

Apache Kudu Overview

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Apache Kudu overview

Apache Kudu is a columnar storage manager developed for the Hadoop platform. Kudu shares the common technical properties of Hadoop ecosystem applications: It runs on commodity hardware, is horizontally scalable, and supports highly available operation.

Apache Kudu is a top-level project in the Apache Software Foundation.

Kudu's benefits include:

- Fast processing of OLAP workloads.
- Integration with MapReduce, Spark, Flume, and other Hadoop ecosystem components.
- Tight integration with Apache Impala, making it a good, mutable alternative to using HDFS with Apache Parquet.
- Strong but flexible consistency model, allowing you to choose consistency requirements on a per-request basis, including the option for strict serialized consistency.
- Strong performance for running sequential and random workloads simultaneously.
- Easy administration and management through Cloudera Manager.
- High availability. Tablet Servers and Master use the Raft consensus algorithm, which ensures availability as long as more replicas are available than unavailable. Reads can be serviced by read-only follower tablets, even in the event of a leader tablet failure.
- Structured data model.

By combining all of these properties, Kudu targets support applications that are difficult or impossible to implement on currently available Hadoop storage technologies. Applications for which Kudu is a viable solution include:

- Reporting applications where new data must be immediately available for end users
- Time-series applications that must support queries across large amounts of historic data while simultaneously returning granular queries about an individual entity
- Applications that use predictive models to make real-time decisions, with periodic refreshes of the predictive model based on all historical data

Kudu-Impala integration

Apache Kudu has tight integration with Apache Impala, allowing you to use Impala to insert, query, update, and delete data from Kudu tablets using Impala's SQL syntax, as an alternative to using the Kudu APIs to build a custom Kudu application. In addition, you can use JDBC or ODBC to connect existing or new applications written in any language, framework, or business intelligence tool to your Kudu data, using Impala as the broker.

- **CREATE/ALTER/DROP TABLE** - Impala supports creating, altering, and dropping tables using Kudu as the persistence layer. The tables follow the same internal/external approach as other tables in Impala, allowing for flexible data ingestion and querying.
- **INSERT** - Data can be inserted into Kudu tables from Impala using the same mechanisms as any other table with HDFS or HBase persistence.
- **UPDATE/DELETE** - Impala supports the UPDATE and DELETE SQL commands to modify existing data in a Kudu table row-by-row or as a batch. The syntax of the SQL commands is designed to be as compatible as possible with existing solutions. In addition to simple DELETE or UPDATE commands, you can specify complex joins in the FROM clause of the query, using the same syntax as a regular SELECT statement.
- **Flexible Partitioning** - Similar to partitioning of tables in Hive, Kudu allows you to dynamically pre-split tables by hash or range into a predefined number of tablets, in order to distribute writes and queries evenly across your cluster. You can partition by any number of primary key columns, with any number of hashes, a list of split rows, or a combination of these. A partition scheme is required.
- **Parallel Scan** - To achieve the highest possible performance on modern hardware, the Kudu client used by Impala parallelizes scans across multiple tablets.

- High-efficiency queries - Where possible, Impala pushes down predicate evaluation to Kudu, so that predicates are evaluated as close as possible to the data. Query performance is comparable to Parquet in many workloads.

Example use cases

Kudu gives you capability to stream inputs with near real-time availability. You can run time-series applications with varying access patterns, and develop predictive learning models. Kudu gives you freedom to access and query data from any legacy sources or formats using Impala.

Streaming Input with Near Real Time Availability

A common business challenge is one where new data arrives rapidly and constantly, and the same data needs to be available in near real time for reads, scans, and updates. Kudu offers the powerful combination of fast inserts and updates with efficient columnar scans to enable real-time analytics use cases on a single storage layer.

Time-Series Application with Widely Varying Access Patterns

A time-series schema is one in which data points are organized and keyed according to the time at which they occurred. This can be useful for investigating the performance of metrics over time or attempting to predict future behavior based on past data. For instance, time-series customer data might be used both to store purchase click-stream history and to predict future purchases, or for use by a customer support representative. While these different types of analysis are occurring, inserts and mutations might also be occurring individually and in bulk, and become available immediately to read workloads. Kudu can handle all of these access patterns simultaneously in a scalable and efficient manner.

Kudu is a good fit for time-series workloads for several reasons. With Kudu's support for hash-based partitioning, combined with its native support for compound row keys, it is simple to set up a table spread across many servers without the risk of "hotspotting" that is commonly observed when range partitioning is used. Kudu's columnar storage engine is also beneficial in this context, because many time-series workloads read only a few columns, as opposed to the whole row.

