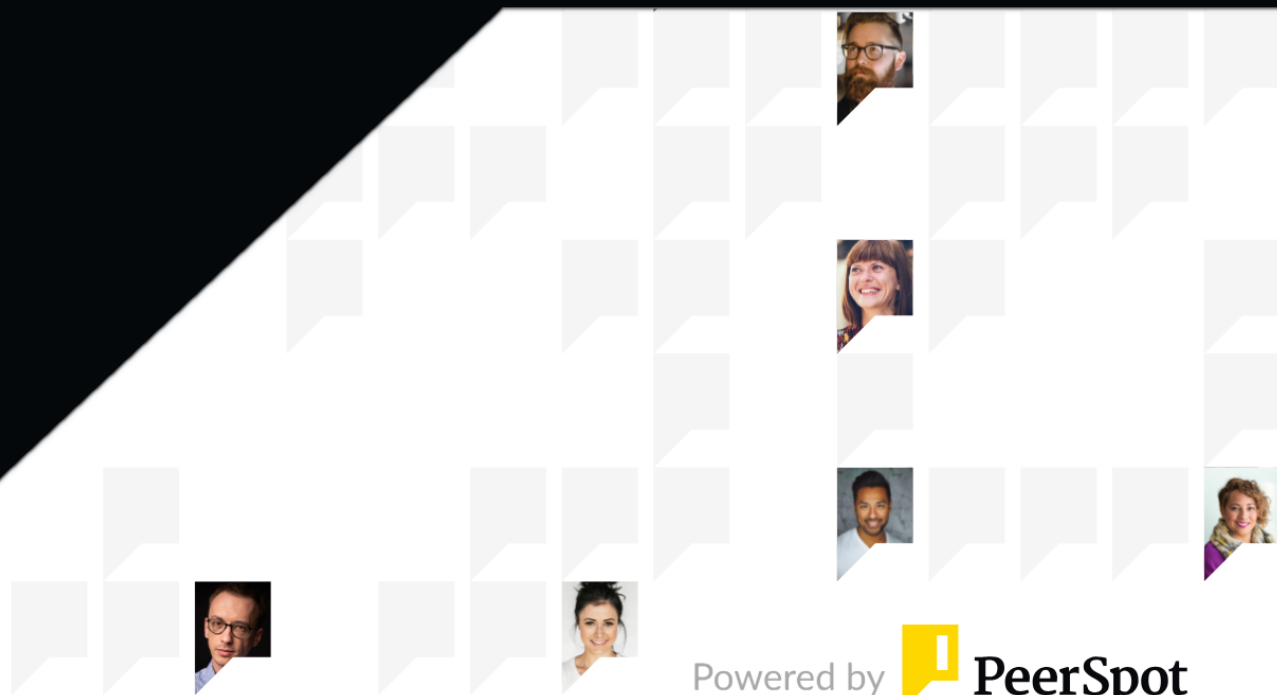




Cisco ACI

Reviews, tips, and advice from real users



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Product Recap



Cisco ACI

Cisco ACI Recap

Cisco ACI provides advanced capabilities with features like seamless integration with VMware and APIs for programmability. It offers centralized management for streamlined operations, efficient micro-segmentation, and robust security, addressing modern data center needs.

Cisco ACI brings automation to data center infrastructure, enabling transitions from legacy to modern environments with centralized management. Organizations benefit from optimized server farms, seamless integration with VMware, and support for Kubernetes, making it suitable for large-scale environments. Offering support for healthcare, finance, and public sectors, Cisco ACI facilitates tasks such as virtual networking and multi-site connectivity with application-centric and network-centric designs.

What are the key features of Cisco ACI?

- **Seamless Integration with VMware:** Ensures smooth operation with existing virtualized environments.
- **Programmability via APIs:** Offers flexibility in network configuration and management through APIs.
- **Centralized Management:** Provides a unified view of the network, simplifying oversight.
- **Automation:** Reduces manual configuration workload, speeding up deployment.
- **Scalability:** Adapts to growing network demands with ease.
- **Robust Security:** Enhances protection against threats with comprehensive security measures.
- **Efficient Micro-Segmentation:** Improves network segmentation for security and efficiency.

