

Adaptive Networks Vision White Paper



ProCurve Networking by HP's vision for harnessing the power of your organization's network and turning it into a strategic asset

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Change is everywhere. So what?

Today, change is a constant – and the pace of change is accelerating ferociously. But what can – and should – organizations do to deal with this fact of modern life?

In this paper, ProCurve Networking by HP will take a look at how organizations can remain competitive in the face of change. It starts with examining old assumptions and questioning the status quo, especially when it comes to information technology (IT) and network infrastructure decisions.

ProCurve presents its vision for **adaptive networks**: the future of networks that are personalized and open, that establish a comprehensive network view and that adapt to the needs of users, applications and organizations.

In this vision, ProCurve outlines how the right network infrastructure is crucial for enabling your organization to compete effectively by **fortifying security, increasing productivity and reducing complexity** across your organization. ProCurve provides the secret to optimizing your IT initiatives today, while offering a path to turn your organization's network into a strategic asset tomorrow.

Competition is fierce, and evolution is crucial to success

For essentially all organizations, increasing global influence is a reality. Even organizations that seem to operate only locally are affected deeply by the global nature of communications and commerce. This fact is apparent in the corporate world. And in the public sector, new expectations are being placed on government and educational institutions, causing tremendous pressure to execute.

Whatever your industry or sector, you are measured against the best and the brightest worldwide, meaning you must pull together a federation of global partners that can help you outperform your competition.

The rate of change in your business or organizational environment might feel like a Darwinian struggle – meaning competition for survival, much less success, is fierce. The question is, can your organization adapt quickly, efficiently and effectively enough to thrive within this relentless pace of change?

It's commonly accepted today that the right IT can be crucial in making your people and processes more effective. You must always be concerned about managing complexity effectively, about the burdens associated with regulatory compliance, about embracing the applications that best support your business processes and about minimizing operational costs.

Less commonly understood, however, is the importance of the right network infrastructure. Too often, even IT-savvy executives make the mistake of treating a network as simply a “pipe” for moving data around. In an era of fast-paced global competition, this limited approach to networking can put you at a disadvantage.

More IT intelligence is migrating to the network, which now assumes a key role in driving every aspect of IT – and therefore of your organization's business processes. The ideal network infrastructure ensures that your information assets remain secure from internal and external attacks, boosts productivity, and is easy to configure, operate and maintain – allowing you to focus on your core business goals.

Adapt to survive – and thrive

In a rapidly evolving climate, you need to constantly deploy new capabilities as they become affordable, and before your competitors do. To gracefully embrace change, you must focus on always learning, improving, refining – in a word, **adapting**.

When change is pervasive, holding on to the status quo is often not the safe or the prudent choice. In fact, what appears to be the safe choice (e.g., vendors that promise to “do it all”) may actually be enormously risky from an adaptability standpoint – limiting your ability to respond to a constantly changing business environment. You might suffer from proprietary vendor lock-ins that restrict future choice and flexibility, and you might end up stuck with outdated, under-performing equipment.

This perspective applies strongly to networks, which are crucial to all communications, connection, commerce – and, ultimately, competitiveness. According to Gartner analysts Mark Fabbi and Bob Hafner, IT will waste an estimated \$100 billion over the next five years by overspending on network products and services⁽¹⁾.

The key to avoiding such overspending is to invest in the right products and services. “IT leaders need to think differently about how to make the right investment decisions and to measure their value,” said Audrey Apfel, vice president at Gartner⁽²⁾. For your organization to evolve successfully, that means investing in solutions that enable your network to adapt rapidly to whatever changes you face.

As a business or organizational leader focused on gaining critical competitive advantage, you need your network to address the following seven key issues:

1. Keeping your information assets secure.
2. Optimizing your business processes for current business/organizational conditions, while ensuring that the processes are flexible enough to evolve as conditions inevitably change.
3. Enhancing IT return on investment (ROI) by fixing areas of inefficiency and waste that threaten to drag your business down.
4. Deploying the applications that will enable your organization to grow and thrive.
5. Making critical information easily and readily accessible to your workers, when and where they need it, to be most effective in their jobs
6. Always focusing on communicating: not only internally with employees, but also externally with customers, partners and suppliers.
7. Making sure your network aids efforts to achieve and document compliance with multinational regulations.

