



RISE ABOVE

Unlock AI's full potential with hybrid cloud

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Executive overview

AI transformation is reshaping enterprise technology strategy. The most visionary CIOs are engineering hybrid cloud foundations that unlock powerful AI value—today and tomorrow. The architectural choices made now will define business advantage for the next decade.

Adopting an intelligent data infrastructure approach to your hybrid cloud strategy empowers you to:



Accelerate AI pipelines

by unifying data across all environments—on-premises, private clouds, and public clouds



Deploy AI workloads

wherever they work best, bringing AI to data, not data to AI



Secure and scale all your data

with autonomous protection and streamlined compliance across all environments



Transform AI investments

into sustainable economic advantage

81%

of boards report their organizations haven't achieved their digital transformation goals*.

The common thread?

Fragmented data architectures that promised agility but delivered complexity.

Leaders who architect unified platforms—delivering the best of on-premises and cloud—position themselves as transformation visionaries who turn AI ambitions into business value.

1 The AI-ready foundation: Unified hybrid cloud

Successful deployments share one thing: a unified hybrid cloud infrastructure that adapts to AI demands rather than constraining them.

Consider the reality of AI pipelines facing technology teams today:

- Training requires massive compute that may require cloud bursting—but isn't continuous.
- Inference is continuous and requires low-latency access to production data that often resides on-premises.
- Compliance requirements may dictate data residency while innovation demands access to cutting-edge cloud AI services.

To seamlessly connect all your data and accelerate your pipeline, your data foundation should provide:



Seamless data integration

A single-pane platform spanning all environments—on-premises, private clouds, and public clouds such as AWS, Azure, and Google Cloud—gives AI teams and applications seamless mobility and access to data wherever it resides, without slowing anyone down.



Disaggregated architecture

Decouple resources to deliver exactly what AI workloads need, when they need it. Scale storage independently of compute for true cloud-native performance.



Architectural freedom

Stop wasting time and money moving data to AI applications. Deploy workloads where they perform best, experiment with competing models across environments, and capitalize on emerging AI services with confidence.



The intelligence built-in advantage

- **Uninterrupted access** to data that's always accurate, secure, and ready to work
- **Agility to optimize and scale** however you need to
- **Maximized flexibility** to move workloads wherever they perform best

Architectural choices compound over time—each decision either amplifies your AI capabilities or creates constraints that limit future innovation.

2 Data mobility: Your competitive differentiator

Data mobility determines competitive velocity.

Intelligent orchestration connects data to AI projects without actually having to migrate or copy the data sets for maximum efficiency.



Available and secure data

Allow AI models to leverage proprietary data wherever it resides without compromising security.



Architectural flexibility

As you scale AI across your organization, requirements evolve. When cost optimization requires workload migration, you can move. When new GPU architectures become available in specific cloud regions, your data is seamlessly accessible.



Accelerated innovation

Access breakthrough AI services as they become available without being forced to choose between innovation and control. Leverage any public or private cloud while maintaining complete independence.

The competitive timeline advantage

While your competitors might spend months migrating data to access new AI capabilities, you deploy in hours. This operational efficiency compounds over time into:

- **First-mover advantage** in new market opportunities
- **Faster iteration cycles** for model improvement
- **Reduced time-to-value** for AI investments
- **Strategic agility** to respond to competitive threats

98%

of IT leaders have adopted or plan to adopt hybrid models, citing data mobility as critical for balancing cost, performance, and AI workload placement.¹

60%

of AI leaders cite vendor lock-in as their primary concern.²

An intelligent data infrastructure delivers the best of all worlds: cloud elasticity, on-premises control, and freedom to choose.

3 Cyber resilience: Fortifying distributed AI

AI amplifies both opportunities and risks. Your security approach must amplify protection without inhibiting innovation.

Instead of layering security onto AI infrastructure, embed protection at every level:



Proactive threat defense

Autonomous anomaly detection prevents compromise before damage occurs. Intelligent defense learns from behavior and strengthens continuous protection of the entire pipeline.



Immutable data protection

AI models are only as good as their training data. Immutable snapshots and air-gapped recovery ensure that even successful attacks can't compromise your AI foundations.



Automated compliance orchestration

As AI pipelines move across hybrid environments, compliance requirements shift dynamically. Automatically apply appropriate controls based on data classification and workload location.

77%

of organizations lack foundational data and AI security practices to safeguard models, pipelines, and cloud infrastructure.³

These blind spots leave organizations unprepared against modern, AI-driven threats. An intelligent data infrastructure approach mitigates risks by building security in from the ground up, not retrofitting after damage.

