

# THOUGHT LEADERSHIP SERIES

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## THE BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO SD-WAN

### The beginner's guide to SD-WAN, in partnership with Node4.

Is SD-WAN the way forward for your networking and digital transformation journey? Or is it another technology to add to the long list of buzz words, which promises more than it can actually deliver when applied to your business?

Before you can answer these questions, you need to do your research, which for many of us means starting with the basics, understanding what SD-WAN is and what it offers. This guide breaks down everything you need to know about SD-WAN before you start asking the more complex questions about how it would work within your business....

**In this guide, we will cover the following :**

- 1. What is SD-WAN?**
- 2. What are the benefits?**
- 3. Is SD-WAN secure?**
- 4. Should your WAN be defined by software?**



In partnership with:



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## 1 WHAT IS SD-WAN?

SD-WAN is a software-defined approach to managing wide area networks. You use software on centralised consoles to control network connections, application flows, policies, security mechanisms and general administration.

## 2 WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

There are various benefits, which can be broadly broken down into:

### Improved Performance

SD-WAN detects applications and prioritises traffic flow automatically, according to your needs, so that everybody has a better experience, whether they're on an HD video call with the team or simply accessing files across your network.

You can send business data across primary and secondary connections, and in the event of line failure, 'application intelligence' will ensure that key applications have priority on the remaining line.

### More Visibility and Control

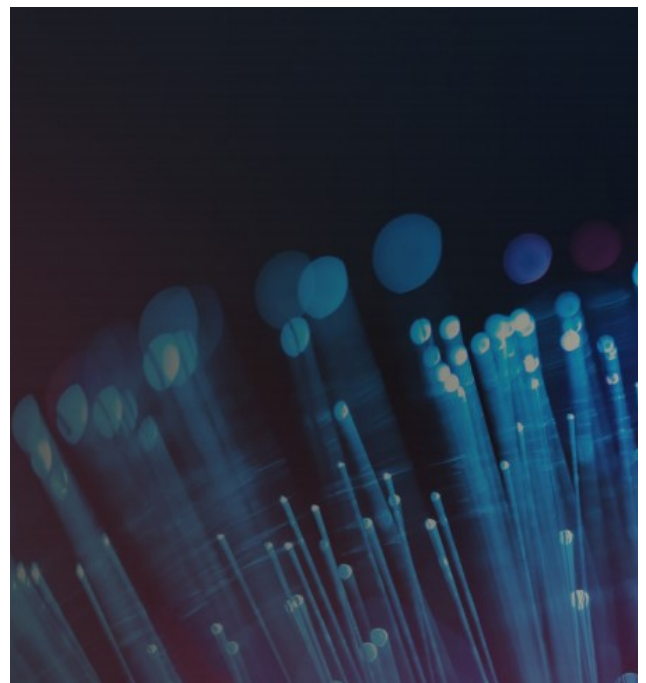
Centralised management allows you to manage a single set of security policies and device health standards in one location for all devices. This standardization means every device is kept up to date, the configuration is backed up and has an identical security policy.

On your centralised console, you'll have analytics and reporting features which allow you to see how your network is supporting business productivity. This can help you to plan for new applications, technology deployments, and right-sizing the connectivity for your next location.

### Easy to Set Up

As SD-WAN works with 4G and 5G connectivity, you can get it set up in your new location straight away, while the fixed line connectivity is being installed.

Also, many technology providers offer Zero Touch Provisioning for SD-WAN, which speeds up new site deployments and replacements. Your provider arranges for the network appliances to be shipped directly from the vendor to you, and once connected, pushes out configurations remotely.



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## 3 IS SD-WAN SECURE?

It depends on the SD-WAN solution you choose. SD-WAN seems inherently less secure because you're moving traffic off your structured, private MPLS on to direct internet, where it will be more exposed to malware and hackers. Many SD-WAN solutions on the market just don't have the comprehensive security features to reduce these risks. There are however Secure SD-WAN solutions out there, which are designed with comprehensive security and data protection in mind. Node4's Secure SD-WAN solution, for example, includes crucial security features:

### **Fortigate Next Generation Firewalls:**

At every location, which protects all users from internal and external threats. You can also control access to websites using a built-in web-filtering solution.

### **Intrusion Prevention and Anti-Malware:**

At every location to actively stop the spread of malicious code throughout your organisation.

### **FortiAnalyzer Network Analytics and Reporting:**

Provides an overview of your secure network, as well as tools to analyse, discover and mitigate threats.

### **Centralised Management:**

Allows a single set of security policies and device health standards to be managed in one location for all devices.

### **Bring Your Own Network:**

Means you can bring unmanaged network locations, such as co-working spaces and home offices, under the same security and application policies as your standard locations. In addition, traffic from these locations is encrypted for maximum security.

## 4 SHOULD YOUR WAN BE DEFINED BY SOFTWARE?

So you've got to grips with SD-WAN as a technology, but is it right for your business and if so, how should you deploy it?

Interested to find out more?...

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