



# Guardian Life speeds pathway to the cloud and easy compliance reporting with Puppet

CASE STUDY



**Industry:** Insurance

## Background

Guardian Life IT Services supports a plethora of applications and was shouldering immense technical debt for the sprawling 159-year-old company.

## Challenge

The team embarked on an accelerated migration to the cloud in a highly regulated environment with many security and compliance constraints.

## Customer Environment

2,000+ AWS servers running production and non-production workloads across Windows and Linux. Infrastructure and Security compliance tools running on Lambda. Various applications hosted on Docker Containers.

## Solution

- Puppet Enterprise provides standard EC2 instances with secure OS controls and customizable modules for middleware
- Easy reporting for compliance
- Eliminate configuration and system drift

## Results

- Guardian Life migrated more than 200 applications to the cloud in less than two years, tremendously reducing their datacenter usage
- It has already started using Containers, whose underlying hosts are managed by Puppet
- More than 2,000 servers were set up, managed, and reported on by Puppet Enterprise

## Rapid cloud migration enables compliance and innovation

Mohinder Singh started his job at Guardian Life few years ago. He and his team were able to apply their cloud migration, configuration management and automation expertise in migrating a lot of applications to AWS and managing a suite of servers using Puppet. “The team’s collective contribution and expertise on AWS and Puppet led to successful migration of a lot of applications”.

A 159-year-old company that has grown into one of the largest mutual life insurers in the world, Guardian Life recognized that it had a large technical debt that held it back from its goals in the emerging competitive landscape for insurance. It began a rapid migration to AWS to build a foundation for innovative customer experiences.

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**“Puppet is more, it’s cloud agnostic. It works with VMs or a physical data center. As we moved toward the cloud, the general mindset changed. People had to write automations and not do only configurations. So that gave the spark to people to implement the standard configuration management. We started doing things in a better way rather than just lifting and shifting.”**

### Mohinder Singh

Senior Cloud Engineer, Guardian Life

## Aggressive cloud migration plan

Singh knew from experience that Puppet configuration management makes the move to the cloud practicable.

“For the clients I’ve worked with that never really had any configuration management tools to keep the software in check, it was kind of a nightmare. It’s not just troubleshooting that’s challenging. For every new app, we as cloud engineers and DevOps engineers, had to manually provision the servers with the required controls and middleware. With Puppet, it’s now automated. It takes the burden off of us,” said Singh.

Guardian chose AWS as their primary cloud provider. It had a mix of Windows and Linux operating systems that use a variety of middleware to support applications. Implementing Puppet Enterprise to build and maintain servers sped the migration and showed the value of adopting a cloud-aware DevOps mindset for future development.

When asked how the enterprise would function without Puppet, Singh said, “We’d crumble. The systems would incur a drastic software and configuration drift without a configuration management tool like Puppet.”

Each server is built using a base profile and role-defined additional profiles that install middleware based on role and OS categorization. Puppet modules then configure the middleware and software elements required. Users can then customize their middleware using the Hieradata feature provided by Puppet.

## Consistency, confidence, and compliance

At its core, the team's focus on automation has sped the migration and created further possibilities for services and development.

"What's happening now is a lot of applications started using containers. It reduces the infrastructure cost for us," said Singh.

In addition, the requests from compliance and security audits are easily addressed via the infrastructure-as-code architecture. "We have all the data they want," said Singh. "We can generate a report for the exact data they are looking for. If someone were to request for a list of Windows servers in dev running an outdated agent, we can easily drill down into specifics using the intuitive Puppet console. We keep track of compliance and security on a very continuous basis.

## Top outcomes from using Puppet

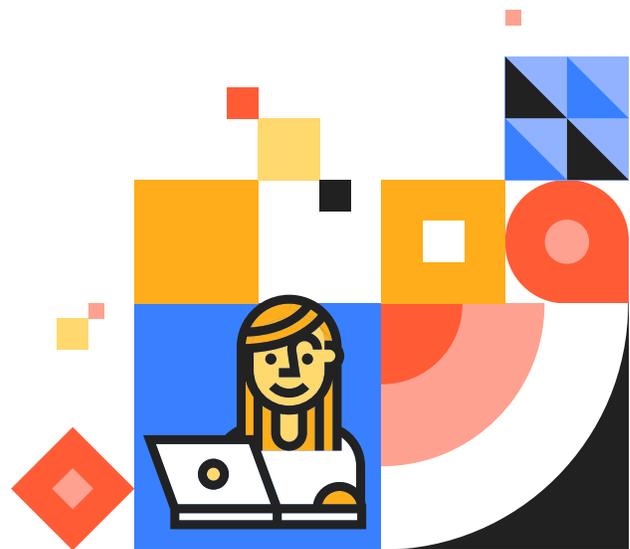
- Massive cloud migration in two years
- Containers implemented and managed
- Ease of compliance and security audit response

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**"Puppet has improved everyone's lives to a great extent."**

**Mohinder Singh**

Senior Cloud Engineer, Guardian Life



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