

Cisco Unified Contact Center Express: a comparison between Cisco Finesse and Cisco Agent Desktop

Introduction

This white paper is intended to help you understand the differences in features and functionality between Cisco Finesse® Desktop and Cisco Agent Desktop.

Cisco Finesse Desktop is a next-generation agent and supervisor desktop solution designed to meet the growing needs of agents, supervisors, and the administrators and developers who support them. Cisco Finesse Desktop offers numerous benefits, including:

- A 100 percent browser-based agent and supervisor desktop: Cisco Finesse Desktop runs in a browser, meaning you install Cisco Unified Contact Center Express (CCX) and agents simply point their browser to the Unified CCX server. There is no client executable to install and maintain, reducing total cost of ownership.
- A container architecture built for client-side integration: Cisco Finesse Desktop is more than an agent state and call-control application. It is an OpenSocial gadget container, built to include third-party applications in a single agent desktop experience. Rather than switching between applications, agents will have easy access to all applications and tools from a single window, increasing agent efficiency.
- An easy-to-use API: The Cisco Finesse API is a modern, open-standards-based web API, exposed via representational state transfer (REST). Each function available in the Cisco Finesse User Interface (UI) has a corresponding REST API that allows all types of integrations for developers to use. The extensibility and ease of use of the API is unprecedented on Unified CCX.

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Feature differences between Cisco Finesse and Cisco Agent Desktop

It is important that you understand the differences in features for Cisco Finesse Desktop and Cisco Agent Desktop. Licensing for Cisco Finesse Desktop is available as a Unified CCX Enhanced or Premium agent seat license.

Some key features in Cisco Agent Desktop are not available in Cisco Finesse Desktop. These features are:

- Agent-to-agent chat
- Some workflow events and actions
- On-demand call recording

Functional differences between Cisco Finesse Desktop and Cisco Agent Desktop

You also should understand the differences in functions between Cisco Finesse Desktop and Agent Desktop. Note: Reference to a specific Cisco Finesse feature applies to both the Cisco Finesse UI and the API. Developers who write Cisco Finesse applications using the Cisco Finesse API will experience the same functions as follows:

Optional Wrap-Up codes

Unified CCX and Cisco Agent Desktop allow agents to choose whether they want to go into **Wrap-Up** or **Work** state on a call-by-call basis. With Cisco Finesse Desktop, agents don't have this option; **Wrap-Up** state is either required or not allowed.

Dynamic team updates

When agents or supervisors are added or removed from a team, the team lists are dynamically updated in Cisco Agent Desktop. With Cisco Finesse Desktop, the supervisor needs to log in again or refresh the browser to see the change. Additionally, Cisco Finesse Desktop allows supervisors to see agents who have been removed from their team in their team list and perform supervisor actions on that agent. Unlike the Cisco Unified Intelligence Center gadgets that show real-time updates, the Team Performance gadget requires supervisors to log in again to see the updates.

Workflow groups compared with team configuration

With Cisco Agent Desktop, administrators create workflow groups and assign agents to these groups. The workflow groups could consist of agents from different teams. Not every agent from a team needs to be part of the workflow group. Settings, such as phone books and reason codes, are configured per workflow group. This configuration is performed inside of Cisco Desktop Administrator.

Rather than having workflow groups, Cisco Finesse Desktop reads the list of agents and teams from Unified CCX. Configurations, such as phone books and reason codes, are applied directly to each team.

Setting Wrap-Up data

With Cisco Agent Desktop, agents can set wrap-up data only after the call. With Cisco Finesse software, agents can set a wrap-up code at any point during the call or during the **Wrap-Up** state.

Setting Wrap-Up data during Silent-Monitor calls

With Cisco Agent Desktop, supervisors can't set wrap-up data during a silent-monitor call. With Cisco Finesse Desktop, supervisors can set wrap-up data during a silent-monitor call.

Silent monitoring

Cisco Finesse Desktop uses Cisco Unified Communications Manager silent monitoring instead of the Desktop and Switched Port Analyzer (SPAN) approaches employed by Cisco Agent Desktop. With Unified Communications Manager monitoring, the customer and agent audio streams are mixed using an IP phone model that supports the built-in bridge feature. When a phone call is placed to the supervisor's phone, the supervisor will hear the customer and agent conversation through the phone.