What benefits or ROI should users look for when evaluating Cisco ACI?

- **Streamlined Operation:** Reduced complexity in network management.
- **Enhanced Performance:** Improved network and application efficiency.
- **Cost Efficiency:** Better resource allocation reduces operational costs.
- **Improved Security:** Advanced features for increased protection.
- **Scalability:** Allows growth without significant redesigns.

In the healthcare industry, Cisco ACI supports secure and efficient data management, accommodating regulatory needs and enhancing patient data handling. Financial institutions benefit from robust security and seamless integration with existing infrastructures, facilitating smooth transaction processing. In the public sector, it's utilized for reliable network management and servicing a diverse range of applications.

Valuable Features

Excerpts from real customer reviews on PeerSpot:

- ✓ “Cisco ACI has positively impacted my organization by making management easier, significantly enhancing our data center networking, helping in cost savings, and allowing our network development team to integrate with the APIs to establish automation-driven workflows for observability, fault alerts, and monitoring.”



Sulaiman Olubiyi

Senior Network Automation Engineer at a outsourcing company with 1,001-5,000 employees

- ✓ “Instead of taking days or multiple days for a deployment of a server or application, they can do it immediately within minutes because all the configuration templates are already there in the control plane, which we can push immediately when the new server gets added.”



Verified user

Consulting & Solution Integration at a comms service provider with 10,001+ employees



“Their technical support has been great, and they have a great partner, so there is nothing to comment on regarding the service.”



Lin Thein Naing

S VP, IT Infra at ATOM



“The main features of Cisco ACI that I really appreciate are the application-centric and network-centric designs, allowing you to create your network according to your application.”



Rahul Khandelwal

Network Technical Manager at KPMG



“The routing of traffic is one of our main focuses when utilizing Cisco ACI.”



Rammohan Manike

Sr Consultant at Tata Consultancy



“Cisco ACI's multi-tenancy has been most beneficial for our network management.”



Raj Metkar

Director, Head of Networks at MUFG, EMEA



“Cisco ACI was the first product in the market, offering stability with a significant install base.”



Brook Debebe Hailu

Chief Technology Officer at Mehbub General Trading PLC

What users had to say about valuable features:

“Robustness is a key aspect. Stability and robustness are what we are banking on. It is essential for growing our data center connectivity and enablement for our customers. It is a must for us. The routing of traffic is one of our main focuses when utilizing Cisco ACI..”

Rammohan Manike

Sr Consultant at Tata Consultancy

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“Cisco ACI was the first product in the market, offering stability with a significant install base. Its features, like easy application deployment, short deployment time for new applications or software, and eliminating the hassle of STP, are appreciated. Additionally, performance capabilities like connectivity of forty gs and one hundred gs and security integration are key benefits..”

Brook Debebe Hailu

Chief Technology Officer at Mehbub General Trading PLC

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“I can only comment on the IDSM tools and the monitoring observability part, which we find to be a great tool. However, we struggled with support a couple of years back due to external factors, such as sanctions, that caused a delay in receiving support. The support we refer to is technical support, and one of the functionalities missing in the current OpenText version is AI. Apart from that, it is quite good. The current tool is adequate for day-to-day operations, but we want to explore more on AI Ops and hope future versions of OpenText can support that..”

Lin Thein Naing

S VP, IT Infra at ATOM

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“The main features of Cisco ACI that I really appreciate are the application-centric and network-centric designs, allowing you to create your network according to your application. That's helpful, and it's good for one-time implementation. The automation capabilities are really helpful. We deployed one data center using Terraform, and after deployment, many automation features are available, which can be very helpful.

Based on my experience, Cisco ACI provides substantial capability; you can design your network accordingly and it's part of the SDN family, providing many benefits to the organization, especially when moving from traditional network infrastructure. Many organizations are actually using the old traditional Nexus infrastructure or some old data center devices. It gives you significant control and one-time implementation capabilities, and it also provides better performance and security. Functionality-wise, Cisco ACI provides integration using automation. We implemented it through Terraform, which was easy. Those features are available, so I don't think any new features are needed right now; something new could come up, but they have implemented many improvements over the years..”

