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Selection Factors for a Cloud-Native IT Operations Solution

Based on real user reviews of Automox



ABSTRACT

IT operations teams are continuously in search of more efficient ways to eliminate exposure to vulnerabilities and improve employee productivity. This paper considers how a cloud-native IT operations solution can reduce corporate risk while raising operational efficiency to provide best-in-class security outcomes – doing things more quickly and with fewer resources. As described in real user reviews on IT Central Station, Automox delivers speed, ease of use and the potential to maximize ROI.

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INTRODUCTION

IT operations teams need to constantly adapt to changes in business operations and employees' work preferences. Today, that means supporting anywhere, anytime employee productivity, i.e., hybrid work, DevOps and more. Cloud-native IT operations solutions make it possible to radically increase IT operations efficiency while supporting rapidly changing business requirements. This includes the ability to quickly and effortlessly respond to the increased need for security, such as defending

digital assets against the increasing threat of ransomware attacks. What makes for a good cloud-native IT operations solution? IT Central Station members who use Automox share their experiences and insights into the most important selection factors for a cloud-native IT operations solution. As this paper reveals, these criteria include speed and ease of use, automation capabilities, such as with Automox Worklets, and the ability to realize a return on investment (ROI).

IT Operations Use Cases

Most IT Central Station members use Automox for patch management, but they also put it to work in a variety of other use cases. For example, a Director of Business Operations at Ihloom Cybersecurity, an IT services company that is also a managed security services provider (MSSP), uses Automox primarily for their own [patching and policy management](#). They are also an Automox reseller.



Meanwhile, B/Net Systems, a small managed services provider, uses Automox for many monthly maintenance tasks for clients, including software patching. Their President and CEO reported, “[Automox] is really great because it [manages software updates](#) for every piece of software on the computer.”

Likewise, a Security Engineer at a retailer with over 500 employees uses Automox for patching, configuration management and support. He explained how they have created ways for their help desk to work faster. He said, “We use

Automox to [create solutions](#) that the help desk can use in an automated fashion rather than having to manually do the work.”

For an IT Director at a large healthcare company, IT operations span patch management, software distribution and implementing security controls. He stated, “Any time we have to connect to a machine and run an automated process, we use Automox. The solution gives us complete visibility for any laptop, desktop or server in our environment regardless of where they are located.”

