Connecting the Switch to the ACI Fabric

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ACI Fabric Topology

The ACI fabric topology includes these major components:

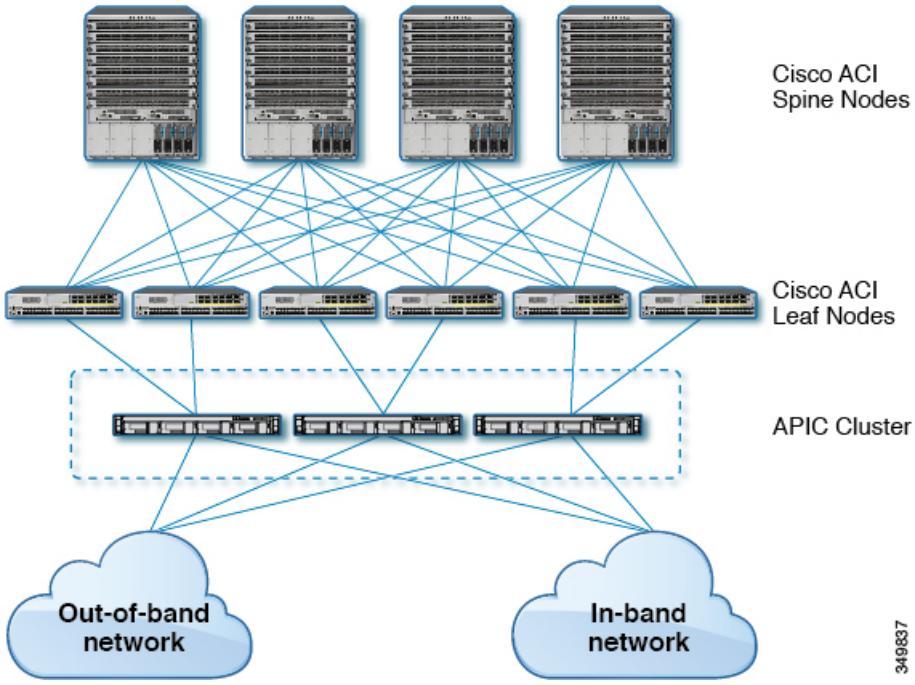
- Application Centric Infrastructure Controller (APIC) appliance (cluster of APICs)
- Leaf switches (for switch compatibility, please see the data sheets)
- Spine switches (for switch compatibility, please see the data sheets)

For additional information, please see the Cisco APIC Installation, Upgrade, and Downgrade Guide.

Note To prevent sub-optimal forwarding between endpoints, connect every leaf switch in the fabric to every spine switch in the same fabric.

As shown in the figure, each APIC is connected to one or two leaf switches and each leaf switch should be connected to every spine switch in the same fabric.

Figure 1: Connections Between APIC Clusters, Leaf Nodes, and Spine Nodes



Preparing to Connect to Other Devices

When preparing to connect the fabric devices, consider these items for each type of interface, and gather all of the required equipment before making the connections:

- Cabling type required for each interface type
- Distance limitations for each signal type
- Additional interface equipment required

Note When running power and data cables in overhead or subfloor cable trays, we strongly recommend that you locate power cables and other potential noise sources as far away as practical from network cabling that terminates on Cisco equipment. In situations where long parallel cable runs cannot be separated by at least 3.3 feet (1 meter), we recommend that you shield any potential noise sources by housing them in a grounded metallic conduit.

The optical transceivers that are not already assembled to their cables come separate from their cables. To prevent these transceivers and their cables from being damaged, we recommend that you keep the transceivers disconnected from their cables when installing them in ports and then insert the optical cable into the transceiver. When removing transceivers from ports, remove their cables before removing the transceivers.

For more information about removing and installing the transceivers, see the Cisco N9408 ACI-Mode Switch Hardware Installation Guide, "*Optic Transceiver Removal Using the Optics Extraction Tool*".

To maximize the effectiveness and life of your transceivers and optical cables:

- Wear an ESD-preventative wrist strap that is connected to an earth ground whenever handling transceivers. The switch is typically grounded when you install transceivers and provides an ESD port to which you can connect your wrist strap. If you cannot find an ESD port, connect the wrist strap to an earth ground (such as the grounding connection for the chassis).
- Do not remove or insert a transceiver more often than necessary. Repeated removals and insertions can shorten its useful life.
- Keep the transceivers and fiber-optic cables clean and dust free to maintain high signal accuracy and to prevent damage to the connectors. Attenuation (loss of light) increases with contamination and should be kept below 0.35 dB.
  - Clean these parts before installing them to prevent dust from scratching the fiber-optic cable ends.
  - Clean the connectors regularly; the required frequency of cleaning depends upon the environment. In addition, clean connectors if they are exposed to dust or accidentally touched. Both wet and dry cleaning techniques can be effective; refer to your site's fiber-optic connection cleaning procedures.
  - Do not touch the ends of connectors. Touching the ends can leave fingerprints and cause other contamination.
- Inspect routinely for dust and damage. If you suspect damage, clean and then inspect fiber ends under a microscope to determine if damage has occurred.

