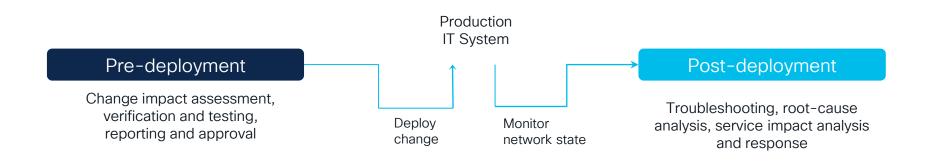
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Agentic AI for troubleshooting and change management:
A glimpse at the future

Frank Brockners - Distinguished Engineer
DEVNET-2094

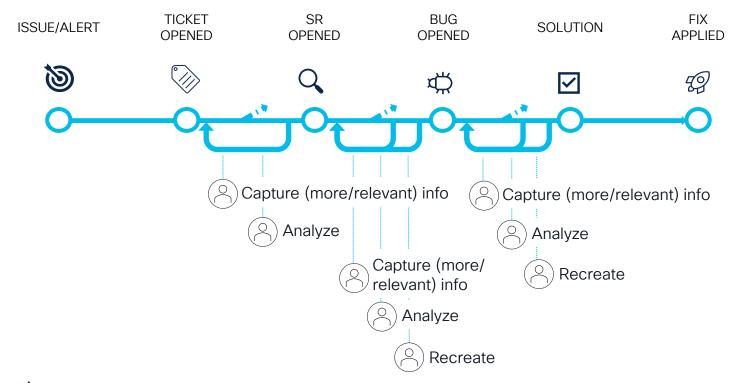


## Cross-domain IT troubleshooting and change validation still rely mostly on manual processes





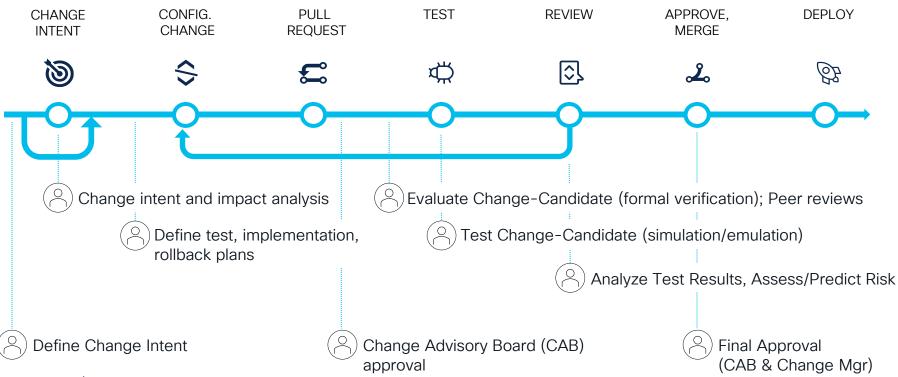
#### Troubleshooting Scenario





3

## Change Verification Workflow



I mentioned about the ability to interact in a humanlike capability.

One of the big opportunities for Al is to replace services with software and if that's the TAM that we're going after, the starting point is not hundreds of billions the starting point is possibly tens of trillions.3



2025: 40% of services engagements will include GenAl-enabled delivery, triggering a shift in human-delivered services for strategy, change, and training organizations<sup>1</sup>

2028: GenAl technology will be used for 35% of network configuration and troubleshooting activities, up from near zero in 2023<sup>2</sup>

Gartner: WW IT Spending

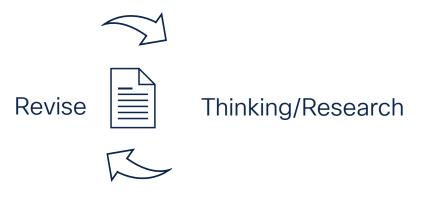
<sup>2.</sup> Gartner: Forecast Al Services 2023-27

<sup>.</sup> Pat Grady, Sequoia, https://youtu.be/TDPqt7ONUCY?si=ikudM8J4hl42nTHH&t=160

With the rise of Agentic AI, can we employ AI agents instead of / besides humans?







