

Whitepaper



# A NETWORK THAT THINKS LIKE YOU...

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Daisy Corporate Services' Product Director  
Richard Beeston explains the transformative  
power of intent-based networking.

## IT Leaders in the UK - some key trends

**43%** consider their networks as strategic “business-enabling” or “business-enhancing” platforms

**Only 8%** consider networks a “non-critical cost-centre”

**87%** believe they will have an advanced network that can “keep up with dynamic business needs” **within 3 years**

# Is your network a victim of its own success?

The main problem with *simplicity* is that it's often rather *complex*.

At least, that tends to be the case with network management. Why? Because the more we experience the benefits of a smooth-functioning network – greater business agility, higher staff productivity, enhanced customer service and beyond – the greater the demands we continually place on that network. It's only natural: given the electric pace of today's “always-on” business world, these are advantages no serious company would ever want to limit.

But this, in turn, multiplies the challenges of maintaining the priceless fluidity your network offers, stretching many an IT and networking team to the limit. For more and more companies, meeting these demands with their current network management solution verges on the unsustainable.

## An “upward spiral” of sophistication...

More cyber threats. More applications. More complex data flows. A snowballing number of new devices connected to your network. The infinite potential of cloud technology. The Internet of Things. Customer expectations surging at the speed of tech. All this comes at a time when mobile working and remote collaboration have become an abrupt necessity.

The result? Serious stress on your infrastructure and people.

If your network management operates at a traditional “granular” level, with engineers inputting endless lines of code onto individual devices, there are questions you might want to ask yourself:

**Is this the best use of my IT resource?**

**Can my business afford the current levels of network downtime, and are they necessary?**

**Is there another way?**

## Intent-based networking: a leap of understanding.

With traditional network models struggling to meet the dynamic demands of modern businesses, it's clear that a new approach is needed.

The focus of that approach, moreover, needs be at the point where speed and efficiency are currently most compromised – i.e. where the “intent” of your business is translated into specialist technical commands that impact disparate points of your network, from devices to switches and routers.

Whereas traditionally, these instructions are entered manually one-by-one, **intent-based networking (IBN)** offers a more scalable, automated and software-enabled approach that requires less overall IT expertise to operate. To put it simply, you express your “intent” for the network (as driven by your core business goals), and your IBN solution translates it into the required language before effecting the required changes simultaneously at all relevant points of your network.

This takes you from a network that needs constant attention to one that simply understands what you need and makes it happen. Instead of time-intensive, hardware-driven, on-location maintenance work, you're now able to manage millions of devices in minutes, while freeing up your specialist IT resources for more value-added work.

By 2025,  
**30% of all  
organisations**  
will rely on  
AI- and ML-  
based network  
management  
and control  
systems to  
augment  
network  
operations and  
troubleshooting  
tasks, up from  
less than 5% in  
2020.”

Gartner: 2020 Strategic  
Roadmap for Enterprise  
Networking

By 2021, in value terms, **over 25% of infrastructure services** will have some autonomous self-managing capabilities, expediting business outcomes and mitigating the risk of human error.”

IDC FutureScape: Worldwide Enterprise Infrastructure 2018

## Cisco DNA: networks that don't (just) do as they're told.

With **Cisco Digital Network Architecture (Cisco DNA)**, enterprise networking has been holistically re-imagined and your business intent placed squarely at its heart. By shifting the architectural emphasis from “hardware-centric” to “software-driven”, Cisco DNA simplifies the operation of your network while allowing you to manage an ever-expanding number of connected devices.

Better still, this transformative tool vastly improves your ability to understand your network, capture usable insights and anticipate threats to both security and performance.

### Welcome to the nerve centre...

The true power of Cisco DNA is contained in its foundational controller and analytics platform, **Cisco DNA Centre**. This centralised management system gives you total visibility of all the nodes on your network, while enabling you to quickly execute a vast range of management tasks that would once only have happened manually, and much more slowly. As a result, your IT teams can respond to any challenges and deploy new policies throughout your organisation regardless of location.

### Key principles of Cisco DNA Centre



Created to help simplify the management of the most complex hybrid network architectures, including those with multiple campuses, branches and cloud environments.



Enables intent-based networking, allowing you to execute commands in a simple intuitive manner.



Designed to work with networks that are not exclusively Cisco-equipped.