Rahul Khandelwal

Network Technical Manager at KPMG

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“One of the interesting features Cisco ACI offers is tenant or endpoint group isolation, allowing you to easily bucket your applications, such as your database, web services, and third-party services into different endpoint groups. By using contracts, you can manage them, and that helps in enforcing a zero-trust environment, which is one of the features I love about Cisco ACI. Furthermore, it allows for easy management of virtualization infrastructure, such as the ESXi and OpenStack.

“The tenant helps my organization day-to-day by making connectivity more secure and easier to manage, enabling me as a network administrator to design communications. I can easily specify which web servers should access the database servers on a particular port. Thus, endpoint group isolation really helps a lot to ensure zero-trust communication and achieve more security in the network infrastructure.

“Another feature worth mentioning is the observability in terms of the endpoint tracker and the ability to see the flow as well. I think that's one of the things I love about Cisco ACI.

“Cisco ACI has positively impacted my organization by making management easier. It's simpler to manage, replacing the need for numerous Nexus switches. Having a Cisco ACI fabric has really assisted us in managing our bare metal servers, including Cisco chassis, Dell chassis, HP servers, and all of that. It significantly enhances our data center networking and helps in cost savings, as you don't need to buy switches repeatedly or manage Nexus switches differently. With the Cisco ACI fabric, you manage them as a whole, and it's an automation-driven solution, with our network development team integrating with the APIs to establish workflows for observability, fault alerts, monitoring, and more. It supports an API-driven development tool as well..”

Sulaiman Olubi

Senior Network Automation Engineer at a outsourcing company with 1,001-5,000 employees

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“We have deployed Cisco ACI for a couple of our customers where they migrated from the traditional Catalyst or traditional enterprise solutions to a Nexus platform for their data center network. We use Cisco ACI infrastructure for the SD-WAN and for the data center SDN solutions.

“For Cisco ACI, we predominantly use it for the data center software-defined network, where customers will have more control on their applications and it will have a matrix kind of architecture and it can have seamless connectivity and seamless access to applications without being moving from a traditional architecture of a data center. This is where they will have more visibility into their network and they can add any workloads in their network easily rather than pushing the configurations or doing the configuration from scratch. Configuration templates are already available in Cisco ACI, which we can push to the next workload which is getting connected to Cisco ACI infrastructure.

“Cisco ACI infrastructure is predominantly for the server infrastructure. It is not the traditional VLANs or those things getting configured. It is basically the VXLANs and Data Center Bridging solutions would come in. There is a spine-leaf architecture where the spine controls the control plane of all the leaf, and the leaf will connect the nodes or the workloads of the servers to that. For the data center management team or the IT team, it will be easy to deploy any new workloads. Instead of taking days or multiple days for a deployment of a server or application, they can do it immediately within minutes because all the configuration templates are already there in the control plane, which we can push immediately when the new server gets added. This provides operational simplicity and visibility, making it easier for the data center IT team.

“Analytics can be used, and AppDynamics can also be integrated into Cisco ACI for application-level monitoring, enabling analysis of applications and determining which application is taking how much of network loads. This kind of integration is possible, and Nexus Dashboard can also be useful in highlighting and providing a single dashboard to view all performance and any issues that may arise, which helps in faster troubleshooting..”

Verified user[Read full review](#) 

Consulting & Solution Integration at a comms service provider with 10,001+ employees

Other Solutions Considered

“We have experience working with other SD-WAN solutions, such as Cisco Viptela, Meraki, Aruba Central, and Juniper, at the SD-WAN level yet not at the data center level. We use NSX for another customer, however, it is not at the scale of Cisco ACI..”

Rammohan Manike

Sr Consultant at Tata Consultancy

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“We work with other vendors as well, having a few other suppliers providing support for different solutions. We are not working with them at this moment. We have solutions from different partners, including Cisco, HP, and Oracle for many different solutions, as we are part of the infrastructure team..”

