



Best practices for designing and implementing modern data-centric architecture use cases

# AWS Prescriptive Guidance



# **AWS Prescriptive Guidance: Best practices for designing and implementing modern data-centric architecture use cases**

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# Best practices for designing and implementing modern data-centric architecture use cases

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Organizations are increasingly moving away from application-centric architectures to embrace data-centric architectures where IT infrastructure, application development, and even business processes are designed around data requirements. In a data-centric architecture, data is a core IT asset, and you design your IT systems and processes to optimize your data.

This guide offers best practices for designing a modern data-centric architecture for your use case. You can use these best practices to modernize your data pipelines and the data engineering operations that support that pipeline. This guide also provides an overview of the lifecycle of data in a data pipeline. By understanding this lifecycle, you can build data pipelines that optimize your data.

You can use this guide to overcome the following challenges that many organizations face when designing a data-centric architecture for data pipelines:

- **Aversion to storing multiple versions of the same dataset** – It's not uncommon to frequently process data multiple times, but this approach has its limitations. In fact, it's often less resource intensive and more cost effective to avoid processing data multiple times. This guide shows you the benefit of taking a different approach that focuses on storing processed data in multiple stages.
- **Reluctance to embrace data lakes** – It can be difficult to sort through the marketing claims around data lakes, and it can also be challenging to figure out if your organization has the skills and resources required for incorporating a data lake into your IT systems and processes. This guide can help you understand how a data lake can be a useful component in your data-centric architecture.
- **Hiring enough data engineers** – Market trends suggest that data scientists are expected to perform data engineering tasks in many organizations even though they don't have the right data engineering skills. This skills gaps can have an impact on your time-to-market plans. This guide can help you better understand what data engineering skills are essential for designing a data-centric architecture.

- **Lack of knowledge about using AWS services for horizontal processing** – Horizontal or distributed processing enables a cluster to process chunks of data in parallel by mapping tasks to multiple nodes and collecting the result before sending it transparently to the user. The move toward horizontal processing represents a shift around how data is viewed and processed. This shift affects not just application logic or the application itself but also the way organizations work with data. For example, horizontal processing affects central storage, task distribution, and modularization. Horizontal processing also favors larger chunks of data for read-write operations. This guide explains how horizontal processing can work for your data pipeline.

## Targeted business outcomes

This guide can help you and your organization achieve the following business outcomes:

- Better planning for your data architecture projects
- More secure governance of the data lifecycle
- Faster deployment of data pipeline projects
- Higher-quality architecture and engineering of data pipeline solutions

# Data engineering principles

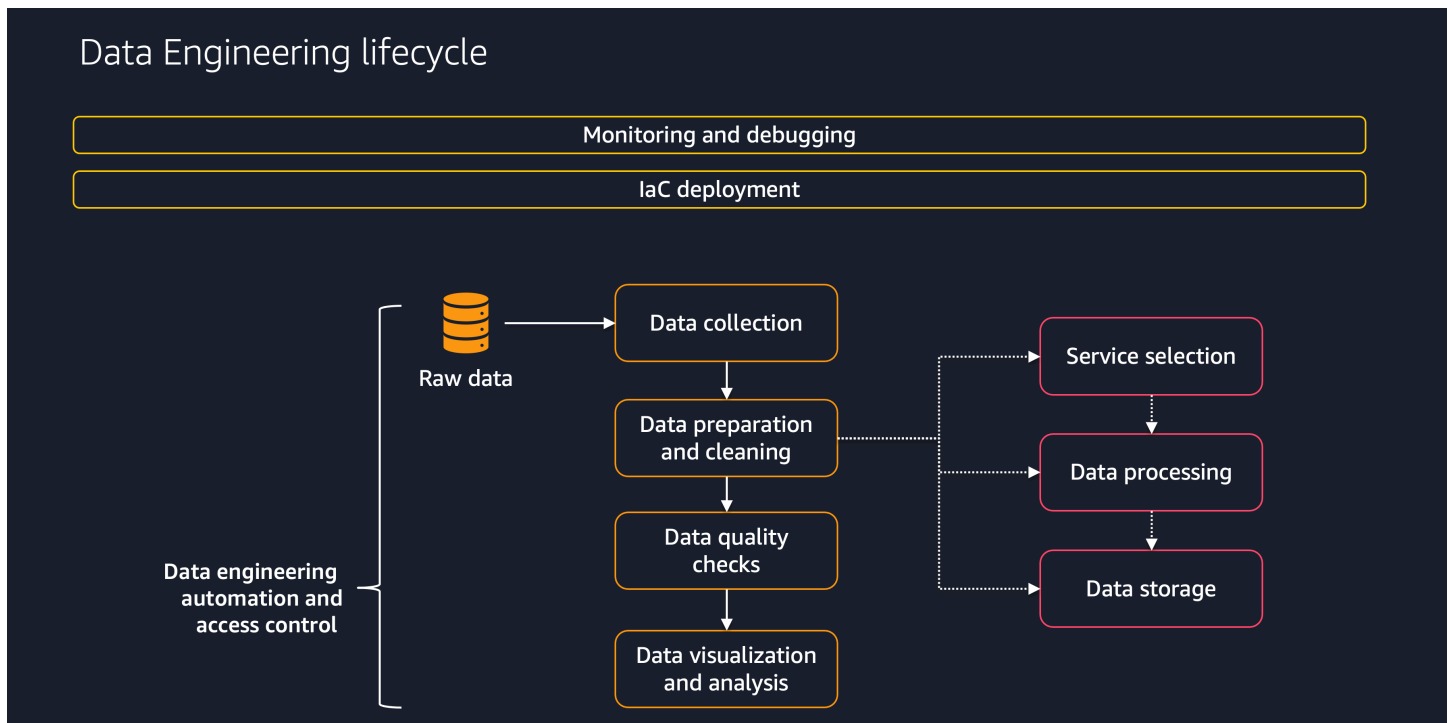
We recommend that you adopt the principles in the following table when you build an architecture for a modern data pipeline.

Principle	Example	Use case
Flexibility	Use microservices	<a href="#">FastGo enjoys flexibility and scalability with a microservices architecture on AWS</a> (AWS case study)
Reproducibility	Use infrastructure as code (IaC) to deploy your services	<a href="#">Part 3: How NatWest Group built auditable, reproducible, and explainable ML models with Amazon SageMaker</a> (AWS Machine Learning Blog)
Reusability	Use libraries and references in a shared manner	<a href="#">Create and reuse governed datasets in Amazon QuickSight with new Dataset-as-a-Source feature</a> (AWS Big Data Blog)
Scalability	Choose service configurations to accommodate any data load	<a href="#">Designing a data lake for growth and scale on the AWS Cloud</a> (AWS Prescriptive Guidance)
Auditability	Keep an audit trail by using logs, versions, and dependencies	<a href="#">How Parametric Built Audit Surveillance using AWS Data Lake Architecture</a> (AWS Architecture Blog)

# Data lifecycle

To build a data pipeline, you must first ingest data into AWS from an external or internal data source, such as a file server, database, storage bucket, or from an API call. The ingested data may or may not go through transformation, such as anonymization, column dropping, or data cleaning.

This section provides an overview of the stages in the data lifecycle process, as shown in the following diagram.

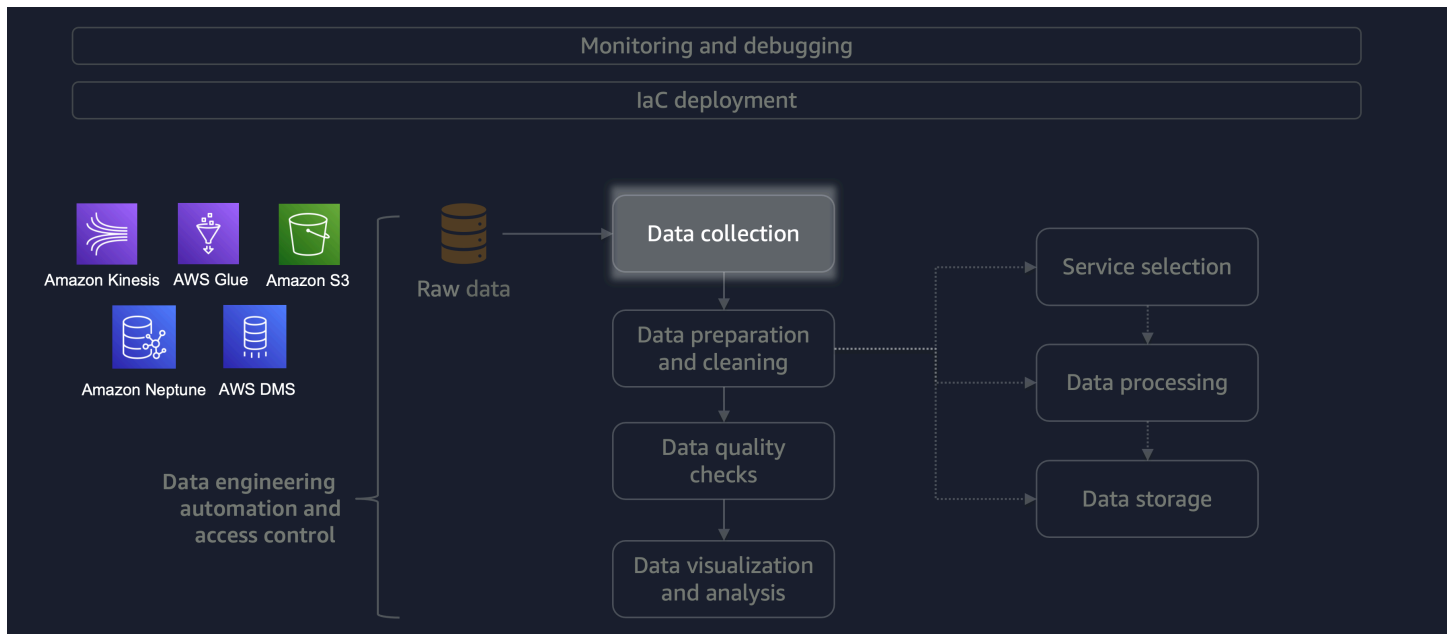


These stages include the following:

- Data collection
- Data preparation and cleaning
- Data quality checks
- Data visualization and analysis
- Monitoring and debugging
- IaC deployment
- Automation and access control

## Data collection

You can collect data from a variety of sources within AWS, but it's important to choose the right data collection tool for your use case. The following diagram shows how the data collection stage fits into the data engineering automation and access control lifecycle.



AWS provides the following data collection tools:

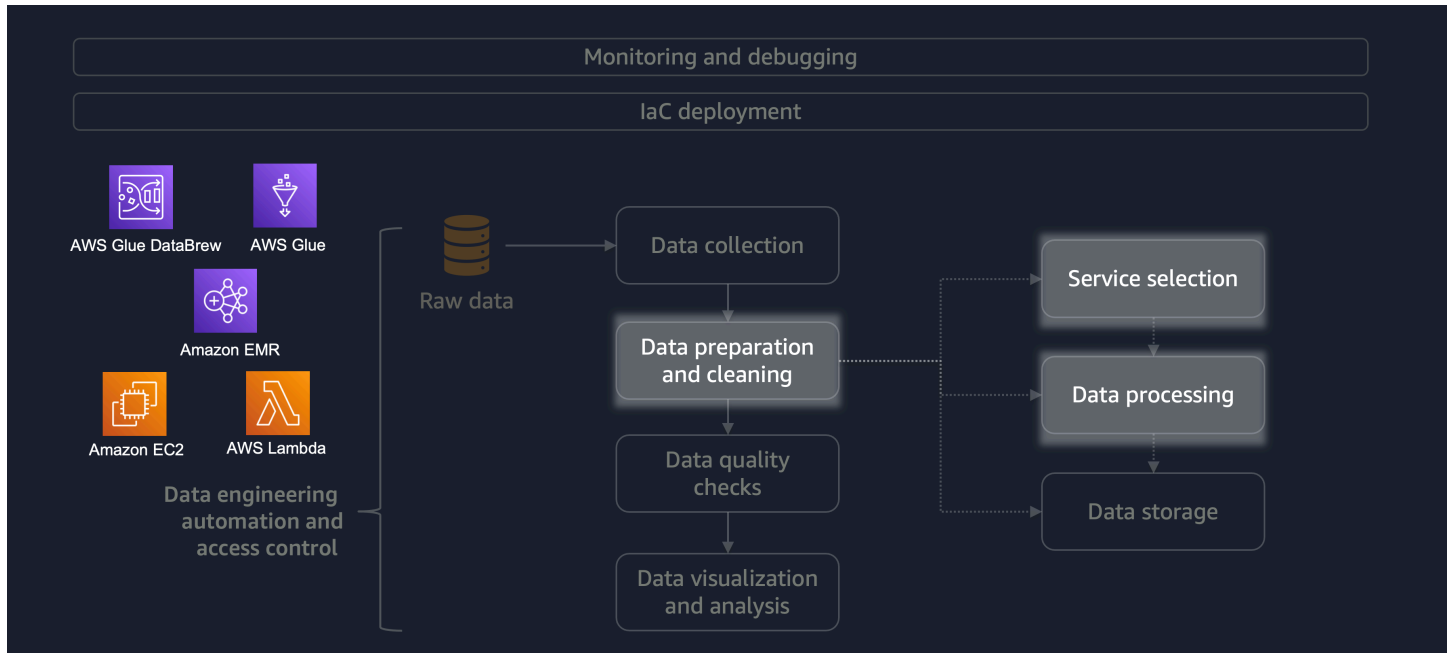
- [Amazon Kinesis](#) helps you collect streaming data. Kinesis also offers seamless integration and processing capabilities.
- [AWS Database Migration Service \(AWS DMS\)](#) helps you ingest data from relational databases. AWS DMS has configuration options and direct connections between on-premises and database services, such as Amazon Simple Storage Service (Amazon S3), that are hosted on AWS.
- [AWS Glue](#) is an extract, transform, and load (ETL) tool that helps you ingest unstructured data.

