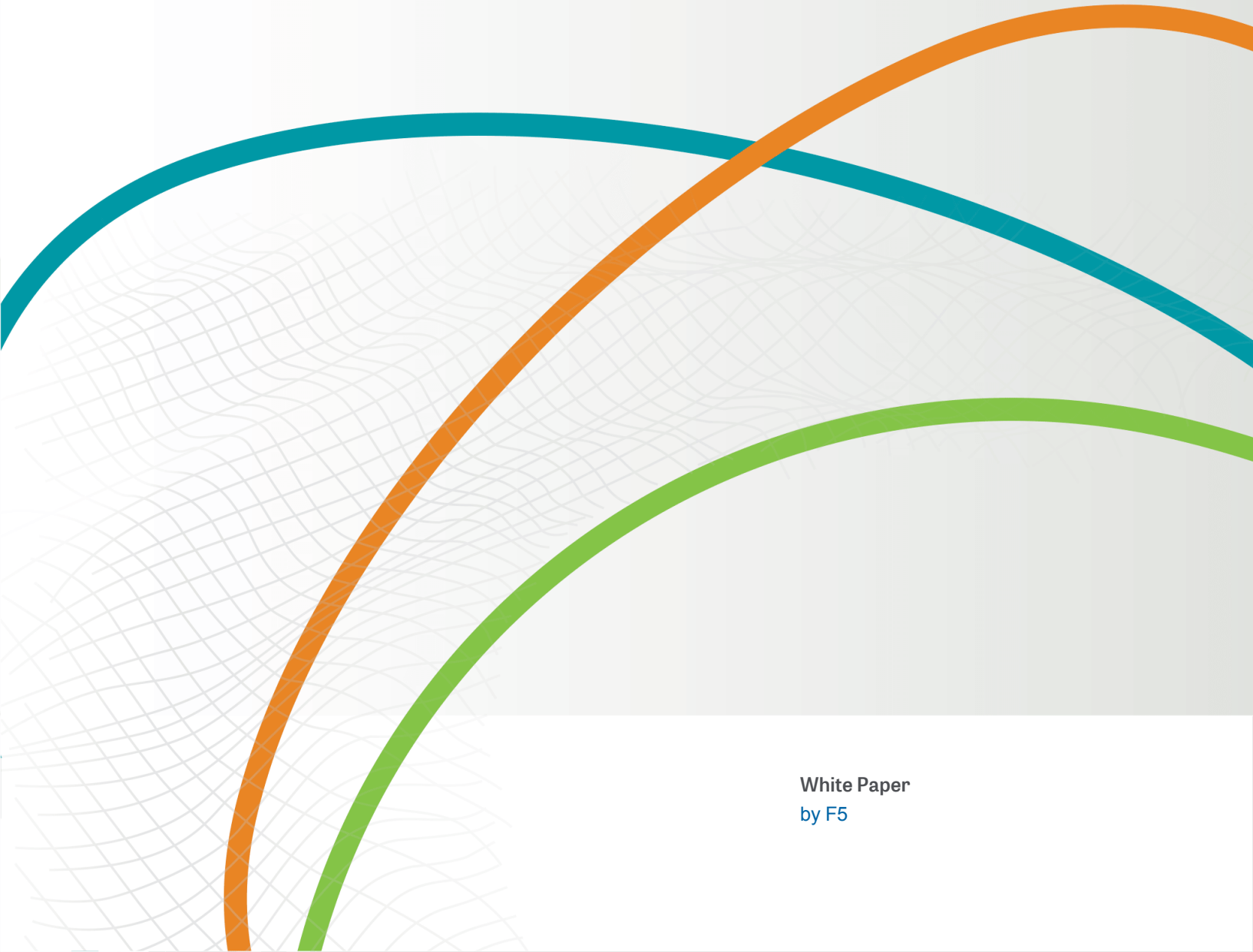
Cisco ACE Migration

Transform your data center infrastructure to be application-centric. Together, F5 Synthesis™ and Cisco Application Centric Infrastructure (ACI) offer an integrated solution for ACE migration—one that transforms the existing data center infrastructure to operationalize the network while maintaining the high availability and predictable performance of existing applications.



White Paper

by F5

Introduction

Cisco has exited the application delivery market and its load balancing products, ACE and GSS, reached an end-of-sale milestone in January 2014. There will be no further software updates or fixes, and Cisco recommends that customers transition to alternative vendor offerings.

