

Introduction and agenda

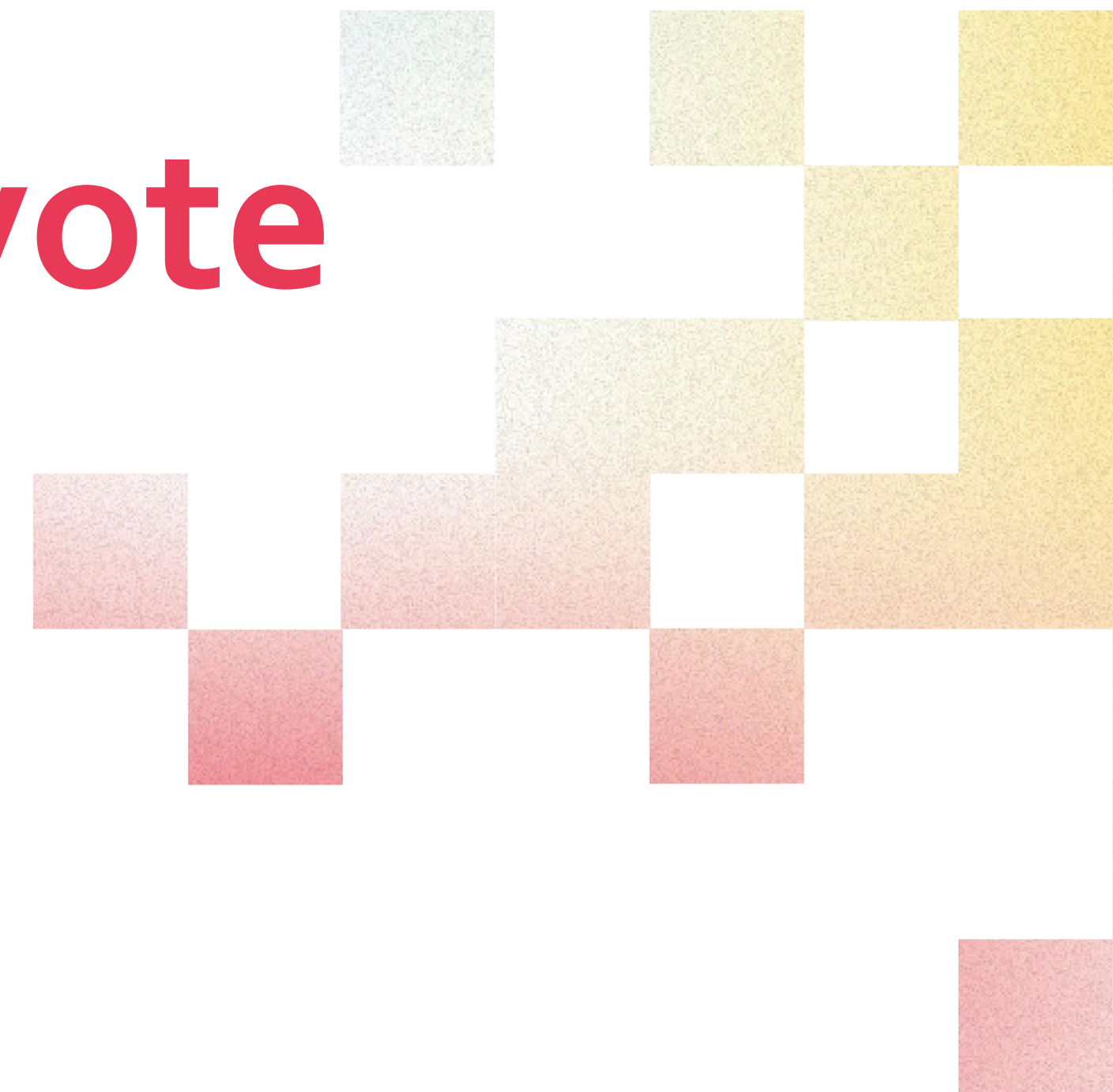
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CTO at Axians Infoma
Microsoft MVP for Business Applications
[@tobiasfenster](#) and
<https://techblog.axians-infoma.com>


axians

Vote at ve.link/td18vote

Agenda

- **Quick intro** to Docker and the overall scenario
- **Self-service** container environments
- **Multi-container** environments
- Automated extension 2.0 builds with **multi-stage images**
- Using **Azure Container Instances**



An aerial, high-angle photograph of a large container port. The image shows a dense grid of multi-colored shipping containers (red, blue, orange, green, white) stacked in neat rows. Yellow gantry cranes are visible, moving containers between the stacks and the docks. The ground is paved with yellow and white markings, including lane numbers like P4, P5, P6, P7 and various directional arrows. The overall scene depicts a highly organized and active logistics hub.

Quick intro to Docker and the overall scenario

Quick intro to docker.

What is **Docker**? Leading cross platform **software container environment**

What is a Docker **container** and a Docker **image**?

- An image is a template with the **minimum amount of os, libraries and application binaries** needed
- A container is an **instance of an image** with an immutable base and it's changes on top
- A container is **NOT a VM**, you especially don't have a GUI and nothing you can connect to with RDP!

Quick intro to docker.

What is a Docker **host**? The (physical or virtual) **machine** where the containers are **running**

What is a Docker **registry**? A place where you and others can **upload (push) and download (pull) images**

Why Docker?

- **Easy way** to create deployments / configuration in a **very stable and reliable** way (no "works here", helps a lot to avoid gaps between dev and ops)
- **Better resource usage** than in VMs, especially because there is no guest os as the host kernel is **directly used**
- **Big ecosystem** of readily available images, primarily on Docker Hub

Introduction to the Infoma scenario

Axians Infoma is an ISV for > 1.200 customers with > 100 employees directly working on the product newsystem (program managers, developers, back office etc.)

Central team provides infrastructure:

- Standard images for laptops, central VMs for development, central SQL Servers / NST / IIS for dev and test
- Local NST installs for some cases but more because of how NAV currently works than because we like it: debugging, need to restart, cmdlets that work only locally, development of server-side dlls

Technical infrastructure must be useable as quick and easy as possible: standardize, minimize friction, don't expect infrastructure knowledge and don't create a need for it

- A lot of employees with infrastructure knowledge, but main strength and therefore focus is working on the product
- Time spent on local dev infrastructure is very likely time spent on something that won't improve the product or customer satisfaction