There are several use cases for collecting unstructured or semi-structured data by using Amazon S3 for storage. For example, a manufacturing site's data collection use case could require historical data to be ingested for machine history data as XML files, event data as JSON files, and purchase data from a relational database. This use case could also require that all three data sources must be joined.

Before you start the data ingestion process, we recommend that you understand what data must be ingested, and then choose the right tool to collect this data.

## Data preparation and cleaning

Data preparation and cleaning is one of the most important yet most time-consuming stages of the data lifecycle. The following diagram shows how the data preparation and cleaning stage fits into the data engineering automation and access control lifecycle.



Here are some examples of data preparation or cleaning:

- Mapping text columns to codes
- Ignoring empty columns
- Filling empty data fields with `0`, `None`, or `' '`
- Anonymizing or masking personally identifiable information (PII)

If you have a large workload that has a variety of data, then we recommend that you use [Amazon EMR](#) or [AWS Glue](#) for your data preparation and cleaning tasks. Amazon EMR and AWS Glue both work with unstructured, semi-structured, and relational data, and both can use Apache Spark to create a `DataFrame` or `DynamicFrame` to work with horizontal processing. Moreover, you can use [AWS Glue DataBrew](#) to clean and process data with a no-code approach. Additionally, DataBrew can profile your dataset with column statistics, provide data lineages, and include data quality rules for all or specified columns.

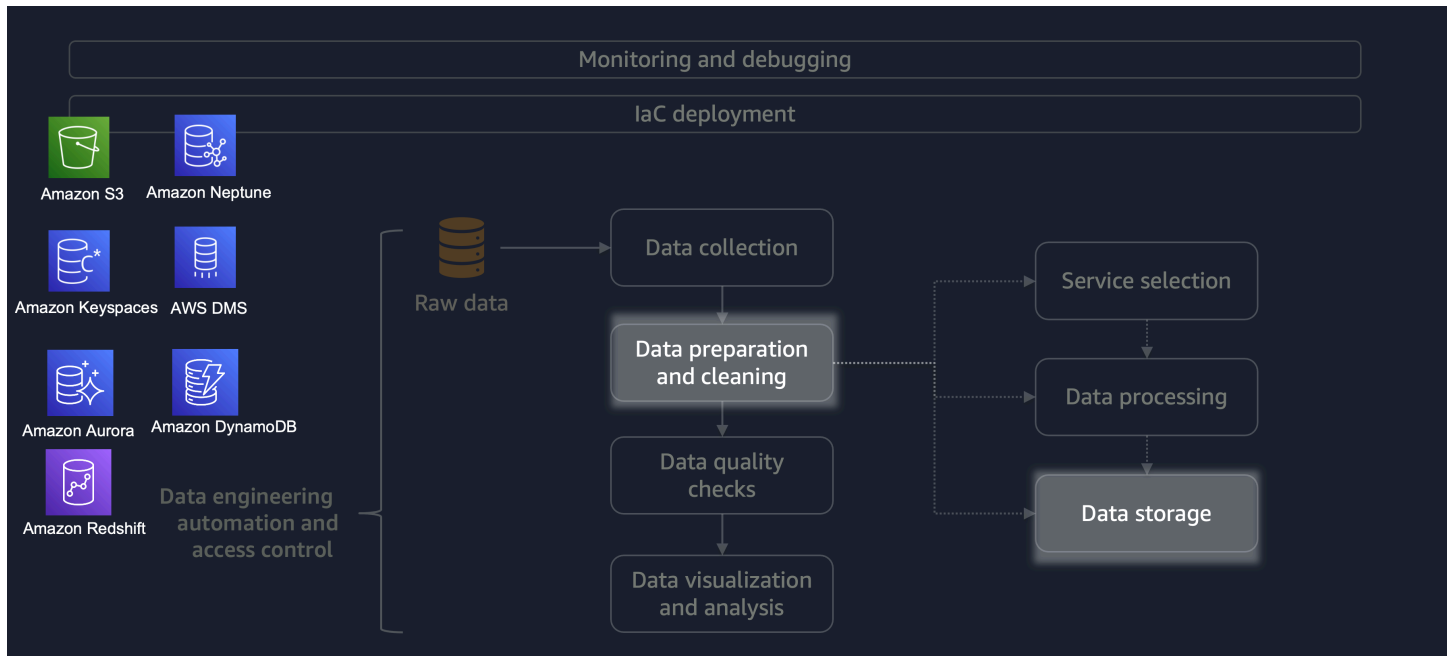
For smaller workloads that don't require distributed processing and can be completed in under 15 minutes, we recommend that you use [AWS Lambda](#) for data preparation and cleaning. Lambda is a cost-effective and lightweight option for smaller workloads. For highly secure data that can't enter the cloud, we recommend that you perform data anonymization on Amazon Elastic Compute Cloud (Amazon EC2) instances by using an [AWS Outposts](#) server.

It's essential to choose the right AWS service for data preparation and cleaning and to understand the tradeoffs involved with your choice. For example, consider a scenario where you're choosing from AWS Glue, DataBrew, and Amazon EMR. AWS Glue is ideal if the ETL job is infrequent. An infrequent job takes place once a day, once a week, or once a month. You can further assume that your data engineers are proficient in writing Spark code (for big data use cases) or scripting in general. If the job is more frequent, running AWS Glue constantly can get expensive. In this case, Amazon EMR provides distributed processing capabilities and offers both a serverless and server-based version. If your data engineers don't have the right skillset or if you must deliver results fast, then DataBrew is a good option. DataBrew can reduce the effort to develop code and speed up the data preparation and cleaning process.

After the processing is completed, the data from the ETL process is stored on AWS. The choice of storage depends on what type of data you're dealing with. For example, you could be working with non-relational data like graph data, key-value pair data, images, text files, or relational structured data.

As shown in the following diagram, you can use the following AWS services for data storage:

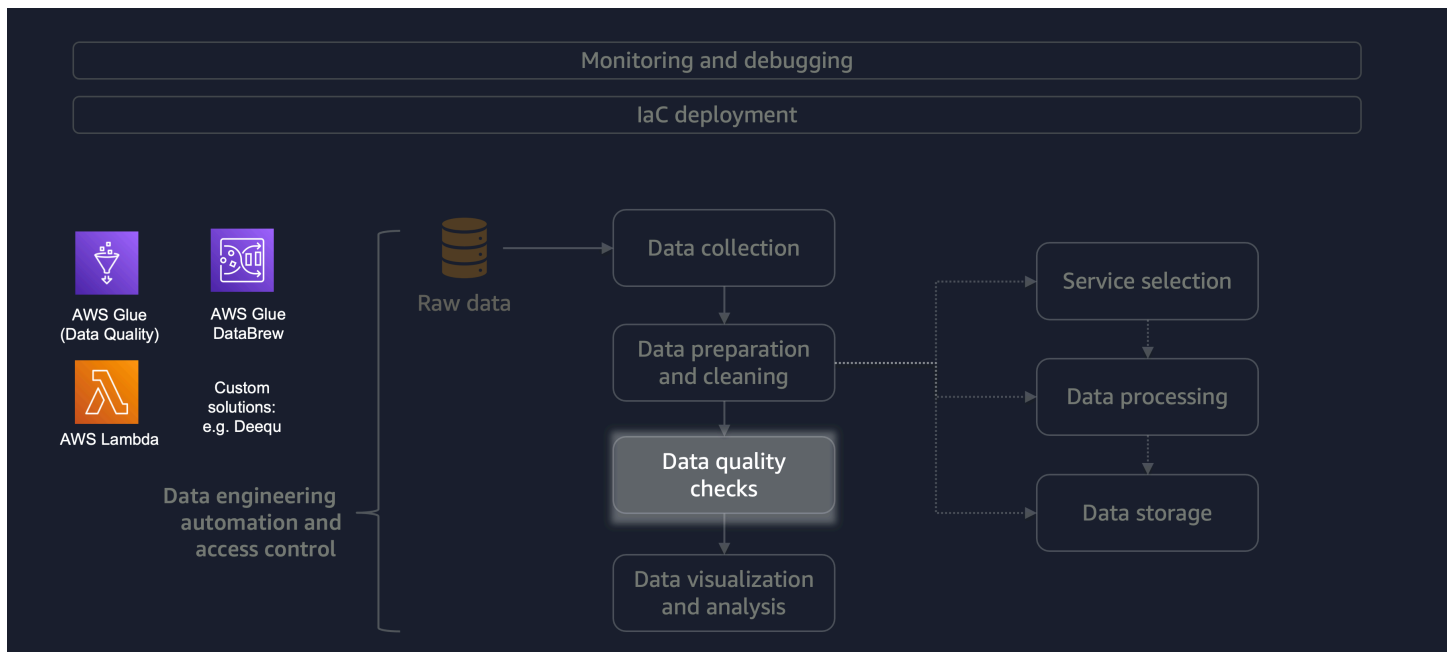
- [Amazon S3](#) stores unstructured data or semi-structured data (for example, Apache Parquet files, images, and videos).
- [Amazon Neptune](#) stores graph datasets that you can query by using SPARQL or GREMLIN.
- [Amazon Keyspaces \(for Apache Cassandra\)](#) stores datasets that are compatible with Apache Cassandra.
- [Amazon Aurora](#) stores relational datasets.
- [Amazon DynamoDB](#) stores key-value or document data in a NoSQL database.
- [Amazon Redshift](#) stores workloads for structured data in a data warehouse.



By using the right service with the correct configurations, you can store your data in the most efficient and effective way. This minimizes the effort involved in data retrieval.

## Data quality checks

Data quality is an integral yet often overlooked part of the data cleaning process. The following diagram shows how data quality checks fit into the data engineering automation and access control lifecycle.

