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Architecting Splunk for High Availability and Disaster Recovery

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About me

- Member of Splunk Tech Services
- Large scale deployments
- Cloud and Big Data
- Fifth .Conf

AGENDA

Disaster Recovery

Recover in the event of a disaster

High Availability

- Data Collection
- Indexing & Searching

Maintain an acceptable level of continuous service

Top Takeaways

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Disaster Recovery (DR)

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DR What is Disaster Recovery?

Set of processes necessary to ensure recovery of service after a disaster

Disaster Recovery Steps

1

Backup necessary data

Backup to a medium at least as resilient as source

Local Backup vs. Remote

2

Restore

Ensure this works

Backup is worthless without restore

Backup

1

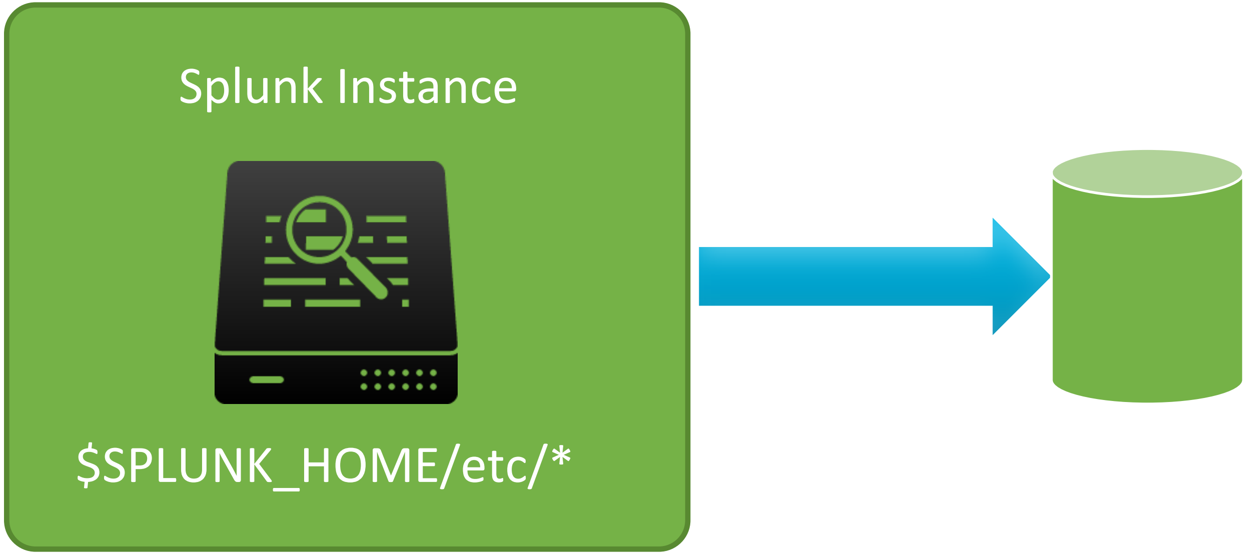
a Configurations

$SPLUNK_HOME/etc/*

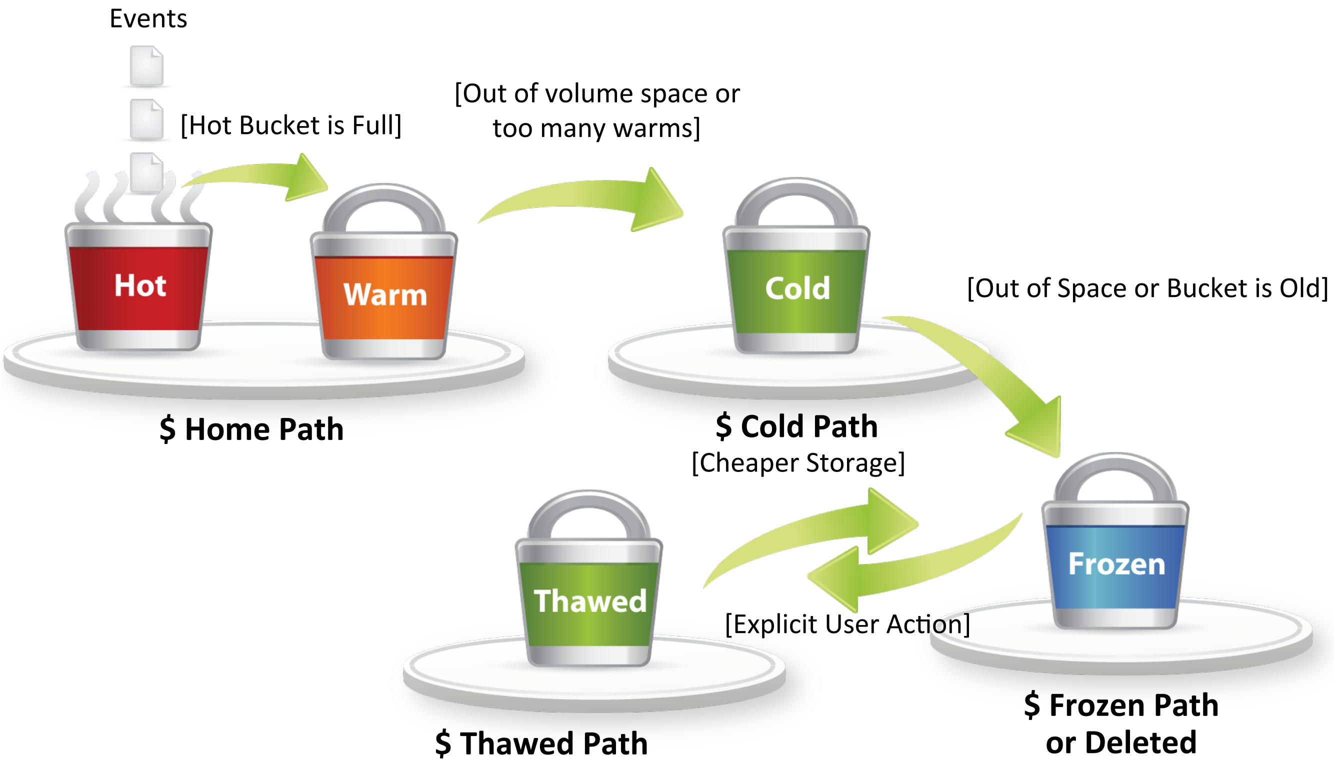
b Indexes

Buckets: Hot*, Warm, Cold, Frozen

Backup Configurations



Backup: Bucket Lifecycle

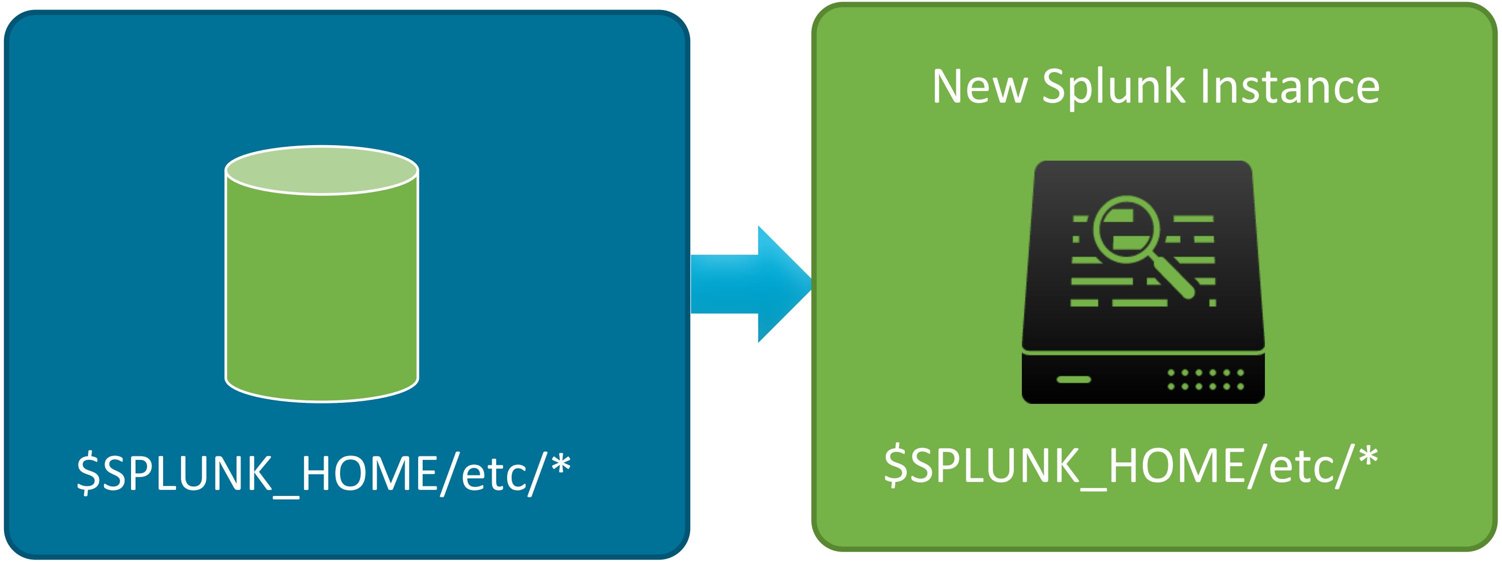


Backup Data

Bucket Type	State	Can Backup?
Hot	Read + Write	No*
Warm	Read Only	Yes
Cold	Read Only	Yes

*Unless using snapshot aware FS (VSS, ZFS) or roll to warm first (which introduces a performance penalty).