Connecting Leaf Switches to APICs

Downlink one or two (recommended for redundancy) Cisco N9000 platform ACI-mode leaf switches to each Application Policy Infrastructure Controller (APIC) in your ACI fabric. The type of virtual interface card (VIC) installed on the APIC determines the types of interface cables that you use to connect the leaf switches to the APICs.

- The **VIC 1225T** module supports copper connectors, copper cables, and switches with copper downlink ports (such as: Cisco N93108TC-FX switch).
- The **VIC 1225** module supports optical transceivers, optical cables, and switches with optical downlink ports (such as: Cisco N93600CD-GX switch).
- The **VIC 1455** module supports optical transceivers, optical cables, and switches with optical downlink ports (such as: Cisco N93600CD-GX switch).

Note You cannot use breakout ports for Cisco APIC connectivity.

Before you begin

The APIC and leaf switches in the fabric must be fully installed in their racks and grounded.

Procedure

Step 1 Connect an interface cable to one of the two to four ports on the virtual interface card (VIC) installed on the APIC. If the cable is not already assembled to its transceiver, insert the transceiver into the VIC port. Connect the optical interface cable to the transceiver.

- For a **VIC 1225T** 10GBASE-T copper module, use 10GBASE-T cables with RJ-45 connectors.
- For a **VIC 1225** optical module, use one of these sets of transceivers and cables:
  - Cisco 10GBASE-LR transceivers (SFP-10G-LR) supporting a link length of up to 6.1 miles (10 km)
  - Cisco 10GBASE-SR transceivers (SFP-10G-SR) supporting these link lengths:
    - Using 2000 MHz MMF (OM3) for up to 984 feet (300 m)
    - Using 4700 MHz MMF (OM4) for up to 1312 feet (400 m)
  - Cisco SFP+ Active Optical Cables (SFP-10G-AOC*x*M [where *x*=1, 3, 5, 7 for lengths in meters])
  - Cisco SFP+ Twinax Cables (SFP-H10GB-CU*x*M [where *x*=7 for lengths in meters])
- For a **VIC 1455** SFP28 module, 10-Gigabit only, use one of these sets of transceivers and cables:
  - Cisco 10GBASE-LR transceivers (SFP-10G-LR) supporting a link length of up to 6.1 miles (10 km)
  - Cisco 10GBASE-SR transceivers (SFP-10G-SR) supporting these link lengths:
    - Using 2000 MHz MMF (OM3) for up to 984 feet (300 m)
    - Using 4700 MHz MMF (OM4) for up to 1312 feet (400 m)
  - Cisco SFP+ Active Optical Cables (SFP-10G-AOC*x*M [where *x*=1, 2, 3, 5, 7, or 10 for lengths in meters])
  - Cisco SFP+ Twinax Cables (SFP-H10GB-CU*x*M [where *x*=1, 2, 3, 5, 7, or 10 for lengths in meters])

  Note
  The VIC 1455 has 4 ports: port-1, port-2, port-3, and port-4 from left to right.

  - All ports must have the same speed, either 10-Gigabit or 25-Gigabit.
  - Port-1 and port-2 is one pair, corresponding to eth2-1 on APIC and port-3 and port-4 is another pair, corresponding to eth2-2 on APIC. Only one connection is allowed for each pair. For example, connect one cable to either port-1 or port-2. Connect another cable to either port-3 or port-4. **Do not connect two cables on any pair**.

  To determine which transceivers, adapters, and cables support this switch, see the Cisco Transceiver Modules Compatibility Information document.

  To see the transceiver specifications and installation information, see Transceiver Module Installation Guides.

Step 2 Connect the other end of the interface cable to a downlink port on a leaf switch.

- For a Cisco 10GBASE-LR or -SR transceiver and cable, insert the transceiver into a downlink optical port on a leaf switch before connecting the cable to the transceiver.

- For Cisco SFP+ Active Optical Cables, insert the transceiver on the cable into a downlink optical port on a leaf switch.
- For a 10GBASE-T copper cable, insert the RJ-45 connector on the cable into a downlink BASE-T port on a leaf switch.

Note
To determine which transceivers, adapters, and cables support this switch, see the Cisco Transceiver Modules Compatibility Information document.

Connecting Leaf Switches to Spine Switches

For optimal forwarding between endpoints, connect each leaf switch to every spine switch in the same ACI fabric.

To determine which transceivers, adapters, and cables support this switch, see the Cisco Transceiver Modules Compatibility Information document.

To see the transceiver specifications and installation information, see Transceiver Module Installation Guides.

Warning

Statement 1055—Class 1/1M Laser

Invisible laser radiation is present. Do not expose to users of telescopic optics. This applies to Class 1/1M laser products.

