



Introduction and concepts

ONTAP 9

NetApp
November 15, 2022

This PDF was generated from <https://docs.netapp.com/us-en/ontap/concepts/index.html> on November 15, 2022. Always check docs.netapp.com for the latest.

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Introduction and concepts

ONTAP concepts

Concepts overview

The following concepts inform ONTAP data management software, including cluster storage, high-availability, virtualization, data protection, storage efficiency, and security. You should understand the full range of ONTAP features and benefits before you configure your storage solution.

If you need reference and configuration information about the ONTAP capabilities, refer to the following:

- High availability (HA) configuration

[High Availability](#)

- Cluster and SVM administration

[System administration](#)

- Network and LIF management

[Network management](#)

- Disks and aggregates

[Disk and aggregate management](#)

- FlexVol volumes, FlexClone technology, and storage efficiency features

[Logical storage management](#)

- SAN host provisioning

[SAN administration](#)

- NAS file access

- [NFS management](#)

- [SMB management](#)

- Disaster recovery and archiving

[Data protection](#)

ONTAP platforms

ONTAP data management software offers unified storage for applications that read and write data over block- or file-access protocols, in storage configurations that range from high-speed flash, to lower-priced spinning media, to cloud-based object storage.

ONTAP implementations run on NetApp-engineered FAS or AFF appliances, on commodity hardware (ONTAP Select), and in private, public, or hybrid clouds (NetApp Private Storage or Cloud Volumes ONTAP). Specialized implementations offer best-in-class converged infrastructure (FlexPod Datacenter) and access to third-party storage arrays (FlexArray Virtualization).

Together these implementations form the basic framework of the *NetApp data fabric*, with a common software-defined approach to data management and fast, efficient replication across platforms.



Across the NetApp data fabric, you can count on a common set of features and fast, efficient replication across platforms. You can use the same interface and the same data management tools.

About FlexPod Datacenter and FlexArray Virtualization

Although not represented in the illustration of the NetApp data fabric, FlexPod Datacenter and FlexArray Virtualization are key ONTAP implementations:

- FlexPod integrates best-in-class storage, networking, and compute components in a flexible architecture for enterprise workloads. Its converged infrastructure speeds the deployment of business-critical applications and cloud-based data center infrastructures.
- FlexArray is a front end for third-party and NetApp E-Series storage arrays, offering a uniform set of capabilities and streamlined data management. A FlexArray system looks like any other ONTAP system and offers all the same features.

Cluster storage

The current iteration of ONTAP was originally developed for NetApp's scale out *cluster* storage architecture. This is the architecture you typically find in datacenter implementations of ONTAP. Because this implementation exercises most of ONTAP's capabilities, it's a good place to start in understanding the concepts that inform ONTAP technology.

Datacenter architectures usually deploy dedicated FAS or AFF controllers running ONTAP data management software. Each controller, its storage, its network connectivity, and the instance of ONTAP running on the controller is called a *node*.

Nodes are paired for high availability (HA). Together these pairs (up to 12 nodes for SAN, up to 24 nodes for NAS) comprise the cluster. Nodes communicate with each other over a private, dedicated cluster interconnect.

Depending on the controller model, node storage consists of flash disks, capacity drives, or both. Network ports on the controller provide access to data. Physical storage and network connectivity resources are virtualized, visible to cluster administrators only, not to NAS clients or SAN hosts.

Nodes in an HA pair must use the same storage array model. Otherwise you can use any supported combination of controllers. You can scale out for capacity by adding nodes with like storage array models, or for performance by adding nodes with higher-end storage arrays.

Of course you can scale up in all the traditional ways as well, upgrading disks or controllers as needed. ONTAP's virtualized storage infrastructure makes it easy to move data nondisruptively, meaning that you can scale vertically or horizontally without downtime.



You can scale out for capacity by adding nodes with like controller models, or for performance by adding nodes with higher-end storage arrays, all while clients and hosts continue to access data.

Single-node clusters

A single-node cluster is a special implementation of a cluster running on a standalone node. You might want to deploy a single-node cluster in a branch office, for example, assuming the workloads are small enough and that storage availability is not a critical concern.

In this scenario, the single-node cluster would use SnapMirror replication to back up the site's data to your organization's primary data center. ONTAP Select, with its support for ONTAP running on commodity hardware, would be a good candidate for this type of implementation.

High-availability pairs

Cluster nodes are configured in *high-availability (HA) pairs* for fault tolerance and nondisruptive operations. If a node fails or if you need to bring a node down for routine maintenance, its partner can *take over* its storage and continue to serve data from it. The partner *gives back* storage when the node is brought back on line.

HA pairs always consist of like controller models. The controllers typically reside in the same chassis with redundant power supplies.

An internal HA interconnect allows each node to continually check whether its partner is functioning and to mirror log data for the other's nonvolatile memory. When a write request is made to a node, it is logged in NVRAM on both nodes before a response is sent back to the client or host. On failover, the surviving partner commits the failed node's uncommitted write requests to disk, ensuring data consistency.

Connections to the other controller's storage media allow each node to access the other's storage in the event of a takeover. Network path failover mechanisms ensure that clients and hosts continue to communicate with the surviving node.

To assure availability, you should keep performance capacity utilization on either node at 50% to accommodate the additional workload in the failover case. For the same reason, you may want to configure no more than 50% of the maximum number of NAS virtual network interfaces for a node.



On failover, the surviving partner commits the failed node's uncommitted write requests to disk, ensuring data consistency.

Takeover and giveback in virtualized ONTAP implementations

Storage is not shared between nodes in virtualized “shared-nothing” ONTAP implementations like Cloud Volumes ONTAP for AWS or ONTAP Select. When a node goes down, its partner continues to serve data from a synchronously mirrored copy of the node's data. It does not take over the node's storage, only its data serving function.

AutoSupport and Active IQ Digital Advisor

ONTAP offers artificial intelligence-driven system monitoring and reporting through a web portal and through a mobile app. The AutoSupport component of ONTAP sends telemetry that is analyzed by Active IQ Digital Advisor.

Active IQ enables you to optimize your data infrastructure across your global hybrid cloud by delivering actionable predictive analytics and proactive support through a cloud-based portal and mobile app. Data-driven insights and recommendations from Active IQ are available to all NetApp customers with an active SupportEdge contract (features vary by product and support tier).

Here are some things you can do with Active IQ:

- Plan upgrades. Active IQ identifies issues in your environment that can be resolved by upgrading to a newer version of ONTAP and the Upgrade Advisor component helps you plan for a successful upgrade.

- View system wellness. Your Active IQ dashboard reports any issues with wellness and helps you correct those issues. Monitor system capacity to make sure you never run out of storage space.
- Manage performance. Active IQ shows system performance over a longer period than you can see in System Manager. Identify configuration and system issues that are impacting your performance.
- Maximize efficiency. View storage efficiency metrics and identify ways to store more data in less space.
- View inventory and configuration. Active IQ displays complete inventory and software and hardware configuration information. See when service contracts are expiring to ensure you remain covered.

Related information

[NetApp Documentation: Active IQ Digital Advisor](#)

[Launch Active IQ](#)

[SupportEdge Services](#)

Network architecture

Network architecture overview

The network architecture for an ONTAP datacenter implementation typically consists of a cluster interconnect, a management network for cluster administration, and a data network. NICs (network interface cards) provide physical ports for Ethernet connections. HBAs (host bus adapters) provide physical ports for FC connections.



The network architecture for an ONTAP datacenter implementation typically consists of a cluster interconnect, a management network for cluster administration, and a data network.

Logical ports

In addition to the physical ports provided on each node, you can use *logical ports* to manage network traffic. Logical ports are interface groups or VLANs.

Interface groups

Interface groups combine multiple physical ports into a single logical “trunk port.” You might want to create an interface group consisting of ports from NICs in different PCI slots to ensure against a slot failure bringing down business-critical traffic.

An interface group can be single-mode, multimode, or dynamic multimode. Each mode offers differing levels of fault tolerance. You can use either type of multimode interface group to load-balance network traffic.

VLANs

VLANs separate traffic from a network port (which could be an interface group) into logical segments defined on a switch port basis, rather than on physical boundaries. The *end-stations* belonging to a VLAN are related by function or application.

You might group end-stations by department, such as Engineering and Marketing, or by project, such as release1 and release2. Because physical proximity of the end-stations is irrelevant in a VLAN, the end-stations can be geographically remote.



You can use VLANs to segregate traffic by department.

Support for industry-standard network technologies

ONTAP supports all major industry-standard network technologies. Key technologies

include IPspaces, DNS load balancing, and SNMP traps.

