

Cisco Live! 2010 News & Updates & Summary

The week of Cisco Live! 2010 in Las Vegas came to an end. It started on Sunday and up until Thursday, thousands (apparently more than 15,000) of network engineers gathered in one place to participate in the largest of Cisco's social and learning events. Of course, we were there and here is just brief summary of the things future will bring. There were two things that were on everyone's mind before "Networkers" started. Will there be a new CCIE track announced (CCIE Data Center) and the overdue blueprint change for CCIE Service Provider. We waited in anticipation for both of these, alas? nothing came out from Cisco. But, there were a lot of technical sessions, marketing presentations and very open and frank conversations with Cisco people that helped us understand what future holds. Without further ado, here we go.

CCIE Routing and Switching] Blueprint is currently in version 4.0 and it is likely to remain like that for at least the next six months. However, that doesn't mean there are not going to be changes and tweaks. Just to quote one of the people from the program who told me "we are bringing routing to routing and switching?". What that means is that there is going to be more emphasis on the core subjects, like IGP and BGP, as well as interaction (redistribution) between protocols. Another thing that is coming is more in-depth and more relevant troubleshooting tickets. As you will see with some of the other tracks, troubleshooting is becoming a major component of the CCIE exam and students going for the exam must absolutely be ready for it! What does more distant future for R&S hold? Since troubleshooting is 100% in virtual environment, we believe it's only a matter of time (perhaps within next 2-3 years) that R&S lab will be 100% virtualized, or at least hybrid of virtual and real equipment, allowing Cisco to create more modular and dynamic lab content. The team of engineers within Cisco responsible for CCIE R&S is very capable and eager to keep this track as the most important and relevant IT certification and they are doing a pretty good job at it! Summary:

- No pending blueprint update.
- More in-depth troubleshooting
- More focus on "core routing topics"
- More virtualization in the distant future

IPExpert's Summary:

- Changes mentioned are very well covered by our CCIE R&S Blended Learning Solution
- Minor content update may be forthcoming to include more troubleshooting exercises

CCIE Voice] There were no changes to the blueprint announced (thankfully!). All software versions will remain at 7.0 and are likely to remain at this release for a couple of years. It is worth pointing out that Cisco are well aware of the fact that there are several "bugs/undocumented features" that can be expected with any ".0" release. However candidates are expected to provide workarounds where applicable. As most of you know, the Core Knowledge questions were removed some time in May 2010 and were replaced with troubleshooting tasks. The speaker repeatedly brought attention to the types of troubleshooting tasks candidates can expect. We have tried to summarize some of the most important points raised below.

- There is no dedicated troubleshooting section for the time being- troubleshooting is embedded into the configuration tasks of the exam. This is subject to change- in other words they may look at providing a dedicated troubleshooting section at some point in the future.
- Troubleshooting tasks account for approximately 15% of the points on the CCIE Voice Lab exam.
- Candidates will have to troubleshoot existing configuration which has built-in errors. More details of example errors are given below.
- Infrastructure tasks will for the most part be complete and will not be the responsibility of the candidate. However configuration might not be 100% correct!
- Going forward phones will be pre-configured into the UCM database. It was mentioned that SIP endpoints have not been tested thus far but candidates should expect SIP endpoints in the lab in the very near future. Interestingly it is the intention to have phones pre-registered with the correct firmware in advance- that means candidates will not be responsible for changing the firmware of the phone. This will come as a relief to many of you since this process is time-consuming.
- Troubleshooting tasks could potentially include in depth knowledge of the protocols used for establishing call setup. Detailed knowledge of the call flow involved in protocols such as SIP/MGCP/H323/SCCP/Q931/etc will be required in order to explain why certain calls to the "provider" are failing. It was mentioned that the candidate may not even have to fix the problem and instead create a text file with the relevant traces/debugs and a suitable explanation. A process not too dissimilar when you create a TAC case.
- Cisco will continuously modify the content of the lab and this includes changing the number of UCM and UCME sites. You can expect 3 UCM sites, 3 UCME sites or anything in between!
- Gatekeeper/CUBE/SIP Trunk tasks will be added to the lab at some point in the near future (if not already!). The PSTN provider in the lab may not necessarily be a T1/E1 connection but rather a H323 or SIP ITSP.
- Security related tasks (authentication and encryption of signaling and media) are not going to be tested since these tasks are too difficult to maintain and implement. However the CCIE Voice Written test which will be updated later this year will cover those topics.
- The Voice CCIE pass rate is currently between 20% and 25% but expect that figure to drop as the impending lab updates will no doubt increase the difficulty of the test.

Overall we were very pleased with the outcome of the discussion- no major updates for a couple of years will come as a huge relief to all training vendors. The IPExpert BLS and bootcamps have for more than a year now been covering SIP Phones, CUBE, multiple UCME sites and detailed knowledge of the protocols involved in call set up. The biggest

takeaway from the session was undoubtedly troubleshooting is going to be the singular most important skill candidates will need to pass the lab ? if you are going to pass the CCIE Voice going forward you need to focus on the why and not only the how as has been the case in the past. **CCIE Security** This seems to be the least exciting track as far as news go. The content is stable, there are no immediate pending blueprint changes and content updates. IPexpert's Summary: - No pending product updates, based on changes.

