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Aruba Q3 Podcast Transcript

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Hello and welcome to the Tech Data podcast. I'm Ian and I'll be your host for today's episode, where we're celebrating the launch of the Aruba Instant On 1930 Switch Series.

Joining me we've got Felix Salvini and Christian Dupont, and they'll be offering us expert insight into what this launch means for partners and small businesses.

Let's just get a bit about both of you, so first of all Felix – tell me a bit about you and your role at Tech Data please.

FELIX:

As stated, my name is Felix Salvini, I work at Tech Data as a Business Development Manager. Me together with my colleague Ken are basically responsible for the Aruba sales in Sweden.

We handle everything from stock issues to doing new and exciting deals with customers and partners. From configurations to helping with stuff like this for example – educating on Aruba. So that's basically what I do.

IAN:

Thanks Felix. And Christian, just tell me about what you do.

CHRISTIAN:

Thanks, my name is Christian Dupont and I am the Product Manager for HPE and Aruba in Denmark. So I lead a team of 7 people working with HPE Server Storage Aruba networking products, and again we deal with everything from configuration and consulting, to pricing and introducing new products and generating some excitement around the HPE portfolio as a whole.

IAN:

Fantastic, thanks Christian. So, let's start broadly. Now that Aruba IO has added switching to its major hardware, maybe Felix you can answer this for me – what does that really mean for end users?

FELIX:

It means quite a lot, first off it's the first time that Aruba has had an SMB offering that's not only access points but is switches as well. This means that when you're a customer, you won't need to jump between different platforms and different vendors. Now you can have a single pane of glass for managing your network, and you can actually manage several networks inside of this single pane of glass.

That is a huge thing. It saves on time; it saves on unnecessary complications that can come up with having different infrastructures. It's very important that it's finally here, so I'm very excited.

IAN:

Fantastic, thanks Felix. So, for those of us who might not know – what's the role of the switch in this complete network solution, and what do they actually do? Christian can you come up with some answers for me on that please?

CHRISTIAN:

Yes sure. So, I think the short explanation is that the switch is essentially the backbone of any network today. It is the point where everything gets connected through a cable, but the switch has also changed its role over recent years.

So, in the past you would see old PCs in an office or at home be connected through a cable to your switch, whereas it's now acting more as the backbone for access points providing wireless services. It's delivering power

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to IoT devices and essentially combining all the different bits and pieces that make up a really complex network in an office environment.

IAN:

Thanks Christian, so for instance, I've got a security camera on my business premises and I've got one at home as well – it could potentially be used for that?

CHRISTIAN:

Absolutely. As we're seeing less and less clients being directly connected to the switch, we see more clients come in through the wireless access points. We've also seen with technology such as ethernet, we can start using the switch to connect and power things such as cameras and other IoT devices direct through the networking cable, making installations and day to day management of all these new devices coming into the network much easier.

A camera would be a great example of that as we can deliver power to it and give it connectivity.

IAN:

Fantastic, thanks Christian. Now let's have a look at the benefits of the Aruba IO 1930 switch series. Let's drill a bit deeper into that, Felix have you got some answers for me on that?

FELIX:

I think what strikes me immediately is that there are 4 things that are fantastic about the new switch series. Firstly, as we touched on, Aruba has taken the simplicity of app based management and applied that through their switch series. Which means that it's plug and play, it's quick setup, and it connects automatically with your already existing account so you can remote manage your multiple sites from anywhere at any time. So, I think that's a really important thing about the series.

The second thing that Christian was talking about is the strong connectivity. So as you guys were talking about, you can use your phones or cameras or APs and power these without having to pay for the cost of wiring, that otherwise would be necessary.

Then I think if you look at it from a more secure perspective, just like the old 1920 series had, the 1930 series has support for access control lists, which is great for really narrowing down and using AC rules to ward off external threats. So, I think those 3 are important.

Then the fourth thing: just like with the instant on APs, you have a phone support that you can call. I think what's important to remember is that the end customer for these products maybe aren't IT experts, so having someone that you can all to get help with management when you're getting started is very important. Now you can get help from your switch to your AP, which is really important because you can have one call to help with your entire network.

So, I think those four things are what strikes me most as making the 1930 series special.

IAN: So, I guess it's simplicity, it's plug and play, and making sure that these things are as easy as possible to set up. And maybe if I come over to you Christian, why do you think these are better than other switches that maybe out there on the market, and how do you go about controlling them? Are there any things like apps available that you can use?

CHRISTIAN:

Yeah so as Felix has touched on, the Instant On app makes it easy to manage both the wired and wireless sides, which is a key differentiator as you have a single point of configuration. You also have a single line of support – even though these are fairly easy to use products, sometimes things will go wrong and being able to have a single point of support for your wired and wireless network just simply makes your life easier as a customer.

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Looking at the feature set of these switches up against other types of SMB solutions, we can see that the 1930 series has a fairly advanced feature set even though it still has a high focus on ease of use.

So, what we're seeing in many SMB customer environments is that there is a lot of new devices coming in. You mentioned surveillance cameras, but also other types of IoT devices, and the complexity of these networks is actually becoming quite high. The requirements are getting quite high even in SMB type environments.

The 1930 series has a full feature set to support all of those requirements in an SMB environment, but still making it very easy to work with.

Another point I would stress is that with the 1930 series you have a lifetime warranty, so Aruba has really put all their weight behind the statement about building a good quality, reliable, easy to use product given their lifetime warranty. You rarely see this for SMB customers, so if the products breaks down you can simply call Aruba and they will come and replace it for you. Which I think is a very important point, and it stresses that Aruba really has confidence in the quality of the product that they're building.

