A US State Retirement System Extends AFF Space with Cloud Tiering

Success Story

A statewide public employees retirement system

Problem Solved

Learn how NetApp's Cloud Tiering helped address this organization's data growth challenges with production applications.

This organization is an independent, state-affiliated agency that oversees the benefits pension plan that supports over 350,000 public employees in a central US state. Responsible for a trust that has assets in excess of $30 billion, it provides a vital part of the state's economy and attracts a dynamic employee pool for the future.

Challenges

The organization recently adopted a cloud-first strategy. The first step was to move disaster recovery and offsite backups to the cloud using NetApp Cloud Volumes ONTAP for AWS while their production applications remained in their on-prem NetApp AFF cluster. However, that AFF cluster began to run extremely low on space—and the data was continuing to accumulate. Their storage team needed a way to quickly reclaim space and extend their existing storage capacity by moving inactive data to the cloud, all while making sure that data would be accessible for immediate use if needed.

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Why Cloud Tiering

The solution for this organization was NetApp's Cloud Tiering service. Cloud Tiering automatically detects cold, inactive data on NetApp AFF systems and tiers that data seamlessly and automatically to object storage in the cloud until it needs to be accessed again. This made it possible for the organization to easily and quickly free up space on their on-prem cluster. Since NetApp Cloud Tiering is fully integrated into Cloud Manager, it can be directly accessed through the same control endpoint the organization currently uses for Cloud Volumes ONTAP. This streamlined workflow made it easy for them to discover their existing AFF arrays and start sending data to the cloud. Since they began using the Cloud Tiering service, over 20 TB of cold production data has been moved to Amazon S3 object storage.

Cloud Tiering's flexible licensing options also allowed the organization to mix and match BYOL and Pay-as-you-Go subscriptions. With the Pay-as-you-Go model, their tiering expenses can be considered OPEX spending, preventing the long and exhausting procurement cycle for new hardware. The PayGo model also allowed the organization to continue tiering cold data to the cloud even after their BYOL reached its capacity limits.

"This feature allowed us to reduce the on-prem storage occupancy on both of the aggregates by 20%," said the organization's Storage Admin Specialist. *"My organization found a lot of value in utilizing Cloud Volumes ONTAP and Cloud Tiering. And the support team was outstanding. I would recommend Cloud Volumes ONTAP and Cloud Tiering to any organization looking for robust cloud storage and a way to reduce their on-prem footprint."*

Summary

As the organization's data continues to grow, Cloud Tiering is being used with their on-premises production ONTAP cluster to discover new savings opportunities. With Cloud Tiering, inactive cold data is tiered to Amazon S3, extending their storage capacity without the need to begin the cumbersome procurement cycle to accommodate additional hardware. The Cloud Tiering service significantly reduces their storage costs without increasing operational expenses since no end-users or application refactoring is involved and data is always seamlessly accessible.

"I would recommend Cloud Volumes ONTAP and Cloud Tiering to any organization looking for robust cloud storage and a way to reduce their on-prem footprint."

—*The organization's Storage Admin Specialist.*

Solution Components

NetApp Product: NetApp Cloud Tiering, NetApp AFF A300 2-node cluster

Third-Party Components: Amazon S3 standard storage class