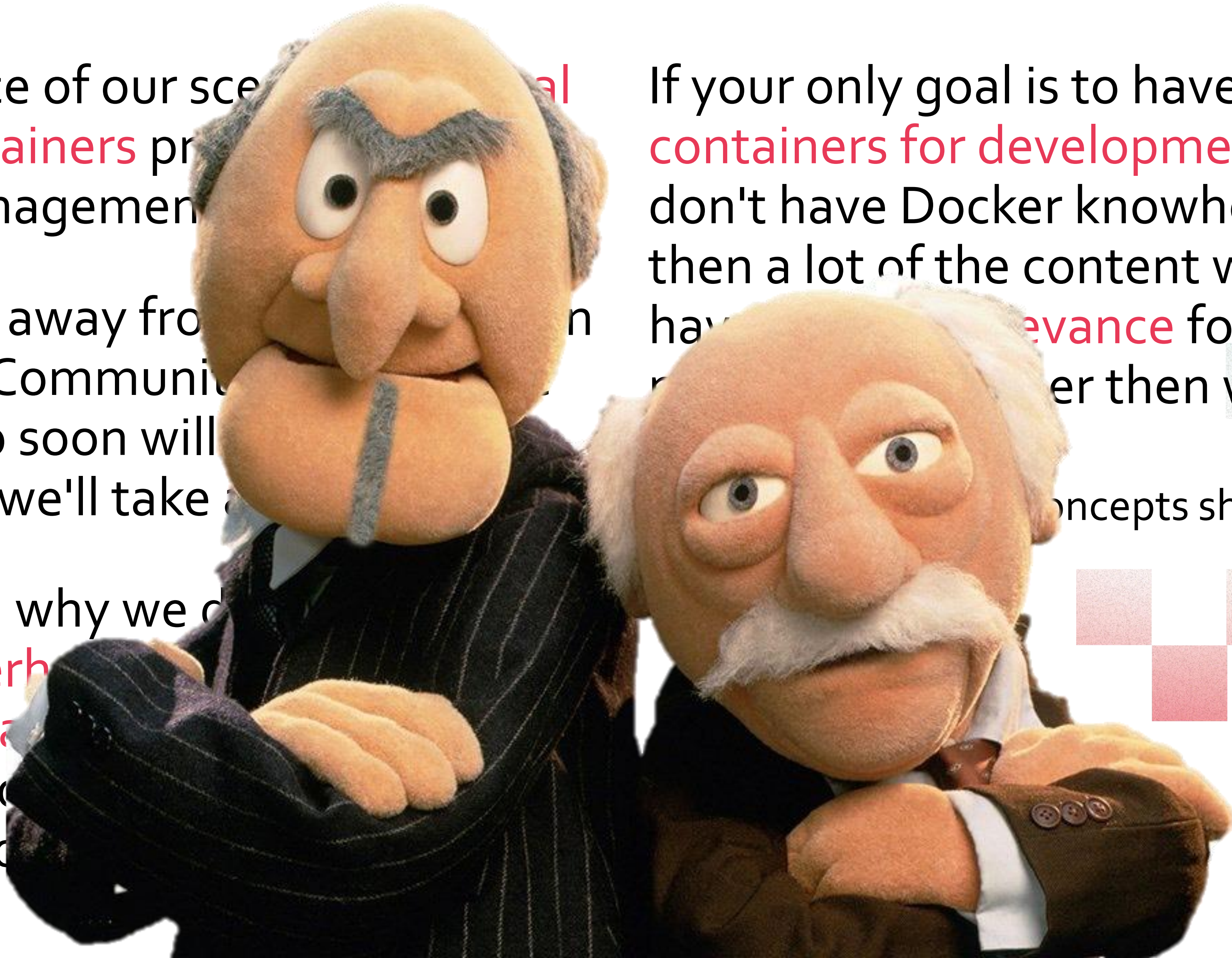
Introduction to the Infoma scenario

Consequence of our sce
Docker containers pr
Release Management

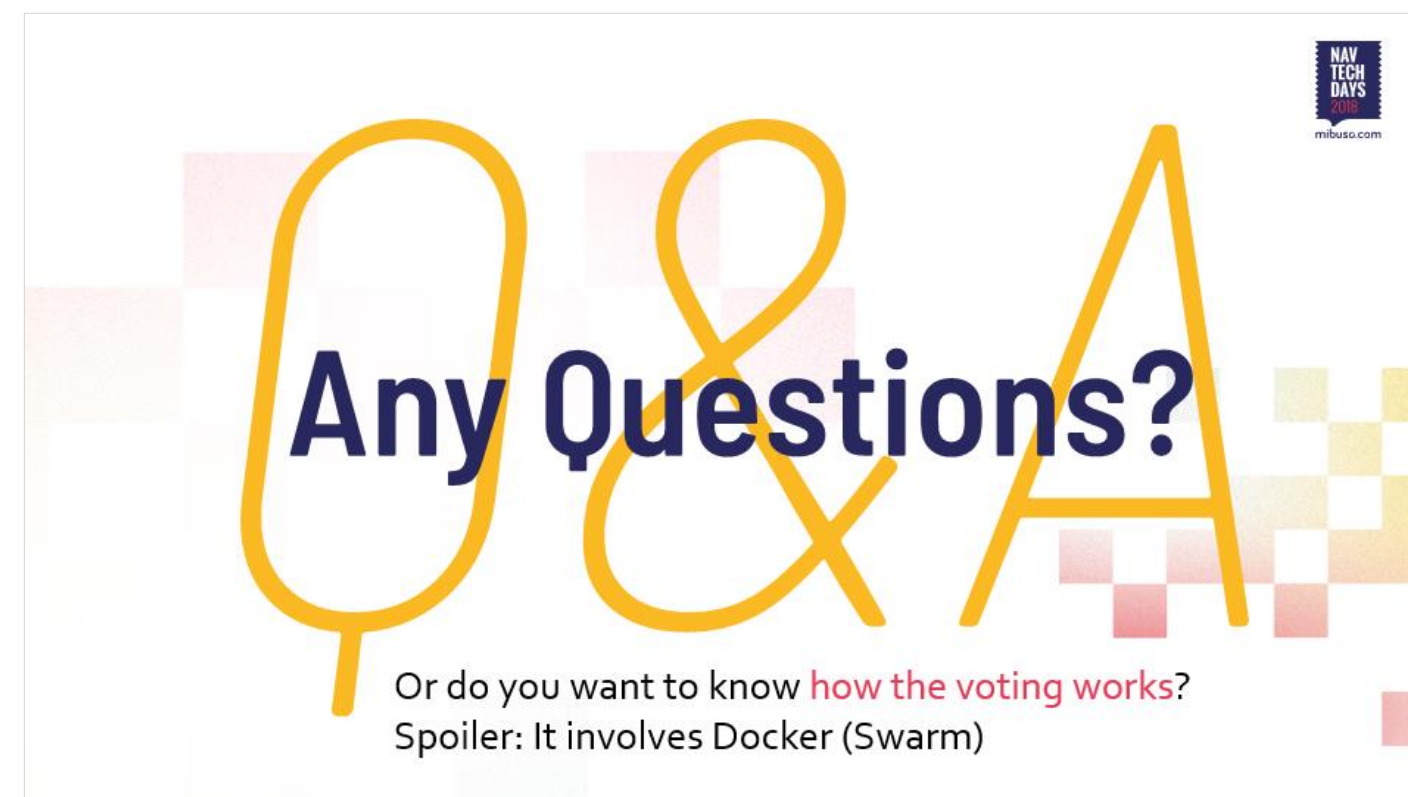
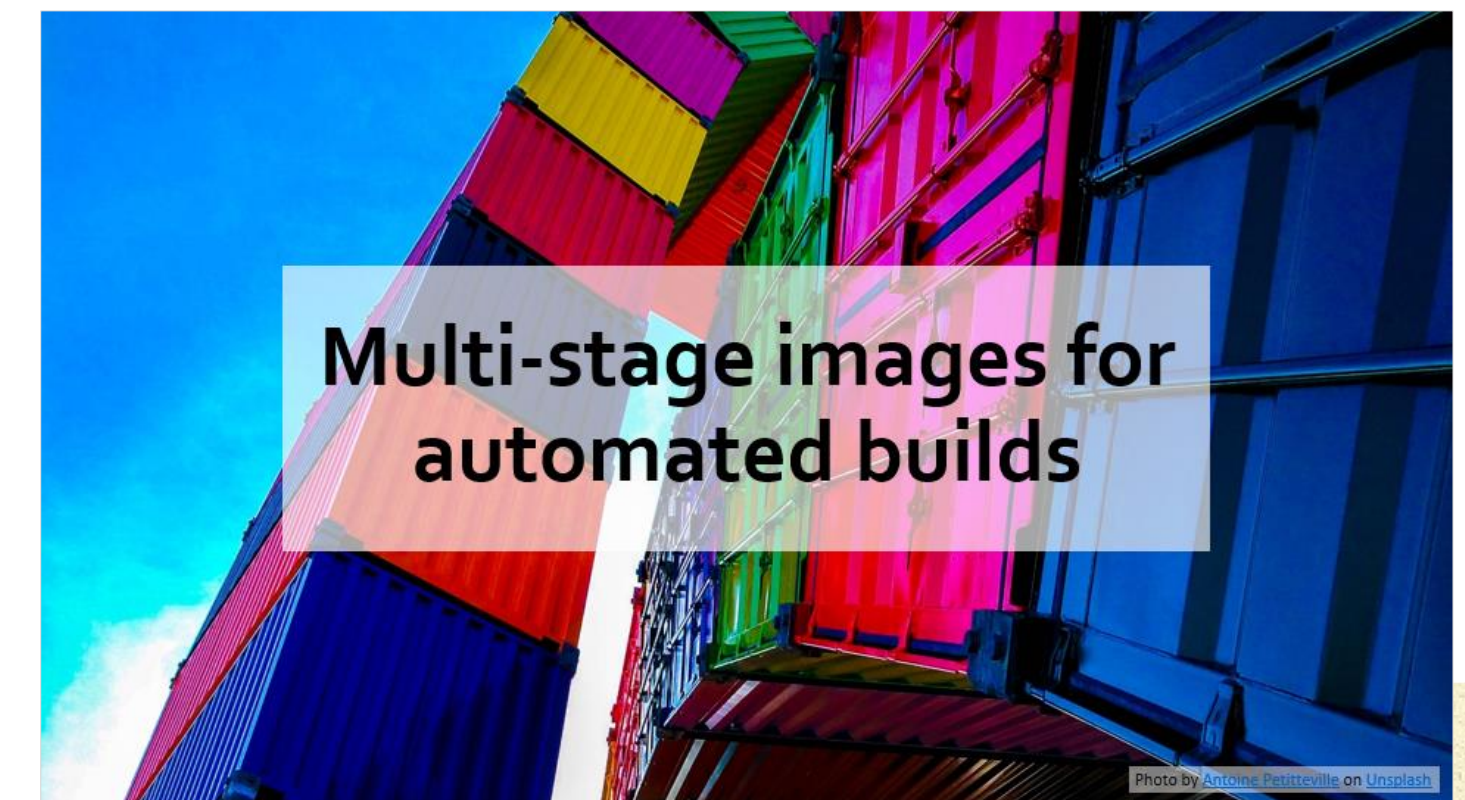
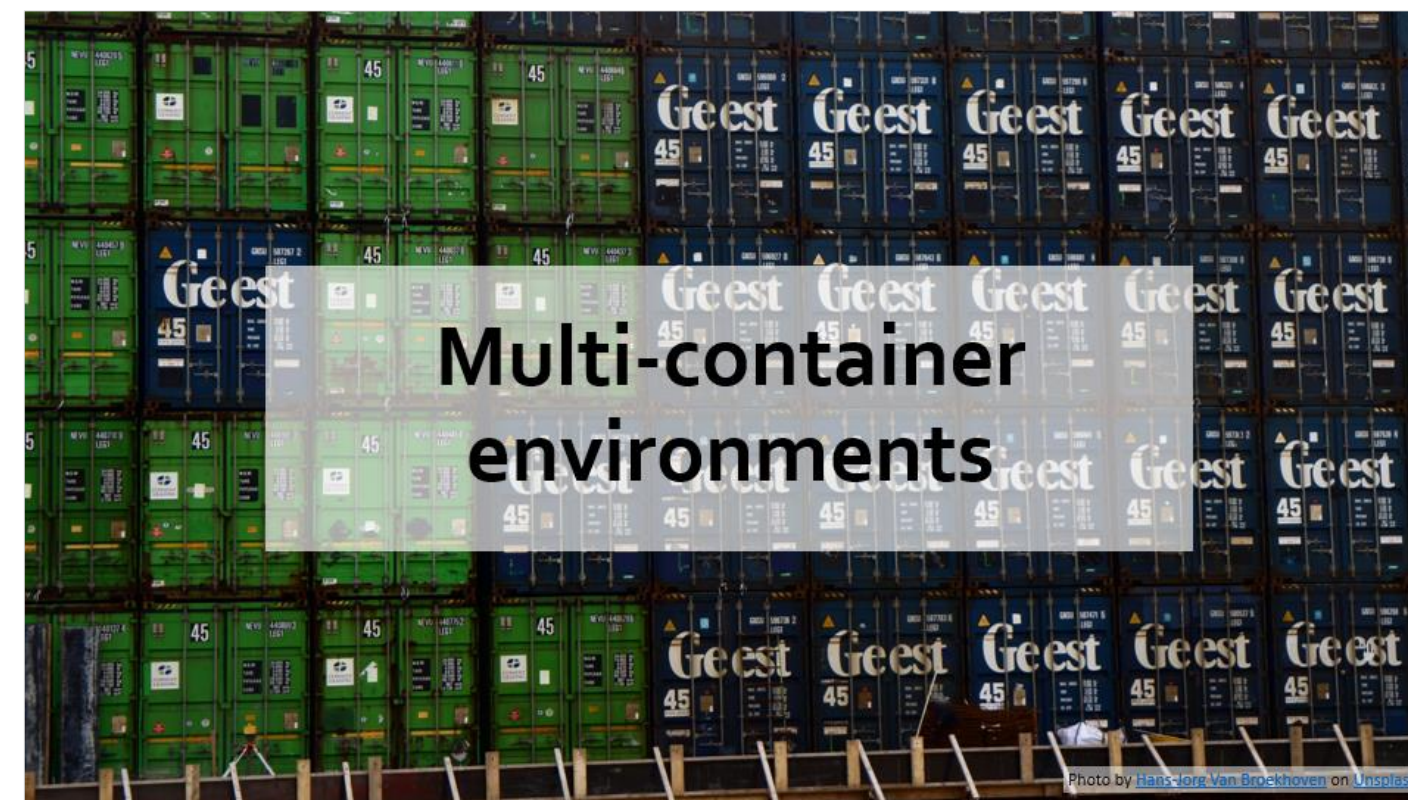
We can stay away from
10 / Docker Community
note: Win 10 soon will
isolation → we'll take a

Main reason why we d
navcontainerh
assumes **local**
ops professio
advanced Do

If your only goal is to have **local containers for development** and you don't have Docker knowhow already, then a lot of the content will only have **relevance** for you as
er then would be
concepts should still be



Your choice: ve.link/td18vote



A person is walking away from the camera on a wet, reflective pier. In the background, several large, orange shipping containers are stacked in a way that forms a large, stylized 'X' shape. The scene is overcast and the ground is wet, creating clear reflections of the containers and the person. A bridge is visible in the far background on the left.

Self-service container environments

Self-service container environments

Why? Easy access to releases

1-3 major releases, 4-6 bugfix releases for each country solution per year → up to 20 Infoma newsytem releases per year

Business central / NAV cumulative updates, releases and previews

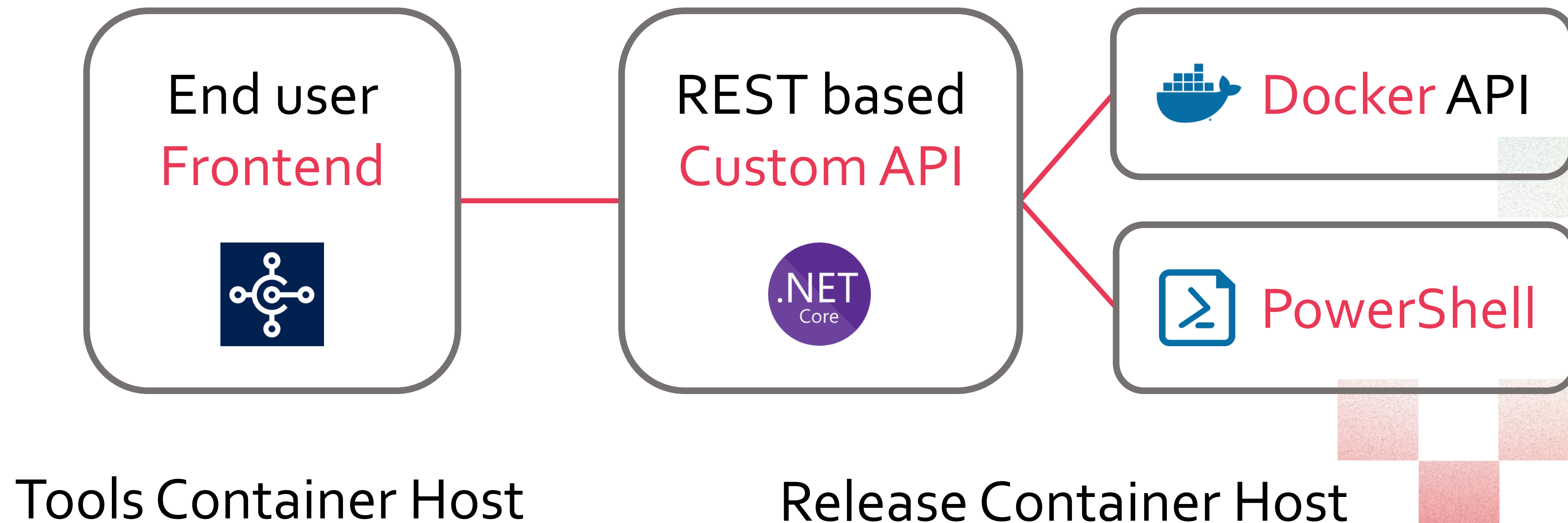
All of those should be readily available for quick tests

- And in the extremely unlikely case that we need to create an individual hotfix for a customer on an old release

Let's create one!

Self-service container environments

How?