# TRANSFORMING YOUR BUSINESS AT A DNA LEVEL

The benefits of intent-based networking

The benefits of Cisco DNA Centre might start at a network level, but they quickly ripple out to impact every aspect of your operations. Why? Because it's all governed by the ultimate foundational driver: the strategic intent of your business.

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## 1 Make networking clearer, simpler and more powerful

With Cisco DNA Centre, you have **360° visibility, context and control** of all your combined network environments. Meanwhile, an **optimised user experience** makes problems easier to predict and quicker to troubleshoot, thus maximising efficiency and minimising downtime.

- See and control all parts of your network through a single, **intuitive dashboard**.
- Carry out **network-wide tasks** through the same user interface, using a convenient **interface** (e.g. “update all wireless access points with the latest software”).
- See an overview of **all connected devices** (wired and wireless) for a comprehensive understanding of current **network health** (includes **individual timelines** of device and user performance for granular traceability).
- **Locate problems precisely** to individual access points, devices, websites etc, or reduce “mean-time-to-innocence” if the problem lies outside the network.
- Create task reports, physical maps, graphical analysis and logic flows to **understand your network structure** and status.

## 2 Accelerate, automate and optimise your network investment

Cisco DNA Centre also lets you make dynamic, practical use of your increased network knowledge, **transforming turnaround times** from days into minutes. **By removing the need for manual, on-site configuration**, it frees up your IT specialists to focus on value-added, less menial work – saving time while making your budget go further.

- **Zero-touch provisioning:** deploy new devices **remotely**, without expensive engineer visits.
- Speed up the rollout of **new policies and software**.
- **Automate** additions, changes, and upgrades.
- Respond more quickly to **security alerts**.
- Optimise software installation with **pre-and-post-checks**.
- Harness the platform’s **machine learning** capabilities to self-heal your systems and guard against problems recurring.

By 2023, 60% of data centre networking configuration activities will be automated, up from 30% in early 2020.”

Gartner: Market Guide for Network Automation and Orchestration Tools, 2020

## 3 Make the different parts of your business work better together

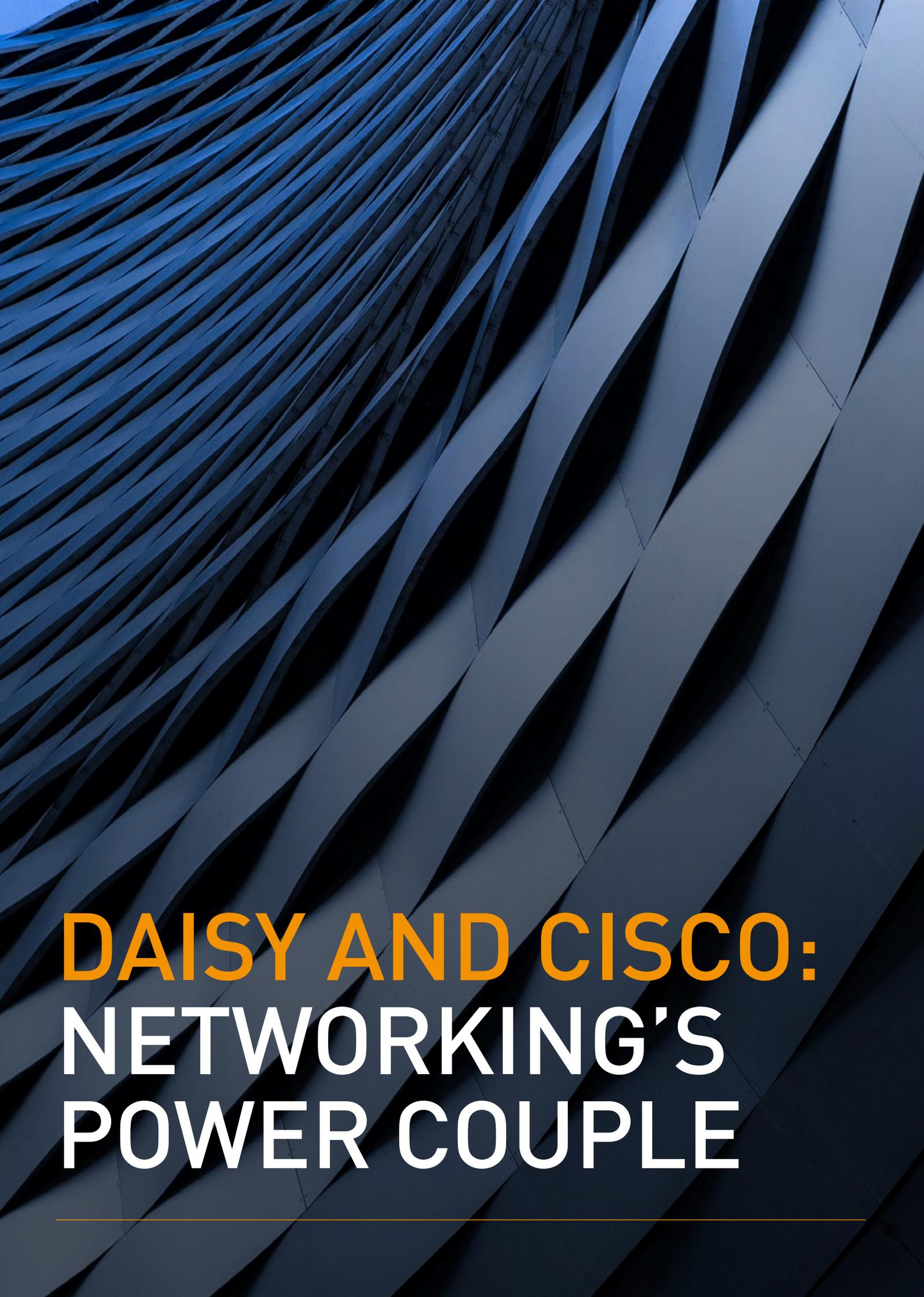
By helping you **centralise policy across multiple network domains**, Cisco DNA Centre **maximises compliance and consistency** to make your business more efficient than ever.

