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The Business Value of NetApp Data Infrastructure Insights

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Business Value Highlights

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33% higher utilization rate

49% quicker identification of root causes of issues

28% lower risk of major data breach or loss

19% efficiency gain for storage administrators

14% efficiency gain for site reliability engineers

11% efficiency gain for IT infrastructure management teams

IDC Opinion

IDC conducted research exploring the value and benefits of organizations using NetApp Data Infrastructure Insights (DII) to simplify observability and data environment management.

IDC found that interviewed customers achieved the following significant benefits from their Data Infrastructure Insights deployment:

- Unified visibility across complex multivendor environments and consolidated the monitoring of diverse infrastructure components into a single observability solution.
- Increased operational efficiency by streamlining troubleshooting and enabling proactive management, thereby reducing team effort and simplifying operations.
- Improved capacity planning and resource optimization via better visibility into utilization trends, which helped organizations reclaim unused resources, optimize provisioning, and improve scalability.
- Reduced operational risk by detecting configuration issues and maintaining redundancy, while supporting security through anomaly detection and workload protection.
- Optimized strategic decision-making and infrastructure planning through insights that guided refresh cycles, consolidation, and future investments, aligning IT operations with business goals.

Situation Overview

That IT infrastructure is continually growing more complex is simply a given. In IDC research, complexity is frequently cited as a key IT challenge. Most organizations are now hybrid multicloud, with data, systems, and platforms spread across on premises, major cloud providers, regional cloud providers, SaaS applications, and more. This scenario creates challenges in terms of governance, cost control, and IT skills management. To manage such complexity without automated tools is simply not possible.

Traditional infrastructure visibility tools have suffered from two major deficiencies. First, the proprietary nature of some tools offers deep insight into related infrastructure but limited insight into other vendor environments. Thus, these tools do not deliver on the promise of enterprise visibility. Second, for non-proprietary tools, the deployment often required agents that were heavily version dependent, making the management of such tools a major task. IT organizations learned that the cost and effort of managing the tool exceeded the benefit of using it. In both cases, the products quickly became "shelfware."

Infrastructure visibility can help organizations increase system availability and security and maximize ROI across these increasingly complex hybrid environments. These tools help organizations see how hardware, networks, applications, and cloud services are performing and quickly identify root causes. IT teams can improve operational performance and reduce downtime proactively. This visibility is essential for ensuring compliance and consistent policy management across the organization and identifying potential risks.

The need for enterprise infrastructure visibility is clear. To be effective, those tools need to offer a breadth of visibility options to match the organization's infrastructure, be easy enough to use that they deliver net labor savings, and help the organization reduce the total cost of its infrastructure.

NetApp Data Infrastructure Insights Overview

NetApp Data Infrastructure Insights is an infrastructure monitoring and observability platform designed to simplify the management of complex, multivendor, and hybrid environments delivered as SaaS. By providing telemetry from storage, compute, networks, and Kubernetes, it offers end-to-end visibility to better understand how components interconnect.

AI- and ML-powered capabilities identify performance anomalies and their root causes, along with actionable recommendations to reduce downtime and accelerate issue resolution. Data Infrastructure Insights highlights resource utilization trends, enabling smarter capacity planning and cost optimization, while Kubernetes-aware insights offer a granular view of cluster, node, and workload behavior.

Data Infrastructure Insights is fully integrated with NetApp ONTAP to enhance security and governance through user behavior analytics and file auditing. By detecting anomalies in user and file activity and providing detailed reporting, it helps organizations proactively address risks, ensure data protection, and meet compliance requirements with confidence.

The Business Value of Data Infrastructure Insights

Firmographics

IDC's research explored the value and benefits for organizations using Data Infrastructure Insights to simplify observability and the management of data environments. The project included four interviews with organizations that use Data Infrastructure Insights and have experience with, and/or knowledge of, the platform's benefits and costs. During the interviews, IDC asked the companies a variety of quantitative and qualitative questions about the offering's impact on their IT operations, core businesses, and costs.

