

INSURTECH

How Kin set up a flexible and productive infrastructure-as-code environment

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Summary

Insurtech company Kin needed a CI/CD platform up to the demands of infrastructure as code. Spacelift has helped them set up a flexible, productive IaC environment and enabled all sorts of new workflows that have transformed their productivity.

Company size

250

Engineering team size

40

Stack

AWS, Terraform, Heroku



Spacelift has allowed Kin to dive much further into Terraform, enabling various new workflows that have transformed productivity.



Spacelift's rapid software updates address Kin's specific needs much faster than older software companies do.



Spacelift helped Kin set up an IaC environment that simplifies and speeds up the basics like setting up and iterating on plans.

Kin is a recent convert to Infrastructure as Code (IaC), having previously used Heroku with a handful of systems on AWS.

Upon making the shift, Kin was working with a third-party provider to build its infrastructure, configuration, and stacks. They strongly recommended Kin look at Spacelift for its CI/CD platform.

Managing director Jason Fraley and senior DevOps engineer Jeremy White explained to us how Spacelift has helped transform their infrastructure.

The challenge for Kin

Like many companies that embrace Terraform and the concept of GitOps, Kin shifted from Heroku and legacy AWS accounts so they could track changes, do change detection, and set things up to work in a repeatable fashion.

IaC and immutable infrastructure are really important concepts to Kin. They chose Terraform as their platform, and very quickly adopted a full-blown GitOps workflow.

When you shift to treating infrastructure like a software project, you need all of the same components that a software project would have. That means having a CI/CD platform in place, and most aren't suited to the demands of IaC. Kin discovered that Spacelift was purpose-built to fill that gap.

Kin's Spacelift experience

"Spacelift really supported us with integrating their software into our setup," notes Kin Managing Director Jason Fraley. "Their software updates are really rapid, addressing our specific needs much faster than we're used to from older software companies, who might consider our needs mere 'edge cases' and add them years down their roadmap, if at all."

Senior DevOps engineer Jeremy White agrees. "The integration was painless. The Spacelift team was great to work with. They charge by the runner but were flexible and didn't try to squeeze every penny out of us because they understand that setting up infrastructure requires a lot of heavy-duty work at first."

The thing that surprised them most was just how rugged the Spacelift policy agent is. That may not be something you don't worry about as much with software builds, but it is really important with infrastructure.

The learning curve was also less of a problem than they expected. "Spacelift's software guides you through what it can do, once you're used to the basics, which only took us a week. After that, the productivity benefits really started to show themselves. Onboarding our developers was much faster than most tools allow. Once it's set up it becomes a simple but powerful part of your toolset."

Spacelift's impact on Kin

Spacelift has helped Kin set up a flexible and productive IaC environment. It makes the basics like setting up and iterating on plans simpler and quicker to handle, which has allowed them to focus more on more significant engineering concerns. "When things in our infrastructure go wrong, that's when Spacelift really shines," Jason says.

Spacelift has allowed Kin to delve much deeper into Terraform. "A lot of the things you can do with the API are really fun," Jeremy points out. "For example, Stacks that make stacks are really neat, and the kind of thing that would normally be intimidating rather than exciting, as Spacelift makes them."

"We would encourage people to rethink how they use Terraform, as Spacelift has enabled all sorts of new workflows that have transformed our productivity," Jason concludes.

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