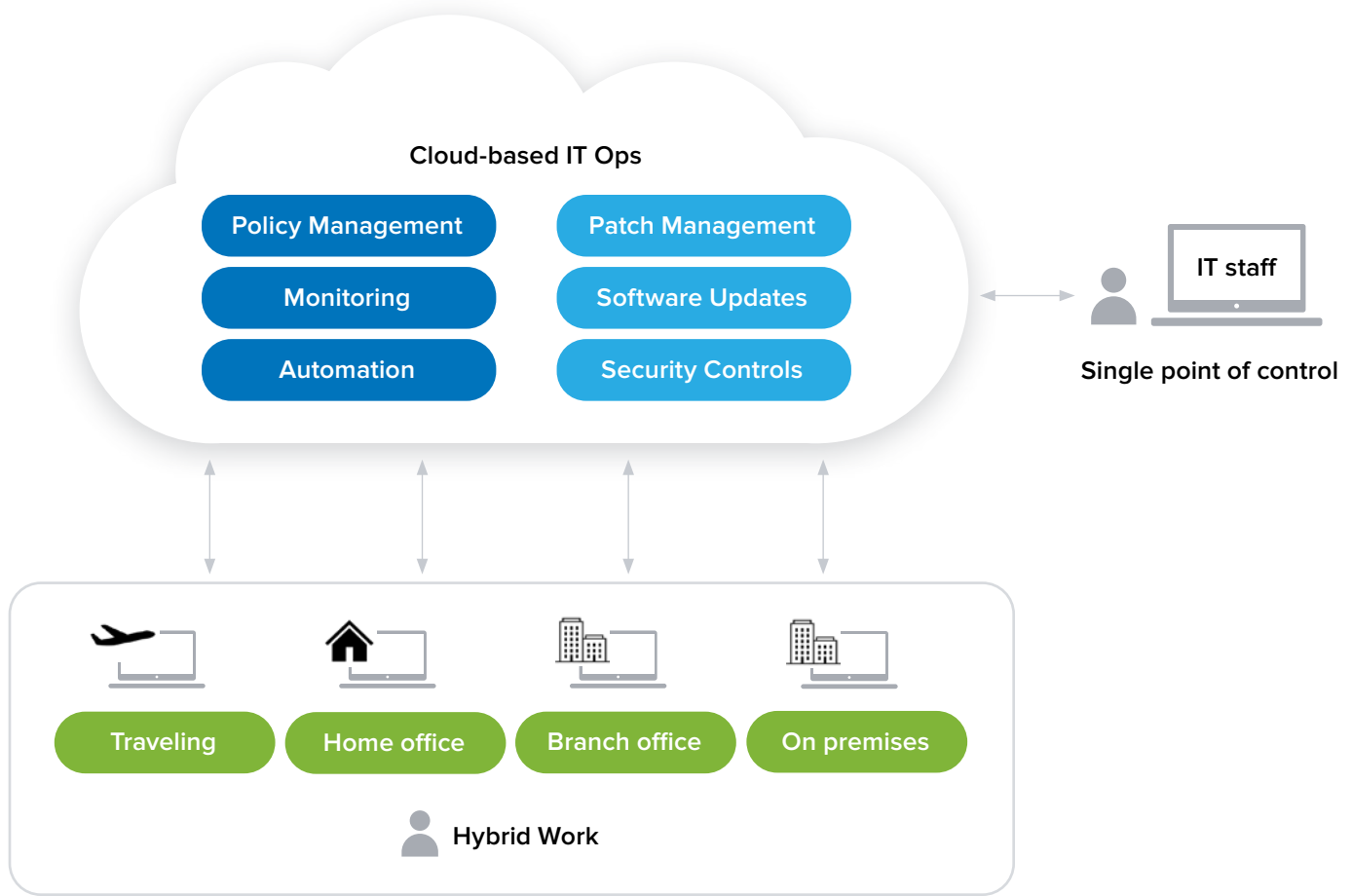


Figure 1 – A cloud-based IT ops solution handles patch management, software updates, security controls and more, through a single point of control for the IT team.

He also leverages the platform’s Worklets to [create and automate customized tasks](#) across endpoints. He said, “We love going in and using the Worklets to find solutions for common day-to-day stuff. Sometimes it’s a Worklet that we run on one machine, and sometimes it’s a Worklet that needs to be run on every machine in the environment.”

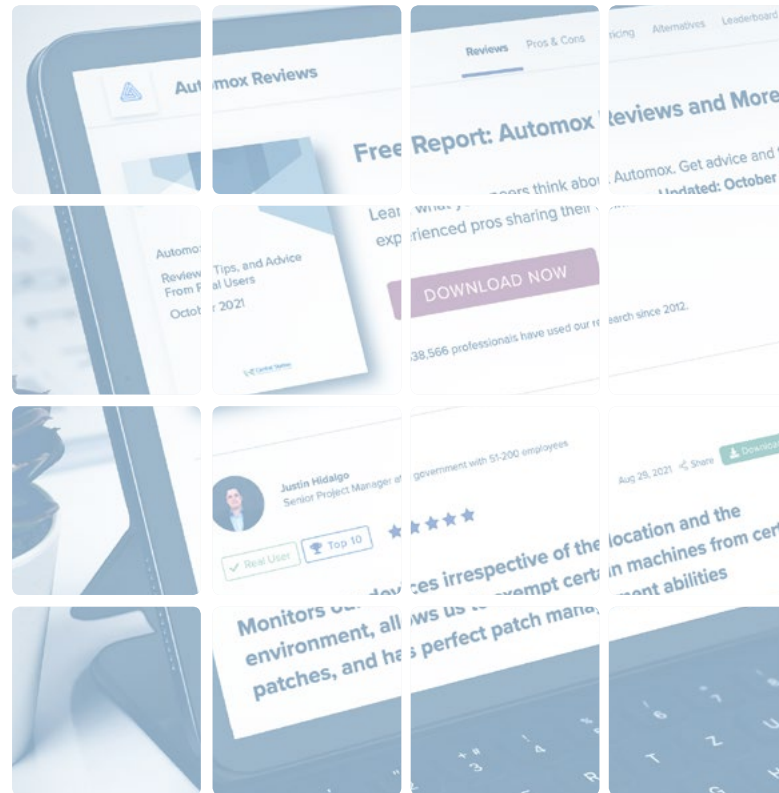
Or, consider the case of Atlantic.net, the hosting