#### **Zero Shot – Non-Agentic Workflow**

"Please write an essay on topic X from start to finish in one go, without using backspace"

#### **Agentic Workflow**

"Write an essay outline on topic X"

"Do web research on the items of the outline"

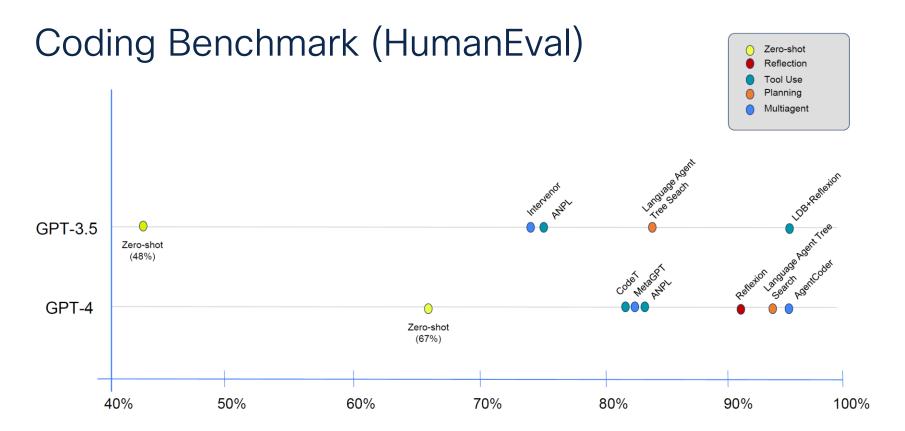
"Write a first draft"

"Consider what parts need revision and more research"

"Revise your draft"

....





[Thanks to Joaquin Dominguez and John Santerre (DeepLearning.AI) for help with analysis.]



### Design Patterns of Agentic Systems











**Planning** 

Think through

the steps that

need to be taken

upfront

Know which tools are available and how to use them

**Tool Calling** 

Reflection

Iteratively improve results through critique, suggestions, and reasoning

Collaboration

Multiple agents collaborate and communicate

Memory

Track progress/ results and learn individually/ collectively



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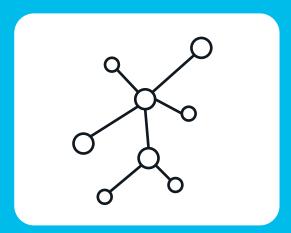
Starting point for how to employ agents?

There is only one category in digital: It is called **Information** Management.

Satya Nadella about what Bill Gates used to say, BG2 Podcast Dec/2024



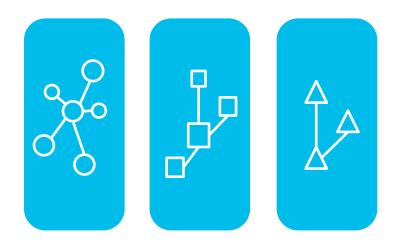
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A holistic digital map/schema exists for the deployment – describing all entities and their relationship

 Allows for formal, deterministic analysis (for everything that is modeled accurately)





Information management follows organizational, business, cost constraints, resulting in data/schema silos

-> Human or "Human-like" probabilistic analysis



Pre-requisite:
One common schema for all your data across one (federated) data-lake

Agentic Al for (near-) deterministic/formal Analysis:

Example: Network Verification



#### Network Change Use cases



#### Device Topology

- Add new device
- Device upgrade or replacement
- Topology changes
- New topology migration
- EVPN/VXLAN/SDA changes
- Network optimization (AP placement, topology, etc)
- Interfaces change



#### Path

- Routing update (BGP, OSPF, static routes)
- Forwarding update (next hop change, connectivity change along a path)
- Capacity planning change