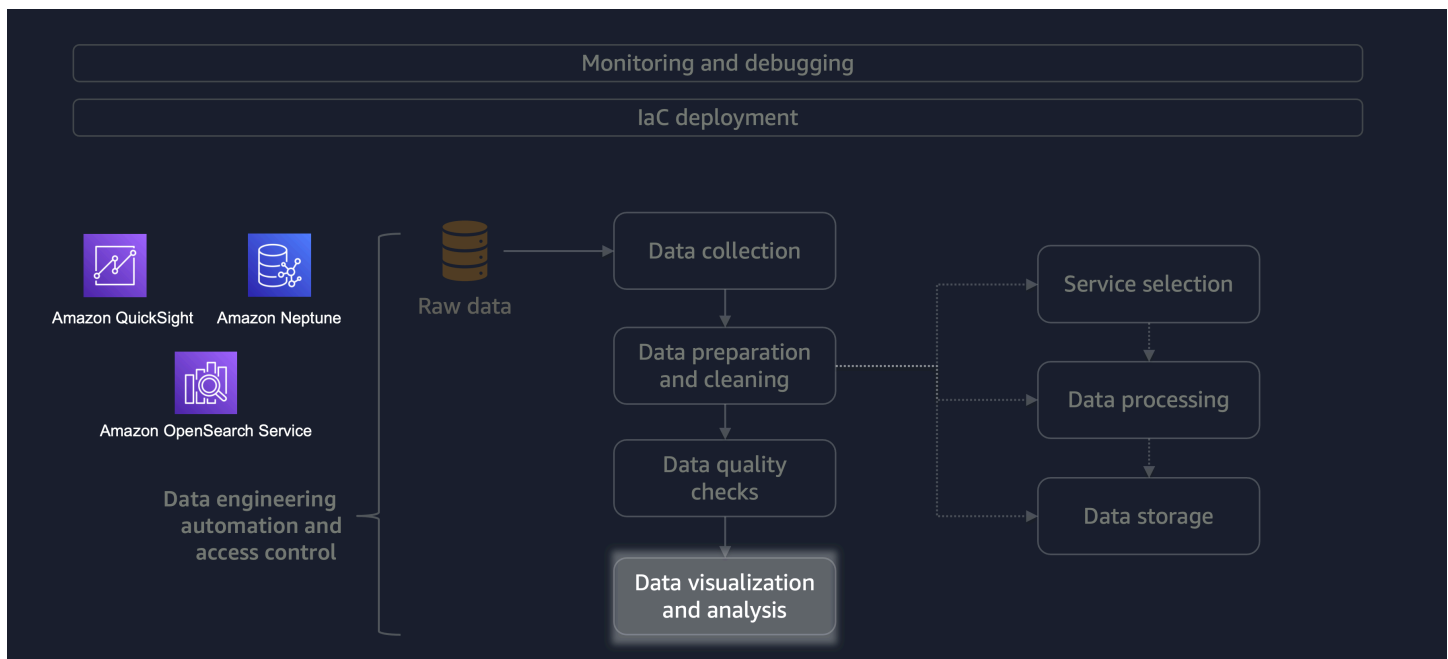


The following table provides an overview of different data quality solutions based on use case.

Use case	Solution	Example
No-code solution to add column-level or table-level quality conditions	<a href="#">AWS Glue DataBrew</a>	Checks if all column values are between 1 and 12, or if a table or column is empty
Custom code added to an AWS Glue job or a no-code solution (in preview) to add column-level or table-level quality conditions	<a href="#">AWS Glue Data Quality</a>	Checks if the column <code>first_name</code> is not null, or if the column <code>phone_number</code> contains only numbers or a "+" operator and/or statistical functions, such as average or sum
Custom checks	ETL of choice, such as <a href="#">AWS Lambda</a> , <a href="#">AWS Glue</a> , or <a href="#">Amazon EMR</a>	Checks if the value of column A is always greater than the corresponding value of column B and column C, or if the value of column <code>continent</code> is always geographically correct and derived from the <code>city</code> column
Sophisticated solution with a metrics report, constraint validation, and constraint suggestions	<a href="#">Deequ</a>	Checks if the <code>CompletenessConstraint</code> for the Completeness of column <code>metric_review_id</code> is equal to 1

## Data visualization and analysis

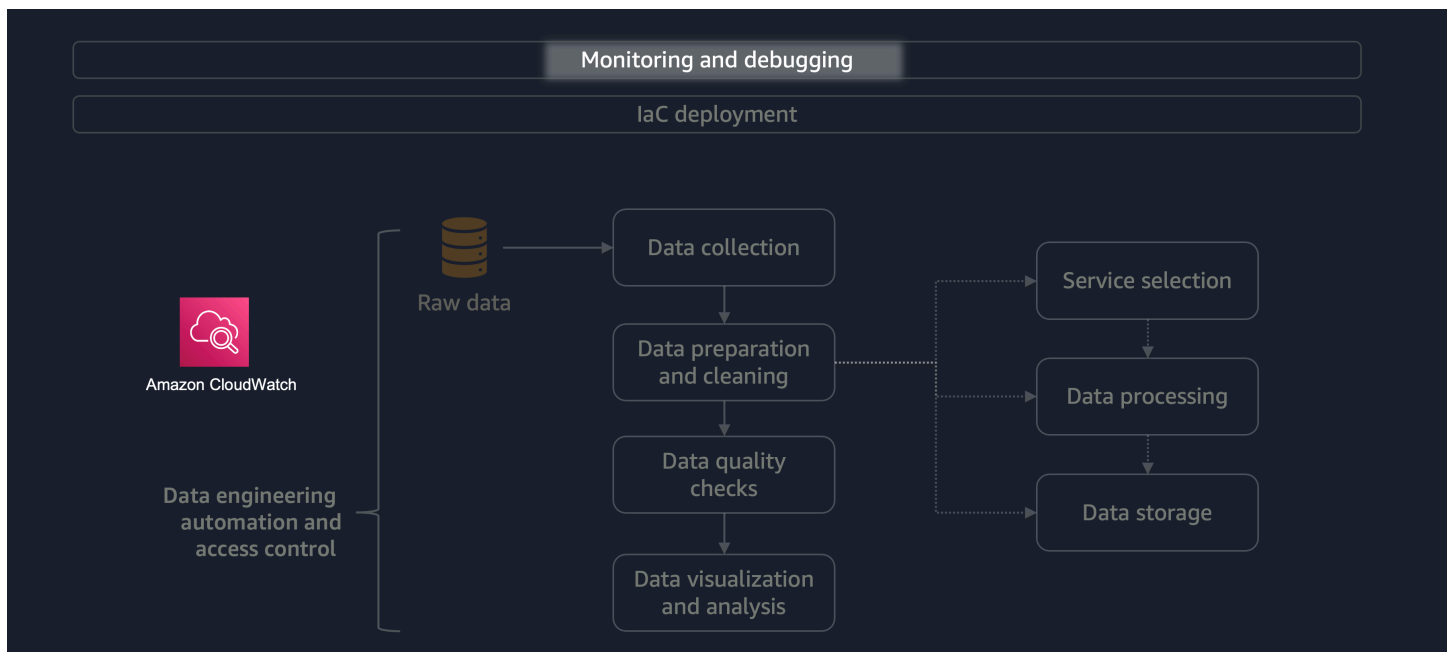
After you complete your data quality checks, then you can move to the data analysis or visualization stage, as shown in the following diagram.



In this stage, you can use [Quick Sight](#) for creating graphs or charts, [Neptune](#) for graph database operations and visualization, or [OpenSearch](#) for open-source search and analytics. Typically, you can also feed clean data into data science or machine learning (ML) workflows by using Amazon SageMaker pipelines or simple reads from Amazon S3. The data visualization and analysis stage concludes the sequential portion of the data engineering pipeline.

## Monitoring and debugging

Certain phases in the data lifecycle are not sequential but consistently present. This is true for the monitoring and debugging stage, as shown in the following diagram.

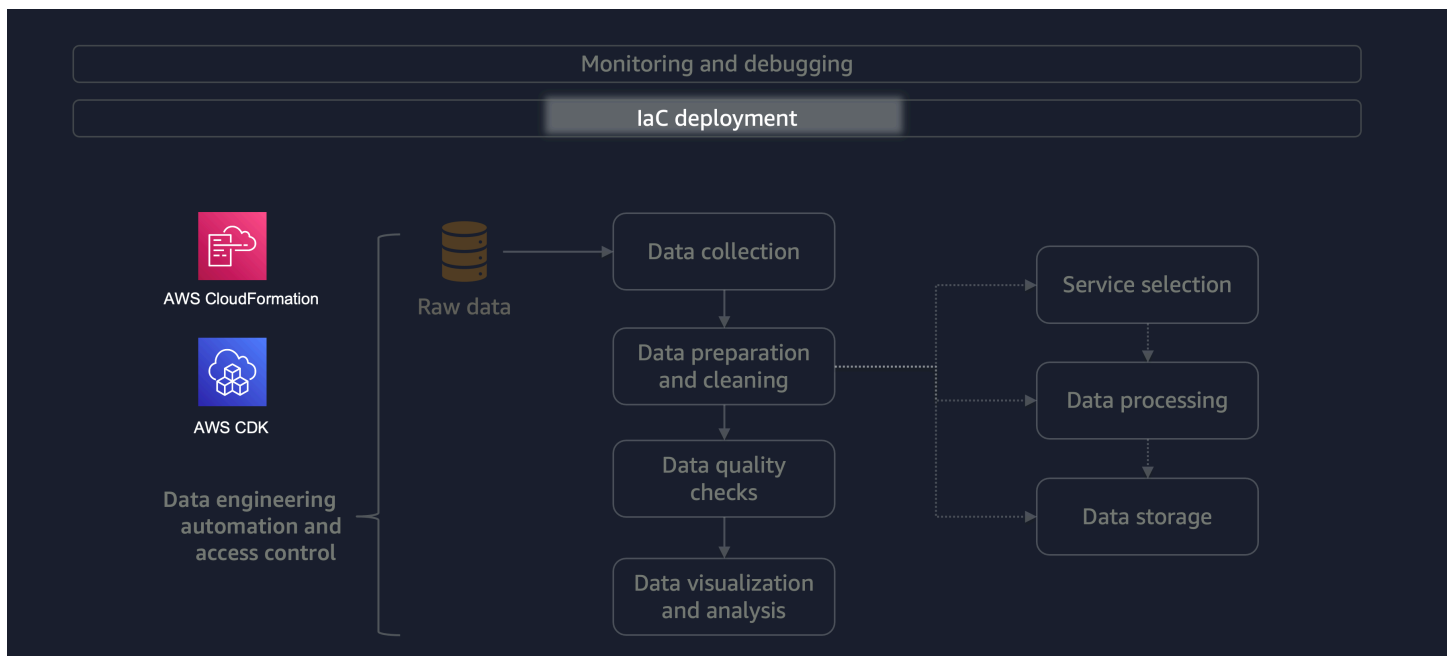


The process of data engineering must be continually monitored for correctness and performance. [Amazon CloudWatch](#) plays a crucial role in monitoring data engineering, as it logs every error and info log to its log groups. You can use monitoring to build automated error recovery. For example, you can stop pipelines if you find that your data quality rules are not satisfied, or you can log successful runs and failed runs separately to enable a recovery action. Monitoring improves the overall reliability of the data engineering process (that is, the full ETL process) as well as the data.

Additionally, we recommend that you create CloudWatch dashboards that include the relevant metrics for the monitoring and debugging process. This can help ensure that the data engineering process is running smoothly and as expected. This is important for operations as well as reporting. For example, a CloudWatch dashboard can show users the status of loads to help them understand the reliability of their processes or what percentage of their data was dropped due to low quality or which sources have the maximum failures. A CloudWatch dashboard not only helps you visualize results but also helps you improve processes by identifying the pain points in the ETL process.

## IaC deployment

Modern architecture is incomplete without a mechanism for an infrastructure as code (IaC) deployment. The following diagram shows the AWS services related to IaC deployment.



We recommend that any deployed infrastructure is always backed by code using IaC tools. For example, you can use [AWS CloudFormation](#) or [AWS Cloud Development Kit \(AWS CDK\)](#). AWS CDK is a wrapper around CloudFormation.

As a best practice, we recommend that you push your code to a code repository of your choice. It's also a best practice to use source control in your code repository so that you have versioning and collaboration capabilities that enable multiple team members to work simultaneously on the same code base, while ensuring that the code integration from different developers into the main branch doesn't result in any conflicts.

## Automation and access control

### Automation

Pipeline automation is a crucial part of modern data-centric architecture design. To successfully run your production system, we recommend that you have a data pipeline that has a start trigger, connecting steps, and a mechanism for separating failed and passed stages. It's also important to log failures while not hindering the rest of the ETL process.

You can use [AWS Glue workflows](#) to create a pipeline. The pipeline supports all AWS Glue jobs, Amazon EventBridge triggers, and crawlers. You can also create workflows from scratch or by using AWS Glue [blueprints](#). A blueprint provides a framework that helps you get started on reusable use

cases. For example, this could be a workflow to import data from Amazon S3 into a DynamoDB table. You can even use parameters to make the blueprint reusable.

If the data pipeline involves more services outside of AWS Glue, then we recommend that you use [AWS Step Functions](#) as the orchestrator. Step Functions can create automated workflows, including manual approval steps for security incident response. You can also use Step Functions for large-scale parallel or sequential processing.

Finally, we recommend using [EventBridge](#) to insert triggers on schedules, events, or on demand. You can also use EventBridge to create pipelines with filters.

## Access control

We recommend that you use [AWS Identity and Access Management \(IAM\)](#) for access control. IAM allows you to specify who or what can access services and resources in AWS and centrally manage fine-grained permissions. Every phase of the lifecycle—from storage to automation to using processing tools—requires the right access permissions. While working with data-centric use cases, you can use [AWS Lake Formation](#) to simplify the process of making data available for wide-ranging analytics and also across accounts.