Restore Configurations

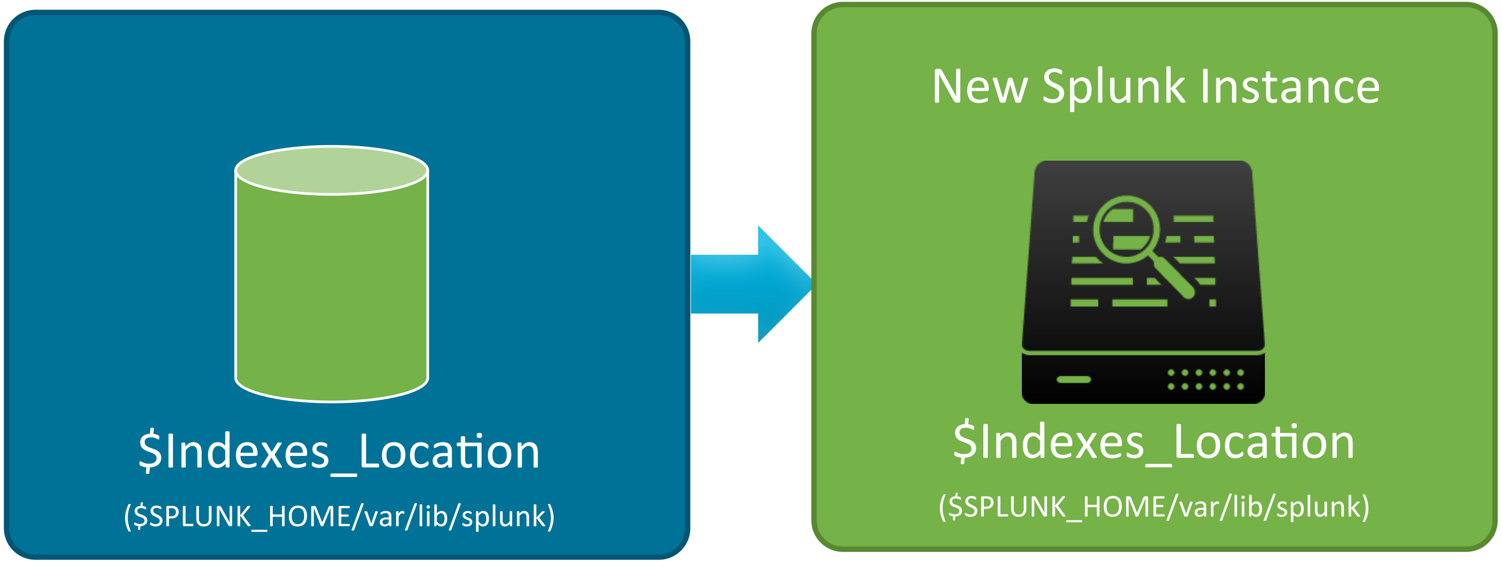


$SPLUNK_HOME/etc/*

New Splunk Instance

$SPLUNK_HOME/etc/*

Restore Data



Splunk advises restoring fully from a backup rather than restoring on top of a partially corrupted datastore.

Backup Clustered Data

- **Option 1**: Backup all data on each node
  - Will also result in backups of duplicate data
- **Option 2**: Identify one copy of each bucket on the cluster and backup only those (requires scripting)
  - Decide whether or not you need to also backup index files

Bucket naming conventions

Non-clustered buckets: **db_<newest_time>_<oldest_time>_<localid>**

★Clustered original bucket: **db_<newest_time>_<oldest_time>_<localid>_<guid>**

Clustered replicated bucket copies: **rb_<newest_time>_<oldest_time>_<localid>_<guid>**

Putting Restore Together

2	a	New Splunk Instance
	b	Configurations
	c	Data/Indexes

Things to think about:

Recovery Time and Tolerable Loss

vs.

Complexity and Cost

- Other custom factors in your environment
  - Ex. Job artifacts, DM, Collections if DR'ing a Search Head

High Availability (HA)

What is High Availability?

A design methodology whereby a system is continuously operational, bounded by a set of predetermined tolerances.

Note: “high availability” !=“complete availability”

