



# Case Study

## NetApp AFF (All Flash FAS)



**Greg Rose**

Principal Engineer at a retailer with 5,001-10,000 employees

- ✓ Review by a Real User
- ✓ Verified by IT Central Station

### What is our primary use case?

My primary use case for All Flash FAS that we have is pretty much everything. It is the go-to storage device that we use for block fiber channel devices on our heavy SAP workloads as well as user base files and file shares for databases.

### How has it helped my organization?

AFF improves how our organization functions because of its speed. Reduction in batch times means that we're able to get better information out of SAP and into BW faster. Those kinds of things are a bit hard to put my finger on. Generally, when we start shrinking the times we need to do things, and we're doing them on a regular basis, it has a flow on impact that the

rest of the business can enjoy. We also have more capacity to call on for things like stock take.

AFF is supporting new business because we've got the capacity to do more. In the past, with a spinning disc and our older FAS units, we had plenty of disc capacity but not enough CPU horsepower and the controllers to drive it and it was beginning to really hurt. With the All Flash FAS, we could see that there are oodles of power, not only from disc utilization figures on the actual storage backend but also from the CPU consumption of the storage controllers. When somebody says "we want to do this" it's not a problem. The job gets done and we don't have to do a thing. It's all good.

All Flash FAS has improved performance for our enterprise applications, data analytics, and VMs which are enterprise applications. It powers the



VM fleet as well. It does provide some of our BW capabilities but that's more of an SAP HANA thing now. Everything runs off it, all of our critical databases also consume storage off of the All Flash FAS for VMs.

For us TCO has definitely decreased, we pay less in data center fees. We also have the ability with the fabric pool to actually save on our storage costs.

## What is most valuable?

The valuable features are the fabric pool. We are taking our cold data and pumping it straight into an estuary bucket. Also, efficiency. We're getting about two and a half times upwards of data efficiency through compaction, compression, deduplication, and it's size. When we refreshed from two or three racks of spinning discs down into 5U of rack space, it not only saved us a whole heap of costs in our data center environment but also it's nice to be green. The power savings alone equated to be about 50 tons of CO2 a year that we no longer emit. It's a big game changer.

The user experience from my point of view, as the person who drives it most of the time, is a really good one. The toolsets are really easy to use and from the service offered we're able to offer non-disruptive upgrades. It just works and keeps going. It's hard to explain good things when we have so few bad things that actually occur within the environment. From a user's point of view, the file shares work, everyone's

happy, and I'm happy because it's usually not storage that's causing the problem.

## What needs improvement?

I would like for them to develop the ability to detach the fabric pool. Once we've added it to an aggregate it's there for life and it would be nice to disconnect it if we ever had to.

## For how long have I used the solution?

One to three years.

## What do I think about the stability of the solution?

Stability with AFF has been really great. We blew an SSD drive which we thought may never actually happen and it just kept on going. We've not had any issues with it even though we actually went to a fairly recent release of data on tap as well that just works.

## What do I think about the scalability of the solution?

Scalability is a really cool part of the product in terms of growing. We don't see that we'll actually need to do much of that. We'll take more advantage of fabric pool and actually push that data out to a lower tier of storage at AWS



and our initial projections on that suggest that we've got a lot of very cold data we're actually storing today.

## How are customer service and technical support?

AFF tech support we've had a couple of calls open and it's always been brilliant. I really like the chat feature because one of the things that annoys me is the conference calls that usually come when you have to contact the hardware vendor. You get stuck on a webex or a conference call for hours on end where it's just easier to chat to the techo at NetApp in real time and if he isn't able to help you he'll just pass you on to the next one and you end up staying in the chat which means that I continue working while dealing with a problem.

## Which solution did I use previously and why did I switch?

We knew it was time to switch to this solution because it was costing us a fortune in maintenance, especially when our hardware was getting over the three to five year old mark. With spinning disc, it's not like we can neglect that because drives fail all the time and the previous iteration of storage we had was a NetApp FAS, so we've gone from NetApp to NetApp.

## What about the implementation team?

We implemented in-house. It was dead easy. All you have to do is throw it in the rack, plug in the network and fiber cables, give it a name, and away you go. There is very little that actually needs to happen to make it all work. I think we managed to get one of them up in two or three hours.

## Which other solutions did I evaluate?

We also considered Dell EMC and Pure Storage. The biggest reason we picked NetApp was the ease of actually getting the data to the next iteration but also the other vendors don't have a product that supports everything we needed which is file services and block services. It's a one stop shop and I didn't really want to have to manage another box and a storage device at the same time.

## What other advice do I have?

I would rate AFF a ten out of ten. If I was in the position to tell someone else about All Flash FAS and why they should get it I would simply say just do it. I think everybody in the storage community is pressured to live on more with less and this product basically enables that to happen.



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