As **Table 1 (below)** shows, the IDC study spanned diverse industries, including financial services, retail, and technology, primarily operating in the United States, with one organization based in Italy. On average, these companies had 27,500 employees and an IT staff of 1,200. Their annual revenues averaged $14.2 billion, and they managed substantial data environments, averaging over 96,000 terabytes (TB) of storage. This diversity highlights NetApp Data Infrastructure Insights' broad applicability across different sectors and scales of operation.

Table 1

Firmographics of Interviewed Organizations

Firmographics	Average	Median	Minimum	Maximum
Number of employees	27,500	29,500	1,000	50,000

Table 1 continued next page

Table 1 continued

Firmographics	Average	Median	Minimum	Maximum
Number of IT staff	1,200	675	450	3,000
Total number of TB per organization	96,250	65,000	5,000	250,000
Annual revenue	$14.2B	$15.8B	$182.0M	$25.0B
Industries	Financial Services (2), Retail, Technology			
Countries	United States (3), Italy (1)			

n = 4; Source: IDC Business Value In-Depth Interviews, December 2025

Choice and Use of Data Infrastructure Insights

The interviewed organizations described the criteria they used to select Data Infrastructure Insights. All these organizations faced challenges in managing large, distributed infrastructures, making them ideal candidates for evaluating the benefits of unified observability solutions, such as Data Infrastructure Insights, for simplified management. Organizations selected the NetApp platform primarily for its ability to provide a unified and centralized view of complex, multivendor environments. Customers emphasized that the platform simplified infrastructure monitoring by consolidating data into a standard, unified view, which was particularly valuable during critical operations, such as large-scale datacenter migrations. This unified visibility enabled faster troubleshooting and reduced reliance on multiple teams for information, thereby improving operational efficiency. Additionally, respondents highlighted the platform's robust features and functionality as key differentiators. For organizations managing globally distributed infrastructures with limited staff, these benefits were critical for optimizing resources and ensuring reliable performance.

Study participants offered these detailed comments:

Unified view of entire environment (technology):

"NetApp is one of the leading storage providers, and we have used its storage solutions, along with many others, since the early 2000s. With so many storage systems and SAN switches to manage, we needed a solution that could bring everything together in one dashboard, and NetApp [Data Infrastructure Insights] provided that capability."

Faster issue identification (financial services):
"My company selected NetApp DII because we needed a unified view of our multivendor environment. During a proof of concept for NetApp DII, we were migrating a large datacenter and encountered issues, and within 15 minutes, the tool helped identify a CPU-starved VMware server causing back pressure."

Enhanced efficiency (retail):
"There were multiple reasons for choosing NetApp DII. Our team is very small, yet we manage a globally distributed infrastructure that is largely outsourced, so efficiency was critical. With NetApp DII, we no longer need to contact different specialists for data, like UUIDs or datastore names, because the platform provides full visibility into servers, storage, and network paths in one place. It made infrastructure monitoring much easier."

Robust features and functions (financial services):
"My organization was already using other NetApp solutions and wanted a tool that could monitor NetApp infrastructure effectively. Our previous tool was free, but NetApp DII offered more features and functionality, which made it the better choice."

Table 2 (below) shows the usage across the organizations that IDC interviewed. These companies were using Data Infrastructure Insights across multiple large-scale environments, with an average of eight datacenters and support for nearly 19,000 internal users. Their infrastructures were highly virtualized, averaging over 9,300 virtual machines (VMs) and managing tens of thousands of terabytes of data, underscoring the complexity and scale of these environments.

Table 2
Organizational Usage of Data Infrastructure Insights

NetApp Customer Environment	Average	Median
Datacenters	8	7
Internal users supported	19,325	13,500
VMs	9,333	2,700
TB	58,288	7,000

n = 4; Source: IDC Business Value In-Depth Interviews, December 2025

Business Value and Quantified Benefits of Data Infrastructure Insights

Study participants reported a wide range of benefits from using Data Infrastructure Insights. Organizations reported that the platform significantly improved infrastructure visibility and centralized monitoring, enabling faster troubleshooting and proactive issue resolution. Customers emphasized that the platform simplified operations, strengthened governance, and provided real-time reporting on unused capacity, which helped optimize resources and reduce waste by leveraging existing hardware instead of purchasing new equipment.