The strategic security advantage

Organizations with AI-driven data protection and security that's built in achieve measurably superior outcomes:

- **Proactive rather than reactive security** that adapts before damage occurs
- **Operational continuity** that maintains availability without manual intervention
- **Automated compliance** across multiple frameworks
- **Zero compromise** of AI model integrity through immutable protection

4 AI economics: From cost center to innovation engine

Transform AI economics from unpredictable expense into strategic investment.

Enterprise AI complexities cause cost overruns and delays. The most successful programs run on platforms built to optimize business value, not just technical performance:



Performance-optimized workload placement

Train large models cost-efficiently on-premises, then deploy inference at cloud scale where usage-based pricing aligns with business value. This results in reduced AI infrastructure costs while improving performance.



Elastic resource management

Scale computing and storage based on AI workload demand patterns, not peak capacity requirements. Burst to cloud during intensive training while maintaining cost-efficient baseline infrastructure.



Strategic vendor independence

Place workloads in the most cost-efficient environment without sacrificing performance. True strategic freedom.

The ROI advantage

Transform AI spending from operational expense into strategic investment:

- **Predictable cost structures** that scale with business value
- **Clear ROI metrics** tied to workload optimization
- **Budget allocation** based on business priorities
- **Innovation funding** generated through operational efficiency

Strategic economics in action

Anaplan, a leading business-planning software provider integrated on-premises and cloud-based data management to respond to dynamic demand. Through their new hybrid cloud approach, the company:

- Streamlined workflows
- Implemented real-time monitoring
- Accelerated service delivery
- Improved customer satisfaction
- Achieved significant cost savings

"I listened to the engineers who are closest to the technical challenges. It was imperative that we remove those pain points—this is as important to our customers as it's important to our business."

Chief Product and Technology Officer,
[Anaplan](#)

5 Breaking free from architectural constraints

A hybrid cloud platform built for AI is more than infrastructure—it’s strategy that determines market position for the next decade.

Organizations building intelligent hybrid cloud data platforms today will dominate tomorrow’s markets. Those constrained by architectural compromises will struggle as AI demands accelerate.

The hybrid cloud advantage

Your hybrid cloud platform becomes increasingly valuable as AI complexity grows:

- **Architectural independence** providing agility and negotiating leverage with vendors
- **Data mobility** enabling innovation velocity competitors cannot match
- **Security intelligence** protecting all your data under any threat scenario
- **Economic optimization** transforming AI investments into sustainable profit engines



Your leadership opportunity

Technology executives who adopt an intelligent data infrastructure approach to powering AI position themselves as strategic business leaders. This is your opportunity to transform from technology steward to competitive advantage architect.

Your next architectural decision can make the difference between accelerating—or throttling—business value from AI.

SUMMARY

Unleash your hybrid cloud advantage

From AI pilot to AI value powerhouse: unlocking the power of hybrid cloud

The future belongs to leaders who successfully transform AI from proof-of-concept to measurable and sustained business value across the enterprise. Scale with confidence for today and tomorrow by building an AI-ready data platform with NetApp.

Is your data infrastructure AI-ready? →

Take the IDC self-assessment.

Learn more about hybrid cloud solutions →



Meet the enterprise-grade data platform built for AI

Built on an intelligent data infrastructure approach, the NetApp data platform delivers all the capabilities that make AI projects successful: unified data foundation, accelerated pipelines, resilient security, optimized economics, and unlimited scalability across hybrid multicloud environments. Intelligence built in, not bolted on.

Discover the topics in this series



**Data infrastructure
modernization →**



Cloud



Cyber resilience →



Artificial intelligence →

About NetApp

For more than three decades, NetApp has helped the world's leading organizations navigate change—from the rise of enterprise storage to the intelligent era defined by data and AI. Today, NetApp is the Intelligent Data Infrastructure company, helping customers turn data into a catalyst for innovation, resilience, and growth.

At the heart of that infrastructure is the NetApp data platform—the unified, enterprise-grade, intelligent foundation that connects, protects, and activates data across every cloud, workload, and environment. Built on the proven power of NetApp ONTAP, our leading data management software and OS, and enhanced by automation through the AI Data Engine and AFX, it delivers observability, resilience, and intelligence at scale.

Disaggregated by design, the NetApp data platform separates storage, services, and control so enterprises can modernize faster, scale efficiently, and innovate without lock-in. As the only enterprise storage platform natively embedded in the world's largest clouds, it gives organizations the freedom to run any workload anywhere with consistent performance, governance, and protection.

With NetApp, data is always ready—ready to defend against threats, ready to power AI, and ready to drive the next breakthrough. That's why the world's most forward-thinking enterprises trust NetApp to turn intelligence into advantage.

Learn more at www.netapp.com or follow us on [X](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#).

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