In the past, you might have needed to use multiple datastores to handle different data access patterns. This practice adds complexity to your application and operations, and duplicates your data, doubling (or worse) the amount of storage required. Kudu can handle all of these access patterns natively and efficiently, without the need to off-load work to other datastores.

Predictive Modeling

Data scientists often develop predictive learning models from large sets of data. The model and the data might need to be updated or modified often as the learning takes place or as the situation being modeled changes. In addition, the scientist might want to change one or more factors in the model to see what happens over time. Updating a large set of data stored in files in HDFS is resource-intensive, as each file needs to be completely rewritten. In Kudu, updates happen in near real time. The scientist can tweak the value, re-run the query, and refresh the graph in seconds or minutes, rather than hours or days. In addition, batch or incremental algorithms can be run across the data at any time, with near-real-time results.

Combining Data In Kudu With Legacy Systems

Companies generate data from multiple sources and store it in a variety of systems and formats. For instance, some of your data might be stored in Kudu, some in a traditional RDBMS, and some in files in HDFS. You can access and query all of these sources and formats using Impala, without the need to change your legacy systems.

Apache Kudu concepts and architecture

You can familiarize yourself with some basic concepts related to Kudu and its architecture in this topic.

Columnar datastore

Kudu is a columnar datastore. A columnar datastore stores data in strongly-typed columns. With a proper design, a columnar store can be superior for analytical or data warehousing workloads for the following reasons:

Read efficiency

For analytical queries, you can read a single column, or a portion of that column, while ignoring other columns. This means you can fulfill your request while reading a minimal number of blocks on disk. With a row-based store, you need to read the entire row, even if you only return values from a few columns.

Data compression

Because a given column contains only one type of data, pattern-based compression can be orders of magnitude more efficient than compressing mixed data types, which are used in row-based solutions. Combined with the efficiencies of reading data from columns, compression allows you to fulfill your query while reading even fewer blocks from disk.

Raft consensus algorithm

The Raft consensus algorithm provides a way to elect a leader for a distributed cluster from a pool of potential leaders. If a follower cannot reach the current leader, it transitions itself to become a candidate. Given a quorum of voters, one candidate is elected to be the new leader, and the others transition back to being followers.

A full discussion of Raft is out of scope for this documentation, but it is a robust algorithm.

Kudu uses the Raft consensus algorithm for the election of masters and leader tablets, as well as determining the success or failure of a given write operation.

Table

A table is where your data is stored in Kudu. A table has a schema and a totally ordered primary key. A table is split into segments called tablets, by primary key.

Tablet

A tablet is a contiguous segment of a table, similar to a partition in other data storage engines or relational databases. A given tablet is replicated on multiple tablet servers, and at any given point in time, one of these replicas is considered the leader tablet. Any replica can service reads. Writes require consensus among the set of tablet servers serving the tablet.

Tablet server

A tablet server stores and serves tablets to clients. For a given tablet, one tablet server acts as a leader and the others serve follower replicas of that tablet. Only leaders service write requests, while leaders or followers each service read requests. Leaders are elected using Raft consensus. One tablet server can serve multiple tablets, and one tablet can be served by multiple tablet servers.

Master

The master keeps track of all the tablets, tablet servers, the catalog table, and other metadata related to the cluster. At a given point in time, there can only be one acting master (the leader). If the current leader disappears, a new master is elected using Raft consensus.

The master also coordinates metadata operations for clients. For example, when creating a new table, the client internally sends the request to the master. The master writes the metadata for the new table into the catalog table, and coordinates the process of creating tablets on the tablet servers.

All the master's data is stored in a tablet, which can be replicated to all the other candidate masters.

Tablet servers heartbeat to the master at a set interval (the default is once per second).

Catalog table

The catalog table is the central location for metadata of Kudu. It stores information about tables and tablets. The catalog table is accessible to clients through the master, using the client API. The catalog table cannot be read or written directly. Instead, it is accessible only through metadata operations exposed in the client API.

The catalog table stores two categories of metadata:

Table 1: Contents of the catalog table

Content	Description
Tables	Table schemas, locations, and states
Tablets	The list of existing tablets, which tablet servers have replicas of each tablet, the tablet's current state, and start and end keys.

