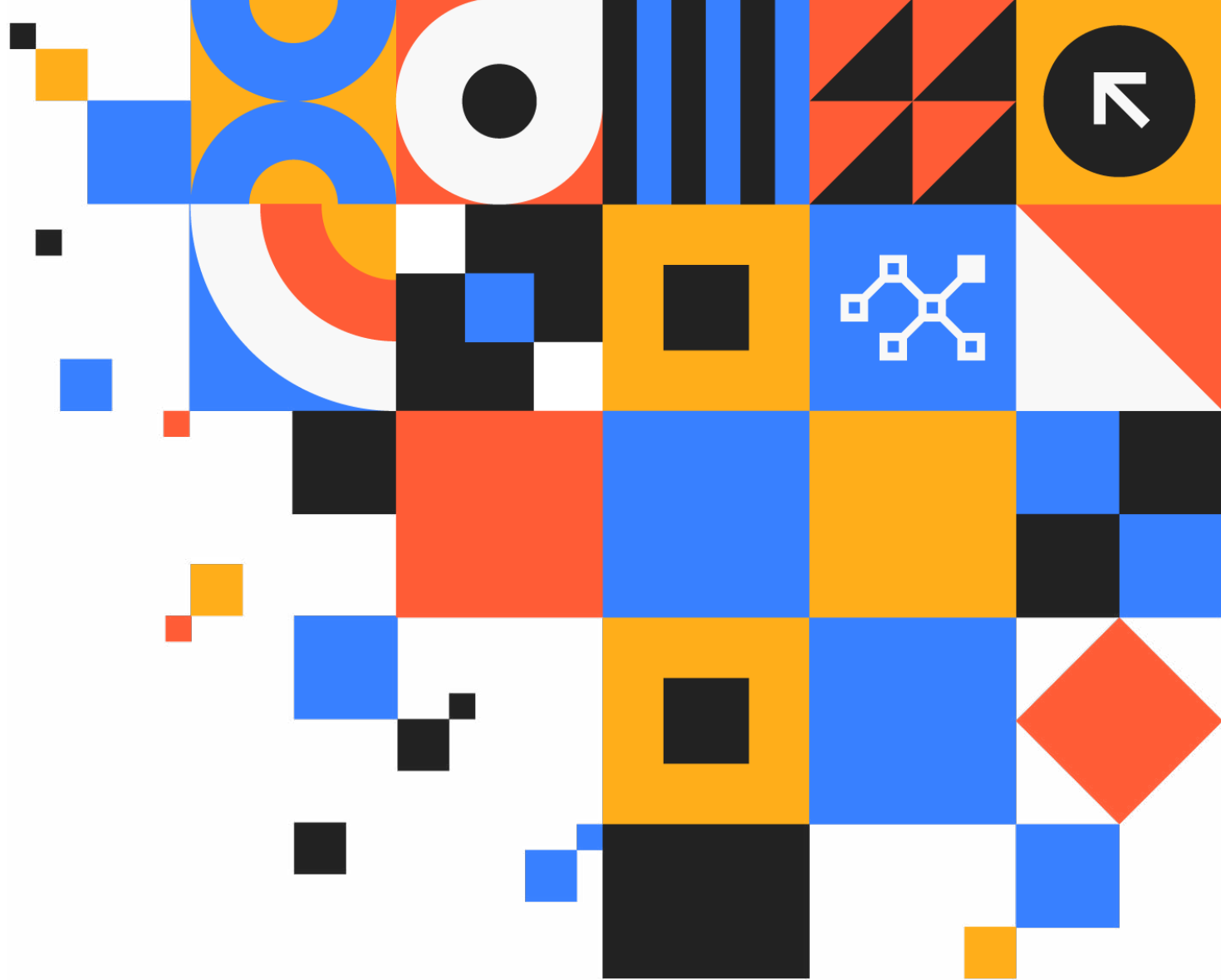


# Open Source Puppet vs. Puppet Enterprise: The Complete Guide





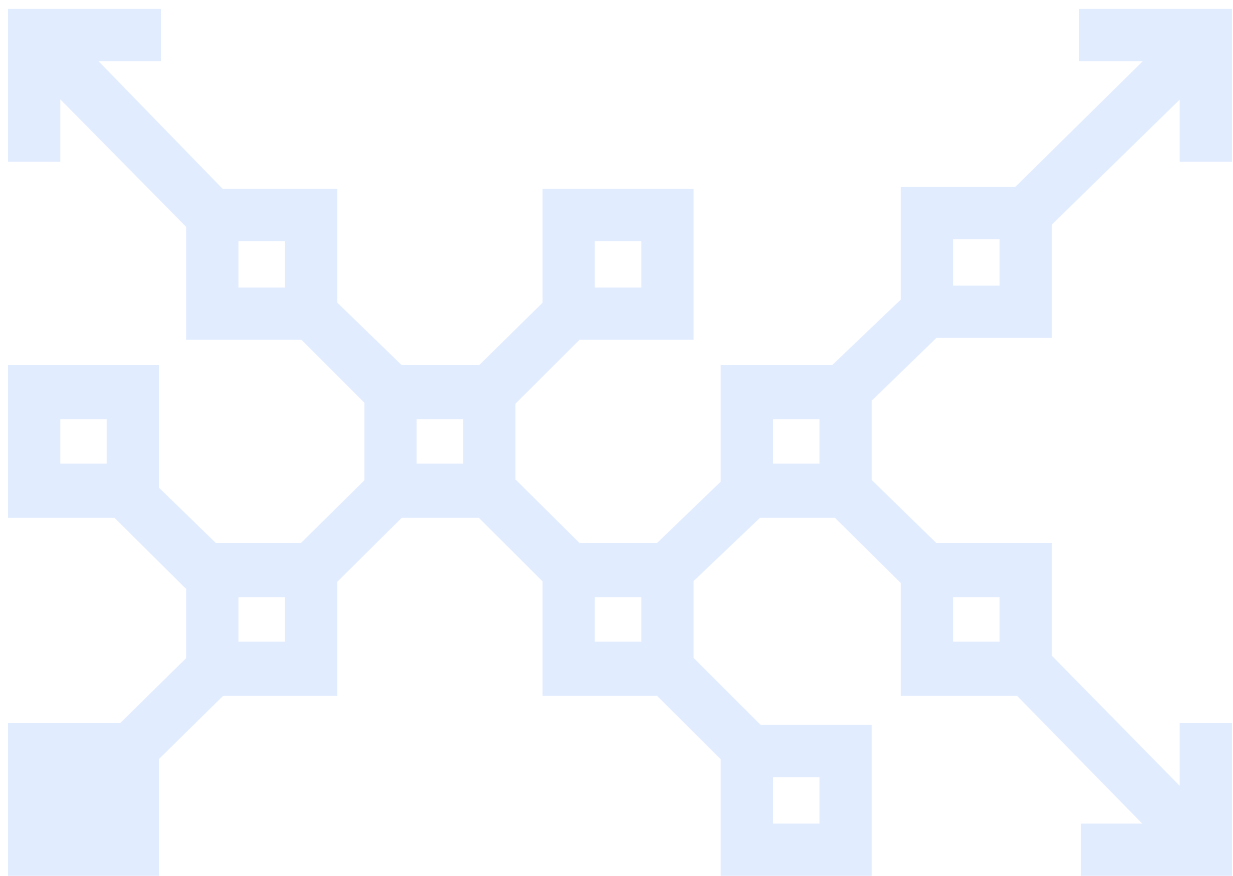
## Contents

- 3 Introduction: What to Consider When Choosing Tools Like Puppet**
- 5 Open Source Puppet vs. Puppet Enterprise**
- 7 Open Source Puppet vs. Puppet Enterprise: A Side-by-Side Comparison**
- 10 Why Organizations Choose Puppet Enterprise Over Open Source Puppet**
- 13 Reasons You Might Need Puppet Enterprise + Signs It's Time to Switch**
- 15 The Bottom Line: Should Your Organization Use Open Source Puppet or Puppet Enterprise?**

## Introduction: What to Consider When Choosing Tools Like Puppet

What happens when your business matures? Business maturity can mean a lot of things, but in a digital-first world, it almost always means IT has new problems to figure out.

