nvme-cli NVMe drive management

CONCEPTS

Use the character device (/dev/nvme0) for controller commands and the block device (/dev/nvme0n1) for namespace ones. The digits are not linked across the two.

Subsystem nvme-subsys0
Controller /dev/nvme0
Namespace /dev/nvme0n1

nvme-cli 3.x groups commands (nvme id ctrl, nvme log smart, nvme ns create). The old dashed names still work as deprecated aliases that warn on stderr.

format, sanitize and ns delete destroy data and cannot be undone. Check the device path against nvme list first, twice.

DISCOVER

nvme list
List NVMe devices with size and model

nvme list -o json
List devices as JSON

nvme list-subsys
Show subsystems, controllers and paths

DISCOVER (cont.)

nvme id ctrl /dev/nvme0
Show controller model, serial, firmware

nvme id ns /dev/nvme0n1
Show namespace size and LBA formats

nvme id ns /dev/nvme0 -n *<nsid>*
Show a namespace via the controller

nvme --version
Show the nvme-cli version

HEALTH AND LOGS

nvme log smart /dev/nvme0
Show SMART health, wear, temperature

nvme log smart /dev/nvme0 -o json
SMART log as JSON for scripts

nvme log error /dev/nvme0
Show the error log

nvme log error /dev/nvme0 -e *<n>* -V
Last n entries, valid ones only

nvme log fw /dev/nvme0
Show firmware slots and active revision

HEALTH AND LOGS (cont.)

nvme log sanitize /dev/nvme0
Show sanitize status and progress

Key SMART fields

Field	Meaning
critical_warning	Non-zero means act now
percentage_used	Wear estimate, may pass 100
available_spare	Spare blocks left (%)
media_errors	Data integrity errors
unsafe_shutdowns	Power loss without flush
data_units_written	Units of 512,000 bytes

SELF-TEST

nvme device-self-test /dev/nvme0 -s 1
Start a short self-test

nvme device-self-test /dev/nvme0 -s 2
Start an extended self-test

nvme device-self-test /dev/nvme0 -s 1 -w
Short test, wait for completion

SELF-TEST (cont.)

nvme log self-test /dev/nvme0
Show self-test results

nvme device-self-test /dev/nvme0 -s 0xf
Abort a running self-test

NAMESPACES

nvme id ns-list /dev/nvme0
List active namespace IDs

nvme ns create /dev/nvme0 --nsze=*<blocks>* --ncap=*<blocks>* --flbas=0
Create a namespace

nvme ns attach /dev/nvme0 -n *<nsid>* -c *<ctrl-id>*
Attach a namespace to a controller

nvme ns delete /dev/nvme0 -n *<nsid>*
DESTROYS the namespace and its data

FORMAT AND ERASE

nvme format /dev/nvme0n1 --lbaf=*<n>*
ERASES: reformat with LBA format n

nvme format /dev/nvme0n1 --block-size=4096
ERASES: reformat to 4K blocks

FORMAT AND ERASE (cont.)

nvme format /dev/nvme0n1 --ses=1
ERASES: format plus user data erase

nvme format /dev/nvme0n1 --ses=2
ERASES: format plus cryptographic erase

nvme sanitize /dev/nvme0 -a start-block-erase
ERASES: block erase the whole drive

FIRMWARE

nvme fw download /dev/nvme0 --fw=*<file>*
Upload a firmware image

nvme fw commit /dev/nvme0 -s *<slot>* -a 1
Store image in slot, activate at reset

OPTIONS AND HELP

nvme *<command>* -o json
Machine-readable output

nvme *<command>* -v
More detail (repeat for more)

nvme *<command>* --dry-run
Print the command without sending it

nvme help
List all subcommands