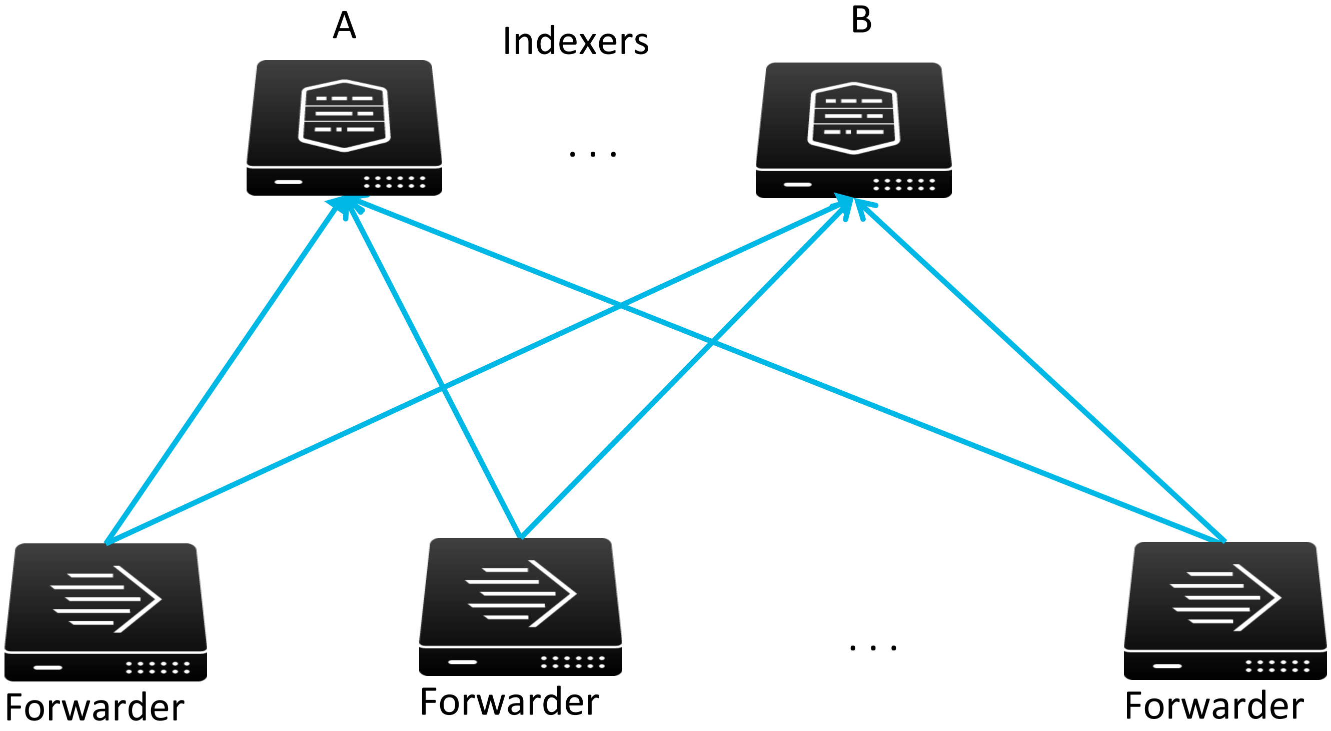
HA

Splunk High Availability

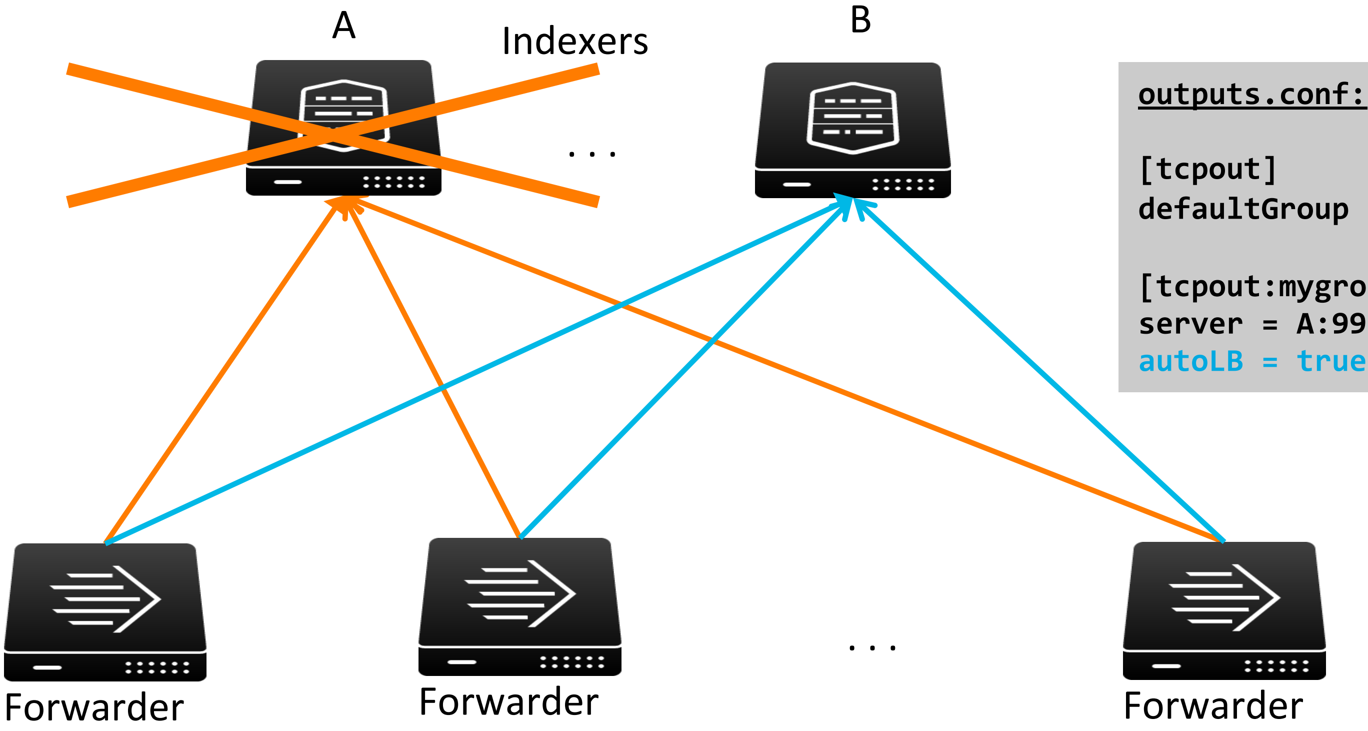
1	Data Collection/Reception
2	Searching
3	Indexing

HA

Data Collection



Data Collection



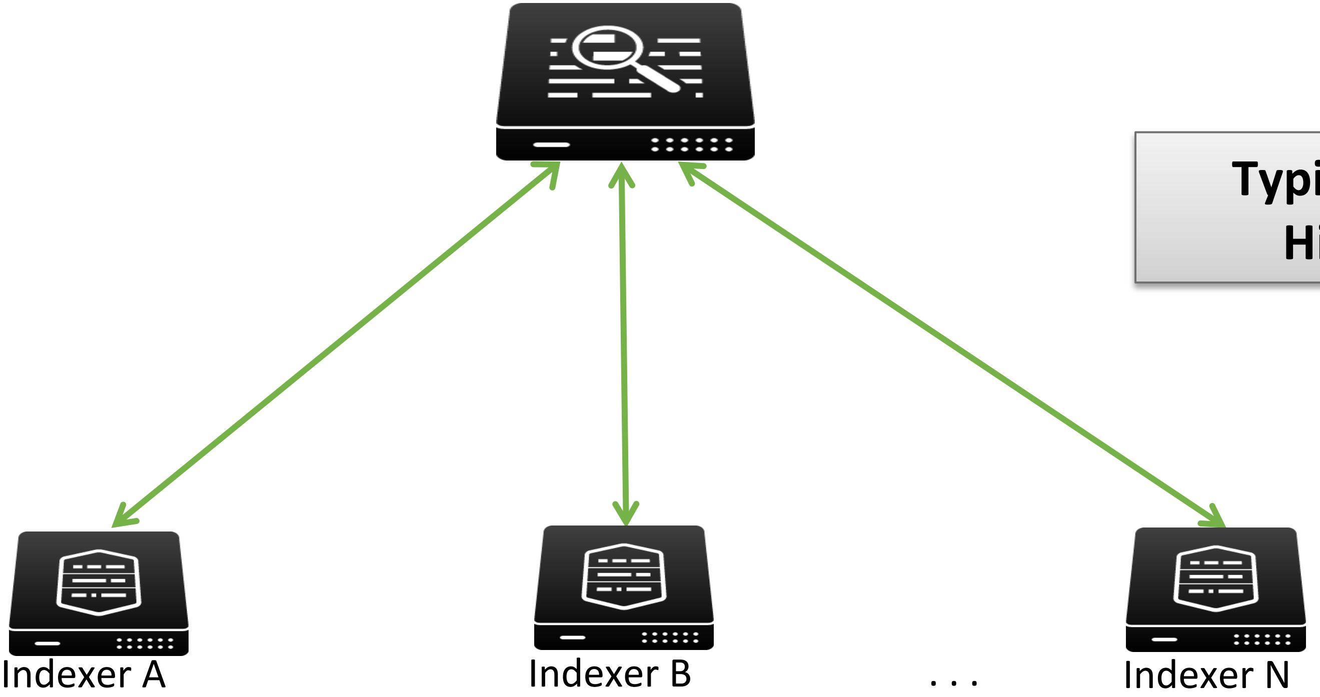
```
outputs.conf:

[tcpout]
defaultGroup = mygroup

[tcpout:mygroup]
server = A:9997, B:9997
autoLB = true
```