CCIE Service Provider] Let me get this out of the way, first. There was no new Service Provider blueprint announced. However, it is ready and will be announced very, very shortly. Blueprint and content are ready, what is pending are hardware upgrades for lab locations. We can expect it to happen at any moment. So, what are the forthcoming changes, then? IOS XR is making the appearance. It is not a rumor, it is not a speculation, it is going to be there. The major focus area is on IP and MPLS, still, but there will be also a focus on service provider approach to IPv6 and interaction between IOS and IOS XR. We can expect any number of routers running IOS and IOS XR in the new lab, where there will be a mix of IOS and IOS XR devices in the ?core? and the same at the edges. CE routers will remain strictly IOS. Also, there will be troubleshooting on the exam, but it is still not 100% certain whether that includes a dedicated troubleshooting section, or preconfigured faults in the configuration section. For this, we need to wait the official announcement. Everyone afraid of pending changes, should aim to proceed with their lab preparations. If you are not concerned (and really, there is no need to be), keep to your schedule, as planned. Summary: - Blueprint change is imminent. - IOS XR and IOS will be tested. - IPv6 will be tested. - Troubleshooting will be a component. IPexpert's

Summary: - We are, like everyone else, waiting for blueprint update. **CCIE Service Provider Operations**] This track was a mystery for me before going to Cisco Live! What is the idea behind it? Well, after talking to relevant people at Cisco, I actually like this track and I'm likely to go for it in the future. So, let's see? CCIE SP Ops is the track that focuses strictly on NOC personell. Cisco sees this as one the fastest growing CCIE tracks in the future, in fact. There is heavy focus on troubleshooting and processes in this exam. In fact, two sections of the lab reflect this. The lab will be split in two parts. The first part is dedicated troubleshooting section, which will include complex problems involving both IOS and IOS XR devices. The second section is scenario-based test, focusing on processes (ITIL) and high-level problem troubleshooting and escalation. Since this exam is still not available to general public, it remains to be seen what will happen here. Summary: - Heavy focus on troubleshooting complex IOS and IOS XR

issues. - Heavy focus on processes and process frameworks (ITIL). IPexpert's Summary: - At this point, we do not have immediate plans to provide training for this track. **CCIE Wireless**] Potentially, one of the most interesting tracks in the future. Fast growing market and ever evolving technology. Cisco understands this and CCIE Wireless is in good hands within Cisco in that respect. So, what's going on with the exam? First of all, there will be some changes in the next couple of months, but no immediate blueprint change ? which will happen within 9-12 months, though. The biggest change that is going to happen soon is that Cisco is ?quietly? going to remove Location appliance from the exam. The reason for that is that it's end-of-life and Cisco wants to replace it with something more relevant. The more relevant thing is Mobilite Services Engine. However, that will require major software changes on the rest of the equipment in the lab and requires blueprint change, which they are not ready for at this moment. One thing was very much stressed out during the technical session on CCIE Wireless ? candidates must understand routing and switching in order to complete the lab successfully! It's not as deep as in R&S track, but it is definitely covered on the exam. Students must know how to configure basic spanning-tree, IGP routing and redistribution to be successful. According to Cisco, this is one of the biggest hurdles candidates experience in the exam. Summary: - No pending blueprint change. - Minor content

upgrade ? Location appliance will be removed. - Basic switching, unicast and multicast routing configuration. IPexpert's Summary: - Stay tuned for pending product announcements for this track. We will be updating our website this month to reflect the following products: - CCIE Wireless racks - Self-study Workbooks (Volume 1 and 2) with Detailed Solution Guides - A Video on Demand Boot Camp - A Live 5-Day Instructor Led Class **CCIE Storage**] We all expected to see CCIE Data

Center announced this year. However, it was not, nor is it planned for immediate future. That being said, Cisco engineers involved in the program informally refer to the Storage track as the CCIE Data Center. Also, they are investigating the future possibility of creating more comprehensive Data Center CCIE, but it's in the early planning stages as of right now. However, there are important bullet points that we should mention here for the people who are preparing for this track. First of all, focus of the exam is only on Cisco equipment and devices. Carefully examine the list of devices mentioned in the blueprint and focus the studes on this equipment. The world of data centers is fast evolving, which makes it very difficult to create a ?stable blueprint? and CCIE program managers are waiting for the product range and technology to stabilise, before they introduce major changes. There are probably going to be blueprint updates in the next 6-12 months, but no major changes will happen overnight. Summary: - No pending blueprint update. - Fast-changing and evolving technology that will only grow in the future. - Strict focus on Cisco equipment in the exam. IPexpert's Summary: - Stay tuned?Although we currently have several CCIE Storage Racks and Tyson Scott (IPexpert's x3 CCIE is working on this track, currently) we're going to wait until the Data Center is announced

before we pursue any products in this space. **Overall Summary]** It has been a great week for IPexpert and everyone who attended Cisco Live! We met with great people, our former, current and future students. We enjoyed the excellence of Cisco's technical presentations, immersed ourselves in deep technical discussion with our peers and had the great opportunity to socialize with like-minded network engineers, both from Cisco and elsewhere. See you all in classes and next year at Cisco Live! 2011 in the CCIE lounge ? where you all need to be with fellow CCIEs! Regards ? The IPexpert team Source From:
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