Beyond operational improvements, Data Infrastructure Insights delivered strategic benefits, such as enhanced risk management and reliable infrastructure monitoring. Respondents noted that the solution helped maintain application availability while reducing data risk and supporting accurate capacity planning. In the aggregate, these capabilities allowed IT teams to operate more efficiently, minimize downtime, and align infrastructure management with broader business objectives.

Interviewed NetApp customers described the most significant benefits in detail:

Increased visibility and management (financial services):
"NetApp DII has provided a much better view of infrastructure performance than we had before. It also simplified operations, strengthened governance, and made troubleshooting faster for detection."

Centralized optimization (technology):
"A big benefit of NetApp DII is that it has centralized the monitoring of infrastructure across multiple datacenters and significantly reduced the time needed to resolve issues. It has allowed us to address degraded situations before they became critical. In addition, it has also provided real-time reporting on unused capacity. This has helped us optimize resources and reduce waste by using spare capacity instead of acquiring new hardware."

Reliable infrastructure monitoring (retail):
"For us, the benefits are primarily IT-focused because we use NetApp DII mainly for infrastructure monitoring. The most important functions that we use are capacity planning, performance analysis, troubleshooting, and maintaining an accurate inventory, which we rely on daily."

Decreased data risk (financial services):
"The biggest benefit of using NetApp DII is risk avoidance and increased availability. NetApp DII identified potential failures in redundant servers before they caused problems and helped us keep applications available while also improving data control, reducing waste, optimizing costs, and supporting more accurate planning."

Cost and Utilization Benefits

NetApp Data Infrastructure Insights enabled organizations to achieve substantial annual IT cost efficiencies by reducing licensing expenses, avoiding unnecessary hardware purchases, and reclaiming unused storage. Study participants reported that its visibility into utilization supported accurate planning and consolidation, which helped prevent overprovisioning and overspending. Across the interviewed organizations, these benefits translated into an average of $541,479 in annual IT cost avoidances.

As one study participant working in the technology sector noted:
"NetApp DII was more cost-effective than our previous software and easier to manage. We did not need to install or maintain servers, which eliminates vulnerabilities and simplifies management."

A retailer commented that:
"NetApp DII has helped us optimize IT costs. The visibility it provides makes it easier to plan, consolidate, and avoid overspending."

And another study participant working in the financial services sector noted that:
"Of the $1 million per year avoided in storage costs, about 80% comes from reducing overprovisioning and 20% from eliminating orphaned storage. This cost avoidance is primarily driven by addressing overprovisioning."

In addition, Data Infrastructure Insights significantly improved infrastructure utilization for organizations by providing clear visibility into performance and capacity. This enhanced transparency allowed IT teams to identify unused resources, consolidate workloads, and plan more effectively. This helped ensure that existing assets were leveraged to their fullest potential. By eliminating inefficiencies and enabling proactive management, organizations were able to optimize their infrastructure without unnecessary hardware investments. **The impact of these improvements was substantial, with interviewed organizations reporting a 33% higher utilization rate after adopting Data Infrastructure Insights.**

One retail customer explained the practical benefit:
"We used to be sitting at around 50% utilization most of the time, and with NetApp DII, we're closer to 70%. The forecasting and visibility help us stay ahead and clean things up before they become an issue."

Storage Administration and Analyst Benefits

IDC then evaluated the benefits of storage operations. Study participants reported that Data Infrastructure Insights delivered significant advantages for storage administrators and analysts by providing end-to-end visibility, strong automated correlation across complex environments, and improved alerting capabilities. These features eliminated the need for manual data gathering across multiple teams and reduced troubleshooting times, enabling faster and more accurate storage infrastructure management. Customers highlighted improvements such as fewer false alerts, better storage capacity monitoring, and the ability to proactively manage changes. This comprehensive visibility allowed administrators to maintain accurate inventories and anticipate usage trends, both of which are critical for efficient operations.