Searching

2	a	Search Head Clustering (SHC)
	b	Search Head Pooling (SHP)

HA

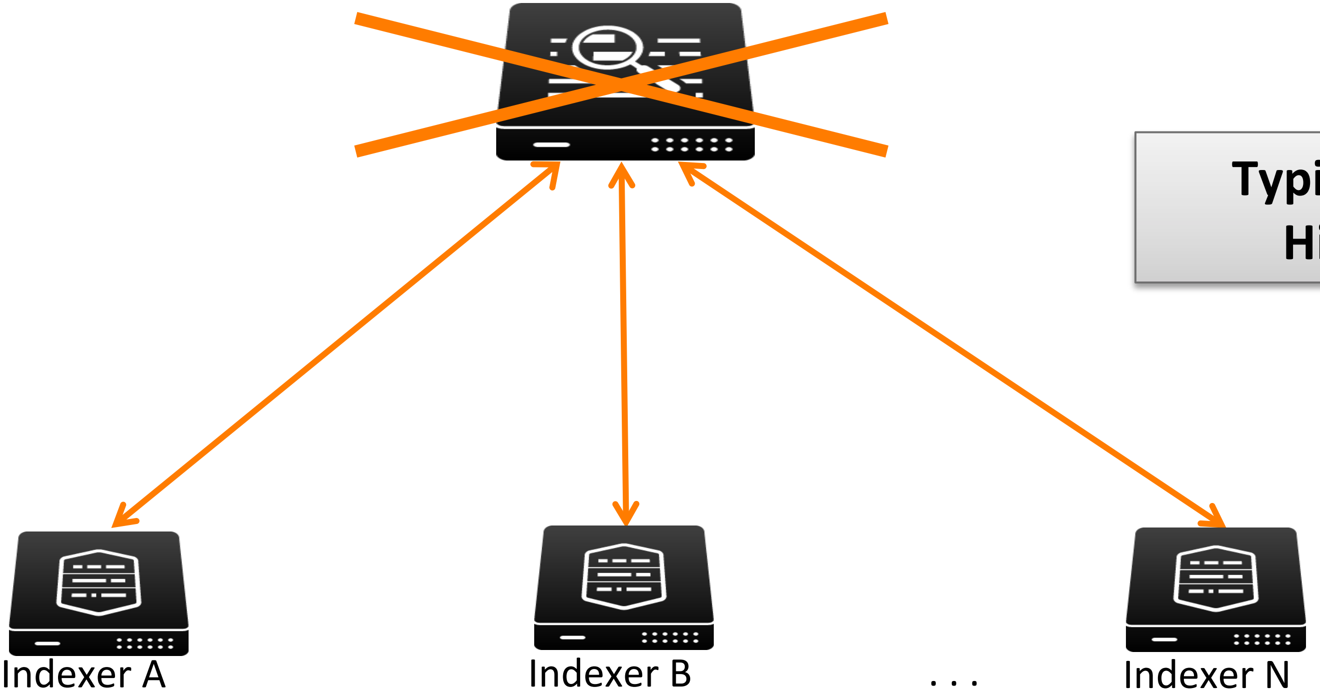
Searching



Typical Search Hierarchy

HA

Searching



Typical Search Hierarchy

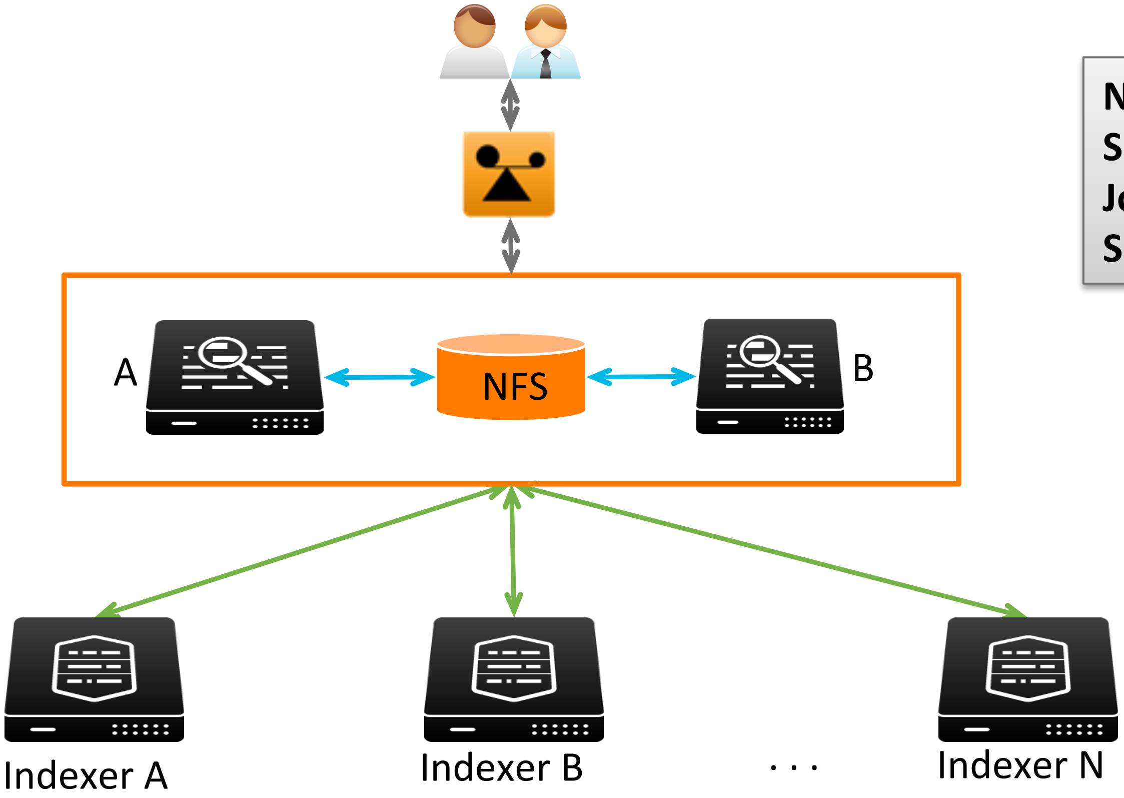
Search Head Pooling

NFS based Search Head Pooling has been **deprecated***

*still works and supported for current Splunk version but plan for its eventual removal.

HA

SHP



NFS used to sync:
SH Configurations
Job Artifacts
SH Schedulers

HA Search Head Clustering (SHC)