⁽¹⁾Weinberg, Neal, “Gartner: IT will waste \$100 billion on network overspending,” *Network World*, October 12, 2006

⁽²⁾Gartner press release, “Gartner Says Eight of Ten Dollars Enterprises Spend on IT is ‘Dead Money’”; October 9, 2006

A network that addresses these key issues becomes a strategic asset for your organization. Such a network is what ProCurve calls an **adaptive network**.

What is an adaptive network? It is a cohesive, flexible network infrastructure that enables your organization to:

- fortify security
- increase productivity and
- reduce complexity.

ProCurve's vision for adaptive networks

With an adaptive network, your organization can focus on your core business, so you become and remain competitive within the rapidly evolving global ecosystem. Your network infrastructure becomes a strategic asset helping you thrive and compete.

Users get seamless access to the information and resources they need to be most effective – while your organization effectively keeps critical information, resources and assets always available over the network, secure from unauthorized users and safe from attacks (e.g., viruses, worms, malware).

Because ProCurve's adaptive network vision is based on an open network infrastructure, you can easily add and integrate new applications, technologies and capabilities into your IT environment without fear that your existing infrastructure will become obsolete, and without having to retrain your staff. And as your organization evolves and grows, so does your network – ensuring the most cost-effective solutions and best ROI.

Adaptive network defined

In ProCurve's vision, adaptive networks must be:

- adaptive to users
- adaptive to applications and
- adaptive to organization needs
- all on a cohesive, flexible network infrastructure that is highly secure and available

Let's take a look at each of these aspects.

1. Adaptive to users = personalization

Adaptive networks embody the intelligence to know the user's identity and device needs. According to a recent Forrester Research survey of 1,130 network-equipment decision makers at mid-size and enterprise companies, almost three-quarters of those polled prefer "smart networks"⁽³⁾ – meaning there is strong desire for the kind of intelligence that enables personalization.

The adaptive network allows only approved access to organization assets, yet assures that the assets required for each user to be productive are readily available. The user enjoys a personalized network experience, for the benefit of both the user and the organization.

Users get easy access to the right information and resources they need to perform their tasks most productively – no matter where they connect, or which computing or communications device they use. Users – especially mobile workers – expect the network to just work, without having to worry about access rights, multiple passwords or details about applications or resource types.

Forrester Research states that: "Today, more than 70 percent of enterprises are using some type of mobile application. A third of businesses say that setting mobile and wireless strategy and policy is a priority in 2006; for another 16 percent, it's a critical priority. Why are these companies investing in mobility? Mobility provides the enabling technology for business practices like flexible working, with quantifiable benefits."⁽⁴⁾

The personalization provided by an adaptive network has many benefits for the user, including a consistent experience regardless of whether network access is via a wired or wireless connection, in the office, at a supplier or from another remote site. According to the rules and policies set by the organization, the user not only gains appropriate access to the network, but also enjoys optimized application performance. In all situations, the network provides the right level of service to meet the needs of the user, the device and the application.

Personalization fortifies security, increases productivity and reduces complexity

At the same time, personalization enables organizations to protect information and assets by controlling users' access, thus strengthening security. Through personalization, an adaptive network understands the user and device needs, thereby increasing productivity. The adaptive network delivers appropriate levels of performance and quality of service (QoS), which optimizes the user's personal experience and productivity. With an adaptive network, IT managers feel safe that the users get what they need and only what they are authorized to access, thereby reducing security threats and issues.

Without an adaptive network, providing users with a seamless and personalized network experience puts increased burdens on the IT staff. Traditionally, as the user experience becomes easier, the network infrastructure becomes more complex. But a properly designed adaptive network, built on the right network infrastructure, can actually reduce complexity through automation, and ultimately lead to a more efficient and/or reduced IT staff.

⁽³⁾Denise Dubie, "Survey says: Smart networks are in"; *Network World* (U.S. online), 18 September 2006

⁽⁴⁾"European Enterprises Put Mobility At The Core Of Their Strategic Agendas: More Than A Third Of Telecom And Networking Budgets Are Spent On Mobility, According To Forrester Research," Forrester Research press release, November 6, 2006

2. Adaptive to applications = application enablement and optimization

Adaptive networks let you get the most from all your applications. Of course, any network should be expected to handle current business applications such as supply chain management, customer care and e-commerce.

