Simplifying your network using Cloudflare's connectivity cloud

The opportunity for simplification

In the wake of the pandemic, organizations are re-examining their office arrangements and shifting their policies to support hybrid work. It presents an opportunity to improve agility by adding more flexibility to previously immutable resources.

For example, organizations are adopting hoteling policies to better utilize office space by eliminating permanent desk assignments in favor of open seating. Cloud-based apps are replacing traditional productivity, file sharing and collaboration tools that were served out of the data center. Users can work from any location, whether at the office or remote, as long as they have internet connectivity.

With the changes taking place with physical infrastructure to enable hybrid work, it also introduces the opportunity to streamline IT infrastructure as well. If users can work as effectively from a remote location as their office, then is there any need for greater levels of networking service while on site? It's a question that's raised when discussing a term that Gartner defines as "Coffee Shop Networking", introduced in the recent report called "Is SD-WAN Dead". If users can stay productive while working remotely, then do users need anything more than the level of network service they receive at the coffee shop?

It's an interesting thought experiment, because it has security implications and it's an exercise in zero trust. There should not be anything or anyone you trust at the coffee shop, so does your internal network require privileged network access? Stated another way, could your on-prem employees work effectively from the guest network?

As organizations reexamine their needs, the model for coffee shop networking presents an opportunity to eliminate sources of complexity by using the enterprise network for connectivity to cloud-delivered security services.

Developing a strategy

Most corporate networks have become over-engineered for today's needs, partly because connectivity and security were inseparable and codependent. Traffic flows had to be enabled for networking and selectively disabled for security purposes.

With Cloudflare, use our connectivity cloud to deliver networking and security services. This effectively helps in a number of ways:

- Support your users in any location, using our data centers rather than having to build out yours.
- Protect your applications and public facing infrastructure by using Cloudflare as the "front door" for your network.
- Eliminate lateral movement by reducing the attack surface within your network by disabling the overly permissive firewall controls that are typically extended to on-prem users.

Key Cloudflare solutions

Network Protection

Use Cloudflare Magic Transit and Magic Firewall to protect your public facing infrastructure from external threats.

Offload and replace on-prem networking appliances and upstream ISP filtering for true cloud-scale "defense in depth" which absorbs and filters out attempts to disrupt your organization's operations.

WAN Modernization:

For branch network connectivity, replace MPLS circuits and first generation SD-WAN and with Cloudflare Magic WAN.

Magic WAN implements branch networking by leveraging the Cloudflare Global Network to connect sites such as your branch offices, retail locations, and regional hubs to your broader organization and to the cloud, without the backhaul of hub & spoke networking

Zero Trust Network Access:

Use Cloudflare Access to extend secure access to applications across untrusted networks. Cloudflare Access helps organizations reduce their attack surface by replacing VPN gateways.

Instead of connecting users to networks, Cloudflare Access uses identity-based controls to contextually connect users to applications.

Network modernization with Cloudflare's connectivity cloud

Consider Cloudflare's connectivity cloud for your network modernization. It is built upon a philosophy of using a composable, programmable architecture to provide networking and security services to your users and across your cloud-enabled business infrastructure and applications. As a result, it addresses both current and future needs in your modernization journey.

With Cloudflare, you can add functionality and support new use cases by enabling services rather than inserting appliances. The connection to a Cloudflare Anycast data center location remains the same, while you configure and deploy services from the unified management interface to process traffic.

You can address current needs while putting the platform in place to support your future use cases and support your entire network modernization journey.

Instead of building out global infrastructure, use ours. Your organization benefits from the lightning fast speed delivered through the Cloudflare global network. With direct connections to nearly every service provider and cloud provider, the Cloudflare network can reach 95% of the world's Internet population within approximately 50 milliseconds.