Rather than simply swap out load balancer solutions, leading organizations will adopt a more strategic and visionary approach that can reap dramatic, long-term benefits. These organizations recognize that to meet near-term challenges that require scalability, agility, and security—and to lay the groundwork for next-generation data center architectures— they need to transition to advanced application delivery solutions.

F5 offers tools and services that ease the migration from Cisco ACE. Based on a shared architectural vision that takes an application-centric approach, F5 and Cisco provide the foundation for building an application services fabric that will help customers meet their near-term and long-term challenges in next-generation data centers.

Challenges That IT Organizations Face

In today's fast-moving, on-demand culture, users expect their applications to always work—and work fast—on any device. If organizations fail to meet these expectations, it has never been easier for customers to find alternatives. For IT departments and organizations to stay connected to their customers, they must meet user expectations with responsive applications that deliver new features seamlessly.

In addition to traditional, linear application delivery from corporate data centers to PC- based users, organizations now deliver applications from a complex matrix of locations— including SaaS providers—outside the data center. Increasingly, mobile users around the globe now demand anywhere, any-device access. At the same time, the pace of global innovation is always accelerating with faster release cycles, the emergence of DevOps, and the move toward continuous delivery. Although this paradigm shift better aligns IT and business, it creates challenges for traditional infrastructures. The Application Delivery Network must promote innovation—but not at the expense of stability, security, or performance.

If the expectations of users are simple and the need to innovate is clear, the solutions to these challenges are neither. Even today's best-run organizations are challenged by the rate at which IT is evolving, the growth of applications, and the complexities created by mobility, cloud computing, and virtualization.

Cisco ACI and F5 Synthesis: An Application-Centric Architectural Vision

To meet these challenges of IT organizations, Cisco and F5 have developed a shared architectural vision and joint solution to simplify networking and solve pain points in next-generation data centers. The solution extends the F5 Synthesis™ architecture and programmable Software-Defined Application Services™ (SDAS) within the Cisco Application Centric Infrastructure (ACI), helping customers efficiently deliver applications that are fast, secure, and available.

There's a long history of customers choosing F5 and Cisco in data center deployments. Organizations that select F5 for their Cisco ACE migration not only gain the unmatched capabilities and performance of the industry's leading Application Delivery Controller (ADC) platform, they are also aligning with F5 and Cisco's shared vision of application-centric data centers.

F5 Synthesis is an architecture that enables organizations to build flexible, automated data centers to deliver Software-Defined Application Services. Its application services fabric enables organizations to rapidly provision, manage, and orchestrate a rich catalog of services using simplified licensing models that dramatically change the economy of scale for layer 4-7 services.

When F5 Synthesis is combined with Cisco ACI, the joint solution offers a comprehensive, application-centric set of network and layer 4-7 services. This empowers both traditional and next-generation data centers to deploy and deliver applications with the speed, reliability, and security necessary to meet the challenges of an increasingly interconnected and highly demanding application world.

> "Application Centric Infrastructure (ACI) is about velocity and speed of application deployment in the data center through the network that works as an adaptive system for real-time application delivery through an innovative policy-driven architecture that automates and unifies: physical and virtual networks, security, and real-time visibility and troubleshooting, with unprecedented performance and scale.
> —Soni Jiandani, SVP, Marketing, Cisco

Integrate Seamlessly

The key point of integration for F5 Synthesis within Cisco ACI is F5's Device Package for the Cisco Application Policy Infrastructure Controller (APIC); this makes it easy for customers to combine F5's L4–L7 application fabric with Cisco's L2–L3 network fabric. A downloadable, easy-to-install piece of software, the F5 Device Package provides a uniquely application-centric use case structure—rather than a feature-driven template—that results in a single workflow for policy configurations and provisioning.

Improve Service Velocity

Both F5 Synthesis and Cisco ACI are highly extensible, enabling the consistent automation and orchestration of critical services needed to support business and application requirements for performance, security, and reliability.

Reduce Costs

Using the industry-leading F5 ScaleN™ architecture, joint customers are uniquely able to deploy multi-tenant solutions in Cisco ACI environments. The result is detailed control over resource deployment and prioritization. The combination of multi-tenancy with a policy-based, per-application delivery approach significantly reduces operating costs.

Conclusion

By combining the advantages of the F5 Synthesis and Cisco ACI models, organizations can deploy versatile, elastic network and application services—ultimately leading to quicker and more successful application rollouts. Because of this shared, application-centric approach, a migration from Cisco ACE to F5 Synthesis will be the first step towards leveraging application services within Cisco ACI. This joint solution ensures the fastest route to application deployments without compromising the performance, security, or scalability of applications—and the services that deliver them.

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