Broadcast domains, failover groups, and subnets are described in [NAS path failover](#).

IPspaces

You can use an *IPspace* to create a distinct IP address space for each virtual data server in a cluster. Doing so enables clients in administratively separate network domains to access cluster data while using overlapping IP addresses from the same IP address subnet range.

A service provider, for example, could configure different IPspaces for tenants using the same IP addresses to access a cluster.

DNS load balancing

You can use *DNS load balancing* to distribute user network traffic across available ports. A DNS server dynamically selects a network interface for traffic based on the number of clients that are mounted on the interface.

SNMP traps

You can use *SNMP traps* to check periodically for operational thresholds or failures. SNMP traps capture system monitoring information sent asynchronously from an SNMP agent to an SNMP manager.

FIPS compliance

ONTAP is compliant with the Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) 140-2 for all SSL connections. You can turn on and off SSL FIPS mode, set SSL protocols globally, and turn off any weak ciphers such as RC4.

RDMA overview

If you have latency sensitive or high-bandwidth workloads, you may want to take advantage of ONTAP's Read Direct Memory Access (RDMA) offerings. RDMA allows data to be copied directly between storage system memory and host system memory, circumventing CPU interruptions and overhead.

Beginning with ONTAP 9.10.1, you can configure [NFS over RDMA](#) to enable the use of NVIDIA GPUDirect Storage for GPU-accelerated workloads on hosts with supported NVIDIA GPUs.

ONTAP 9.10.1 also introduces RDMA cluster interconnect for ONTAP users with an A400 or ASA400 storage system with Pensando cluster NICs. RDMA cluster interconnect reduces latency, decreases failover times, and accelerates communication between nodes in a cluster. Given the appropriate storage system set up, no additional configuration is needed.

Client protocols

ONTAP supports all major industry-standard client protocols: NFS, SMB, FC, FCoE, iSCSI, NVMe/FC, and S3.

NFS

NFS is the traditional file access protocol for UNIX and LINUX systems. Clients can access files in ONTAP volumes using the NFSv3, NFSv4, NFSv4.1, and pNFS protocols. You can control file access using UNIX-style permissions, NTFS-style permissions, or a mix of both.

Clients can access the same files using both NFS and SMB protocols.

SMB

SMB is the traditional file access protocol for Windows systems. Clients can access files in ONTAP volumes using the SMB 2.0, SMB 2.1, SMB 3.0, and SMB 3.1.1 protocols. Just like with NFS, a mix of permission styles are supported.

SMB 1.0 is available but disabled by default in ONTAP 9.3 and later releases.

FC

Fibre Channel is the original networked block protocol. Instead of files, a block protocol presents an entire virtual disk to a client. The traditional FC protocol uses a dedicated FC network with specialized FC switches, and requires the client computer to have FC network interfaces.

A LUN represents the virtual disk, and one or more LUNs are stored in an ONTAP volume. The same LUN can be accessed through the FC, FCoE, and iSCSI protocols, but multiple clients can access the same LUN only if they are part of a cluster that prevents write collisions.

FCoE

FCoE is basically the same protocol as FC, but uses a datacenter-grade Ethernet network in place of the traditional FC transport. The client still requires an FCoE-specific network interface.

iSCSI

iSCSI is a block protocol that can run on standard Ethernet networks. Most client operating systems offer a software initiator that runs over a standard Ethernet port. iSCSI is a good choice when you need a block protocol for a particular application, but do not have dedicated FC networking available.

NVMe/FC

The newest block protocol, NVMe/FC, is specifically designed to work with flash-based storage. It offers scalable sessions, a significant reduction in latency, and an increase in parallelism, making it well suited to low-latency and high-throughput applications such as in-memory databases and analytics.

Unlike FC and iSCSI, NVMe does not use LUNs. Instead it uses namespaces, which are stored in an ONTAP volume. NVMe namespaces can be accessed only through the NVMe protocol.

S3

Beginning with ONTAP 9.8, you can enable an ONTAP Simple Storage Service (S3) server in an ONTAP cluster, allowing you to serve data in object storage using S3 buckets.

ONTAP supports two on-premises use case scenarios for serving S3 object storage:

- FabricPool tier to a bucket on local cluster (tier to a local bucket) or remote cluster (cloud tier).

- S3 client app access to a bucket on the local cluster or a remote cluster.



ONTAP S3 is appropriate if you want S3 capabilities on existing clusters without additional hardware and management. For deployments larger than 300TB, NetApp StorageGRID software continues to be the NetApp flagship solution for object storage. Learn about [StorageGRID](#).

Disks and aggregates

Local tiers (aggregates) and RAID groups

Modern RAID technologies protect against disk failure by rebuilding a failed disk's data on a spare disk. The system compares index information on a "parity disk" with data on the remaining healthy disks to reconstruct the missing data, all without downtime or a significant performance cost.

A local tier (aggregate) consists of one or more *RAID groups*. The *RAID type* of the local tier determines the number of parity disks in the RAID group and the number of simultaneous disk failures that the RAID configuration protects against.

The default RAID type, RAID-DP (RAID-double parity), requires two parity disks per RAID group and protects against data loss in the event of two disks failing at the same time. For RAID-DP, the recommended RAID group size is between 12 and 20 HDDs and between 20 and 28 SSDs.

You can spread out the overhead cost of parity disks by creating RAID groups at the higher end of the sizing recommendation. This is especially the case for SSDs, which are much more reliable than capacity drives. For local tiers that use HDDs, you should balance the need to maximize disk storage against countervailing factors like the longer rebuild time required for larger RAID groups.

Root-data partitioning

Every node must have a root aggregate for storage system configuration files. The root aggregate has the RAID type of the data aggregate.

System Manager does not support root-data or root-data-data partitioning.

A root aggregate of type RAID-DP typically consists of one data disk and two parity disks. That's a significant "parity tax" to pay for storage system files, when the system is already reserving two disks as parity disks for each RAID group in the aggregate.

Root-data partitioning reduces the parity tax by apportioning the root aggregate across disk partitions, reserving one small partition on each disk as the root partition and one large partition for data.



Root-data partitioning creates one small partition on each disk as the root partition and one large partition on each disk for data.

As the illustration suggests, the more disks used to store the root aggregate, the smaller the root partition. That's also the case for a form of root-data partitioning called *root-data-data partitioning*, which creates one small partition as the root partition and two larger, equally sized partitions for data.



Root-data-data partitioning creates one small partition as the root partition and two larger, equally sized partitions for data.

Both types of root-data partitioning are part of the ONTAP *Advanced Drive Partitioning (ADP)* feature. Both are configured at the factory: root-data partitioning for entry-level FAS2xxx, FAS9000, FAS8200, FAS80xx and AFF systems, root-data-data partitioning for AFF systems only.

Drives partitioned and used for the root aggregate

The drives that are partitioned for use in the root aggregate depend on the system configuration. Knowing how many drives are used for the root aggregate helps you to determine how much of the drives' capacity is reserved for the root partition, and how much is available for use in a data aggregate.

The root-data partitioning capability is supported for entry-level platforms, All Flash FAS platforms, and FAS platforms with only SSDs attached.

For entry-level platforms, only the internal drives are partitioned.

For All Flash FAS platforms and FAS platforms with only SSDs attached, all drives that are attached to the controller when the system is initialized are partitioned, up to a limit of 24 per node. Drives that are added after system configuration are not partitioned.

Volumes, qtrees, files, and LUNs

ONTAP serves data to clients and hosts from logical containers called *FlexVol volumes*. Because these volumes are only loosely coupled with their containing aggregate, they offer greater flexibility in managing data than traditional volumes.

You can assign multiple FlexVol volumes to an aggregate, each dedicated to a different application or service. You can expand and contract a FlexVol volume, move a FlexVol volume, and make efficient copies of a FlexVol volume. You can use *qtrees* to partition a FlexVol volume into more manageable units, and *quotas* to limit volume resource usage.

Volumes contain file systems in a NAS environment and LUNs in a SAN environment. A LUN (logical unit number) is an identifier for a device called a *logical unit* addressed by a SAN protocol.

LUNs are the basic unit of storage in a SAN configuration. The Windows host sees LUNs on your storage system as virtual disks. You can nondisruptively move LUNs to different volumes as needed.

In addition to data volumes, there are a few special volumes you need to know about:

- A *node root volume* (typically “vol0”) contains node configuration information and logs.
- An *SVM root volume* serves as the entry point to the namespace provided by the SVM and contains namespace directory information.
- *System volumes* contain special metadata such as service audit logs.

You cannot use these volumes to store data.



Volumes contain files in a NAS environment and LUNs in a SAN environment.