But it's equally important that the network not get in the way of applications – that it be able to handle the new sets of requirements generated by each application. And what happens when new applications appear on the scene and need to be integrated into the organizational structure?

An adaptive network recognizes the applications traversing it and automatically configures itself to yield the optimal application performance. With intelligence built into the network, organizations can focus on the areas of productivity that are most vital to their success and let the network itself translate the underlying application requirements into network behaviors. As a result, applications can be optimized individually at the same time they're made part of the integrated whole.

In addition, adaptive networks are open and convergence-ready and able to easily integrate whatever comes along, whether it's IP telephony, desktop video conferencing, Web-based applications, on-demand computing, collaborative applications, next-generation applications or future applications that have not yet even been conceived.

Being adaptive to applications fortifies security, increases productivity and reduces complexity

By automatically understanding the identity of each user and device that accesses the network (i.e., through personalization) and the needs of the applications being used, an adaptive network optimizes the user's application experience and greatly simplifies an IT manager's application management challenges.

The intelligence embedded into an adaptive network allows it to understand the applications moving through it and thus respond to the needs of – and enable the optimization of – each application. For instance, for voice applications, the adaptive network can assign the appropriate QoS to maintain voice quality, while providing the right level of security to both protect the application and make it optimally available to users.

Adaptive networks are enabled by their foundation of industry standards. Industry standards and open architectures promote interoperability among multiple vendors' equipment and applications. They also allow the network architecture to welcome new applications because they share the common "language" embodied in industry standards.

Often network vendors have multiple or differing architectures for specific applications. In contrast, an adaptive network is not a network of networks, but a comprehensive infrastructure that cohesively supports all applications. With such a network, organizations can more easily deploy applications to enhance users' productivity, while being assured of the security and manageability of the applications.

3. Adaptive to organizations = evolves and responds to changing needs

Adaptive networks empower organizations to respond appropriately and swiftly to change and competitive pressures, from both a business and an operational standpoint. Because they are open and flexible, adaptive networks enable the entire organization to move quickly in the right direction – leading directly to more efficient operations (including improved ROI), greater expandability and investment protection.

Being adaptive to organizations' needs fortifies security, increases productivity and reduces complexity

On a practical level, adaptive networks let organizations focus on their business goals, rather than devoting exorbitant time, money and resources to managing the network and keeping it running. You retain complete control over your network's operation, but implementation of your policies is handled automatically and centrally by an adaptive network.

Benefits to organizations of adaptive networks include:

- Real-time visibility and insight into the inner workings of your organization, so you can steer rapidly toward new opportunities and away from potentially detrimental situations.
- Greater integrity and privacy of your valuable information and resources integrated into the fabric of the network, directed by business policies.
- Vastly improved manageability of your IT resources through the reduction of complexity, including unified management of wired and wireless networks, and integrated voice/data/video networks.
- Greater reliability and availability of your network resources, so your organization can remain productive and focused on core business objectives, rather than on network maintenance.
- Easier compliance with regulations as well as documentation of compliance.
- Simpler deployment of new equipment and applications, along with easy integration of third-party technologies and products.
- Deeper and more rewarding relationships with customers and partners through more effective communication and connections.
- Reduction of risk – in compliance, in technology choices and in overall business processes.
- Long-term investment protection through open, scalable networking as well as interoperability with your existing networks, while avoiding vendor lock-in.

Forrester analyst Robert Whiteley has said: "Companies, regardless of size, region or industry, overwhelmingly prefer to use smart networks in their architecture. Hardware advancements, more sophisticated network software and better management tools mean that firms can reliably embed intelligent security, mobility, virtualization and acceleration directly into the network."⁽⁵⁾

⁽⁵⁾Robert Whiteley, "The Debate is Over: Businesses Prefer Smart Networks"; the second document in the "The Evolving Enterprise Network" series; September 8, 2006

Cohesive, flexible network infrastructure that is highly secure and available

Adaptive networks are based on a network infrastructure that is cohesive – where features and functionalities are purpose-built into the infrastructure rather than “bolted on” later as an afterthought.

