

Cisco Smart Licensing and Smart Accounts

Overview



How is Cisco changing its approach to software licensing?



Cisco is transforming the end-to-end software lifecycle to make our customers' experience better and easier. A major part of this change is a move away from Product Activation Key (PAK) licenses to Smart Licensing to make the license registration process faster and more flexible. At the heart of the transformation is Smart Licensing and Smart Accounts, which offer streamlined purchasing and software administration.



What is Smart Licensing?



Smart Licensing is a flexible software licensing model that simplifies the way you activate and manage licenses across your organization. The Smart Licensing model makes it easier for you to procure, deploy, and manage your Cisco® software licenses. To use Smart Licensing, you must first set up a Smart Account. Watch a [short video on Smart Licensing](#).



What is a Smart Account?



A Smart Account is a central repository where you can view, store, and manage licenses across the entire organization. Comprehensively, you can get access to your software licenses, hardware, and subscriptions through your Smart Account. Smart Accounts are required to access and manage Smart License-enabled products. Creating a Smart Account is easy and takes less than five minutes. [Create a Smart Account](#) on cisco.com. [Learn more about Smart Accounts](#) in a short video.

Q What are the benefits of a Smart Account?

A Smart Accounts offer a simple-to-use, centralized, and organized solution to license management. With a Smart Account, you get full visibility and insight into all of your Cisco software assets deposited into the Smart Account (including PAK licenses and Enterprise Agreements). When Smart Accounts are used with Smart Licenses, the benefits include:

- **Real-time visibility** - You can view all of your software licenses, entitlements, and users across the organization.
- **Centralized management** - A single location gives authorized users the ability to see all license entitlements and move licenses freely through the network as needed.
- **Cost-effectiveness** - Drive down the cost of license management with reduced overhead, better utilization management, and more efficient planning.
- **Organization** - Virtual Accounts provide the flexibility to organize licenses by department, product, geography, or other designation—whatever makes the most sense for your company.

Q How does Smart Licensing work?

A Instead of using Product Activation Keys (PAKs), Smart Licenses establish a pool of software licenses in a customer-defined Smart Account that can be used throughout the enterprise. Smart Licensed products self-register upon configuration and activation with a single token, removing the need to visit a website and register products individually with separate PAKs.

Q How is Smart Licensing different from traditional PAK-based licensing?

A The following table highlights the differences between traditional PAK-based licenses and Smart Licenses.

Table 1. Traditional licenses comparison to Smart Licenses

Traditional licenses	Smart licenses
<p>Limited view You do not know what you own. You need to access multiple portals and tools to view information about your software assets.</p>	<p>Complete view You have a complete view of your software assets. License and device usage is easily managed from a single interface.</p>
<p>PAK registration You must manually register each device. A device can only be unlocked with a license key.</p>	<p>Easy registration No PAKs are required for unlocking a device. You can easily activate devices.</p>
<p>Device-specific licensing Licenses are specific to only one device (also referred to as node locking).</p>	<p>Company-specific licensing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our flexible licensing feature enables use of licenses across devices. • Licenses can be pooled and applied to applicable devices in any grouping as designated by your company. • You can consume licenses beyond the original purchase and reconcile overage usage at a later, agreed-upon date to speed execution and reduce the friction in the procurement cycles.

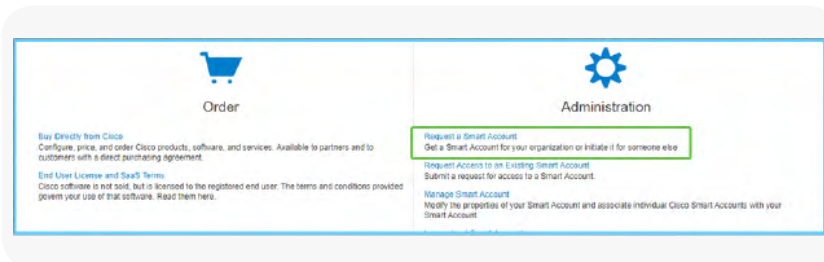
Requesting and managing Smart Accounts

Q Who needs a Smart Account?