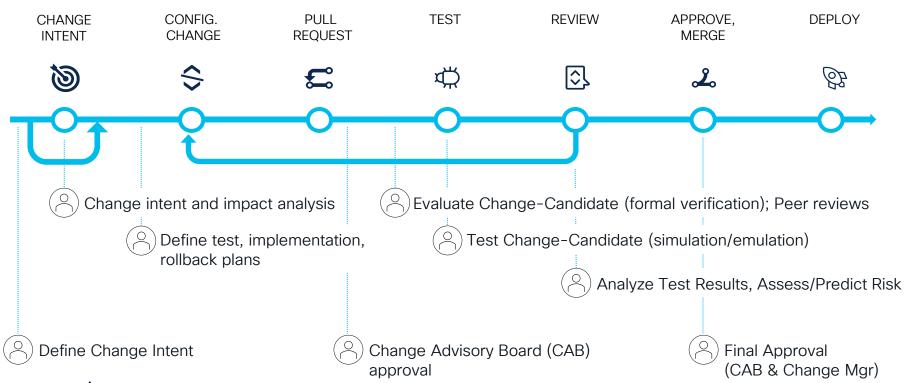


#### Flow

- ACL/policy update (site isolation, new allowed host)
- Firewall policy change
- Change driven by QoS/QoE KPI (traffic engineering)

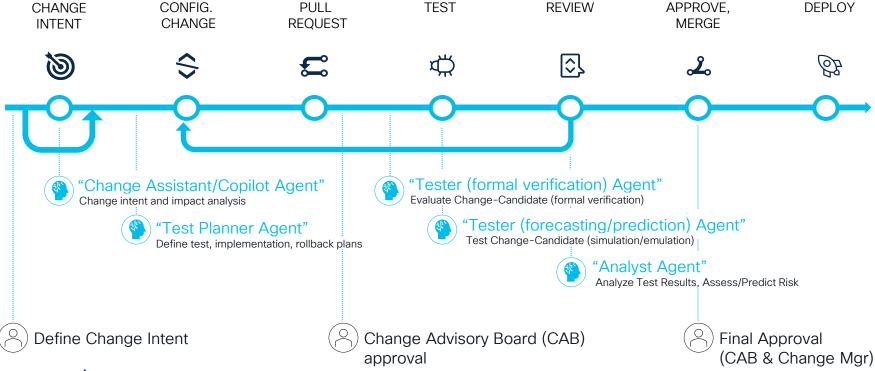


## Change Verification Workflow



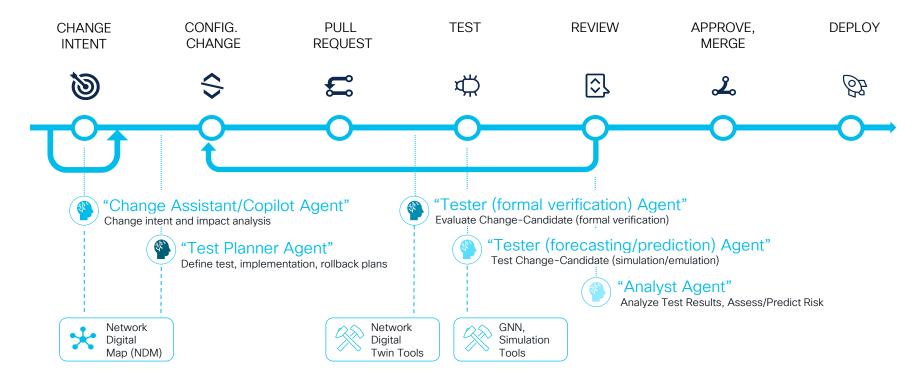
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# Al Agents integrated into Change Verification Workflow



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### Al Agents integrated into Change Verification Workflow



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#### Al Agents for Change Verification



Assistant/ Copilot Agent



Test Planner Agent



Tester (verify formally) Agent



Tester (forecasting)
Agent



Analyst Agent

provide network status pre-change

assess potential change impact

define a test plan,

deployment plan,

and rollback plan

translate change intent/test plan into test execution plan (formal tests)

execute formal verification tests for all change candidates and create test report translate change intent/test plan into test execution plan (simulation/emulation tests)

execute verification tests for all change candidates and create test report Documentation and interpretation

