



KubeCon



CloudNativeCon

Europe 2026

#KubeCon #CloudNativeCon

# How Much Platform is Enough Platform

**John Keates, Wehkamp Retail Group**



# About me

John Keates

- Platform engineering at Wehkamp Retail Group
- Consultancy
- DevOps Culture and Cloud Architecture

@johnkeates pretty much everywhere  
(CNCF/Istio/K8S Slack, GitHub, Mastodon etc.)



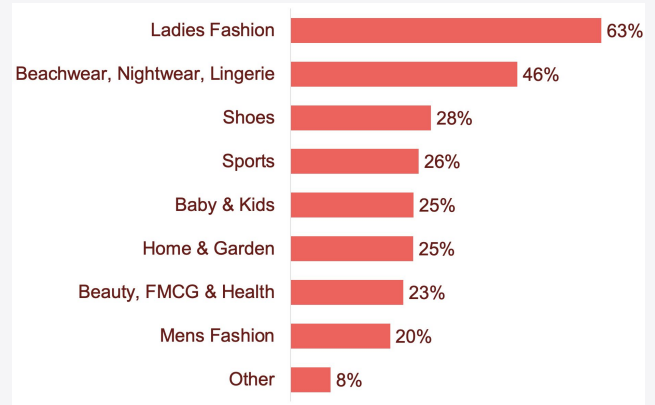
*Same old picture everywhere*

# Wehkamp Retail Group

Wehkamp serves (future) families, with women often taking the lead in shopping for the whole household.

wehkamp  
retail group

## 2M active customers



wehkamp

 kleertjes.com



KubeCon



CloudNativeCon

Europe 2026

# So what makes a platform?

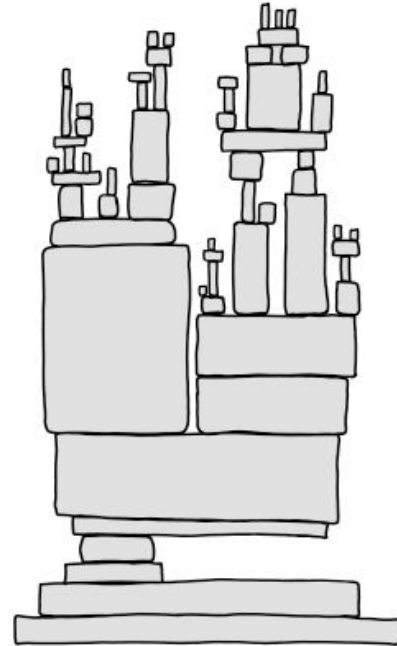
- Software (and services) that exists to enable other software
- Supposed to make that second part easier (lower cognitive load)
- As a product, it tends to have a name and customers (users, our engineers)

# So what makes a platform?

- Software (and services) that exists to enable other software
  - Supposed to make that second part easier (lower cognitive load)
  - As a product, it tends to have a name and customers (users, our engineers)
- 
- Camille & Ian: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9IPp-6nJ8bI> (KubeCon EU '25)
  - Chris & Corbin: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SCveWC\\_6LyQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SCveWC_6LyQ) (KubeCon Platform Day NA '25)
    - <https://cloudnativeplatforms.com/initiatives/platform-maturity-model-assessment/>
  - What I Talk About When I Talk About Platforms (<https://martinfowler.com/>)
  - Ruben: [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-54712-6\\_11](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-54712-6_11)

# How much is enough?

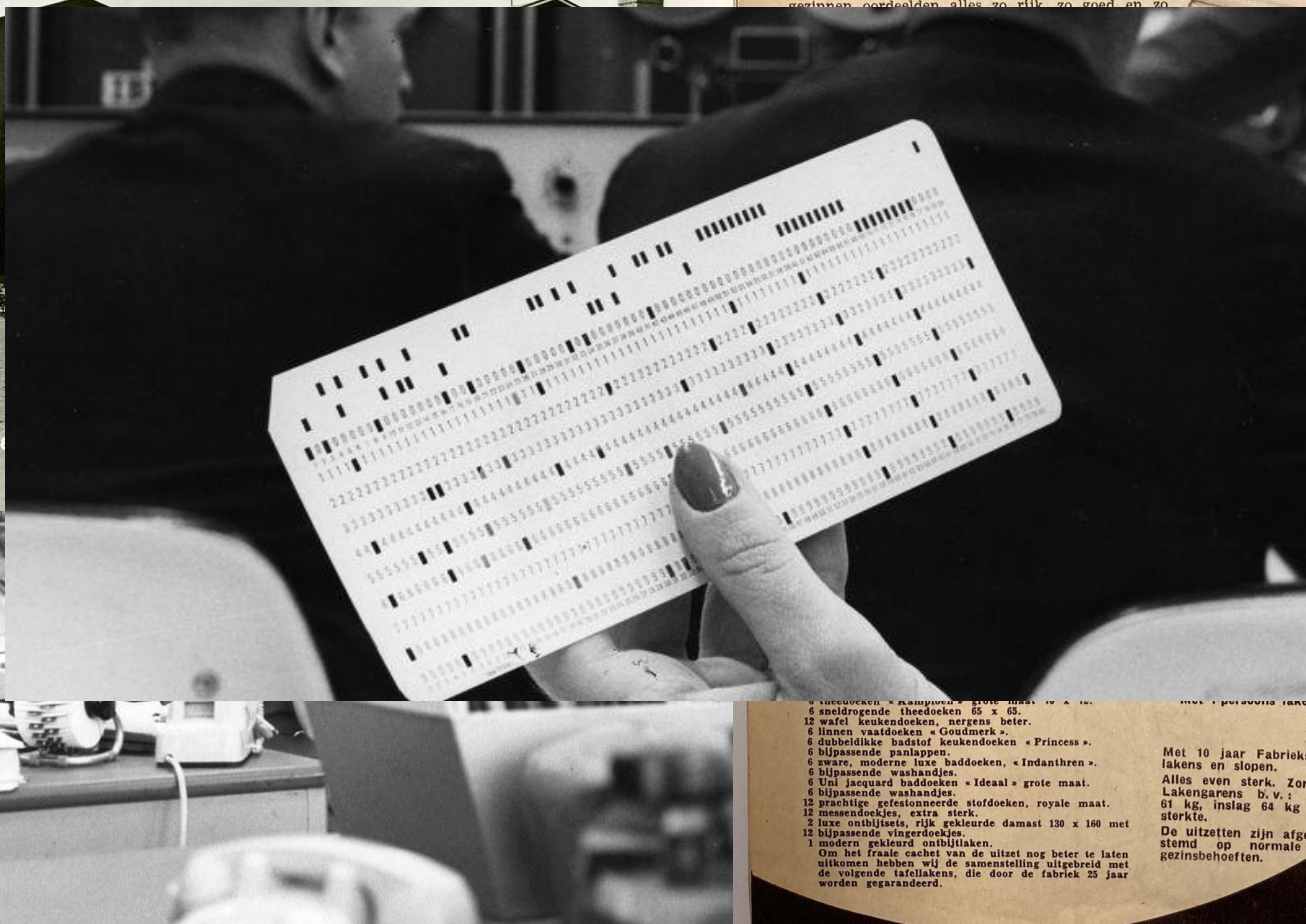
- Cognitive load low enough?
- Changes can flow through, unblocked?
  - Safely
  - With ownership



