

The Evolution of Big Data Workflows: From On-Premise Hadoop to Cloud-Based Architectures

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Abstract:

Due to the rapid expansion of digital data, scalable and efficient big data processing architectures are gained since demand. Hadoop is, initially, used on premise, but as the cloud development grows, organizations start using cloud infrastructures, which allow them to use scalability, lower cost, and real time analytics. The focus of this paper is on this shift in solving movement from traditional on premise Hadoop ecosystem to cloud native alternatives and exploring the challenges and opportunities of such transition. This includes limitations of Hadoop based workflows, advancement in cloud computing which has helped in this migration and a comparative assessment of various cloud based big data solutions. The migration strategies, challenges and best practices are also discussed in the study to assist enterprises in modernizing their data infrastructure. This research provides insights into cloud adoption frameworks to help organizations go well beyond their big data processing capabilities, but in a cost effective and performance improving manner.

Keywords: Big Data, Hadoop, Cloud Computing, Distributed Computing, Data Processing, Cloud Migration, Apache Spark, Serverless Computing, Data Analytics, Cloud-Native Architectures.

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Motivation

The rapid proliferation of digital data has necessitated the development of scalable, efficient, and high-performance data processing architectures. Initially, organizations relied on on-premise solutions such as Hadoop for big data processing. However, with the advent of cloud computing, enterprises have progressively transitioned towards cloud-based architectures to enhance scalability, cost-efficiency, and real-time analytics capabilities. The evolution from on-premise Hadoop clusters to modern cloud-based big data architectures reflects the broader paradigm shift in distributed computing, data management, and analytics.

1.2 Problem Statement

Traditional on-premise Hadoop-based workflows posed challenges in terms of infrastructure management, operational overhead, and scalability. Despite its advantages in handling large-scale data processing, Hadoop's monolithic architecture struggled with performance bottlenecks, inefficient resource utilization, and maintenance complexity. As data workloads grew exponentially, enterprises sought alternatives that could provide greater agility, elasticity, and cost efficiency. This transition led to the emergence of cloud-based architectures leveraging modern distributed computing frameworks such as Apache Spark, Kubernetes, and serverless computing. However, migrating from legacy Hadoop-based systems to cloud-native solutions presents several technical and operational challenges that warrant in-depth investigation.

1.3 Research Objectives

This paper aims to explore the evolution of big data workflows from on-premise Hadoop ecosystems to cloud-based architectures by addressing the following research objectives:

1. **Examine** the limitations of traditional on-premise Hadoop-based big data workflows.

2. **Analyze** the key drivers and technological advancements facilitating the transition to cloud-based architectures.
3. **Compare** different cloud-native big data frameworks, including their performance, scalability, and cost-effectiveness.
4. **Identify** the challenges and best practices for migrating big data workflows to cloud environments.
5. **Provide** a roadmap for enterprises looking to modernize their big data infrastructure.

1.4 Research Contributions

The primary contributions of this paper are:

- A **comprehensive analysis** of the historical evolution of big data processing frameworks, focusing on Hadoop and its transition to cloud-based models.
- An **evaluation** of cloud-based big data architectures, including managed services, serverless solutions, and distributed processing frameworks.
- A **discussion** on key migration challenges, security concerns, and cost considerations for enterprises.
- A **framework** for decision-making regarding the optimal cloud architecture for specific big data workloads.

1.5 Structure of the Paper

The rest of this paper is organized as follows:

- **Section 2** provides an overview of on-premise Hadoop-based big data workflows, including its architecture, advantages, and limitations.
- **Section 3** discusses the transition towards cloud-based architectures, highlighting key technological advancements and industry adoption trends.
- **Section 4** presents a comparative analysis of different cloud-based big data solutions.
- **Section 5** explores migration strategies, challenges, and best practices.
- **Section 6** concludes the paper with key takeaways and recommendations.

