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Network Support Operations

The Automation Conversation



Even as networks become more complex to meet the growing demands of cloud, big data, social media, and mobile initiatives, network operations teams are still being asked to do more with less.



These teams are often already stressed dedicating most of their time to manually implementing repetitive device inventory procedures, maintenance tasks, and fundamental support processes.



This manual coordination can result in configuration errors and cause critical issues.

There Is a Better Way

Companies are turning to tools that help automate the process of collecting inventory data, streamlining network maintenance, and consolidating device information—and these companies are getting concrete results in time and cost savings.

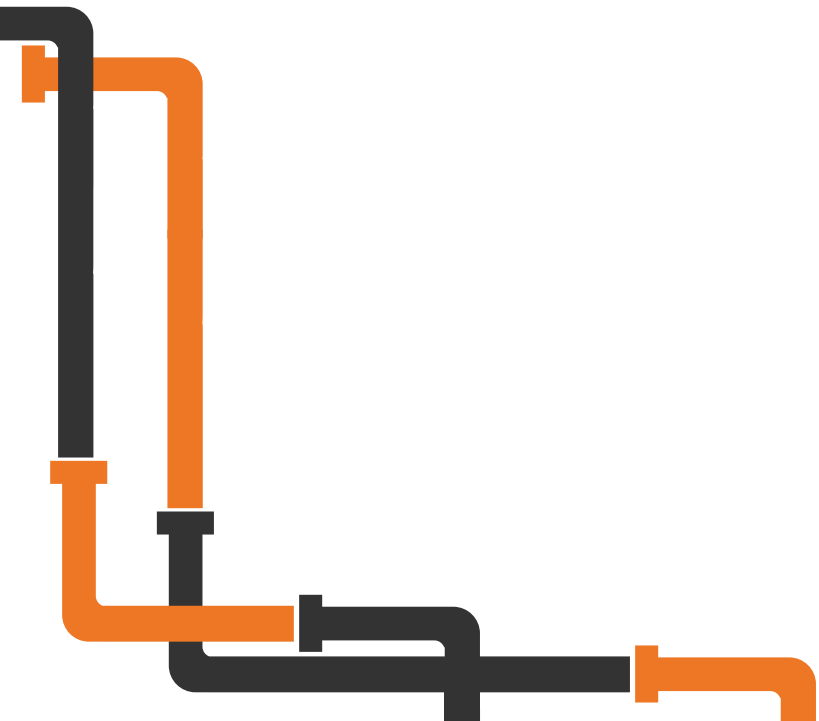
In this eBook, you learn how these automation tools can help you to:



Enhance your network visibility

Simplify your alert and upgrade management

Streamline your device coverage and contracts renewal process

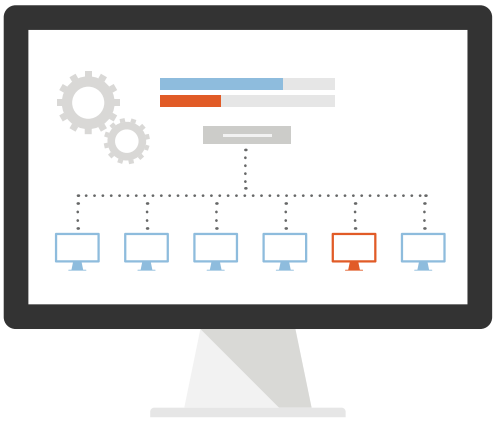


Let’s get started.



Enhance Visibility

Managing a device inventory manually is a time-consuming process that is difficult to keep current and accurate. Automated inventory tools provide greater visibility into today's extensive and changing networks, so you know exactly what it is in your network.