via: [mcc@mastodon.social](mailto:mcc@mastodon.social)



DEDEMSVAART, Wehkamp's F



## LINNEN - UITZETTEN COMPLEET OP ZICHT

Wij praten niet lang. Op onze kosten krijgt u de complete uitzet op zicht. Terug op onze kosten als Wehkamp geen eerste klas kantoor is. Maar 1000 tegen 1 stuurt u niets terug. Want tienduizenden gezinnen oordeelden alles zo rijk, zo goed en zo

» met 6 lakens en 6 slopen, rijk geborduurd, goedgekeurd door de Ver. van Nederl. Huisvrouwen.  
100 % graslinnen lakens 180 x 240.  
an dezelfde « Super » kwaliteit 180 x 240.  
Blaude slopen 85 x 72.  
ploen » grote maat 70 x 72.  
doeken 65 x 65.  
n, nergens voordeliger.  
n. « Goudmerk ».  
f keukendoeken « Princess ».  
pen.  
ke baddoeken « Indanthren ».  
ndjes.  
neerde stofdoeken, royale maat.  
ra sterk.  
n, fantastisch mooi.  
g gekleurde damast 130 x 160 met  
rdoekjes.  
ken, glanshoudend, grote maat 150 x 200.  
lamast servetten.  
lakens, glanshoudend 130 x 160.  
zakdoekjes, extra gemerceriseerd.  
anla-lakens 170 x 220.

50 of 31,60 + 7 x 24,—  
lakens 150 breed : f 190,60  
eksgarantie op lakens en slopen.

as « Carmen » 130 x 160.  
in dezelfde superklasse 150 x 200.  
doekjes, extra gemerceriseerd.  
leken (2-pers.) catalogusprijs.

f 385,80  
11 x 29,75

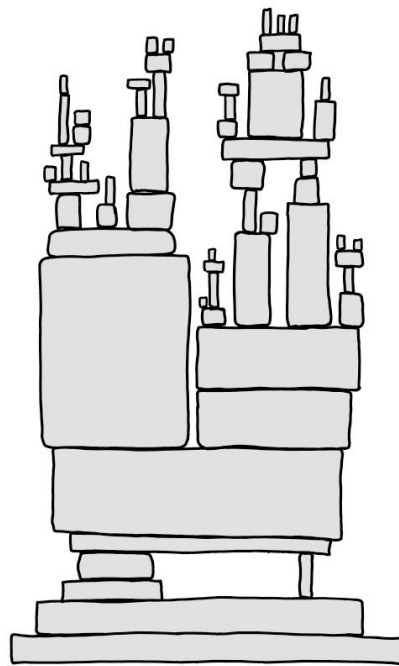
f 367,80

8 theedoeken « Kaspian » grote maat 19 x 26.  
6 sneldrogende theedoeken 65 x 65.  
12 wafel keukendoeken, nergens beter.  
6 linnen vaaddoeken « Goudmerk ».  
6 dubbeldikke badstof keukendoeken « Princess ».  
6 bijpassende pantappen.  
6 zware, moderne luxe baddoeken, « Indanthren ».  
6 bijpassende washandjes.  
6 Uni Jacquard baddoeken « Ideaal » grote maat.  
6 bijpassende washandjes.  
12 prachtige gefasonneerde stofdoeken, royale maat.  
12 messendoekjes, extra sterk.  
2 luxe ontbijsets, rijk gekleurde damast 130 x 160 met  
12 bijpassende vingerdoekjes.  
1 modern gekleurd ontbijtlaken.  
Om het fraaie cachet van de uitzet nog beter te laten uitkomen hebben wij de samenstelling uitgebreid met de volgende tafellakens, die door de fabriek 25 jaar worden gegarandeerd.

Met 10 jaar Fabrieksgarantie op lakens en slopen.  
Alles even sterk. Zonder pap.  
Lakengarens b.v.: kettling  
61 kg, inslag 64 kg treksterkte.  
De uitzetten zijn afgestemd op normale gezinsbehoeften.

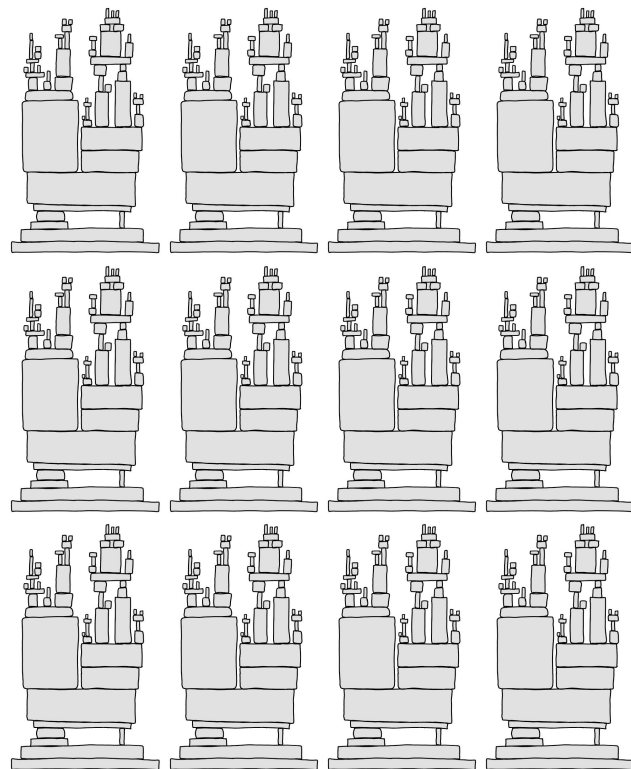
# WRG (around 2015)