FlexGroup volumes

In some enterprises a single namespace may require petabytes of storage, far exceeding even a FlexVol volume's 100TB capacity.

A *FlexGroup volume* supports up to 400 billion files with 200 constituent member volumes that work collaboratively to dynamically balance load and space allocation evenly across all members.

There is no required maintenance or management overhead with a FlexGroup volume. You simply create the FlexGroup volume and share it with your NAS clients. ONTAP does the rest.

Storage virtualization

Storage virtualization overview

You use *storage virtual machines (SVMs)* to serve data to clients and hosts. Like a virtual machine running on a hypervisor, an SVM is a logical entity that abstracts physical resources. Data accessed through the SVM is not bound to a location in storage. Network access to the SVM is not bound to a physical port.



SVMs were formerly called "vservers." You will still see that term in the ONTAP command line interface (CLI).

An SVM serves data to clients and hosts from one or more volumes, through one or more network *logical interfaces (LIFs)*. Volumes can be assigned to any data aggregate in the cluster. LIFs can be hosted by any physical or logical port. Both volumes and LIFs can be moved without disrupting data service, whether you are performing hardware upgrades, adding nodes, balancing performance, or optimizing capacity across aggregates.

The same SVM can have a LIF for NAS traffic and a LIF for SAN traffic. Clients and hosts need only the

address of the LIF (IP address for NFS, SMB, or iSCSI; WWPN for FC) to access the SVM. LIFs keep their addresses as they move. Ports can host multiple LIFs. Each SVM has its own security, administration, and namespace.

In addition to data SVMs, ONTAP deploys special SVMs for administration:

- An *admin SVM* is created when the cluster is set up.
- A *node SVM* is created when a node joins a new or existing cluster.
- A *system SVM* is automatically created for cluster-level communications in an IPspace.

You cannot use these SVMs to serve data. There are also special LIFs for traffic within and between clusters, and for cluster and node management.



Why ONTAP is like middleware

The logical objects ONTAP uses for storage management tasks serve the familiar goals of a well-designed middleware package: shielding the administrator from low-level implementation details and insulating the configuration from changes in physical characteristics like nodes and ports. The basic idea is that the administrator should be able to move volumes and LIFs easily, reconfiguring a few fields rather than the entire storage infrastructure.

SVM use cases

Service providers use SVMs in secure multitenancy arrangements to isolate each tenant's data, to provide each tenant with its own authentication and administration, and to simplify chargeback. You can assign multiple LIFs to the same SVM to satisfy different customer needs, and you can use QoS to protect against tenant workloads "bullying" the workloads of other tenants.

Administrators use SVMs for similar purposes in the enterprise. You might want to segregate data from different departments, or keep storage volumes accessed by hosts in one SVM and user share volumes in another. Some administrators put iSCSI/FC LUNs and NFS datastores in one SVM and SMB shares in

another.



Service providers use SVMs in multitenant environments to isolate tenant data and simplify chargeback.

Cluster and SVM administration

A *cluster administrator* accesses the admin SVM for the cluster. The admin SVM and a cluster administrator with the reserved name `admin` are automatically created when the cluster is set up.

A cluster administrator with the default `admin` role can administer the entire cluster and its resources. The cluster administrator can create additional cluster administrators with different roles as needed.

An *SVM administrator* accesses a data SVM. The cluster administrator creates data SVMs and SVM administrators as needed.

SVM administrators are assigned the `vsadmin` role by default. The cluster administrator can assign different roles to SVM administrators as needed.

Role-Based Access Control (RBAC)

The *role* assigned to an administrator determines the commands to which the administrator has access. You assign the role when you create the account for the administrator. You can assign a different role or define custom roles as needed.

Namespaces and junction points

A NAS *namespace* is a logical grouping of volumes joined together at *junction points* to create a single file system hierarchy. A client with sufficient permissions can access files in the namespace without specifying the location of the files in storage. Junctioned volumes can reside anywhere in the cluster.

Rather than mounting every volume containing a file of interest, NAS clients mount an NFS *export* or access an SMB *share*. The export or share represents the entire namespace or an intermediate location within the namespace. The client accesses only the volumes mounted below its access point.

You can add volumes to the namespace as needed. You can create junction points directly below a parent volume junction or on a directory within a volume. A path to a volume junction for a volume named “vol3” might be /vol1/vol2/vol3, or /vol1/dir2/vol3, or even /dir1/dir2/vol3. The path is called the *junction path*.

Every SVM has a unique namespace. The SVM root volume is the entry point to the namespace hierarchy.



To ensure that data remains available in the event of a node outage or failover, you should create a *load-sharing mirror* copy for the SVM root volume.



A namespace is a logical grouping of volumes joined together at junction points to create a single file system hierarchy.

Example

The following example creates a volume named “home4” located on SVM vs1 that has a junction path /eng/home:

```
cluster1::> volume create -vserver vs1 -volume home4 -aggregate aggr1  
-size 1g -junction-path /eng/home  
[Job 1642] Job succeeded: Successful
```

Path failover

Path failover overview

There are important differences in how ONTAP manages path failover in NAS and SAN topologies. A NAS LIF automatically migrates to a different network port after a link failure. A SAN LIF does not migrate (unless you move it manually after the failure). Instead, multipathing technology on the host diverts traffic to a different LIF—on the same SVM, but accessing a different network port.

NAS path failover

A NAS LIF automatically migrates to a surviving network port after a link failure on its current port. The port to which the LIF migrates must be a member of the *failover group* for the LIF. The *failover group policy* narrows the failover targets for a data LIF to ports on the node that owns the data and its HA partner.

For administrative convenience, ONTAP creates a failover group for each *broadcast domain* in the network architecture. Broadcast domains group ports that belong to the same layer 2 network. If you are using VLANs, for example, to segregate traffic by department (Engineering, Marketing, Finance, and so on), each VLAN defines a separate broadcast domain. The failover group associated with the broadcast domain is automatically updated each time you add or remove a broadcast domain port.

It is almost always a good idea to use a broadcast domain to define a failover group to ensure that the failover group remains current. Occasionally, however, you may want to define a failover group that is not associated with a broadcast domain. For example, you may want LIFs to fail over only to ports in a subset of the ports defined in the broadcast domain.



A NAS LIF automatically migrates to a surviving network port after a link failure on its current port.

Subnets

A *subnet* reserves a block of IP addresses in a broadcast domain. These addresses belong to the same layer 3 network and are allocated to ports in the broadcast domain when you create a LIF. It is usually easier and less error-prone to specify a subnet name when you define a LIF address than it is to specify an IP address and network mask.

SAN path failover

A SAN host uses ALUA (Asymmetric Logical Unit Access) and MPIO (multipath I/O) to reroute traffic to a surviving LIF after a link failure. Predefined paths determine the possible routes to the LUN served by the SVM.

In a SAN environment, hosts are regarded as *initiators* of requests to LUN *targets*. MPIO enables multiple paths from initiators to targets. ALUA identifies the most direct paths, called *optimized paths*.

You typically configure multiple optimized paths to LIFs on the LUN's owning node, and multiple non-optimized paths to LIFs on its HA partner. If one port fails on the owning node, the host routes traffic to the surviving ports. If all the ports fail, the host routes traffic over the non-optimized paths.

ONTAP Selective LUN Map (SLM) limits the number of paths from the host to a LUN by default. A newly created LUN is accessible only through paths to the node that owns the LUN or its HA partner. You can also limit access to a LUN by configuring LIFs in a *port set* for the initiator.



A SAN host uses multipathing technology to reroute traffic to a surviving LIF after a link failure.

Moving volumes in SAN environments

By default, ONTAP *Selective LUN Map (SLM)* limits the number of paths to a LUN from a SAN host. A newly created LUN is accessible only through paths to the node that owns the LUN or its HA partner, the *reporting nodes* for the LUN.

This means that when you move a volume to a node on another HA pair, you need to add reporting nodes for the destination HA pair to the LUN mapping. You can then specify the new paths in your MPIO setup. After the volume move is complete, you can delete the reporting nodes for the source HA pair from the mapping.

Load balancing

Performance of workloads begins to be affected by latency when the amount of work on a node exceeds the available resources. You can manage an overloaded node by increasing the available resources (upgrading disks or CPU), or by reducing load (moving volumes or LUNs to different nodes as needed).

You can also use ONTAP *storage quality of service (QoS)* to guarantee that performance of critical workloads is not degraded by competing workloads:

- You can set a QoS throughput *ceiling* on a competing workload to limit its impact on system resources (QoS Max).
- You can set a QoS throughput *floor* for a critical workload, ensuring that it meets minimum throughput targets regardless of demand by competing workloads (QoS Min).
- You can set a QoS ceiling and floor for the same workload.