Self-service container environments

Frontend: BC Extension v2

- Available images **maintained in a table, pulled nightly**
- Containers valid for **max. 3 days**
- Calls proxy API through a **REST interface** to create or delete containers, get status and logs

Custom API: .Net Core App

- Creates **gMSA** (for win auth); if newsystem container then **downloads DLLs** from TFS and **gets backup**
- Constructs and executes **docker run** command
- Gets running containers and logs from the **Docker API**

Container: Standard NAV/BC image from Microsoft with a couple of additional scripts and specific settings

- Script 1: Grant an **AD user group** access to the database
- Script 2: Automatically **convert the database on startup** (in case the .bak is from an older CU than the container)
- Use **Windows authentication**
- Use our **dev license**
- Enable **ClickOnce** (always get the matching clients)
- Use **transparent networking**
- Custom NST and WebClient settings
- Set **labels** to identify releases

Self-service container environments

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docker run --name testtfe --hostname testtfe -e accept_eula=y
--network MyTransparentNetwork -e usessl=n -e clickonce=y
--security-opt "credentialspec=file://testtfe.json"
-e auth=Windows -e username=admin -e password=Passw0rd*123
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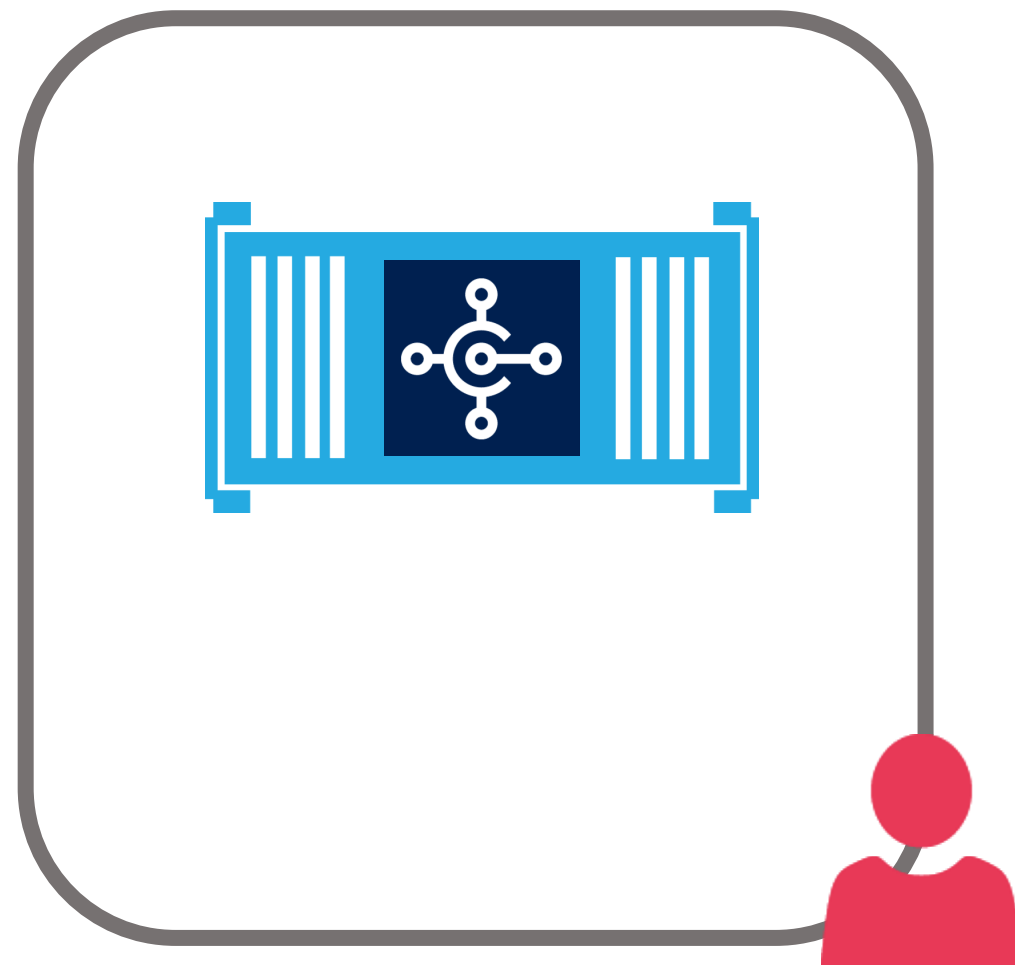

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What about those gMSAs?



AD with a gMSA



Container Host
with installed gMSA

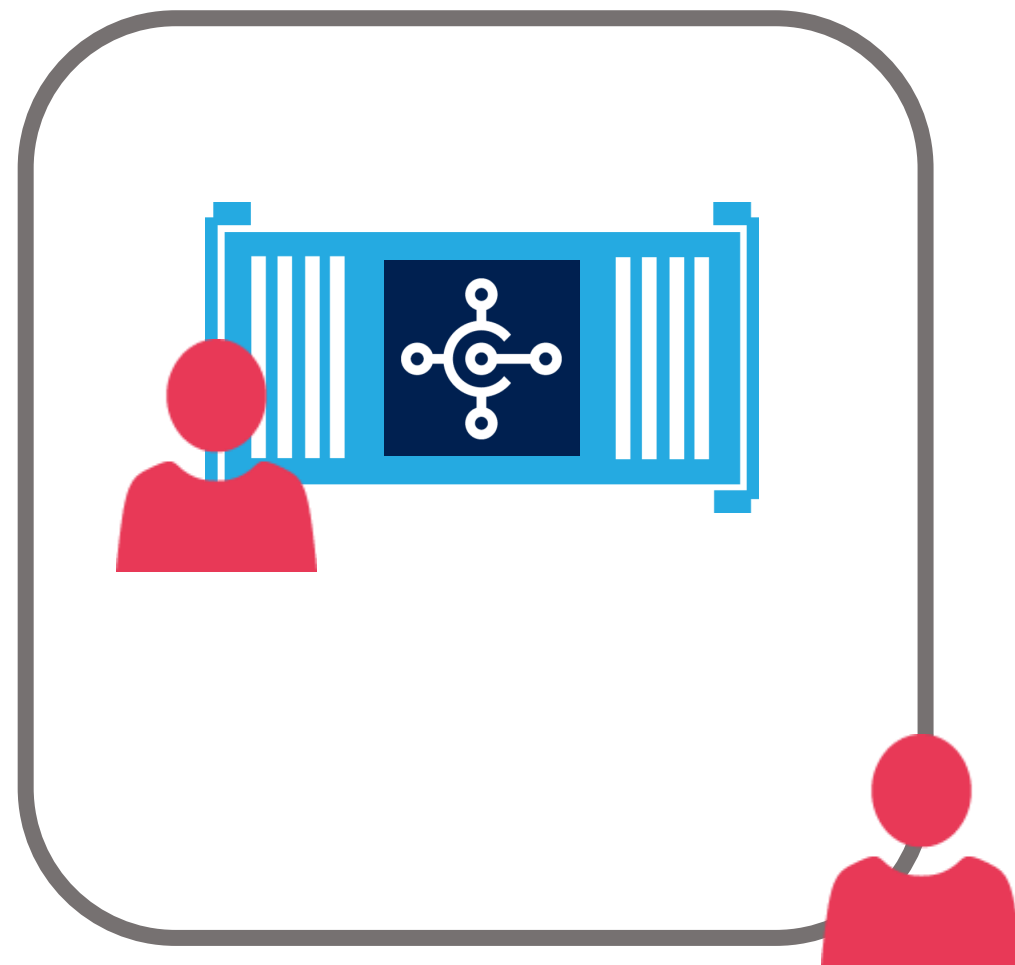


SQL with a DB
where the gMSA
has access

What about those gMSAs?



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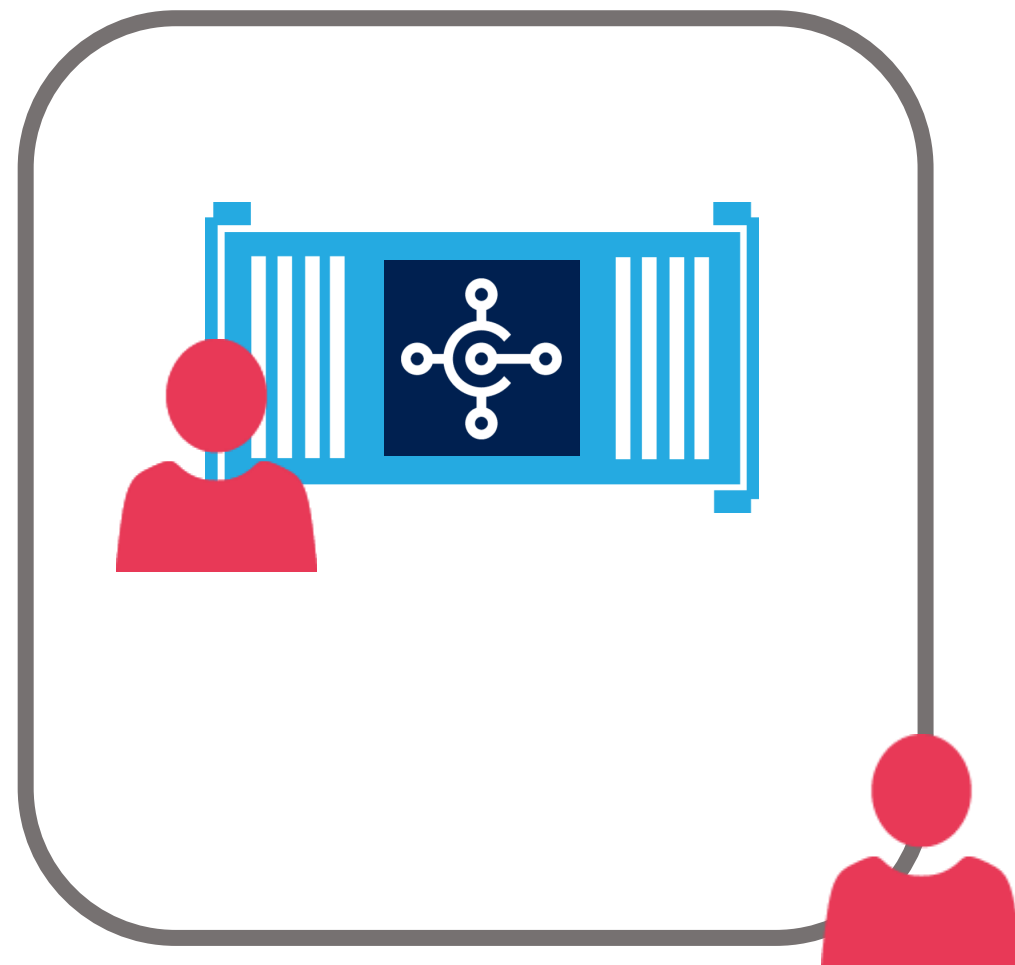


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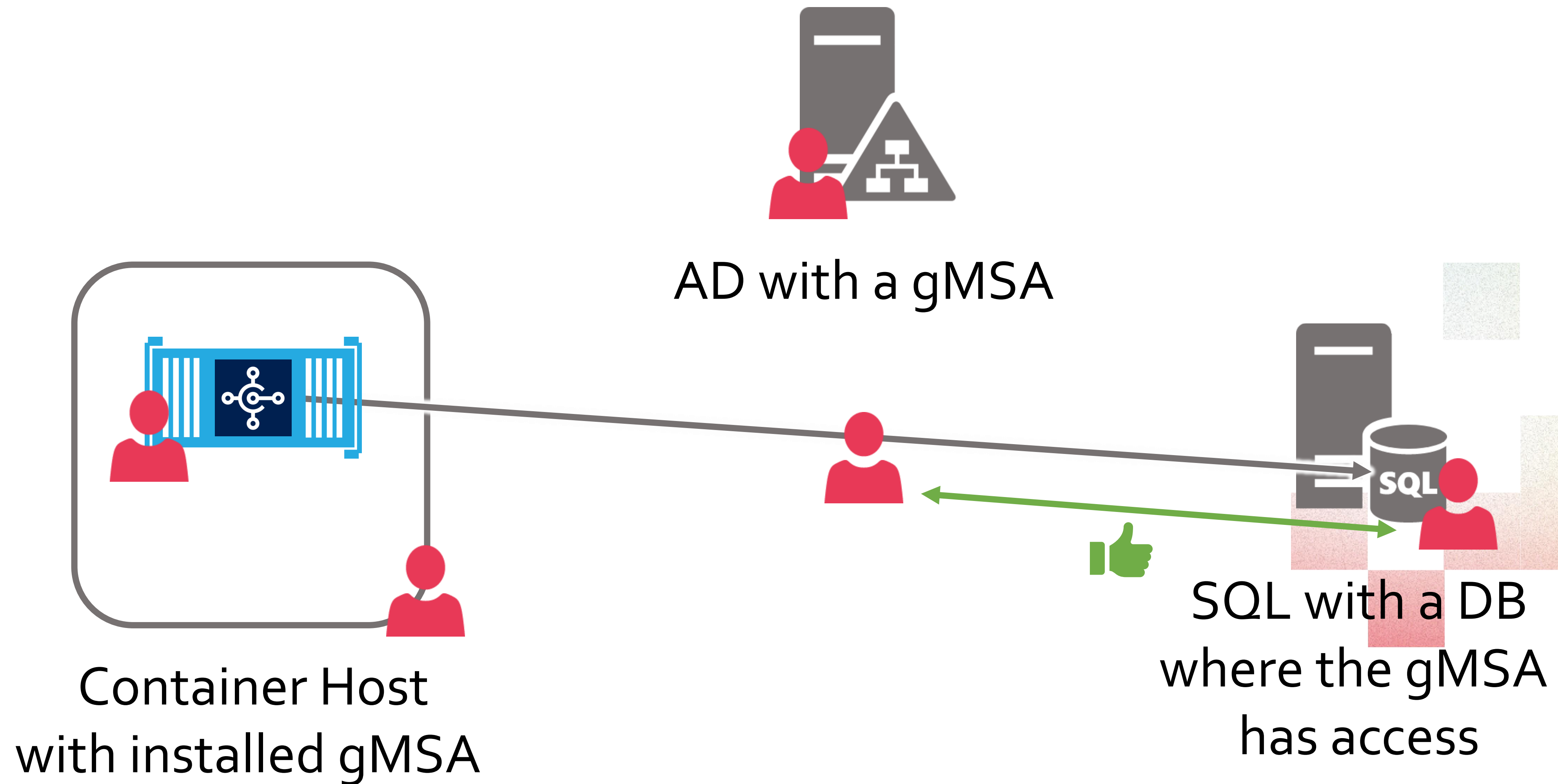


Container Host
with installed gMSA



SQL with a DB
where the gMSA
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What about those gMSAs?