- Commercial COTS hosting stack
- In-house software on top of that
- Lots of handoffs
- No changes unless CAB says so



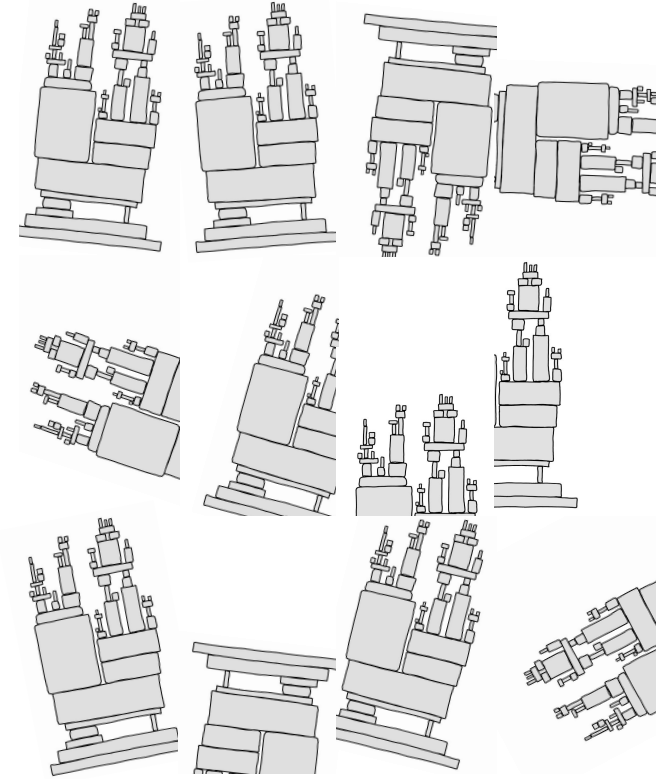
# WRG (around 2015)

- Commercial COTS hosting stack
- In-house software on top of that
- Lots of handoffs
- No changes unless CAB says so



# WRG (around 2015)

- Commercial COTS hosting stack
- In-house software on top of that
- Lots of handoffs
- No changes unless CAB says so



# WRG (around 2015)

- What is located where
- Who owns it
- Link to more links (out of frame)
- Mappings for different owners

## \*futurestack.nl overzicht

By Former user (Deleted) Mar 21, 2017 1 min Add a reaction • [Cloud editor](#)

| Omgeving                           | On Premise | Team            | Gekoppelde_TRC                 | Backoffice  |
|------------------------------------|------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|-------------|
| <a href="#">T01.futurestack.nl</a> |            | Yellow          | <a href="#">TRCT3</a> (MDBM-T) | TE03DIVEAPP |
| <a href="#">T02.futurestack.nl</a> |            | Green           | <a href="#">TRCA3</a> (MDBM-A) | TRC_MDBM_A  |
| <a href="#">T03.futurestack.nl</a> |            | Blue            | TRCT3 (MDBM-T)                 | TE03DIVEAPP |
| <a href="#">T04.futurestack.nl</a> |            | Yellow          | <a href="#">TRCT2</a> (MDBM-T) | TE02DIVEAPP |
| <a href="#">T05.futurestack.nl</a> | T05        | App Team (Lime) | TRCT3 (MDBM-T)                 | TE03DIVEAPP |
| <a href="#">T06.futurestack.nl</a> | T06        | Black           | TRCT3 (MDBM-T)                 | TE03DIVEAPP |

# WRG (around 2015)

- How to do things
- What means what

## BO07. Sitemanager Hub (Dashboard)

TFS location: \$/Wehkamp/Main/Wehkamp.Dashboard/Sitemanager/Wehkamp.Sitemanager

## BO08. ThemeManager (Dashboard)

TFS location: \$/Wehkamp/Main/Wehkamp.Dashboard/ThemeManager

## BO09. PrijsVoorraadMutatieService

## BO10. Sitemanager Classic

| Environment    | Name        | Root                                           |
|----------------|-------------|------------------------------------------------|
| LC WCM         |             |                                                |
| Acceptatie WCM | sitemanager | D:\inetpub\desktop_website\wwwroot\sitemanager |

## Resume the job-chain

By Former user (Unlicensed) ⌚ Sept 06, 2017 📖 2 min 😊 Add a reaction • [Cloud editor](#)

1. Login at [http://pr01uweb.internal.stack:8080/univiewer\\_6.7/](http://pr01uweb.internal.stack:8080/univiewer_6.7/).
2. Click GO on the webpage
3. It will download a file and will run a java applet.
4. If you have download the file, it can be used every time and no need to follow steps 1-3.
5. Login details :



KubeCon



CloudNativeCon

Europe 2026

# How do you make this better?

- By “trying harder”

# How do you make this better?

~~— By “trying harder”~~

- Having an internal high-level champion with the means to say yeet before it was cool

# Atlas

A much more platform-y platform.

- Users can engineer and release all day without leaving the IDE
  - \*If you don't count code reviews
  - \*If no problems were introduced



Atlas, hard at work

# Atlas

So many CNCF projects, we're at risk of creating our own landscape!

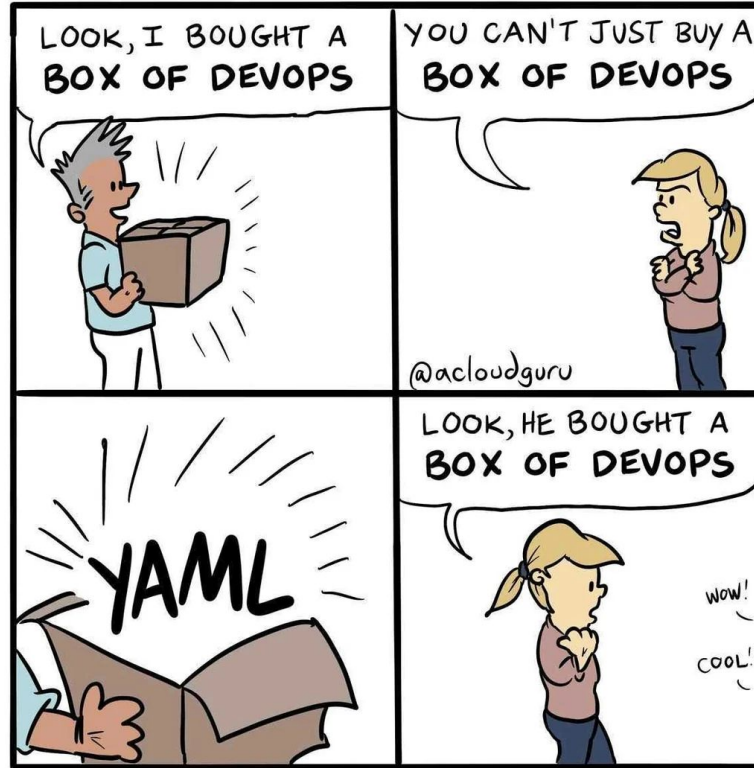
- Kubernetes, Istio and ArgoCD as the main drivers running the show
- Helm charts, Prometheus, FluentBit, ESO, KEDA, External DNS and more...