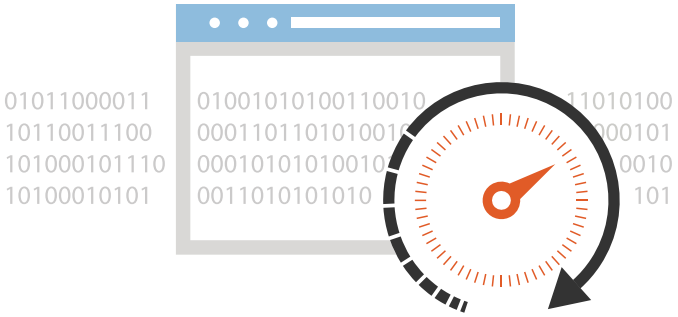
The IT Network Operations Manager at iYogi, a leading provider of technical support services to consumers and small businesses across a wide range of computing and communications devices and software, reflects on their transition to a centralized, automated inventory:

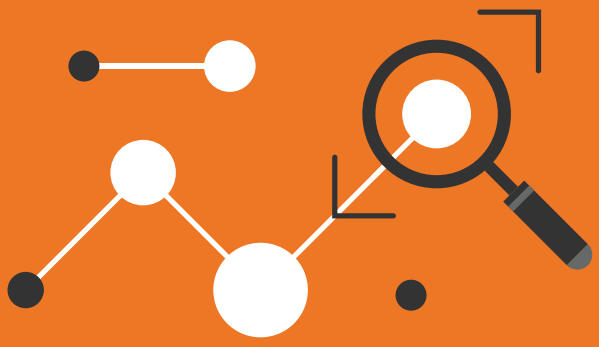
"The Smart Net Total Care web portal provides us with a single source of truth on the status of our network inventory. Because we operate multiple network operations' shifts 24/7 every day of the year, this ensures that each shift has the most current and complete device information available, rather than referring to manual reports that may be out of date or incorrect. This contributes to a more stable network operating environment than before we implemented the Cisco solution."[1]

Pradeep Joshi, IT Network Operations Manager, iYogi, Inc.

How It Works

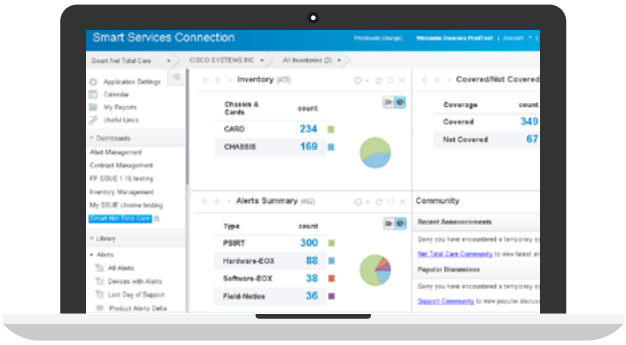
1. Collect inventory data.
Automated inventory tools gather information from your installed base.