Throughput ceilings

A throughput ceiling limits throughput for a workload to a maximum number of IOPS or MB/s. In the figure

below, the throughput ceiling for workload 2 ensures that it does not “bully” workloads 1 and 3.

A *policy group* defines the throughput ceiling for one or more workloads. A workload represents the I/O operations for a *storage object*: a volume, file, or LUN, or all the volumes, files, or LUNs in an SVM. You can specify the ceiling when you create the policy group, or you can wait until after you monitor workloads to specify it.



Throughput to workloads might exceed the specified ceiling by up to 10 percent, especially if a workload experiences rapid changes in throughput. The ceiling might be exceeded by up to 50% to handle bursts.



The throughput ceiling for workload 2 ensures that it does not “bully” workloads 1 and 3.

Throughput floors

A throughput floor guarantees that throughput for a workload does not fall below a minimum number of IOPS. In the figure below, the throughput floors for workload 1 and workload 3 ensure that they meet minimum throughput targets, regardless of demand by workload 2.



As the examples suggest, a throughput ceiling throttles throughput directly. A throughput floor throttles throughput indirectly, by giving priority to the workloads for which the floor has been set.

A workload represents the I/O operations for a volume, LUN, or, beginning with ONTAP 9.3, file. A policy group that defines a throughput floor cannot be applied to an SVM. You can specify the floor when you create the policy group, or you can wait until after you monitor workloads to specify it.



Throughput to a workload might fall below the specified floor if there is insufficient performance capacity (headroom) on the node or aggregate, or during critical operations like `volume move trigger-cutover`. Even when sufficient capacity is available and critical operations are not taking place, throughput to a workload might fall below the specified floor by up to 5 percent.



The throughput floors for workload 1 and workload 3 ensure that they meet minimum throughput targets, regardless of demand by workload 2.

Adaptive QoS

Ordinarily, the value of the policy group you assign to a storage object is fixed. You need to change the value manually when the size of the storage object changes. An increase in the amount of space used on a volume, for example, usually requires a corresponding increase in the throughput ceiling specified for the volume.

Adaptive QoS automatically scales the policy group value to workload size, maintaining the ratio of IOPS to TBs|GBs as the size of the workload changes. That's a significant advantage when you are managing hundreds or thousands of workloads in a large deployment.

You typically use adaptive QoS to adjust throughput ceilings, but you can also use it to manage throughput floors (when workload size increases). Workload size is expressed as either the allocated space for the storage object or the space used by the storage object.



Used space is available for throughput floors in ONTAP 9.5 and later. It is not supported for throughput floors in ONTAP 9.4 and earlier.

- An *allocated space* policy maintains the IOPS/TB|GB ratio according to the nominal size of the storage object. If the ratio is 100 IOPS/GB, a 150 GB volume will have a throughput ceiling of 15,000 IOPS for as long as the volume remains that size. If the volume is resized to 300 GB, adaptive QoS adjusts the throughput ceiling to 30,000 IOPS.
- A *used space* policy (the default) maintains the IOPS/TB|GB ratio according to the amount of actual data stored before storage efficiencies. If the ratio is 100 IOPS/GB, a 150 GB volume that has 100 GB of data stored would have a throughput ceiling of 10,000 IOPS. As the amount of used space changes, adaptive QoS adjusts the throughput ceiling according to the ratio.

Replication

Snapshot copies

Traditionally, ONTAP replication technologies served the need for disaster recovery (DR) and data archiving. With the advent of cloud services, ONTAP replication has been

adapted to data transfer between endpoints in the NetApp data fabric. The foundation for all these uses is ONTAP Snapshot technology.

A *Snapshot copy* is a read-only, point-in-time image of a volume. The image consumes minimal storage space and incurs negligible performance overhead because it records only changes to files since the last Snapshot copy was made.

Snapshot copies owe their efficiency to ONTAP's core storage virtualization technology, its *Write Anywhere File Layout (WAFL)*. Like a database, WAFL uses metadata to point to actual data blocks on disk. But, unlike a database, WAFL does not overwrite existing blocks. It writes updated data to a new block and changes the metadata.

It's because ONTAP references metadata when it creates a Snapshot copy, rather than copying data blocks, that Snapshot copies are so efficient. Doing so eliminates the "seek time" that other systems incur in locating the blocks to copy, as well as the cost of making the copy itself.

You can use a Snapshot copy to recover individual files or LUNs, or to restore the entire contents of a volume. ONTAP compares pointer information in the Snapshot copy with data on disk to reconstruct the missing or damaged object, without downtime or a significant performance cost.

A *Snapshot policy* defines how the system creates Snapshot copies of volumes. The policy specifies when to create the Snapshot copies, how many copies to retain, how to name them, and how to label them for replication. For example, a system might create one Snapshot copy every day at 12:10 a.m., retain the two most recent copies, name them "daily" (appended with a timestamp), and label them "daily" for replication.



A SnapShot copy records only changes to the active file system since the last SnapShot copy.

SnapMirror disaster recovery and data transfer

SnapMirror is disaster recovery technology, designed for failover from primary storage to secondary storage at a geographically remote site. As its name implies, SnapMirror creates a replica, or *mirror*, of your working data in secondary storage from which you can continue to serve data in the event of a catastrophe at the primary site.

Data is mirrored at the volume level. The relationship between the source volume in primary storage and the destination volume in secondary storage is called a *data protection relationship*. The clusters in which the volumes reside and the SVMs that serve data from the volumes must be *peered*. A peer relationship enables clusters and SVMs to exchange data securely.



You can also create a data protection relationship between SVMs. In this type of relationship, all or part of the SVM's configuration, from NFS exports and SMB shares to RBAC, is replicated, as well as the data in the volumes the SVM owns.

Beginning with ONTAP 9.10.1, you can create data protection relationships between S3 buckets using S3 SnapMirror. Destination buckets can be on local or remote ONTAP systems, or on non-ONTAP systems such as StorageGRID and AWS.

The first time you invoke SnapMirror, it performs a *baseline transfer* from the source volume to the destination volume. The baseline transfer typically involves the following steps:

- Make a Snapshot copy of the source volume.
- Transfer the Snapshot copy and all the data blocks it references to the destination volume.
- Transfer the remaining, less recent Snapshot copies on the source volume to the destination volume for use in case the “active” mirror is corrupted.

Once a baseline transfer is complete, SnapMirror transfers only new Snapshot copies to the mirror. Updates are asynchronous, following the schedule you configure. Retention mirrors the Snapshot policy on the source. You can activate the destination volume with minimal disruption in case of a disaster at the primary site, and reactivate the source volume when service is restored.

Because SnapMirror transfers only Snapshot copies after the baseline is created, replication is fast and nondisruptive. As the failover use case implies, the controllers on the secondary system should be equivalent or nearly equivalent to the controllers on the primary system to serve data efficiently from mirrored storage.



A SnapMirror data protection relationship mirrors the Snapshot copies available on the source volume.

Using SnapMirror for data transfer

You can also use SnapMirror to replicate data between endpoints in the NetApp data fabric. You can choose between one-time replication or recurring replication when you create the SnapMirror policy.

SnapMirror Cloud backups to object storage

SnapMirror Cloud is a backup and recovery technology designed for ONTAP users who want to transition their data protection workflows to the cloud. Organizations moving away from legacy backup-to-tape architectures can use object storage as an alternative repository for long-term data retention and archiving. SnapMirror Cloud provides ONTAP-to-object storage replication as part of an incremental forever backup strategy.

SnapMirror Cloud was introduced in ONTAP 9.8 as an extension to the family of SnapMirror replication technologies. While SnapMirror is frequently used for ONTAP-to-ONTAP backups, SnapMirror Cloud uses the same replication engine to transfer Snapshot copies for ONTAP to S3-compliant object storage backups.

Targeted for backup use cases, SnapMirror Cloud supports both long-term retention and archives workflows. As with SnapMirror, the initial SnapMirror Cloud backup performs a baseline transfer of a volume. For subsequent backups, SnapMirror Cloud generates a snapshot copy of the source volume and transfers the snapshot copy with only the changed data blocks to an object storage target.

SnapMirror Cloud relationships can be configured between ONTAP systems and select on-premises and public cloud object storage targets - including AWS S3, Google Cloud Storage Platform, and Microsoft Azure Blob Storage. Additional on-premises object storage targets include StoragGRID and ONTAP S3.