Essentially what happens if you were to take the concept of a 12-factor app!



Atlas, hard at work

# Atlas



# Automation & Self-Service

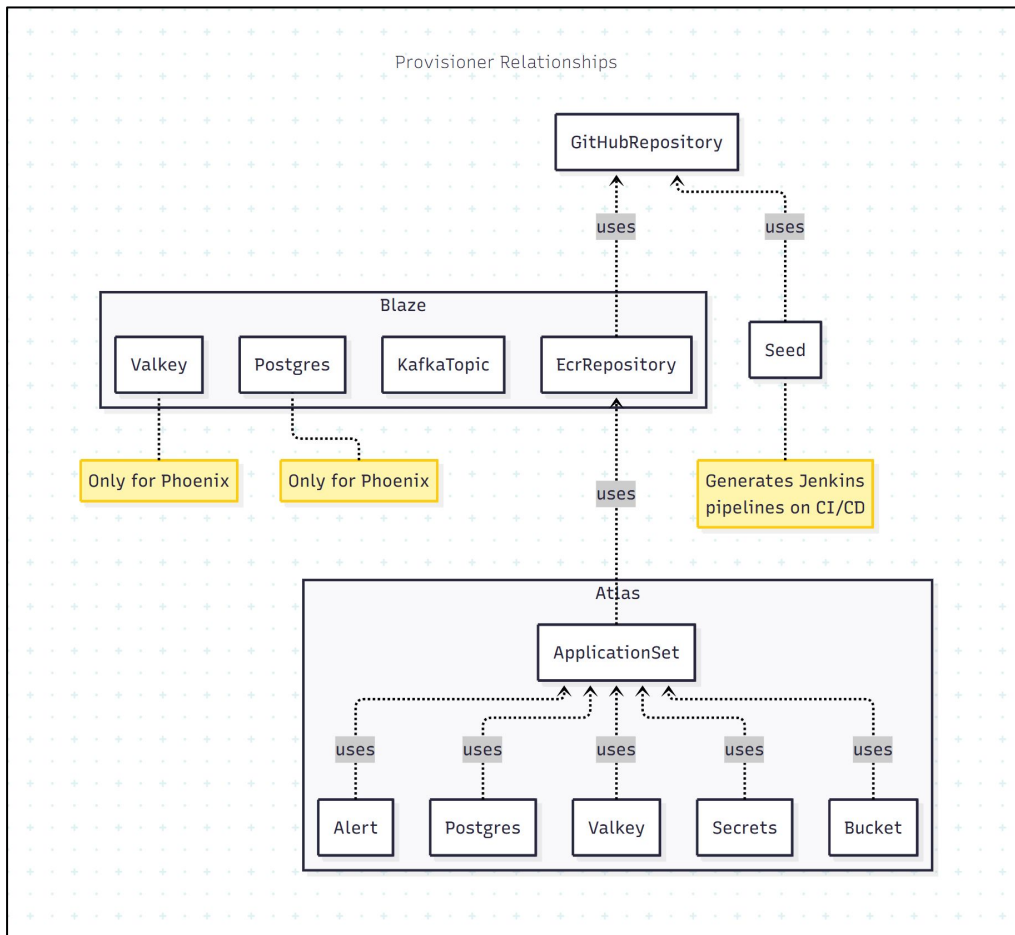
Instead of all engineers becoming platform engineers as a side-job:

- Defaults that work for the happy flow ✓
  - Generic archetypes are used abundantly anyway ✓
  - If you are doing something special, you were going to spend extra effort regardless ✓
- Creating and delivering those defaults 🤔

# Provisioner

API and UI for:

- Creating common resources
- Managing secrets
- Kicking off async updates
  - So you can get to work faster
- Ensuring resources that require relationships are actually connected to each other
- Taking the identity of the user into account (ownership, IAM)



KubeCon



CloudNativeCon

Europe 2026

# Provisioner

- Flashy version of sed
- No schema?
- What is wrong with making a PR



Me, before I realised I was wrong



# Backstage

- Fix everything
- Make everything better
- Do things we can't even imagine yet
- Make you fall in love
- Never stub your toes again





# Backstage (attempt #1)

- Made it build and run
- Talked about it a lot
- Got a lot of excitement going

But then:

- Trouble integrating
  - No auth
  - No git
  - Scaffolder half-worked
- Someone accidentally pushed out a catalog-info to every repo
- Excitement fizzled out, questions were raised
- Teams going back to 'normal work'



# Backstage (attempt #2)



- Made it build and run (again), this time without a SWE or senior PE
- Talked about it a little bit less (temper expectations)
- Got a lot of excitement going anyway (it's so cool!)

But then:

- Still trouble integrating
  - Using a universal token for everything
    - No traceability across integrations
  - Scaffolder works but so did the existing provisioning system
    - No users
  - TechDocs work great but no docs to put in there
- We'll need to write some plugins to make use of existing systems
  - Mainly our terraform/tofu module abstractions
- Things break, a lot

# Backstage (attempt #3)



- Made it build and run (again)
- Talked about it a little bit less (temper expectations, again)
- Got a lot of excitement going anyway (again, because it's so cool!)

