

Zero Trust - Performance and Connectivity (SD-WAN)



The sudden shift to remote work earlier this year was disruptive for a lot of organizations. Keeping workers connected while ensuring security and compliance can be a challenge, particularly if workers use outside apps or programs that have not been properly vetted and are not sheltered under your current security umbrella.

What is SD-WAN?

SD-WANs ([Software-Defined Wide Area Networks](#)) are a great way to ensure all network traffic and data remains secure even when workers are accessing resources from home. SD-WAN is already commonly used by many [banks](#), [retail companies](#), and similar organizations to connect individual stores and branches to the company's headquarters.

As organizations began to pivot to remote work, many have turned to SD-WAN to support workers while maintaining security and compliance.

The Benefits of SD-WAN

SD-WANs are great because they allow organizations to optimize the cost of relying on various network technologies and easily connect remote offices, branches, or stores while helping ensure security and compliance.

Early SD-WAN deployments lacked security features that have become standard today. Current security features include:

- Native and integrated third party NGFW (Next-Generation Firewall) options
- IDS (Intrusion Detection Systems) or IPS (Intrusion Prevention Systems)
- Web filtering
- Malware detection

How SD-WAN Supports Work from Home Initiatives

SD-WAN configurations support work from home initiatives in a variety of ways, making it easy for workers to complete their tasks and access the resources they need without compromising security or compliance.

SD-WAN configurations allow your organization to:

- **Segregate your network.** SD-WAN configurations allow you to add barriers so you can limit the reach of newly introduced segments, such as home users. This helps ensure that all new segments can be appropriately vetted by your security personnel before they are allowed broader access to the network and the sensitive data stored on it.
- **Eliminate complexity.** SD-WAN configurations allow you to simplify your network by limiting the home user case to a manageable scope. This simplification reduces the number of attack surfaces cybercriminals can exploit and ensures that all home users, branches, or stores are afforded equal protection. An SD-WAN also includes built-in end-to-end encryption and allows you to specify how authentication and access policies are applied and automated across your entire network.
- **Control your endpoints.** SD-WAN configurations allow you to monitor network connections and eliminate local device access should you need to. This ensures that unauthorized devices are kept off your network and makes offboarding easier in the event that a remote worker leaves the organization.
- **Monitor endpoint activity.** All endpoints on the network are under constant surveillance, and your SD-WAN can be configured to send out an alert if an endpoint's behavior deviates from the norm. This is particularly useful from a security perspective if a remote worker's device is stolen (since access can be immediately cut off) or if a user's credentials are being used by cybercriminals to gain unauthorized access to your network.

Business Continuity is Supported by SD-WAN Solutions

The current healthcare crisis has brought the issue of business continuity to the foreground as many companies struggled to continue to offer uninterrupted services even as they suddenly transitioned to remote work. Financial institutions, in particular, need to be cognizant of business continuity as they can face steep fines for extended branch outages. SD-WAN allows businesses to leverage broadband and LTE connections, supplementing, or even replacing more expensive MPLS (Multiprotocol Label Switching) connectivity in some use cases.

Even if your organization is located in an area where workers can safely work on-site, investing in a solid SD-WAN solution now will make it easier should employees need to shift to remote work again or continue to work from home even once the current health crisis has passed.

Logging & Performance Monitoring

SD-WAN can also be leveraged to log data for security and compliance purposes and help you monitor your network's performance.

SD-WAN Offers All-in-One Solutions

One of the biggest security threats many networks are exposed by their users come from unauthorized applications. When users aren't given established processes for performing tasks, they tend to default to ad hoc solutions, which can undermine your security posture.

When users are able to easily access all of the applications they need, and those applications perform well and meet user demand, users are much less likely to turn to personal options to perform tasks. However, if the tools provided by IT pose a barrier to productivity, users are much more likely to use other solutions to complete tasks.

One common example of this is data; Users may email sensitive files to themselves or copy information to consumer data services (such as Google Drive or Dropbox) because they think it will improve efficiency or allow them to complete their work faster, even if that isn't true. **SD-WAN allows users to securely share files and access the resources they need promptly, discouraging users from using external applications or email sensitive files to themselves.**

Why Should My Organization Switch to SD-WAN?

SD-WANs allow you to monitor, prioritize, and control network traffic while securely connecting far-flung users to network resources, apps, and data, including those that reside on the cloud. This centralization not only decreases bandwidth requirements, but it also does so while improving quality of service, visibility, and security across your entire network.

Implementing an SD-WAN solution is less disruptive than you may think and can save your organization both time and money. Some industry estimates have found that SD-WAN solutions cost as much as 90% less than similar traditional MPLS-driven infrastructures.

The centralization and simplicity of SD-WAN management consoles also reduce the amount of time IT staff spend managing your WAN, freeing them up for other tasks.

SD-WAN Solutions from Citrix & Structured to Consider

[Structured](#), in partnership with [Citrix](#), offers cutting edge SD-WAN solutions that empower organizations to take a comprehensive security approach that supports zero trust, without the need to compromise on performance. As more work than ever relies on the cloud, this new attack surface may be left vulnerable without a consolidated SD-WAN solution that includes strong security along the WAN Edge.

Why Choose Citrix?

SD-WAN solutions from Citrix and Structured offer a wide variety of benefits, including the ability to:

- **Protect users and apps via cloud-delivered security.** You need to be able to protect your users and apps against threats that can breach your internet or cloud connections. That's why Citrix SD-WAN offers a unified cloud-delivered security and network service called [Citrix Secure Internet Access](#), which can be integrated into your SD-WAN solution. Citrix Secure Internet Access allows you to provide direct internet access (DIA) with protection beyond your headquarters, stores, or branches to safeguard remote or mobile users.
- **Simplify your network by including integrated WAN Edge security.** Increased organizational and IT complexity can increase your security risk, and while a local breakout can simplify application access across your branches or to remote workers, it can also open your network to threats by leaving it exposed to the internet. You need a comprehensive, multi-layered security strategy that doesn't require adding additional infrastructure to every branch or home office. That's why Citrix SD-WAN includes a built-in stateful firewall, which allows you to centrally define application-centric policies that limit or reject traffic by applications and by zones. You can also add a fully-integrated security stack that includes web filtering, IDS/IPS, and malware protection.
- **Ensure security compliance.** The Citrix SD-WAN branch platform with an integrated SD-WAN edge security stack includes IPS functionality, which periodically scans your data for threats.

At Structured, we know that our clients are relying on us to provide high-quality solutions as well as world-class customer service, ongoing support, and troubleshooting assistance. That's why we only partner with companies like Citrix that share our customer-focused approach to business.

For more information about SD-WAN or to start laying the groundwork for your own SD-WAN solution, please [contact our team today](#).

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