What about those gMSAs?

Windows Server 2016: gMSA = container name = host name → 1 gMSA for every container, no dynamic scaling with e.g. container name_1, name_2 etc. generated on demand

Windows Server 2019: name doesn't matter

gMSA is used for outgoing connection if process in the container uses accounts Local System or Network Service

See the container up and running!

gMSAs don't have a password, can be only used on allowed machines

Container usage: Download credentialspec JSON file, add it as security opt
docker run --security-opt "credentialspec=file:///testtfe.json" ...

<https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/virtualization/windowscontainers/manage-containers/manage-serviceaccounts>



Multi-container environments

Multi-container environments

Why? Multiple very similar containers or more complex scenarios:

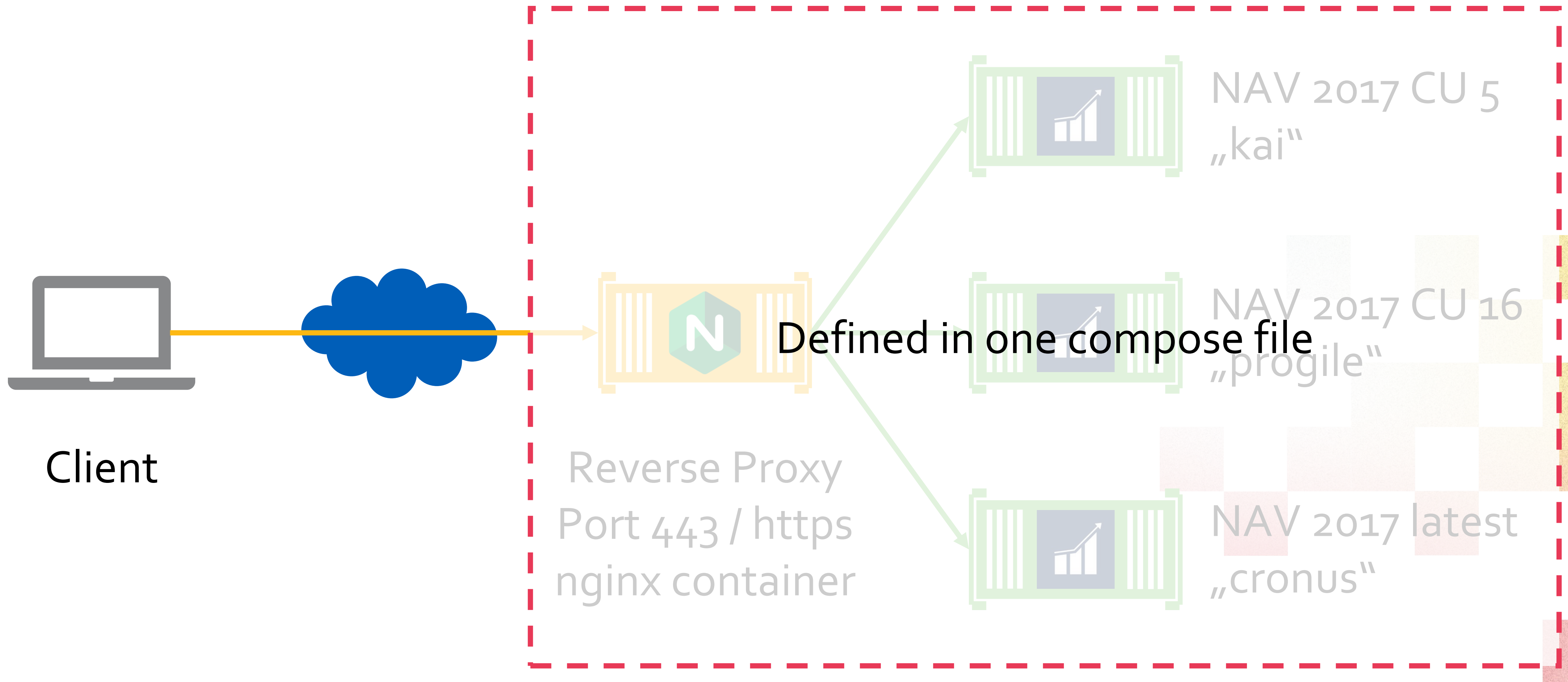
Release tests with 10 databases and all need the “**same**” **container** with NST / IIS → **stable, reproducible, easily adjustable** config

Tools host with different images → **infrastructure as code**

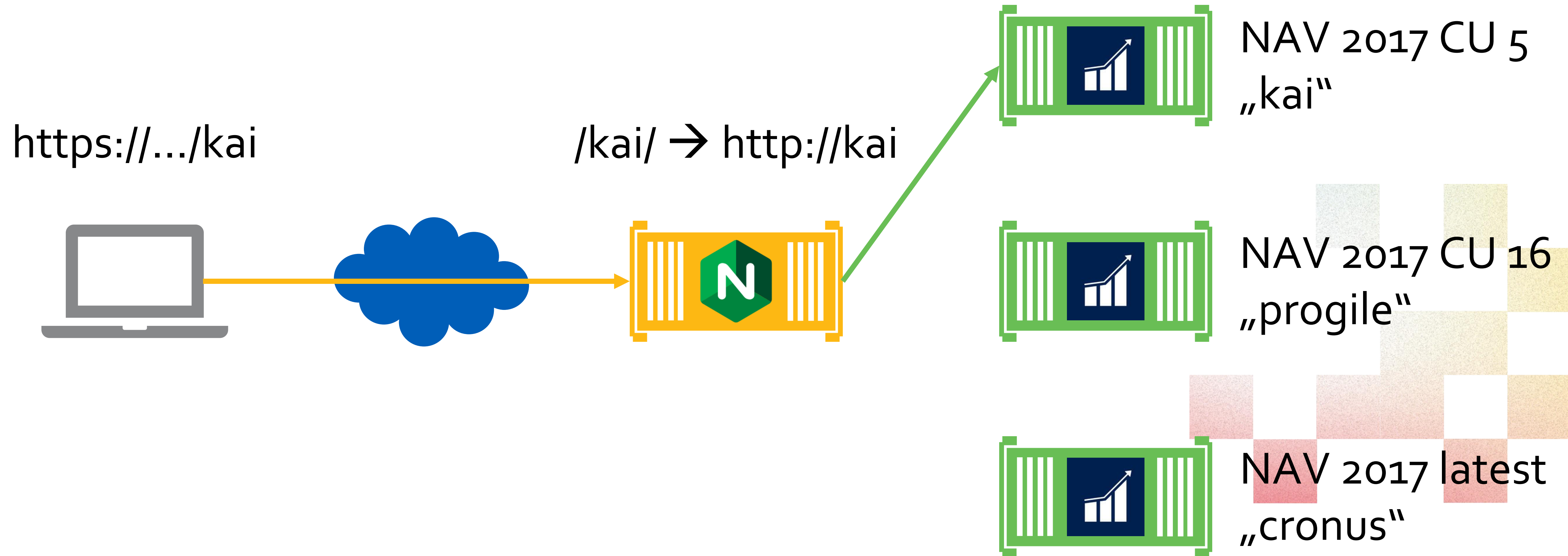
Externally available environment with **multiple containers and endpoints** but only a **reverse proxy** is exposed → multiple containers working together



Reverse proxy



Reverse proxy



Multi-container environments

How? Docker compose

Descriptive YAML for **containers**, their **configuration** and the **networking** setup

For the scenario with 10 identical containers: PowerShell script to **generate compose file** from templates

Compose is created by Docker as well, needs to be downloaded separately

Let's see the code



Multi-container environments

YAML can be **changed** and Docker will **only update the changed parts**

Allows easily **updating or even changing the host**

Dynamically scalable if needed: number of replicas

- Windows auth works fine but needs correctly named containers (gMSA)

Even **more flexible** alternative: **Docker Swarm**

- Spans **multiple hosts** (nodes) and places containers on the nodes on demand
- Very **flexible networking** from Server 2019 onwards
- **Dynamic reverse proxy** setup with Traefik or others (almost no setup)
- Can run **mixed OS**: some nodes Windows, some nodes Linux

Widely used alternative to Docker Swarm in the Linux world: **Kubernetes**

- Windows GA expected in the next months
- Probably Windows authentication soon after



Multi-stage images for automated builds

Automated build with multi-stage images

Why **automated** builds?

- Manually building is very **time consuming** and **error prone**
- Automation allows immediate / periodic builds → **fail fast and early!**

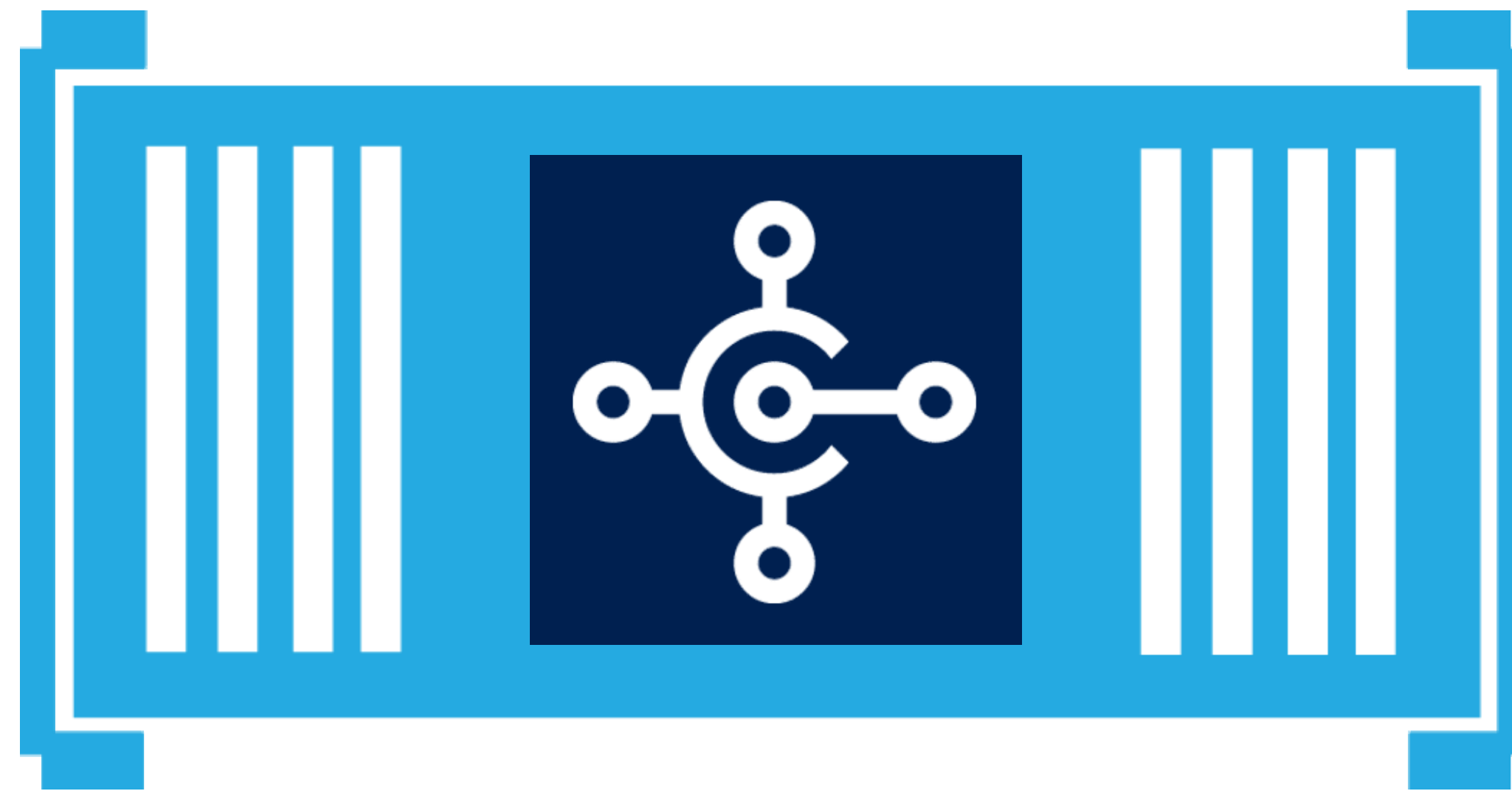
Why in **containers**?