Risk assessment and prediction to decide about additional tests or move final change approval



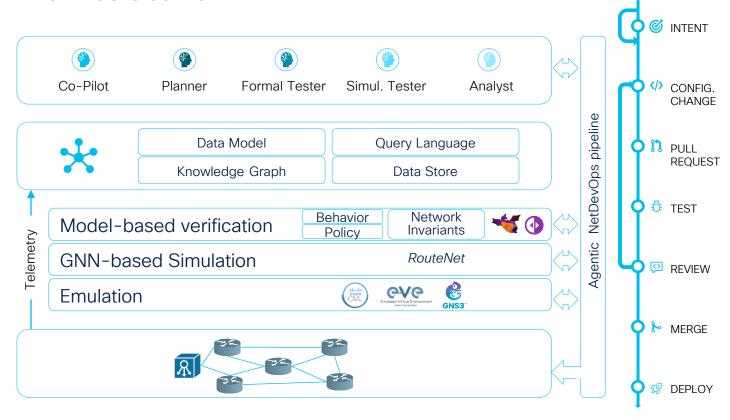
#### Solution Architecture

Agentic Application

NDM (Network Digital Map)

NDT layers model, simulation, emulation

Monitored Production Network

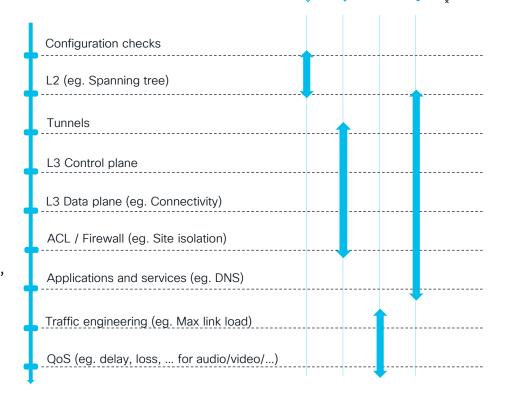


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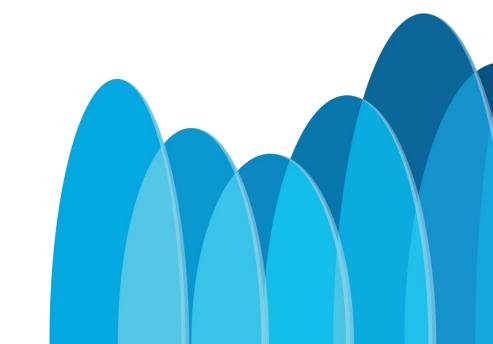
## Agentic tools: NDM, NDT

- Agentic application relies upon one Network Source of Truth (NSOT):
  - Network Digital Map (NDM) graph representation of the production network using production network telemetry
  - Network Digital Twin (NDT) built on top of the NDM for Model-based verification, Simulation, Emulation
- NDT's testing capabilities can be both internal (e.g., computation over NDM graph) and external (e.g., external testing tools NDT-integrated are Batfish, Diffy,...)
- Agents select tools and define tests based on intent and on scalability/ accuracy/cost trade-offs





## Concept Demo



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#### Example: Firewall update