Unified Communications Manager monitoring is different from desktop and SPAN monitoring in the following ways:

- Agents need a Cisco IP phone that includes a built-in-bridge
- Supervisors will hear the monitored call through their phone instead of through their PC sound card

Valid usernames

Cisco Agent Desktop supports a wide range of characters for usernames. Cisco Finesse Desktop agent usernames are restricted to 7-bit printable ASCII characters (any of the 94 characters with the numeric values from 33 to 126). They do not support double quotes (""). Agent IDs are case-sensitive and can contain letters, numbers, hyphens (-), underscores (_), and periods (.). Agent IDs cannot begin or end with a period or contain two periods in a row.

In addition, the following list of reserved, case-insensitive usernames are not allowed in Cisco Finesse software:

- Admin
- Finesse
- Xmpprootowner
- presencelistener
- cuicnodewatchuser
- cuicpresenceuser

Administration on the secondary node

Cisco Finesse Desktop allows administration on the primary node and read-only access to the Cisco Administration application on the secondary node. If the primary server is down, the Cisco Finesse configuration cannot be adjusted.

Cisco Finesse administration requires a functioning CTI connection

Cisco Finesse software retrieves the list of teams from Unified CCX in the Team Resources gadget. The Team Resources gadget is how reason codes, wrap-up codes, phone books, and workflows are assigned to teams. If the Computer-Telephony-Integration (CTI) connection between the Cisco Finesse server and Unified CCX is not functioning, the list of teams cannot be retrieved. In such cases, it will not be possible to configure team-specific settings.

Phone books

Cisco Agent Desktop provides agents access to the following phone-number lists:

- A personal phone book, created and maintained by the agent (and enabled and disabled by the system administrator)
- Up to 256 phone books (includes global and workflow group phone books); each phone book supports a maximum of 3000 directory entries
- Up to 10,000 directory entries that include global, workflow group, or personal phone book entries

Cisco Finesse Desktop provides the following phone books, supporting a total of 1500 contacts across all phone books:

- 10 global phone books
- 50 team phone books
- An individual phone book that includes a maximum of 1500 contacts

Agent recording and playback

Two available solutions exist for agent call recording and playback:

- Cisco Unified Workforce Optimization Compliance Recording and Quality Management
- Combination of Unified Workforce Optimization Compliance Recording and Quality Management

Unified Workforce Optimization Compliance Recording and Quality Management is a recording, compliance, and evaluation solution for agent performance optimization and dispute resolution. The software supports four recording methods, including desktop, server (SPAN) and network-based. The ability for an agent to control recording for manual start, pause, and add metadata is through an independent Recording Control browser instance or IP phone application. In addition, recordings can be initiated and metadata applied by the Cisco Finesse workflow. Supervisors can search, play back, or export recordings via the Unified Workforce Optimization Compliance Recording and Quality Management interface.

Additional details about integration can be found in the Quality Management Cisco Agent Desktop and Cisco Finesse Integration Guide at:

https://www.cisco.com/en/US/docs/voice_ip_comm/cust_contact/contact_center/workforce_optimization/qm_10x/reference/guide/qm-CAD-integration-programmers-guide-100.pdf.

Single Sign-On

Cisco Finesse Desktop, available as part of Unified CCX 11.5, provides single sign-on capability, which simplifies login and password management for agents and supervisors by allowing just one login for the Cisco Finesse desktop and associated gadgets.

Toaster notifications

Cisco Finesse Desktop, available as part of Unified CCX 11.5, provides the Toaster Notification feature.

These notifications are pop-ups that appear when the Cisco Finesse web interface is not active or is in a minimized state:

- Agent receives a desktop call notification on an incoming call
- Agent receives a notification when a new email is received
- Agent receives a notification when a new chat is received

Reporting

Agent desktop

Cisco Agent Desktop provides the following real-time displays:

- Agent automatic-call-distributor (ACD) state log display
- Agent call log display: Available in historical reports, it shows a record of calls made and received over the past seven days, by day
- Agent statistics display: Shows performance statistics for the current day, starting at midnight, and is automatically updated every 30 seconds
- Contact service queue statistics display

The following gadgets are available on Cisco Finesse Agent Desktop:

- Home tab
 - Agent CSQ Statistics Report
 - Agent Team Summary Report
- My History tab
 - Agent State History (Agent State Log Report)
 - Agent Call History (Agent Call Log Report)
- My Statistics tab
 - Agent Statistics Report

The Unified CCX Administration Guide provides details about how to add additional gadgets to the agent desktop.