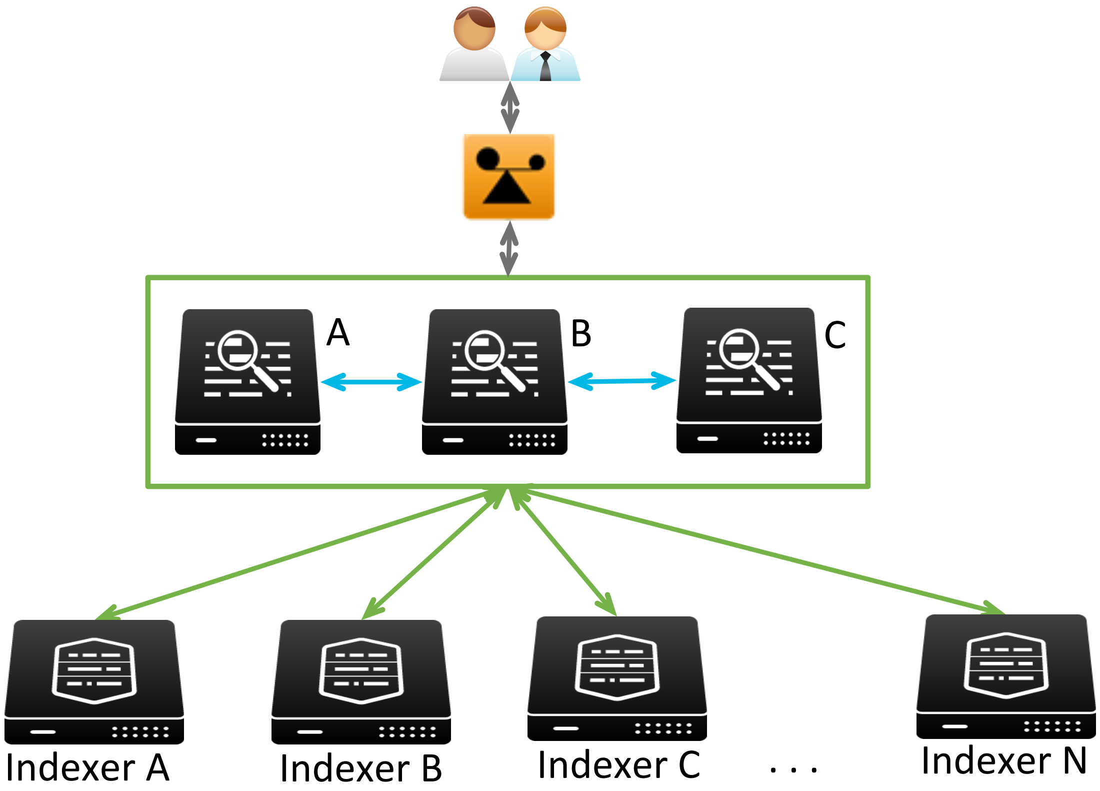
- Improved horizontal scaling
- Improved high availability
- No single point of failure

HA

SHC vs. SHP

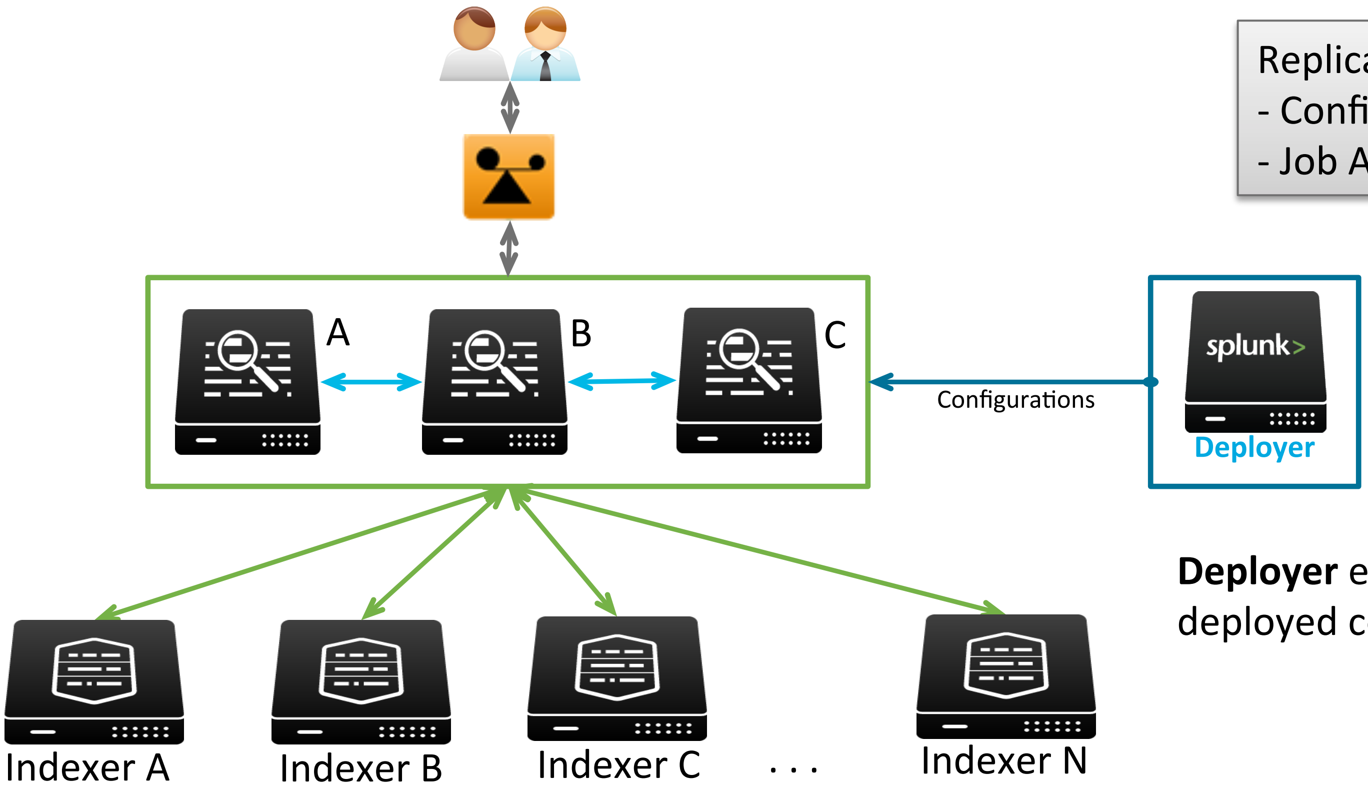
SHC	SHP
NFS-less	Uses NFS
NFS-less	Single point of failure
NFS-less	Performance issues