- Keeping build environments **clean** is difficult → often periodic re-installs if you use traditional VMs
- Creating a container for every build and every step is **not much overhead** but guarantees a **clean, controlled and reproducible** environment (same is true for automated testing)

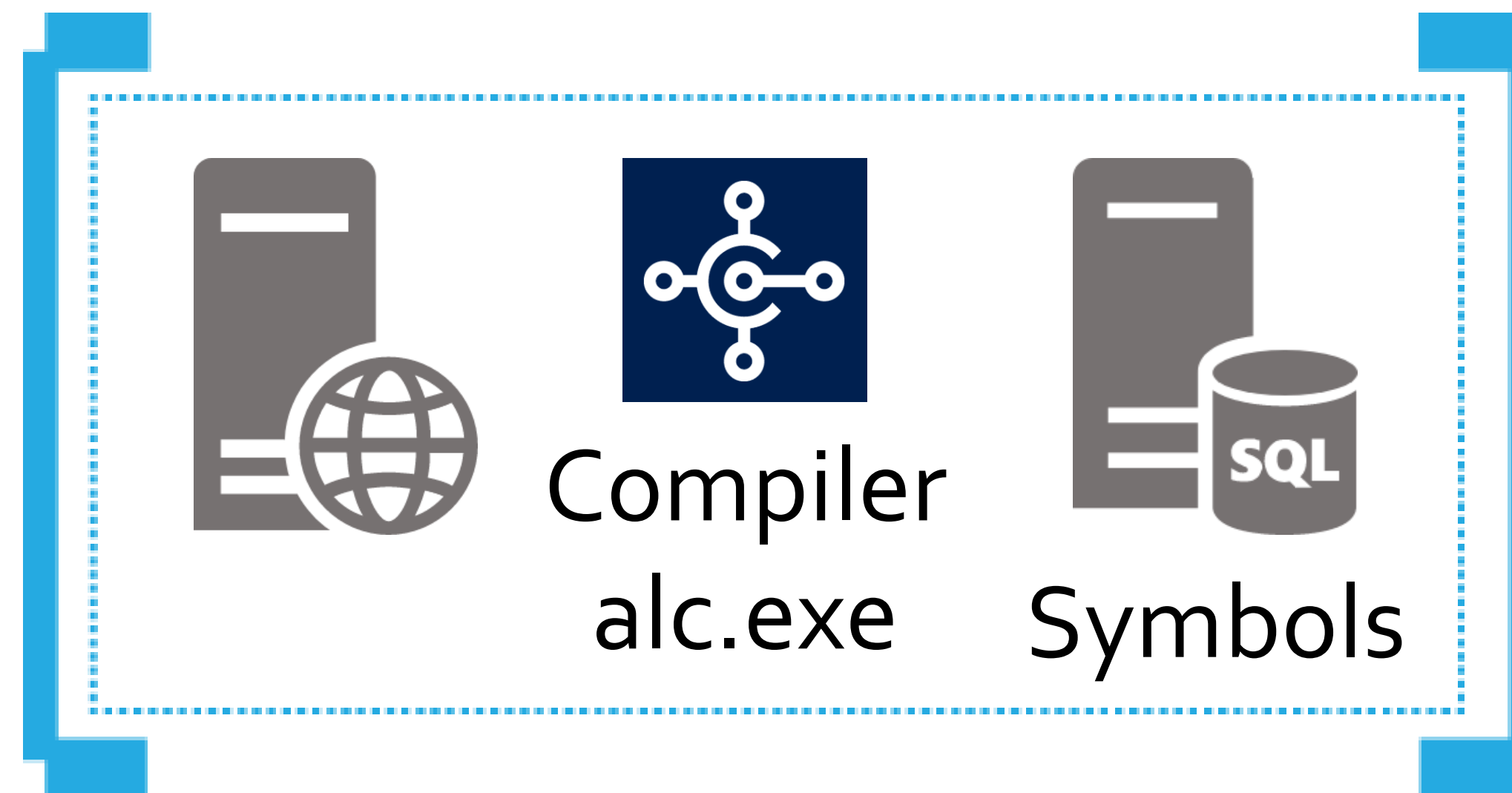
Why **multi-stage**?

- Standard bcsandbox / bconprem is quite big and somewhat slow to start, multi-stage image **reduces** that → gated check-ins with **quicker results**

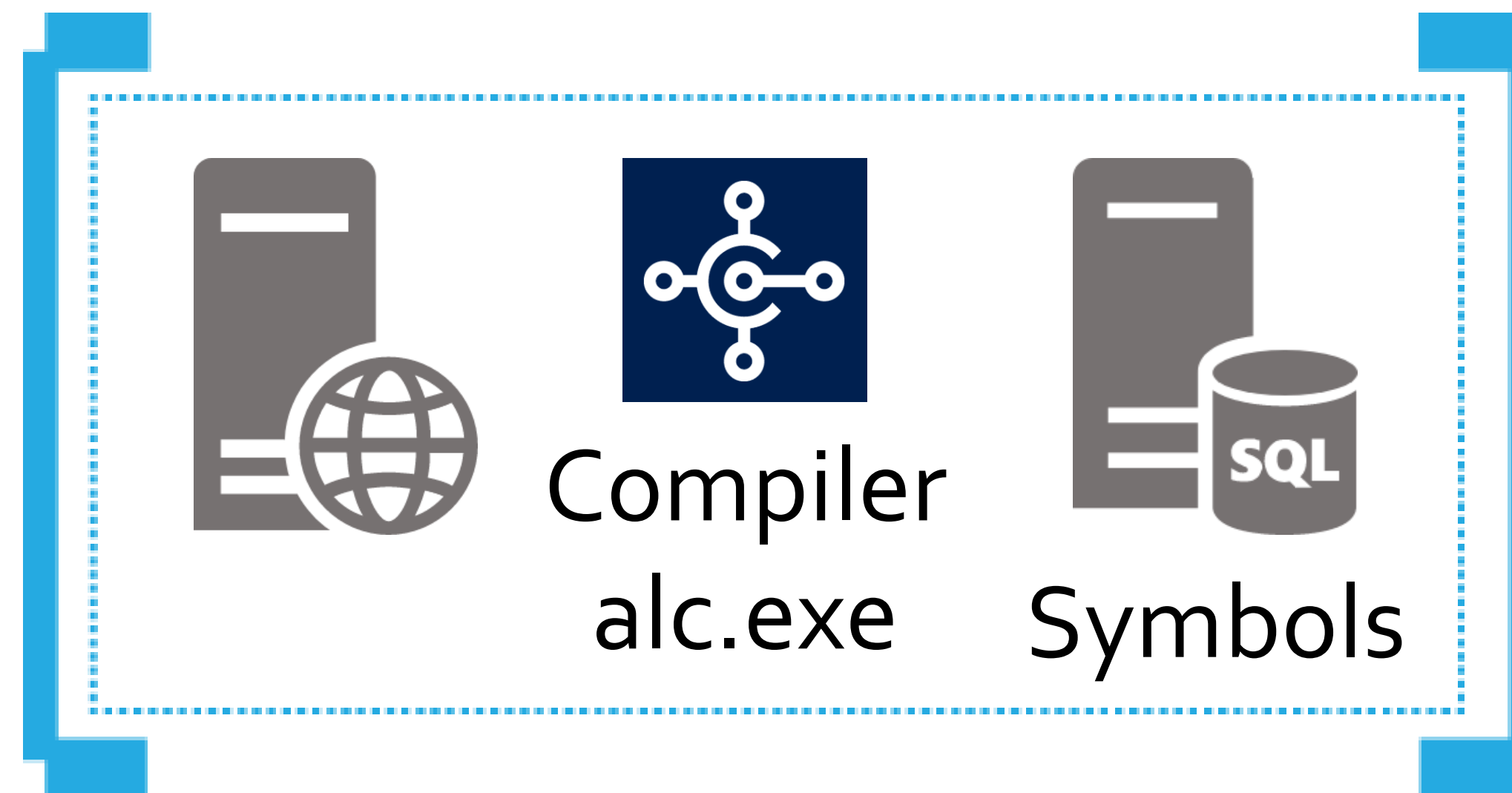
Automated build with multi-stage images



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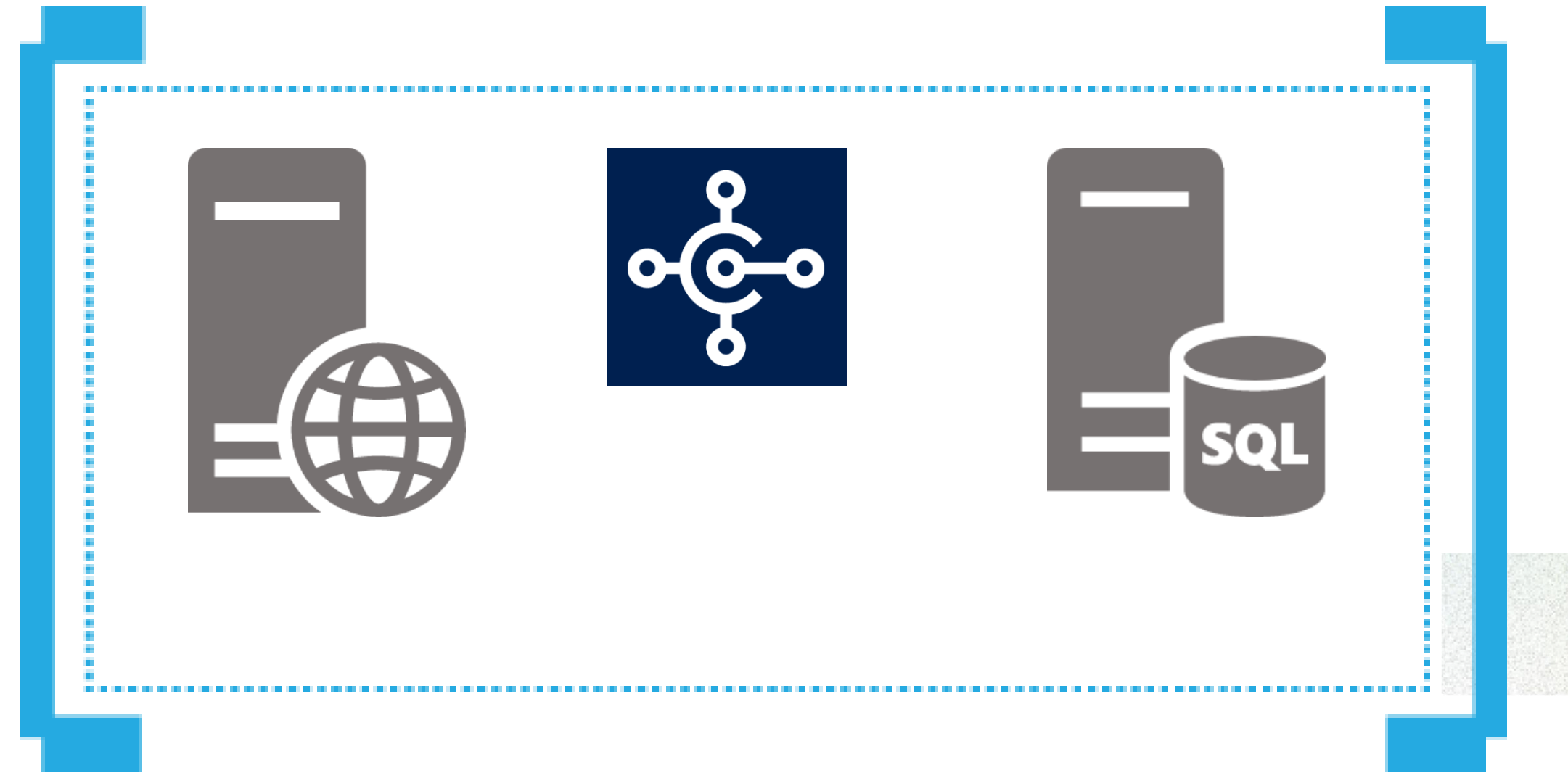