SnapMirror Cloud replication is a licensed ONTAP feature and requires an approved application to orchestrate data protection workflows. Several orchestration options are available for managing SnapMirror Cloud backups:

- Multiple 3rd party backup partners who offer support for SnapMirror Cloud replication. Participating vendors are available on the [NetApp blog](#).
- BlueXP and Cloud Backup for a NetApp-native solution for ONTAP environments
- APIs for developing custom software for data protection workflows or leveraging automation tools



SnapVault archiving

The SnapMirror license is used to support both SnapVault relationships for backup, and SnapMirror relationships for disaster recovery. SnapVault licenses were deprecated, and SnapMirror licenses can now be used to configure vault, mirror, and mirror-and-vault relationships. SnapMirror replication is used for ONTAP-to-ONTAP replication of Snapshot copies, supporting both backup and disaster recovery use cases.

SnapVault is archiving technology, designed for disk-to-disk Snapshot copy replication for standards compliance and other governance-related purposes. In contrast to a SnapMirror relationship, in which the destination usually contains only the Snapshot copies currently in the source volume, a SnapVault destination typically retains point-in-time Snapshot copies created over a much longer period.

You might want to keep monthly Snapshot copies of your data over a 20-year span, for example, to comply with government accounting regulations for your business. Since there is no requirement to serve data from

Updates are asynchronous, following the schedule you configure. The rules you define in the policy for the relationship identify which new Snapshot copies to include in updates and how many copies to retain. The labels defined in the policy (“monthly,” for example) must match one or more labels defined in the Snapshot policy on the source. Otherwise, replication fails.



SnapMirror and SnapVault share the same command infrastructure. You specify which method you want to use when you create a policy. Both methods require peered clusters and peered SVMs.



A SnapVault data protection relationship typically retains point-in-time Snapshot copies created over a longer period than the Snapshot copies on the source volume.

Cloud backup and support for traditional backups

In addition to SnapMirror and SnapVault data protection relationships, which were previously disk-to-disk only, there are now several backup solutions that offer a less expensive alternative for long-term data retention.

Numerous third-party data protection applications offer traditional backup for ONTAP-managed data. Veeam, Veritas, and Commvault, among others, all offer integrated backup for ONTAP systems.

Beginning with ONTAP 9.8, SnapMirror Cloud provides asynchronous replication of Snapshot copies from ONTAP instances to object storage endpoints. SnapMirror Cloud replication requires a licensed application for orchestration and management of data protection workflows. SnapMirror Cloud relationships are supported from ONTAP systems to select on-premises and public cloud object storage targets — including AWS S3, Google Cloud Storage Platform, or Microsoft Azure Blob Storage — which provides enhanced efficiency with vendor backup software. Contact your NetApp representative for a list of supported certified applications and object storage vendors.

If you are interested in cloud-native data protection, BlueXP can be used to configure SnapMirror or SnapVault relationships between on-premises volumes and Cloud Volumes ONTAP instances in the public cloud.

BlueXP also provides backups of Cloud Volumes ONTAP instances using a Software as a Service (SaaS) model. Users can back up their Cloud Volumes ONTAP instances to S3 and S3-compliant public cloud object storage using Cloud Backup found on NetApp Cloud Central.

[Cloud Volumes ONTAP and BlueXP documentation resources](#)

[NetApp Cloud Central](#)

MetroCluster continuous availability

MetroCluster configurations protect data by implementing two physically separate, mirrored clusters. Each cluster synchronously replicates the data and SVM configuration of the other. In the event of a disaster at one site, an administrator can activate the mirrored SVM and begin serving data from the surviving site.

- *Fabric-attached MetroCluster* configurations support metropolitan-wide clusters.
- *Stretch MetroCluster* configurations support campus-wide clusters.

Clusters must be peered in either case.

MetroCluster uses an ONTAP feature called *SyncMirror* to synchronously mirror aggregate data for each cluster in copies, or *plexes*, in the other cluster's storage. If a switchover occurs, the remote plex on the surviving cluster comes online and the secondary SVM begins serving data.



When a MetroCluster switchover occurs, the remote plex on the surviving cluster comes online and the secondary SVM begins serving data.

Using SyncMirror in non-MetroCluster implementations

You can optionally use SyncMirror in a non-MetroCluster implementation to protect against data loss if more disks fail than the RAID type protects against, or if there is a loss of connectivity to RAID group disks. The feature is available for HA pairs only.

Aggregate data is mirrored in plexes stored on different disk shelves. If one of the shelves becomes unavailable, the unaffected plex continues to serve data while you fix the cause of the failure.

Keep in mind that an aggregate mirrored using SyncMirror requires twice as much storage as an unmirrored aggregate. Each plex requires as many disks as the plex it mirrors. You would need 2,880 GB of disk space, for example, to mirror a 1,440 GB aggregate, 1,440 GB for each plex.



SyncMirror is also available for FlexArray Virtualization implementations.

Storage efficiency

Thin provisioning

ONTAP offers a wide range of storage efficiency technologies in addition to Snapshot copies. Key technologies include thin provisioning, deduplication, compression, and FlexClone volumes, files, and LUNs. Like Snapshot copies, all are built on ONTAP's Write Anywhere File Layout (WAFL).

A *thin-provisioned* volume or LUN is one for which storage is not reserved in advance. Instead, storage is allocated dynamically, as it is needed. Free space is released back to the storage system when data in the volume or LUN is deleted.

Suppose that your organization needs to supply 5,000 users with storage for home directories. You estimate that the largest home directories will consume 1 GB of space.

In this situation, you could purchase 5 TB of physical storage. For each volume that stores a home directory, you would reserve enough space to satisfy the needs of the largest consumers.

As a practical matter, however, you also know that home directory capacity requirements vary greatly across your community. For every large user of storage, there are ten who consume little or no space.

Thin provisioning allows you to satisfy the needs of the large storage consumers without having to purchase storage you might never use. Since storage space is not allocated until it is consumed, you can "overcommit" an aggregate of 2 TB by nominally assigning a size of 1 GB to each of the 5,000 volumes the aggregate contains.

As long as you are correct that there is a 10:1 ratio of light to heavy users, and as long as you take an active role in monitoring free space on the aggregate, you can be confident that volume writes won't fail due to lack of space.

Deduplication

Deduplication reduces the amount of physical storage required for a volume (or all the volumes in an AFF aggregate) by discarding duplicate blocks and replacing them with references to a single shared block. Reads of deduplicated data typically incur no performance charge. Writes incur a negligible charge except on overloaded nodes.

As data is written during normal use, WAFL uses a batch process to create a catalog of *block signatures*. After deduplication starts, ONTAP compares the signatures in the catalog to identify duplicate blocks. If a match exists, a byte-by-byte comparison is done to verify that the candidate blocks have not changed since the catalog was created. Only if all the bytes match is the duplicate block discarded and its disk space reclaimed.



Deduplication reduces the amount of physical storage required for a volume by discarding duplicate data blocks.

Compression

Compression reduces the amount of physical storage required for a volume by combining data blocks in *compression groups*, each of which is stored as a single block. Reads of compressed data are faster than in traditional compression methods because ONTAP decompresses only the compression groups that contain the requested data, not an entire file or LUN.

You can perform inline or postprocess compression, separately or in combination:

- *Inline compression* compresses data in memory before it is written to disk, significantly reducing the amount of write I/O to a volume, but potentially degrading write performance. Performance-intensive operations are deferred until the next postprocess compression operation, if any.
- *Postprocess compression* compresses data after it is written to disk, on the same schedule as deduplication.

Inline data compaction Small files or I/O padded with zeros are stored in a 4 KB block whether or not they require 4 KB of physical storage. *Inline data compaction* combines data chunks that would ordinarily consume multiple 4 KB blocks into a single 4 KB block on disk. Compaction takes place while data is still in memory, so it is best suited to faster controllers.

FlexClone volumes, files, and LUNs

FlexClone technology references Snapshot metadata to create writable, point-in-time copies of a volume. Copies share data blocks with their parents, consuming no storage except what is required for metadata until changes are written to the copy. FlexClone files and FlexClone LUNs use identical technology, except that a backing Snapshot copy is not required.

Where traditional copies can take minutes or even hours to create, FlexClone software lets you copy even the largest datasets almost instantaneously. That makes it ideal for situations in which you need multiple copies of identical datasets (a virtual desktop deployment, for example) or temporary copies of a dataset (testing an application against a production dataset).

You can clone an existing FlexClone volume, clone a volume containing LUN clones, or clone mirror and vault data. You can *split* a FlexClone volume from its parent, in which case the copy is allocated its own storage.



FlexClone copies share data blocks with their parents, consuming no storage except what is required for metadata.

