

Automated Server Provisioning with Cisco UCS Director

What

Every quarter Cisco IT provisions approximately 20 Cisco UCS domains around the world. Each contains 40-80 servers. The faster we can provision those servers, the faster engineers and developers can get to work on new projects.

Now Cisco IT administrators spend only 10-20 minutes of their time to provision a domain with virtualized or bare-metal servers. "Before, we had to use a collection automation tools and manual processes to provision servers," says Prashant Zanwar, Cisco IT engineer. "Now we visit the a self-service portal to enter the specs, and then Cisco UCS Director automatically provisions the servers."

Imagine you're an administrator and just received an urgent request to provision additional capacity for a new application. You visit the portal, where you're prompted to answer about 20 questions, beginning with the site, pod, and domain. The portal shows how many servers are available in that domain by checking with Cisco UCS Central. You enter server requirements from pull-down menus. You click Submit, and Cisco UCS Director begins provisioning the server from end to end.

A few hours later, you receive an email announcing that the servers are ready to use. If a request fails—say, because of physical server issues or an incorrectly configured policy in Cisco UCS Central—Cisco UCS Director sends an email explaining the issue. "The debugging is very helpful," Zanwar says. After you fix the issue, you can retry by clicking a link in the email. There's no need to re-enter the configuration details.

Why

Using Cisco UCS Director saves time for IT and helps us enforce global standards:

- Provisioning servers takes far less of our time. Before we began using Cisco UCS Director, provisioning a server took about four hours of an administrator's time. Now administrators spend 10-20 minutes filling out a form on our self-service portal, and then Cisco UCS Director takes over. While the first request is being processed, the administrator can submit additional requests or work on other projects. Servers are ready for use up to 70 percent sooner.
- We enforce consistent standards in all global data centers. Administrators no longer change VLAN and VSAN settings in Cisco UCS Central or Cisco UCS Manager. Instead they simply select one of our standard policies from the self-service portal, and Cisco UCS Director applies it. Automation simplifies compliance.
- Provisioning virtualized or bare-metal servers requires less training. We define all policies, templates, and rules for all data centers on one interface: Cisco UCS Central. Administrators no longer need to learn to use internally developed provisioning tools.
- We don't have to update internally developed tools whenever vendors release new operating system and software versions. Cisco UCS Director software is constantly updated. That saves us a lot of work. "Cisco UCS Director is simple to manage and upgrade," Zanwar says.

Using Cisco UCS Director to automate server provisioning is just the start. We plan to also use it to provision storage and networking: both traditional and application-centric infrastructure (ACI). Although we've already automated storage and network provisioning, the teams currently use different interfaces. Using one interface to provision domains from end-to-end will help us more quickly fulfill requests for the infrastructure that employees need to innovate and run the business better.

For More Information

[Cisco UCS Director](#)

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