solutions provider which found in 2017 that it needed [better visibility of patching](#) for clients that had to comply with regulations regarding patch management. They started using Automox with their clients and haven’t looked back. Their Vice President reports, “We never truly made this kind of functionality into a formal offering before settling on Automox. It was more on an urgent-need basis. But, once we adopted Automox, we made it a formalized offering.”

Overview of User Benefits

Organizations that opt to deploy cloud-native IT operations solutions reap the benefits. For instance, the Security Engineer at the retailer appreciates the ability to [automate repetitive tasks](#) for the help desk. He said, “If the VPN breaks, we can just click a button and fix the VPN for that person. If the software is having a hard time, we can run solutions to remove and reinstall that software rapidly so that they can get back to supporting the next person in line.”

“You can’t protect what you can’t see,” warned the CEO of ThreatAware, a computer security service. He likes how Automox provides visibility into the patch status of devices in their environment. He also values being able to do [patch management from a single console](#) across Windows, macOS and Linux endpoints. He added, “Overall, the patch management is very good. If it can’t do something because I haven’t integrated it, you can use the Worklets and do it yourself, which is great.”



With employees working remotely more than ever, the Director of Business Operations at Ihloom Cybersecurity enjoys the [complete visibility for any laptop, desktop or server](#) in their environment, regardless of whether the person is working at home, at a branch office or a coffee shop. He said, “These capabilities traditionally only exist on machines when they’re in the office or in a defined place. It is a valuable feature to be capable of insights and machines regardless of their location and to be sure of our abilities to

