

Planning Ahead for Network Upgrades: Three Rewards

Not proactively planning for network equipment replacements is risky business for the public sector. "IT departments sometimes call a vendor's technical assistance center only to discover that their router or switch is longer being supported," says Margaret Kneeland, with Cisco's public sector group.

Agencies that find themselves in this situation have to get creative to find budget and plan downtime to replace the product. Worse, government services might be interrupted while the department scrambles to find a replacement.

Put Your Crystal Ball in Mothballs

Fortunately, planning when to replace network equipment doesn't have to require guesswork. Cisco, for example, sends Last Date of Support (LDoS) notifications to all of its customers, giving them ample time to make critical decisions.

Now government IT departments can plan network refreshes years ahead of time by visiting a new [web portal](#). Updated weekly, the portal shows LDoS dates through 2015 for all Cisco products.

Your Cisco account manager can also bring you a report that shows only those Cisco products in your agency's network. "You can set up a meeting to go over the report and plan a migration strategy for the next several years," says Pat Hastings, with the Cisco federal government group.

Agencies that don't have a current inventory list on file can engage Cisco Advanced Services to perform a comprehensive network assessment. "Reviewing migration plans against the actual inventory list and LDoS schedule twice a year is a good insurance policy," Kneeland says.

Three Big Payoffs

Establishing a three-year plan for network upgrades provides three important advantages for government agencies:

- **Accurate budgeting:** Planning ahead for equipment replacement avoids potential budget surprises. If you do need an equipment upgrade when you don't have the budget, you can take advantage of flexible financing options from Cisco Capital. "Financing is a way to begin an upgrade during the current year instead of waiting until the following year," Hastings says.
- **Continuity of government services:** Planning ahead to replace equipment before LDoS helps avoid business disruption, allows time to make considered decisions, and prevents the need to rush to procure and deploy a replacement.
- **Preparation to adopt business video and other government collaboration solutions:** "As part of your three-year migration plan, you can determine which upgrades are necessary to adopt Cisco VoIP, Cisco WebEx, Cisco TelePresence, IP-based video surveillance, and other key collaboration tools," Kneeland says. "The goal is for agency IT departments to be ready whenever their constituents are."

Agencies can learn from the experience of Cisco IT, which once discovered it had to wait to embark on a high-priority project because 1100 devices would first have to be upgraded. The upgrade took two years, postponing the strategic projects. Now Cisco plans ahead to keep its infrastructure up to date and ready to support new collaboration and security tools.

To learn about Cisco's Get Refreshed program, contact your Cisco account manager.

To see the web portal listing LDoS for all Cisco products, visit: www.cisco.com/en/US/products/prod_end_of_life.html

To learn about innovative financing options for federal government, visit: www.cisco.com/web/ordering/ciscocapital/cf/na/goved.html




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