Automated build with multi-stage images



Automated build with multi-stage images

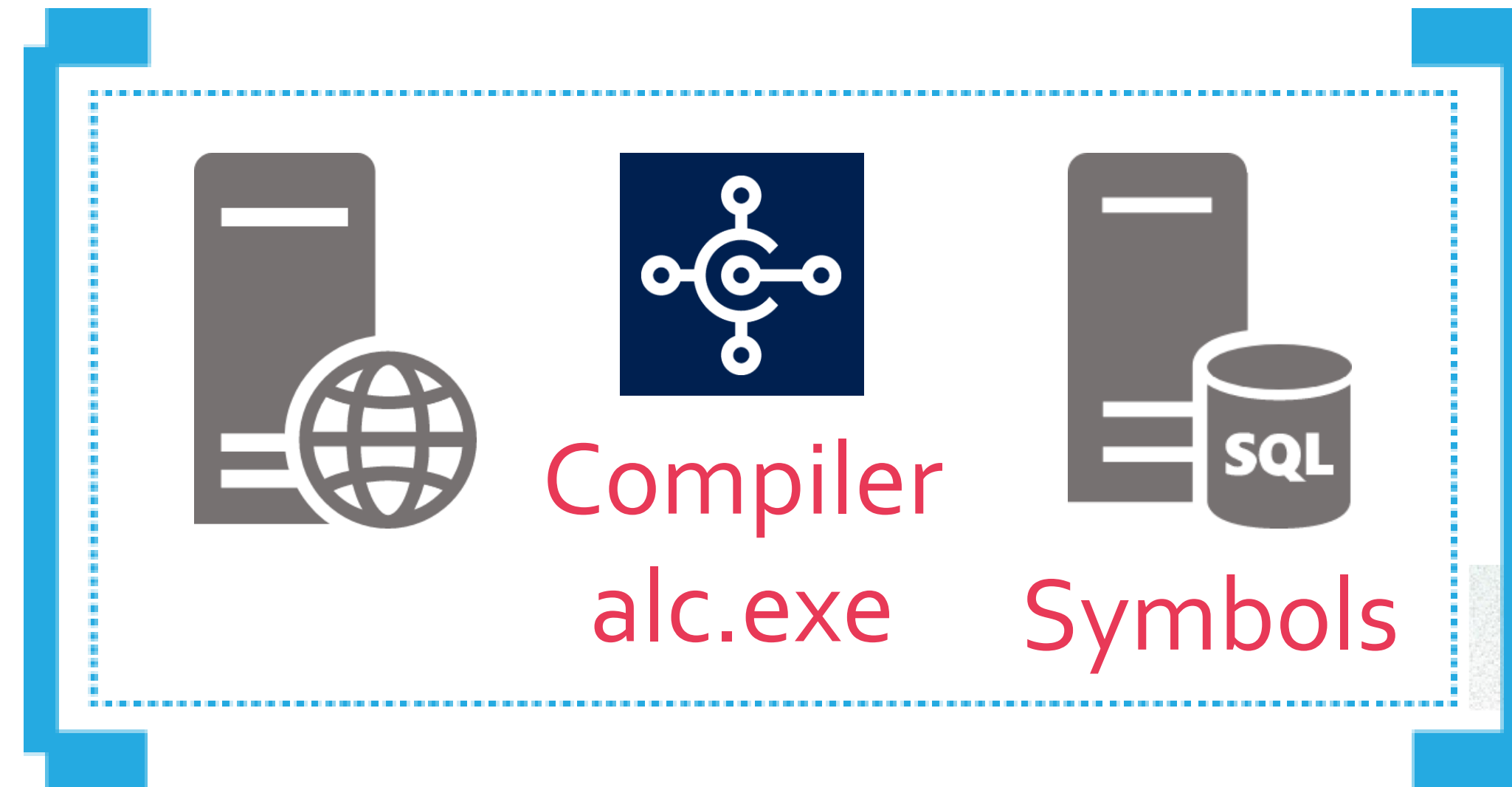
FROM bcsandbox
(windowsservercore +6G)



Automated build with multi-stage images

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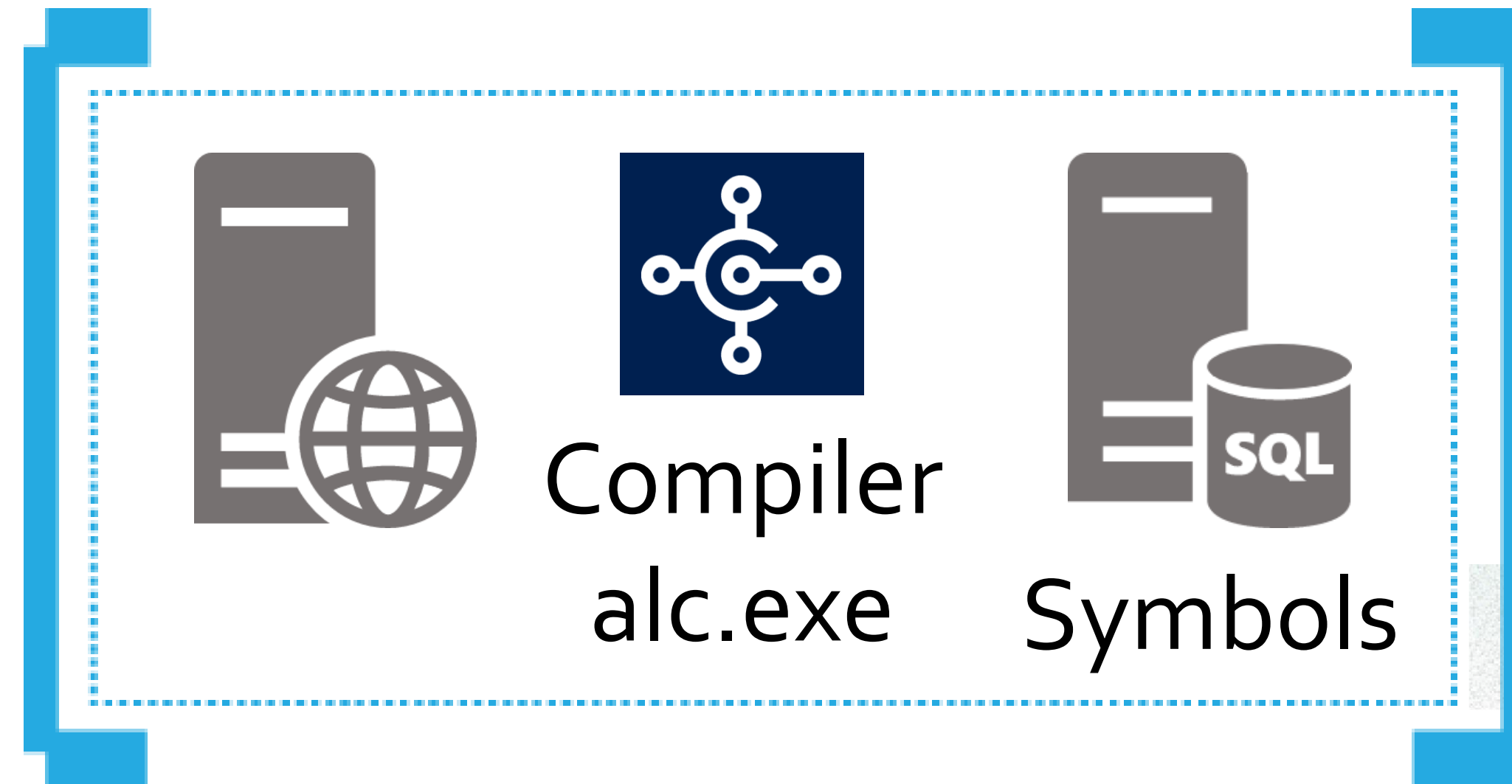
First stage: full