# Best practices

We recommend that you follow storage and technical best practices. These best practices can help you get the most out of your data-centric architecture.

## Storage best practices for big data

The following table describes a common best practice to store files for a big data processing load on Amazon S3. The last column is an example of a lifecycle policy that you can set. If [Amazon S3 Intelligent-Tiering](#) is enabled (which delivers automatic storage cost savings when data access patterns change automatically), then you don't have to manually set the policy.

Data layer name	Description	Example lifecycle policy strategy
Raw	<p>Contains raw, unprocessed data</p> <p><b>Note:</b> For an external data source, the raw data layer is typically a 1:1 copy of the data, but on AWS the data can be partitioned by keys based on AWS Region or date during the ingestion process.</p>	<p>After one year, move files into the S3 Standard-IA <a href="#">storage class</a>. After two years in S3 Standard-IA, archive the files in <a href="#">Amazon Simple Storage Service Glacier (Amazon S3 Glacier)</a>.</p> <p>Amazon Glacier (original standalone vault-based service) will no longer accept new customers starting December 15, 2025, with no impact to existing customers.</p> <p>Amazon Glacier is a standalone service with its own APIs that stores data in vaults and is distinct from Amazon S3 and the Amazon S3 Glacier storage classes. Your existing</p>

data will remain secure and accessible in Amazon Glacier indefinitely. No migration is required. For low-cost, long-term archival storage, AWS recommends the [Amazon S3 Glacier storage classes](#), which deliver a superior customer experience with S3 bucket-based APIs, full AWS Region availability, lower costs, and AWS service integration. If you want enhanced capabilities, consider migrating to Amazon S3 Glacier storage classes by using our [AWS Solutions Guidance for transferring data from Amazon S3 vaults to Amazon S3 Glacier storage classes](#).

Stage

Contains intermediate processed data that's optimized for consumption

**Example:** CSV to Apache Parquet converted raw files or data transformations

You can delete data after a defined time period or according to your organization's requirements.

You can remove some data derivatives (for example, an Apache Avro transform of an original JSON format) from the data lake after a shorter amount of time (for example, after 90 days).

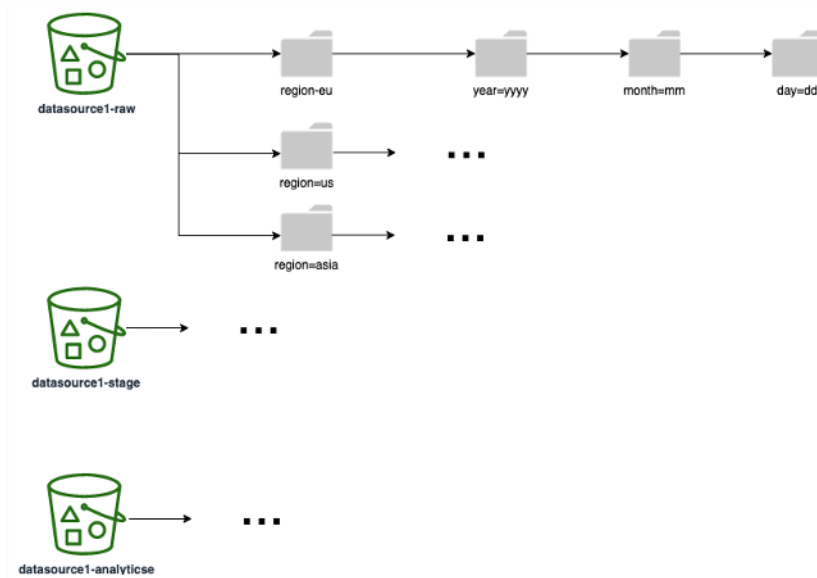
**Analytics**

Contains the aggregated data for your specific use cases in a consumption-ready format

**Example:** Apache Parquet

You can move data to S3 Standard-IA, and then delete the data after a defined time period or according to your organization's requirements.

The following diagram shows an example of a partitioning strategy (corresponding to one S3 folder/prefix) that you can use across all the data layers. We recommend that you choose a partitioning strategy based on how your data is used downstream. For example, if reports are built on your data (where most common queries on the report filter the results based on region and dates), then make sure to include the regions and dates as partitions to improve query performance and runtime.



## Technical best practices

Technical best practices depend on the specific AWS services and processing technologies that you use to design your data-centric architecture. However, we recommend that you keep in mind the following best practices. These best practices apply to typical data processing use cases.

**Area****Best practice**

SQL

Reduce the amount of data that must be queried by projecting attributes on your data.

Instead of parsing the entire table, you can use data projection to scan and return only certain required columns in the table.

Avoid large joins if possible because joins between multiple tables can significantly impact performance due to their resource-intensive demands.

## Apache Spark

[Optimize Spark applications](#) with workload partitioning in AWS Glue (AWS Big Data blog).

[Optimize memory management](#) in AWS Glue (AWS Big Data blog).

## Database design

Follow the [Architecture Best Practices for Databases](#) (AWS Architecture Center).

## Data pruning

Use [server-side partition pruning](#) with the `catalogPartitionPredicate` .

## Scaling

Understand and implement [horizontal scaling](#).

## FAQ

### **What's the difference between a data pipeline and an ML pipeline?**

A data pipeline is a data engineering pipeline that typically ingests, cleans, and processes data to make it compatible or optimized for machine learning (ML) or other analytical and visualization processes. An ML pipeline typically automates the creation of an ML model.

### **What's the difference between horizontal and vertical scaling?**

Horizontal scaling is the addition of hardware to increase processing power and enable the use of clusters (for example, by using Amazon EMR or AWS Glue). Vertical scaling is the increase in processing power of existing hardware (for example, increasing the RAM capacity of an EC2 instance).

## Next steps

We recommend that you take the following next steps:

1. Assess your current data engineering process and contact data experts for further guidance and assistance.
2. Adjust your data engineering process to ensure that all the stages of the data lifecycle are optimized for efficiency.
3. Use the data engineering principles and best practices in this guide to design a data-centric architecture and choose the AWS services that are most appropriate for your use case.

## Resources

- [AWS Data and Analytics Competency Partner](#)
- [AWS Glue](#)
- [AWS Step Functions](#)
- [Introduction to Apache Spark](#)

## Document history

The following table describes significant changes to this guide. If you want to be notified about future updates, you can subscribe to an [RSS feed](#).

Change	Description	Date
<a href="#">Initial publication</a>	—	May 5, 2023

# AWS Prescriptive Guidance glossary

The following are commonly used terms in strategies, guides, and patterns provided by AWS Prescriptive Guidance. To suggest entries, please use the **Provide feedback** link at the end of the glossary.

## Numbers

### 7 Rs

Seven common migration strategies for moving applications to the cloud. These strategies build upon the 5 Rs that Gartner identified in 2011 and consist of the following:

- **Refactor/re-architect** – Move an application and modify its architecture by taking full advantage of cloud-native features to improve agility, performance, and scalability. This typically involves porting the operating system and database. Example: Migrate your on-premises Oracle database to the Amazon Aurora PostgreSQL-Compatible Edition.
- **Replatform (lift and reshape)** – Move an application to the cloud, and introduce some level of optimization to take advantage of cloud capabilities. Example: Migrate your on-premises Oracle database to Amazon Relational Database Service (Amazon RDS) for Oracle in the AWS Cloud.
- **Repurchase (drop and shop)** – Switch to a different product, typically by moving from a traditional license to a SaaS model. Example: Migrate your customer relationship management (CRM) system to Salesforce.com.
- **Rehost (lift and shift)** – Move an application to the cloud without making any changes to take advantage of cloud capabilities. Example: Migrate your on-premises Oracle database to Oracle on an EC2 instance in the AWS Cloud.
- **Relocate (hypervisor-level lift and shift)** – Move infrastructure to the cloud without purchasing new hardware, rewriting applications, or modifying your existing operations. You migrate servers from an on-premises platform to a cloud service for the same platform. Example: Migrate a Microsoft Hyper-V application to AWS.
- **Retain (revisit)** – Keep applications in your source environment. These might include applications that require major refactoring, and you want to postpone that work until a later time, and legacy applications that you want to retain, because there's no business justification for migrating them.

- **Retire** – Decommission or remove applications that are no longer needed in your source environment.

## A

### A2A (Agent-to-Agent)

A stateful protocol for agent-to-agent collaboration supporting task delegation and state transfer.

### ABAC

See [attribute-based access control](#).

### abstracted services

See [managed services](#).

### ACID

See [atomicity, consistency, isolation, durability](#).

### active-active migration

A database migration method in which the source and target databases are kept in sync (by using a bidirectional replication tool or dual write operations), and both databases handle transactions from connecting applications during migration. This method supports migration in small, controlled batches instead of requiring a one-time cutover. It's more flexible but requires more work than [active-passive migration](#).

### active-passive migration

A database migration method in which the source and target databases are kept in sync, but only the source database handles transactions from connecting applications while data is replicated to the target database. The target database doesn't accept any transactions during migration.

### Agent

An AI system that can autonomously reason, plan, and take actions using tools to achieve goals.

### Agent Ops

Operational practices for building, testing, deploying, and running AI agents in production at scale.

## aggregate function

A SQL function that operates on a group of rows and calculates a single return value for the group. Examples of aggregate functions include SUM and MAX.

## AI

See [artificial intelligence](#).

## AIOps

See [artificial intelligence operations](#).

## anonymization

The process of permanently deleting personal information in a dataset. Anonymization can help protect personal privacy. Anonymized data is no longer considered to be personal data.

## anti-pattern

A frequently used solution for a recurring issue where the solution is counter-productive, ineffective, or less effective than an alternative.

## application control

A security approach that allows the use of only approved applications in order to help protect a system from malware.

## application portfolio

A collection of detailed information about each application used by an organization, including the cost to build and maintain the application, and its business value. This information is key to [the portfolio discovery and analysis process](#) and helps identify and prioritize the applications to be migrated, modernized, and optimized.

## artificial intelligence (AI)

The field of computer science that is dedicated to using computing technologies to perform cognitive functions that are typically associated with humans, such as learning, solving problems, and recognizing patterns. For more information, see [What is Artificial Intelligence?](#)

## artificial intelligence operations (AIOps)

The process of using machine learning techniques to solve operational problems, reduce operational incidents and human intervention, and increase service quality. For more information about how AIOps is used in the AWS migration strategy, see the [operations integration guide](#).

## asymmetric encryption

An encryption algorithm that uses a pair of keys, a public key for encryption and a private key for decryption. You can share the public key because it isn't used for decryption, but access to the private key should be highly restricted.

## atomicity, consistency, isolation, durability (ACID)

A set of software properties that guarantee the data validity and operational reliability of a database, even in the case of errors, power failures, or other problems.

## attribute-based access control (ABAC)

The practice of creating fine-grained permissions based on user attributes, such as department, job role, and team name. For more information, see [ABAC for AWS](#) in the AWS Identity and Access Management (IAM) documentation.

## authoritative data source

A location where you store the primary version of data, which is considered to be the most reliable source of information. You can copy data from the authoritative data source to other locations for the purposes of processing or modifying the data, such as anonymizing, redacting, or pseudonymizing it.

## Availability Zone

A distinct location within an AWS Region that is insulated from failures in other Availability Zones and provides inexpensive, low-latency network connectivity to other Availability Zones in the same Region.

## AWS Cloud Adoption Framework (AWS CAF)

A framework of guidelines and best practices from AWS to help organizations develop an efficient and effective plan to move successfully to the cloud. AWS CAF organizes guidance into six focus areas called perspectives: business, people, governance, platform, security, and operations. The business, people, and governance perspectives focus on business skills and processes; the platform, security, and operations perspectives focus on technical skills and processes. For example, the people perspective targets stakeholders who handle human resources (HR), staffing functions, and people management. For this perspective, AWS CAF provides guidance for people development, training, and communications to help ready the organization for successful cloud adoption. For more information, see the [AWS CAF website](#) and the [AWS CAF whitepaper](#).

## AWS Workload Qualification Framework (AWS WQF)

A tool that evaluates database migration workloads, recommends migration strategies, and provides work estimates. AWS WQF is included with AWS Schema Conversion Tool (AWS SCT). It analyzes database schemas and code objects, application code, dependencies, and performance characteristics, and provides assessment reports.

## B

### bad bot

A [bot](#) that is intended to disrupt or cause harm to individuals or organizations.

### BCP

See [business continuity planning](#).

### behavior graph

A unified, interactive view of resource behavior and interactions over time. You can use a behavior graph with Amazon Detective to examine failed logon attempts, suspicious API calls, and similar actions. For more information, see [Data in a behavior graph](#) in the Detective documentation.