- Automate and streamline the connection of **trusted users** and **applications**.
- Easily create **virtual networks** with **bespoke policies** for access control, traffic and applications.
- Extrapolate and adapt policy information to work with different device types, operating systems and role requirements.
- Define, configure and update policies across **all network environments**, from campus and WAN to data centres and multiple clouds.
- Configure Cisco DNA Centre to **carry out tasks on other systems**, like inputting guest WiFi log-in details on your CRM system, or logging maintenance tickets if certain problems occur.

## 4 Make your business more secure

By now, you've probably already foreseen some of the ways in which Cisco DNA Centre helps to **strengthen the all-round security of your business**. It's worth remembering that this doesn't just take place at the level of **the technology itself**. By automating so many vital processes, the platform also greatly reduces the chances of **human error**.

- Cisco DNA Centre's **network security analytics** use machine learning capability to detect advanced threats.
- **Continuous, 360° monitoring** of your network ensures your systems and their administrators are instantly alerted to malware and other attacks.
- Cisco DNA Centre can be packaged with complementary technology, including **Cisco Identity Services Engine** and **Cisco Stealthwatch**.



**DAISY AND CISCO:**  
**NETWORKING'S**  
**POWER COUPLE**

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As a Cisco Gold Certified Partner (with master specialisation in cloud and managed services) for over 15 years, Daisy Corporate Services has unmatched experience in deploying Cisco's leading-edge networking to UK businesses.

However complex your operations and current networking needs, our expertise allows us to design a solution that's tailored to your strategy, completely secure and inherently future-proof. Put simply, we harness Cisco DNA's power and in-built scalability in ways that can give you the edge in your sector for many years to come.

### **Beyond networking: making your business smarter through technology**

In addition to our long-standing collaboration with Cisco, Daisy Corporate Services is the UK's largest independent provider of integrated technology to UK businesses. We can therefore combine your Cisco DNA Centre with other vendor solutions to increase the power and potential of your organisation on a multi-dimensional, nationwide scale. From **system security** to **LAN, WiFi, mobility solutions** and a comprehensive **managed services** option that offers total peace of mind, the Daisy team can provide the help that your business needs to flourish.

## Final words...

It's almost a cliché to say so these days, but businesses who truly nurture their technology estate (and think of it as a profit centre, not a cost centre) are the only ones who can expect to thrive. The significant transformation in working patterns that took place in 2020 has only accentuated this rule, placing network health and employee mobility right at the top of the "imperatives" list.

In such a climate, the ability to understand, control and optimise all elements of your network may be all that separates success from failure. Cisco DNA Centre, with Daisy for expert deployment and support, is a powerful blueprint for making this a reality.

## Find out more at:

[dcs.tech/product/cisco-dna-centre](https://dcs.tech/product/cisco-dna-centre)

### Next steps

Contact us today to see how Cisco DNA Centre can benefit your business:

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W: [dcs.tech](https://dcs.tech)

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