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Q: What is AWS Config?

AWS Config is a fully managed service that provides you with an AWS resource inventory, configuration history, and configuration change notifications to enable security and governance. With AWS Config you can discover existing AWS resources, export a complete inventory of your AWS resources with all configuration details, and determine how a resource was configured at any point in time. These capabilities enable compliance auditing, security analysis, resource change tracking, and troubleshooting.

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Q: What is a Config Rule?

A Config Rule represents desired configurations for a resource and is evaluated against configuration changes on the relevant resources, as recorded by AWS Config. The results of evaluating a rule against the configuration of a resource are available on a dashboard. Using Config Rules, you can assess your overall compliance and risk status from a configuration perspective, view compliance trends over time and pinpoint which configuration change caused a resource to drift out of compliance with a rule.

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Q: What are the benefits of AWS Config?

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this information to generate reports to aid auditing and assessing compliance over a period of time.

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Q: Who should use AWS Config and Config Rules?

Any AWS customer looking to improve their security and governance posture on AWS by continuously evaluating the configuration of their resources would benefit from this capability. Administrators within larger organizations who recommend best practices for configuring resources can codify these rules as Config Rules, and enable self-governance among users. Information Security experts who monitor usage activity and configurations to detect vulnerabilities can benefit from Config Rules. Customers with workloads that need to comply with specific standards (e.g. PCI-DSS or HIPAA) can use this capability to assess compliance of their AWS infrastructure configurations, and generate reports for their auditors. Operators who manage large AWS infrastructure or components that change frequently can also benefit from Config Rules for troubleshooting.Customers who want to track changes to resources configuration, answer questions about resource configurations, demonstrate compliance, troubleshoot or perform security analysis should turn on AWS Config.

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Q: Does the service guarantee that my configurations are never out of compliance?

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provisioning, please use AWS Identity and Access Management (IAM) Policies and AWS Service Catalog respectively.

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Q: Can rules be evaluated prior to provisioning a resource?

Config Rules evaluates rules after the Configuration Item (CI) for the resource is captured by AWS Config. It does not evaluate rules prior to provisioning a resource or prior to making configuration changes on the resource.

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Q: How does AWS Config work with AWS CloudTrail?

AWS CloudTrail records user API activity on your account and allows you to access information about this activity. You get full details about API actions, such as identity of the caller, the time of the API call, the request parameters, and the response elements returned by the AWS service. AWS Config records point-in-time configuration details for your AWS resources as Configuration Items (CIs). You can use a CI to answer "What did my AWS resource look like?" at a point in time. You can use AWS CloudTrail to answer "Who made an API call to modify this resource?" For example, you can use the AWS Management Console for AWS Config to detect security group "Production-DB" was incorrectly configured in the past. Using the integrated AWS CloudTrail information, you can pinpoint which user misconfigured "Production-DB" security group.

Getting started

Q: How do I get started with this service?

The quickest way to get started with AWS Config is to use the AWS Management Console. You can turn on AWS Config in a few clicks. For additional details, see the Getting Started documentation.

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Q: How do I access my resources' configuration?

You can lookup current and historical resource configuration using the AWS Management Console, AWS Command Line Interface or SDKs.

For additional details, please refer to AWS Config documentation.

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Q: Do I turn on AWS Config regionally or globally?

You turn on AWS Config on a per-region basis for your account.

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Q: What time and timezones are displayed in the timeline view of a resource? What about daylight savings?

AWS Config displays the time at which Configuration Items (CIs) were recorded for a resource on a timeline. All times are captured in Coordinated Universal Time (UTC). When the timeline is visualized on the management console, the services uses the current time zone (adjusted for daylight savings, if relevant) to display all times in the timeline view.

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Config Rules

Q: What is a resource's configuration?

Configuration of a resource is defined by the data included in the Configuration Item (CI) of AWS Config. The initial release of Config Rules makes the CI for a resource available to relevant rules. Config Rules can use this information along with any other relevant information such as other attached resource, business hours, etc. to evaluate compliance of a resource's configuration.

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Q: How are rules created?

Rules are typically set up by the AWS account administrator. They can be created by leveraging AWS managed rules – a predefined set of rules provided by AWS or through customer managed rules. With AWS managed rules updates to the rule are automatically applied to any account using that rule. In the customer-managed model, the customer has a full copy of the rule, and executes the rule within his/her own account. These rules are maintained by the customer.

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Q: How many rules can I create?

You can create up to 50 rules in your AWS account by default. Additionally, you can request an increase for the limit on the number of rules in your account by visiting the AWS Service Limits page.

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Q: How are rules evaluated?

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available to the rule.

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Q: What is an evaluation?

Evaluation of a rule determines whether a rule is compliant with a resource at a particular point in time. It is the result of evaluating a rule against the configuration of a resource. Config Rules will capture and store the result of each evaluation. This result will include the resource, rule, time of evaluation and a link to Configuration Item (CI) that caused non-compliance.

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Q: What does compliance mean?

A resource is compliant if complies with all rules that apply to it. Otherwise it is noncompliant. Similarly, a rule is compliant if all resources evaluated by the rule comply with the rule. Otherwise it is noncompliant. In some cases, such as when inadequate permissions are available to the rule, an evaluation may not exist for the resource, leading to a state of insufficient data. This state is excluded from determining the compliance status of a resource or rule.

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Q: What information does the Config Rules dashboard provide?

