



NEWS RELEASE

Cisco Research Shows IT Eager to Adopt Artificial Intelligence, Intent-based Networking

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News Summary:

- In a survey of over 2000 IT leaders and network strategists, Cisco found maximizing businesses value to be IT's number one priority, demonstrating a desire to drive greater innovation and closer alignment to business strategy.
- In order to achieve this, organizations are moving their networks towards intent-based networking and investing in AI technologies.
- IT leaders expect new wireless technologies, AI and IoT to be the biggest network disruptors in the next five years.

The network is vital to today's digital business. Whether maximizing employee productivity, optimizing customer experience or keeping data protected and secure, the network is foundational to business success. At the same time, the network is in the midst of one of its biggest evolutions since the introduction of the Internet, creating an opportunity for IT leaders and their teams to innovate. Cisco asked over 2000 IT leaders and network strategists how they plan to prioritize investment and the current state of their networks.

"IT teams today are running complex mission critical networks that are increasingly capable of providing rich data. But using that data to improve the operations, security, or business impact of the network requires new tools. That's why IT teams are embracing intent-based networking, AI and machine learning — because the business demands it," said Scott Harrell, SVP and GM, Cisco Enterprise Networking. "AI will help IT break the cycle of maintaining the status quo. By embracing predictive analytics and AI-based operations, IT teams will pivot from being consumed with maintaining the status quo to becoming an enabler of new business innovation."

Key findings from the [Global Networking Trends Report and Survey](#) include:

- IT leaders expect new wireless technologies, IoT and AI-enabled operations, threat detection and remediation to have the biggest impact on their network strategy and design over the next five years.
- The top priority for global IT leaders and network strategists is to maximize the business value of IT and more closely align to business needs.
 - Almost 40 percent of IT leaders named maximizing IT's business value as their number one priority, higher than simplifying operations, optimizing employee productivity and minimizing security events.
 - In order to achieve this, leaders and strategists believe investing in AI technologies is crucial. Almost 50 percent of network strategists believe increasing the use of analytics and AI will help enable the ideal network.
- Intent-based networking is coming, allowing organizations to build on their software-defined networking foundations.
 - 41 percent of those surveyed claim to have at least one instance of SDN in at least one of their network domains.
 - Only 4 percent of respondents believe their networks have moved beyond software-defined and are intent-based today. However, 35 percent believe their networks will be fully intent-based in two years' time.
 - When asked to indicate where on Cisco's Digital Network Readiness Model their networks currently operate, only 28 percent indicated they've reached a service-driven or intent-based network. However, when asked where their networks will be in two years, 78 respondents believed they would move beyond software-defined towards service-driven and intent-based networks.
- IT leaders and strategists are ready to embrace AI and automation.
 - Only 18 percent of IT leaders see lack of AI maturity as an obstacle to network modernization, the lowest level of concern indicated in their responses.
 - 72 percent of respondents plan to achieve AI-enabled predictive insights or prescriptive remediation within the next two years.
 - 94 percent of respondents believe they will have a software-defined wide area network (SD-WAN) in two years. Further, 47% of SD-WAN owners plan to have an AI-optimized WAN in two years.
- IT operations are struggling to move from reactive to proactive, hindering their ability to become more aligned to their business.
 - Over 75 percent of IT leaders and strategists believe their organizations are not predictive or business-optimized.
 - One possible explanation as to why IT teams haven't become more proactive is the amount of time spent on maintaining the status quo of the network. 73 percent of teams are spending more than half their time here.
 - Another barrier to achieving more proactive and business-optimized operations is operational silos. 29 percent of organizations identified coordinating with other IT teams as its top time-consuming operational activity. An additional 27 percent identified that a siloed design and operational approach across separate network domains was holding them back from being able to modernize their networks.
- IT leaders and strategists aren't concerned about a skills gap.
 - Leaders and strategists expressed confidence in their teams' abilities to address future network challenges. A third of IT leaders believe their teams are extremely well prepared to meet all the needs of an advanced network, another 40 percent believe they are well prepared and only 7 percent believe they are not prepared at all.
 - However, the skills gap remains a barrier for over a quarter of IT teams. 27 percent of IT leaders identified a lack of necessary skills as a main obstacle to transitioning to an advanced network.

- 22 percent of IT leaders identified reskilling and upskilling to address the skills gap as a top priority.

The complete Cisco Global Networking Trends Report

The complete Cisco 2020 Global Networking Trends Report is available to download [click here](#). It is Cisco's inaugural report on the state of the evolution of enterprise networking. It brings together research from across Cisco, including guidance from our leaders, fellows, and distinguished engineers. The report also includes insights from the Global Networking Trends Survey of over 2000 IT leaders and network strategists to better understand their network's current state as well as their future network aspirations.

Additional Resources

- Executive Blog: (Scott Harrell) [Building the Network of the Future - Powered by AI](#)
- [Global Networking Trends Report and Survey Homepage](#)
- [Intent-based Networking Assessment Tool](#)
- [Click Here](#) to view the Networking.Next Virtual Event

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