But then:

- Still trouble integrating
  - Same as before
- We'll need to write some plugins to make use of existing systems
  - Same as before
- We realise we should have started with the catalog and onboarding
  - We start out with an injection script where we first scrape and provision it locally, works great! (-ish..)
- We still break stuff, a lot

Kind

Component

Type

all

## PERSONAL

Owned 0

Starred 0

## WEHKAMP RETAIL GROUP

All 535

OWNER

LIFECYCLE

TAGS

PROCESSING STATUS

NAMESPACE

## All components (535)

| NAME                                          | SYSTEM | OWNER   | TYPE    | LIFECYCLE  |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------|---------|---------|------------|
| ⊞ atlas-authentication-service                |        | Unknown | service | production |
| ⊞ atlas-basket-service                        |        | Unknown | service | production |
| ⊞ atlas-cbs-proxy-service                     |        | Unknown | service | production |
| ⊞ atlas-checkout-preferences-service          |        | Unknown | service | production |
| ⊞ atlas-configuration-management-service      |        | Unknown | service | production |
| ⊞ atlas-configuration-management-site         |        | Unknown | service | production |
| ⊞ atlas-coupon-service                        |        | Unknown | service | production |
| ⊞ atlas-data-cleanup-service                  |        | Unknown | service | production |
| ⊞ atlas-domain-detective-service              |        | Unknown | service | production |
| ⊞ atlas-order-enrichment-processor            |        | Unknown | service | production |
| ⊞ atlas-order-services-fee-service            |        | Unknown | service | production |
| ⊞ atlas-product-information-slack-bot-service |        | Unknown | service | production |
| ⊞ atlas-product-query-service                 |        | Unknown | service | production |
| ⊞ atlas-staff-discount-service                |        | Unknown | service | production |
| ⊞ atlas-staff-discount-site                   |        | Unknown | service | production |
| ⊞ autosuggest-servicepage-processor           |        | Unknown | service | production |
| ⊞ blaze-acceptance-fraud-poc-service          |        | Unknown | service | production |
| ⊞ blaze-accessibility-insights-service        |        | Unknown | service | production |
| ⊞ blaze-active-directory-service              |        | Unknown | service | production |
| ⊞ blaze-advisor-processor                     |        | Unknown | service | production |

Search

Home

APIs

Docs

Provision

Cockpits

## PERSONAL

Owned 0

Starred 0

## WEHKAMP RETAIL GROUP

All 535

## OWNER

## TAGS

## All (535)

### DOCUMENT

### OWNER

atlas-authentication-service

Unknown

atlas-basket-service

Unknown

atlas-cbs-proxy-service

Unknown

atlas-checkout-preferences-service

Unknown

atlas-configuration-management-service

Unknown

atlas-configuration-management-site

Unknown



KubeCon

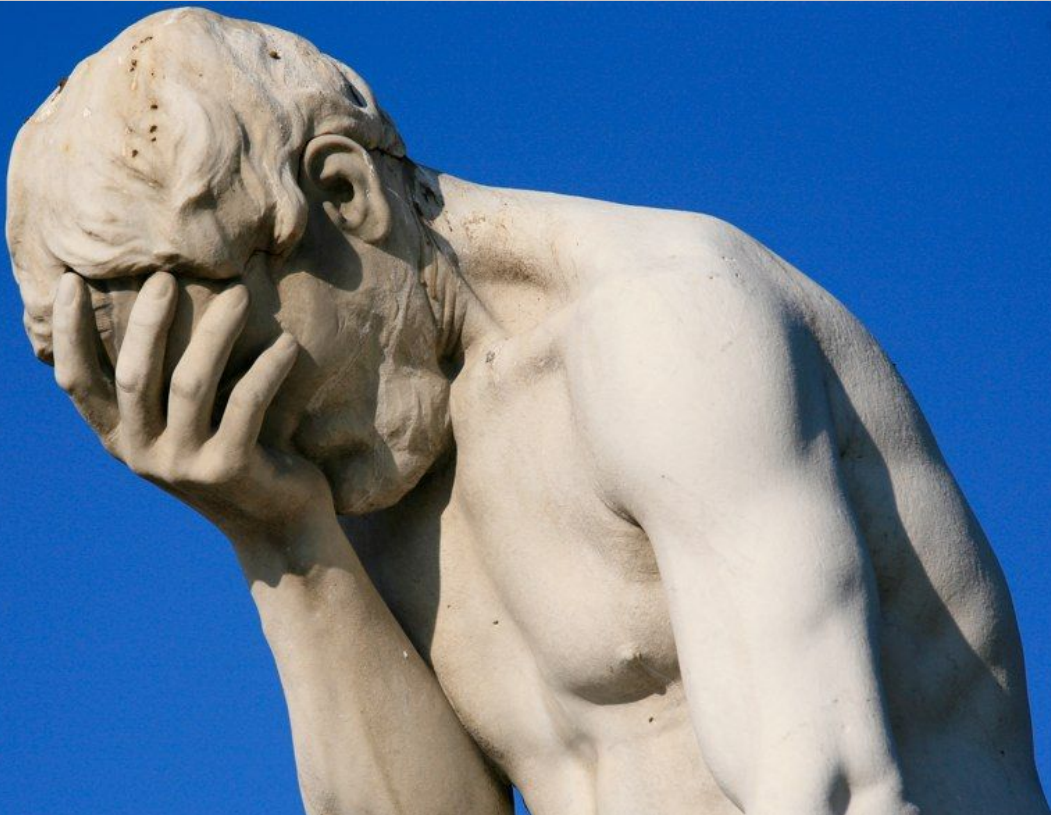


CloudNativeCon

Europe 2026



❗ Error: Request failed with 404



# Backstage (attempt #3)

Users report:

- Catalog looks good, but no owners?
- No relationships with other entities either...
- SSO works great now!
- But, docs either appear when they shouldn't, or don't appear when they should 🤔
- Provisioning sometimes works, sometimes you get:

None of these are actual 'big problems',  
or an issue with Backstage!



'Github teams' must be integer

Team\*

brands-recommendations

Team that owns the .NET service.

Business unit\*

technology

Business Unit that is billed for the cost of the .NET service.