You might need to scale really fast. You might need to start building hybrid infrastructure. Even if you're not expanding your IT footprint, you might still be indebted to old tools and bad code. A new SLA might force you to comply with new security and compliance standards you aren't ready for, or that you might not be appropriately staffed for. No matter what the symptoms are, your IT is going to face some growing pains.



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## One thing is for certain: Your IT doesn't get easier to manage on its own.

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So naturally, you turn to secure automation to handle the expanding workloads and increased expectations. All of a sudden, you're writing scripts, automating tasks, and saving mountains of time by keeping everything in your desired state. Automation lets you do more, faster, and better than before. You can't imagine development, operations, or DevOps the same way again.

But before long, those growing pains start to show up again. You find that the tools, solutions, and processes that kept your IT afloat in the past don't cut it anymore. The scale and sophistication of your IT are essential to business success, but in a fast-paced, ever-changing digital landscape, new challenges and complexity are never far behind.

As your infrastructure expands, you need a solution that securely scales as quickly as your organization grows. This eBook offers insight into the business benefits of Puppet Enterprise that build on the capabilities of your current Open Source Puppet infrastructure – or help you choose a starting point if you're not using either.

### This eBook is for:

- **IT operations, InfoSec, compliance, cloud ops, CISOs, and other IT leaders** looking for better tools to support their roadmap and empower their teams.
- **Business leaders** who need to choose tools that can help move their organization forward.
- **DevOps engineers and IT operations managers** looking for a technical comparison between Puppet's primary offerings.
- **Existing Puppet users** who are curious about what they're missing in the Enterprise version.
- **Anyone** wondering how Open Source Puppet and Puppet Enterprise are used, why, and what to expect from each.



## Open Source Puppet vs. Puppet Enterprise

When you need more infrastructure (to handle more complexity, more users, and more tools) and more time to manage it, Puppet is there to support your path to better IT. Both Open Source Puppet and Puppet Enterprise are built on the same popular open source code – but there are some key differences to consider.

### Long Story Short

- **Both Open Source Puppet and Puppet Enterprise** are great places to start automating, securing, and enforcing with Puppet.
- **Open Source Puppet** is great for individuals or teams with Puppet experience managing a small number of servers, with optional add-on services and modules available via the Puppet Forge.
- **Puppet Enterprise** includes everything that comes with Open Source Puppet, and adds several key features designed to help you get started faster and get the most out of your infrastructure for the long run.

### Both Open Source Puppet and Puppet Enterprise Offer...

- Puppet’s popular, flexible, reliable infrastructure-as-code (IaC) with agent-based automation and a “pull”-based architecture
- Ability to manage servers across a hybrid cloud environment
- Access to the Puppet Forge, home to thousands of value-enhancing Puppet modules
- Optional extensions and add-ons for support, training, compliance, and managed services
- Access to Puppet’s vibrant open source community

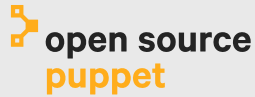
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“The more we use Puppet Enterprise, the more we find we can do with it. Puppet Enterprise comes with many modules to help us manage our Puppet setup more easily. The open source version does not come with these modules ... Every new upgrade of Puppet proves to be more innovative, and brings exciting features that we want.”

Pope Davis | Senior Director of Systems Engineering | NYSE/ICE



[Read the case study >>](#)



**Open Source Puppet** is a great, free starting point for managing servers. It's the most popular collection of open source projects for defining secure infrastructure as code and enforcing system configurations.

- Utilize modules created by the Puppet community and some Puppet-supported modules via the Forge
- Command line interface



**Puppet Enterprise** is built for enterprise infrastructure and the teams that manage it. Puppet Enterprise includes all features of Open Source Puppet and adds open APIs, value reporting, compliance reporting, and more to automate the delivery and operation of enterprise-scale infrastructure.

