

# The Difference Between Active Directory and LDAP



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Active Directory (AD) is a directory service made by Microsoft. It provides all sorts of functionality like authentication, group and user management, policy administration and more. **LDAP is a way of speaking to Active Directory.**

LDAP, which stands for Lightweight Directory Access Protocol, is a means for querying items in *any* directory service that supports it.

The relationship between AD and LDAP is much like the relationship between Apache and HTTP:

- HTTP is a web protocol.
- Apache is a web server that *uses* the HTTP protocol.
- LDAP is a directory services protocol.
- Active Directory is a directory server that *uses* the LDAP protocol.

Active Directory is just **one example** of a directory service that supports LDAP. There are other flavors, too: Red Hat Directory Service, OpenLDAP, Apache Directory Server, and [more](#).

## AWS Directory Service

Choose the directory type based on your needs. Cloud Directory offers cloud-native, highly flexible and cost-effective directory for your application-specific resources. Cognito User Pools offers Internet-scale user directory for your mobile and web applications. You can also migrate your Microsoft Active Directory-dependent applications to the cloud using the managed Microsoft AD option.

[Getting Started Guide](#)





#### AD Connector

AD Connector is a gateway that sends to your existing on-premises Microsoft Active Directory from AWS services. No directory information is replicated into or cached in AWS. [Learn more.](#)

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#### Simple AD

Create a Microsoft Active Directory-compatible directory powered by Samba 4 that provides a subset of Microsoft Active Directory features. [Learn more.](#)

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#### Microsoft AD

Create an AWS-managed Microsoft Active Directory powered by Windows Server 2012 R2. With Microsoft AD, you can easily integrate your Active Directory-dependent workloads such as Amazon EC2 for Microsoft Windows Server, Amazon RDS for Microsoft SQL Server, custom .NET applications and AWS Enterprise IT applications such as Amazon WorkSpaces. [Learn more.](#)

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#### Amazon Cloud Directory

Create a cloud-native directory to store your application's hierarchical data. Cloud Directory scales to hundreds of millions of objects and offers support for multiple relationships and application-specific schemas. Examples of application directories include device registries, catalogs, organization structures, and network topologies. [Learn more.](#)

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[Browse schemas](#)



#### Amazon Cognito Your User Pools

With Amazon Cognito Your User Pools you can easily and securely add user sign-up and sign-in functionality to your mobile and web apps. This fully managed service scales to support hundreds of millions of users. [Learn more.](#)

[Set up a User Pool](#)