Github teams\*

Development.BLAZE

must be integer

DEAR DIARY,  
TODAY I HAD A

**SKILL  
ISSUE.**

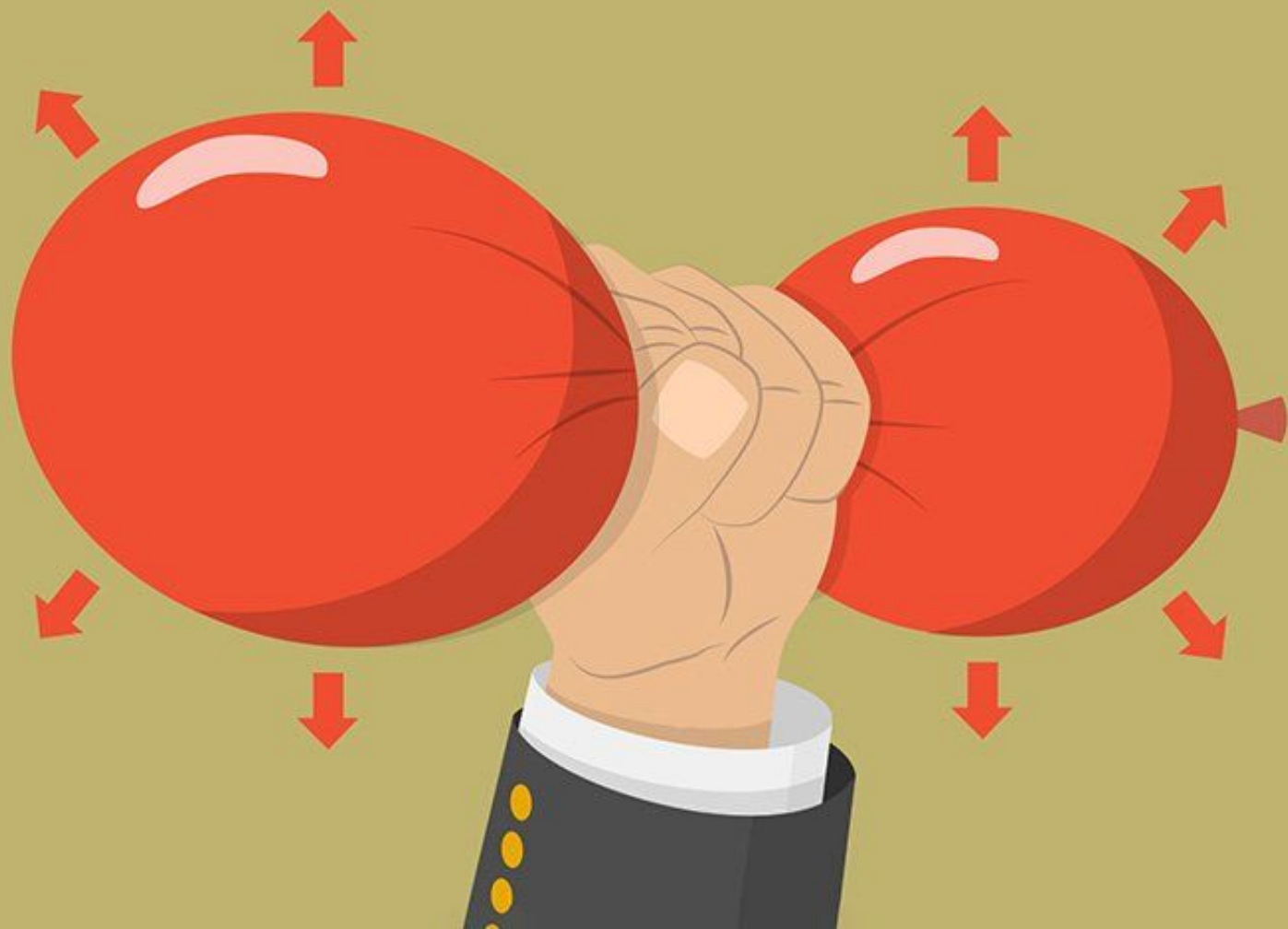
**This repository was archived by the owner on Jun 24, 2025. It is now read-only.**

# This might be too much platform



We learned a lot:

- Tried to turn a shared responsibility into a top-down responsibility
- It takes a little availability from a lot of stakeholders to make something like this works, similar to a community (i.e. you guys!)
  - Having a team setup the foundation and then everyone bring in smaller bits to get what they need will work great
- Our platform & infrastructure team isn't structured to do software development for larger projects well! (even if it's just extending)
- For some reason we still want Backstage and are likely to try it again 🤔



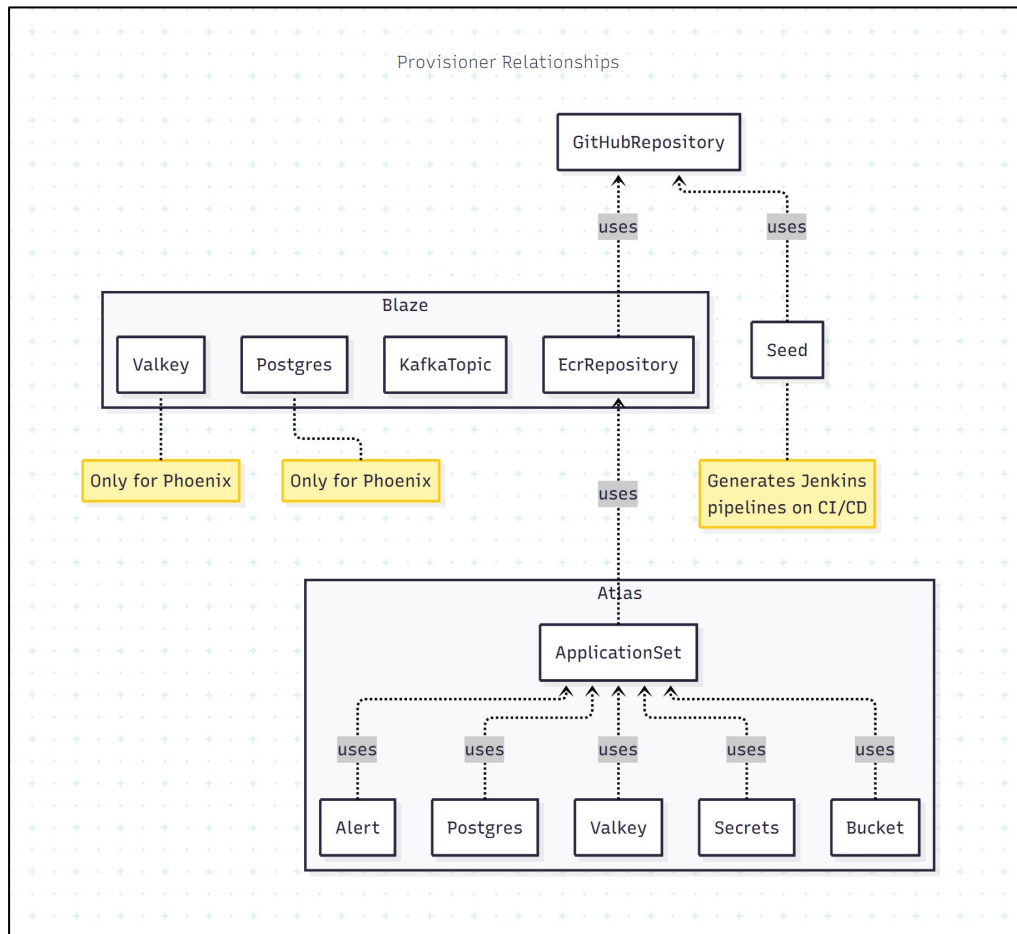
# What did we get out of all of this?