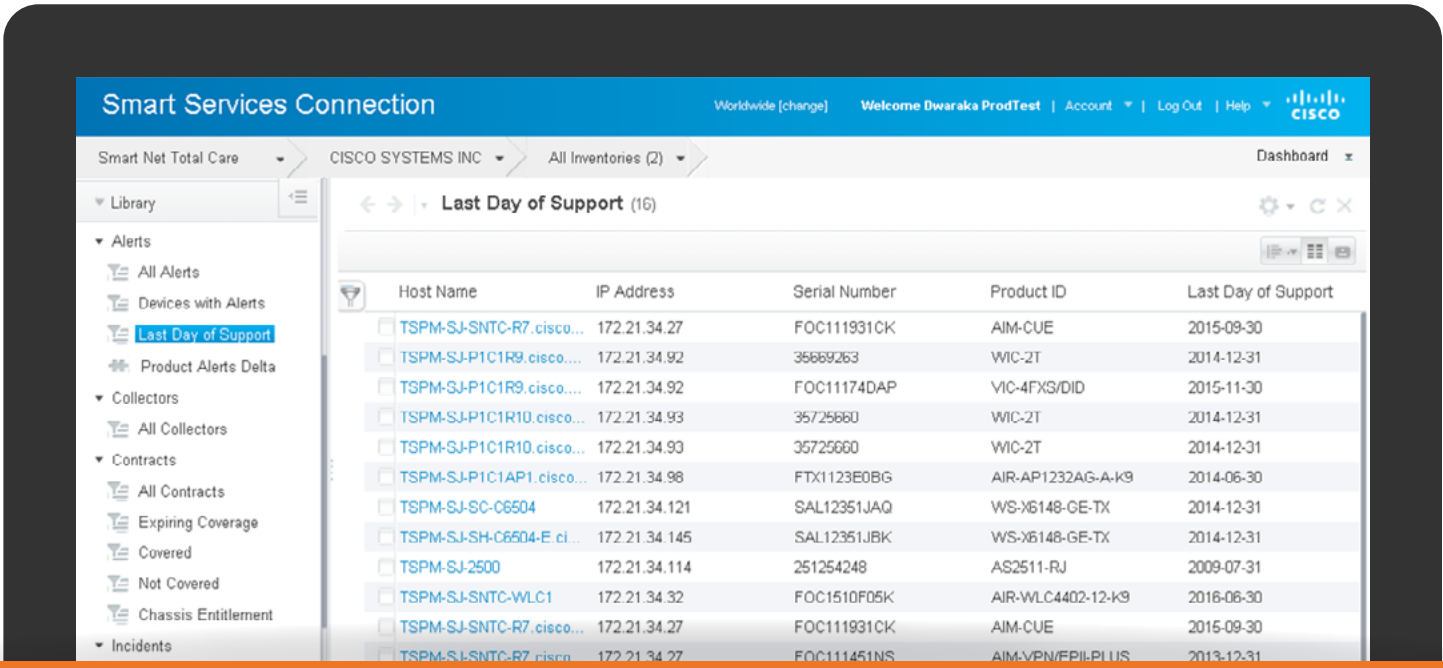


2. **Analyze device data.**
Information is securely analyzed against Cisco® manufacturing, security, shipping, technical support and contract data.

3. Publish to a centralized portal.
Through your portal you get a comprehensive view of your installed base, service contracts, and product alerts.



The Centralized Portal



An automated tool creates a portal that displays all your device information, providing a complete view of device lifecycle data, which helps to speed up the planning and renewal processes with organized and detailed device-level information.

Device ID	Serial number	Contract number
Host name	Product ID	Coverage end date
IP address	Product family	Coverage status
Sysname	Ship data	Service level

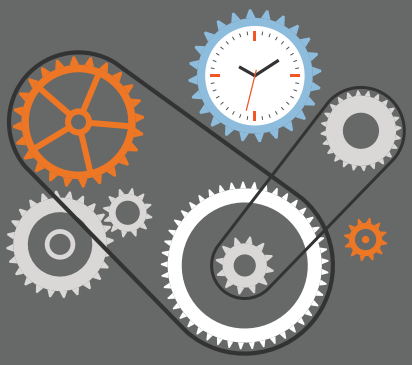
This enhanced visibility helps your team gather a more accurate picture of your network inventory, as well as the coverage status of your equipment.



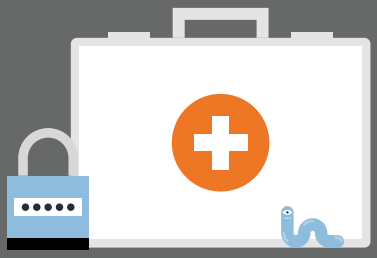
Tracking the installed base in this detailed and timely way is helping more and more companies to:



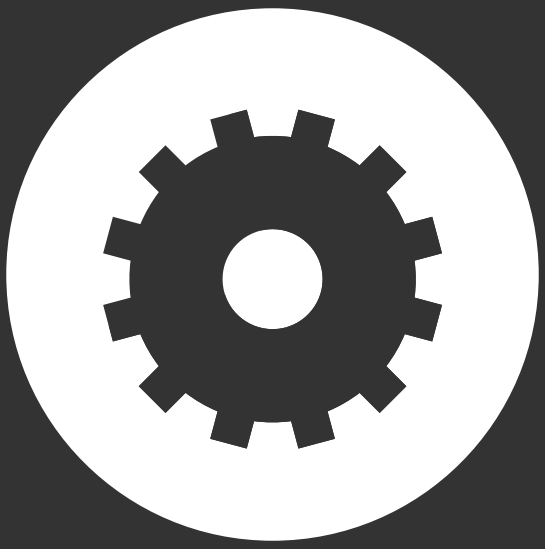
Set up a network that enables companies to reach their goals and keep up with an evolving competitive landscape