Lin Thein Naing

S VP, IT Infra at ATOM

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“We previously used Cisco 6500 switches in our data center. It was a mix of Cisco 6500 and Cisco Nexus switching for our data center. We switched to Cisco ACI because I wanted a multi-tenancy environment as two entities were coming together. I like the way you can change things within Cisco ACI. I also like the programmability or automation capability that this platform gives me..”

Raj Metkar

Director, Head of Networks at MUFG, EMEA

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“Before choosing Cisco ACI, we evaluated other options, including Huawei SDN and Dell SDN, but with all the features and capabilities, we decided to go with Cisco ACI..”

Sulaiman Olubiyi

Senior Network Automation Engineer at a outsourcing company with 1,001-5,000 employees

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“We are a Gold Partner for Cisco and a global Gold Partner for Cisco, so we resell Cisco products and have skill sets to provide services for Cisco. We have certified resources across our country and every country, and we utilize them for deployment and other professional services. We don't do marketplace; we go through direct Cisco. We sell directly through Cisco, discuss with the customer, and arrange a back-to-back ordering with Cisco instead of going through a marketplace..”

Verified user

Consulting & Solution Integration at a comms service provider with 10,001+ employees

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“Before choosing Cisco ACI, we did look at some other vendors. However, my team has always been a network team that has hands-on experience with Cisco technologies. I felt comfortable because we had managed the Cisco environment for a long time. We know how good the stability of the environment is.

It was not an easy decision to choose Cisco's new platform considering you need to train your all network engineers to think different from traditional way they have been doing networking. I met some of the top-level VPs then and decided to go for Cisco. I explored the platform in Cisco CPOC labs and looked at the product's capability..”

Raj Metkar

Director, Head of Networks at MUFG, EMEA

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ROI

Real user quotes about their ROI:

“Efficient utilization leads to cost savings and efficiency gains. We achieved ROI within approximately 30 to 35 months, and it has been essential for us..”

Rammohan Manike

Sr Consultant at Tata Consultancy

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“I believe there is an ROI. We've been able to streamline our processes dramatically because of the way the new architecture works. So while it was a large investment, I believe that it had a big impact on the general productivity of our systems..”

Byron Hooper

Senior Network Engineer at a insurance company with 501-1,000 employees

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“It decreases network provisioning time and application provisioning time. It also takes fewer resources to manage it. You don't need a number of consultants to manage the ACI fabric because it's a centralized system. You will have one APIC controller which can manage more than 200 leaf switches. It depends on the APIC sizing. You can have multiple switches connected to it and you can manage it..”

Syed Ali Wajahat

IT Solution Architect at a media company with 1,001-5,000 employees

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“I'm not really so sure of how fast our client has seen return on investment. But maybe in the past three years they have seen it.

I cannot comment on how much ROI they've had. But they've established some BPO centers, call centers, using the infrastructure. I don't know how much success they've had..”

DarrylG

Technology Support Specialist at Fujitsu

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“I think it has a fairly good time to value. While it takes time to implement, once it's implemented the ability to make changes and adopt new functionality to the system becomes very easy. That saves more money over time because changes are implemented using fewer internal resources. I've seen some ROI for clients. Clients don't normally share that information with me, but I see how clients have benefited from implemented ACI and how the speed of implementing changes on their network improves over time. The ability to quickly make changes in the network is the biggest benefit that I've seen..”

Verified user

Data Center Implementation Engineer at a consultancy with 1-10 employees

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“We have seen a return on investment with Cisco ACI. I could get rid of another entity's data center. MUFG Bank was another entity that ran a traditional Cisco data center stack. When we came together as two different entities and consolidated our data center, I didn't have to buy any kit for MUFG Bank.

The return on investment for me is that I run two different entities, MUFG Bank and MUFG Securities, on the same hardware. It is a 50% return on investment for each entity. One entity originally invested in the platform, another entity came as an additional tenant, and both started sharing the cost of the platform.

It's a huge benefit for anybody trying to acquire additional businesses, and if there is a regulatory need to keep those environments separate from each other. There are huge security benefits as well with multi-tenancy. Both tenants remain separate. If one is hacked or something happens to one tenant, the other one still remains separate and protected.