- Runtime side of the platform is already greatly appreciated
- Governance and data quality has to happen first
  - That means metadata and schemas must be mandatory!
- Documentation will always be hard, but having a simple rule helps a ton
  - If the docs are related to code, commit it to git when you commit that code it is about, no excuses
- Golden paths as an experiment ended up being used as a project template and generator
- Team-agnostic groups were established to work on the quality and workflow side of engineering, away from the daily feature factory.

# Provisioner

API and UI for:

- Creating common resources
- Managing secrets
- Kicking off async updates
  - So you can get to work faster
- Ensuring resources that require relationships are actually connected to each other
- Taking the identity of the user into account (ownership, IAM)



KubeCon



CloudNativeCon

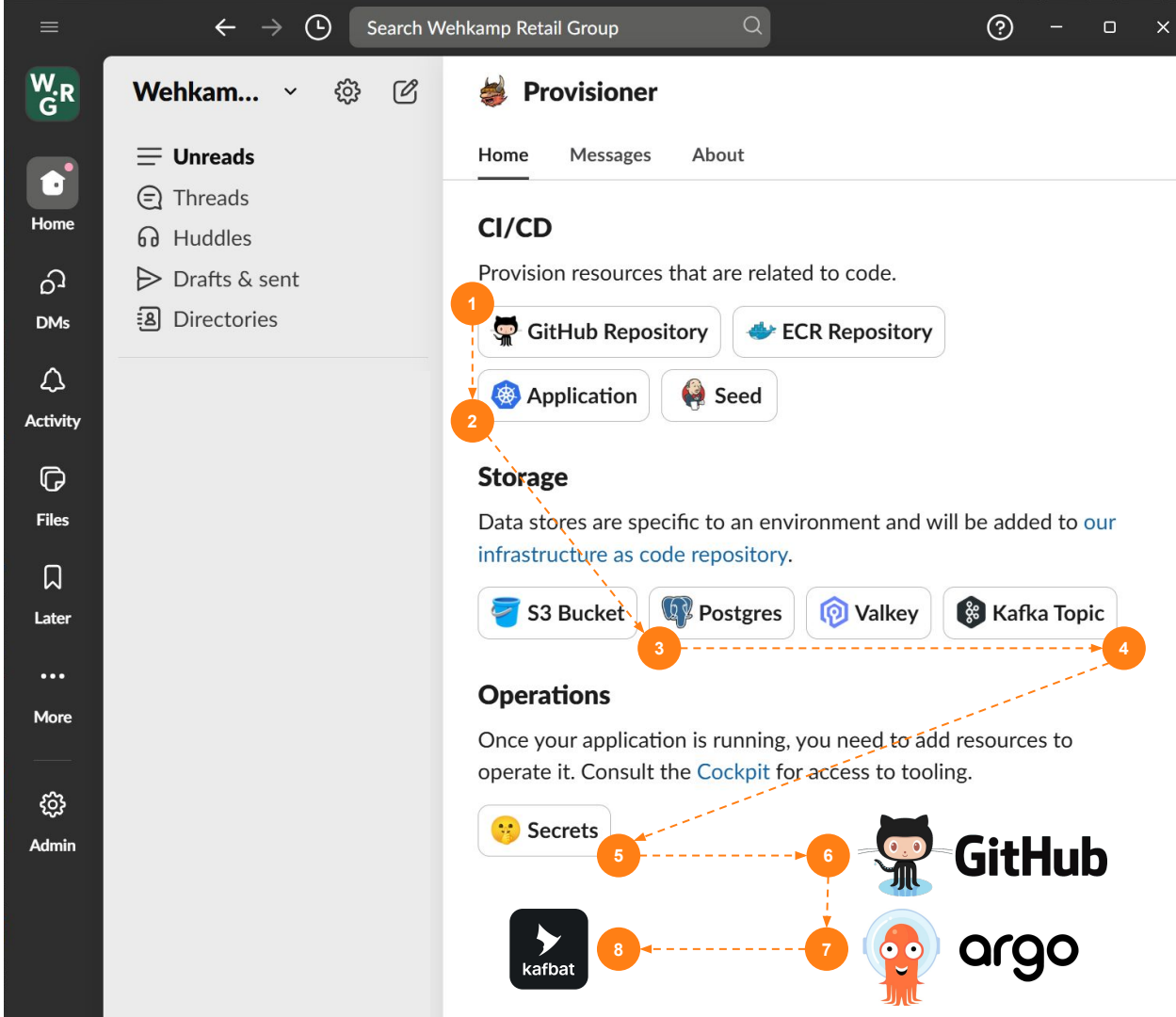
Europe 2026

# Provisioner

You can start with a full application, or just start with a repo.

When needed, you can always add persistence services, secrets.

Afterwards, if you need to dig into any of them, we have a central starting point: the cockpit.



The screenshot displays the Wehkamp Provisioner web application. The interface is divided into a left sidebar, a top navigation bar, and a main content area.

**Left Sidebar:** Contains navigation links for Home, DMs, Activity, Files, Later, More, and Admin.

**Top Navigation Bar:** Includes a search bar labeled "Search Wehkamp Retail Group" and a "Provisioner" header.

**Main Content Area:** Titled "Wehkamp..." and "Provisioner", it features a "Unreads" section with links to Threads, Huddles, Drafts & sent, and Directories.

**CI/CD Section:** Describes "Provision resources that are related to code." It includes buttons for GitHub Repository (1), ECR Repository, Application (2), and Seed.

**Storage Section:** Describes "Data stores are specific to an environment and will be added to our infrastructure as code repository." It includes buttons for S3 Bucket (3), Postgres, Valkey, and Kafka Topic (4).