Security

Client authentication and authorization

ONTAP uses standard methods to secure client and administrator access to storage and to protect against viruses. Advanced technologies are available for encryption of data at rest and for WORM storage.

ONTAP authenticates a client machine and user by verifying their identities with a trusted source. ONTAP authorizes a user to access a file or directory by comparing the user's credentials with the permissions configured on the file or directory.

Authentication

You can create local or remote user accounts:

- A local account is one in which the account information resides on the storage system.
- A remote account is one in which account information is stored on an Active Directory domain controller, an LDAP server, or a NIS server.

ONTAP uses local or external name services to look up host name, user, group, netgroup, and name mapping information. ONTAP supports the following name services:

- Local users
- DNS
- External NIS domains
- External LDAP domains

A *name service switch table* specifies the sources to search for network information and the order in which to

search them (providing the equivalent functionality of the `/etc/nsswitch.conf` file on UNIX systems). When a NAS client connects to the SVM, ONTAP checks the specified name services to obtain the required information.

Kerberos support Kerberos is a network authentication protocol that provides “strong authentication” by encrypting user passwords in client-server implementations. ONTAP supports Kerberos 5 authentication with integrity checking (krb5i) and Kerberos 5 authentication with privacy checking (krb5p).

Authorization

ONTAP evaluates three levels of security to determine whether an entity is authorized to perform a requested action on files and directories residing on an SVM. Access is determined by the effective permissions after evaluation of the security levels:

- Export (NFS) and share (SMB) security

Export and share security applies to client access to a given NFS export or SMB share. Users with administrative privileges can manage export and share-level security from SMB and NFS clients.

- Storage-Level Access Guard file and directory security

Storage-Level Access Guard security applies to SMB and NFS client access to SVM volumes. Only NTFS access permissions are supported. For ONTAP to perform security checks on UNIX users for access to data on volumes for which Storage-Level Access Guard has been applied, the UNIX user must map to a Windows user on the SVM that owns the volume.

- NTFS, UNIX, and NFSv4 native file-level security

Native file-level security exists on the file or directory that represents the storage object. You can set file-level security from a client. File permissions are effective regardless of whether SMB or NFS is used to access the data.

Administrator authentication and RBAC

Administrators use local or remote login accounts to authenticate themselves to the cluster and SVM. Role-Based Access Control (RBAC) determines the commands to which an administrator has access.

Authentication

You can create local or remote cluster and SVM administrator accounts:

- A local account is one in which the account information, public key, or security certificate resides on the storage system.
- A remote account is one in which account information is stored on an Active Directory domain controller, an LDAP server, or a NIS server.

Except for DNS, ONTAP uses the same name services to authenticate administrator accounts as it uses to authenticate clients.

RBAC

The *role* assigned to an administrator determines the commands to which the administrator has access. You assign the role when you create the account for the administrator. You can assign a different role or define custom roles as needed.

Virus scanning

You can use integrated antivirus functionality on the storage system to protect data from being compromised by viruses or other malicious code. ONTAP virus scanning, called *Vscan*, combines best-in-class third-party antivirus software with ONTAP features that give you the flexibility you need to control which files get scanned and when.

Storage systems offload scanning operations to external servers hosting antivirus software from third-party vendors. The *ONTAP Antivirus Connector*, provided by NetApp and installed on the external server, handles communications between the storage system and the antivirus software.

- You can use *on-access scanning* to check for viruses when clients open, read, rename, or close files over SMB. File operation is suspended until the external server reports the scan status of the file. If the file has already been scanned, ONTAP allows the file operation. Otherwise, it requests a scan from the server.

On-access scanning is not supported for NFS.

- You can use *on-demand scanning* to check files for viruses immediately or on a schedule. You might want to run scans only in off-peak hours, for example. The external server updates the scan status of the checked files, so that file-access latency for those files (assuming they have not been modified) is typically reduced when they are next accessed over SMB.

You can use on-demand scanning for any path in the SVM namespace, even for volumes that are exported only through NFS.

You typically enable both scanning modes on an SVM. In either mode, the antivirus software takes remedial action on infected files based on your settings in the software.

Virus scanning in disaster recovery and MetroCluster configurations

For disaster recovery and MetroCluster configurations, you must set up separate Vscan servers for the local and partner clusters.



The storage system offloads virus scanning operations to external servers hosting antivirus software from third-party vendors.

Encryption

ONTAP offers both software- and hardware-based encryption technologies to ensure that data at rest cannot be read if the storage medium is repurposed, returned, misplaced, or stolen.

ONTAP is compliant with the Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) 140-2 for all SSL connections. You can use the following encryption solutions:

- Hardware solutions:

- NetApp Storage Encryption (NSE)

NSE is a hardware solution that uses self-encrypting drives (SEDs).

- NVMe SEDs

ONTAP provides full disk encryption for NVMe SEDs that do not have FIPS 140-2 certification.

- Software solutions:

- NetApp Aggregate Encryption (NAE)

NAE is a software solution that enables encryption of any data volume on any drive type where it is enabled with unique keys for each aggregate.

- NetApp Volume Encryption (NVE)

NVE is a software solution that enables encryption of any data volume on any drive type where it is

enabled with a unique key for each volume.

Use both software (NAE or NVE) and hardware (NSE or NVMe SED) encryption solutions to achieve double encryption at rest. Storage efficiency is not affected by NAE or NVE encryption.

NetApp Storage Encryption

NetApp Storage Encryption (NSE) supports SEDs that encrypt data as it is written. The data cannot be read without an encryption key stored on the disk. The encryption key, in turn, is accessible only to an authenticated node.

On an I/O request, a node authenticates itself to an SED using an authentication key retrieved from an external key management server or Onboard Key Manager:

- The external key management server is a third-party system in your storage environment that serves authentication keys to nodes using the Key Management Interoperability Protocol (KMIP).
- The Onboard Key Manager is a built-in tool that serves authentication keys to nodes from the same storage system as your data.

NSE supports self-encrypting HDDs and SSDs. You can use NetApp Volume Encryption with NSE to double encrypt data on NSE drives.

NVMe self-encrypting drives

NVMe SEDs do not have FIPS 140-2 certification, however, these disks use AES 256-bit transparent disk encryption to protect data at rest.

Data encryption operations, such as generating an authentication key, are performed internally. The authentication key is generated the first time the disk is accessed by the storage system. After that, the disks protect data at rest by requiring storage system authentication each time data operations are requested.

NetApp Aggregate Encryption

NetApp Aggregate Encryption (NAE) is a software-based technology for encrypting all data on an aggregate. A benefit of NAE is that volumes are included in aggregate level deduplication, whereas NVE volumes are excluded.

With NAE enabled, the volumes within the aggregate can be encrypted with aggregate keys.

Beginning with ONTAP 9.7, newly created aggregates and volumes are encrypted by default when you have the NVE license and onboard or external key management.

NetApp Volume Encryption

NetApp Volume Encryption (NVE) is a software-based technology for encrypting data at rest one volume at a time. An encryption key accessible only to the storage system ensures that volume data cannot be read if the underlying device is separated from the system.

Both data, including Snapshot copies, and metadata are encrypted. Access to the data is given by a unique XTS-AES-256 key, one per volume. A built-in Onboard Key Manager secures the keys on the same system with your data.

You can use NVE on any type of aggregate (HDD, SSD, hybrid, array LUN), with any RAID type, and in any supported ONTAP implementation, including ONTAP Select. You can also use NVE with NetApp Storage Encryption (NSE) to double encrypt data on NSE drives.

When to use KMIP servers Although it is less expensive and typically more convenient to use the Onboard Key Manager, you should set up KMIP servers if any of the following are true:

- Your encryption key management solution must comply with Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) 140-2 or the OASIS KMIP standard.
- You need a multi-cluster solution. KMIP servers support multiple clusters with centralized management of encryption keys.

KMIP servers support multiple clusters with centralized management of encryption keys.

- Your business requires the added security of storing authentication keys on a system or in a location different from the data.

KMIP servers stores authentication keys separately from your data.

WORM storage

SnapLock is a high-performance compliance solution for organizations that use *write once, read many (WORM)* storage to retain critical files in unmodified form for regulatory and governance purposes.

A single license entitles you to use SnapLock in strict *Compliance mode*, to satisfy external mandates like SEC Rule 17a-4, and a looser *Enterprise mode*, to meet internally mandated regulations for the protection of digital assets. SnapLock uses a tamper-proof *ComplianceClock* to determine when the retention period for a WORM file has elapsed.

You can use *SnapLock for SnapVault* to WORM-protect Snapshot copies on secondary storage. You can use SnapMirror to replicate WORM files to another geographic location for disaster recovery and other purposes.