### big-endian system

A system that stores the most significant byte first. See also [endianness](#).

### binary classification

A process that predicts a binary outcome (one of two possible classes). For example, your ML model might need to predict problems such as "Is this email spam or not spam?" or "Is this product a book or a car?"

### bloom filter

A probabilistic, memory-efficient data structure that is used to test whether an element is a member of a set.

### blue/green deployment

A deployment strategy where you create two separate but identical environments. You run the current application version in one environment (blue) and the new application version in the other environment (green). This strategy helps you quickly roll back with minimal impact.

## bot

A software application that runs automated tasks over the internet and simulates human activity or interaction. Some bots are useful or beneficial, such as web crawlers that index information on the internet. Some other bots, known as *bad bots*, are intended to disrupt or cause harm to individuals or organizations.

## botnet

Networks of [bots](#) that are infected by [malware](#) and are under the control of a single party, known as a *bot herder* or *bot operator*. Botnets are the best-known mechanism to scale bots and their impact.

## branch

A contained area of a code repository. The first branch created in a repository is the *main branch*. You can create a new branch from an existing branch, and you can then develop features or fix bugs in the new branch. A branch you create to build a feature is commonly referred to as a *feature branch*. When the feature is ready for release, you merge the feature branch back into the main branch. For more information, see [About branches](#) (GitHub documentation).

## break-glass access

In exceptional circumstances and through an approved process, a quick means for a user to gain access to an AWS account that they don't typically have permissions to access. For more information, see the [Implement break-glass procedures](#) indicator in the AWS Well-Architected guidance.

## brownfield strategy

The existing infrastructure in your environment. When adopting a brownfield strategy for a system architecture, you design the architecture around the constraints of the current systems and infrastructure. If you are expanding the existing infrastructure, you might blend brownfield and [greenfield](#) strategies.

## buffer cache

The memory area where the most frequently accessed data is stored.

## business capability

What a business does to generate value (for example, sales, customer service, or marketing). Microservices architectures and development decisions can be driven by business capabilities.

For more information, see the [Organized around business capabilities](#) section of the [Running containerized microservices on AWS](#) whitepaper.

## business continuity planning (BCP)

A plan that addresses the potential impact of a disruptive event, such as a large-scale migration, on operations and enables a business to resume operations quickly.

## C

### CAF

See [AWS Cloud Adoption Framework](#).

### canary deployment

The slow and incremental release of a version to end users. When you are confident, you deploy the new version and replace the current version in its entirety.

### CCoE

See [Cloud Center of Excellence](#).

### CDC

See [change data capture](#).

### change data capture (CDC)

The process of tracking changes to a data source, such as a database table, and recording metadata about the change. You can use CDC for various purposes, such as auditing or replicating changes in a target system to maintain synchronization.

### chaos engineering

Intentionally introducing failures or disruptive events to test a system's resilience. You can use [AWS Fault Injection Service \(AWS FIS\)](#) to perform experiments that stress your AWS workloads and evaluate their response.

### CI/CD

See [continuous integration and continuous delivery](#).

## classification

A categorization process that helps generate predictions. ML models for classification problems predict a discrete value. Discrete values are always distinct from one another. For example, a model might need to evaluate whether or not there is a car in an image.

## Citizen Developer

A business user who creates AI applications using no-code/low-code platforms without specialized technical skills.

## client-side encryption

Encryption of data locally, before the target AWS service receives it.

## Cloud Center of Excellence (CCoE)

A multi-disciplinary team that drives cloud adoption efforts across an organization, including developing cloud best practices, mobilizing resources, establishing migration timelines, and leading the organization through large-scale transformations. For more information, see the [CCoE posts](#) on the AWS Cloud Enterprise Strategy Blog.

## cloud computing

The cloud technology that is typically used for remote data storage and IoT device management. Cloud computing is commonly connected to [edge computing](#) technology.

## cloud operating model

In an IT organization, the operating model that is used to build, mature, and optimize one or more cloud environments. For more information, see [Building your Cloud Operating Model](#).

## cloud stages of adoption

The four phases that organizations typically go through when they migrate to the AWS Cloud:

- Project – Running a few cloud-related projects for proof of concept and learning purposes
- Foundation – Making foundational investments to scale your cloud adoption (e.g., creating a landing zone, defining a CCoE, establishing an operations model)
- Migration – Migrating individual applications
- Re-invention – Optimizing products and services, and innovating in the cloud

These stages were defined by Stephen Orban in the blog post [The Journey Toward Cloud-First & the Stages of Adoption](#) on the AWS Cloud Enterprise Strategy blog. For information about how they relate to the AWS migration strategy, see the [migration readiness guide](#).

## CMDB

See [configuration management database](#).

### code repository

A location where source code and other assets, such as documentation, samples, and scripts, are stored and updated through version control processes. Common cloud repositories include GitHub or Bitbucket Cloud. Each version of the code is called a *branch*. In a microservice structure, each repository is devoted to a single piece of functionality. A single CI/CD pipeline can use multiple repositories.

### cold cache

A buffer cache that is empty, not well populated, or contains stale or irrelevant data. This affects performance because the database instance must read from the main memory or disk, which is slower than reading from the buffer cache.

### cold data

Data that is rarely accessed and is typically historical. When querying this kind of data, slow queries are typically acceptable. Moving this data to lower-performing and less expensive storage tiers or classes can reduce costs.

### computer vision (CV)

A field of [AI](#) that uses machine learning to analyze and extract information from visual formats such as digital images and videos. For example, Amazon SageMaker AI provides image processing algorithms for CV.

### configuration drift

For a workload, a configuration change from the expected state. It might cause the workload to become noncompliant, and it's typically gradual and unintentional.

### configuration management database (CMDB)

A repository that stores and manages information about a database and its IT environment, including both hardware and software components and their configurations. You typically use data from a CMDB in the portfolio discovery and analysis stage of migration.

### conformance pack

A collection of AWS Config rules and remediation actions that you can assemble to customize your compliance and security checks. You can deploy a conformance pack as a single entity in

an AWS account and Region, or across an organization, by using a YAML template. For more information, see [Conformance packs](#) in the AWS Config documentation.

## continuous integration and continuous delivery (CI/CD)

The process of automating the source, build, test, staging, and production stages of the software release process. CI/CD is commonly described as a pipeline. CI/CD can help you automate processes, improve productivity, improve code quality, and deliver faster. For more information, see [Benefits of continuous delivery](#). CD can also stand for *continuous deployment*. For more information, see [Continuous Delivery vs. Continuous Deployment](#).

## CV

See [computer vision](#).

# D

## data at rest

Data that is stationary in your network, such as data that is in storage.

## data classification

A process for identifying and categorizing the data in your network based on its criticality and sensitivity. It is a critical component of any cybersecurity risk management strategy because it helps you determine the appropriate protection and retention controls for the data. Data classification is a component of the security pillar in the AWS Well-Architected Framework. For more information, see [Data classification](#).

## data drift

A meaningful variation between the production data and the data that was used to train an ML model, or a meaningful change in the input data over time. Data drift can reduce the overall quality, accuracy, and fairness in ML model predictions.

## data in transit

Data that is actively moving through your network, such as between network resources.

## data mesh

An architectural framework that provides distributed, decentralized data ownership with centralized management and governance.

## data minimization

The principle of collecting and processing only the data that is strictly necessary. Practicing data minimization in the AWS Cloud can reduce privacy risks, costs, and your analytics carbon footprint.

## data perimeter

A set of preventive guardrails in your AWS environment that help make sure that only trusted identities are accessing trusted resources from expected networks. For more information, see [Building a data perimeter on AWS](#).

## data preprocessing

To transform raw data into a format that is easily parsed by your ML model. Preprocessing data can mean removing certain columns or rows and addressing missing, inconsistent, or duplicate values.

## data provenance

The process of tracking the origin and history of data throughout its lifecycle, such as how the data was generated, transmitted, and stored.

## data subject

An individual whose data is being collected and processed.

## data warehouse

A data management system that supports business intelligence, such as analytics. Data warehouses commonly contain large amounts of historical data, and they are typically used for queries and analysis.

## database definition language (DDL)

Statements or commands for creating or modifying the structure of tables and objects in a database.

## database manipulation language (DML)

Statements or commands for modifying (inserting, updating, and deleting) information in a database.

## DDL

See [database definition language](#).

## deep ensemble

To combine multiple deep learning models for prediction. You can use deep ensembles to obtain a more accurate prediction or for estimating uncertainty in predictions.

## deep learning

An ML subfield that uses multiple layers of artificial neural networks to identify mapping between input data and target variables of interest.

## defense-in-depth

An information security approach in which a series of security mechanisms and controls are thoughtfully layered throughout a computer network to protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of the network and the data within. When you adopt this strategy on AWS, you add multiple controls at different layers of the AWS Organizations structure to help secure resources. For example, a defense-in-depth approach might combine multi-factor authentication, network segmentation, and encryption.

## delegated administrator

In AWS Organizations, a compatible service can register an AWS member account to administer the organization's accounts and manage permissions for that service. This account is called the *delegated administrator* for that service. For more information and a list of compatible services, see [Services that work with AWS Organizations](#) in the AWS Organizations documentation.

## deployment

The process of making an application, new features, or code fixes available in the target environment. Deployment involves implementing changes in a code base and then building and running that code base in the application's environments.

## development environment

See [environment](#).

## detective control

A security control that is designed to detect, log, and alert after an event has occurred. These controls are a second line of defense, alerting you to security events that bypassed the preventative controls in place. For more information, see [Detective controls](#) in *Implementing security controls on AWS*.

## development value stream mapping (DVSM)

A process used to identify and prioritize constraints that adversely affect speed and quality in a software development lifecycle. DVSM extends the value stream mapping process originally designed for lean manufacturing practices. It focuses on the steps and teams required to create and move value through the software development process.

## digital twin

A virtual representation of a real-world system, such as a building, factory, industrial equipment, or production line. Digital twins support predictive maintenance, remote monitoring, and production optimization.

## dimension table

In a [star schema](#), a smaller table that contains data attributes about quantitative data in a fact table. Dimension table attributes are typically text fields or discrete numbers that behave like text. These attributes are commonly used for query constraining, filtering, and result set labeling.

## disaster

An event that prevents a workload or system from fulfilling its business objectives in its primary deployed location. These events can be natural disasters, technical failures, or the result of human actions, such as unintentional misconfiguration or a malware attack.

## disaster recovery (DR)

The strategy and process you use to minimize downtime and data loss caused by a [disaster](#). For more information, see [Disaster Recovery of Workloads on AWS: Recovery in the Cloud](#) in the AWS Well-Architected Framework.

## DML

See [database manipulation language](#).

## domain-driven design

An approach to developing a complex software system by connecting its components to evolving domains, or core business goals, that each component serves. This concept was introduced by Eric Evans in his book, *Domain-Driven Design: Tackling Complexity in the Heart of Software* (Boston: Addison-Wesley Professional, 2003). For information about how you can use domain-driven design with the strangler fig pattern, see [Modernizing legacy Microsoft ASP.NET \(ASMX\) web services incrementally by using containers and Amazon API Gateway](#).

## DR

See [disaster recovery](#).

## drift detection

Tracking deviations from a baselined configuration. For example, you can use AWS CloudFormation to [detect drift in system resources](#), or you can use AWS Control Tower to [detect changes in your landing zone](#) that might affect compliance with governance requirements.

## DVSM

See [development value stream mapping](#).

## E

### EDA

See [exploratory data analysis](#).

### EDI

See [electronic data interchange](#).

## edge computing

The technology that increases the computing power for smart devices at the edges of an IoT network. When compared with [cloud computing](#), edge computing can reduce communication latency and improve response time.

## electronic data interchange (EDI)

The automated exchange of business documents between organizations. For more information, see [What is Electronic Data Interchange](#).

## encryption

A computing process that transforms plaintext data, which is human-readable, into ciphertext.

## encryption key

A cryptographic string of randomized bits that is generated by an encryption algorithm. Keys can vary in length, and each key is designed to be unpredictable and unique.

## endianness

The order in which bytes are stored in computer memory. Big-endian systems store the most significant byte first. Little-endian systems store the least significant byte first.

## endpoint

See [service endpoint](#).

## endpoint service

A service that you can host in a virtual private cloud (VPC) to share with other users. You can create an endpoint service with AWS PrivateLink and grant permissions to other AWS accounts or to AWS Identity and Access Management (IAM) principals. These accounts or principals can connect to your endpoint service privately by creating interface VPC endpoints. For more information, see [Create an endpoint service](#) in the Amazon Virtual Private Cloud (Amazon VPC) documentation.

