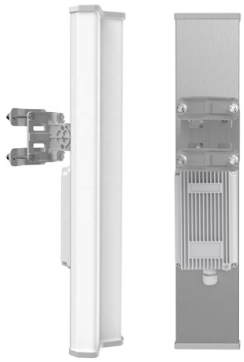
Switches for Aggregation and Access Switches



Overview

While access switches provide end-device connectivity, distribution switches aggregate traffic and enforce policies, and core switches form the high-speed backbone.

Key Takeaways

Access switches connect end devices to the network, while aggregation switches consolidate traffic from multiple access switches and forward it to the core layer.

Access Switches

Access switches operate at the edge of a network and are responsible for connecting end-user devices such as PCs, printers, IP phones, and wireless access points to the network. Key characteristics include: High port density to support multiple devices directly. Power over Ethernet (PoE) support for devices like IP phones and cameras.

Layer 2 functionality, with some basic Layer 3 features in advanced models. Security features such as port security and access control lists (ACLs).

VLA

N support for segmenting network traffic. Typically cost-effective and optimized for providing reliable network access at the edge. Access switches are the first point of contact for devices in a network and ensure that traffic from end devices is efficiently transmitted to higher layers.

© 2026 CGWEB NETWORK INFRASTRUCTURE - All rights reserved

Aggregation Switches

Aggregation switches, also known as distribution switches, sit between access switches and core switches in a hierarchical network. Their main role is to aggregate traffic from multiple access switches and forward it to the core layer. Key features include: Layer 2 and Layer 3 capabilities, supporting routing between VLANs and subnets.

Link aggregation using protocols like LACP to combine multiple physical links into a single logical connection, enhancing bandwidth and redundancy. Quality of Service (QoS) to prioritize critical traffic such as voice or video. Policy enforcement including ACLs and traffic filtering for security and performance.

High throughput and reliability, suitable for enterprise backbones, data centers, and large campus networks. Aggregation switches reduce the load on core switches by consolidating traffic and providing a scalable, high-performance network infrastructure. Key DifferencesFeatureAccess SwitchAggregation SwitchNetwork LayerPrimarily Layer 2Layer 2 and Layer 3RoleConnects end devicesAggregates traffic from access switchesPort DensityHigh for end devicesMedium to high for multiple access switchesPoE SupportCommonLess common, optionalTraffic ManagementBasic VLANs, port securityVLAN routing, QoS, ACLs, link aggregationPlacementEdge of networkBetween access and core layersNetwork Hierarchy ContextIn a three-tier network architecture, access switches form the edge layer, aggregation switches form the distribution layer, and core switches form the backbone.

This layered design: Improves scalability by allowing multiple access switches to connect through aggregation switches. Enhances performance by reducing bottlenecks at the core. Supports redundancy and high availability through link aggregation and failover mechanisms.

By understanding the distinct roles of access and aggregation switches, network designers can build efficient, secure, and scalable networks that meet enterprise or campus requirements.

© 2026 CGWEB NETWORK INFRASTRUCTURE - All rights reserved

Article Content

Core, Aggregation, or Access Switches? Choose the

Discover the crucial differences between core, aggregation, and access switches. Find out which type can best transform your network''s

What Is an Aggregation Switch and How to Choose?

Discover the role of aggregation switches. Explore differences between aggregation, access, and core switches, and choose the right model for

Which Aggregation Switch to Choose?

In-depth discussion of the key role and selection points of aggregation switches in network architecture, and comparison of their differences

What is an Aggregate Switch?

An aggregate switch consolidates traffic from access switches, while a core switch forms the backbone of the network, interconnecting multiple aggregate switches and providing access to

Access vs. Distribution vs. Core Switch Comparison Guide

While access switches provide end-device connectivity, distribution switches aggregate traffic and enforce policies, and core switches form the high-speed backbone.

Core Switch vs. Distribution Switch vs. Access Switch

There are different types of enterprise switches that perform various roles in these layer-based or hierarchical ethernet networks. This white paper introduces the following three types of network

What is Switch Aggregation, Its Role and Selection Advice

Compared to access switches, aggregation switches offer better performance and higher switching speeds. However, in some network architectures, there may be only access and core

Difference between an access switch and aggregation switch?

I would like to know what the difference is between the access switches and an aggregation switch. We are looking at a environment where we are quoting on 2 x MS225-48LP

Understanding Switch Aggregation: A Comprehensive

© 2026 CGWEB NETWORK INFRASTRUCTURE - All rights reserved

A: An access switch is typically located at the edge of the network and connects end-user devices, while an aggregation switch is situated in the

Network Switches

Our rack-mount industrial switches provide versatile connectivity with PoE, high-speed ports, stacking capabilities, and built-in security. These attributes make them ideal for access, distribution, or

What is Switch Aggregation, Its Role and Selection Advice

What is switch aggregation? Switch aggregation refers to the concept of consolidating multiple access layer switches into a single aggregation layer switch in a traditional three-tier network

Meraki Switches

Meraki MS Switches combine enterprise-grade hardware with cloud management, allowing your organization to scale effortlessly. Explore the models.

What Is an All-Optical Ethernet Switch?

All-optical Ethernet switches are a type of switch that provides optical uplink and downlink ports, making them an ideal choice for building an all-optical campus network. They can function as

Understanding Core Switch: What It Is and How to Choose the

In the realm of system networking, three key types of switches are frequently mentioned: access switches, aggregation switches, and core switches. The part of the network that directly

Cisco Catalyst 3750 Series Switches Data Sheet

Mix-and-Match Switch Types: Pay as You Expand Your Network Stacks can be created with any combination of Cisco Catalyst 3750 and Cisco Catalyst 3750-E switches. Customers who

Best Enterprise Switches 2025: Top 5 Network Switches

Our 2025 guide compares the top 5 enterprise switches from Cisco, HPE, Arista & more. Deep-dive on technical specs, AI capabilities, and use cases.

All Switches Products

Cisco has a comprehensive portfolio of network switches and switching solutions for enterprise networks, data centers and small businesses. Learn more.

The 9 Best Enterprise Network Switches for 2026

© 2026 CGWEB NETWORK INFRASTRUCTURE - All rights reserved

Generally speaking, enterprise-level switches are rack-mounted. When used as a backbone switch, it can support over 500 information points. According to the three-layer network

Related Video Reference

This video was associated with the source search result. Verify technical details against current product documentation and project requirements.

Contact Us

Continue your research online:

Website: https://cgweb.co.za
Technical inquiry: https://cgweb.co.za/project-enquiry.html

This document is for preliminary research. Verify specifications against current standards, product documentation and project requirements.

© 2026 CGWEB NETWORK INFRASTRUCTURE - All rights reserved