- Role-Based Access Control (RBAC)
- Disaster recovery
- GUI interface
- Access Enterprise-exclusive Forge modules to unlock more infrastructure management use cases
- More training options, priority support, and higher admin service levels to help you get started faster
- Swiftly integrate Puppet with your tech stack using enterprise-grade integrations
- Quickly provision and manage hundreds of thousands of servers across on-prem, cloud, hybrid, and VMs
- Document, report, and collaborate on compliance with graphical visibility into changes across your infrastructure
- Stay current with ongoing releases containing new features, security fixes, and more from Puppet

# Open Source Puppet vs. Puppet Enterprise: A Side-by-Side Comparison

## Configuration Automation

Define and continually enforce infrastructure configurations.

	Open Source Puppet	Puppet Enterprise
Puppet language	✓	✓
Puppet server	✓	✓
PuppetDB	✓	✓
Unified agent	✓	✓
Web UI		✓
Enterprise-only platforms (AIX,F5)		✓
Guided, out-of-the-box installation		✓
Supported modules		✓
Enterprise-class integrations		✓

## Orchestration

Directly control and view change across distributed apps and global infrastructure.

	Open Source Puppet	Puppet Enterprise
Language extensions	✓	✓
Visual orchestration workflows		✓
Command line interface & tooling		✓
Full & direct control		✓
Real-time feedback & visibility		✓
Built-in intelligence		✓

## Automated Provisioning

Automate Day One provisioning across your infrastructure.

	Open Source Puppet	Puppet Enterprise
Bare metal	✓	✓
Cloud (AWS, Azure, OpenStack)	✓	✓
Containers (Docker)	✓	✓
Virtual machines		✓
Built-in, supported, upgradable capabilities		✓

## Reporting & Compliance

Gain real-time visibility into the state of your infrastructure and changes taking place.

	Open Source Puppet	Puppet Enterprise
View corrective vs. intentional changes		✓
Inspect unmanaged software packages		✓
Event inspection		✓
Puppet server reporting		✓
Automated security baseline enforcement and remediation	Add-on available	Add-on available

## Node Management

Classify and manage the lifecycle of your nodes.

	Open Source Puppet	Puppet Enterprise
Rules-based node classifier		✓
Web UI for node classification		✓
Inventory filtering		✓

## Code Management

Manage infrastructure as code across everything for continuous delivery.

	Open Source Puppet	Puppet Enterprise
Community tools for code management (r10k)	✓	✓
Integration with Git	✓	✓
Supported out-of-the-box workflows		✓
Command line interface		✓
Multi-master file sync		✓

## Role-Based Access Control

Assign permissions to teams in line with company and regulatory policies.