Keep that network up and running, enabling productivity and prosperity



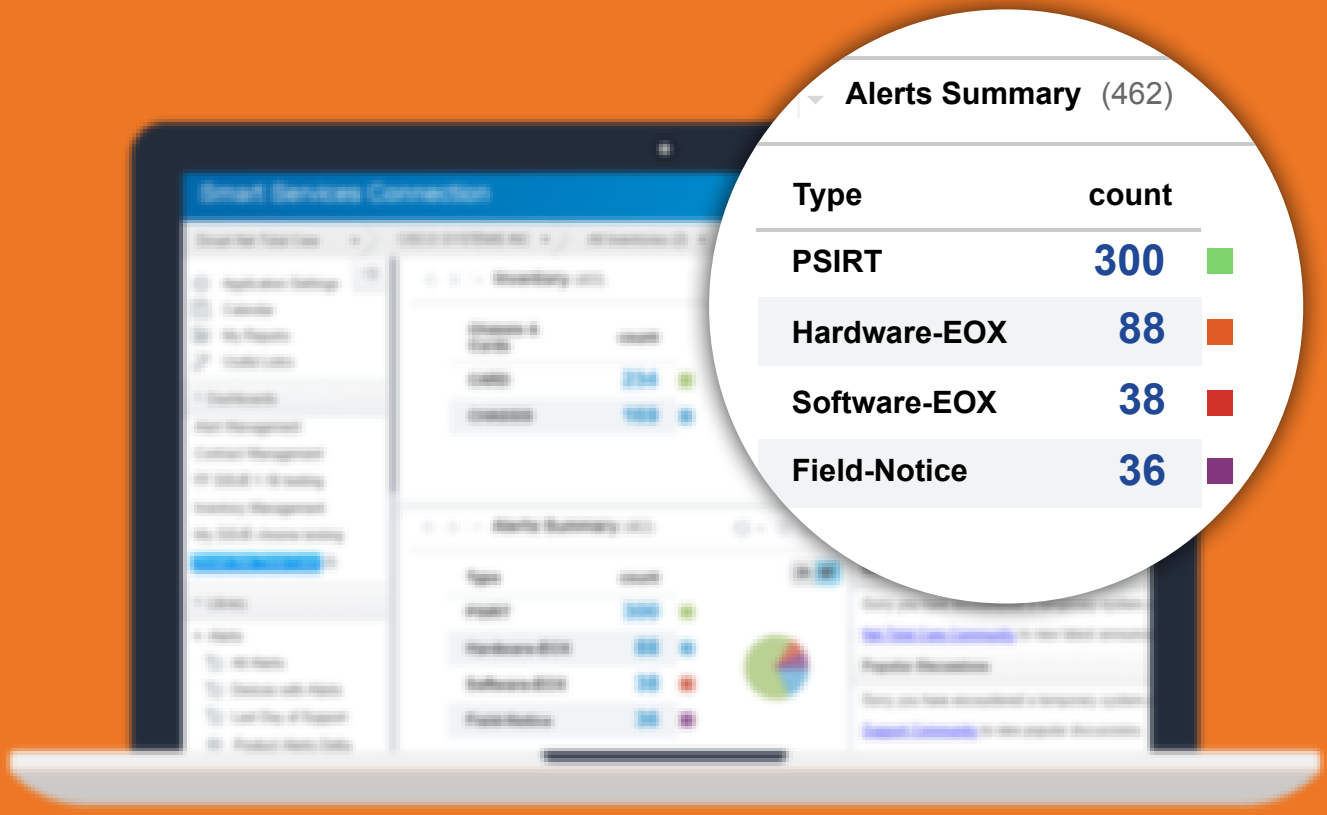
Prepare for the unexpected



Best of all, chief information officers (CIOs), IT managers, and technical support staff can better meet their main goal: keeping their clients productive and making sure business-critical capabilities aren't put at risk when their network slows or goes down.