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Q: What is multi-account, multi-region data aggregation?

Data aggregation in AWS Config allows you to aggregate AWS Config data from multiple accounts and regions into a single account. Multi-Account data aggregation is useful for central IT administrators to monitor compliance for multiple AWS accounts in the enterprise.

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Q: Can I use the data aggregation capability to centrally provision Config rules across multiple accounts?

The data aggregation capability cannot be used for provisioning rules across multiple accounts. It is purely a reporting capability that provides visibility into your compliance. You can use CloudFormation StackSets to provision rules across accounts and regions. Here is a useful blog.

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Q: How do I enable data aggregation in my account?

Once Config and Config rules are enabled in your account, as well as the accounts being aggregated, you can enable data aggregation by creating an aggregator in your account. Learn more.

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most number of non-compliant rules. You can then drill down to view more details about the resources that are violating the rule and the list of rules that are being violated by an account.

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Q: I am not an AWS Organizations customer. Can I still use the data aggregation capability?

You can specify the accounts to aggregate the Config data from, by uploading a file or by individually entering accounts. Note that since these accounts are not part of any AWS organization, you will need each account to explicitly authorize the aggregator account. Learn more.

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Q: I only have a single account, can I still take advantage of the data aggregation capability?

The data aggregation capability is useful for multi-region aggregation as well. So you can aggregate the Config data for your account across multiple regions using this capability.

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Q: In what regions is the multi-account, multi-region data aggregation capability available?

Services and region support

Q: What AWS resources types are covered by AWS Config?

Review our documentation for a complete list of supported resource types.

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Q: What regions is AWS Config available in?

For details on the regions where AWS Config is available, please visit this page:

http://aws.amazon.com/about-aws/global-infrastructure/regional-product-services/

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Resource configuration

Q: What is a configuration item?

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Q: What are AWS Config relationships and how are they used?

AWS Config takes the relationships among resources into account when recording changes. For example, if a new Amazon EC2 Security Group is associated with an Amazon EC2 Instance, AWS Config records the updated configurations of both the primary resource, the Amazon EC2 Security Group, and related resources, such as the Amazon EC2 Instance, if these resources actually changed.

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Q: Does AWS Config record every state a resource has been in?

AWS Config detects change to resource's configuration and records the configuration state that resulted from that change. In cases where several configuration changes are made to a resource in quick succession (e.g. within a span of few minutes), Config will only record the latest configuration of that resource that represents cumulative impact of the set of changes. In these situations, Config will only list the latest change in the *relatedEvents* field of the Configuration Item.This allows users and programs to continue to change infrastructure configurations without having to wait for Config to record intermediate transient states.

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The configuration information recorded by AWS Config includes Operating System updates, network configuration, installed applications, etc. You can evaluate whether your instances, VMs, and servers are in compliance with your guidelines using AWS Config Rules. The deep visibility and continuous monitoring capabilities provided by AWS Config allow you to assess compliance and troubleshoot operational issues.

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Q: Does AWS Config continue to send notifications if a resource that was previously non-compliant is still non-compliant after a periodic rule evaluation?

AWS Config sends notifications only when the compliance status changes. If a resource was previously non-compliant and is still non-compliant, Config will not send a new notification. If the compliance status changes to "compliant", you will receive a notification for the change in status.

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Q: Can I flag or exempt resources from being evaluated by Config rules?

When you configure Config rules, you can specify whether your rule runs evaluations against specified resource types or resources with a specific tag.

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Configuration snapshots and configuration history files are delivered to you in the Amazon S3 bucket that you choose, and configuration change notifications are delivered via Amazon Simple Notification Service (SNS). Standard rates for Amazon S3 and Amazon SNS apply. Customer managed rules are authored using AWS Lambda. Standard rates for AWS Lambda apply.

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Q: Does the pricing for Config Rules include the costs for AWS Lambda functions?

You can choose from a set of managed rules provided by AWS or you can author your own rules, written as AWS Lambda functions. Managed rules are fully managed and maintained by AWS and you do not pay any additional AWS Lambda charges to run them. Simply enable managed rules, provide any required parameters, and pay a single rate for each AWS Config rule. On the other hand, customer managed rules give you full control by executing these rules as AWS Lambda functions in your account. In addition to monthly charges for an active rule, standard AWS Lambda free tier* and function execution rates apply to customer managed rules.

*AWS Free Tier is not available in the AWS China (Beijing) Region or the AWS China (Ningxia) Region

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Q: Can you provide a breakdown of charges using an example?

Pricing example 1:

region and 400 Configuration Items with 5 active rules in EU (Ireland) region. Your monthly charges will be

AWS Config costs (N. Virginia): 1,000 * $0.003 = $3.00

AWS Config rules (N. Virginia):

$2.00 per active Config Rule for the first 10 rules in US East (N.Virginia) region: 10*$2.00 = $20.00

$1.50 per active Config Rule for the next 40 rules US East (N.Virginia) region: 40*$1.50 = $60.00

$1.00 per active Config rule for over 50 rules in US East (N.Virginia) region: 50*$1.00 = $50.00

AWS Config costs (EU Ireland): 400*$0.003 = $1.20

$2.00 per active Config Rule for the first 10 rules in EU (Ireland) region: 5*$2.00 = $10.00

Total AWS Config monthly charges = $144.20

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Partner solutions

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Learn more about AWS Config
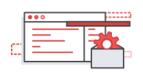
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