SHC



Replication **protocol** syncs:
- Configurations
- Job Artifacts

SHC

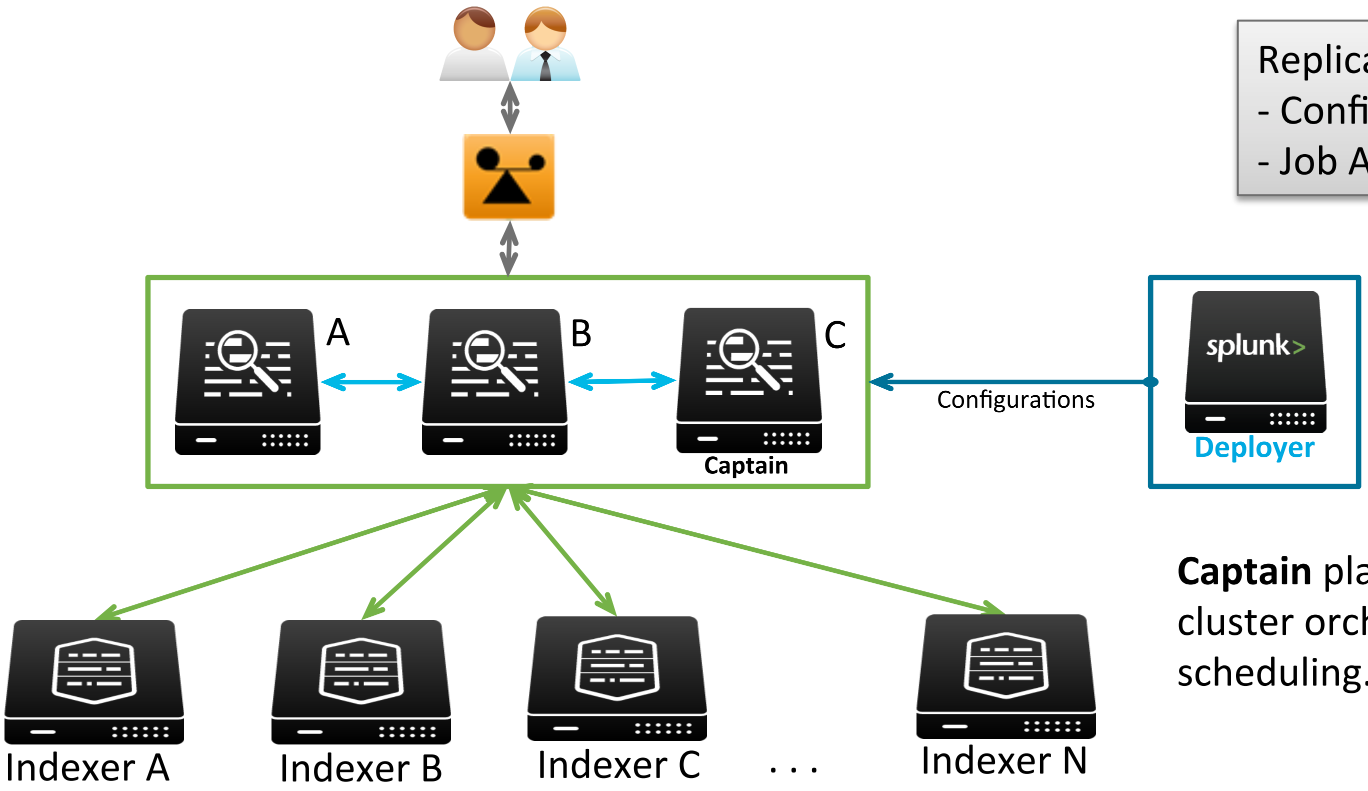


Replication **protocol** syncs:
- Configurations
- Job Artifacts

Deployer ensures identical deployed configurations

SHC

Replication **protocol** syncs:
- Configurations
- Job Artifacts



Captain plays a special role in cluster orchestration and job scheduling.

SHC Operation - High Level

- Deployer ensures all SHC members have identical baseline configurations
  - Subsequent UI changes propagated using an internal replication mechanism
- Job Scheduler gets disabled on all members but the Captain
- Captain selects members to **run scheduled jobs based on load**
  - Selection based on load statistics. Ensures better load distribution vs. SHP
- Captain orchestrates job artifact replication to selected members/ candidates of the cluster.
- Transparent job artifact proxying (and eventual replication) if artifact not present on user's SH.

Deploying SHC

- Same SH version and high speed network (LAN)
  - More storage required vs. stand-alone SHs. Linux/Solaris only
- Needs LB and a Deployer instance (DS or MN can also be used to fulfill this role)
- Select RF per your HA/DR requirements
- Configure Deployer first with a secret key
- Initialize each instance, point them to Deployer, then bootstrap **one** of them to become the cluster captain
- More details on Splunk Docs

HA

Indexing

3

Indexer Clustering

Index Replication

- **Cluster** = a group of search peers (indexers) that replicate each others' buckets
- **Data Availability**
  - Availability for ingestion and searching
- **Data Fidelity**
  - Forwarder Acknowledgement, assurance
- **Disaster Recovery**
  - Site awareness
- **Search Affinity**
  - Local search preference vs. remote

Trade offs

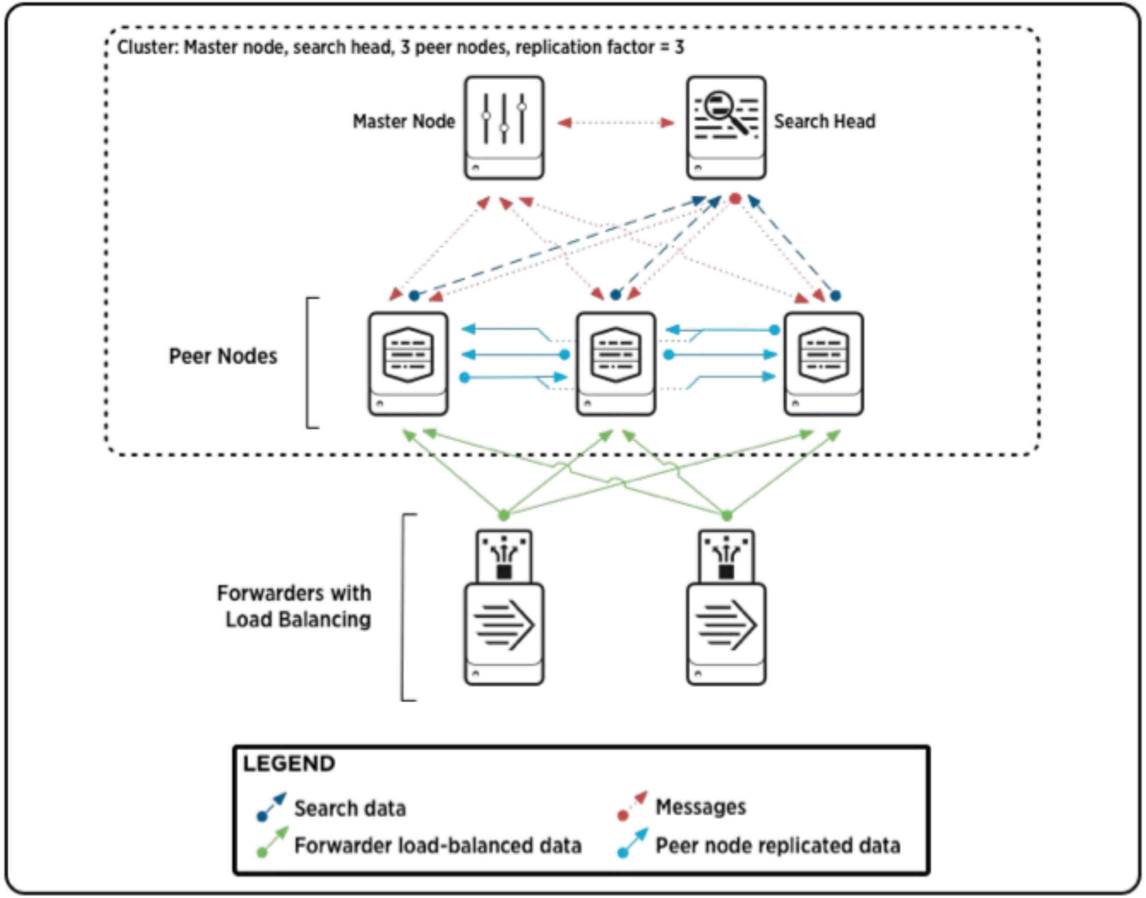
- Extra storage
- Slightly increased processing load.

HA Cluster Components

- Master Node
  - Orchestrates replication/remedial process. Informs the SH where to find searchable data. Helps manage peer configurations.
- Peer Nodes
  - Receive and index data. Replicate data to/from other peers. Peer Nodes Number ≥ RF
- Search Head(s)
  - **Must** use one to search across the cluster.
- Forwarders
  - Use with auto-lb and indexer acknowledgement