Logical replication

Kudu replicates operations, not on-disk data. This is referred to as logical replication, as opposed to physical replication. This has several advantages:

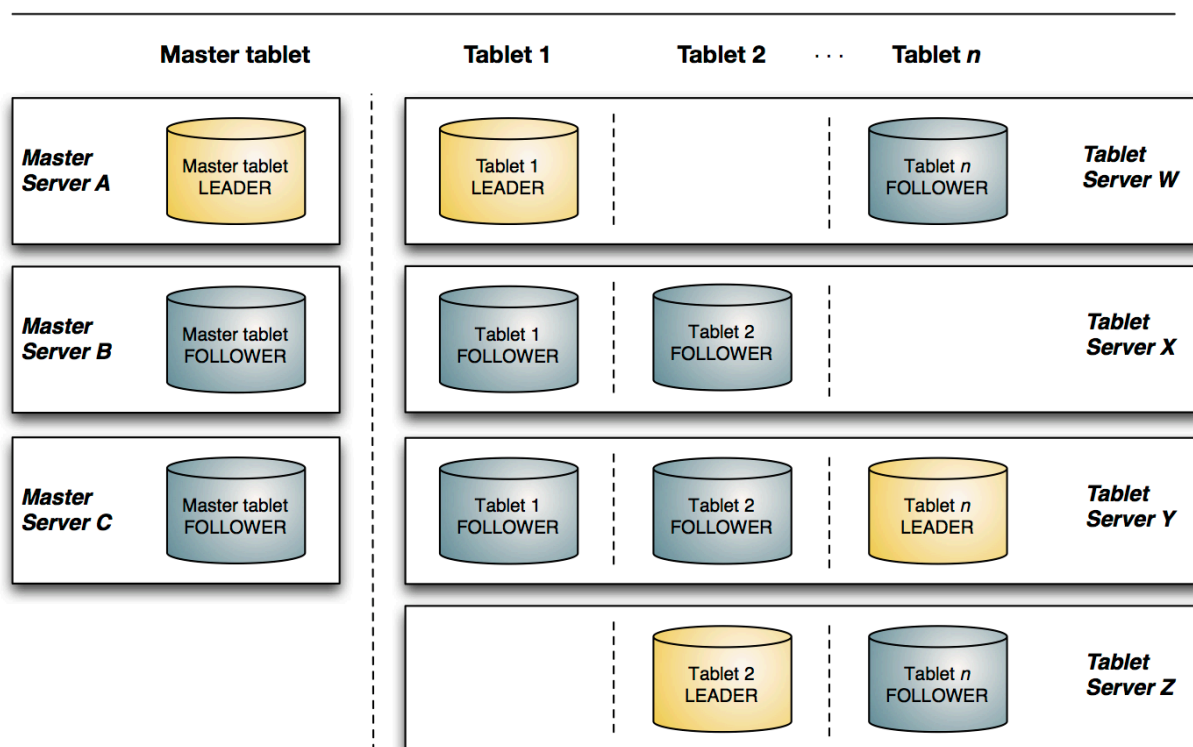
- Although inserts and updates transmit data over the network, deletes do not need to move any data. The delete operation is sent to each tablet server, which performs the delete locally.
- Physical operations, such as compaction, do not need to transmit the data over the network in Kudu. This is different from storage systems that use HDFS, where the blocks need to be transmitted over the network to fulfill the required number of replicas.
- Tablets do not need to perform compactions at the same time or on the same schedule. They do not even need to remain in sync on the physical storage layer. This decreases the chances of all tablet servers experiencing high latency at the same time, due to compactions or heavy write loads.

Architectural overview

The following diagram shows a Kudu cluster with three masters and multiple tablet servers, each serving multiple tablets. It illustrates how Raft consensus is used to allow for both leaders and followers for both the masters and tablet servers. In addition, a tablet server can be a leader for some tablets and a follower for others. Leaders are shown in gold, while followers are shown in grey.

Figure 1: Kudu architectural overview

Kudu network architecture



Apache Kudu usage limitations

We recommend that you review the usage limitations of Kudu with respect to schema design, scaling, server management, cluster management, replication and backup, security, and integration with Spark and Impala.

Schema design limitations

Kudu currently has some known limitations that may factor into schema design.

Primary key

- The primary key cannot be changed after the table is created. You must drop and recreate a table to select a new primary key.
- The columns which make up the primary key must be listed first in the schema.
- The primary key of a row cannot be modified using the UPDATE functionality. To modify a row's primary key, the row must be deleted and re-inserted with the modified key. Such a modification is non-atomic.
- Columns with DOUBLE, FLOAT, or BOOL types are not allowed as part of a primary key definition. Additionally, all columns that are part of a primary key definition must be NOT NULL.
- Auto-generated primary keys are not supported.
- Cells making up a composite primary key are limited to a total of 16KB after internal composite-key encoding is done by Kudu.