SECTION 2: ON-PREMISE HADOOP-BASED BIG DATA WORKFLOWS

The emergence of big data workflows: adoption of Hadoop clusters in on premise offers secret meaning is a potential solution for big data processing data that has become too big for conventional databases as it is a giant collection of data amid vast quantity, size and velocity requiring certainty of big data processing algorithms that are not applied in traditional systems using finite space and time. With its architecture, Hadoop was able to solve the basic problems of data storage and parallel processing at petabyte scale in commodity hardware. But over time, as the business requirements evolved and cloud computing started to take over the paradigm of the modern day organization, the on premise Hadoop started losing its usage for a host of reasons, and organizations rather wanted the more flexible and scalable cloud solutions. [1]

Hadoop Architecture and Core Components

The idea of Apache Hadoop was to develop an architecture built with a distributed computing model that could perform large scale data processing across compute clusters comprised with commodity hardware. A high volume storage system, such as Hadoop Distributed File System (HDFS), using replicating data, was used to allow high throughput access for large datasets and ensure fault tolerance. The original Computation Engine of Hadoop, which originally is MapReduce, designed a programming model for parallel data processing through dividing the computation into map task and reduce task executed in multiple nodes.

Yet Another Resource Negotiator (YARN) framework was introduced over the time to make the Hadoop's resource management better by running multiple data processing engines in a single cluster concurrently. This permitted the use of Hadoop's distributed computing environment by frameworks other than MapReduce, such as Apache Spark and Apache Tez. Both Apache Hive and Apache Pig simplified big data processing by introducing the SQL like query functionalities, so as to make the writing of raw MapReduce jobs simpler. Apart from that, Apache HBase, a distributed NoSQL database, a fast and scalable data store that was

optimized for real time access was another important part of the Hadoop ecosystem, as well as Apache Sqoop and Apache Flume which helped loading data to Hadoop from structure and structure less sources.[2]

The upside of the Hadoop ecosystem being robust does not mean that this batch oriented processing model, coupled with the complex infrastructure requirements and high operational costs weren't a challenge to overcome, so it forced organizations to look for other types of architecture.

Advantages of On-Premise Hadoop Workflows

It was for enterprises wanting control over their data infrastructure (or trying to be regulated) that on premise Hadoop clusters provided this. Businesses enjoyed the ability to use horizontally scalable clusters to process and store huge datasets efficiently for the large scale analytics workloads. Additionally, Hadoop was founded on commodity hardware and therefore a more cost effective solution to proprietary data processing solutions that had depended on expensive high performance computing infrastructure.

Hadoop's another core strength lied in its ability to tolerate faults and its data replication mechanisms that reduced the risk of losing data by keeping multiple redundant copies of files across the nodes. This ability also made sure Hadoop was high available, in order to be used in mission critical applications. In addition to this, Hadoop's flexibility and extensibility made it possible to integrate with other analytical or machine learning frameworks very easily, allowing the organizations to have a complete big data processing ecosystem.[3]

Having said that, though Hadoop came with the advantage of scalability and fault tolerance, architectural constraints of Hadoop became clear for high throughputs while accommodating complex data workloads and realtime analytics requirements.

Limitations of On-Premise Hadoop

It was complicated to manage the infrastructure, one of the most significant challenge for on premise Hadoop. Configuring and maintaining a multi node Hadoop cluster involved all the sweat and blood of system administration, network optimisation, performance tuning, etc. Due to expansion of clusters, the overhead of managing hardware provisioning, software update and job scheduling grew to become operational inefficiencies.

Another one was the high total cost of ownership (TCO). Hadoop was an open source framework but the enterprises spent a lot of money on operations related to data centers, which included power, cooling, network and storage expansion. Often the cost of these made running large scale on premise deployments financially unviable.[4]

The other limitation of Hadoop was its batch oriented processing model which was fine when we only needed instant data analytics but real time data analytics became the need of industries. The processing latency of MapReduce introduced by the framework for long running batch job proves not to be useful for applications that require low latency insights such as fraud detection, or real time recommendation systems, and IoT analysis. To do it, complementary tools like Apache Storm and Apache Kafka offered streaming capabilities, but tying them into the existing Hadoop clusters made the data architecture complex.