If you want two different administrative teams, you can have one network team manage one tenant and another network team manage the other tenant. You have all the advantages of a cloud platform in your own data center..”

Raj Metkar

Director, Head of Networks at MUFG, EMEA

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Use Case

“We primarily use it for network-centric applications and environments. It's mostly used for migrating traditional three-tier networks to the ACI infrastructure..”

ShehreyarKhan

Senior Operations Consultant at NNIT

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“We are using Cisco ACI primarily for data center operations. We are creating different remote channels for segmentation and structuring our network, building routes for traffic management, and implementing micro-segmentation from end-to-end for traffic management..”

Rammohan Manike

Sr Consultant at Tata Consultancy

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“We are the user, representing the organization ATOM, a mobile operator in Myanmar. We have several products in our portfolio, including Vertica database, Document Management, Operation Bridge Manager, and IDSM. We are only using Operation Bridge Manager for monitoring, which generates alerts. We have the Network Monitoring Module, NNMi, for network operations management. We are customers with a direct relationship with the vendor..”

Lin Thein Naing

S VP, IT Infra at ATOM

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“We use Cisco ACI for data center software-defined networking. Instead of restricting ourselves to older Cisco data center networking like 6500 switches for servers or Nexus devices or 6500 core switches, I personally like the flexibility of Cisco ACI to grow the data center footprint and stability Cisco was promising with new 6500 like architecture. That is when I decided to go for software-defined networking, where you can program things and do it better.

We also had something coming up on the horizon where two different MUFG entities were likely to come together and start consolidating Infrastructure, namely MUFG Bank and MUFG Securities. Cisco ACI is like cloud data center networking or cloud networking in your private DCs, where you have a multi-tenancy. The real use case for Cisco ACI was to segment two different entities and put them on the same network hardware but still have a completely segregated separate environment. That was the reason why we went for Cisco ACI..”

Raj Metkar

Director, Head of Networks at MUFG, EMEA

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“I predominantly work on switching and routing, specifically utilizing products like Secure Access, UCM, or something similar from Cisco. Currently, we are working with Catalyst 9000 series for the switches and Catalyst 8000 series for the routers. From the router, we use 8200 and 8300 series, and from switches, all 9200, 9300, and 9500 series. We use Catalyst Center in at least one or two cases.

“Sometimes I use Firepower firewalls and sometimes I go for the Cisco ISE solution, ISE licenses, ISC licenses. We also work with wireless solutions like Meraki as well as Catalyst wireless. I am using Cisco ISE for network virtualization.

“ACI is predominantly on the Nexus platform. We have deployed Cisco ACI for a couple of our customers where they migrated from the traditional Catalyst or traditional enterprise solutions to a Nexus platform for their data center network. We use Cisco ACI infrastructure for the SD-WAN and for the data center SDN solutions..”

Verified user

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Consulting & Solution Integration at a comms service provider with 10,001+ employees

“Cisco ACI, called Application Centric Infrastructure, is the main backbone for our data center networking, which manages all the enterprise data center networking and how all virtual machines, servers, and bare metal hosts are interconnected together. I manage both production and the disaster recovery site, so that's what it is used for in my organization.

“One of the interesting use cases of Cisco ACI is what we call Interpod networking. We call it IPN, and it's a situation whereby you can integrate it with another router or a firewall so that the traffic will be exposed to another device. Maybe you want to reach what we call majorly a north-south traffic, where a subnet or IPs or servers that are on Cisco ACI could easily reach other networks outside of Cisco ACI.

“I have another use case called VMM migration. Cisco ACI natively supports virtual machine migration, such as ESXi hosts, making it easy to manage. An ESXi vCenter can be easily supported on Cisco ACI, and I've integrated vCenter 6.0, 7.0, and I'm even working on a project now with vCenter 8.0, which is also easy to manage. A vCenter is a virtualization infrastructure to manage servers, and it can be easily integrated with Cisco ACI, allowing you to push all the endpoint groups, which are the subnet and grouping, directly into the ESXi environment. Additionally, it supports Canonical, an OpenStack cloud solution, and it's one of the use cases I've been currently working on from the beginning of this year as well..”