SnapLock uses a tamper-proof ComplianceClock to determine when the retention period for a WORM file has elapsed.

Application aware data management

Application aware data management enables you to describe the application that you want to deploy over ONTAP in terms of the application, rather than in storage terms. The application can be configured and ready to serve data quickly with minimal inputs by using System Manager and REST APIs.

The application aware data management feature provides a way to set up, manage, and monitor storage at the level of individual applications. This feature incorporates relevant ONTAP best practices to optimally provision applications, with balanced placement of storage objects based on desired performance service levels and available system resources.

The application aware data management feature includes a set of application templates, with each template consisting of a set of parameters that collectively describe the configuration of an application. These parameters, which are often preset with default values, define the characteristics that an application administrator could specify for provisioning storage on an ONTAP system, such as database sizes, service levels, protocol access elements such as LIFs as well as local protection criteria and remote protection criteria. Based on the specified parameters, ONTAP configures storage entities such as LUNs and volumes with appropriate sizes and service levels for the application.

You can perform the following tasks for your applications:

- Create applications by using the application templates
- Manage the storage associated with the applications
- Modify or delete the applications
- View applications
- Manage Snapshot copies of the applications
- Create [consistency groups](#) to provide data protection capabilities by selecting multiple LUNs in the same or in different volumes

ONTAP and the cloud

ONTAP and the cloud overview

Administrators of on-premises ONTAP systems can start using “the cloud.” ONTAP features are compared to the equivalent products and features in the cloud.

If you are already familiar with ONTAP but are not as familiar with cloud-based products, the following information helps you understand what you can do in the cloud and points you to other resources to learn how:

- Cloud Volumes ONTAP

A software-only storage appliance that runs ONTAP data management software in the cloud.

- Cloud Volume Services

Cloud native file services that provide metered file storage for NAS volumes. Three options are offered:

- Azure NetApp Files
- Cloud Volumes Service for AWS
- Cloud Volumes Service for Google Cloud

Related information

Whether you are new to these cloud products or already familiar with them, you can find more information at [NetApp Product Documentation](#).

Data protection and the cloud

Data protection and the cloud overview

Data protection is often the first thing customers try when they begin their cloud journey.

Protection can be as simple as asynchronous replication of key data or as complex as a complete hot-backup site. Data protection is based primarily on the familiar NetApp SnapMirror technology.

Data replication

SnapMirror technology keeps your data synchronized between on-premises and cloud installations by using ONTAP Snapshot copies. SnapMirror performs block-level incremental data transfers to ensure that only the data that has changed is sent to your destination replica.



Similarly, you can use a SnapMirror vault relationship to create a data archive for the local Snapshot copies created on a Cloud Volumes ONTAP system.

NetApp Cloud Backup delivers seamless and cost-effective backup and restore capabilities for protecting and archiving data to object storage in the cloud. Cloud Backup is available for both cloud-based data and for on-premises data.

Related information

[Setting up a disaster recovery in the cloud with Cloud Volumes ONTAP](#)

[Efficient Data Replication Using Cloud Volumes ONTAP and SnapMirror](#)

[ONTAP Data Protection with the CLI](#)

[NetApp Cloud Backup](#)

High availability

In an on-premises data center, physical nodes are configured in high-availability (HA) pairs for fault tolerance and nondisruptive operations. If a node fails or if you need to

bring a node down for routine maintenance, its partner takes over its storage and continues to serve data from it.

In a cloud environment, you can create an HA pair of Cloud Volumes ONTAP instances for the same fault tolerance and non-disruptive operations as an on-premises HA pair. These recovery objectives are available with cloud HA pairs:

- The recovery point objective (RPO) is 0 seconds. Your data is transactionally consistent with no data loss.
- The recovery time objective (RTO) is 60 seconds. In the event of an outage, data should be available in 60 seconds or less.

Each cloud provider offers its own HA architecture and configuration options. For Cloud Volumes Service, high availability is guaranteed in the service level agreement.

Related information

[High-availability pairs in AWS](#)

[High-availability pairs in Azure](#)

Encryption of data at rest

ONTAP uses the same encryption technology to secure data in the cloud that you use to secure your on-premises data.

Cloud Volumes ONTAP supports NetApp Volume Encryption (NVE) and NetApp Aggregate Encryption (NAE) with an external key manager.

Cloud Volumes ONTAP also supports the following encryption technologies:

- AWS Key Management Service
- Azure Storage Service Encryption
- Google Cloud Platform default encryption

Data is always encrypted at rest when using Azure NetApp Files and NetApp Cloud Volumes Service for Google Cloud.

Related information

[Encryption of data at rest in Cloud Volumes ONTAP](#)

[NetApp Volume Encryption and NetApp Aggregate Encryption](#)

[Encrypting volumes in Cloud Volumes ONTAP with NetApp encryption solutions](#)

Antivirus protection

You likely use the integrated antivirus functionality on-premises to protect data from being compromised by viruses or other malicious code. This same antivirus protection is available in the cloud when you use Cloud Volumes ONTAP.

The ONTAP Antivirus Connector, installed on a local server, handles communication between the storage system and the antivirus software. For Cloud Volumes ONTAP, you install the Antivirus Connector on a virtual machine in the same cloud as ONTAP.

Related information

[Antivirus configuration](#)

Move entire workloads to the cloud

Storage protocols

Some customers choose to move entire workloads to the cloud. This can be more complicated than just using the cloud for data protection. But ONTAP makes the move easier because you do not have to rewrite your applications to use cloud-based storage. ONTAP in the cloud works just like your on-premises ONTAP does.

ONTAP offers the same NFS, SMB, and iSCSI protocols in the cloud that you are using today.

File sharing with NFS and SMB

The NFS and SMB protocols are used to make shares and files available to client applications over a network. Cloud Volumes ONTAP enables you to provide files from a public cloud using either or both of these protocols.

If you choose to move an entire workload to the cloud, Cloud Volumes ONTAP enables your application to work with storage in the cloud exactly as it does on premises. There is no need to change your application, and if you decide to move to a different cloud provider, there is no worry about provider lock in. The same commands and scripts you use to manage file services on premises work in the cloud.

In the cloud, you can scale file shares rapidly, by adding or removing storage and compute instances or by adjusting your service level as needed to respond to changes in client demand without incurring capital expenses. The more resources you use, the more you pay, but only when you are using the resources.

NetApp SnapMirror technology moves and synchronizes your file data between your on-premises ONTAP system and Cloud Volumes ONTAP. You can easily move the data to and from the cloud, and between cloud providers.

Related information

[BlueXP: Provisioning Storage](#)

[Managing volumes for Azure NetApp Files](#)

[Managing Cloud Volumes Service for AWS](#)

iSCSI

The iSCSI protocol provides block-level storage to clients such as databases and other applications that want block storage instead of files. ONTAP provides the iSCSI protocol in the cloud.

Once iSCSI storage has been provisioned, there is no difference between on-premises iSCSI access and cloud-based iSCSI access.

The same iSCSI SAN features that are available on-premises such as Snapshot copies, deduplication, compression, and thin provisioning are also available and work the same way in the cloud.

Related information

[Provisioning block storage with BlueXP](#)

[Provisioning iSCSI LUNs in Cloud Volumes ONTAP](#)

[Deploying Oracle Databases on Azure/AWS](#)

AutoSupport and Active IQ Digital Advisor

AutoSupport proactively monitors the health of your system and automatically sends telemetry to NetApp technical support. You can get detailed actionable information about your systems from NetApp Active IQ Digital Advisor.

The same AutoSupport and Active IQ Digital Advisor features you use on-premises are also available in the cloud. While AutoSupport can't collect data about the underlying hardware that powers Cloud Volumes ONTAP, you still get significantly useful information in Active IQ.

Related information

[NetApp Active IQ](#)

[AutoSupport for Cloud Volumes ONTAP](#)

Storage VMs

A storage VM (SVM) serves data to clients and hosts. Like a virtual machine running on a hypervisor, an SVM is a logical entity that abstracts physical resources.

In an on-premises ONTAP environment, you use SVMs to separate workloads. In Cloud Volumes ONTAP, you can use multiple SVMs, or you can use multiple instances of Cloud Volumes ONTAP.

Related information

[Cloud Volumes ONTAP default configuration](#)

FlexGroup volumes

FlexGroup volumes enable you to present a single volume of virtually unlimited size to an application. FlexGroup volumes are supported for Cloud Volumes ONTAP, enabling you to deploy a FlexGroup volume in Cloud Volumes ONTAP.