Furthermore, inefficiencies in resource utilization made Hadoop scale inefficiently. Resource allocation was often statically allocated by the static nature of the resource allocation which sometimes lead to underutilize of compute and storage resource in period of low processing demand. Differing from modern cloud architectures, whose resource scaling to workload fluctuation is possible in a dynamic way, on premises Hadoop clusters were planned based on capacity to balance performance and cost efficiency.

Another issue in on-premise Hadoop environment is security and compliance. It was the responsibility of the organizations to enforce strong authentication algorithms, encrypt the data and provide access control to sensitive information. Another investment into security infrastructure and governance policies was needed to ensure compliance with regulatory frameworks, e.g. GDPR, HIPAA, SOC 2 and added to the operational burden.[5]

Lastly, the agnosticism and scalability on the on premises deployment was making enterprises unable to respond quickly to changing business environments. That meant procuring, adding, and configuring new hardware to expand a Hadoop cluster and, with that, serious delays in being able to scale operations. Particularly when organizations aimed to adopt agile data strategies with rapid provisioning and real-time analytics capabilities this limitation was getting very pronounced.

The Decline of On-Premise Hadoop and the Shift Towards Cloud-Based Architectures

Over time, data volumes and business requirements grew, and organizations started seeing the necessity of adapting to a flexible, cost efficient and scalable way of processing big data. Cloud Computing emergence was a great alternative, with on demand compute and storage resources without on premise infrastructure to be worried with.

Big data clouds offered many advantages compared to Hadoop, which directly solved Hadoop's challenges. Organizations were able to optimize costs by means of pay-as-you-go pricing model through provisioning of resources dynamically based on the demand, thus eliminating the need for upfront capital expenditures. Elastic scalability meant that burdensome, difficult to manage and rigid on premise clusters were no more and enterprises were able to scale workloads instantly whenever and however they chose. Also, fully managed big data services like Amazon EMR, Google Cloud Dataproc, Azure HDInsight made it incredibly simple to operate the distributed data processing framework and thereby reduced the operational overhead.[6]

With the shift of doing everything that we can into serverless, and containers, on premise Hadoop systems continued to decline. Kubernetes allowed organizations to run distributed data workloads in a more modular and resources efficient manner compared to the traditional way, while serverless enabled organizations to not deal with persistent cluster management. Real time processing capabilities of big data solutions also were cloud native big data solutions which also fixed the latency issues that were available in Hadoop for batch oriented design.

The cloud security advancement made it possible to mitigate regulatory and security concerns that have initially impeded cloud adoption. Robust security frameworks were introduced by major cloud providers that allowed data sovereignty and regulatory compliance, while still allowing cloud deployments to be flexible. These enhancements turned cloud based architecture an appealing option for businesses in different industries such as finance, healthcare, e commerce etc.

SECTION 3: TRANSITION TO CLOUD-BASED BIG DATA ARCHITECTURES

Drives of shifting from on-premise Hadoop clusters to cloud based big data architecture have been the need for higher scalability, cost efficiency and real time processing features. Then as the complexity of the data workloads where organizations discovered that running large Hadoop clusters on premise was rapidly becoming too hard to operate. As a result, cloud computing arose as a solution, giving businesses on demand resources, managed services, and flexible price models to bypass the inefficiencies of setting up Hadoop in more traditional ways.