Cells

No individual cell may be larger than 64KB before encoding or compression. The cells making up a composite key are limited to a total of 16KB after the internal composite-key encoding done by Kudu. Inserting rows not conforming to these limitations will result in errors being returned to the client.

Columns

- By default, Kudu tables can have a maximum of 300 columns. We recommend schema designs that use fewer columns for best performance.
- CHAR, VARCHAR, DATE, and complex types such as ARRAY, MAP, and STRUCT are not supported.
- Type and nullability of existing columns cannot be changed by altering the table.
- Dropping a column does not immediately reclaim space. Compaction must run first.
- The precision and scale of DECIMAL columns cannot be changed by altering the table.

Tables

- Tables must have an odd number of replicas, with a maximum of 7.
- Replication factor (set at table creation time) cannot be changed.
- There is no way to run compaction manually, but dropping a table will reclaim the space immediately.

Other usage limitations

- Secondary indexes are not supported.
- Multi-row transactions are not supported.
- Relational features, such as foreign keys, are not supported.
- Identifiers such as column and table names are restricted to be valid UTF-8 strings. Additionally, a maximum length of 256 characters is enforced.

If you are using Apache Impala to query Kudu tables, refer to the section on [Impala integration limitations](#).

Partitioning limitations

Here are some of the limitations that you must consider before partitioning tables.

- Tables must be manually pre-split into tablets using simple or compound primary keys. Automatic splitting is not yet possible. Kudu does not allow you to change how a table is partitioned after creation, with the exception of adding or dropping range partitions.
- Data in existing tables cannot currently be automatically repartitioned. As a workaround, create a new table with the new partitioning and insert the contents of the old table.
- Tablets that lose a majority of replicas (such as 1 left out of 3) require manual intervention to be repaired.

Scaling recommendations and limitations

Here are some of the recommended values that you should consider while deciding the size of the tablet servers, masters, and other storage resources to get optimum performance.

Kudu can seamlessly run across a wide array of environments and workloads with minimal expertise and configuration at the following scale:

- Recommended maximum number of masters is 3.
- Recommended maximum number of tablet servers is 100.
- Recommended maximum amount of stored data, post-replication and post-compression, per tablet server is 8 TiB.
- Recommended number of tablets per tablet server is 1000 (post-replication) with 2000 being the maximum number of tablets allowed per tablet server.
- Maximum number of tablets per table is 60, per tablet server, at table-creation time.
- Maximum number of tablets per table for each tablet server is 60, post-replication (assuming the default replication factor of 3), at table-creation time.
- Recommended maximum amount of data per tablet is 50 GiB. Going beyond this can cause issues such as a reduced performance, compaction issues, and slow tablet startup times.

The recommended target size for tablets is under 10 GiB.

Staying within these limits will provide the most predictable and straightforward Kudu experience. However, experienced users who run on modern hardware, use the latest versions of Kudu, test and tune Kudu for their use case,

and work closely with the community, can achieve much higher scales comfortably. Following are some anecdotal values that have been seen in real world production clusters:

- Number of master servers: 3
- More than 300 tablet servers
- 10+ TiB of stored data per tablet server, post-replication and post-compression
- More than 4000 tablets per tablet server, post-replication
- 50 GiB of stored data per tablet. Going beyond this can cause issues such as reduced performance, compaction issues, and slower tablet startup time.

Server management limitations

Here are some of the server management guidelines that you should consider before implementing Kudu.

- Production deployments should configure a least 4 GiB of memory for tablet servers, and ideally more than 16 GiB when approaching the data and tablet scale limits.
- Write ahead logs (WALs) can only be stored on one disk.
- Data directories cannot be removed. You must reformat the data directories to remove them.
- Tablet servers cannot be gracefully decommissioned.
- Tablet servers cannot change their address or port.
- Kudu has a hard requirement on having an up-to-date NTP. Kudu masters and tablet servers will crash when out of sync.
- Kudu releases have only been tested with NTP. Other time synchronization providers such as Chrony may not work.

Cluster management limitations

When managing Kudu clusters, review the following limitations and recommended maximum point-to-point latency and bandwidth values.

- Rolling restart is not supported.
- Recommended maximum point-to-point latency within a Kudu cluster is 20 milliseconds.
- Recommended minimum point-to-point bandwidth within a Kudu cluster is 10 Gbps.
- If you intend to use the location awareness feature to place tablet servers in different locations, it is recommended that you measure the bandwidth and latency between servers to ensure they fit within the above guidelines.
- All masters must be started at the same time when the cluster is started for the very first time.

