

Customer Experience Assurance (CEA): The Future of Customer Satisfaction

Network and service providers spend a lot of time and money creating advanced mobile networks that provide more bandwidth and faster service to customers worldwide. But even with these investments, 40% of customers are leaving their current providers due to service issues. How can this be possible?

Today's networks are more complex and dynamic than ever before. Long-term evolution (LTE) technology is a major step forward in creating an intelligent network where handsets can talk to the network to create the best service environment possible. However, while LTE promises to facilitate more sophisticated and scalable services, assurance solutions that guarantee a high-quality experience have not evolved accordingly.

Most providers use assurance solutions based on a model that has not changed significantly over the past decade. This model was designed for voice traffic back when networks were static instead of the dynamic environments needed for data. Most importantly, this model treats all traffic and problems equally, rather than by their impact on the subscriber experience. This approach decreases bottom-line revenue.



A new CEA paradigm is emerging that delivers a fundamentally different assurance approach to address the opportunities and challenges of dynamic 4G/LTE networks.

Mobile operators are facing significant challenges with these traditional assurance solutions that:

- Are not financially scalable to meet explosive 4G/LTE “mobile broadband” growth
- Cannot drive meaningful improvements in customer experience
- Lack the real-time traffic visibility and analysis needed to enable and ensure dynamic network and service delivery

Providers are investing billions in the evolution to LTE, yet customer churn is at an all-time high—they need a better assurance model.

A new CEA paradigm is emerging that delivers a fundamentally different assurance approach to address the opportunities and challenges of dynamic 4G/LTE networks. The goal of this new approach is to enable a real and relevant improvement in customer experience while maximizing operator productivity and profitability. Key operator requirements include the ability to:

- Proactively identify and resolve problems having the greatest impact on customer experience in a fraction of the time
- Break the data growth cost curve to substantially improve CapEx/OpEx, footprint, and scalability
- Enable dynamic network and service assurance with real-time intelligence
- Leverage end-to-end data—from the handset through the core—to deliver deeper visibility and enable data monetization

Traditionally, network and service assurance are managed by two separate and disjointed systems, neither of which incorporate real-time subscriber experience analysis. In contrast, CEA provides an integrated, real-time view of network performance, service performance, and customer experience. This approach lets operators correlate customer experience data to an actual underlying network, service, or other problem in a statistically relevant way to quickly identify when customers are indeed being negatively impacted. This lets providers know which problems they should spend time and money to resolve.

To gain this real-time insight, providers need a way to address the data growth dilemma that is breaking the assurance solutions’ scalability and budgets. Current assurance solutions’ complexity, cost, and footprint are growing exponentially alongside the amount of traffic. Traditional assurance solutions use a “one size fits all” model that collects and treats all traffic equally, regardless of value. CEA

introduces a new “value-based” assurance model that customizes network monitoring and analytics according to the unique needs of different service types and customers. The ability to deliver deeper analysis and metrics on premium services and top average revenue per user (ARPU) customers while minimizing investment and visibility for less-valuable traffic helps operators manage data growth that aligns to their budget and customers.

Increasingly, customers rely on applications for nearly every aspect of their lives. They expect and demand more. Mobile operators who charge subscribers a premium for high-quality streaming video or high-definition voice over LTE (VoLTE) must meet customer expectations. Traditional assurance solutions that take 10 to 15 minutes to simply detect a performance problem—let alone to troubleshoot and fix it—are simply inadequate.

CEA redefines the definition of real time to reflect what operators need today and into the future. The evolution to dynamic networks, services, and performance requires CEA solutions that significantly improve the concept of real time, measuring it in seconds rather than minutes. Overall, today’s networks, services, and performance are becoming more dynamic. They vary and fluctuate much faster than legacy network and service technologies.

CEA’s real-time context awareness also creates an environment for effective asset optimization and big data monetization. Analyzing big data has always been a problem and most current solutions try to analyze all the data—no matter how immaterial. But as networks become faster and more dynamic, history is now measured in seconds and most of the data is no longer important.

CEA can quickly identify patterns and events in big data that are statistically relevant and meaningful so providers see only the data that matters. By doing so, CEA can deliver value-based intelligence by feeding big data platforms with actionable, customer-focused insight. This ability moves CEA well beyond normal assurance and lets providers leverage assets that are more usable, efficient, and scalable, speeding innovation for a much lower cost.

For customers, this translates to a personalized service experience that feels more cohesive, with access to premium services as they are needed. It also lets providers identify and fix service issues almost before customers can physically react. In essence, CEA is challenging how assurance is achieved. It is the future of customer satisfaction.



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