Study participants offered the following comments:

Strong infrastructure and data correlation (financial services):
"NetApp DII does a really good job with correlation and providing end-to-end visibility from a VMware virtual server through the physical server, SAN, and physical storage down to virtual storage. This correlation works across multiple vendors."

Increased visibility (retail):
"From our perspective, especially around storage, NetApp DII is super helpful because storage administrators now have full visibility and can access all the information themselves. They no longer need to go to compute, VMware, or power teams to get details like WWPNs. They can look everything up on their own."

Fewer false alerts (financial services):
"NetApp DII has better alerting capabilities for performance issues; we could not monitor this effectively before. It helps filter out short-term spikes. This means we get fewer false alerts by winnowing out very brief intervals where performance appears bad. The dashboards are also beneficial in reducing a lot of effort."

Improved monitoring (technology):
"NetApp DII helps with the discovery of the switches. We went from monitoring only 10 or 20 fiber channel ports with errors to confirming that 15,000 ports are good, which is very good monitoring. It is also important for managing storage capacity because features like thin provisioning and compression require us to anticipate usage and migrate storage proactively instead of reacting to critical alerts."

Proactive administration (retail):
"NetApp DII allows our system administrators to work proactively. It really helps them be ahead of problems versus chasing things all the time."

As **Table 3 (below)** shows, Data Infrastructure Insights significantly improved efficiency for storage administrators and analysts by streamlining infrastructure management tasks. After adoption, interviewed companies found that these administrators recognized a 19% efficiency gain with Data Infrastructure Insights, effectively returning 3.9 FTEs to focus on innovation and priority projects rather than the routine management of their storage and compute environments. Features such as unified dashboards, automated correlation, and end-to-end visibility largely drove this efficiency gain. They enabled the team to scale with organizational growth and work proactively within the environment. As one retail customer explained: *"Our storage administrators get a list of the full inventory with NetApp DII, and that helps them see which systems are out of support and which are getting high on utilization. They also get alerts anytime a change is made, which is definitely helpful."*

Table 3

Storage Administrator and Analyst Efficiency Gains

Storage Administrator and Analyst Efficiency Gains	Before NetApp DII	With NetApp DII	Difference	Benefit
Total FTE count	20.9	17.0	3.9	**19%**
Value of staff time per year	$2,090,615	$1,700,000	$390,615	**19%**

n = 4; Source: IDC Business Value In-Depth Interviews, December 2025

Infrastructure Management Benefits

IDC looked at the impacts on infrastructure management. Interviewed companies reported that Data Infrastructure Insights delivered strong benefits for IT infrastructure management teams by improving inventory correlation and resource planning. NetApp customers highlighted that Data Infrastructure Insights enabled accurate visibility into hardware utilization, helping organizations avoid unnecessary purchases and consolidate infrastructure effectively. The platform also supported refresh planning by identifying oversized or underutilized assets, allowing teams to migrate to smaller, more efficient devices and operate within tighter tolerances. Additionally, the ability to monitor Kubernetes environments and recognize every server connected to the SAN ensured comprehensive oversight across diverse infrastructures. Looking ahead, NetApp customers saw the platform as a catalyst for organizational evolution, positioning them to achieve better storage management, operational agility, and long-term efficiency as IT environments become more complex and distributed.

Study participants offered these observations:

Inventory correlation (retail):

"NetApp DII helps our IT infrastructure management team with strategic alignment by providing the correlation and inventory tools to make sure we are utilizing our inventory correctly and more efficiently. We are no longer spending money on hardware that we do not need, and we are able to consolidate infrastructure."

Improved resource planning (financial services):

"I want to underscore that our infrastructure team uses NetApp DII during refresh planning to figure out what is out there, how much is being utilized, and whether it is oversized. It has helped us refresh onto smaller devices and operate at a tighter tolerance."