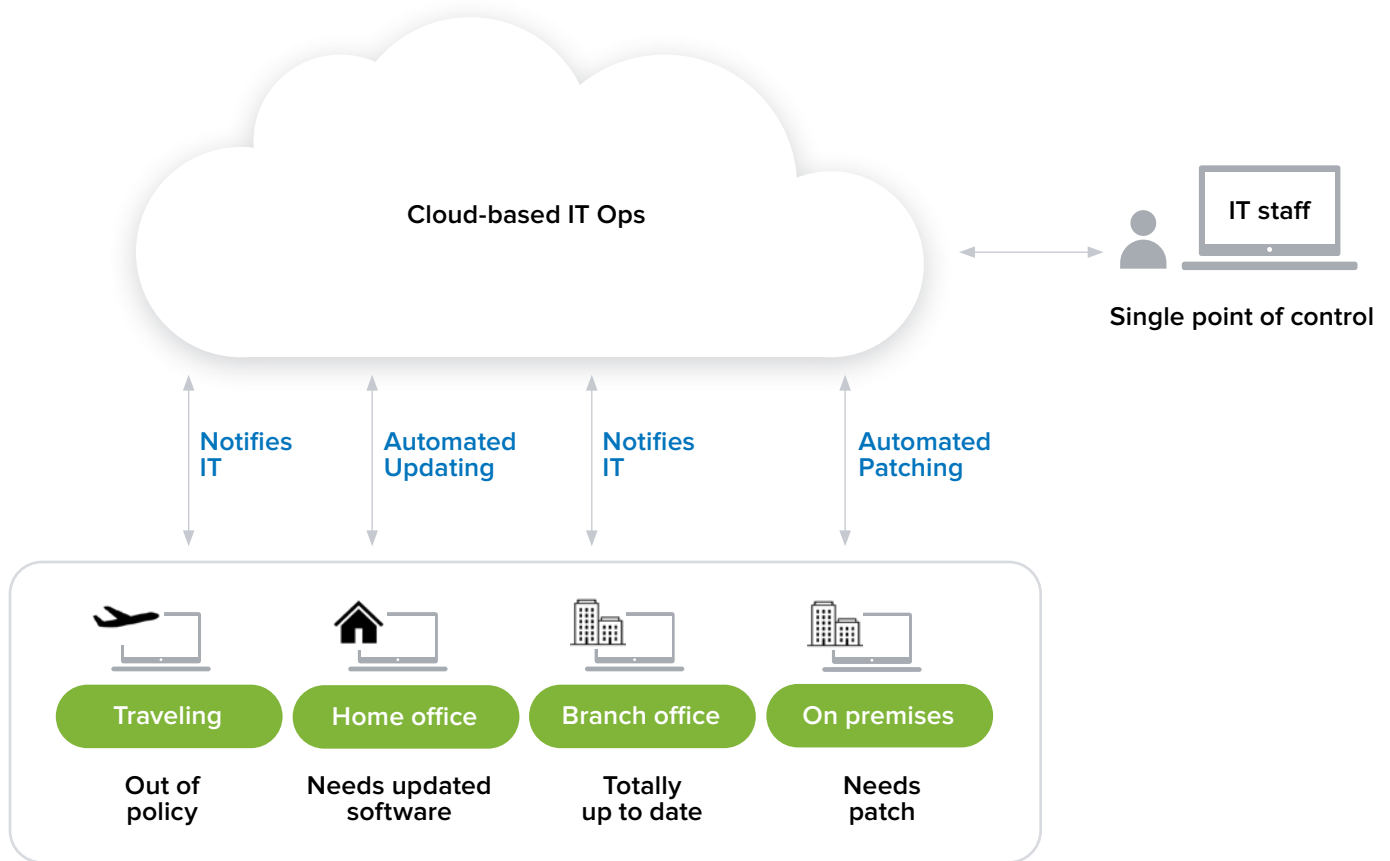


Figure 2 – The solution keeps on top of the status of each device, regardless of location.

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The solution gives us complete visibility for any laptop, desktop or server in our environment regardless of where they are located.

patch and manage them.” Figure 2 shows this functionality in action.

Automox has improved security outcomes, according to the healthcare IT Director, including the ability to harden a machine after an employee leaves the business. He cited an example: “If we terminate an employee in the middle of a workday, we don’t want that employee to log back into his machine or to extract data or to do anything dangerous. Automox gives us the ability to create tools so that we can make some changes inside that laptop. This way the person cannot log in as usual.”

Importance of Cloud-Native Architecture for IT Operations

As more of the world moves to the cloud every day, companies are naturally becoming increasingly cloud-centric. One example is B/Net Systems, which doesn't have a physical office. Their CEO explained, "We try to push as much as we can to the cloud for all the usual reasons: It is [more scalable and robust](#), and the security will generally be better."

The healthcare IT Director chose Automox because it's a cloud-native platform. He also appreciates [the cost savings](#) that come with it, sharing, "Automox just charges us a set amount per user, per month for using the product. That is very important to us. Because it's a cloud-native solution, you're saving on the cost of hosting an on-premises solution on your servers. Not having to pay for the bandwidth and the power of an appliance in our environment is positive."

Atlantic.net used to employ open source and a Microsoft solution together to handle patching systems. According to their Vice President, this approach was cumbersome and involved a long

