Engineer Advisory

Built 7 read-only host reporting roles

Built seven read-only reporting roles that render a live host to Markdown — facts, access, git, metrics, traffic, security and provider inventory — under a rule that no number is printed the run did not measure.

September 2026

seven reports that print only what they measured

Situation. The host had no dashboard and was not getting one, because a metrics stack does not fit on 464 MB and would not have been worth its cost if it did. That left an honest gap: there was no way to answer questions like who has access, how much has this repository grown, what does the traffic look like, or is the hardening actually enforced.

Task. Those questions needed answers that could be produced on demand, cost the host nothing while nobody was asking, and could never change the thing they were describing.

Action. Seven read-only roles, each rendering a live host into Markdown in the repository. A facts snapshot covering operating system, hardware, storage, network, services, packages, listening sockets and processor utilisation computed from two samples of the kernel's own counter. An access report covering accounts, sudo scope, key fingerprints, forge users and database roles. A git report per repository. A metrics report over the day's collected samples. A traffic report built from the web server's privacy-masked log. A provider inventory across four provider surfaces — DNS, two cloud APIs and a dedicated-server API. And a security report that answers whether hardening is enforced rather than configured, printing the firewall rules in match order and the live ban rule set. The governing rule across all seven is that no number is printed that the run did not measure — a report that fills a gap with a plausible figure is worse than one that leaves it blank, because only the plausible one gets believed.

Result. The estate can be described from the repository on demand, and the reports have found real things: the two dead security controls, an undeclared listening port, and the observation that the traffic archive is only as old as the last time somebody remembered to harvest it. That last one is written up as a limitation with a specific cost recorded — sixteen days of one site's history that rotated away between harvests and do not exist anywhere.

Bring this experience to your project

Use "Built 7 read-only host reporting roles" as a starting point for a similar challenge in your organisation. The services behind this work are available for your project. Handovers, runbooks and manuals that let your own staff operate the system without ringing whoever built it.

Explore our services Get in touch →

Look behind the result

Read the situation, decisions and result in this example. We can discuss which parts transfer to your constraints and which need another approach. Built 7 read-only host reporting roles — seven reports that print only what they measured

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Need a written picture of what your servers are doing?

Talk through your project with the engineer responsible for delivery. We agree the scope, price basis and handover in writing before work begins.

Role context: Site Reliability Engineer. It draws on Infrastructure, Automation & CI/CD, Monitoring & Observability, Linux & Servers, Stakeholder & Reporting and Documentation. And while you are here, we are rather good at Site Reliability & Monitoring, System Administration and Technical Documentation.

Get in touch Explore our services

One piece of **a longer record** — and it is all on this site.

Every entry is written the same way: the situation, the task, what we did and what changed.

See the whole record

Define the improvement you need

Bring the decision, the people affected and the options already considered. We can make the tradeoffs explicit and leave a documented recommendation.

See what it costs Get in touch →

Need a written picture of what your servers are doing?

Ask about the decisions behind “Built 7 read-only host reporting roles”. You will speak with the people who can explain the work and assess your own project.

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