Server recognition (technology):

"NetApp has helped IT infrastructure management because they have gained the ability to anticipate situations and failures. The feature that allows NetApp DII to recognize every server connected to our SAN is the major benefit for them, as it lets them list all servers, how they are connected, and generate usage reports by server for management."

Kubernetes monitoring (financial services):

"NetApp DII can monitor Kubernetes infrastructure. That is important because we needed a tool that supports multiple vendors and provides correlation."

As **Table 4 (below)** shows, Data Infrastructure Insights delivered measurable efficiency improvements for IT infrastructure management teams by simplifying inventory management and supporting proactive resource planning. Interviewed organizations reported that this team recognized an 11% efficiency gain, which IDC valued at $291,589 in staff time per year.

As one study participant working in the technology sector noted:

"I think in the future there will be an evolution of the infrastructure and IT groups. NetApp DII plays a big role in that evolution because these teams will merge individual capabilities to create teams that share knowledge and manage all infrastructures in a 360-degree way. This will lead to better storage management with the aid of automation."

Table 4

IT Infrastructure Management Team Efficiency Gains

IT Infrastructure Management Team Efficiency Gains	Before NetApp DII	With NetApp DII	Difference	Benefit
Total FTE count	26.9	24.0	2.9	11%
Value of staff time per year	$2,691,589	$2,400,000	$291,589	11%

n = 4; Source: IDC Business Value In-Depth Interviews, December 2025

Site Reliability Engineering Benefits

Data Infrastructure Insights provided considerable benefits for site reliability engineering (SRE) teams by centralizing alerts and performance data into a single source of truth. This consolidation enabled engineers to quickly identify and resolve issues without navigating multiple tools, thereby improving their on-the-job operational efficiency. Study participants reported that Data Infrastructure Insights positively impacted application performance, stability, and availability by offering robust monitoring capabilities and proactive recommendations. Features such as dashboards, notifications, and comprehensive performance reporting allowed SRE teams to anticipate potential problems and maintain consistent SLAs across complex multivendor environments.

Study participants elaborated on these benefits:

Centralized alerts (technology):

"NetApp DII has helped our site reliability engineers because alerts are a unique source, and they have all of them in one place. They can check an alert and immediately see where the problem is."

Positive impact on performance (retail):

"NetApp DII has positively impacted the performance, stability, and availability of our applications and workloads. It is the only monitoring tool that my company uses for all system monitoring and performance reviews."

Robust performance reporting (financial services):

"Our site reliability engineers appreciate NetApp's performance reporting. It provides a lot of alerting that looks for different issues that could lead to performance trouble. Features like proactive recommendations, notifications, dashboards, and centralized data have been helpful for the team."

Table 5 (below) presents metrics describing how site reliability engineers benefited directly from improved efficiency stemming from centralizing alerts and performance data. These improvements enabled site reliability engineers to achieve a 14% efficiency gain, meaning that they were able to return the equivalent of 1.3 FTEs to focus on other priority tasks with Data Infrastructure Insights. IDC valued this staff time savings at $128,539 per year.

Table 5

Site Reliability Engineer Efficiency Gains

Site Reliability Engineer Efficiency Gains	Before NetApp DII	With NetApp DII	Difference	Benefit
Total FTE count	9.3	8.0	1.3	14%
Value of staff time per year	$928,539	$800,000	$128,539	14%

n = 4; Source: IDC Business Value In-Depth Interviews, December 2025

IDC further evaluated several key performance indicators to highlight specific areas of improvement. Data Infrastructure Insights enhanced the performance of data infrastructure by delivering real-time visibility into system health and identifying issues before they impacted applications. Its advanced monitoring and correlation capabilities allowed teams to resolve problems quickly and maintain consistent availability for critical workloads. **Interviewed companies reported a 49% faster identification of root causes for issues, thanks to unified dashboards and topology mapping from servers to storage.**

One study participant working in the technology field noted:
"NetApp DII has helped us pinpoint the root causes of issues faster because it provides us with a single dashboard. We can see everything in the infrastructure, including the topology from the server to the storage, and quickly identify where a failure has occurred. It is easy for us to recognize which server is failing and where it is connected to the SAN."