Warning

Statement 1056—Unterminated Fiber Cable

Invisible laser radiation may be emitted from the end of the unterminated fiber cable or connector. Do not view directly with optical instruments. Viewing the laser output with certain optical instruments, for example, eye loupes, magnifiers, and microscopes, within a distance of 100 mm, may pose an eye hazard.

Warning

Statement 1255—Laser Compliance Statement

Pluggable optical modules comply with IEC 60825-1 Ed. 3 and 21 CFR 1040.10 and 1040.11 with or without exception for conformance with IEC 60825-1 Ed. 3 as described in Laser Notice No. 56, dated May 8, 2019.

Before you begin

- The leaf and spine switches in the fabric (such as: N9K-C9364C, N9K-C9332C, N9K-C9316D-GX, and N9K-C9332D-GX2B) must be fully installed in their racks and grounded.
- If there are modular switches in the fabric, their ACI-mode line cards must already be installed. The line cards can be of these types:
  - 32-port 100-Gigabit (such as: N9K-X9732C-EX)
  - 36-port 100-Gigabit (such as: N9K-X9736C-FX)
  - N9K-X9400-22L linecard expansion module (LEM)
  - N9K-X9400-16W LEM
  - N9K-X9400-8D LEM

Note

- You cannot include NX-OS line cards in the same chassis when running in ACI mode.
- Multiple uplinks from a leaf switch to a spine switch is supported. A symmetrical topology is recommended so that all devices have equal access to resources.

Procedure

Step 1 For the transceivers with removable cables, separate the transceivers from their interface cables.

Step 2 Insert the appropriate transceiver into an active uplink port on the leaf switch.

Step 3 Insert the same type of transceiver in the spine switch port on the line card.

Step 4 For transceivers with removable cables, insert the interface cable into the open end of each of those transceivers.

Step 5 Repeat Steps 1 through 4 for each spine switch in the ACI fabric.
The leaf switch is connected to each spine switch in the ACI fabric.

Step 6 Repeat Steps 1 through 5 for each leaf switch in the ACI fabric.
Each leaf switch in the ACI fabric is connected to each spine switch in the network.

The fabric automatically implements Equal Cost Multi-Pathing (ECMP) and enables all links. You do not need to configure the links.

Replacing an Existing Switch in the ACI Fabric

To replace an existing switch in the ACI fabric, see "Upgrading the Switch Hardware" in the Cisco APIC Installation and ACI Upgrade and Downgrade Guide.

Setting Up an Optional Console Interface

Optionally set up a console interface for performing the initial configuration of the switch. Use the interface cable provided in the accessory kit to connect the switch to your console device. Connect the console port on the switch to a modem. If you do not connect it to a modem, make the connection either before powering up the switch or after completing the boot process for the switch.

Before you begin

The console device must support VT100 terminal emulations and asynchronous transmissions.

Procedure

Step 1 Configure the terminal emulator program to match each of these default port characteristics:

- 9600 baud
- 8 data bits
- 1 stop bit
- No parity

Step 2 Insert the RJ-45 connector on the interface cable found in the accessory kit into the RS-232 port on the switch. Insert the DB-9 connector on the other end of the cable to the serial port on the console device.

What to do next

Perform the initial configuration for the switch (see the *Cisco ACI Getting Started Guide*).

Setting Up an Optional Management Connection

Optionally set up an out-of-band management connection for monitoring and troubleshooting purposes. Depending on your switch, connect either the RJ-45 management port or the SFP management port on the switch to an external hub, switch, or router.

Before you begin

To prevent an IP address conflict, complete the initial configuration for the switch and establish an IP address before you create the management connection.

Procedure

Step 1 Connect the interface cable to a management port on the switch.

Step 2 Connect the other end of the cable to an external hub, switch, or router.

Maintaining Transceivers and Optical Cables

Keep transceivers and fiber-optic cables clean and dust free to maintain high signal accuracy and prevent damage to the connectors. Contamination increases attenuation (loss of light) and should be below 0.35 dB.

Consider these maintenance guidelines:

- Transceivers are static sensitive. To prevent ESD damage, wear an ESD-preventative wrist strap that is connected to the grounded chassis.
- Do not remove and insert a transceiver more often than is necessary. Repeated removals and insertions can shorten its useful life.
- Keep all optical connections covered when not in use. Clean them before using to prevent dust from scratching the fiber-optic cable ends.
- Do not touch the ends of connectors. Touching the ends can leave fingerprints and cause other contamination.
- Clean the connectors regularly; the required frequency of cleaning depends upon the environment. In addition, clean connectors if they are exposed to dust or accidentally touched. Both wet and dry cleaning techniques can be effective; refer to the fiber-optic connection cleaning procedures for your site.
- Inspect routinely for dust and damage. If you suspect damage, clean and then inspect fiber ends under a microscope to determine if damage has occurred.

Note When you need to remove a fiber-optic transceiver, first remove the fiber-optic cable from the transceiver **before** you remove the transceiver from the port.