Simplify Your Alert and Upgrade Management

Manually trawling through all your alerts is exceptionally time consuming, and as alerts pile up, so do your potential risks.



Centralizing your alert and upgrade management helps to keep you one step ahead, enabling you to quickly identify risk factors that require mitigation and reduce time chasing irrelevant alerts.

“Since implementing the Smart Net Total Care service, we have reduced network downtime by over 60 percent. We’ve also exceeded our customer delight index (CDI) target for the first time ever. This is not surprising given the strong correlation between network reliability and customer satisfaction.”[2]

– Elly Odera,
head of Network and Service Operations, iYogi



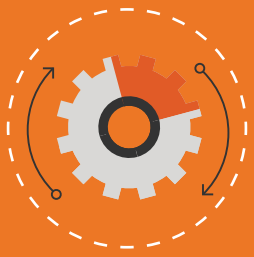
By converting to an automated process with a centralized database, you can get strategic about tracking and maintaining your devices, so you can:



Identify potential threats to avoid device incidents, helping to maintain network stability and reducing downtime risks



Easily track responses to alerts



Stay on top of OS updates



Schedule regular software upgrades to keep hardware secure and working effectively



Review report information to identify high-risk areas and critical network devices to prioritize and allocate budget for replacement or coverage renewal

“With better inventory data at our fingertips, we can accurately forecast our equipment needs, focus support efforts where they’re needed most, and avoid thorny logistical issues. That helps us ensure that we’re always maintaining optimal network resilience and availability.[3]”

–Pedro Cravo,
network solutions manager, ZON Multimédia

Streamline Your Device Coverage and Contracts Renewals Process



It's difficult to assess risk, allocate budget, and process renewals without clear visibility into which devices are covered and if they are covered at the right level.

At large and midsize companies, directors of operations, IT managers, and network engineers handling coverage planning and contract renewal face a unique challenge to manage coverage dates and entitlement levels on dozens of different contracts for hundreds, or even thousands, of network devices.

Quintiles senior network systems engineer Wil Bolton, reported spending upwards of 40 hours searching through spreadsheets to track down data for renewals before finding a better way.[4]

"We simply log onto the portal and check coverage on a device before spending time to open a TAC case, explaining a problem, and then finding out that the device is not covered."[4]

–Wil Bolton
senior network systems engineer, Quintiles



But with full visibility into your network's installed base, you can use reporting tools to streamline renewals, quickly qualify service entitlement, and speed up your interactions with the Cisco TAC, which frees up your team resources to focus on innovation and strategy.



This comprehensive perspective of your network helps you:



Develop a network planning schedule



Identify upcoming coverage gaps to prioritize renewals



Make more informed decisions about coverage levels associated with each of your devices.

Speed up decision making



Consolidate contracts by synchronizing support dates so devices come up for renewal at the same time and standardizing your service-level agreements (SLAs)

