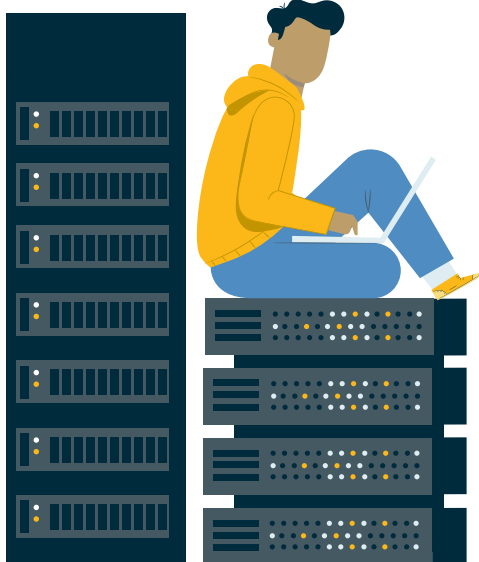


Evaluation Criteria for Software-Defined Storage

As you look to adopt SDS for your IT environment, you need to understand that not all SDS solutions are the same. Some storage manufacturers offer solutions that are bound only to their hardware, offering no flexibility to integrate gear from other suppliers. Then there are other SDS variants that necessitate a cloud commitment which might not be a reasonable option for you today. And there are limitations of supported storage protocols and deployment options in some SDS tools that may not go all the way to support your heterogeneous or hybrid infrastructure.

To help you on your SDS adoption journey, here are some criteria for you to consider as you go about evaluating SDS solutions in the market.



1. Ensure continuous business operations

The solution of your choice must be able to create data redundancy locally and over remote sites along with integrated failover, resynchronisation and failback capabilities. Additionally, point-in-time data recovery techniques (snapshots, backup integration, and/or CDP) should be included to return to normal operations based on the last good known data status in the event of data loss.

2. Enable fast data access

Responsiveness of storage devices is critical for a positive user experience. Consequently, the chosen solution should cover inherent functionalities to improve storage response times. These are caching mechanisms, parallel operations, and fully automated, continuously updated and transparent placement of data to the right storage.

3. Integrate new technologies easily

To save future implementation time and costs, the selected solution should be able to provide simple ways to include new technologies (e.g. NVMe, Intel Optane, cloud, etc.) easily into the existing environment. Also, it should be possible to add/switch/decommission storage equipment during business operation.

4. Achieve non-disruptive data migration

Migrating data is a complex process which requires tremendous efforts and bears some risks. Therefore, the solution of your choice should enable seamless and remotely controlled migration of data between all disparate storage media without causing any disruptions.

5. Gain free choice of hardware assets

Being bound to a single supplier contains many disadvantages. Among others, your choice of products/services are limited, your price negotiation position is impacted, and technical dependencies limit your ability to act according to your needs. Having a maximum compatibility to work with any storage equipment from any manufacturer, provides you with the necessary freedom of choice and should be a mandatory selection factor of your solution.

6. Automate storage service management

To enable IT teams to be more productive, they must be freed from spending too much time on unimportant tasks. The easiest way to achieve this is leveraging automation. Only consider solutions that massively help you to automate repetitive manual administration and management tasks.

7. Centralize capacity management

Look for solutions that are able to aggregate resources across diverse storage hardware, ideally regardless of how they are physically connected, and centrally manage capacity provisioning and load balancing.

8. Scale without boundaries

Especially nowadays, it is hard to predict what storage will be needed in a couple of years. Whether you need to scale up or scale out your on-premises storage environment or you are expanding to the cloud with a hybrid cloud strategy, the solution has to facilitate easy ways to expand capacity where you want, how you want.

9. Deliver uniform data services across diverse storage

Regardless of what make or model of storage gear is being used, the selected solution must allow for uniform execution of all data services across heterogeneous storage infrastructures. In addition, the scope and quality of the data services should correspond to the so-called “enterprise class”.

10. Leverage a mature product with flexible licensing

Look for solutions that have weathered the test of time and matured. In addition, prefer offerings which offer an excellent support expertise, which is available 24x7. Transparent licensing and competitive pricing provide maximum cost-per-capacity advantage as your capacity consumption continues to grow.

By using the right SDS solution you can easily adapt your primary, secondary, and archival storage to your business requirements. Maximize the value across your IT investments by improving data access and protection while reducing costs – onsite, across sites, or in the cloud. Break free from vendor lock-in and future-proof your infrastructure to prepare for the demands of tomorrow. Replace ineffective methods with automated solutions for data protection, placement, update, and retrieval.

Whether you seek to make better use of disparate assets already in place, simply expand your capacity, or modernize your environment completely with new storage technology, Software-Defined Storage helps.

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