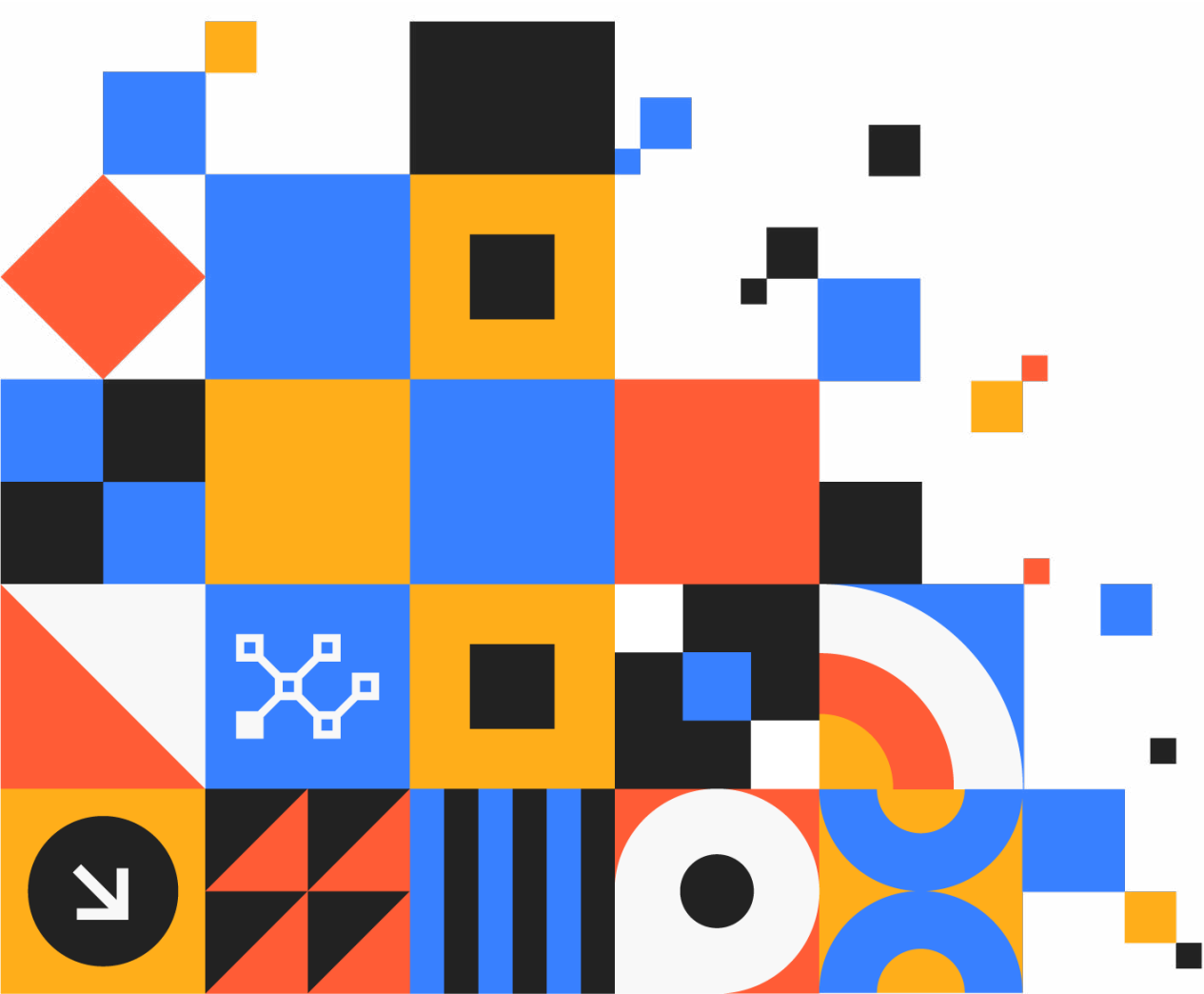
	Open Source Puppet	Puppet Enterprise
Role-based access control		✓
Token authentication & revocation		✓
Integration with Active Directory & LDAP		✓



# Enterprise Support

Get 24/7 help when you need it, a private support portal with email and phone support, access to all product updates, an account manager, free training, and prioritized bug reports and feature requests.

	Open Source Puppet	Puppet Enterprise
Community support	✓	✓
Enterprise support	Add-on services available	✓
Professional services	Add-on services available	✓
Virtual and in-person training	Add-on services available	✓



## Why Organizations Choose Puppet Enterprise Over Open Source Puppet

Organizations of all sizes and scale choose Open Source Puppet. But when their business needs change, many of those organizations make the switch to Puppet Enterprise. Let's take a closer look at some of the reasons why growing companies make the move.



University of Oregon Information Services provides centralized services like Active Directory and OpenLDAP, email, and Banner ERP for more than a dozen teams of admins and developers across a decentralized IT campus. Switching from Open Source Puppet to Puppet Enterprise improved reporting, orchestration, and support without sacrificing the powerful, scalable automation and configuration management they'd come to expect from Puppet. [Read the case study >>](#)

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“While I believe Open Source Puppet is a fantastic product that already serves the majority of needs, there are some huge benefits we’ve gained by moving to Puppet Enterprise.”

Lucas Crownover, SysAdmin for Information Services

“Puppet Enterprise was absolutely essential to meet our needs. It offers a nice user interface for various groups to log in and create reports, see the state of their machines, or run tasks related to their infrastructure.”