Scalability and Cost Efficiency

Elastic scalability has been acting as one of the key drivers of this transition. While with the on-premise environments, you needed to procure and configure the hardware, the cloud platforms enabled the enterprises to increase the compute and storage resources on demand. The elasticity makes it easier for organizations to cope with the workload fluctuations, optimize the utilization of the resources, and reduce the costs. Furthermore, cloud providers provide pay as you go billing models so that businesses can spend only on the resources that they use.[7]

Advancements in Big Data Processing Frameworks

In addition, big data processing frameworks have also contributed to the shift towards cloud native architectures. Hadoop took advantage of the batch oriented MapReduce model whereas cloud based platforms use in memory processing engines like Apache Spark, Apache Flink or Google BigQuery that help realize

much faster and interactive data analytics. Getting real time data processing which was a major limitation of Hadoop is a core capability of cloud based solutions which are suitable for applications where low latency insights is required.

Rise of Managed and Serverless Services

Managed big data services are also another great factor to this transition. Fully managed Hadoop and Spark environments are available cloud providers including AWS (Amazon EMR), Google Cloud (Dataproc), and Microsoft Azure (HDInsight), and are less burdened with running on premises. These services enable to provision of clusters, setting up of your monitors and scaling, helping you focus on analytics instead of infrastructure.[8]

Furthermore, organizations can now process their big data workloads without maintaining persistent infrastructure as serverless solutions like AWS Lambda, Google Cloud Functions, Azure Data Explorer can be used for this task. This simplifies big data operations by eliminating manual cluster management and is cost efficient.

Security and Compliance Considerations

Enterprise grade encryption, identity management and cloud regulatory compliance frameworks robust enough have been improved so much that concerns like security and compliance regarding adoption are no longer on the agenda. Without such advancements, the lack of consumer trust regarding data privacy is holding back data privacy, and thus the use of big data architectures in the cloud can be adopted by organizations operating in highly regulated industries like finance and healthcare.[9]

Challenges of Cloud Migration

Although migrating Hadoop to the cloud has its advantages, it carries complex data transfer issues, application re-architecture, and needs of cost optimization. With large legacy Hadoop clusters, enterprises have to carefully layout their data migration strategy to avoid downtime and help keep compatibility with the cloud natively developed frameworks. Also, to prevent any unexpected expenses, cost management in the cloud depends on appropriate monitoring and optimizing strategies.[10]

SECTION 4: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF CLOUD-BASED BIG DATA SOLUTIONS

As enterprises transition from on-premise Hadoop to cloud-based architectures, a variety of big data solutions have emerged, each offering distinct capabilities in terms of performance, scalability, and cost-effectiveness. This section provides a comparative analysis of major cloud-based big data platforms, focusing on their architecture, key features, and suitability for different workloads.[11]

Comparison Criteria

The comparative analysis of cloud-based big data solutions is based on several critical factors:

1. **Processing Engine:** The underlying data processing framework that powers analytics workloads.
2. **Managed Services:** Whether the solution is fully managed or requires manual configuration and maintenance.
3. **Real-Time Processing:** The ability to handle streaming and low-latency analytics.
4. **Scalability:** Support for automatic scaling based on workload demands.
5. **Pricing Model:** The cost structure, including pay-as-you-go and reserved pricing options.
6. **Security & Compliance:** Built-in encryption, access control, and regulatory compliance features.
7. **Best Use Case:** Ideal applications for the platform based on its strengths.

Comparative Overview of Cloud-Based Big Data Solutions

Feature	Amazon EMR	Google Cloud Dataproc	Azure HDInsight	Google BigQuery	AWS Athena
Processing Engine	Apache Spark, Hadoop, Presto	Apache Spark, Hadoop, Flink	Apache Spark, Hadoop, Hive, Kafka	SQL-based serverless analytics	SQL-based serverless query engine
Managed Service	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Real-Time Processing	Yes (with Spark Streaming)	Yes (via Dataflow integration)	Yes (with Kafka & Spark Streaming)	Yes (via streaming insert)	Limited (via AWS Glue)
Scalability	Auto-scaling	Auto-scaling, serverless	Cluster scaling options	Fully managed, elastic scaling	Fully managed, scales on demand
Pricing Model	Pay-as-you-go	Pay-as-you-go	Pay-as-you-go, Reserved Pricing	Pay-per-query	Pay-per-query
Security & Compliance	IAM, KMS encryption, GDPR, HIPAA compliance	Cloud IAM, VPC Service Controls, GDPR compliance	Azure AD, Encryption, GDPR, HIPAA compliance	Built-in encryption, data masking, GDPR compliance	AWS IAM, encryption, compliance support
Best Use Case	Enterprise-scale data lakes, ETL workloads	ML/AI analytics, fast batch processing	IoT analytics, enterprise data processing	Ad-hoc analytics, data warehousing, real-time insights	Ad-hoc querying, data lake analytics