Additionally, the platform reduced the risk of major data breaches or losses by up to 28%, leveraging workload security features such as anomaly detection and snapshot capabilities to identify and mitigate unusual behavior or threats. Another participant working in the financial services sector observed: *"NetApp DII helps identify potential risk areas. I would say we have reduced the risk of a major data breach or loss by about 50% because of NetApp DII."*

Challenges/Opportunities

Infrastructure visibility tools can offer significant benefits to customers, as these results illustrate. However, no two customer situations are the same, either in the infrastructure they deploy or in the staff operating it. For the best results, these tools must be used and applied consistently and generally cannot be considered "set and forget." Moreover, given the vastness of the hybrid multicloud environment, no single tool can address all permutations. IT buyers should assess their situation and compare it to the capabilities of the visibility tool.

Conclusion

IDC's business value analysis seeks to quantify how NetApp Data Infrastructure Insights has improved observability and management across complex, hybrid, multivendor customer environments. Our analysis confirmed how Data Infrastructure Insights has facilitated higher infrastructure utilization, reduced operational risk, and accelerated problem troubleshooting through unified dashboards, topology mapping, and analytics in these situations. Interviewed enterprises achieved 33% higher utilization, 49% quicker identification of root causes of issues, 19% storage admin efficiency, 14% SRE efficiency, 11% IT infrastructure management efficiency, and lower breach risk.

While every customer situation is unique, not all scenarios will benefit equally. These results show the possible gains that translate into substantial annual IT cost avoidance, mainly from reclaiming unused capacity, reducing overprovisioning, and avoiding unnecessary hardware purchases.

About the IDC Analysts

Phil Goodwin

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Phil Goodwin is research vice president within IDC's Worldwide Infrastructure Research organization and global research lead for the Infrastructure Software Platforms practice. He leads a team of analysts that provide detailed insights and analyses on evolving infrastructure software trends, vendor performance, and the impact of new technology adoption. Goodwin's own research focuses on multi-cloud data management, data logistics, on-premises and cloud-based data protection as a service, cyberprotection and recovery, and recovery orchestration. He takes a holistic view of these markets and covers risk analysis, service-level requirements, and cost/benefit calculations in his research. Goodwin also contributes regularly to IDC's CIO Advisory practice.

More about Phil Goodwin →

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Megan Szurley is manager for the Business Value Strategy practice, responsible for creating custom business value research that determines the ROI and cost savings for enterprise technology products. Szurley's research focuses on the financial and operational impact of these products for organizations once deployed and in production. Prior to joining the Business Value Strategy practice, Szurley was a consulting manager within IDC's Custom Solutions division, delivering consultative support across every stage of the business life cycle: business planning and budgeting, sales and marketing, and performance measurement. In her position, Szurley partners with IDC analyst teams to support deliverables that focus on thought leadership, business value, custom analytics, buyer behavior, and content marketing. These customized deliverables are often derived from primary research and yield content marketing, market models, and customer insights.

More about Megan Szurley →

Message from the Sponsor

About NetApp Data Infrastructure Insights

NetApp Data Infrastructure Insights is an IT infrastructure monitoring and AI-driven analytics solution that helps storage teams ensure the performance, availability, and security of their heterogeneous environment. It delivers end-to-end visibility by unifying telemetry from diverse storage vendors, networks, virtualized and container environments, and applications into a unified view. Designed specifically for storage teams, Data Infrastructure Insights AI-driven analytics identify risks, detect anomalies, pinpoint root causes, and recommend solutions to resolve issues faster. By connecting insights from storage to workload, users can reduce risks, cut costs, and optimize operations, turning complex data into confident decisions for infrastructure growth and modernization.

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