



NEWS



Aruba Serves Up Controllerless WLAN Offerings

By [Chad Berndtson](#)

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Aruba Networks Tuesday confirmed a new software release that packs additional wireless LAN functionality on its access points without requiring physical or virtual wireless controllers.

The software update is called Aruba Instant Enterprise, and Aruba also is launching a cloud-based provisioning service called Aruba Activate for helping enterprises better manage large-scale, distributed Wi-Fi environments. Aruba, Sunnyvale, Calif., is claiming that the two new features bring down the total cost of ownership for branch Wi-Fi networks by 42 percent against comparable Cisco (NSDQ:[CSCO](#)) infrastructure.

[**Related:** [Aruba Enters MDM Fray With ClearPass Appliance](#)]

"We're addressing the entire enterprise, providing a consistent user and management experience whether the enterprise is using mobility controllers, a controllerless model or a combination of the two," said Ben Gibson, Aruba's chief marketing officer, in a statement. "In any of these scenarios, the result for customers is improved performance and lower deployment costs."

Aruba Instant customers already get virtualized Aruba Mobility Controller functions on 802.11n APs. Instant Enterprise removes the controller aspect altogether, and includes features such as voice and video optimization and integrated spectrum analysis. Aruba will factory-ship Instant APs to any office in the world, and once those APs are activated, they download the appropriate wireless configuration, which eliminates on-site support hassles, according to Aruba.

Ozer Dondurmacioglu, Aruba senior director of product and solutions marketing, explained the process: "Aruba Instant APs are shipped to distributed sites. The first Aruba Instant AP deployed at the remote site connects with the Aruba Activate service. During this communication, Aruba Activate informs the Instant AP of the IP address of the Aruba AirWave management software. Aruba AirWave then pushes down the network configuration required for that Aruba Instant AP at that particular location. The rest of the Aruba Instant APs plugged into the network at that remote site then download their configuration from this first Instant AP."

Other Instant features include application fingerprinting, in which Aruba's policy-enforcement firewall identifies voice and video traffic and preserves the connection, even for encrypted applications such as Apple (NSDQ:[AAPL](#)) FaceTime and Microsoft (NSDQ:[MSFT](#)) Lync, and Layer 3 roaming, in which mobile devices can roam across subnet boundaries without affecting Wi-Fi performance.

Aruba Activate's security controls can be used not only by IT managers, but also by solution provider partners that want to build device provisioning, inventory management and other services and market them to customers.

Aruba also is including "Bonjour Gateway" functionality for both Aruba Instant- and Mobility Controller-based Aruba WLANs to better enable Apple device-based wireless functions such as AirPlay and AirPrint.

"Aruba AirGroup provides per-user, per-role, per-location service filtering and availability," Dondurmacioglu said. "For example, enabling Apple TV access only to 'teachers,' even when student devices are connected to the same Wi-Fi network. These context-based policies are enabled by using [Aruba ClearPass](#) alongside Aruba Instant."

Both Aruba Instant Enterprise and Aruba Activate are available free to existing Aruba Instant customers.

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