Matthew Shepard, Associate Director, Systems Automation Services for Information Services

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### Enterprise support

You can deliver business value to your organization faster with 24/7 help from Puppet experts when you need it. You'll get a private support portal with options for email and phone support as well as up-to-date content to help you troubleshoot and resolve issues independently if desired; immediate access to all product updates; an account manager to help you find what you need; free Puppet training; and prioritization of your bug reports and feature requests.

Limited support packages can be purchased by Open Source Puppet users, but they don't go as far as those offered to Enterprise users.



“Puppet Support has always been quick to answer and knowledgeable about the product as a user, not just based on an understanding of the documentation.”

Senior IT Architect, Global 500 Telecommunications Services Company

TechValidate Survey TVID: B09-FEE-B6E

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## Organizational scale

Puppet Enterprise enables organizations to self-serve their automation efforts by empowering teams outside of the central IT or platform team to own their infrastructure automation without the need to manage the tooling. With the addition of workspaces, federated teams can own the authoring, validation, and delivery of the automation content for their service without blocking or being blocked by others.

Open Source Puppet does not provide self-service options.

## Reporting and compliance

Puppet Enterprise gives you graphical reporting so you can visualize your infrastructure, collaborate, and respond to changes faster. You get real-time visibility into the effects of changes so you can see exactly what’s going on in your infrastructure — and prove to executives and auditors that your organization is hardened and operating in compliance.

Compliance Enforcement can be added to Open Source Puppet to automate security baseline configuration enforcement, but Open Source Puppet provides limited visibility and reporting capabilities.



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“We have been automating [with] Open Source Puppet for years ...  
[With Puppet Enterprise], all documentation requirements are now also  
fulfilled without any additional time spent. We simply no longer have to worry  
about whether all the necessary information is included in the change record.  
We can rely one hundred percent on our automation processes.”

Willi Bühler, Head of Application Technology at Interhyp

[Read the case study >>](#)



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### Built for teams

Puppet Enterprise is built for distributed teams. It provides a standardized way to automate delivery and operation of your software. You get efficiency and traceability across large fleets of servers, plus the ability to safely delegate role-based access across teams, view audit trails, and quickly orchestrate change across tens of thousands of machines. Open Source Puppet is designed for individuals and small, local teams, and does not offer role-based access or the ability to scale changes.

### Full stack automation

Puppet Enterprise gives you a consistent approach to automation across your entire infrastructure lifecycle, from initial provisioning to system configuration, application deployment, and intelligent change orchestration. Because Puppet Enterprise manages the breadth of enterprise infrastructure, you can automate the entire application stack, from core infrastructure through middleware and application deployment. Now you have full control and visibility, all in a single solution.

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“Moving from Open Source Puppet to Puppet Enterprise has had a major  
impact on how we manage our nodes. For example, with Open Source  
Puppet, restarting services, upgrading software packages, forcing agent runs  
and more were performed by running custom-made scripts on the command  
line. Now all those tasks are executed using the Puppet Enterprise console.”

Jan Schuer, Founder and Owner, Smartbit (creator of Smartschool)

[Read the case study >>](#)



## Reasons You Might Need Puppet Enterprise

### + Signs It's Time to Switch

If you're in IT, you're being asked to do more, better, and faster – often with a budget that doesn't quite keep pace.

Since both Open Source Puppet and Puppet Enterprise are built on the same strong Puppet foundation, it's useful to look at your current state – your pain points, inefficiencies, goals, and growing pains – to determine whether you should start with Puppet Enterprise or if it's time to make the switch from Open Source Puppet.

#### Why new Puppet users choose Enterprise

- **You need to deliver better infrastructure faster.** You need the confidence that your continuous integration and continuous delivery (CI/CD) pipeline is consistent and that your infrastructure is stable, while also enabling you to roll back at a moment's notice. You want a prescriptive workflow to test and deploy Puppet code across environments without interruption.
- **You're facing increased regulation and security requirements.** As your business scales, so does your responsibility to your customers. Increased regulation has made compliance a priority, often at the expense of speed and agility, but you can't afford to make that trade-off. Your teams need to be able to assess and enforce desired state across your on-prem or hybrid infrastructure to ensure you meet security benchmark requirements and compliance mandates.
- **You rely solely on internal resources to run your critical infrastructure.** It's happened to all of us: Your internal technology expert leaves and you're left with a knowledge gap in part of your critical infrastructure. You need peace of mind knowing that you have around-the-clock expertise from a reliable, always-on vendor. As regulations require you to prove business continuity, you owe it to your stakeholders to provide assurance their applications and systems will meet customer expectations 24/7.