## enterprise resource planning (ERP)

A system that automates and manages key business processes (such as accounting, [MES](#), and project management) for an enterprise.

## envelope encryption

The process of encrypting an encryption key with another encryption key. For more information, see [Envelope encryption](#) in the AWS Key Management Service (AWS KMS) documentation.

## environment

An instance of a running application. The following are common types of environments in cloud computing:

- development environment – An instance of a running application that is available only to the core team responsible for maintaining the application. Development environments are used to test changes before promoting them to upper environments. This type of environment is sometimes referred to as a *test environment*.
- lower environments – All development environments for an application, such as those used for initial builds and tests.
- production environment – An instance of a running application that end users can access. In a CI/CD pipeline, the production environment is the last deployment environment.

- upper environments – All environments that can be accessed by users other than the core development team. This can include a production environment, preproduction environments, and environments for user acceptance testing.

## epic

In agile methodologies, functional categories that help organize and prioritize your work. Epics provide a high-level description of requirements and implementation tasks. For example, AWS CAF security epics include identity and access management, detective controls, infrastructure security, data protection, and incident response. For more information about epics in the AWS migration strategy, see the [program implementation guide](#).

## ERP

See [enterprise resource planning](#).

## exploratory data analysis (EDA)

The process of analyzing a dataset to understand its main characteristics. You collect or aggregate data and then perform initial investigations to find patterns, detect anomalies, and check assumptions. EDA is performed by calculating summary statistics and creating data visualizations.

## F

### fact table

The central table in a [star schema](#). It stores quantitative data about business operations. Typically, a fact table contains two types of columns: those that contain measures and those that contain a foreign key to a dimension table.

### fail fast

A philosophy that uses frequent and incremental testing to reduce the development lifecycle. It is a critical part of an agile approach.

### fault isolation boundary

In the AWS Cloud, a boundary such as an Availability Zone, AWS Region, control plane, or data plane that limits the effect of a failure and helps improve the resilience of workloads. For more information, see [AWS Fault Isolation Boundaries](#).

## feature branch

See [branch](#).

## features

The input data that you use to make a prediction. For example, in a manufacturing context, features could be images that are periodically captured from the manufacturing line.

## feature importance

How significant a feature is for a model's predictions. This is usually expressed as a numerical score that can be calculated through various techniques, such as Shapley Additive Explanations (SHAP) and integrated gradients. For more information, see [Machine learning model interpretability with AWS](#).

## feature transformation

To optimize data for the ML process, including enriching data with additional sources, scaling values, or extracting multiple sets of information from a single data field. This enables the ML model to benefit from the data. For example, if you break down the "2021-05-27 00:15:37" date into "2021", "May", "Thu", and "15", you can help the learning algorithm learn nuanced patterns associated with different data components.

## few-shot prompting

Providing an [LLM](#) with a small number of examples that demonstrate the task and desired output before asking it to perform a similar task. This technique is an application of in-context learning, where models learn from examples (*shots*) that are embedded in prompts. Few-shot prompting can be effective for tasks that require specific formatting, reasoning, or domain knowledge. See also [zero-shot prompting](#).

## FGAC

See [fine-grained access control](#).

## fine-grained access control (FGAC)

The use of multiple conditions to allow or deny an access request.

## flash-cut migration

A database migration method that uses continuous data replication through [change data capture](#) to migrate data in the shortest time possible, instead of using a phased approach. The objective is to keep downtime to a minimum.

## FM

See [foundation model](#).

### foundation model (FM)

A large deep-learning neural network that has been training on massive datasets of generalized and unlabeled data. FMs are capable of performing a wide variety of general tasks, such as understanding language, generating text and images, and conversing in natural language. For more information, see [What are Foundation Models](#).

### FM gateway

A centralized intermediary that controls and normalizes access to [foundation models](#). Also known as an *LLM gateway*.

## G

### generative AI

A subset of [AI](#) models that have been trained on large amounts of data and that can use a simple text prompt to create new content and artifacts, such as images, videos, text, and audio. For more information, see [What is Generative AI](#).

### geo blocking

See [geographic restrictions](#).

### geographic restrictions (geo blocking)

In Amazon CloudFront, an option to prevent users in specific countries from accessing content distributions. You can use an allow list or block list to specify approved and banned countries. For more information, see [Restricting the geographic distribution of your content](#) in the CloudFront documentation.

### Gitflow workflow

An approach in which lower and upper environments use different branches in a source code repository. The Gitflow workflow is considered legacy, and the [trunk-based workflow](#) is the modern, preferred approach.

## golden image

A snapshot of a system or software that is used as a template to deploy new instances of that system or software. For example, in manufacturing, a golden image can be used to provision software on multiple devices and helps improve speed, scalability, and productivity in device manufacturing operations.

## greenfield strategy

The absence of existing infrastructure in a new environment. When adopting a greenfield strategy for a system architecture, you can select all new technologies without the restriction of compatibility with existing infrastructure, also known as [brownfield](#). If you are expanding the existing infrastructure, you might blend brownfield and greenfield strategies.

## guardrail

A high-level rule that helps govern resources, policies, and compliance across organizational units (OUs). *Preventive guardrails* enforce policies to ensure alignment to compliance standards. They are implemented by using service control policies and IAM permissions boundaries. *Detective guardrails* detect policy violations and compliance issues, and generate alerts for remediation. They are implemented by using AWS Config, AWS Security Hub CSPM, Amazon GuardDuty, AWS Trusted Advisor, Amazon Inspector, and custom AWS Lambda checks.

## guardrails (AI)

Safety mechanisms that filter, validate, and constrain [agent](#) inputs and outputs to help ensure responsible and safe AI behavior.

# H

## HA

See [high availability](#).

## heterogeneous database migration

Migrating your source database to a target database that uses a different database engine (for example, Oracle to Amazon Aurora). Heterogeneous migration is typically part of a re-architecting effort, and converting the schema can be a complex task. [AWS provides AWS SCT](#) that helps with schema conversions.

## high availability (HA)

The ability of a workload to operate continuously, without intervention, in the event of challenges or disasters. HA systems are designed to automatically fail over, consistently deliver high-quality performance, and handle different loads and failures with minimal performance impact.

## historian modernization

An approach used to modernize and upgrade operational technology (OT) systems to better serve the needs of the manufacturing industry. A *historian* is a type of database that is used to collect and store data from various sources in a factory.

## holdout data

A portion of historical, labeled data that is withheld from a dataset that is used to train a [machine learning](#) model. You can use holdout data to evaluate the model performance by comparing the model predictions against the holdout data.

## human-in-the-loop (HitL)

A workflow pattern where [agent](#) execution pauses for human review and approval at critical decision points.

## homogeneous database migration

Migrating your source database to a target database that shares the same database engine (for example, Microsoft SQL Server to Amazon RDS for SQL Server). Homogeneous migration is typically part of a rehosting or replatforming effort. You can use native database utilities to migrate the schema.

## hot data

Data that is frequently accessed, such as real-time data or recent translational data. This data typically requires a high-performance storage tier or class to provide fast query responses.

## hotfix

An urgent fix for a critical issue in a production environment. Due to its urgency, a hotfix is usually made outside of the typical DevOps release workflow.

## hypercare period

Immediately following cutover, the period of time when a migration team manages and monitors the migrated applications in the cloud in order to address any issues. Typically, this

period is 1–4 days in length. At the end of the hypercare period, the migration team typically transfers responsibility for the applications to the cloud operations team.

## I

### IaC

See [infrastructure as code](#).

### identity-based policy

A policy attached to one or more IAM principals that defines their permissions within the AWS Cloud environment.

### idle application

An application that has an average CPU and memory usage between 5 and 20 percent over a period of 90 days. In a migration project, it is common to retire these applications or retain them on premises.

### IIoT

See [industrial Internet of Things](#).

### immutable infrastructure

A model that deploys new infrastructure for production workloads instead of updating, patching, or modifying the existing infrastructure. Immutable infrastructures are inherently more consistent, reliable, and predictable than [mutable infrastructure](#). For more information, see the [Deploy using immutable infrastructure](#) best practice in the AWS Well-Architected Framework.

### inbound (ingress) VPC

In an AWS multi-account architecture, a VPC that accepts, inspects, and routes network connections from outside an application. The [AWS Security Reference Architecture](#) recommends setting up your Network account with inbound, outbound, and inspection VPCs to protect the two-way interface between your application and the broader internet.

### incremental migration

A cutover strategy in which you migrate your application in small parts instead of performing a single, full cutover. For example, you might move only a few microservices or users to the new system initially. After you verify that everything is working properly, you can incrementally

move additional microservices or users until you can decommission your legacy system. This strategy reduces the risks associated with large migrations.

## Industry 4.0

A term that was introduced by [Klaus Schwab](#) in 2016 to refer to the modernization of manufacturing processes through advances in connectivity, real-time data, automation, analytics, and AI/ML.

## infrastructure

All of the resources and assets contained within an application's environment.

## infrastructure as code (IaC)

The process of provisioning and managing an application's infrastructure through a set of configuration files. IaC is designed to help you centralize infrastructure management, standardize resources, and scale quickly so that new environments are repeatable, reliable, and consistent.

## industrial Internet of Things (IIoT)

The use of internet-connected sensors and devices in the industrial sectors, such as manufacturing, energy, automotive, healthcare, life sciences, and agriculture. For more information, see [Building an industrial Internet of Things \(IIoT\) digital transformation strategy](#).

## inspection VPC

In an AWS multi-account architecture, a centralized VPC that manages inspections of network traffic between VPCs (in the same or different AWS Regions), the internet, and on-premises networks. The [AWS Security Reference Architecture](#) recommends setting up your Network account with inbound, outbound, and inspection VPCs to protect the two-way interface between your application and the broader internet.

## Internet of Things (IoT)

The network of connected physical objects with embedded sensors or processors that communicate with other devices and systems through the internet or over a local communication network. For more information, see [What is IoT?](#)

## interpretability

A characteristic of a machine learning model that describes the degree to which a human can understand how the model's predictions depend on its inputs. For more information, see [Machine learning model interpretability with AWS](#).

## IoT

See [Internet of Things](#).

### IT information library (ITIL)

A set of best practices for delivering IT services and aligning these services with business requirements. ITIL provides the foundation for ITSM.

### IT service management (ITSM)

Activities associated with designing, implementing, managing, and supporting IT services for an organization. For information about integrating cloud operations with ITSM tools, see the [operations integration guide](#).

## ITIL

See [IT information library](#).

## ITSM

See [IT service management](#).

## L

### label-based access control (LBAC)

An implementation of mandatory access control (MAC) where the users and the data itself are each explicitly assigned a security label value. The intersection between the user security label and data security label determines which rows and columns can be seen by the user.

### landing zone

A landing zone is a well-architected, multi-account AWS environment that is scalable and secure. This is a starting point from which your organizations can quickly launch and deploy workloads and applications with confidence in their security and infrastructure environment. For more information about landing zones, see [Setting up a secure and scalable multi-account AWS environment](#).

### large language model (LLM)

A deep learning [AI](#) model that is pretrained on a vast amount of data. An LLM can perform multiple tasks, such as answering questions, summarizing documents, translating text into other languages, and completing sentences. For more information, see [What are LLMs](#).

## large migration

A migration of 300 or more servers.

## LBAC

See [label-based access control](#).

## least privilege

The security best practice of granting the minimum permissions required to perform a task. For more information, see [Apply least-privilege permissions](#) in the IAM documentation.

## lift and shift

See [7 Rs](#).

## little-endian system

A system that stores the least significant byte first. See also [endianness](#).

## LLM

See [large language model](#).

## lower environments

See [environment](#).

# M

## machine learning (ML)

A type of artificial intelligence that uses algorithms and techniques for pattern recognition and learning. ML analyzes and learns from recorded data, such as Internet of Things (IoT) data, to generate a statistical model based on patterns. For more information, see [Machine Learning](#).

## main branch

See [branch](#).

## malware

Software that is designed to compromise computer security or privacy. Malware might disrupt computer systems, leak sensitive information, or gain unauthorized access. Examples of malware include viruses, worms, ransomware, Trojan horses, spyware, and keyloggers.

## managed services

AWS services for which AWS operates the infrastructure layer, the operating system, and platforms, and you access the endpoints to store and retrieve data. Amazon Simple Storage Service (Amazon S3) and Amazon DynamoDB are examples of managed services. These are also known as *abstracted services*.