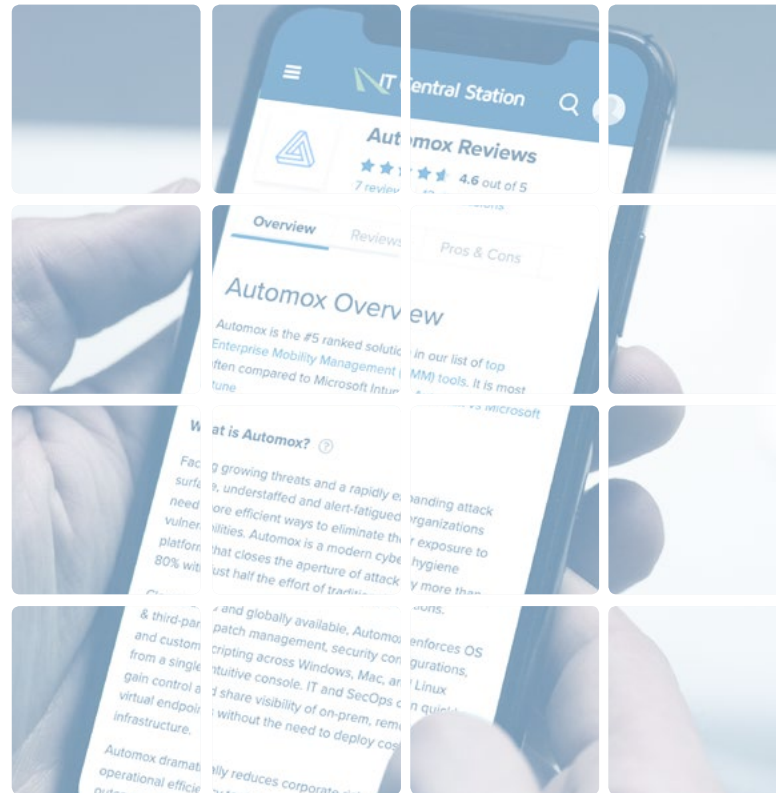


learning curve. His team was also very limited in what they could and couldn't manage, and in terms of scheduling or applying updates. Now that they are using a cloud-native solution, [life is much easier](#) for his people. He said, "Being in the cloud reduced, by two VMs, what we would have had to manage, update, monitor and the like."

The retailer's Security Engineer also agrees that it is important to have a cloud-native platform. He said, "Software-as-a-Service means that I'm [not maintaining internal architecture](#), servers, licensing and the like to keep it online, or High Availability if I need it. I don't have to think about any of that because it's just there."

Selection Factors for Cloud-Native IT Operations Solutions

Companies that want to shift away from hosting on-prem solutions while increasing security and efficiency have many desired features that they look for in a cloud-native IT operations platform. Users of Automox cite ease of use, speed and the ability to realize ROI as three of the most important factors.



1. Ease of use and ease of deployment

B/Net Systems' CEO likes the ease of drilling down into systems that are compliant or determine where they aren't compliant. [The ability to push out updates is also simple](#) and a huge time saver for his team and clients. He said, "If for some reason a Chrome update doesn't take, then you can push out the updates from Automox and say, 'Hey, try it again.' If it doesn't work after a couple of tries, then we can always remote into the user's computer and do it manually."

Atlantic.net's Vice President appreciates [how easy it is for everyone on his team to be on the same page](#). He said, "When I look at the dashboard, I can see how many are scheduled for updates, how many are already fully up-to-date, and how many need attention. I can see if there are any exceptions that my people put in for the

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The user interface is very pointed... You can go in without any prior knowledge and build a policy without messing it up on the first try.

customer.” He also reported, with some pride, that despite not being at the same technical level of an engineer, he is able to set up VMware, Windows and Hyper-V environments by following the simple instructions.

For the retail Security Engineer, Automox is much easier to use than other configuration management tools his team has tried before. Whereas they used to stumble through implementation with other platforms, they can now come in and tackle deployment without any problems. He also [likes how straightforward it is to set up policies](#), noting, “The user interface is very pointed. It keeps you aware of what you’re doing. You can go in without any prior knowledge and build a policy without messing it up on the first try.”

And the CEO of ThreatAware reported numerous examples of Automox’s ease of use:

- “We haven’t found anything easier. You just specify what you want to patch and what level. For example, you can choose to just do security, or you can do everything. You tick a few boxes and it’s done.”
- “With Automox, its usability is a sign that it’s a very well put together, well thought out product.”
- “The initial setup is really easy, and it involves only four steps. All you have to do is create your policies.”
- “Setting up the policies is extremely easy. You create your groups and you do this by working out what type of machines you have and how you want those groups to be.”
- “[Patching automation](#) saves us a lot of time. Then when we link it into ThreatAware and use the bulk operation feature, it just makes life easy. We’re probably saving between 10-12 hours a month.”