As part of this cohesiveness, security is embedded and ubiquitous, with the network able to automatically protect, detect and respond within a trusted network infrastructure. Similarly, network management becomes a simple operation that can be managed from a single point. And a cohesive network is intrinsically more reliable and resilient, and thus more productive, than a network developed as a hodge-podge of various parts.

At the same time, the openness of an adaptive network makes it very flexible. An open, standards-based adaptive network provides a trusted infrastructure that bridges existing and new environments – such as Windows Vista™ and Longhorn operating systems, or IP-based voice and video communications systems.

As a result, organizations with adaptive networks can rapidly and more easily take advantage of these types of advances – which leads to not only greater interoperability among multi-vendor equipment and products, but also tremendous flexibility and choice in selecting just the right solutions to achieve broader goals. As you add new advancements in technology, applications or capabilities to your organization to keep it competitive, an adaptive networks based on open industry standards does not require you to change your existing networking infrastructure.

In a November 30, 2006, press release, market analyst firm Infonetics noted not only that worldwide Ethernet switch port shipments and revenue increased in the third quarter of 2006 – signaling that more organizations are purchasing LAN technology – but also that organizations invest in emerging technology “to make the network more secure, more reliable and more efficient, which in turn should lower long-term operating costs.”⁽⁶⁾

By fortifying security, increasing productivity and reducing complexity, an adaptive network allows you to focus on your business strategy. Eventually, an adaptive network can truly become a strategic asset to your organization, able to make world-class competitiveness an achievable reality.

⁽⁶⁾ Infonetics press release, November 30, 2006

What adaptive networks might look like

Adaptive networks provide the personalized experience that enables users to achieve optimal productivity, while ensuring that the network is actually more secure and less complex to manage than a static network. The following scenarios illustrate how an adaptive network – that is adaptive to users, applications and organizations' needs – might look from both a user's and an IT manager's perspectives.

Scenario #1: From a user's perspective:

The user, a knowledge worker at a large organization, wakes in the morning for an early conference call and seamlessly logs into the work network, wirelessly, to get information for the meeting. She takes the call using her converged voice over IP (VoIP) cell phone/PDA. The network automatically recognizes the user's identity and device to allow access and establish the quality of service needed for a voice call. She used her phone's presence feature to determine if a co-worker is available to chat, eliminating the need to play the annoying game of phone tag.

After leaving her house in the morning, the user's first stop is at a supplier's work site. She is able to access the supplier's adaptive network with agreed access and rights and quickly gain access to her applications and data from her organization's network, all while roaming wirelessly on the supplier's campus. Her VoIP phone is recognized, and she can make calls economically using her organization's VoIP system.

The next stop is for coffee, where once again she can get easy and secure wireless access to all her organization's resources. When she arrives at her office it's the same thing: The network recognizes the user and her devices instantly, so she wastes no time gaining access. At the same time, the intelligence of the network, recognizing that she was previously outside of the building, performs some additional scans on her devices to make sure she hasn't picked up any malware during her morning stops. The adaptive network takes every opportunity to check the integrity of the devices connecting to it, to ensure that its trusted infrastructure remains intact.

New applications promised by the organization are available transparently to the user (and enabled automatically by the adaptive network), to enhance her efficiency.

As she connects to the network one day, she is notified that a new business policy is available that requires training. She is presented with choices: to watch a video of the training now, to schedule a time for a streaming video session or to download (in the background) the material for review at a later time. Another day, she gains access to a new collaborative application that enables her to work interactively on projects in real time with co-workers located all across the world.

No matter where she accesses her personal data files, she has no fear that her private information will be compromised or that her ability to find and use them will be hindered by onerous access procedures. Wireless access is secure and she enjoys a unified wired and wireless experience.

At the end of the work day the user drives home and, after a pleasant dinner and evening with her family, she checks in briefly for messages, then participates in a video conference with colleagues attending a conference in another part of the world.

The colleagues provide some important information that she will be able to leverage when she meets with an important customer the next day.

Result: The adaptive network can be trusted to support the user and the network managers every step of the way, making it easier for everyone in the organization to succeed.

Scenario #2: From an IT manager's perspective:

The IT manager is confident that he is installing a trusted network infrastructure that is easily deployable, manageable and adaptable. All parts of the network infrastructure – including switches, routers, wireless access points and management solutions – are authenticated before being authorized to use the network. Each element possesses the appropriate levels of performance and intelligence to meet current conditions while adapting flawlessly to whatever future needs and applications arise. The adaptive network can easily evolve and grow with the organization.

