

Tech Field Day VFD3 - Spirent - the art of the test

It's another busy day with Tech Field Day VFD3 of exploring some great vendors! We were introduced to Spirent today which was a new experience for many of the delegates. Spirent has a broad set of offerings which you may already be familiar with though, as they actually have a strong presence in the GPS and mobile space using their testing products with NFV/SDN, and in the application test automation space also.

If you want to see an impressive portfolio of services, a quick over over the product list at Spirent will give you a hint as to how heavily leveraged they are in many areas:



Testing 1-2-3

The win for any environment that is under heavy change and development is the ability to apply the DevOps methodologies and move all aspects of their infrastructure into a continuous integration model. This is a paradigm shift for many organizations, but for folks who have had experience in application development environments, this will be a familiar and well-regarded way to achieve efficiency and consistency.

I am a fan of the automation and orchestration to reduce the variability when building and managing hardware and software solutions. One of the real challenges comes in the difficulty of testing network designs. We do our best to plan how to build our physical network topologies and test them in place before going live, but we also know how difficult it can be to do effective, repeatable testing.

Imagine how a minimally tested network infrastructure becomes exponentially more painful when it is running as an overlay network in the style of Software Defined Networking (SDN). What do we do for testing out a complex Layer 2-7 topology? And just imagine if it is in a dynamic, self-service environment such as using Cisco ACI or VMware NSX.

Enter Spirent

Network Virtualization (NV) and encapsulation create some very distinct challenges in how we can test them at design, at deployment, and then continuously during operation.

This diagram is a great depiction of the flow if implementation that was presented:



The soon to be released solution from Spirent is meant to answer the question of "How can I introduce continuous integration and testing into my network and NV platform?".

The continuous integration fan in me lit up at the thought of this ☐

Spirent has a great history in application testing and L2-L7 testing already, but the addition of this new suite to push the testing into the NV space is very exciting. Dynamic network testing in virtual data centers with orchestration baked in really does feel like it could be a panacea, so for this reason

I will be eagerly watching for their announcement at Interop at the end of the month (<http://www.interop.com/lasvegas/>).

☒ Automate All the Things

This is my style! I am a firm believer in the value of automation as you'll see in the theme of many of my posts and tweets. There is a reason of course, and that is the long term value for application, infrastructure, and network environments has been proven to be real when orchestration and testing has been integrated.

In the classic tagline: There's an app for that! Spirent showcased their iTest product (<http://www.spirent.com/Products/iTest>) and chatted lots about the advantages, both tangible (aka \$\$\$\$) and intangible (aka time-to-market reductions and smiling employees and customers).

There is definitely some great potential for the platform to be a part of many organizations, so if you would like to dig in a little deeper, make sure to reach out to the folks at Spirent ([@Spirent](https://twitter.com/Spirent) on Twitter) and take a look at their wide array of offerings online at <http://www.spirent.com> for more info.

And if the theme hasn't been hammered home enough: Continuous Integration should be in your thoughts as you design your infrastructure, period.

DISCLOSURE: Travel and expenses for Tech Field Day - Virtualization Field Day 3 were provided by the Tech Field Day organization. No compensation was received for attending the event. All content provided in my posts is of my own opinion based on independent research and information gathered during the sessions.