Sulaiman Olubiyi

Senior Network Automation Engineer at a outsourcing company with 1,001-5,000 employees

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Setup

The setup process involves configuring and preparing the product or service for use, which may include tasks such as installation, account creation, initial configuration, and troubleshooting any issues that may arise. Below you can find real user quotes about the setup process.

“The initial setup process for Cisco ACI is simple; it's not complex. First-time configuration requires a lot of setup, but that's the great thing about Cisco ACI: it's one-time implementation. You create many policies at once, and after that, it becomes pretty easy..”

Rahul Khandelwal

Network Technical Manager at KPMG

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“The initial setup was not straightforward. We adopted an agile strategy, starting small and expanding to multiple data centers. The deployment took approximately eighteen months..”

Rammohan Manike

Sr Consultant at Tata Consultancy

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“The initial setup is straightforward. The deployment is centrally provisioned. The initial setup might take a couple of days. The deployment depends on the scale and customer requirements. We need one engineer for the deployment. The maintenance requires some skill development..”

Verified user

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Director, Advanced Services 2xccie 17359 (R&S DC) at a comms service provider with 51-200 employees

“I would rate my experience with the initial setup a nine out of ten, with ten being easy to set up.

The initial setup is quite straightforward. Our clients have a private and hybrid cloud. .”

Sanjay Gaiswal

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Technical Presales at Vcom Technologies

“It was easy, especially with the newer version. After preparing the initial fabric, it's mostly plug-and-play.

However, service deployment could be simplified with a better orchestration tool for deploying endpoint groups (EPGs) and other objects.

The deployment process is an ongoing process that can take over a year, as it's part of a migration of workloads and services. You can't migrate an active data center all at once. There are project dependencies that affect the timeline.

These are not technical challenges but project dependencies. Each project has its own timeline and phases. The technical aspects aren't that complicated.

I haven't encountered any challenges in deployment. It's simple automation through a portal for deploying services and EPGs..”

ShehreyarKhan

Senior Operations Consultant at NNIT

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“The solution's initial setup was easy because we went for network-centric implementation. When we deployed the solution, Cisco MSO (Multi-Site Orchestrator) was a new product in the market. It was quite buggy, and we have had some production outages because of the bugs in the product.

It took us longer than expected for us to deploy the solution because the COVID pandemic struck while we were implementing Cisco ACI. All the plans to deploy it were disrupted, but we managed to deploy it within a year instead of six months. If it hadn't been for COVID, we would have finished our project as planned within six months.

The deployment process was more about understanding the current network design and seeing how it will work within ACI. We considered what sort of tenancy we would need for one organization, how we carve out the tenancy for another organization, how many tenants we need, and how we maintain all this aggregation and some restructuring. The process was quite involved. However, once everybody grasped it, it was quite easy for us.

A core team of four people were involved in the solution's deployment.

On a scale from one to ten, where one is difficult and ten is easy, I rate the solution's initial setup an eight out of ten..”

Raj Metkar

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Director, Head of Networks at MUFG, EMEA

Customer Service and Support

“Cisco has a Customer Experience team and other professional services coming in, so their support seems to be good, and they try to solve issues as early as possible. Support is really good..”

Verified user

Consulting & Solution Integration at a comms service provider with 10,001+ employees

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“I have never sought support from Cisco, mainly because of the nature of the operations and issues I've encountered. With the exception of hardware problems, which are usually beyond our control, I've handled all other situations and software failures directly..”

Vahid_Nazari

Data Center Consulting Engineer at Techrun Stock Exchange

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“When we contacted support for troubleshooting, the issue was escalated to the next level in four hours. However, the last time we had a problem, the support took a long time to investigate..”

Navee Srichaiyanont

IT manager at IRPC PCL

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“My experience with technical support depends on the region. For example, technical support is excellent if it's an engineer from the EMEA, like Belgium. But we struggle to connect with good engineers in the APAC region..”