Related information

[FlexGroup volumes management](#)

Performance and efficiency in the cloud

Performance and efficiency in the cloud overview

Your on-premises ONTAP system offers data efficiency features that enable you to store more data in less physical space, and to tier rarely used data to lower cost storage. Whether you use a hybrid cloud configuration, or you move an entire workload to the cloud, ONTAP enables you to maximize storage performance and efficiency.

FabricPool

Many NetApp customers have significant amounts of stored data that is rarely accessed. We call that *cold* data. Customers also have data that is frequently accessed, which we call *hot* data. Ideally, you want to keep your hot data on your fastest storage for best performance. Cold data can move to slower storage as long as it is immediately available if needed. But how do you know which parts of your data are hot and which are cold?

FabricPool is an ONTAP feature that automatically moves data between a high-performance local tier (aggregate) and a cloud tier based on access patterns. Tiering frees up expensive local storage for hot data while keeping cold data readily available from low-cost object storage in the cloud. FabricPool constantly monitors data access and moves data between tiers for best performance and maximum savings.

Using FabricPool to tier cold data to the cloud is one of the easiest ways to gain cloud efficiency and create a hybrid cloud configuration. FabricPool works at the storage block level, so it works with both file and LUN data.

But FabricPool is not just for tiering on-premises data to the cloud. Many customers use FabricPool in Cloud Volumes ONTAP to tier cold data from more-expensive cloud storage to lower-cost object storage within the cloud provider. Beginning with ONTAP 9.8, you can capture analytics on FabricPool-enabled volumes with [File System Analytics](#) or [temperature-sensitive storage efficiency](#).

The applications using the data are not aware that data is tiered, so no changes to your applications are needed. Tiering is fully automatic, so there is no ongoing administration needed.

You can store cold data in object storage from one of the major cloud providers. Or choose NetApp StorageGRID to keep your cold data in your own private cloud for highest performance and complete control over your data.

Related information

[FabricPool System Manager doc](#)

[Cloud Tiering Service](#)

[FabricPool playlist on NetApp TechComm TV](#)

Storage Efficiency

The same storage efficiency features of on-premises ONTAP are available in the Cloud. SnapShot copies, deduplication, compression, compaction, thin provisioning, and FlexClone data clones are all available in NetApp Cloud offerings.

When you move data from on-premises ONTAP to the cloud, the existing storage efficiency is preserved. Whether you are moving an entire dataset, or just tiering cold data to the cloud, you won't move uncompressed or duplicate data.

Related information

[Cloud Volumes ONTAP Feature Spotlight: Storage Efficiency Case Studies](#)

[Using a volume usage profile in BlueXP to manage cloud storage efficiency](#)

Manage ONTAP in the cloud

Manage ONTAP in the cloud

Whether you use ONTAP in your own datacenter or in the cloud, you use the same interfaces to manage your storage. This means you already know how to manage ONTAP in the cloud. Additionally, NetApp BlueXP is a modern, easy-to-use graphical interface for deploying and getting started with Cloud Volumes ONTAP. There are situations when you need to perform advanced management of Cloud Volumes ONTAP or Cloud Volumes Service. You can do so using System Manager, the command line interface (CLI), or REST APIs.

System Manager runs on the Cloud Volumes ONTAP or Cloud Volumes Service system, enabling you to perform management tasks.

The ONTAP CLI enables you to execute all administrative commands and is a good choice for advanced tasks or if you are more comfortable using the CLI. You connect to the CLI using Secure Shell (SSH).

ONTAP REST APIs enable you to create and manage cloud volumes and develop provisioning scripts and tools. The ONTAP capabilities that are available through the Web user interface are also available through REST APIs. For some situations, this programmatic interface is more useful, especially for developers because they can automate processes involving BlueXP operations.

Related information

[Connecting to Cloud Volumes ONTAP](#)

[Cloud Automation with Cloud Volumes ONTAP and REST](#)

[BlueXP REST API](#)

Event and performance monitoring

When you move your on-premises workloads to the cloud, you can continue to rely on ONTAP event monitoring. EMS messages, NAS native auditing, FPolicy, and SNMP are all available in the cloud.

If you are already using System Manager or Active IQ Unified Manager for on-premises performance monitoring, you can continue to do so in the cloud. Both System Manager and Unified Manager provide detailed reporting and alerting of Cloud Volumes ONTAP health, capacity, and performance.

Related information

[How to Define an Effective Cloud Monitoring Strategy](#)

[10 Cloud Monitoring Tools You Should Know](#)

Volume management

Flexible and efficient volume management is the heart of the ONTAP cloud solution. ONTAP FlexVol volumes offer the same data fabric benefits, with the same data management processes, regardless of whether they are configured on-prem in the cloud. You can also take advantage of cloud capabilities to rapidly scale workloads, increasing

or decreasing capacity as needed.

Cloud volumes provide the same storage efficiencies as on-prem volumes: deduplication, compression, compaction, thin provisioning, and data tiering. In a cloud environment, this means that you pay less for underlying cloud disk usage.



There are two ways to provision volumes in the cloud:

- Create new cloud volumes.
- Replicate existing on-prem volumes to new cloud volume destination using SnapMirror technology or the Cloud Sync service.

Related information

[BlueXP: Provisioning storage](#)

[Managing volumes for Azure NetApp Files](#)

[Managing Cloud Volumes Service for AWS](#)

[Cloud Sync service](#)

Volume move

Using ONTAP, you can move a FlexVol volume to a different local tier (aggregate), node, or both within the same storage VM (SVM) to balance storage capacity after you determine that there is a storage capacity imbalance. With Cloud Volumes ONTAP, you can move one or more volumes to another Cloud Volumes ONTAP system or to another

aggregate to avoid capacity issues. You might need to do this if the system reaches its disk limit.

Related information

[Cloud Volumes ONTAP: Moving volumes to another system to avoid capacity issues](#)

[Cloud Volumes ONTAP: Moving volumes to another aggregate to avoid capacity issues](#)

ONTAP updates

NetApp releases regular updates to ONTAP to add new features and to fix known issues. You can update ONTAP in the cloud in a similar way to updating your on-premises ONTAP release. For HA configurations in the cloud, the process is nondisruptive.

Related information

[Upgrading Cloud Volumes ONTAP](#)

Compliance and the cloud

NetApp Cloud Data Sense

Each industry and each country has different compliance requirements. Whether you have an on-premises system or are working in the cloud, ONTAP helps you maintain compliance.

Powered by artificial intelligence, NetApp offers Cloud Data Sense (formerly Cloud Compliance service) to keep your cloud resources in compliance with many regulations. This always-on service is the best way to navigate complex compliance regulations.

Related information

[NetApp Cloud Data Sense](#)

Data sovereignty

Data sovereignty refers to national laws concerning the collection, storage, and transmission of data. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in Europe and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) in the US are examples of these laws. Data residency refers to where data is physically stored and is often specified by data sovereignty laws. Personal data about individuals is a primary target of regulations, but other data can be regulated too.

When you store data on premises in your own data center, you have complete control over how and where the data is stored. When you store data in the cloud, you are responsible for understanding how and where that data is physically stored, and you are responsible for ensuring you comply with applicable data sovereignty laws. For hybrid cloud configurations, you need to pay attention to where both the on-premises tiers and the cloud tiers are stored.

The good news is that all the major cloud providers are fully aware of the laws and have procedures and information to help you comply. But it's still important that you select the appropriate products and procedures for your specific needs.

In many cases, storing your data in the cloud makes it possible to keep data within the boundaries of a country where your company has no physical presence.

Here are some examples of the compliance information from NetApp and from cloud providers:

- [Architecting GDPR- and HIPAA-Compliant Storage](#)
- [Questions on data residency and compliance in Microsoft Azure](#)
- [General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\) Center for Amazon Web Services](#)
- [Compliance resource center for Google Cloud](#)
- [Alibaba Cloud Security & Compliance Center](#)

Cloud WORM storage

An important aspect of compliance is being able to guarantee that certain data is maintained unchanged for a required period of time. You can activate write once, read many (WORM) storage on a Cloud Volumes ONTAP system to retain files in unmodified form for a specified retention period. Cloud WORM storage is powered by SnapLock technology, which means WORM files are protected at the file level.

Once a file has been committed to WORM storage, it can't be modified, even after the retention period has expired. A tamper-proof clock determines when the retention period for a WORM file has elapsed.

You can activate WORM storage on a Cloud Volumes ONTAP system when you create a new working environment. This includes setting the default retention period for files. You can't activate WORM storage on individual volumes—WORM must be activated at the system level.

Related information

[WORM storage](#)

[Archive and compliance using SnapLock technology](#)

[NetApp Cloud WORM: Enhancing Data Protection with Locking Features](#)

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