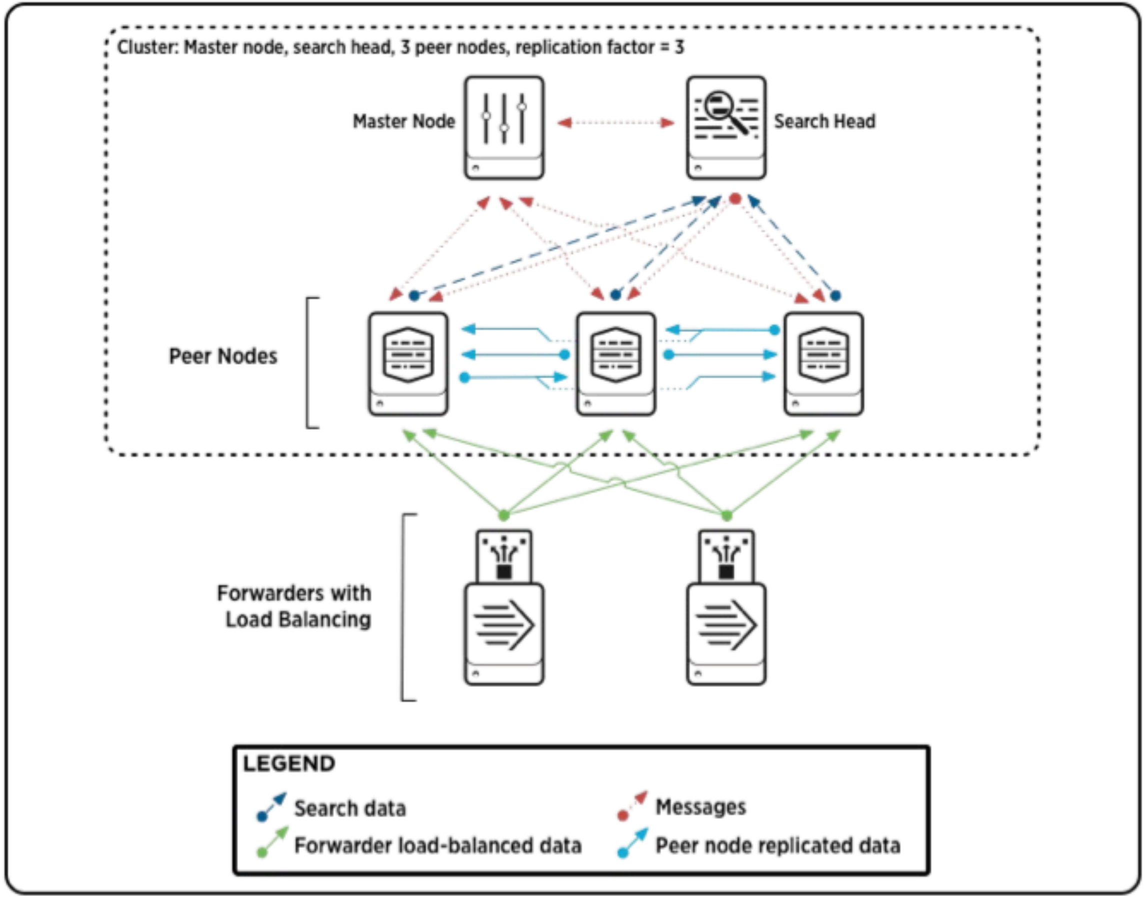
HA

Single Site Cluster Architecture


Cluster: Master node, search head, 3 peer nodes, replication factor = 3
Master Node
Search Head
Peer Nodes
Forwarders with Load Balancing
LEGEND
Search data
Messages
Forwarder load-balanced data
Peer node replicated data

Credit: Splunk Docs Team

HA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Master Node
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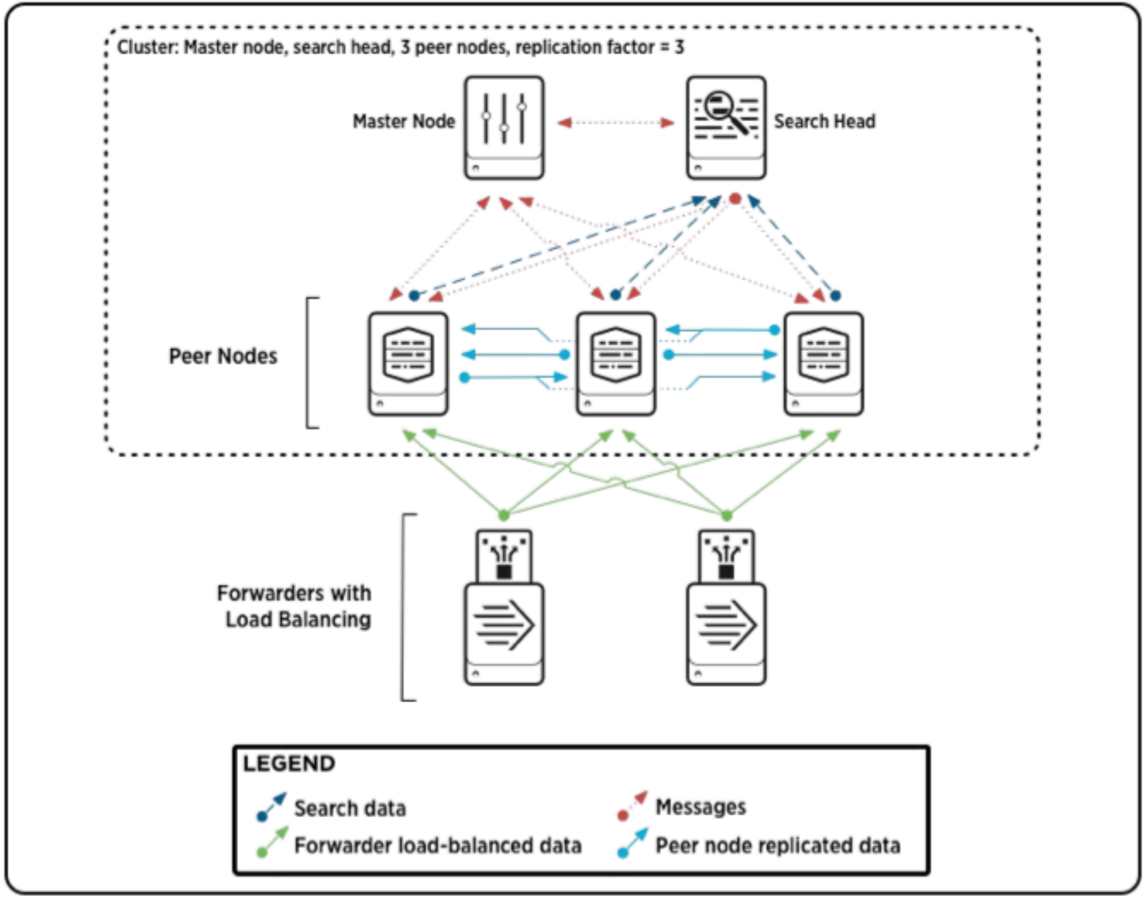
Forwarders with Load Balancing
LEGEND
Search data
Messages
Forwarder load-balanced data
Peer node replicated data

Credit: Splunk Docs Team

Replication Factor (RF)

- Number of copies of data in the cluster. Default **RF=3**
- Cluster can tolerate **RF-1** node failures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Master Node
Search Head
Peer Nodes
Forwarders with Load Balancing
LEGEND
Search data
Forwarder load-balanced data
Messages
Peer node replicated data

Credit: Splunk Docs Team

Search Factor (SF)

- Number of copies of data in the cluster. Default **SF=2**
- Requires more storage
- Replicated vs. Searchable Bucket