## manufacturing execution system (MES)

A software system for tracking, monitoring, documenting, and controlling production processes that convert raw materials to finished products on the shop floor.

## MAP

See [Migration Acceleration Program](#).

## MCP

See [Model Context Protocol](#).

## Model Context Protocol (MCP)

A stateless protocol for [agent](#)-to-[tool](#) communication.

## MCP server

A service that exposes one or more [tools](#) through the [Model Context Protocol](#).

## mechanism

A complete process in which you create a tool, drive adoption of the tool, and then inspect the results in order to make adjustments. A mechanism is a cycle that reinforces and improves itself as it operates. For more information, see [Building mechanisms](#) in the AWS Well-Architected Framework.

## member account

All AWS accounts other than the management account that are part of an organization in AWS Organizations. An account can be a member of only one organization at a time.

## MES

See [manufacturing execution system](#).

## Message Queuing Telemetry Transport (MQTT)

A lightweight, machine-to-machine (M2M) communication protocol, based on the [publish/subscribe](#) pattern, for resource-constrained [IoT](#) devices.

## microservice

A small, independent service that communicates over well-defined APIs and is typically owned by small, self-contained teams. For example, an insurance system might include microservices that map to business capabilities, such as sales or marketing, or subdomains, such as purchasing, claims, or analytics. The benefits of microservices include agility, flexible scaling, easy deployment, reusable code, and resilience. For more information, see [Integrating microservices by using AWS serverless services](#).

## microservices architecture

An approach to building an application with independent components that run each application process as a microservice. These microservices communicate through a well-defined interface by using lightweight APIs. Each microservice in this architecture can be updated, deployed, and scaled to meet demand for specific functions of an application. For more information, see [Implementing microservices on AWS](#).

## Migration Acceleration Program (MAP)

An AWS program that provides consulting support, training, and services to help organizations build a strong operational foundation for moving to the cloud, and to help offset the initial cost of migrations. MAP includes a migration methodology for executing legacy migrations in a methodical way and a set of tools to automate and accelerate common migration scenarios.

## migration at scale

The process of moving the majority of the application portfolio to the cloud in waves, with more applications moved at a faster rate in each wave. This phase uses the best practices and lessons learned from the earlier phases to implement a *migration factory* of teams, tools, and processes to streamline the migration of workloads through automation and agile delivery. This is the third phase of the [AWS migration strategy](#).

## migration factory

Cross-functional teams that streamline the migration of workloads through automated, agile approaches. Migration factory teams typically include operations, business analysts and owners, migration engineers, developers, and DevOps professionals working in sprints. Between 20 and 50 percent of an enterprise application portfolio consists of repeated patterns that can be optimized by a factory approach. For more information, see the [discussion of migration factories](#) and the [Cloud Migration Factory guide](#) in this content set.

## migration metadata

The information about the application and server that is needed to complete the migration. Each migration pattern requires a different set of migration metadata. Examples of migration metadata include the target subnet, security group, and AWS account.

## migration pattern

A repeatable migration task that details the migration strategy, the migration destination, and the migration application or service used. Example: Rehost migration to Amazon EC2 with AWS Application Migration Service.

## Migration Portfolio Assessment (MPA)

An online tool that provides information for validating the business case for migrating to the AWS Cloud. MPA provides detailed portfolio assessment (server right-sizing, pricing, TCO comparisons, migration cost analysis) as well as migration planning (application data analysis and data collection, application grouping, migration prioritization, and wave planning). The [MPA tool](#) (requires login) is available free of charge to all AWS consultants and APN Partner consultants.

## Migration Readiness Assessment (MRA)

The process of gaining insights about an organization's cloud readiness status, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and building an action plan to close identified gaps, using the AWS CAF. For more information, see the [migration readiness guide](#). MRA is the first phase of the [AWS migration strategy](#).

## migration strategy

The approach used to migrate a workload to the AWS Cloud. For more information, see the [7 Rs](#) entry in this glossary and see [Mobilize your organization to accelerate large-scale migrations](#).

## ML

See [machine learning](#).

## modernization

Transforming an outdated (legacy or monolithic) application and its infrastructure into an agile, elastic, and highly available system in the cloud to reduce costs, gain efficiencies, and take advantage of innovations. For more information, see [Strategy for modernizing applications in the AWS Cloud](#).

## modernization readiness assessment

An evaluation that helps determine the modernization readiness of an organization's applications; identifies benefits, risks, and dependencies; and determines how well the organization can support the future state of those applications. The outcome of the assessment is a blueprint of the target architecture, a roadmap that details development phases and milestones for the modernization process, and an action plan for addressing identified gaps. For more information, see [Evaluating modernization readiness for applications in the AWS Cloud](#).

## monolithic applications (monoliths)

Applications that run as a single service with tightly coupled processes. Monolithic applications have several drawbacks. If one application feature experiences a spike in demand, the entire architecture must be scaled. Adding or improving a monolithic application's features also becomes more complex when the code base grows. To address these issues, you can use a microservices architecture. For more information, see [Decomposing monoliths into microservices](#).

## MPA

See [Migration Portfolio Assessment](#).

## MQTT

See [Message Queuing Telemetry Transport](#).

## multiclass classification

A process that helps generate predictions for multiple classes (predicting one of more than two outcomes). For example, an ML model might ask "Is this product a book, car, or phone?" or "Which product category is most interesting to this customer?"

## mutable infrastructure

A model that updates and modifies the existing infrastructure for production workloads. For improved consistency, reliability, and predictability, the AWS Well-Architected Framework recommends the use of [immutable infrastructure](#) as a best practice.

# O

## OAC

See [origin access control](#).

## OAI

See [origin access identity](#).

## OCM

See [organizational change management](#).

## offline migration

A migration method in which the source workload is taken down during the migration process. This method involves extended downtime and is typically used for small, non-critical workloads.

## OI

See [operations integration](#).

## OLA

See [operational-level agreement](#).

## online migration

A migration method in which the source workload is copied to the target system without being taken offline. Applications that are connected to the workload can continue to function during the migration. This method involves zero to minimal downtime and is typically used for critical production workloads.

## OPC-UA

See [Open Process Communications - Unified Architecture](#).

## Open Process Communications - Unified Architecture (OPC-UA)

A machine-to-machine (M2M) communication protocol for industrial automation. OPC-UA provides an interoperability standard with data encryption, authentication, and authorization schemes.

## operational-level agreement (OLA)

An agreement that clarifies what functional IT groups promise to deliver to each other, to support a service-level agreement (SLA).

## operational readiness review (ORR)

A checklist of questions and associated best practices that help you understand, evaluate, prevent, or reduce the scope of incidents and possible failures. For more information, see [Operational Readiness Reviews \(ORR\)](#) in the AWS Well-Architected Framework.

## operational technology (OT)

Hardware and software systems that work with the physical environment to control industrial operations, equipment, and infrastructure. In manufacturing, the integration of OT and information technology (IT) systems is a key focus for [Industry 4.0](#) transformations.

## operations integration (OI)

The process of modernizing operations in the cloud, which involves readiness planning, automation, and integration. For more information, see the [operations integration guide](#).

## organization trail

A trail that's created by AWS CloudTrail that logs all events for all AWS accounts in an organization in AWS Organizations. This trail is created in each AWS account that's part of the organization and tracks the activity in each account. For more information, see [Creating a trail for an organization](#) in the CloudTrail documentation.

## organizational change management (OCM)

A framework for managing major, disruptive business transformations from a people, culture, and leadership perspective. OCM helps organizations prepare for, and transition to, new systems and strategies by accelerating change adoption, addressing transitional issues, and driving cultural and organizational changes. In the AWS migration strategy, this framework is called *people acceleration*, because of the speed of change required in cloud adoption projects. For more information, see the [OCM guide](#).

## origin access control (OAC)

In CloudFront, an enhanced option for restricting access to secure your Amazon Simple Storage Service (Amazon S3) content. OAC supports all S3 buckets in all AWS Regions, server-side encryption with AWS KMS (SSE-KMS), and dynamic PUT and DELETE requests to the S3 bucket.

## origin access identity (OAI)

In CloudFront, an option for restricting access to secure your Amazon S3 content. When you use OAI, CloudFront creates a principal that Amazon S3 can authenticate with. Authenticated principals can access content in an S3 bucket only through a specific CloudFront distribution. See also [OAC](#), which provides more granular and enhanced access control.

## ORR

See [operational readiness review](#).

## OT

See [operational technology](#).

### outbound (egress) VPC

In an AWS multi-account architecture, a VPC that handles network connections that are initiated from within an application. The [AWS Security Reference Architecture](#) recommends setting up your Network account with inbound, outbound, and inspection VPCs to protect the two-way interface between your application and the broader internet.

## P

### permissions boundary

An IAM management policy that is attached to IAM principals to set the maximum permissions that the user or role can have. For more information, see [Permissions boundaries](#) in the IAM documentation.

### personally identifiable information (PII)

Information that, when viewed directly or paired with other related data, can be used to reasonably infer the identity of an individual. Examples of PII include names, addresses, and contact information.

## PII

See [personally identifiable information](#).

### playbook

A set of predefined steps that capture the work associated with migrations, such as delivering core operations functions in the cloud. A playbook can take the form of scripts, automated runbooks, or a summary of processes or steps required to operate your modernized environment.

## PLC

See [programmable logic controller](#).

## PLM

See [product lifecycle management](#).

## policy

An object that can define permissions (see [identity-based policy](#)), specify access conditions (see [resource-based policy](#)), or define the maximum permissions for all accounts in an organization in AWS Organizations (see [service control policy](#)).

## polyglot persistence

Independently choosing a microservice's data storage technology based on data access patterns and other requirements. If your microservices have the same data storage technology, they can encounter implementation challenges or experience poor performance. Microservices are more easily implemented and achieve better performance and scalability if they use the data store best adapted to their requirements.

## portfolio assessment

A process of discovering, analyzing, and prioritizing the application portfolio in order to plan the migration. For more information, see [Evaluating migration readiness](#).

## predicate

A query condition that returns `true` or `false`, commonly located in a `WHERE` clause.

## predicate pushdown

A database query optimization technique that filters the data in the query before transfer. This reduces the amount of data that must be retrieved and processed from the relational database, and it improves query performance.

## preventative control

A security control that is designed to prevent an event from occurring. These controls are a first line of defense to help prevent unauthorized access or unwanted changes to your network. For more information, see [Preventative controls](#) in *Implementing security controls on AWS*.

## principal

An entity in AWS that can perform actions and access resources. This entity is typically a root user for an AWS account, an IAM role, or a user. For more information, see *Principal* in [Roles terms and concepts](#) in the IAM documentation.

## privacy by design

A system engineering approach that takes privacy into account through the whole development process.

## private hosted zones

A container that holds information about how you want Amazon Route 53 to respond to DNS queries for a domain and its subdomains within one or more VPCs. For more information, see [Working with private hosted zones](#) in the Route 53 documentation.

## proactive control

A [security control](#) designed to prevent the deployment of noncompliant resources. These controls scan resources before they are provisioned. If the resource is not compliant with the control, then it isn't provisioned. For more information, see the [Controls reference guide](#) in the AWS Control Tower documentation and see [Proactive controls](#) in *Implementing security controls on AWS*.

## product lifecycle management (PLM)

The management of data and processes for a product throughout its entire lifecycle, from design, development, and launch, through growth and maturity, to decline and removal.

## production environment

See [environment](#).

## programmable logic controller (PLC)

In manufacturing, a highly reliable, adaptable computer that monitors machines and automates manufacturing processes.

## prompt chaining

Using the output of one [LLM](#) prompt as the input for the next prompt to generate better responses. This technique is used to break down a complex task into subtasks, or to iteratively refine or expand a preliminary response. It helps improve the accuracy and relevance of a model's responses and allows for more granular, personalized results.

## pseudonymization

The process of replacing personal identifiers in a dataset with placeholder values. Pseudonymization can help protect personal privacy. Pseudonymized data is still considered to be personal data.

## publish/subscribe (pub/sub)

A pattern that enables asynchronous communications among microservices to improve scalability and responsiveness. For example, in a microservices-based [MES](#), a microservice can

publish event messages to a channel that other microservices can subscribe to. The system can add new microservices without changing the publishing service.

## Q

### query plan

A series of steps, like instructions, that are used to access the data in a SQL relational database system.

### query plan regression

When a database service optimizer chooses a less optimal plan than it did before a given change to the database environment. This can be caused by changes to statistics, constraints, environment settings, query parameter bindings, and updates to the database engine.

## R

### RACI matrix

See [responsible, accountable, consulted, informed \(RACI\)](#).

