NETGEAR Switches

Review From A Customer

NETGEAR Switches

From IT Central Station, the leading review site for enterprise technology solutions.

Review by a Real User

Verified by IT Central Station

Independent Consultant at a tech company with 1-10 employees

WHAT IS OUR PRIMARY USE CASE?

The primary use case is generally small office, and multiple users with the same customer.

HOW HAS IT HELPED MY ORGANIZATION?

For us, the Insight platform is a consistent experience from one office to the next. A user can connect to one access point in one office and then automatically connect to another access point in the office, without having to do any WiFi connections or passwords. So the user experience is seamless. And that also saves time. It's only a few minutes per user for each office we go to, but it soon adds up and reduces frustration.

WHAT IS MOST VALUABLE?

The most valuable feature is the Insight application itself, with its ease of management. Also, the remote management tools are fantastic. The combination of the webpage as well as the app makes life so much easier. I don't need to go and visit sites to do upgrades or any sorts of changes. The firmware can all be deployed remotely. I can see the traffic on each of the switch ports remotely as well, so I can see if we've got problems, down to an individual port. It's very granular. It's easy to use and deploy. It's just a simple case of assigning a switch to one of the already-configured network offices. Then, as soon as the device pairs up, it downloads the configuration and it's good to go. It's very simple. The management tools are very straightforward. They're well laid out in terms of the concepts, and configuration and adding new devices are very easy. It's very straightforward.

WHAT NEEDS IMPROVEMENT?

My one issue with it is that not all the features of the switch can currently be managed via the portal. For some of the more advanced features, you still have to configure the switch. We tend not to use those features, so it's not a problem. It's coming along. Quite regularly, the platform is being updated so those features are definitely coming. Every month or two, when I log in, there are new features available online. So we can start to implement the features that, historically, we'd have to go to site to implement. They're not features that are critical to our use. It's the wireless access-point aspect and some of the routing capabilities on the wireless access point that I'm referring to. For example, the peer-to-peer bridging isn't available. You have to configure the access points directly for that.

FOR HOW LONG HAVE I USED THE SOLUTION?

One to three years

WHAT DO I THINK ABOUT THE STABILITY OF THE SOLUTION?

The stability is very good. We've only had one problem and that turned out not to be the switch. It was another device. But it highlighted where the problem was, so it was very good.

WHAT DO I THINK ABOUT THE SCALABILITY OF THE SOLUTION?

They do come in different sizes: small, medium, and large. From our perspective, the scalability is great. It suits all our needs. At most, I think we have three of the 24-port switches in one location. The scalability is very good. That would be for 25 people, maximum. Everybody has two devices so there would be 50 or 60 on it, in total, once we add in tablets and phones.

HOW ARE CUSTOMER SERVICE AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT?

I've never needed to contact tech support. The switches come with a quite extensive warranty of three or five years, and 90 days worth of free initial support. But it is that straightforward to set up and configure that we've never needed to contact them.

WHICH SOLUTION DID I USE PREVIOUSLY AND WHY DID I SWITCH?

We used existing, legacy NETGEAR devices in the past. We were just keeping up to date and seeing the changes in the products they were bringing, and that's how we came across Insight.

HOW WAS THE INITIAL SETUP?

At the office, on the Insight platform, the individual switch setup is very straightforward. You just scan the barcode and you plug it in. That said, setting up in an office is very straightforward as well because it's all web or app-driven. For an individual device, it probably takes longer to put it in the rack and screw it in. To actually install it, have it configured and running, it's less than 30 minutes. In terms of an implementation strategy, each office is different sized and has different capabilities and different requirements. So there isn't a generic strategy in that sense. But configuration is all centrally managed. The individual switches are sized based on the office. A smaller office might have two or three of the smaller Ethernet switches, just for redundancy. A very small office might just have a single switch. But all that configuration is done centrally so the actual implementation strategy is just: Turn up on site and plug it in. You don't need to be an IT expert to deploy and support a network. It is that straightforward. It requires no staff for deployment. Because it's all centrally configured, you don't need to have any staff to deploy it. You just need to be able to plug in the cable.

WHAT WAS OUR ROI?

The fact they continue to work and can be managed remotely is all about cost savings. We don't incur travel costs to update switches. None of the switches have been faulty. We've carried out four or five firmware updates this year, remotely. That has probably reduced travel by 300 or 400 miles. That saves travel costs and travel time.

WHAT'S MY EXPERIENCE WITH PRICING, SETUP COST, AND LICENSING?

They're good value. They're good entry-level switches. I know Cisco generally has a lot more capability. But, for an organization this size, we don't need that. So they're good value for the cost and what we need. The cost of the hardware and additional services is low compared to others. Anything that's cheaper, for the same output, is a good thing for our business.

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WHAT OTHER ADVICE DO I HAVE?

Go for it They're very straightforward to purchase and setup time is very minimal, especially if you've got a lot of small, remote offices, because you get the central management. The big feature for us that centralized management and the remote capabilities. The apps for the phones are good. I have an Android phone, and it's also available on iOS. You can remotely manage and monitor even without having to sit at a desk. That is very useful. The Insight platform itself - for VPN, firewalls, and storage devices - is a good, centralized platform for managing all of that. Although we've only really talked about the switching, it has other features as well, which make it sensible for us as a centralized management platform. It's appropriate for medium to large businesses. I haven't really had to use the remote troubleshooting much. The one time I did, it was very detailed regarding the point where the problem was and we could identify the problem. It ended up being on a non-switch device so we had to have an engineer go to the site to fix it. But it was very quick to identify exactly where that problem was, down to an individual port and the device connected into that port. I have been troubleshooting the network as opposed to the devices and, in my experience, it's very good. In terms of maintenance, it's all done remotely so we've needed only one staff member, with very little overhead. At one of the offices, for example, they turn everything off at night. We get an alert saying the network is down, but when they turn it back on in the morning, we get an alert saying the network is back up. There's very little management on top of that. The businesses where we deploy them have plants and office locations. As they sign up and grow, we'll definitely deploy more.

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