#### Why longtime Open Source Puppet users switch to Puppet Enterprise

Moving from Open Source Puppet to Puppet Enterprise enables your business to harness the full power of Puppet, while taking advantage of enterprise-level support, uptime, reliability, and scalability that your business needs to fully automate and compete today and in the future. Moving to Puppet Enterprise also offers exclusive extensibility to embrace the full power and capabilities of the Puppet Enterprise platform to help you become an unstoppable enterprise.

Puppet Enterprise holds many benefits for teams who already use Puppet's open source version. They switch when they need:

- The ability to review, test, and promote Puppet code across all environments
- The ability to orchestrate ordered deployments across infrastructure and apps
- Full traceability, auditing, and built-in reporting dashboards to quickly prove compliance
- Faster onboarding and increased standardization with lower governance costs
- Out of the box disaster recovery processes and support to continue managing infrastructure in the event of an emergency or outage
- RBAC to delegate management capabilities across teams and individuals
- Full enterprise support with training, professional services, and 24/7 tech support
- A GUI that packages SME expertise into self-service interfaces

Regardless of whether they start with Puppet Enterprise or switch after using Open Source Puppet, the tipping point for most organizations is the same: they're being asked to deliver better software, faster, across more complex IT. When they find they are spending too much time manually writing scripts, configuring, remediating drift, developing unsupported modules, managing manual workflows, and fixing security problems, they realize it's time to move to Puppet Enterprise.

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**“We’re able to manage more servers with the same number of people (and even fewer). We can deliver servers with the same level of security every time with minimal effort.”**

**DevOps Engineer, Federal Government**

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# The Bottom Line: Should Your Organization Use Open Source Puppet or Puppet Enterprise?

## Start with Open Source Puppet if:

- You have a small set of servers to manage
- You plan to leave your infrastructure the way it is for the foreseeable future
- You prefer a hands-on approach to managing infrastructure
- You're pretty familiar with Puppet
- You value customizability over efficiency

## Use Puppet Enterprise if:

- You have a large or complex IT infrastructure (i.e., hundreds or thousands of servers, hybrid deployment, etc.)
- You need to meet security and compliance expectations (like regulations, vendor agreements, audits, and SLAs)
- Your organization plans to add IT capacity or capabilities
- You need to simplify your infrastructure management tools and workflows

Puppet Enterprise is the only solution that combines both model-based and task-based capabilities in a way that enables you to scale your hybrid infrastructure as your automation footprint grows. With both agent-based and agentless capabilities, you have the flexibility to automate what you want, how you want, **wherever you want**.

## Next Steps: Getting Started

So, are you ready to start with Open Source Puppet or Puppet Enterprise? No matter which you choose, the Puppet team is there – whether you're ready to start with Puppet Enterprise or need to migrate from Open Source Puppet. They'll work with you to understand your infrastructure landscape, your current implementation, and where you want to take your organization's IT so they can help chart your course to better IT. Get in touch with the Puppet team at [puppet.com/contact](https://puppet.com/contact) to take the first – or next – step toward your best infrastructure.

## About Puppet by Perforce

Puppet by Perforce empowers people to innovate through infrastructure automation. For more than a dozen years, Puppet has led the way in IT infrastructure automation to simplify complexity for the masses in order to strengthen customers' security posture, compliance standards, and business resiliency beyond the data center to the cloud. More than 40,000 organizations — including more than 80 percent of the Global 5000 — have benefited from Puppet's open source and commercial solutions. In 2022, Puppet was acquired by Perforce Software. Learn more at [puppet.com](https://puppet.com).

