and deployment once you build your environment.

Scripts versus ISO

One of the really neat things that Rackspace did in the past was to build a standalone ISO to be able to deploy the Rackspace Private Cloud which was running the Folsom release of OpenStack. This ISO is still available, but for now, the Grizzly release is only available with the scripted deployment.

If you still want to use the standalone ISO, you can continue to use my series on deploying OpenStack with VMware Workstation ([Getting Started](#), [Setting up the All-In-One](#), [Adding Cinder](#)) and you can still download the archived versions of the ISO, and also get to the OpenCenter (version 3.0) installation through links in the Rackspace Knowledge Center - http://www.rackspace.com/knowledge_center/article/rackspace-private-cloud-software-archived-versions

What's new with this Release?

The use of Grizzly will add all of the new features of OpenStack of course, but along with that are

new Chef cookbooks packaged into the build which make your continued management of OpenStack Grizzly much easier; Especially for those who are just dipping their toes into the OpenStack waters.

All of the core services are included (Nova, Horizon, Swift, Cinder, Keystone, Neutron, Glance) as well as Ceilometer which is the metering tool that is most likely slated for core project inclusion with the upcoming Havana release of the OpenStack software in Q4 of 2013.



Image courtesy of Rackspace:

http://www.rackspace.com/cloud/private/openstack_software/

HA all the way!

Another really cool feature in the Rackspace 4.0 release is the use of HA features of RabbitMQ and database services. The use of HA design in the build gives us another edge up over building from scratch because there are some challenges for many to build out the underlying services in a multi-master configuration.

You have to ensure that your node deployments are built with HA in mind of course, but the steps saved in designing the HA database and message queuing are appreciated because of the time savings you receive from these features being pre-configured.

Thank You Rackspace for another great way to deploy OpenStack and I encourage everyone to take a look at this and reach out to the Rackspace crew. All that you have to do is to click the Download button on the Rackspace Private Cloud page here: http://www.rackspace.com/cloud/private/openstack_software/ and you will receive contact information in email from the Rackspace support team.