### RAG

See [Retrieval Augmented Generation](#).

### ransomware

A malicious software that is designed to block access to a computer system or data until a payment is made.

### RASCI matrix

See [responsible, accountable, consulted, informed \(RACI\)](#).

### RCAC

See [row and column access control](#).

### read replica

A copy of a database that's used for read-only purposes. You can route queries to the read replica to reduce the load on your primary database.

## re-architect

See [7 Rs](#).

## recovery point objective (RPO)

The maximum acceptable amount of time since the last data recovery point. This determines what is considered an acceptable loss of data between the last recovery point and the interruption of service.

## recovery time objective (RTO)

The maximum acceptable delay between the interruption of service and restoration of service.

## refactor

See [7 Rs](#).

## Region

A collection of AWS resources in a geographic area. Each AWS Region is isolated and independent of the others to provide fault tolerance, stability, and resilience. For more information, see [Specify which AWS Regions your account can use](#).

## regression

An ML technique that predicts a numeric value. For example, to solve the problem of "What price will this house sell for?" an ML model could use a linear regression model to predict a house's sale price based on known facts about the house (for example, the square footage).

## rehost

See [7 Rs](#).

## release

In a deployment process, the act of promoting changes to a production environment.

## relocate

See [7 Rs](#).

## replatform

See [7 Rs](#).

## repurchase

See [7 Rs](#).

## resiliency

An application's ability to resist or recover from disruptions. [High availability](#) and [disaster recovery](#) are common considerations when planning for resiliency in the AWS Cloud. For more information, see [AWS Cloud Resilience](#).

## resource-based policy

A policy attached to a resource, such as an Amazon S3 bucket, an endpoint, or an encryption key. This type of policy specifies which principals are allowed access, supported actions, and any other conditions that must be met.

## responsible, accountable, consulted, informed (RACI) matrix

A matrix that defines the roles and responsibilities for all parties involved in migration activities and cloud operations. The matrix name is derived from the responsibility types defined in the matrix: responsible (R), accountable (A), consulted (C), and informed (I). The support (S) type is optional. If you include support, the matrix is called a *RASCI matrix*, and if you exclude it, it's called a *RACI matrix*.

## responsive control

A security control that is designed to drive remediation of adverse events or deviations from your security baseline. For more information, see [Responsive controls](#) in *Implementing security controls on AWS*.

## retain

See [7 Rs](#).

## retire

See [7 Rs](#).

## Retrieval Augmented Generation (RAG)

A [generative AI](#) technology in which an [LLM](#) references an authoritative data source that is outside of its training data sources before generating a response. For example, a RAG model might perform a semantic search of an organization's knowledge base or custom data. For more information, see [What is RAG](#).

## rotation

The process of periodically updating a [secret](#) to make it more difficult for an attacker to access the credentials.

## row and column access control (RCAC)

The use of basic, flexible SQL expressions that have defined access rules. RCAC consists of row permissions and column masks.

## RPO

See [recovery point objective](#).

## RTO

See [recovery time objective](#).

## runbook

A set of manual or automated procedures required to perform a specific task. These are typically built to streamline repetitive operations or procedures with high error rates.

# S

## SAML 2.0

An open standard that many identity providers (IdPs) use. This feature enables federated single sign-on (SSO), so users can log into the AWS Management Console or call the AWS API operations without you having to create user in IAM for everyone in your organization. For more information about SAML 2.0-based federation, see [About SAML 2.0-based federation](#) in the IAM documentation.

## SCADA

See [supervisory control and data acquisition](#).

## SCP

See [service control policy](#).

## secret

In AWS Secrets Manager, confidential or restricted information, such as a password or user credentials, that you store in encrypted form. It consists of the secret value and its metadata.

The secret value can be binary, a single string, or multiple strings. For more information, see [What's in a Secrets Manager secret?](#) in the Secrets Manager documentation.

### security by design

A system engineering approach that takes security into account through the whole development process.

### security control

A technical or administrative guardrail that prevents, detects, or reduces the ability of a threat actor to exploit a security vulnerability. There are four primary types of security controls: [preventative](#), [detective](#), [responsive](#), and [proactive](#).

### security hardening

The process of reducing the attack surface to make it more resistant to attacks. This can include actions such as removing resources that are no longer needed, implementing the security best practice of granting least privilege, or deactivating unnecessary features in configuration files.

### security information and event management (SIEM) system

Tools and services that combine security information management (SIM) and security event management (SEM) systems. A SIEM system collects, monitors, and analyzes data from servers, networks, devices, and other sources to detect threats and security breaches, and to generate alerts.

### security response automation

A predefined and programmed action that is designed to automatically respond to or remediate a security event. These automations serve as [detective](#) or [responsive](#) security controls that help you implement AWS security best practices. Examples of automated response actions include modifying a VPC security group, patching an Amazon EC2 instance, or rotating credentials.

### server-side encryption

Encryption of data at its destination, by the AWS service that receives it.

### service control policy (SCP)

A policy that provides centralized control over permissions for all accounts in an organization in AWS Organizations. SCPs define guardrails or set limits on actions that an administrator can delegate to users or roles. You can use SCPs as allow lists or deny lists, to specify which services

or actions are permitted or prohibited. For more information, see [Service control policies](#) in the AWS Organizations documentation.

#### service endpoint

The URL of the entry point for an AWS service. You can use the endpoint to connect programmatically to the target service. For more information, see [AWS service endpoints](#) in *AWS General Reference*.

#### service-level agreement (SLA)

An agreement that clarifies what an IT team promises to deliver to their customers, such as service uptime and performance.

#### service-level indicator (SLI)

A measurement of a performance aspect of a service, such as its error rate, availability, or throughput.

#### service-level objective (SLO)

A target metric that represents the health of a service, as measured by a [service-level indicator](#).

#### shared responsibility model

A model describing the responsibility you share with AWS for cloud security and compliance. AWS is responsible for security *of* the cloud, whereas you are responsible for security *in* the cloud. For more information, see [Shared responsibility model](#).

#### Shadow AI

Unauthorized [AI](#) applications built or used outside of governed channels within an organization.

#### SIEM

See [security information and event management system](#).

#### single point of failure (SPOF)

A failure in a single, critical component of an application that can disrupt the system.

#### SLA

See [service-level agreement](#).

#### SLI

See [service-level indicator](#).

## SLO

See [service-level objective](#).

## split-and-seed model

A pattern for scaling and accelerating modernization projects. As new features and product releases are defined, the core team splits up to create new product teams. This helps scale your organization's capabilities and services, improves developer productivity, and supports rapid innovation. For more information, see [Phased approach to modernizing applications in the AWS Cloud](#).

## SPOF

See [single point of failure](#).

## star schema

A database organizational structure that uses one large fact table to store transactional or measured data and uses one or more smaller dimensional tables to store data attributes. This structure is designed for use in a [data warehouse](#) or for business intelligence purposes.

## strangler fig pattern

An approach to modernizing monolithic systems by incrementally rewriting and replacing system functionality until the legacy system can be decommissioned. This pattern uses the analogy of a fig vine that grows into an established tree and eventually overcomes and replaces its host. The pattern was [introduced by Martin Fowler](#) as a way to manage risk when rewriting monolithic systems. For an example of how to apply this pattern, see [Modernizing legacy Microsoft ASP.NET \(ASMX\) web services incrementally by using containers and Amazon API Gateway](#).

## subnet

A range of IP addresses in your VPC. A subnet must reside in a single Availability Zone.

## supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA)

In manufacturing, a system that uses hardware and software to monitor physical assets and production operations.

## symmetric encryption

An encryption algorithm that uses the same key to encrypt and decrypt the data.

## synthetic testing

Testing a system in a way that simulates user interactions to detect potential issues or to monitor performance. You can use [Amazon CloudWatch Synthetics](#) to create these tests.

## system prompt

A technique for providing context, instructions, or guidelines to an [LLM](#) to direct its behavior. System prompts help set context and establish rules for interactions with users.

# T

## tags

Key-value pairs that act as metadata for organizing your AWS resources. Tags can help you manage, identify, organize, search for, and filter resources. For more information, see [Tagging your AWS resources](#).

## target variable

The value that you are trying to predict in supervised ML. This is also referred to as an *outcome variable*. For example, in a manufacturing setting the target variable could be a product defect.

## task list

A tool that is used to track progress through a runbook. A task list contains an overview of the runbook and a list of general tasks to be completed. For each general task, it includes the estimated amount of time required, the owner, and the progress.

## test environment

See [environment](#).

## training

To provide data for your ML model to learn from. The training data must contain the correct answer. The learning algorithm finds patterns in the training data that map the input data attributes to the target (the answer that you want to predict). It outputs an ML model that captures these patterns. You can then use the ML model to make predictions on new data for which you don't know the target.

## tool

A function or API that an [agent](#) can invoke to perform operations in external systems.

## transit gateway

A network transit hub that you can use to interconnect your VPCs and on-premises networks. For more information, see [What is a transit gateway](#) in the AWS Transit Gateway documentation.

## trunk-based workflow

An approach in which developers build and test features locally in a feature branch and then merge those changes into the main branch. The main branch is then built to the development, preproduction, and production environments, sequentially.

## trusted access

Granting permissions to a service that you specify to perform tasks in your organization in AWS Organizations and in its accounts on your behalf. The trusted service creates a service-linked role in each account, when that role is needed, to perform management tasks for you. For more information, see [Using AWS Organizations with other AWS services](#) in the AWS Organizations documentation.

## tuning

To change aspects of your training process to improve the ML model's accuracy. For example, you can train the ML model by generating a labeling set, adding labels, and then repeating these steps several times under different settings to optimize the model.

## two-pizza team

A small DevOps team that you can feed with two pizzas. A two-pizza team size ensures the best possible opportunity for collaboration in software development.

# U

## uncertainty

A concept that refers to imprecise, incomplete, or unknown information that can undermine the reliability of predictive ML models. There are two types of uncertainty: *Epistemic uncertainty* is caused by limited, incomplete data, whereas *aleatoric uncertainty* is caused by the noise and randomness inherent in the data.

## undifferentiated tasks

Also known as *heavy lifting*, work that is necessary to create and operate an application but that doesn't provide direct value to the end user or provide competitive advantage. Examples of undifferentiated tasks include procurement, maintenance, and capacity planning.

## upper environments

See [environment](#).

# V

## vacuuming

A database maintenance operation that involves cleaning up after incremental updates to reclaim storage and improve performance.

## version control

Processes and tools that track changes, such as changes to source code in a repository.

## VPC peering

A connection between two VPCs that allows you to route traffic by using private IP addresses. For more information, see [What is VPC peering](#) in the Amazon VPC documentation.

## vulnerability

A software or hardware flaw that compromises the security of the system.

# W

## warm cache

A buffer cache that contains current, relevant data that is frequently accessed. The database instance can read from the buffer cache, which is faster than reading from the main memory or disk.

## warm data

Data that is infrequently accessed. When querying this kind of data, moderately slow queries are typically acceptable.

## window function

A SQL function that performs a calculation on a group of rows that relate in some way to the current record. Window functions are useful for processing tasks, such as calculating a moving average or accessing the value of rows based on the relative position of the current row.

## workload

A collection of resources and code that delivers business value, such as a customer-facing application or backend process.

## workstream

Functional groups in a migration project that are responsible for a specific set of tasks. Each workstream is independent but supports the other workstreams in the project. For example, the portfolio workstream is responsible for prioritizing applications, wave planning, and collecting migration metadata. The portfolio workstream delivers these assets to the migration workstream, which then migrates the servers and applications.

## WORM

See [write once, read many](#).

## WQF

See [AWS Workload Qualification Framework](#).

## write once, read many (WORM)

A storage model that writes data a single time and prevents the data from being deleted or modified. Authorized users can read the data as many times as needed, but they cannot change it. This data storage infrastructure is considered [immutable](#).

## Z

### zero-day exploit

An attack, typically malware, that takes advantage of a [zero-day vulnerability](#).

### zero-day vulnerability

An unmitigated flaw or vulnerability in a production system. Threat actors can use this type of vulnerability to attack the system. Developers frequently become aware of the vulnerability as a result of the attack.

## zero-shot prompting

Providing an [LLM](#) with instructions for performing a task but no examples (*shots*) that can help guide it. The LLM must use its pre-trained knowledge to handle the task. The effectiveness of zero-shot prompting depends on the complexity of the task and the quality of the prompt. See also [few-shot prompting](#).

## zombie application

An application that has an average CPU and memory usage below 5 percent. In a migration project, it is common to retire these applications.