Supervisor desktop

Unified CCX includes support for live data, which provides 3-second updates for real-time reporting in Cisco Unified Intelligence Center and Cisco Finesse reporting gadgets. In addition to reporting averages since midnight, averages are reported over configurable short-term (5, 10, or 15 minutes) and long-term intervals (30 minutes). This reporting provides supervisors with a more granular view of the performance of the contact center and status. The Cisco Finesse Supervisor Desktop provides reports on agents' voice calls.

Cisco Finesse Desktop provides the following reports for supervisors:

- Team State: Provides information about Contact Service Queues (CSQs) associated with the agent, including the number of calls waiting in the queue and the longest call in the queue
- Agent Team Summary: Provides call averages since midnight and in the short term (5, 10, or 15 minutes) and long term (30 minutes)
- CSQ Summary: Provides a snapshot of the agent state, short-term and long-term call averages, and call statistics since midnight
- CSQ Agent Detail: Provides the state, state duration, and reason code (where applicable) for all of the agents in the CSQs associated with the supervisor
- Email Contact Detail: Provides a list of email interactions, including agent name, email subject, and receive/response times
- Email Agent Activity: Provides detailed agent state duration data along with a list of emails handled by each agent
- Agent Outbound Team Summary Report: Provides performance statistics of the agents in the team for direct preview, progressive, and predictive outbound campaigns
- Chat Agent Statistics Report: Provides agent statistics
- Chat CSQ Summary Report: Provides agent statistics and contact statistics for a Contact Service Queue (CSQ)
- Email Agent Statistics Report: Provides the email statistics of the agents
- Email CSQ Summary Report: Presents the email activity summary of agents in a Contact Service Queue (CSQ)
- Team State Report: Presents each agent state and the time spent in a state. The supervisor can see agents of all the assigned teams
- Team Summary Report: Presents performance statistics of all the agents in the team
- Voice CSQ Agent Detail Report: Presents the agent current state, duration in the state and the reason code where applicable
- Voice CSQ Summary Report: Presents agent statistics and call statistics for a Contact Service Queue (CSQ)

All of the supervisor reports have thresholds, which can be configured by CUIIC reporting user or administrator, and visual alerts configured for threshold violations.

Agent call logs and agent state logs are available to be viewed as live data reports (Agent Call History and Agent State History gadgets).

The default gadgets available on the Cisco Finesse supervisor desktop follow:

- Team Data tab
 - Team Summary Report - Short- and Long-Term Average
 - Team Summary Report - Since Midnight
- Queue Data tab
 - Voice CSQ Agent Detail Report
 - Voice CSQ Summary Report

Additional details about how to add gadgets to the supervisor desktop can be found in the Unified CCX Administration Guide, Release 10.6(1): https://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/td/docs/voice_ip_comm/cust_contact/contact_center/crs/express_10_6/config/guide/UCCX_BK_CEC562D1_00_cisco-unified-ccx-administration-guide106.html?mdfid=286279660.

Important considerations before upgrading to Cisco Finesse Desktop

Cisco Finesse Desktop Is a Unified CCX Subsystem with Clients in the Browser

Similar to Cisco Agent Desktop, the Cisco Finesse server runs as a Unified CCX subservice on the same virtual machine as the Unified CCX server. One important difference between Cisco Agent Desktop and Cisco Finesse Desktop is that the Cisco Finesse clients run in a browser. Aside from a supported browser, you do not need to install any client software on your agent and supervisor desktops.

Cisco Finesse Desktop requires more Client-to-Server bandwidth than Cisco Agent Desktop

With Cisco Agent Desktop, the client UI is part of the application that is installed on the agent desktop. Because Cisco Finesse Desktop is a browser-based desktop, the UI needs to be streamed from the Cisco Finesse server to the Cisco Finesse client. This streaming requires more bandwidth. You may access a bandwidth calculator in the Cisco Unified CCX Design Guide to help you provision the network correctly for your Cisco Finesse deployment: https://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/td/docs/voice_ip_comm/cust_contact/contact_center/crs/express_10_6/design/guide/UCCX_BK_CBB99111_00_cisco-unified-contact-center-express.html?mdfid=286279660.