The adaptive network also provides the IT manager with unified wired and wireless management, as well as unified management of multiple media types (e.g., voice, data, video), which greatly simplifies network management. In fact, an adaptive network makes it nearly as simple for the IT staff to manage the network as it is for users to use the network.

A clear, simple interface enables the IT manager to deploy applications and administer their usage rules, as well as control user rights and access at the individual level and across the organization, for groups and individuals. In addition, he can manage remote sites as seamlessly as local sites, using multi-vendor topology discovery to help simplify network management.

The IT manager can control network access and gain full visibility over application-layer performance to cover peak usage needs. Adherence to compliance requirements is simplified because the network logs activities automatically and documents compliance nearly effortlessly.

And because the network is based on open industry standards, the IT manager can easily integrate any chosen products – from a variety of network and solutions partners – and be assured that they will interoperate.

With the adaptive network's trusted network infrastructure, security is pervasive, automatically implemented and an inherent characteristic of the network. The security capabilities extend to secure and agreed interactions with partners and suppliers.

The CFO is preparing a compliance report, and the IT manager easily finds and forwards the access information needed to complete the report.

Result: The adaptive network enables optimal performance, availability, resiliency and intelligence to be built into products across the infrastructure, to support the organization's processes and applications as well as handle growth and expansion.

ProCurve is delivering on its adaptive networks vision.

The previous scenarios mix present and future capabilities. What is ProCurve doing to make these scenarios a reality?

ProCurve's adaptive networks vision arises as a natural outgrowth of the company's legacy of excellence in a number of crucial areas – which together enable ProCurve to deliver the fortified security, increased productivity and reduced complexity promised by adaptive networks.

For example:

- *Interoperability through standards leadership:* ProCurve has a long history of both defining and driving adoption of industry standards in networking, with particular strength in network security standards. The focus is on reduced complexity to allow the easy integration of varying technologies and products. As a result, ProCurve adaptive networks provide organizations with tremendous multi-vendor interoperability and unprecedented choice and flexibility in what solutions they deploy, as well as how, when and where those solutions are deployed.
- ProCurve believes that innovation through industry standards is the way that technological innovation is made practical. Leadership in open industry standards also means that ProCurve's customers are able to scale their ProCurve adaptive networks easily and affordably as the organization grows and in response to market and technology changes. They have confidence that they can choose from a variety of applications and vendors to get the solution that is right for their organization.
- ProCurve's approach contrasts vividly with vendors who insist that customers use their proprietary, end-to-end solutions – thus locking customers into a single vendor's whims. ProCurve's standards-based approach preserves flexibility while enabling easy deployment of multi-vendor equipment. In short, ProCurve works well with others, without restricting your freedom of movement.
- ProCurve's sophisticated management software makes this kind of network easy to manage, which reduces complexity while also supporting greater productivity and improved security throughout the organization. At the same time, ProCurve has built sufficient headroom into its network so that intelligence can be added at the pace needed by individual organizations.
- *Fortifying Security:* ProCurve's ProActive Defense strategy represents a new approach to network security. ProActive Defense – a comprehensive security strategy for automating protection, detection and response in a network, within a trusted network infrastructure – encompasses both wired and wireless networks and is a fundamental characteristic of an adaptive network.
- ProActive Defense is the first network security approach to simultaneously combine security offense and defense for IT assets. The ProActive (offense) side provides access control for network usage, while the Defense side is the embedded threat management within the trusted network infrastructure. This combination of offense, defense and trusted network infrastructure lets network users adapt their security solutions to meet both current challenges and future, unknown threat levels.