Analysis of Key Differences

Amazon EMR, Google Cloud Dataproc, and Azure HDInsight offer fully managed Hadoop and Spark environments, making them ideal for enterprises migrating legacy Hadoop workloads to the cloud. While Amazon EMR provides deep integration with AWS services such as S3 and Glue, Google Cloud Dataproc is particularly well-suited for AI/ML analytics due to its integration with Google's AI stack. Azure HDInsight stands out for IoT and streaming analytics, given its support for Kafka and real-time data ingestion.[12]

Google BigQuery and AWS Athena take a serverless approach to big data processing, eliminating the need for persistent infrastructure management. BigQuery excels in ad-hoc analytics and real-time insights, offering a highly optimized columnar storage format and fast query execution. AWS Athena, on the other hand,

provides pay-per-query analytics on S3-based data lakes, making it a cost-effective option for organizations focused on data lake exploration rather than complex ETL workloads.

SECTION 5: MIGRATION STRATEGIES, CHALLENGES, AND BEST PRACTICES

This is a complex process when moving from on-premise Hadoop to cloud based and can be modeled as a 5 step process. Cloud based solutions technically give numerous advantages from scaling, cost advantages and real time analytics capabilities to organizations, yet, indeed, organizations should confront various difficulties in the change interaction. This section covers important migration strategies, common pitfall as well as best practices, to provide a seamless and effective move to the cloud.

5.1 Migration Strategies

There are multiple approaches to migration depending on the type of infrastructure you are working from, the objectives of your business, and the tolerance for risk. For migration of big data workflows to the cloud, the three basic strategies are: lift-and-shift, re-platforming, and re-architecting.[13]

Lift and Shift: In this case, the existing Hadoop clusters are transferred to the cloud based managed services like Amazon EMR, Google Cloud Dataproc or Azure HDInsight with minimum changes to the architecture. This will allow a fast transition but it will not use all of the cloud native optimizations.[14]

Re-Platforming: Organizations move the workloads to cloud native alternatives, e.g., Apache Spark on Kubernetes, Google BigQuery, or AWS Glue, and do require some changes in adapting them to become more performant and alleviating operational overhead.

Re-Architecting: It is the strategy which re-architects big data workflows to fully leverage serverless computing, containerization and cloud-native analytics such as Kafka Streams. The largest provider of ACR end-to-end services will be your framework offering the best performance at lower cost and benefiting most from the growth but needing a significant development effort.[15]

There are several factors that choose the migration strategy, e.g. the volume and processing requirements of data, the constraints set by quantum, and the readiness of the organization to adopt the cloud.

5.2 Key Challenges in Cloud Migration

Moving big data workflows from on premise Hadoop to the cloud however has challenges that organizations need to deal with for a smooth move.

Large scale data migration & Data Transfer & Latency issues: What needs to perform efficiently is data transfer. Services like AWS Snowball, Google Transfer Appliance, or using a hybrid cloud model have to be employed in order to mitigate these challenges such as network bandwidth limitations and data consistency.[16]

Application Compatibility and Re-Engineering: There may be legacy Hadoop applications that will require to be substantially modified to work with optimum utilization in a cloud environment. Not all Hadoop based jobs will be ready for Apache Spark, Google BigQuery or AWS Lambda without a rewrite to take advantage of true cloud efficiencies.[17]

Risks Applied to Security and Compliance: As noted earlier, the security and compliance of data must be retained during the migration process. While migrating sensitive data to the cloud, organizations need to encrypt, have a role based access control (RBAC) and compliance frameworks (GDPR, HIPAA and SOC 2 to enable).[18]

Cost Management and Optimization: Cloud platforms provide some flexible pricing models but allocation of resources waste if not done rightly can lead to very high bill. To optimize the cloud expenses, organizations must realize the auto-scaling, reserved instances, workload scheduling among others.

