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A Network Fable: The Cutover Done Wrong

by Ethan Banks

Sue awoke with a start. She'd fallen asleep at her desk. That wasn't the plan, but today was the cutover for the first floor closet switch stack. This was the foundation of the WiFi rollout that, after all these years, the business decided to fund.

The first step? Closet switch stack replacement, loaded to the gills with PoE, fancy ASICs, and features galore. Here Sue was, paying off years of technical debt in one fell swoop. If this first replacement went smoothly, it would be the template for the rest of the closet updates. With last minute changes and prep work for the maintenance window, it eventually didn't make sense to go home Friday night.

Sue lifted her head, and shook the mouse to wake up the screen. A mostly empty family-size bag of chips lay crumpled on her desk. Gross. Almost as gross as the

drool on her wrist rest, leading to a tiny puddle under her keyboard. It had been a tough night.

The night wasn't supposed to be tough. Sue had prepared for the replacement for weeks. She'd mapped every port. She'd hunted down every rogue 8-port switch out on the floor. She'd located the source of every bogus SSID cluttering the air. She'd fixed every bad patch panel port, even pulling in new lines herself when she had to.

Sue didn't care. Wifi was coming, and life was going to be better for her and her team. She reviewed her spreadsheets one more time, mapping the old ports to the new and documenting the special cases, the one-offs. She was still annoyed by that one VLAN she had to trunk for the stupid printer, but retiring all the technical debt at once was a little optimistic.

The door to IT opened and shut. Pete had arrived, early...as usual. "Good morning! You ready for this? Hey...you been here all night?"

Sue yawned her answer. "Uh huh. I need coffee."

Over the next half-hour, the rest of the team assigned to the project rolled in. Sue sent the final reminder email, letting the weekend workaholics know that the first floor was going to be down.

The team set to work. Everything revolved around Sue and her spreadsheets. She was the source of truth, and she fielded endless questions from the team as the migration progressed.

Sue was sort of happy that way. Stay all night? Sure--whatever it took. A little martyrdom never killed anyone. Delegate to other people? Meh...what if they screw it up? Sue knew she'd get it right, or at least right enough. She wasn't too sure about anyone else.

The migration went okay. It took a little longer than expected. They ran out of 2m patch cables along the way, and ended up scrounging some 5m cables leaving messy coils in the otherwise tidy closet. But it was done. The new closet stack was up. Ports were lighting up as expected. Only one port with errors, and that could be sorted out on Monday.

Everyone went home...except Sue. She stayed behind and fussed on the NMS for a bit, adding in a few more SNMP OIDs she'd meant to add last week when staging the new stack. Stack environmentals were all good. New backhaul fiber links were running clean. Syslog events were coming in. NTP was synced. 802.1x auths were working to both the primary and backup servers.

Finally satisfied, Sue e-mailed her boss that the job was done. She sent a second em-mail to the workaholics to get back to it. She gave the on-call help desk person all her numbers, making sure they knew to contact her if anything weird was reported from first floor. Time to go home.

Sue left the building, her car one of the few in the parking lot. Tired? Yes, but pleased...at least for the moment.

Only 17 more closet stacks to go.

Many of you reading this identify with Sue. She's the hero--the visionary. She's the technical lead that made the closet switch migration go. But Sue did it wrong.

The biggest problem Sue, I, and others of us with our controlling personality types have is letting other people work with us. We don't take time to mentor. We don't share responsibility. We don't have a backup plan for ourselves.

We can't leave the office, go out to eat, or go on vacation without a full remote access kit, because some part of our company's IT operations revolve around us.

Mentor. Train. Be willing to let others fail. Your career stalls if you don't. Your stress level never gets out of the red zone. The crumpled, empty bags of chips fill your wastebasket over and over again.

Include others. It's the selfish thing to do.

Packet Pushers Listener Survey: We Need Your Feedback!

It's that time of year when we come to you, virtual hats in hand, to ask for a few minutes of your time to [take our annual audience survey](#).

Your responses help us in several ways:

- Feedback helps us suck less at what we do now (we hope)
- Feedback informs new ideas and initiatives (entirely new ways to suck!)
- Aggregate audience data helps us attract sponsors (the whole money thing is icky, but we gotta eat)

We never share individual responses or any personalized details with anyone.

