

# 8 Important DevOps Trends from 2014



There are buzzwords and then there are bona fide movements. In 2014, DevOps has tilted clearly toward the latter during the past year, as a growing number of companies started to embrace the potential bottom-line boon offered by a more agile, unified, and strategic vision of IT better suited for the always-on digital age.

These eight moments and trends from 2014 help put the rise of DevOps in perspective:

## ONE:

### A groundswell year for DevOps

No one waved a magic wand and conjured DevOps out of thin air in 2014—but this will likely go down as the year DevOps visibly began its move from niche to normal. Some 21% of companies included in [InformationWeek's 2014 DevOps survey](#) said they've already implemented DevOps in their organizations, and another 21% plan to do so within a year. No doubt, DevOps has a ways to go before we think of it as commonplace—the same survey revealed that nearly a third of IT pros still weren't really familiar with DevOps. But as DevOps continues to expand from Web companies to conventional enterprise IT, that number is likely to shrink.

## TWO:



### Making the connections between DevOps, IT performance, and the bottom line

When you're trying to build organizational buy-in and momentum—especially when it involves significant change—it helps to be able to point to positive results. Fortunately, 2014 brought more of that proof. [Puppet Labs' annual State of DevOps report](#) had already noted that high-performing IT teams were deploying code 30 times faster while cutting failures in half. In 2014, the report dug deeper into the business impacts of better IT results and found high-performing IT departments were twice as likely to beat their profitability, market share, and productivity goals. Moreover, the report linked performance with DevOps methodologies such as version control and continuous delivery, and noted there's much more than a one-time benefit: “The longer an organization has implemented—and continues to improve upon—DevOps practices, the better it performs.”

This speaks to DevOps as a strategic weapon and competitive advantage—what New Relic CEO Lew Cirne calls using software to play offense, not just defense.



As IT worries about being pigeon-holed as little more than support-centric cost centers, the DevOps model can help give development teams and operations a seat at their organization's strategic table—even if that means possibly splitting IT into two tracks.

### THREE: Docker

Docker and containerization weren't new this year, but the discussion around them reached stadium volumes in 2014, thanks in part to the cross-platform, "build once" mindset that drives it—and makes it a natural fit for DevOps. It wasn't all talk, either—Docker's growth this year was real.

"You can't talk about DevOps in 2014 without talking about Docker," says Nic Benders, New Relic's director of site engineering. "I really think that containerization was the big story this year." Benders also points to Kafka, the LinkedIn-born messaging system that's now an Apache open source project. The folks behind it spun out their own company this year, Confluent. "Both Docker and Kafka were a fast move from 'pretty exotic tech' to 'required interview question' this year," Benders notes.

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### FOUR: Automation tools and platforms attract new interest

Configuration and provisioning automation tools like Puppet, Ansible, and Chef aren't just DevOps tools, but they enjoyed growing interest both to help support existing DevOps shops and as incremental steps toward a DevOps makeover. Signs

these tools are ready to move beyond early adoption include the fact that corporate training firms started offering classes in them. Another such portent: IT jobs site Dice.com recently said employer demand for Puppet expertise was one of the fastest-growing skill categories in 2014, noting "it has gained a foothold with some of tech's biggest players."

### FIVE: DevOps makes the industry conference rounds

Here's a good litmus test for the mainstreaming of technology trends: When you start seeing key terms—like DevOps, for example—popping up regularly on the agendas of the tech industry's top conferences, you know something's afoot. And DevOps most definitely aced that test in 2014, as we began seeing seminar titles like "DevOps and Regulatory Compliance Considerations" (at the Gartner Data Center, Infrastructure & Operations Management Conference). Not to mention how often DevOps came up in various sessions at our [FutureStack14 conference](#).

### SIX: Developers see DevOps' ROI light through the cloud(s)

They put the Dev in DevOps, and developers themselves became increasingly aware of the potential payoffs from the continuous-delivery model and other DevOps methodologies—especially when done in the cloud. A recent Evans Data [report found](#) that 80% of developers believed DevOps was important to their organization, and that figure skewed even higher (86%) when singling out the continuous delivery element. Meanwhile, 77% of developers working in a continuous delivery environment were doing so in the cloud.

That speaks to a related trend in 2014: the considerable growth of cloud computing in the enterprise. Take Amazon Web Services, for example: on its Q3 earnings call, the company reported AWS usage was up 90% from the same period in 2013.

**SEVEN:** **Growing demand  
for DevOps pros**

You'd be hard-pressed to find many developers (or other technology professionals) with DevOps, cloud, and related skills and experience on the unemployment line in 2014. That's not just an indicator of their career prospects, but a sign that more enterprises were taking DevOps (and interconnected technologies like cloud) seriously and investing in the right talent as a result. That's virtually certain to continue in the **coming year**, too.

**EIGHT:** **High-profile companies  
embrace DevOps**

Much as a sweeping, evolutionary change like DevOps is fueled by demonstrable results, it's similarly helped along by early leaders willing to take the plunge. GE Capital's DevOps journey hit full stride this year inside the mammoth GE business, for instance, but not without a lot of hard work.

Others major companies have embraced new ways of innovating and unleashing the potential of technology, too. General Motors's CIO, for example, sees IT as two separate, related pieces: One runs the business, and the other innovates with the business.

 **Looking forward  
to 2015**

2014 was clearly a pivotal year for the rise of DevOps, and if current trends continue we can expect the DevOps approach to become even more important to more organizations in 2015. The key, as is often the case with major changes, will be just as much about cultural adjustments as technology.