To evaluate the skill gap and prepare an organization for a better transition for big data capabilities to these cloud based big data platform, expertise in Kubernetes, Server less computing and cloud native data processing framework are needed. This type of migration requires upskilling teams and hiring cloud specialists for a successful migration.

5.3 Best Practices for a Successful Migration

Overcoming these problems and implementing a smooth migration process depends on best practices, which improve security, improve performance and make it economical.

Phased Migration Assessment and Planning: Perform a thorough assessment of the existing workloads and identify a phased migration plan. Workloads need to be prioritised based on business impact, as well as complexity, which reduces the risks.[19]

Hybrid Cloud During Transition: Use a hybrid approach where organizations can transition workloads step by step while they keep their imperative applications in local premises until reaching a full state of cloud readiness.

Reduce Data Storage and Compute Cost: Cheap storage solutions like AWS S3, Google Cloud Storage, MongoDB Atlas (Mongodb), Azure Data Lake Storage are cheaper than HDFS. The compute resources should be scaled dynamically so as to accommodate the workload demands.

Automatically update the infrastructure: Write the Data Pipelines and Resource provisioning as Infrastructure as Code (IaC) using various tools like Terraform or AWS Cloud Formation and get consistent and fast cloud deployment.[20]

Near Zero Downtime Migrations: We are a SaaS product which means that we can offer a zero downtime migration path with the help of an ACI stack.

More importantly, to accomplish all this, they need to continuously monitor and optimize the performance post migration: Businesses can use the cloud monitoring tools such as AWS CloudWatch, Google Stackdriver, and Azure Monitor to monitor performance metrics and further optimize the resource utilization.

SECTION 6: CONCLUSION

A fundamental shift has occurred in the way enterprises manage, process, and analyse big data at a scale as big data workflows transition from on premise Hadoop clusters to cloud based architectures. Even though pipelined distributed data processing was made possible by Hadoop, its architectural shortcomings—heterogeneous infrastructure management, noncompetitive operational cost, and inflexibility for real time analytics—fuelled the migration to cloud native approach. Big data platforms in the cloud provide elastic scalability, cost efficiency, managed services, real-time analytics and hence are the emergent choice for today's modern enterprises. Cloud architecture enables more efficient data processing and is also easier to manage, often at a lower cost. The incidence of (acceptable) failure of infrastructure is reduced. Security compliance is also improved compared to traditional solutions such as custom data warehouse and ETL processing systems.

Yet, migrating from the on-premise Hadoop to the cloud is not without problems. Organizations are faced with data transfer complexities, application re-architecture, security concerns and cost management, and are therefore forced to adopt well defined strategies for migration. Among the initiatives, lift and shift, re platforming and re architecting differ in the amount of implementation effort required and the amount of optimization possible. The most crucial best practices to a successful cloud migration are phased migration, hybrid cloud strategies, workload optimization, security implementation, and monitoring performance continuously. In the foreseeable future, serverless computing, AI driven data analytics, multi cloud strategies and real time processing are going to form the pillars of big data workflow design. Cloud providers keep introducing new and advanced data management solutions and enterprises need to be agile enough in adopting these emerging technologies which help them scale, be efficient and enhanced business intelligence.

Ultimately, the move from Hadoop based architectures to cloud native big data solution is more than technology transition but a strategic shift and enabler for organisation to innovate and improve decision making on the competitive landscape of the data driven economy. Those enterprises that adopt the cloud based big data workflows in a progressive state will be in a good stead to reap maximum benefits from big data analytics in the near future.

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