

News

Managed Switches vs. Unmanaged Switches



Einstein's IQ wasn't based on what he knew but the pace at which he dealt with information. And it's like that for networks, too. Network switches are the "brains" that simultaneously link all devices on a LAN (Local Area Network), redirecting and routing data to the appropriate place.

Companies choosing switch hardware must consider the current and future demands on the network and understand the distinction between managed vs. unmanaged switches.

Here, you'll learn to differentiate between the types of network switches, and what questions to ask to find the style best suited to your application.

How Many Control Features Will The Network Team Require?

Unmanaged switches are basically plug & play—everything that comes into the switch goes onto the network. That simplicity is compelling for smaller applications, but for larger organizations, a more sophisticated solution is needed.

Determining whether managed vs. unmanaged switches are right for your application (or completely wrong) depends on your required features. Here are the basics:

Unmanaged switches = fixed configurations and less control

Unmanaged switches use auto-negotiated ports to determine parameters, such as data rates and whether to apply half-duplex or full-duplex mode (moving data in one-direction or two-directions at the same time).

Additionally, unmanaged switches have no concept of virtual LANs (VLANs)—as a result, devices on an unmanaged switch all belong to the same broadcast domain.

Managed switches = full control and flexibility

With a managed switch, you have options for controlling your network. For instance, users can customize the settings for each port to manage, configure, and monitor network data closely.

A managed switch controls how data travels across the network and who has access to that data, and administrators can prioritize channels to ensure the best performance for critical pathways.

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By Iain Deuchars



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