mdadm Linux software RAID

CONCEPTS

RAID is not a backup: it survives a disk failure, not deletion, corruption or a dead controller.

Disks / partitions components
↓ `--create`
/dev/md0 md array
↓ `mkfs`
Filesystem ext4, xfs, LVM...
↓ `mount`
In use watch /proc/mdstat

Create, grow and add start a background resync; the array is usable meanwhile but slower and not yet redundant.

INSPECT

`cat /proc/mdstat`
Show arrays, members and sync progress

`mdadm --detail` *`<md>`*
Array state, level, members, UUID

`mdadm --examine` *`<dev>`*
Read the RAID superblock of a member

`mdadm --detail --scan`
One-line summary per active array

CREATE

`mdadm --create` *`<md>`* **`--level=1 --raid-devices=2`** *`<dev1>`* *`<dev2>`*
Mirror (RAID1) of two devices

`mdadm --create` *`<md>`* **`--level=5 --raid-devices=3`** *`<dev1>`* *`<dev2>`* *`<dev3>`*
RAID5: striping with parity

`mdadm --create` *`<md>`* **`--level=6 --raid-devices=4`** *`<devs>`*
RAID6: survives two failures

`mdadm --create` *`<md>`* **`--level=10 --raid-devices=4`** *`<devs>`*
RAID10: mirrored stripes

CREATE (cont.)

Prefer partitions of type Linux RAID, or whole disks, of equal size; the smallest member sets the size.

FAIL, REPLACE, REPAIR

`mdadm` *`<md>`* **`--fail`** *`<dev>`*
Mark a member as faulty

`mdadm` *`<md>`* **`--remove`** *`<dev>`*
Remove a failed member

`mdadm` *`<md>`* **`--add`** *`<dev>`*
Add a disk; rebuild starts

`mdadm` *`<md>`* **`--replace`** *`<dev>`* **`--with`** *`<spare>`*
Swap a disk while it is still healthy

`mdadm --zero-superblock` *`<dev>`*
Erase RAID metadata from a disk

ASSEMBLE AND STOP

`mdadm --assemble --scan`
Assemble arrays from config or superblocks

`mdadm --assemble` *`<md>`* *`<dev1>`* *`<dev2>`*
Assemble one array from given members

`mdadm --stop` *`<md>`*
Deactivate an array (unmount first)

GROW AND RESHAPE

`mdadm --grow` *`<md>`* **`--raid-devices=`***`<n>`*
Change the number of active members

After growing, extend the filesystem (resize2fs, xfs_growfs) or the LVM layer on top.

CONFIG AND MONITORING

`mdadm --detail --scan >> /etc/mdadm/mdadm.conf`
Persist array definitions