HA

Clustered Indexing

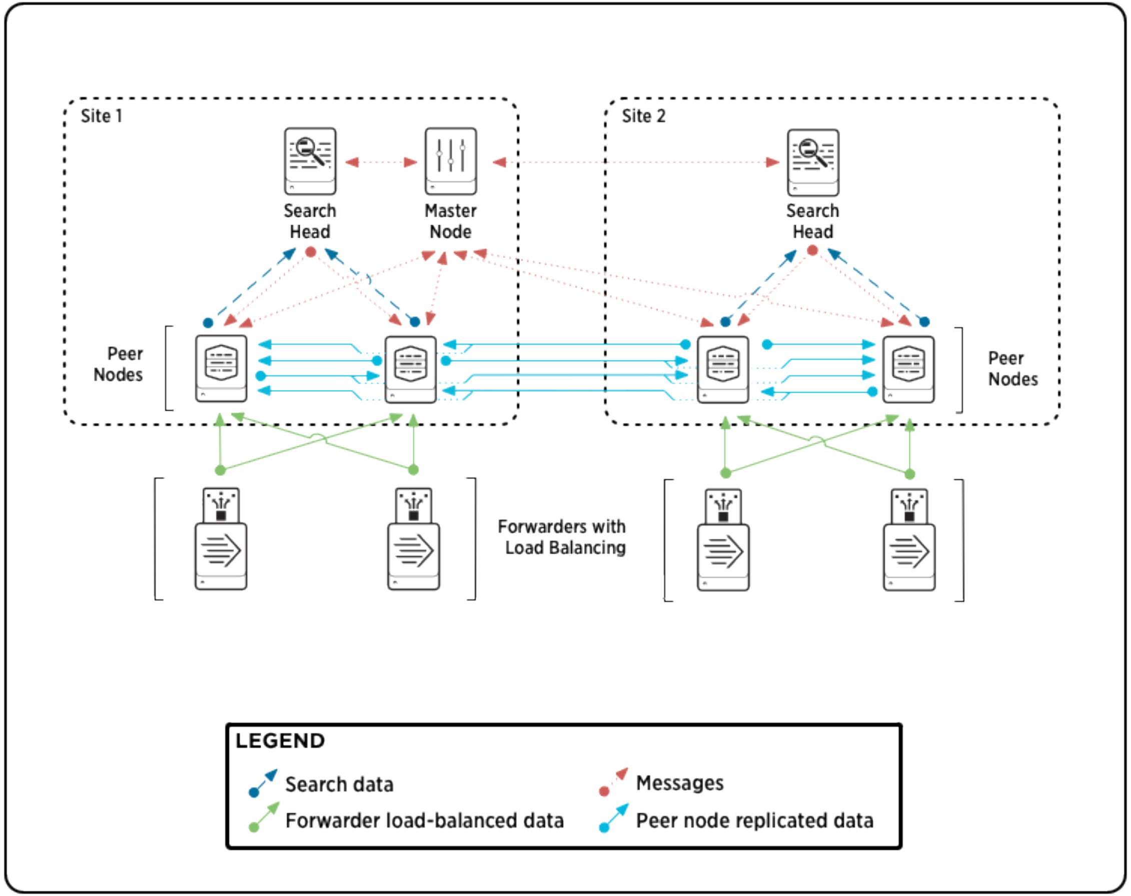
- Originating peer node streams copies of data to other clustered peers.
  – Receiving peers store those copies.
- Master determines replicated data destination.
  – Instructs peers what peers to stream data to. Does not sit on data path.
- Master manages all peer-to-peer interactions and coordinates remedial activities.
- Master keeps track of which peers have searchable data.
  – Ensures that there are always SF copies of searchable

Clustered Searching

- Search head coordinates all searches in the cluster
- SH relies on master to tell it who its peers are.
  - The master keeps track of which peers have searchable data
- Only one replicated bucket is searchable a.k.a primary
  - i.e., searches occur over primary buckets, only.
- Primary buckets may change over time
  - Peers know their status and therefore know where

Multisite Clustering

- Site awareness introduced in Splunk 6.1
- Improved disaster recovery
  - Multisite clusters provide site failover capability
- Search Affinity
  - Search heads will scope searches to local site, whenever possible
  - Ability to turn off for better thruput vs. X-Site bandwidth



Credit: Splunk Docs Team

Multi Site Cluster Architecture

Differences vs. single site

- Assign a site to each node
- Specify RF and SF on a site by site basis

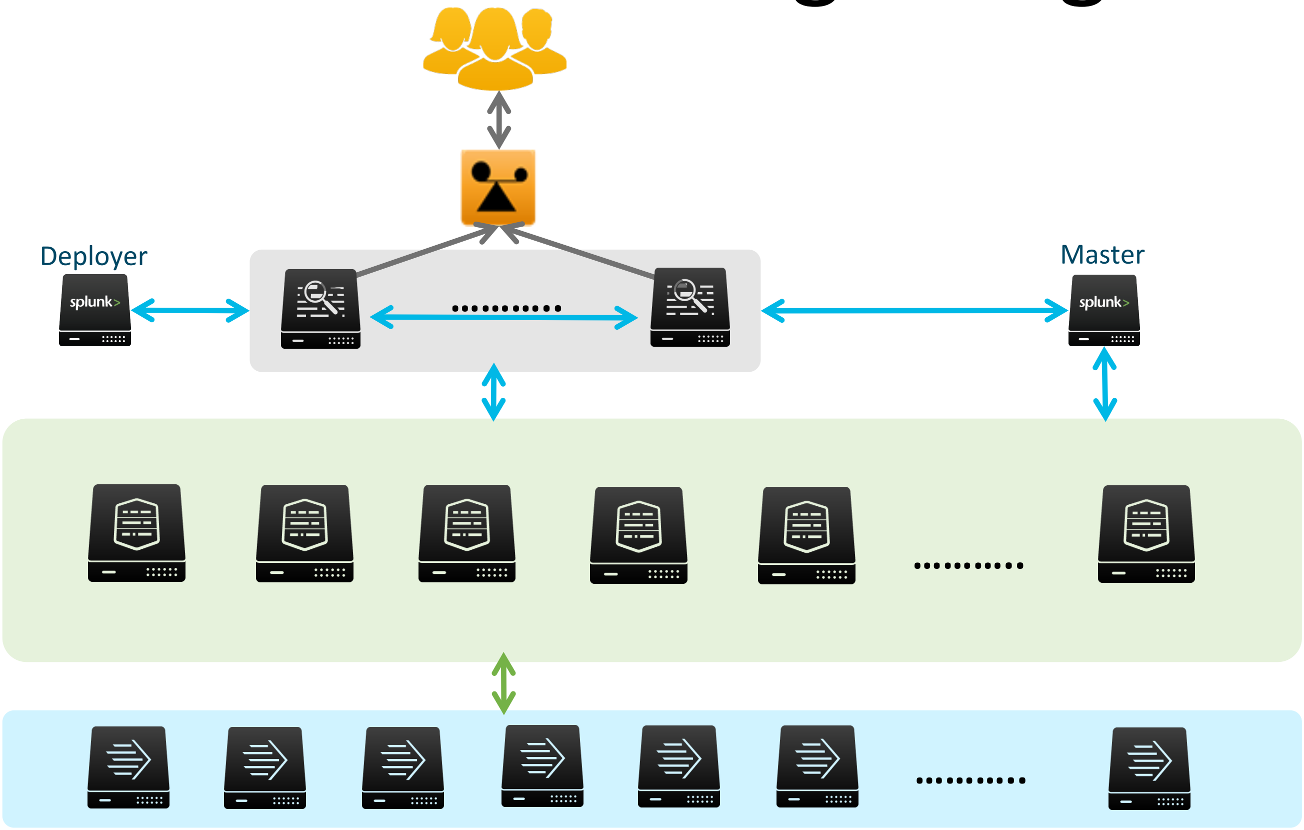
Multisite Clustering Cont’d

- Each node belongs to an assigned site, except for the Master Node, which controls all sites but it’s not **logically** a member of any
- Replication of bucket copies occurs in a site-aware manner.
  - Multisite replication determines # copies on each site. Ex. 3 site cluster:

```
site_replication_factor = origin:2, site1:1, site2:1, site3:1, total:4
```

- Bucket-fixing activities respect site boundaries when applicable
- Searches are fulfilled by local peers whenever possible (a.k.a **search affinity**)
  - Each site must have at least a full set of searchable data

Putting it Together



Search Head Clustering

Indexer Clustering

Forwarding Layer – autoLB

Top Takeways

- **DR – Process of backing-up and restoring service in case of disaster**
  - **Configuration files** – copy of $SPLUNK_HOME/etc/ folder
  - **Indexed data** – backup and restore buckets
    - Hot, warm, cold, frozen
    - Can't backup hot (without snapshots) but can safely backup warm and cold
- **HA – continuously operational system bounded by a set of tolerances**
  - **Data collection**
    - Autolb from forwarders to multiple indexers
    - Use Indexer Acknowledgement to protect in flight data
  - **Searching**
    - Search Head Clustering (SHC)
  - **Indexing**
    - Use Index Replication

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You may also like:

Architecting and Sizing Your Splunk Deployment

Go Big or Go Home

Indexer Clustering Best Practices, Tips, and Tricks

Search Head Clustering

Q & A

THANK YOU

Feedback: dritan@splunk.com

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