Impala integration limitations

Here are the limitations when integrating Kudu with Impala, and list of Impala keywords that are not supported for creating Kudu tables.

- When creating a Kudu table, the CREATE TABLE statement must include the primary key columns before other columns, in primary key order.
- Impala cannot update values in primary key columns.
- Impala cannot create Kudu tables with VARCHAR or nested-typed columns.
- Kudu tables with a name containing upper case or non-ASCII characters must be assigned an alternate name when used as an external table in Impala.
- Kudu tables with a column name containing upper case or non-ASCII characters cannot be used as an external table in Impala. Columns can be renamed in Kudu to work around this issue.
- != and LIKE predicates are not pushed to Kudu, and instead will be evaluated by the Impala scan node. This may decrease performance relative to other types of predicates.
- Updates, inserts, and deletes using Impala are non-transactional. If a query fails part of the way through, its partial effects will not be rolled back.
- The maximum parallelism of a single query is limited to the number of tablets in a table. For good analytic performance, aim for 10 or more tablets per host or use large tables.

Impala keywords not supported for creating Kudu tables

- PARTITIONED
- LOCATION
- ROWFORMAT

Spark integration limitations

Here are the limitations that you should consider while integrating Kudu and Spark.

- Spark 2.2 (and higher) requires Java 8 at runtime even though Kudu Spark 2.x integration is Java 7 compatible. Spark 2.2 is the default dependency version as of Kudu 1.5.0.
- Kudu tables with a name containing upper case or non-ASCII characters must be assigned an alternate name when registered as a temporary table.
- Kudu tables with a column name containing upper case or non-ASCII characters must not be used with SparkSQL. Columns can be renamed in Kudu to work around this issue.
- `<>` and `OR` predicates are not pushed to Kudu, and instead will be evaluated by the Spark task. Only `LIKE` predicates with a suffix wildcard are pushed to Kudu. This means `LIKE "FOO%"` will be pushed, but `LIKE "FOO%BAR"` won't.
- Kudu does not support all the types supported by Spark SQL. For example, Date and complex types are not supported.
- Kudu tables can only be registered as temporary tables in SparkSQL.
- Kudu tables cannot be queried using HiveContext.

Security limitations

Here are some limitations related to data encryption and authorization in Kudu.

- Data encryption at rest is not directly built into Kudu. Encryption of Kudu data at rest can be achieved through the use of local block device encryption software such as dmccrypt.
- Row-level authorization is not available.
- Kudu does not support configuring a custom service principal for Kudu processes. The principal must follow the pattern `kudu/<HOST>@<DEFAULT.REALM>`.
- Server certificates generated by Kudu IPKI are incompatible with bouncycastle version 1.52 and earlier.
- The highest supported version of the TLS protocol is TLSv1.2

Other known issues

Some of the known bugs and issues with the current release of Kudu are listed in this topic. These will be addressed in later releases. Note that this list is not exhaustive, and is meant to communicate only the most important known issues.

- If the Kudu master is configured with the `-log_force_fsync_all` option, the tablet servers and the clients will experience frequent timeouts, and the cluster may become unusable.
- If a tablet server has a very large number of tablets, it may take several minutes to start up. It is recommended to limit the number of tablets per server to 1000 or fewer. Consider this limitation when pre-splitting your tables. If you notice slow start-up times, you can monitor the number of tablets per server in the web UI.

More resources for Apache Kudu

The following is a list of resources that may help you to understand some of the architectural features of Apache Kudu and columnar data storage. The links further down tend toward the academic and are not required reading in order to understand how to install, use, and administer Kudu.

Resources

[Kudu Project](#)

Read the official Kudu documentation and learn how you can get involved.

Kudu Documentation

Read the official Kudu documentation, which includes more in-depth information about installation and configuration choices.

Kudu Github Repository

Examine the Kudu source code and contribute to the project.

Kudu-Examples Github Repository

View and run several Kudu code examples, as well as the Kudu Quickstart VM.

Kudu White Paper

Read draft of the white paper discussing Kudu's architecture, written by the Kudu development team.

In Search Of An Understandable Consensus Algorithm, Diego Ongaro and John Ousterhout, Stanford University. 2014.

The original whitepaper describing the Raft consensus algorithm.

Support

Bug reports and feedback can be submitted through the [public JIRA](#), our [Cloudera Community Kudu forum](#), and a public [mailing list](#) monitored by the Kudu development team and community members. In addition, a public [Slack instance](#) is available to communicate with the team.