A All Cisco customers need a Smart Account. Smart License-enabled products must have a Smart Account assigned in a Cisco Commerce Workspace (CCW) order before the order can be placed. Products that require a Smart Account are indicated by an 'SA' icon and 'Smart Account Required' message in red at the line level. Without a Smart Account, you cannot use the Smart Licenses that you purchase.

Q How can I request a Smart Account?

A Getting a Smart Account is fast and easy. Log into Cisco Software Central with your cisco.com ID and initiate a request for a Smart Account by clicking 'Request a Smart Account' under the 'Administration' tile. Creating a Smart Account takes less than five minutes. You can also initiate a request for a Smart Account when ordering in CCW. Learn more about [creating a Smart Account](#) in a short video. [Create a Smart Account](#) on software.cisco.com.



Q Where do I view and manage Smart Accounts?

A Once a Smart Account is created, basic account management is done in Cisco Software Central. You can access and manage your licenses assigned to your Smart Account through Smart Software Manager (SSM). Management of the Smart Account administration and creation of new Virtual Accounts is done through Cisco Software Central.

Q Do Smart Accounts cover all licenses?

A Smart Accounts provide full visibility into all types of Cisco software licenses except for Right-To-Use (RTU) licenses. The greatest benefit of a Smart Account is achieved when consuming a Smart License.

- For Smart Licensing, no PAKs are needed and it's easy to order and activate Smart Licenses.
- For Classic, PAK-based licenses, you gain enterprise-wide visibility of PAK licenses and devices assigned to the Smart Account.
- For Cisco Enterprise Agreements (EA), you benefit from simplified EA management, enterprise-wide visibility and automatic license fulfillment.

Q How do I access the different license types?

A Smart Accounts are the gateway to three different portals:

- For Smart Licenses, there is the Cisco Smart Software Manager, where Smart Licenses are stored and managed.
- For Classic Licenses, there is the License Registration Portal, where Classic Licenses are deposited and managed.
- For EAs, the EA Workspace is a tool where customers can manage their Enterprise Agreement licensing activities all in one place.

Virtual Accounts

Q What is a Virtual Account?

A Virtual Accounts are subaccounts within your Smart Account. They are used to internally organize and manage licenses based on your company's specific needs. Virtual Accounts can be set up by department, product, geography, or other designation that best fits your company's business model. When a Smart Account is created, a corresponding default Virtual Account is automatically created at the same time. Additional Virtual Accounts for Customer Smart Accounts are created in Cisco Software Central.

Q Why do I need Virtual Accounts?

A Virtual Accounts help you organize your Cisco assets in a way that is logical for your business. The most common use of a Virtual Account is to provide access and allocate specific licenses to different departments or geographies while maintaining an overall view of the organizational usage. There is no limit to the number of Virtual Accounts you create. [Watch a short video](#) on Virtual Account creation and best practices.

Smart Account roles

Q What are the customer Smart Account roles?

A There are five roles for Smart Accounts:

- 1. Smart Account approver** – The approver is able to edit Smart Account properties, view all users, accept agreements, and view event logs. The approver cannot perform any license management activities.
- 2. Smart Account administrator** – The administrator is able to edit Smart Account properties, add and edit users, add and edit Virtual Accounts, accept agreements and view event logs. The Smart Account administrator can perform license management activities for the entire Smart Account.
- 3. Smart Account user** – Similar to a Smart Account administrator, this role allows access to all Virtual Accounts. A Smart Account user can perform licensing activities but cannot create new Virtual Accounts or perform user management activities.
- 4. Virtual Account administrator** – Similar to the Smart Account administrator, except that this administrator is limited to assigned Virtual Accounts. This role allows the administrator to add and edit users to assigned Virtual Accounts, view event logs for assigned Virtual Accounts, and view account agreements. The Virtual Account administrator can perform all license management activities for the assigned Virtual Accounts.