If you have a few minutes, we'd really appreciate [your input](#). Thanks!



Cisco Vs. Arista Is Settled. What Did We Learn? (Video)

by **Greg Ferro**

After several years, millions of dollars, and thousands of words in competing blog posts and press releases, Cisco and Arista have agreed to suspend the various lawsuits that have embroiled the two switch makers. Greg explores what the outcome means.

[Watch it here](#)

Packet Pushers Ignition

Check out [Ignition](#), a brand new membership site from the Packet Pushers!

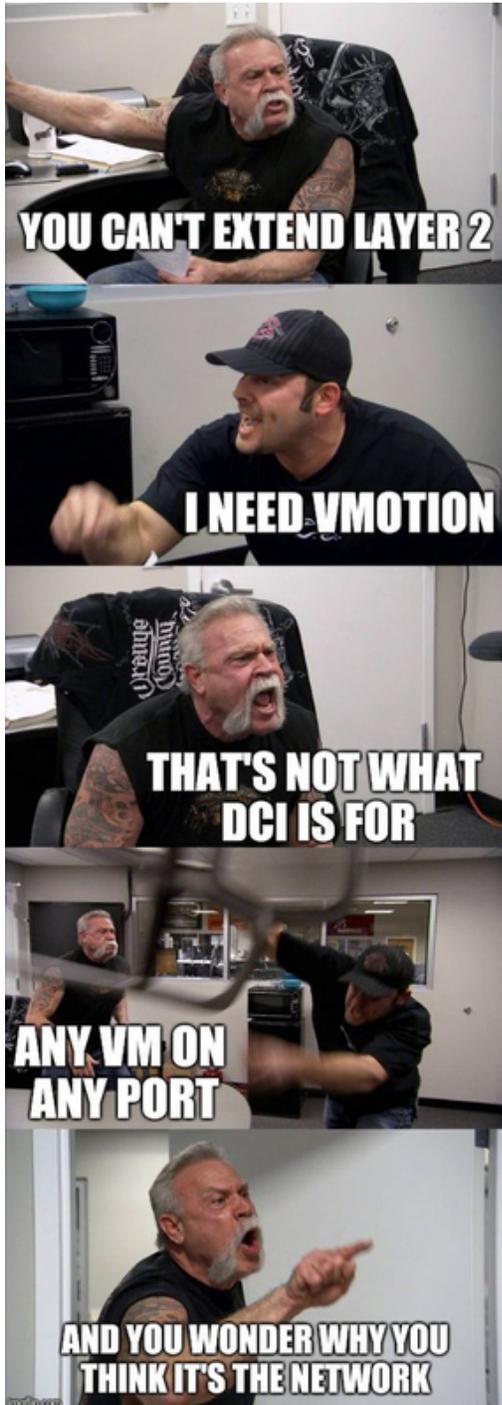
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Thanks, Internet!

Amusing flotsam and jetsam wash up in our social media feeds. Here's one we liked, courtesy of Pete Lumbis, a.k.a [@PeteCCDE](#)



Product News

We get briefed on new products and other tech news. Sometimes they're worth writing about.

Juniper Announces New Acceleration Cards For SRX5000 Security Appliances

Juniper Networks has announced that it will soon begin shipping new SPC3 (Services Process Card) Advanced Security Acceleration cards for its [SRX5000](#) line of security gateways, which includes the 5400, 5600, and 5800 appliances.

These security appliances target large enterprises, service providers, and cloud providers. Customers can mix and match security features including firewalling, IPS, site-to-site IPsec VPNs, and Unified Threat Management (UTM).

[LINK](#)

Arm Unveils Client CPU Performance Roadmap Through 2020 – Taking Intel Head On

This article from Ars Technica covers recent announcements by ARM for laptop class CPUs. Given that ARM hasn't been overly successful in server/data centre, could they repurpose some of that technology to laptops?

[LINK](#)

The End Bit

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Human Infrastructure is bi-weekly newsletter with view, perspectives, and opinions. It is edited and published by Greg Ferro and Drew Conry-Murray from

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