Cisco Unified CCX 10.6 with Cisco Finesse Desktop runs only on a virtual machine

Earlier versions of Unified CCX prior to Unified CCX 10.0 had the ability to run on a virtual machine or a native machine. Unified CCX 10.x is supported only in deployments where Unified CCX is running on a virtual machine.

For existing customers running bare-metal deployments who want Cisco Finesse Desktop, the general steps follow:

1. Install a second Unified CCX instance on a virtual machine that has the same IP address and the same version as the current Unified CCX instance. To avoid networking errors associated with two devices using the same IP address, install the new instance on a private network.

2. Run a backup of the primary instance.
3. Restore the backup onto the new, virtual machine-based instance.
4. Change the IP address of the new instance and move the machine out of the private network.
5. Migrate the new instance to Unified CCX 10.6 and confirm that the Cisco Finesse service is active.

Migration utility available

A Cisco Agent Desktop to Cisco Finesse migration tool is available at <https://developer.cisco.com/site/finesse/docs/#cad-to-finesse-migration-tool>

Cisco Agent Desktop and Cisco Finesse Desktop operate simultaneously (Mixed-Mode support)

In Unified CCX 10.6, it is possible to run both Cisco Agent Desktop and Cisco Finesse services at the same time. This feature is targeted for existing customers who want to run a trial of Cisco Finesse Desktop for a subset of agents while the bulk of the agents continue to use Cisco Agent Desktop.

Details for this feature are in the Cisco [Unified CCX 10.6 Design Guide](#), but here are the high-level considerations:

- All agents and supervisors for a team must use the same desktop, either Cisco Agent Desktop or Cisco Finesse Desktop
- Each agent team can use only one type of desktop at a time. For example, if an agent is using Cisco Finesse Desktop, the Cisco Agent Desktop application must not be started on the agent's PC, and vice versa
- If the Cisco Finesse service is activated, all agents must use Cisco Finesse email instead of Cisco Agent Desktop email
- If the Cisco Finesse service is activated, all agents must use Cisco Finesse web chat instead of Cisco Agent Desktop web chat

For customers who are already in production with Cisco Agent Desktop, it is considered a best practice to run a small pilot of Cisco Finesse Desktop and ensure success on a limited scale before migrating the entire agent pool to Cisco Finesse Desktop.

Note: From Unified CCX 11.0 onward:

- Cisco Finesse Desktop is supported
- Cisco Agent Desktop is not supported

Installing and administering Cisco Finesse Software

[The Cisco Unified CCX 10.6 Operations guide](#) provides step-by-step instructions about how to:

- Install or upgrade to Unified CCX 10.6
- Configure Cisco Finesse Desktop
- Add additional gadgets to Cisco Finesse Desktop
- Prepare Cisco Finesse Desktop for agent and supervisor activity

Switching back to Cisco Agent Desktop

With Unified CCX 10.6, you can switch back to Cisco Agent Desktop, if desired. You can simply deactivate Cisco Finesse Desktop and have agents log in to Cisco Agent Desktop.

User documents

The Cisco Finesse Agent and Supervisor Desktop User Guide for Cisco Unified Contact Center Express, Releases can be found here: <https://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/support/customer-collaboration/unified-contact-center-express/products-user-guide-list.html>.

Custom development

An important feature of Cisco Finesse Desktop is the ability to use the Cisco Finesse API to deliver custom functions. To learn more about developing applications for Cisco Finesse software, visit the Cisco Finesse page on the Cisco Developer Network Tech Center:

<https://developer.cisco.com/site/finesse/>.

This site includes a wealth of valuable information, including access to:

- Cisco Finesse Developer Guide
- Sample code
- Support forms
- Tips

To obtain support for custom development, either the deployment partner or the customer must have a developer support services contract.

Details about the Cisco Discovery Network support services contract can be found here:

<https://developer.cisco.com/site/devnet/overview/>.

You may also access the Developer Network Marketplace, your source for secure, validated enterprise-class apps, products, solutions, and services, at <https://marketplace.cisco.com/>.