NetApp Enhances Cloud Data Management with AI-Ready Solutions, Cost Efficiency, and Advanced Security

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IDC'S QUICK TAKE

NetApp's recent updates to its storage portfolio are a timely response to the increasing demands for efficient data management, cost control, and enhanced cybersecurity as organizations increasingly adopt hybrid and multicloud environments. By introducing features like automated data tiering and advanced service levels, NetApp equips organizations to navigate rising data volumes and leverage AI and analytics effectively, all while addressing the growing threat of cyberattacks.

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

On September 24, NetApp held its NetApp INSIGHT 2024 conference at MGM Grand, Las Vegas. At the event, NetApp announced several key updates to its storage portfolio, including enhancements to its cloud-based "as-a-service" solutions and offerings in collaboration with major hyperscalers.

We highlight some of the key announcements that stood out from a public cloud IaaS perspective:

- **Azure NetApp Files Cool Access:** Azure NetApp Files Cool Access automatically moves infrequently accessed data to cold tier storage, returning it to hot storage when accessed by an application or user. This intelligent management helps reduce cloud storage costs. The cooling period can be customized between 2 and 183 days, with a default of 31 days. Upon access, the data block is marked as hot, triggering a new cooling period for the next auto-tiering cycle. This approach maximizes storage ROI for enterprises while maintaining minimal impact on performance.

- **Google Cloud NetApp Volumes:** Announced earlier in April this year, the Flex service level provides support for 1GiB volumes from a storage pool of minimum 1TiB on Google Cloud NetApp Volumes. The volumes within a Flex storage pool share the total bandwidth, enabling efficient resource management for even the most demanding or unpredictable workloads without the need for overprovisioning. The Flex service level option is now available across all the 40 Google Cloud regions and supports Customer Managed Encryption Keys (CMEK), allowing one policy per region. Users can have a mix of storage pools with and

without CMEK policies within the same region for flexibility in data security management.

For workloads requiring larger storage and higher throughput, the Premium and Extreme service levels offer large capacity volume options. These service levels allow volumes to be configured between 15TiB and 1PiB, with increments of 1GiB. These large volumes deliver higher throughput, reaching up to 12.5GiB per second, making them ideal for high-performance applications. Both service levels are now broadly available, providing users with the flexibility and performance needed to meet even the most intensive workload demands.

- **Cloud Volumes ONTAP:** NetApp has made several key cybersecurity features, including Autonomous Ransomware Protection (ARP), SnapCenter, and write once, read many (WORM) storage, available at no additional cost with Cloud Volumes ONTAP licenses. The inclusion of these features strengthens cyber-resilience by simplifying security management and reducing overhead for customers, as they no longer have to handle multiple licenses for essential security features. This consolidation helps organizations enhance their data protection strategy while saving both time and costs.

- **NetApp's AI-ready story:** NetApp announced support for Vertex AI and BigQuery, enabling these services to access data stored in **Google Cloud NetApp Volumes.** In addition, users will be able to build applications in no-code/low-code environments through Vertex AI Agent Builder. This integration is expected to be available later this year.

  BlueXP Workload Factory now supports Amazon Bedrock foundation models, enabling them to leverage data stored in **Amazon FSx for NetApp ONTAP.** In addition, it supports the deployment and management of end-to-end RAG Infrastructure.

- **Azure NetApp Files:** Azure NetApp Files is now supported as a data store for Azure OneLake, enabling users to leverage Azure's AI and analytics capabilities without needing to duplicate data. This integration enables seamless analytics on data stored in Azure NetApp Files or on-premises, directly through Azure OneLake.

IDC'S POINT OF VIEW

The rapid growth of data, cloud adoption, and AI integration has presented enterprises with significant challenges in managing diverse workloads, securing data, and controlling costs. Traditional storage solutions often struggle to meet the high demands of modern applications, which creates a need to handle large-scale data across hybrid and multicloud environments. According to IDC's 2Q24 *Cloud Pulse Survey,* 47% cloud buyers expect digital technologies to majorly disrupt their industry over the next five years, while 56% say that IT will require major change to adapt to these technologies.

NetApp's latest announcements focus on tackling some of the challenges that organizations face adopting newer technologies and help curb the costs. As workloads grow more complex and storage needs expand, the ability to optimize resources without overprovisioning becomes critical. Many organizations still face issues of data duplication, inefficient storage use, and rising cloud storage costs. By introducing features like automatic tiering of cold data and providing access to AI and analytics tools without duplicating data, NetApp's new offerings allow customers to reduce costs. These innovations cater to enterprises that need to manage large-scale data efficiently, making it easier to handle growing data volumes without incurring unnecessary expenses.

Security is a top priority for organizations as cyberattacks, particularly ransomware, continue to evolve in sophistication. With built-in ransomware protection and immutability features, businesses can safeguard their data more comprehensively without the complexity of managing multiple security tools. These improvements significantly reduce both time and costs, allowing organizations to focus on their core operations.

The growing adoption of AI and machine learning is driving the need for more robust and scalable infrastructure. AI workloads are often resource intensive, requiring not only large amounts of storage capacity but also the ability to process data efficiently. NetApp's support for AI platforms across major cloud providers helps organizations manage these workloads without excessive complexity or cost. By offering streamlined access to data for AI and analytics, these updates enable enterprises to leverage advanced technologies more effectively, supporting innovation while keeping infrastructure demands under control.

IDC recognizes NetApp as the only storage vendor that has co-engineered native, first-party services with the major public cloud providers. This provides NetApp a unique advantage over competitive solutions that must be purchased through a cloud provider marketplace. Native cloud storage services like Azure NetApp Files, Amazon FSx for NetApp ONTAP, and Google Cloud NetApp Volumes offer deeper integration with other aspects of the cloud provider platform and are purchased and supported directly from the cloud provider. This simplifies the experience for customers and allows them to easily manage their cloud storage with other on-premises NetApp systems.

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