IAN:

Absolutely, that sounds like that's key Christian. So, let's now move on to look at how these benefits might apply to certain key sectors, Felix how would AIO complete network solution work for things like cafes and restaurants and retail businesses?

FELIX:

Well I think that one thing that's important here to understand is that, once again, we have one solution that covers both the inside and the outside and the wired and wireless, which makes it easy to set up. But it's important to remember that if you are a café owner, cafes have changed now – people go there to socialise as well as to work – so now you can offer your customers the possibility to have enterprise grade networks on the guest side. Which means that you can sit there and do your emailing and your work, while having your cup of coffee, which is a great value add for you as a café.

Also, I think it's important to realise that now you can also have the possibility to do outside Wi-Fi, which means that you can give access to people sitting outside too which can be very important in these times.

I think also its important to mention that with a strong wireless network, you can do things like have mobile operating systems to give quick and simple payments. Really what it is is a way to make your café more effective from a sense point of view, and more attractive from a customer point of view.

To go somewhere and have a complete experience, to not only have a cup of coffee but to catch up on your emails or whatnot.

IAN:

Christian, was there anything you wanted to add?

CHRISTIAN:

I just wanted to add the power of the app that follows the IO solution. So, whether you are managing the network yourself as perhaps the owner of a small café or restaurant, or you have a partner managing it, I think there is a big strength in having this app that gives you remote access. So, if something goes wrong with the network, you as the network operator or your partner can easily connect with the network and see what might be causing the issue even though you might not necessarily be onsite at that point in time.

I think that's important for any small business. If its running your POS systems for example, it's critical for your business to remote access and fix any issues.

IAN:

Very much so at the moment. Maybe the last point about outdoor areas which is probably particularly relevant at this point in time as we start to get back to normal. We've seen cafes and restaurants use outdoor space much

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more to maintain social distancing – business need to be able to adapt to that trend and allow people to pay outside. So, on that note, working from home is another key vertical for AIO and something that were all doing a lot more of in the wake of the pandemic. Christian, have you got any more thoughts on that?

CHRISTIAN:

Absolutely, so in the past we have seen people being content with the network being provided from your service provider. But as requirements have grown in the home, with the kids wanting to stream Netflix and more IoT devices making their way into the home, and now also people needing to work from home with Zoom and Skype and voice and video conferencing, the network becomes a business critical item for the home.

Home users are getting more willing to pay for quality networking at home and I think that personally the Instant On is a perfect fit.

Looking at the 1930 switch, you also see that some of the smaller models don't have a fan built in so they can easily be fitted into a home installation without causing any noise as a typical networking switch would normally do. It can power your AP or any IoT device you might want to connect with in the home, but getting that stable, fast and reliable networking connection in your home is becoming even more critical these days with more people working from home.

IAN:

And you mentioned kids in there Christian, so could AIO be useful in the education environment? So, teachers and educators who need to do online learning – does this work for them?

CHRISTIAN:

Absolutely, so if you look at online learning environments, streaming video and audio, all these things are critical to giving a good learning experiences to the students. Having a fast reliable network in that aspect is key and I think that the AIO as whole could easily deliver that to any teacher trying to teach students remotely.

IAN:

Fantastic, so we mentioned kids and education, but what about medical offices and areas like that? Would Aruba Instant On be useful in those, and would that work Felix?

FELIX:

Absolutely, the things we're talking about now are also applicable to medical offices. It is very convenient to have an extended network to maybe even outside for staging areas which are typical in these times. But of course, you have an integrated firewall to keep things secure – you can say what can and can't be accessed online for your patients that are waiting.

You can also prioritise collaboration apps which can be very important if you need to have voice calls which medical offices often use to get in contact with other medical offices.

Then of course you can do things like control guest access by time and day, something that also useful for restaurants – do you really need to have patients on the guest WIFI at 7 if you close your offices at 6 o'clock?

So there's a lot of these things that are important not only for restaurants and people working from home, but also people working from medical offices.

I also want to mention that Aruba is a secure and very reliable vendor, which is very important when it comes to records and all of these things. So being able to separate networks and have all these other devices on one network, and being able to trust that your vendor can perform all these actions without any problems, means there are definitely cases for use in a medical office.

CHRISTIAN:

If I can just jump in here for a second, since the founding of Aruba, they have been very security focussed when it comes to networking. They are essentially the trusted brand of some of the most security focussed companies –

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central intelligence offices for example, military offices throughout the world, and they've carried a lot of this security DNA into their solutions.

So whether you are a doctor's office who have patient records that need to be protected, or you're in a retail environment where you have credit card transactions that need to be protected and kept away from your guest network, you have that security functionality built into the AIO.

Aruba are also known for being among the very best in the industry when securing the wired and wireless connection.

IAN:

Fantastic, it sounds like the switch series suits a variety of facilities that we need and use every day, and I'm sure there's a broad range of business applications that Aruba could work with. We'd be here all day if we carried on going through them, so let's maybe wrap up there.

Thank you first of all Felix for your time today.

FELIX:

Thank you for having me.

IAN:

And also to Christian as well.

CHRISTIAN:

Thank you so much.

IAN:

I think we've really covered a lot in this podcast so far, and you've shared your time and your knowledge with us. Some really relevant and useful insights there from our Tech Data experts, and if you have any questions about the network powering small businesses, or the new AIO 1930 switch series, make sure to visit the Tech Data website where you'll find lots more information.

For now, thanks for listening, and hope you can join us again next time.