- *Value:* To ProCurve, value has always meant making advanced technology affordable and easy to use, now and in the future. Adaptive networks provide superior value when compared with static networks.
- For example, ProCurve adaptive networks deliver high-performance, no-compromise functionality at affordable prices, as well as greater operational efficiency with reduced operation costs, better network asset utilization, more streamlined network management and increased productivity among users of the network.
- As a company, ProCurve also delivers unprecedented value through its industry-leading warranty (the only true lifetime warranty in the networking industry) and with consistent, free software updates that help extend product and solution life. In these and other ways, the ProCurve organization reflects many of the same adaptive characteristics as its adaptive network infrastructure.
- *Innovation:* ProCurve is known for taking very complex problems and creating simple solutions by using advanced technology and engineering expertise. ProCurve expands the notion of innovation to include not just technological innovation, but also innovation in areas such as reducing complexity and improving operational efficiency in the network.
- The adaptive networks vision is another example of ProCurve innovation: a holistic, highly responsive foundation that adapts to the changing requirements of users, applications and organizations – with the goal of boosting competitiveness by enhancing security, increasing productivity and reducing complexity.
- ProCurve innovates at the technical level, as well; examples include the industry’s first integrated wired and wireless network management solution; the components that implement the ProActive Defense strategy; and the ProVision™ ASIC, the fourth-generation ProCurve-designed network chipset.
- The highly integrated ProVision ASIC chips have built-in wirespeed intelligence as well as programmable logic that future-proofs your network. It is through the ProVision chips that ProCurve is able to build headroom into the network, so you can be sure that your network has the ability to grow organically to remain a strategic asset in the future. The ProCurve Intelligent Edge Switch 5400 and 3500 series are built on the ProVision ASIC.
- *HP legacy of quality, reliability and ease of use:* It’s important to remember the HP heritage of ProCurve (whose full name, after all, is ProCurve Networking by HP). The HP legacy shows up in ProCurve’s industry-leading warranty, renowned service and support, rigorous quality testing and strong reputation for making sophisticated technology readily accessible. This fundamental nature of quality, reliability and ease of use ensures a highly available network architecture, with best-in-class reliability plus the ease of use that leads to self-reliance – all backed by a company that’s there to help when needed.
- ProCurve has built on this HP legacy to amass considerable experience in the networking industry. ProCurve has been in this business for a long time – more than 25 years – and knows what it is doing.

ProCurve Adaptive EDGE Architecture™

ProCurve's adaptive networks vision did not emerge suddenly or out of the blue – or without a solid underpinning for “how” it can implement this vision. In fact, ProCurve's adaptive networks vision is one of continuity rather than disruption.

This network vision is based on the foundational network infrastructure of the ProCurve Adaptive EDGE Architecture™ (AEA). Publicly introduced in 2003, the AEA has revolutionized the networking industry – moving quickly from a radically new view of the network infrastructure to the accepted model, adopted by the major networking vendors and embraced by thousands of customers worldwide. ProCurve was the first to outline a comprehensive network and a single architecture approach, moving from core-centric networks to intelligence at the edge – thereby enabling future application deployment without sacrificing ease of use, cost of ownership or existing capabilities.

The AEA provides “control to the edge” with “command from the center” by locating intelligence – the ability for the network to respond and act – at the network edge, where users and resources connect with the network. The AEA enables network administrators to retain control over the policies and rules governing the network's intelligence, and it is key to the network's ability to adapt to meet an organization's changing business goals and growing competitive pressures.

Summary

In a world of frenetic change, organizations must evolve rapidly to become and remain competitive. Crucial to this evolution is the ability to harness networks to be nimble and responsive to change – and to take full advantage of the competitive opportunities presented by change to become even more efficient and even more effective.

It is in an organization's best interests to question the status quo and continually look at alternatives to "business as usual." This is especially true with networks, which are crucial to organizations' ability to communicate, connect and compete. The choice of network infrastructure – the foundation upon which your IT environment operates – becomes increasingly important as the pace of change increases and competitive pressures mount.

Successful organizations will be those that can respond to change with the most agility and grace. They will have an adaptive network that is a long-term strategic asset and that they can harness to do things not even imagined in the past.

ProCurve Networking by HP has a bold vision for adaptive networks: open, cohesive, highly available networks that automatically fortify security, increase productivity and reduce complexity by being adaptive to users, to applications and to organizations' goals.

By enabling organizations to understand, anticipate and respond optimally to change – and therefore compete more effectively – adaptive networks become crucial strategic assets helping you survive and thrive.

To learn more about how ProCurve's adaptive networks vision can help you turn your organization's network into a strategic asset, watch the video of John McHugh, Vice President and General Manager of ProCurve Networking by HP.

For more information, visit the ProCurve Networking Web site at www.hp.com/eur/procurve

For more information

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