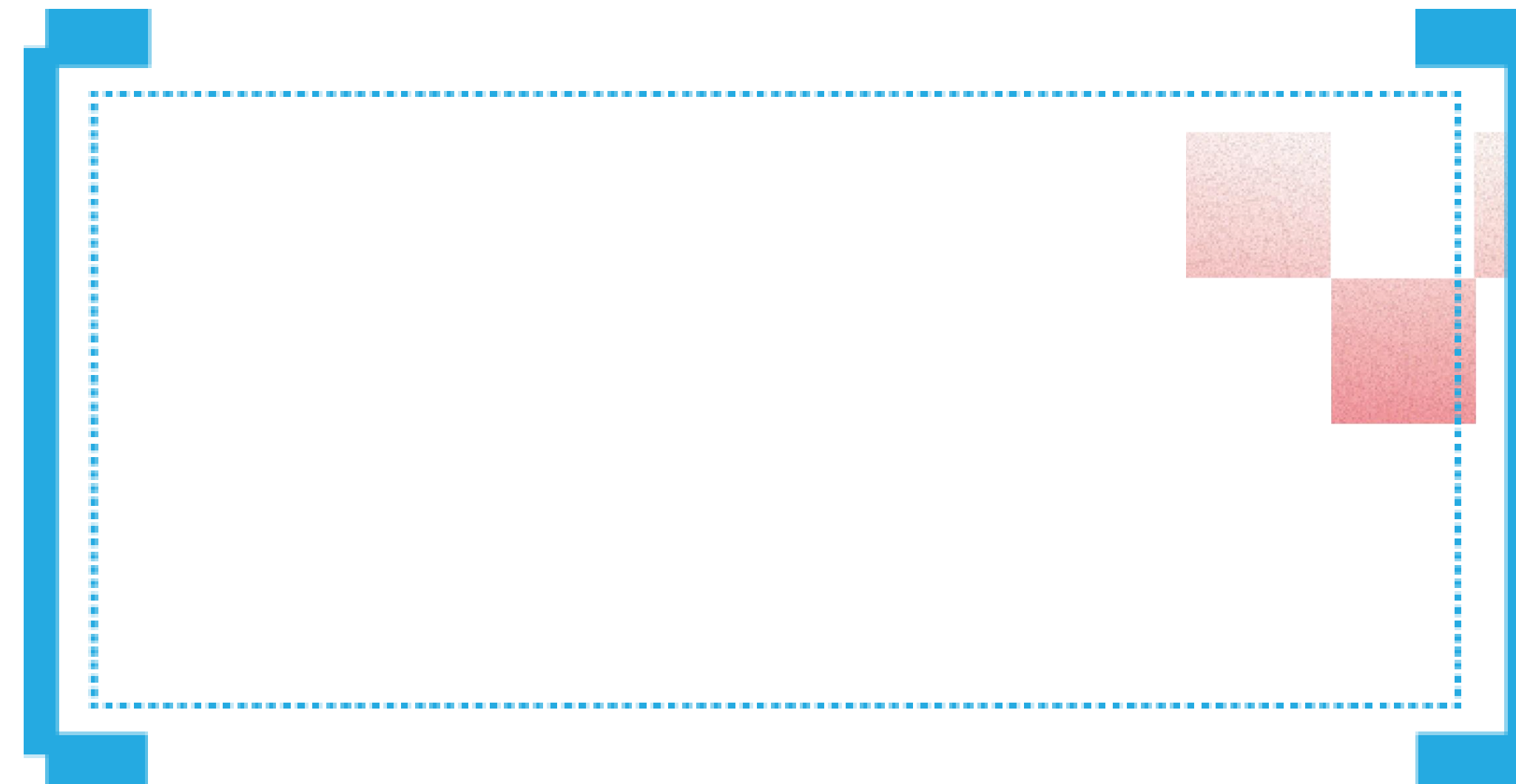
Automated build with multi-stage images

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First stage: full



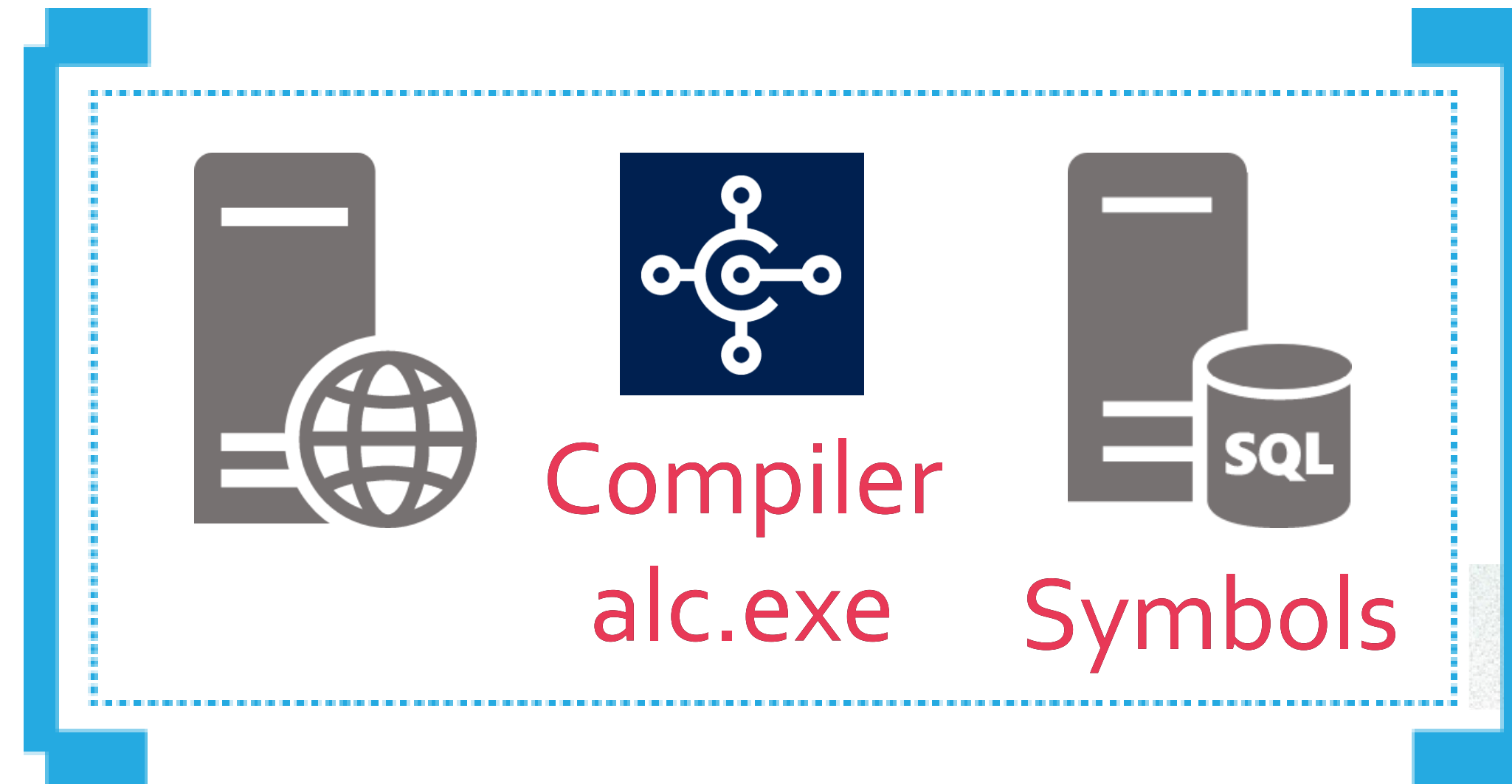
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Automated build with multi-stage images

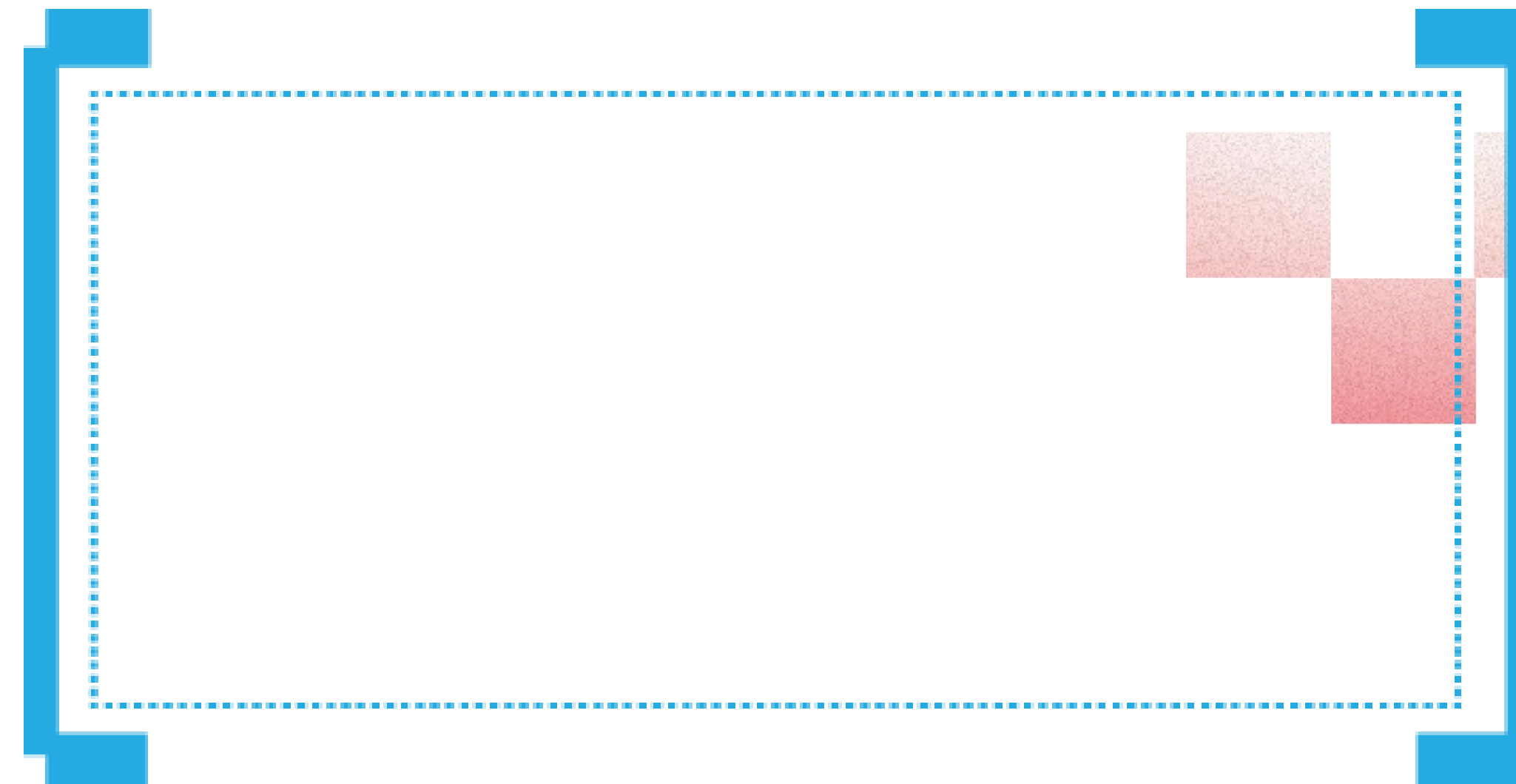
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First stage: full



FROM windowsservercore

Second stage: build
(+300M)



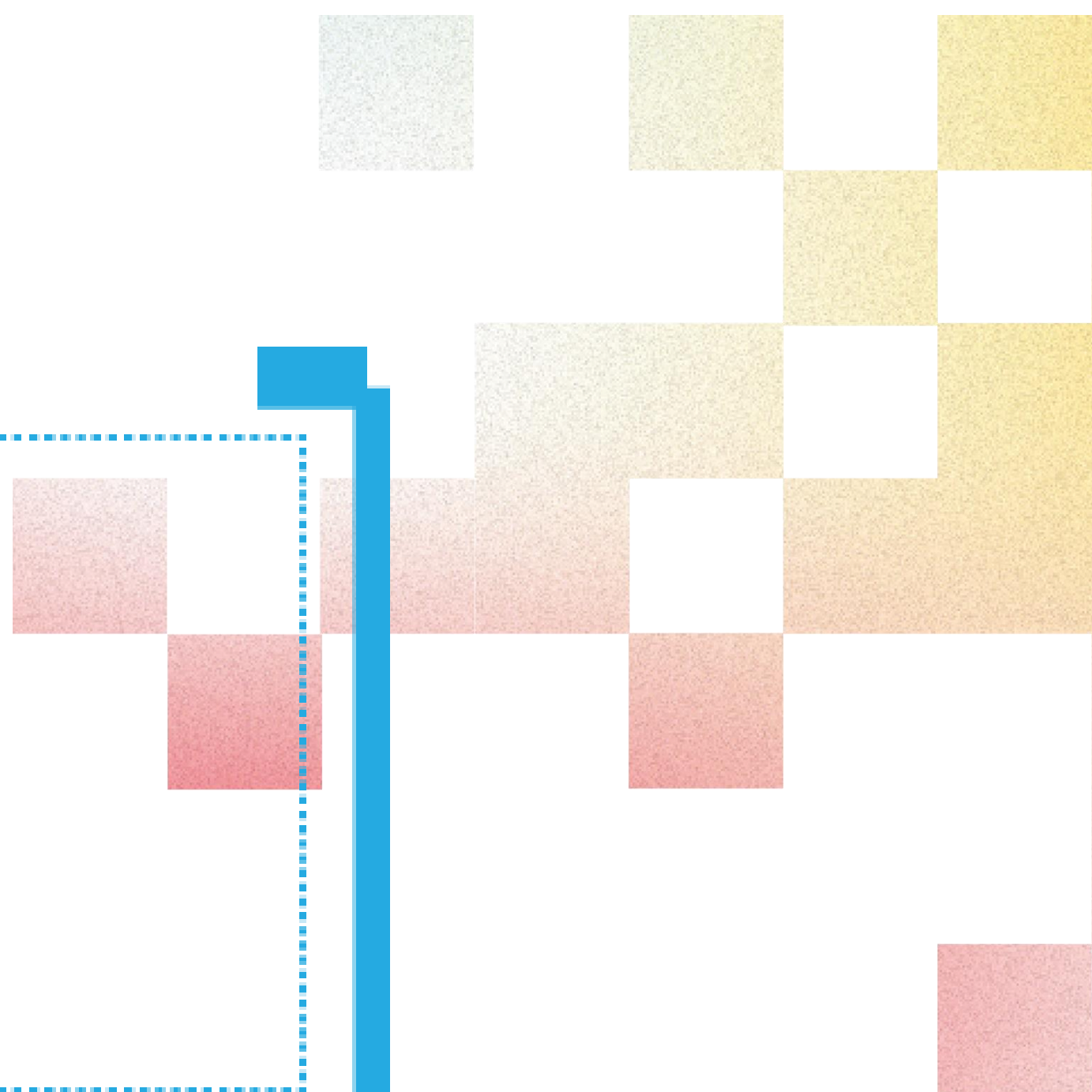
Automated build with multi-stage images

Let's see the code

FROM windowsservercore

Second stage: build
(+300M)

Compiler
alc.exe Symbols

A decorative graphic on the right side of the slide consisting of a grid of squares in various colors (gray, yellow, orange, red) arranged in a pattern that tapers to the right.

Automated build with multi-stage images

Automated builds for **continuous integration** can be achieved in **other ways** as well

- **AJ Kauffmann, Gunnar Gestsson and Kamil Sacek** showed a way at TechDays
- Even the **grumpy old guys** talked about it
- **Freddy Kristiansen and Stan Stempin** showed a way at Directions and blogged about it
- ...