2. Speed of solution and speed of setup

ThreatAware’s CEO is also impressed with the stability and speed of Automox, as he’s never had a problem accessing it. He said, “When you install the agent, literally within 30 seconds, the machine appears. This is really handy because if you are rolling out a load, you can just check them off as you go. You don’t have to wait half an hour and come back. [It’s always online, and it’s always fast.](#)”

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Ihloom’s Director of Business Operations also recognized [the solution’s speed](#) in carrying out its functions. He commented, “We have set patch schedules and found that if we state our desire to patch a group of machines at 10:00 AM, they will all be patched at this time.” From the scripting side, he reported that when commands are sent out, they’re often received by the endpoint within 30 seconds.

Using a plumbing analogy, the CEO of B/Net Systems chimed in about the platform’s speed, remarking, “Like plumbing, your average user doesn’t understand how all this stuff works. They don’t care. They just want it to work. Also, like plumbing, when there is a problem, it needs to be fixed right now, not tomorrow or next week. Having Automox allows us to bother people less, fix things faster and generally be a [better managed services provider providing better service.](#)”

When creating Worklets to manage drivers, security configurations and software

management, the Security Engineer at the retailer found that Automox was way faster than expected. He said, “Manually deploying a payload to it running on an endpoint is almost [instantaneous](#). It’s so fast. I switched to Automox because we can go from zero to hero with all of our complex needs really fast.”

3. Return on Investment (ROI)

The healthcare IT Director pointed to two ways he has seen ROI as a result of employing a cloud-native platform: 1) fewer person-hours spent trying to understand how to roll out patches, and 2) reporting. With his department [saving 10-15 hours a week](#) on tasks, he enjoys being able to do stuff quicker and easier. He said, “There are times when I don’t even know how we would have done some of the things that we do today without Automox.”

B/Net Systems is also saving several hours a month on reporting. Their CEO shared, “Previously, we would run a report, scan it and compare it. We were spending 15-30 minutes a month on each machine because you would find stuff that wasn’t up-to-date, then you had to fix it. [This \[Automox\] solution takes that time down to a few total minutes per month.](#)”

The retail Security Engineer estimated his company is saving 40-80 hours a month due to all the different features that Automox automates. He said, “There has certainly been a return on the time spent accomplishing the tasks and accomplishing tasks that we didn’t even think would save us time, but it ultimately did. We have also seen a return in our [ability to patch everything and keep it compliant.](#)”



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According to Atlantic.net’s Vice President, the savings in person-hours alone means [Automox has paid for itself](#). He estimated they spend about 20 hours a month doing patch management through Automox, where in the past it was a full-time job for about two people. He added, “Since we have scaled – and all the more so because in security compliance you have to test the updates – we’ve probably saved hundreds of hours a month, at least. This amounts to significant savings.”

CONCLUSION

As the world of computing continues to evolve, IT operations must be able to adjust to the needs of their companies, employees and clients. In an effort to gain better visibility, save on staff time, improve efficiency and increase security, organizations are shifting to cloud-native solutions like Automox. In describing their experiences on IT Central Station, users agree that Automox delivers the speed and ease of use they seek, as well as a strong return on their investment.

ABOUT IT CENTRAL STATION

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The Internet has completely changed the way we make buying decisions. We now use ratings and review sites to see what other real users think before we buy electronics, book a hotel, visit a doctor or choose a restaurant. But in the world of enterprise technology, most of the information online and in your inbox comes from vendors. What you really want is objective information from other users. IT Central Station provides technology professionals with a community platform to share information about enterprise solutions.

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ABOUT AUTOMOX

Today's IT leaders deserve better than tedious legacy tools to manage their infrastructure. From Automox's single cloud-native platform, IT teams can automate, manage, and scale IT operations to meet the growing business demands of the modern workforce and improve security for their businesses.

Only Automox delivers a single, cloud-native, zero-infrastructure IT operations platform with complete visibility and control so IT can act in real-time across any endpoint, server, or workload and enable greater strategic value and security outcomes for their business.

Realize radical efficiency across IT operations. Patch and remediate vulnerabilities in 24 hours or less. Deploy software on any endpoint, regardless of location, environment, and OS. Eliminate manual maintenance and patching. And reduce resource and operational costs by up to 97%. That's the IT Operations Cloud.

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