- 5. Virtual Account user** – Similar to a Smart Account user, except that this user is limited to the Virtual Account the user is assigned to. They can perform licensing activities for the selected Virtual Accounts, but they cannot add new users.

Managing your Smart Licenses

Q How are Smart Licenses managed?

A You can self-manage license deployment throughout your company using the Cisco Smart Software Manager. Smart Software Manager is a cloud-based tool that maintains a record of your Smart Licenses. It allows you to group licenses in Virtual Accounts (pools). The system maintains real-time status of license usage after products are registered and activated. The user is notified by alerts (expiring, expired, insufficient), event logs, and summary emails as to the status of licenses in the Virtual Accounts. [Watch a short video](#) to learn how to manage Smart Licenses.

Q What software products offer Smart Licenses?

A [See a complete list of Smart License-enabled products](#) on cisco.com.

Q Can Classic, PAK-based licenses be converted into Smart Licenses?

A You can convert Classic, PAK-based licenses to a Smart Entitlement (if a Smart License equivalent is available). The license conversion can be performed in the License Registration Portal (LRP) or in Smart Software Manager (SSM).

- In LRP, go to the 'PAKs/Tokens' tab, select 'Actions', then 'Convert to Smart Entitlement'.
- In SSM, go to the 'License Conversion' tab to convert Classic Licenses to Smart Licenses.

[Watch a short video](#) on converting Classic licenses to Smart Licenses.

Q Can I transfer licenses across devices?

A For Smart License-enabled products, you can go to SSM and transfer licenses across compatible products through Virtual Accounts.

Q What is the process to register and activate a Smart License-enabled product?

A To register and activate a Smart License-enabled product:

1. Create an initial token for the device in SSM.
2. Enable the 'Smart Call Home' feature on the device so that it can send the device information to SSM.
3. Set the token on the device with the "(exec)license Smart register idtoken" command.
4. The device connects to SSM and a notification is received about the activation.
5. The product instance for the device appears on the SSM display.

Q Do I need a direct Internet connection to use Smart Licenses?

A The default tool for Smart Licenses is the cloud-based Cisco Smart Software Manager (SSM). For customers who want to keep the operational simplicity of the cloud-based tool on their protected network, we offer Cisco Smart Software Manager (SSM) On-Prem. The On-Prem offer is a free, virtual-machine-based download that replicates the cloud-based SSM user experience but keeps all communications on premises. Once a month, the SSM On-Prem synchronizes with the SSM, with either a network-based transfer or an offline manual transfer. [Watch a video](#) on Cisco Smart Software Manager (SSM) On-Prem.

Q How is licensing information reported back to Cisco?

A Cisco Smart Software Licensing offers several flexible deployment options for reporting software license usage data, depending on the security posture required for your environment. You may choose to

use one or more of the following means of transferring data from different systems:

- **Direct cloud access (default)** – Cisco products send usage information directly over the Internet or through a HTTP proxy server. No additional components are needed.
- **Access through an on-premises license server** – Cisco products send usage information to a locally installed On-Prem server. Periodically, information is exchanged automatically in connected environments or manually in disconnected environments.
- **Full, offline access–license reservation** – This method uses copy and paste information between the product and cisco.com to manually check in and out licenses. The functionality is equivalent to node locking, but with Smart License tracking.

Q How does Cisco manage personal data?

A We are committed to being transparent about how your data is collected, transferred, and protected across our offerings. Privacy data sheets describe the processing of personal data, or personally identifiable information, by specific solutions. [Read the data sheet to learn more](#) about the processing of personal data (or personal identifiable information) by Smart Licensing and Smart Accounts.

Learn more

Q Where can I learn more?

A To learn more about Smart Licensing, go to: <https://www.cisco.com/go/smartlicensing>.

To learn more about Smart Accounts, go to: <https://www.cisco.com/go/smartaccounts>.

To create a Smart Account, go to: <https://software.cisco.com>.