Multi-stage images often used in connection with but **not limited to building**

- Usually it works the other way: Build image is **bigger** than production image
- Could also be something like
 - First stage **build dlls**
 - Second stage **build .app**
 - Third stage **BC + dlls + app**

Azure Container Instances



Azure Container Instances

Why? You **quickly** need 1-n business central "installations" to **test or demo** something or for e.g. a workshop

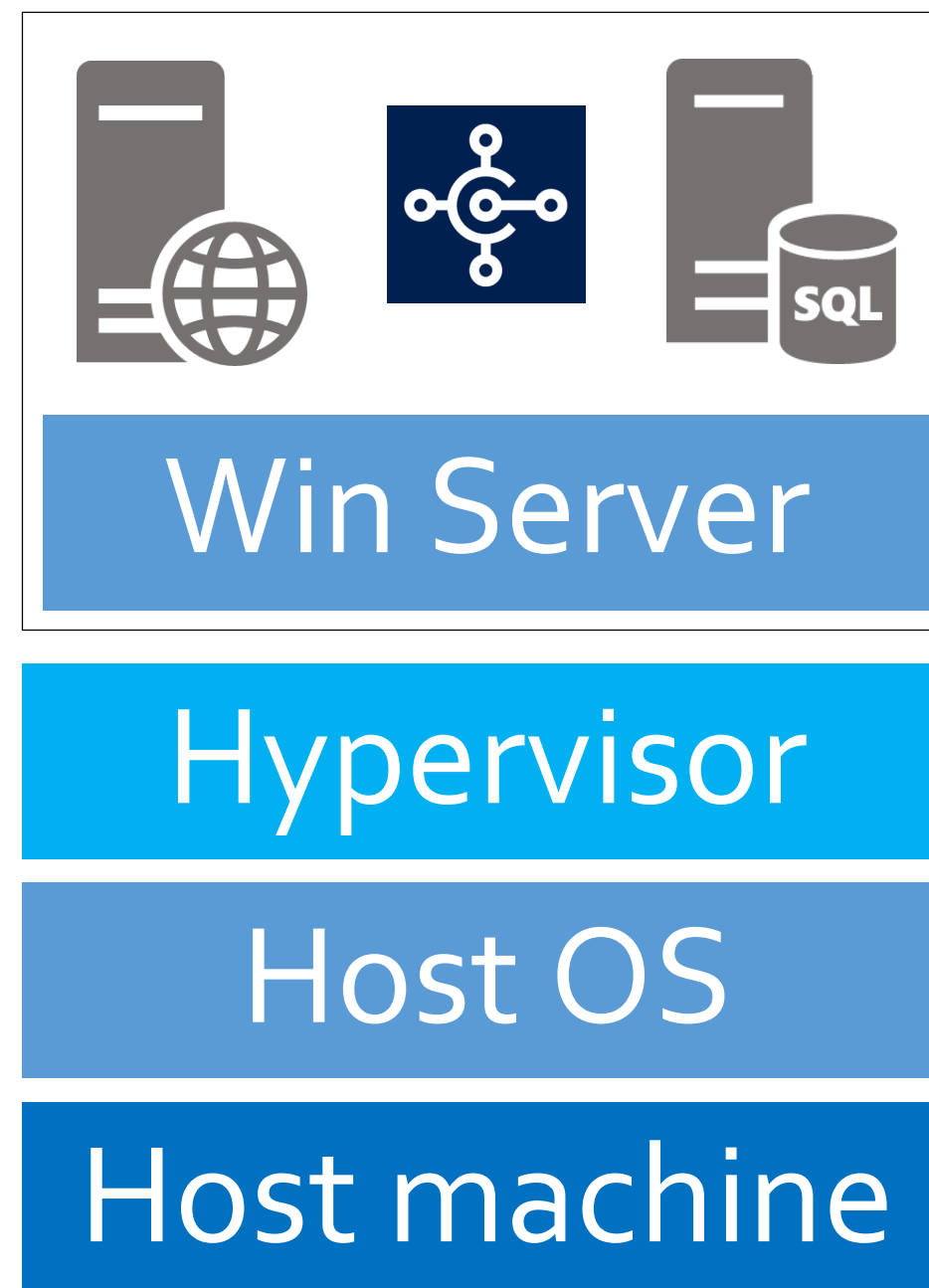
Azure Container Instances (ACIs) **just run** 1-n containers without the need to worry about the base infrastructure

- Start / stop / scale up / scale down **as needed**
- Example: 115 ACIs with 4 cores / 12 GB RAM each, started at 8:30, stopped at 13:30
→ **460 cores and 1.4TB of RAM for 5 hours** with a ramp-up time of **< 30 minutes**

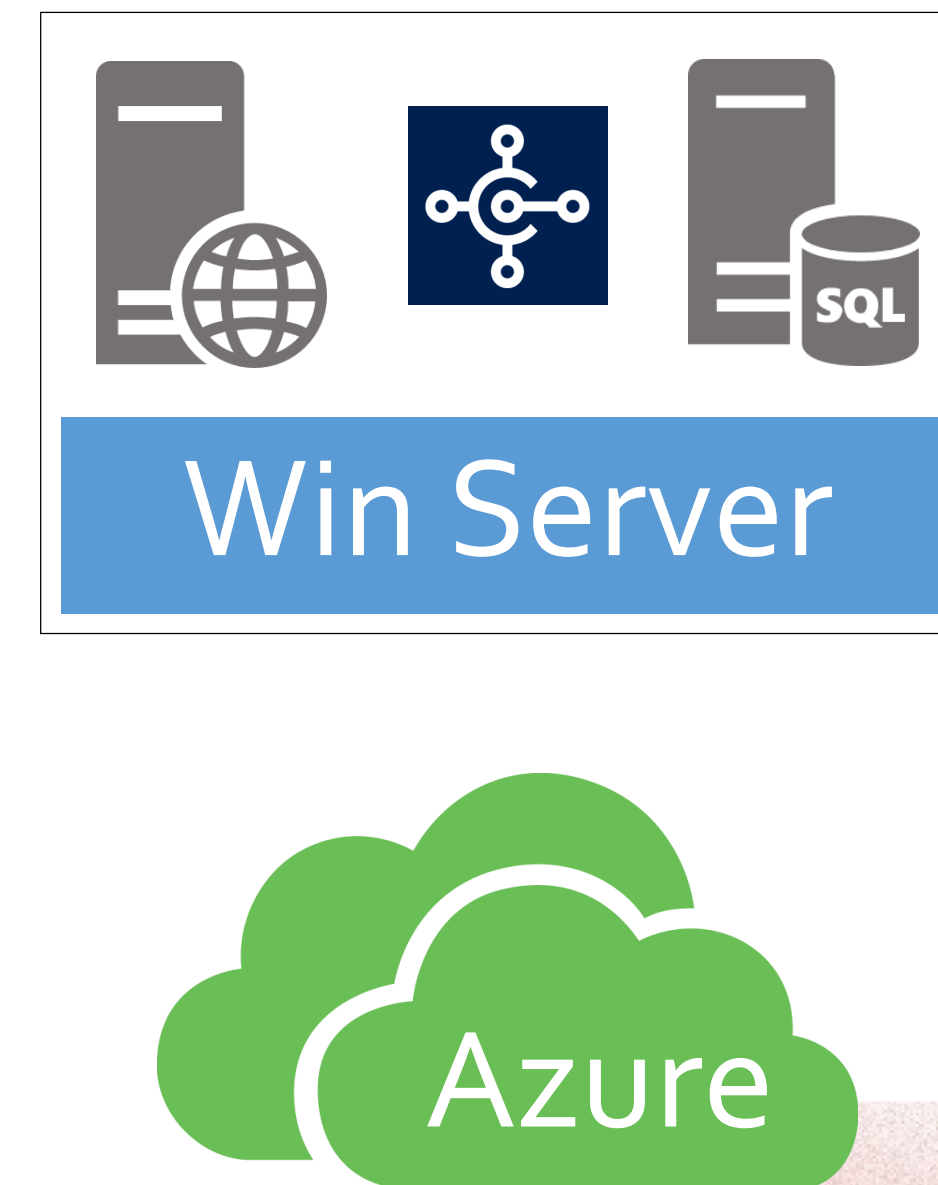
Paid on demand by seconds of CPU / RAM / Windows license (see [Azure pricing calculator](#))

- Example above cost around 300€

Azure Virtual Machines

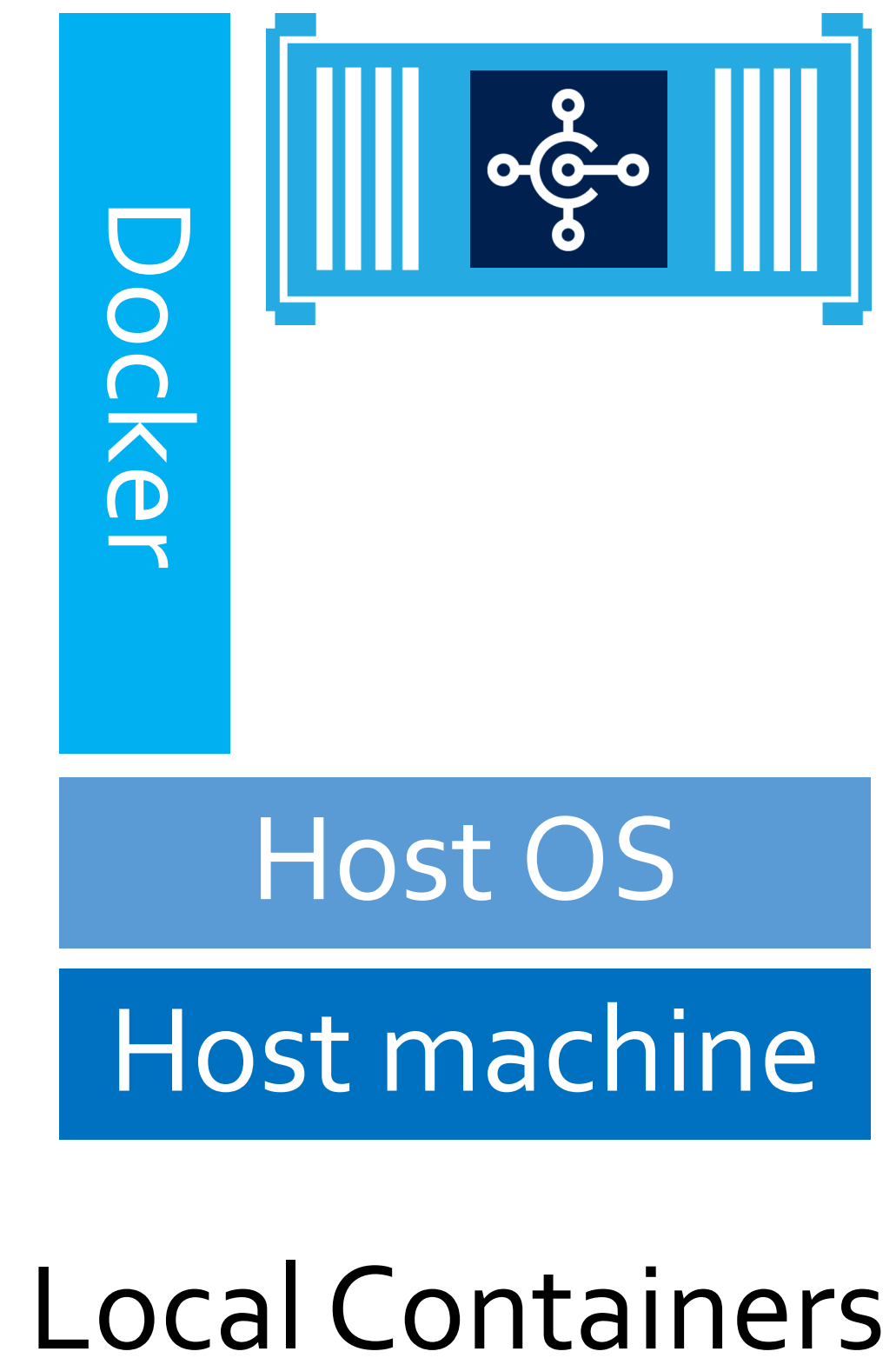


Local VMs



VMs on Azure

Azure Container Instances



Azure Container Instances

How? Multiple ways

- Azure Portal **GUI**
- Azure **command line** or PowerShell cmdlets for single containers
- **ARM template** deployed manually → custom or pre-defined like [quickstart template](#)
- ARM template deployed through Azure **command line** or PowerShell cmdlets
- Probably more... (including my little [VS Code extension](#))



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New-AzureRmResourceGroupDeployment

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-Name mydeploment -ResourceGroupName fk18mati -contGroupName matibasc  
-TemplateFile azuredeploy.json  
-cpuCores 4 -memoryInGb 12  
-dnsPrefix matibasc -azurecontainerSuffix .azurecontainer.io  
-navRelease bcinsider.azurecr.io/bcsandbox:de  
-username basc -password ngph2614 -acceptEula Y  
-asJob
```


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See it in the
Portal GUI

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Any Questions?

Or do you want to know **how the voting works?**
Spoiler: It involves Docker (Swarm)

Any Questions?

Or do you want to know **how the voting works?**

<https://training.play-with-docker.com/swarm-stack-intro/>

THANK YOU