AbhinavSingh

Technical Marketing Engineer Hybrid Cloud Infrastructures at NetApp

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“For technical support, I would rate them a seven because it's a complex technology and the TAC people sometimes don't have much understanding of the product. When issues occur, the TAC is not able to provide much support, leading to difficulties in finding RCAs..”

Rahul Khandelwal

Network Technical Manager at KPMG

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“My experience with the solution's technical support has been quite good. Sometimes, we find that some of the engineers we get from technical support do not know about the latest version of Cisco NDO. Cisco still has to train its engineers on the latest version because they are more used to the older versions.

Sometimes, my own engineers find it funny that they know more than Cisco engineers because we use the solution's latest version. It's not that they don't know it. They are not completely familiar with their own product. It could be because we reached out to Cisco on the weekend, and the engineers available were not specialists in the product's latest version.

I think whatever Cisco has done in the technical support background has improved recently. I know that Cisco has started using artificial intelligence in its TAC environment. Since some AI advises their technical support staff, the meantime to resolve has drastically reduced for me as a customer..”

Raj Metkar

Director, Head of Networks at MUFG, EMEA

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Other Advice

“I recommend Cisco ACI due to its reliable tech support, timely updates for security, traffic management, and ease of management. Enhancements with public APIs and sustainability measures could be beneficial.

Overall, I rate the solution as nine on a scale of one to ten..”

Rammohan Manike

Sr Consultant at Tata Consultancy

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“I have only worked with Cisco ACI in an on-premises deployment; I'm not sure about the hybrid model. I'm not currently working with the analytics part. I haven't integrated Cisco ACI with third-party tools such as VMware, [OpenStack](#), or [Microsoft Azure](#). On a scale of 1-10, I rate Cisco ACI a 9..”

Rahul Khandelwal

Network Technical Manager at KPMG

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“I am not responsible for Vertica, as we are not responsible for the Vertica side; it will be handled by a separate team, but we mainly work on IDSM and Operation Bridge Management. The current tool is adequate for day-to-day operations, but we want to explore more on AI Ops and hope future versions of OpenText can support that. In the future, I would like to see more flexibility on the integration with other platforms and greater flexibility for integrations or automations with other platforms. Other platforms such as [Microsoft Azure](#) and [AWS](#) would be beneficial. I would rate this solution a seven out of ten..”

Lin Thein Naing

S VP, IT Infra at ATOM

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“We are still working with Cisco products. I have not much used Cisco ACI, but we have proposed it to customers. I have been working with Cisco ACI for almost three to four years.

“Cisco ACI infrastructure is predominantly for the server infrastructure. It is not the traditional VLANs or those things getting configured. It is basically the VXLANs and Data Center Bridging solutions would come in. There is a spine-leaf architecture where the spine controls the control plane of all the leaf, and the leaf will connect the nodes or the workloads of the servers to that. For the data center management team or the IT team, it will be easy to deploy any new workloads. Instead of taking days or multiple days for a deployment of a server or application, they can do it immediately within minutes because all the configuration templates are already there in the control plane, which we can push immediately when the new server gets added. This provides operational simplicity and visibility, making it easier for the data center IT team.

“Automation processes can definitely be done as well. I am totally satisfied with the functionality of Cisco ACI. My overall review rating for Cisco ACI is eight..”

Verified user

Consulting & Solution Integration at a comms service provider with 10,001+

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“I rate Cisco ACI around an 8 out of 10.

“I rate it an eight because it's a very good tool for me. I've been using it for a while, and it has provided a lot of progress, easing my work as I enjoy its networking features. There was even a time when we had an issue with Cisco ACI, and the TAC engineer suggested we upgrade, which resolved the problems we were facing. So, it's a very great tool for me.

“Regarding cost savings and automation impact, it saves about five hours typically spent logging into the APIC controller and checking the console or dashboard for faults or fabric checks. That's one of the efficiencies we've gained. It also provides a quick SLA and quick MTTR, enabling us to easily detect issues on the fabric with automation-driven workflows, such as when an interface is down or when the T-cap is higher than expected, allowing for instant resolution.

“My advice for others looking into using Cisco ACI is that it's a good tool and they can use it. They have good support, great documentation, and it can handle their expectations. My overall rating for Cisco ACI is an 8 out of 10..”

