



NetApp AFF (All Flash FAS)

Review From A Customer



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VP Global Storage at a financial services firm
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it_user527364

WHAT IS MOST VALUABLE?

We have some specific workloads that are pretty demanding that struggle on spinning media. We're looking to leverage All Flash FAS to meet the workload demands of some of our real high IO clients. That's primarily why we're looking at it.

HOW HAS IT HELPED MY ORGANIZATION?

The benefits are yet to be seen. We're currently putting it in right now. It's not in production yet. It's still being installed. We tested it. We're expecting a significant workload increase from our previous-generation platforms, but we'll find out soon enough. We just have experience with it in our testing. We tested it. It was a lot faster. We haven't put a full production workload on it yet. We expect it to be much faster.

WHAT NEEDS IMPROVEMENT?

I think it is on the product roadmap already, but I would like to see more of the cloud pools and tiering. Obviously, some workloads need the speed of flash, but some workloads also have pieces of it that don't. They'd be able to leverage the speed, but then age data moving off to object, spinning media or whatever would definitely be good for the future. It's currently lacking that right now, but it's on the roadmap that I've seen, so I think they're heading that direction.

FOR HOW LONG HAVE I USED THE SOLUTION?

I've been probably using it for a good nine months. We had some thorough testing and looking at what workloads we can fit on it. Then, we've been through a six-month install process. That's an internal thing for us.

WHAT DO I THINK ABOUT THE STABILITY OF THE SOLUTION?

We haven't used it much in production yet, but as far as we can tell, it is stable.



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WHAT DO I THINK ABOUT THE SCALABILITY OF THE SOLUTION?

We haven't really scaled it yet. We expect it to be scalable.

HOW ARE CUSTOMER SERVICE AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT?

We have not used technical support specifically for this product, but in general, it's hit or miss. Sometimes, when we first call in, we get some medium-level resources that don't really solve our problems right away. Once we get to the escalation or higher-level guys, they're usually really, really good.

WHICH SOLUTION DID I USE PREVIOUSLY AND WHY DID I SWITCH?

Our production environments are currently normal, non-flash FAS appliances. They are stressing the hardware significantly, so that's why we looked at All Flash. They run thousands of compute nodes. They want to run more but they can't right now, because the system is already maxed out. We're hoping they can scale that and run a lot more on the all-flash array.

HOW WAS THE INITIAL SETUP?

Initial setup is pretty straightforward. Especially hardware-wise, it's not much different than what we currently have; we're pretty used to installing.

WHICH OTHER SOLUTIONS DID I EVALUATE?

We considered quite a few vendors before deciding on NetApp. We considered EMC Isilon and a couple other smaller vendors. We eventually chose the FAS, primarily because we already have the equipment and the environment. It doesn't really change our support structure. We don't have to learn anything new. Obviously, cost is a factor, too. When selecting a vendor to work with, they have to have a good product, number one. They have to be a good partner. Cost is obviously a factor for everybody, but it's got to be something we need that solves our needs and meets our requirements. They have to be a good partner; it's not just, "Here, you figure it out." They work with us to make it work, which NetApp does a pretty good job of, and then make it affordable for us.

WHAT OTHER ADVICE DO I HAVE?

Look at TCO. Most people look at flash and just look at it as being expensive: "Can we avoid it and use something cheaper?" There are other savings besides just the straight-out, raw cost. I think it does what we need pretty well. I can't give it a perfect rating because we haven't thrown a giant production workload on it to see how it scales and works. So far, it's doing what we need it to do.

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