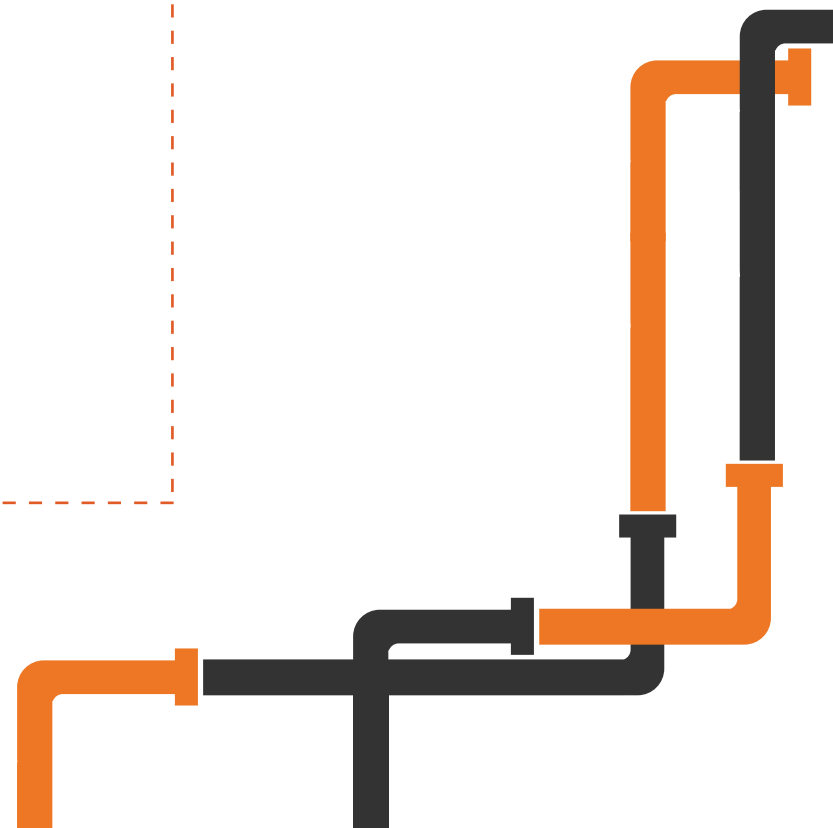


Organize critical information to save time on your Cisco Technical Assistance Center (TAC) calls



Seven Essentials to Streamline Your Cisco TAC Calls

- Service contract number
- Device serial number
- Product ID and product family
- Device location
- OS version information
- Exceptions
- IP address