Sulaiman Olubiyi

Senior Network Automation Engineer at a outsourcing company with 1,001-5,000 employees

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“I am working with the latest version of Cisco ACI. I don't like the policy-driven approach of Cisco ACI. I have deployed Cisco ACI to get multi-tenancy and other features, but not the policy-driven features. Cisco ACI follows an application-centric approach that segregates all your applications within the ACI. The solution's policy-driven approach makes it really complicated to administer an ACI infrastructure.

As a network team, our run MUFG ACI is in a more network-centric mode, where it is like a network that is known to us. It facilitates network expansion and allows me to have multi-tenancy and other nice features. I do micro-segmentation that policy driven approach using another Cisco product called [Cisco Secure Workload](#)

or [Cisco Tetration](#) as it used to be called.

I took the decision to onboard Cisco Secure Workload or Cisco Tetration. We use that product for any segmentation or micro-segmentation with in internal enviroment, have have onboarded product and my IT RSC team has successfully deployed for many critical applications

I have an ACI expert on my team to maintain the solution. Cisco ACI is completely new for a normal network engineer who is used to racking, stacking, and configuring switches from scratch using the command line. It's rocket science for a normal network engineer because the way you do things in Cisco ACI is different.

You do not configure a leaf switch or a spine switch. You just connect and configure them to an Orchestrator. This was more of an eye-opening journey for network engineers, as it showed how networks are changing and how on-premise networks are transforming into cloud-like. I had to retrain my entire team through Cisco ACI.

There have been a lot of in-house sessions where people were learning from each other, training each other, and taking some Cisco courses as well. I think it was a journey worth embarking on over four and a half years. People have changed their mindsets, become experts, and can now manage the platform on their own.

I don't know any other platform that I would have chosen for such a critical use case. You have to consider that the network is the core of everything. You cannot afford an outage on a network because I have 500 applications running within my network. If something goes wrong with the network, the business suffers.

The cost of network outages for businesses is quite high. A single two-hour outage within my network could cost us million as an investment bank. Since the cost of network outage is high, we cannot buy just any technology. We need a robust solution that guarantees it will always work.

I would advise new users to go for Cisco in a network-centric mode. It offers you all the flexibility of Cisco ACI without the complication of application-centric infrastructure with EPGs. If you run one single application within Cisco ACI, the application-centric infrastructure or policy-based element will work, where you

restrict one from talking to the other.

Suppose you work for a complicated organization like an investment bank, where we have over 300 applications. If somebody goes for an application-centric architecture within Cisco ACI, they will spend another three to four years trying to get it together.

My advice would be to go for the other capabilities of Cisco ACI and not for its segmentation or micro-segmentation capabilities. Users can deploy Cisco Secure Workload for their micro-segmentation needs.

Overall, I rate Cisco ACI ten out of ten..”

Raj Metkar

Director, Head of Networks at MUFG, EMEA

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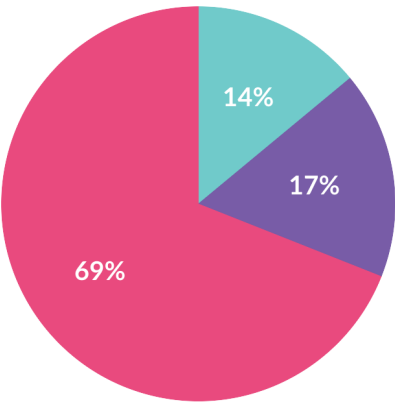
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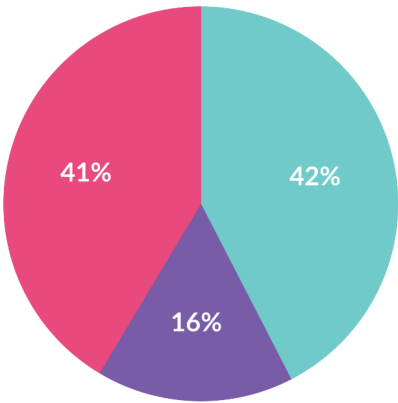
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