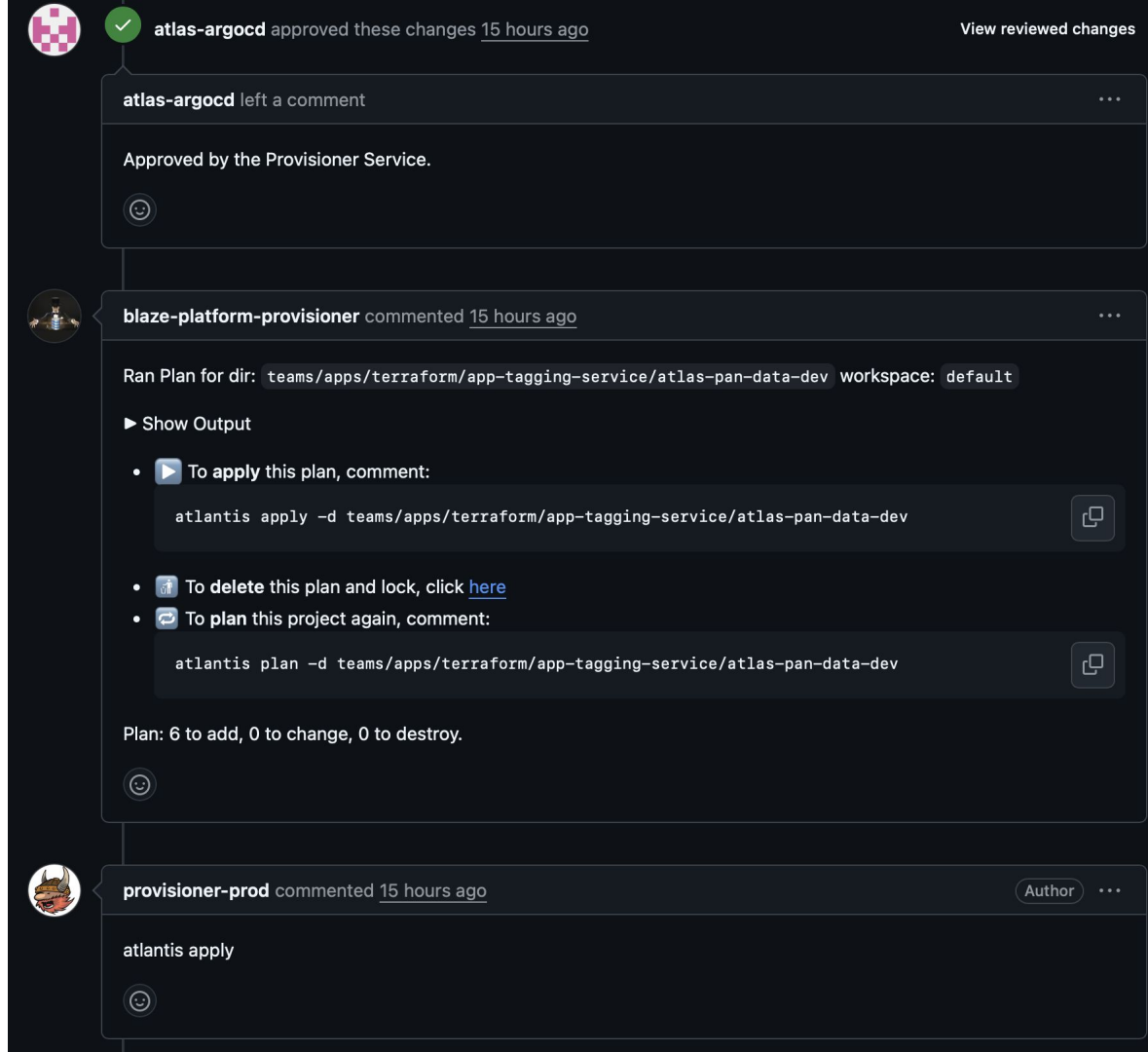
**Operations Section:** Describes "Once your application is running, you need to add resources to operate it. Consult the Cockpit for access to tooling." It includes buttons for Secrets (5), GitHub (6), k8s (7), and argo (8).

**Workflow Diagram:** A series of orange dashed arrows with numbered circles (1-8) indicating a sequence of operations: 1 (GitHub Repository) -> 2 (Application) -> 3 (S3 Bucket) -> 4 (Kafka Topic) -> 5 (Secrets) -> 6 (GitHub) -> 7 (k8s) -> 8 (argo).

# Provisioner

This causes a template to be rendered, committed, and applied in GitHub:

(3 bots talking to each other)



atlas-argocd approved these changes [15 hours ago](#) [View reviewed changes](#)

atlas-argocd left a comment

Approved by the Provisioner Service.

blaze-platform-provisioner commented [15 hours ago](#)

Ran Plan for dir: `teams/apps/terraform/app-tagging-service/atlas-pan-data-dev` workspace: `default`

► Show Output

- ▶ To apply this plan, comment:  
`atlantis apply -d teams/apps/terraform/app-tagging-service/atlas-pan-data-dev`
- 🔗 To delete this plan and lock, click [here](#)
- 🔄 To plan this project again, comment:  
`atlantis plan -d teams/apps/terraform/app-tagging-service/atlas-pan-data-dev`

Plan: 6 to add, 0 to change, 0 to destroy.

provisioner-prod commented [15 hours ago](#) [Author](#)

atlantis apply

## Cockpits

Core

**Wehkamp**

Kleertjes

Hermes

Salta

Databricks

FinOps

## Atlas

Deployment (CD)

EOS Application Sets

Argo CD

Dashboards

Atlantis

### Development



Wehkamp



nl-wehkamp-dev



Metrics (Thanos)



Alerts + Routing



Logging (Kibana)



Consul



Kafbat UI



Tracing



Site/User Configuration Management



Storybook

### Production



Wehkamp



nl-wehkamp-prod



Metrics (Thanos)



Alerts + Routing



Logging (Kibana)



Consul



Kafbat UI



Tracing



Site/User Configuration Management

# It's still a success!

Sometimes it feels like we're re-implementing an IDP... scaffolding, central place to get started, dashboards

Maybe that is the way to go for us:

- Solve each workflow, data quality or culturally ingrained thing first
- Use lightweight interfaces and cookiecutter techniques to get more traction first
- Backstage once more?





KubeCon



CloudNativeCon

Europe 2026

# Thank you!

**Slides:**

<https://github.com/johnkeates/presentations>



**Leave me some  
feedback!**

<https://sched.co/2CW2g>



KubeCon



CloudNativeCon

Europe 2026