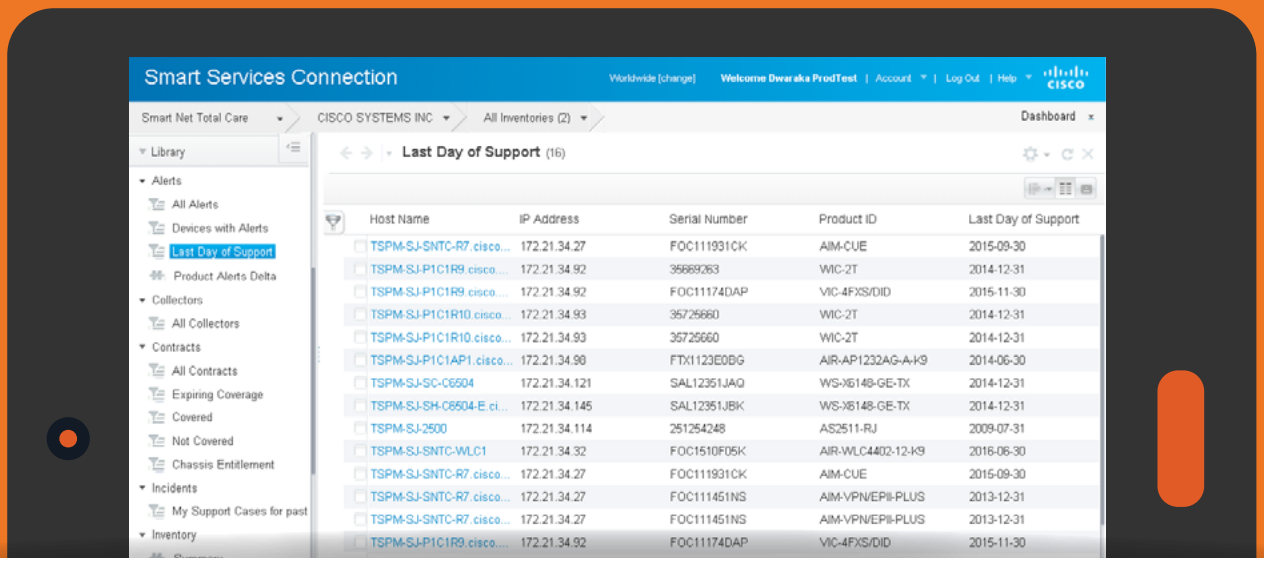


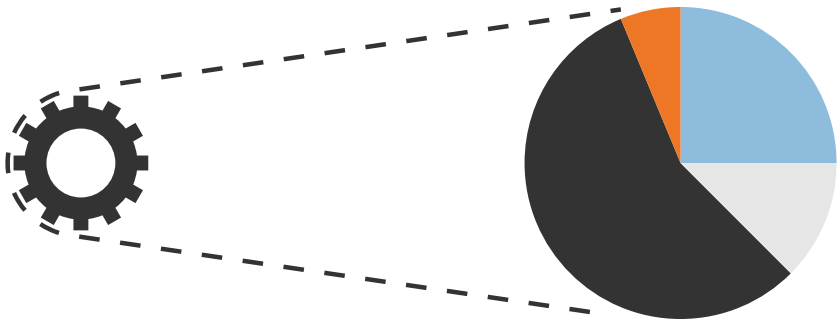


By getting its many network devices on one easily renewable contract, the California Office of the Courts has unlocked new financing and leasing options, and lowered maintenance costs by 31 percent.[5]

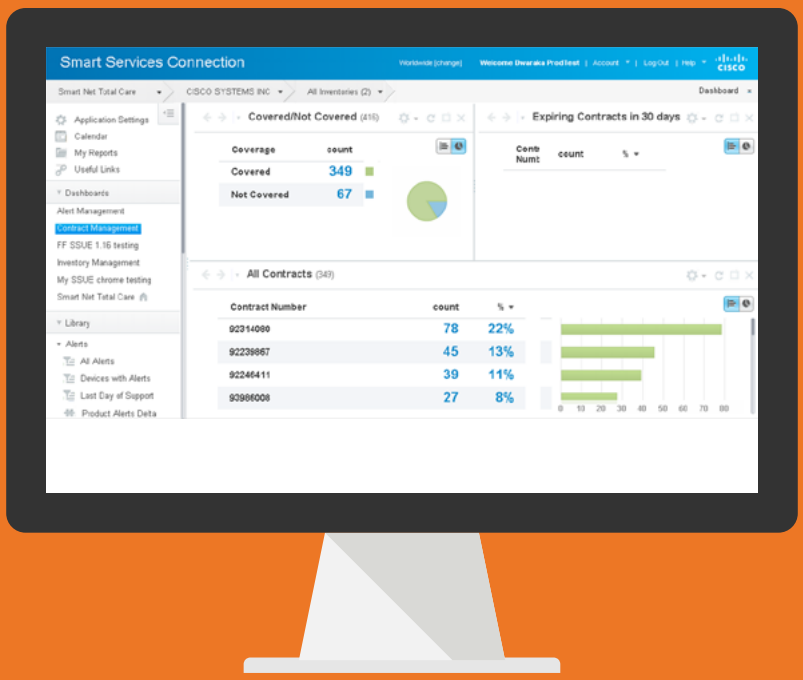
Increase Productivity

With a clear vision of where your network stands today, you can better plan for its future. Decisions regarding device coverage, maintenance, upgrade, and replacement at end of life should be made with a full sense of what devices you have in the network, how they are performing, service and support incidents, and coverage and entitlements.





Switching to automation is a critical step in improving your network operations. Successful conversion to automated processes can transform your IT operations, helping you to stay organized, simplifying your management processes and streamlining your contracts and renewals, so you can free up valuable network personnel from inefficient manual practices to work on innovative and strategic programs.



Next Steps

If you are ready to improve your business processes, Cisco can help. Cisco Smart Net Total Care (SNTC) helps you automate your processes, so you can organize your network, filter and prioritize your alerts, maximize efficiencies and reduce risk. Use the following resources to learn more.

Cisco SNTC Service Overview



Proactively Support Your Network Devices



Learn More

1. Customer Case Study:
   Support Provider Automates Network Maintenance

2. Customer Case Study:
   Visibility Spells Reliability for Mobile Service Provider

3. Customer Case Study:
   Cable Provider Gains Efficiencies Through Network Visibility

4. Customer Cast Study:
   Pharmaceutical Services Company Saves Time, Increases Reliability

5. Customer Case Study:
   California Courts Adopt Innovative Services Delivery Model

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