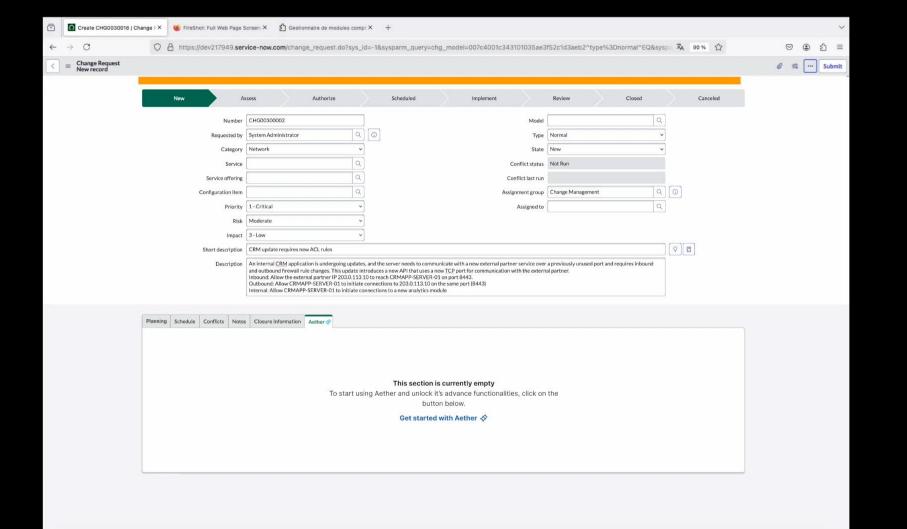
Firewall rule and ACL updates due to the introduction of new IP addresses, ports, or protocols

- An internal CRM application is undergoing updates, and the server needs to communicate with a new external partner service over a previously unused port and requires inbound and outbound firewall rule changes. This update introduces a new API that uses a new TCP port for communication with the external partner.
  - Inbound: Allow the external partner IP 203.0.113.10 to reach CRMAPP-SERVER-01 on port 8443.
  - Outbound: Allow CRMAPP-SERVER-01 to initiate connections to 203.0.113.10 on the same port (8443)
  - Internal: Allow CRMAPP-SERVER-01 to initiate connections to a new analytics module
- The application team has submitted a change request through the ITSM ticketing system to open these ports on the firewall and update relevant network device ACLs.



Starting Point: A Service-Now Ticket



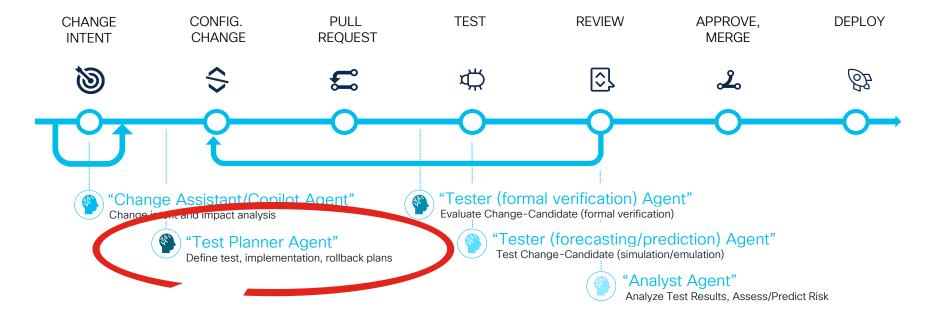


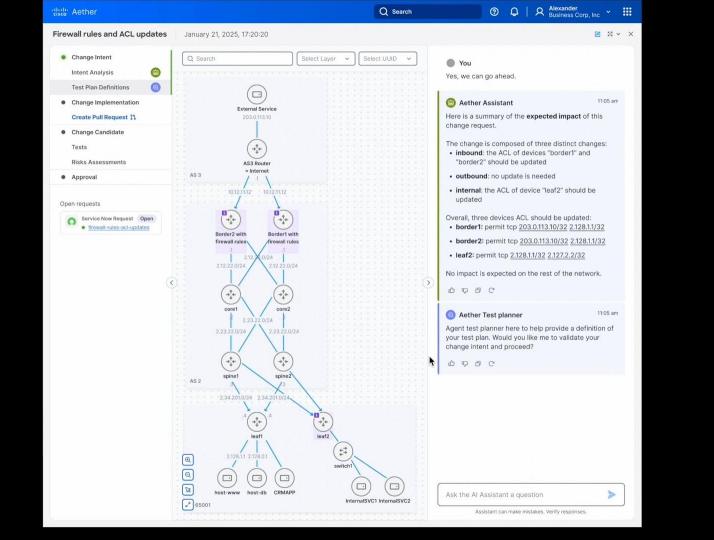
## Change Intent Analysis





#### Test Planner



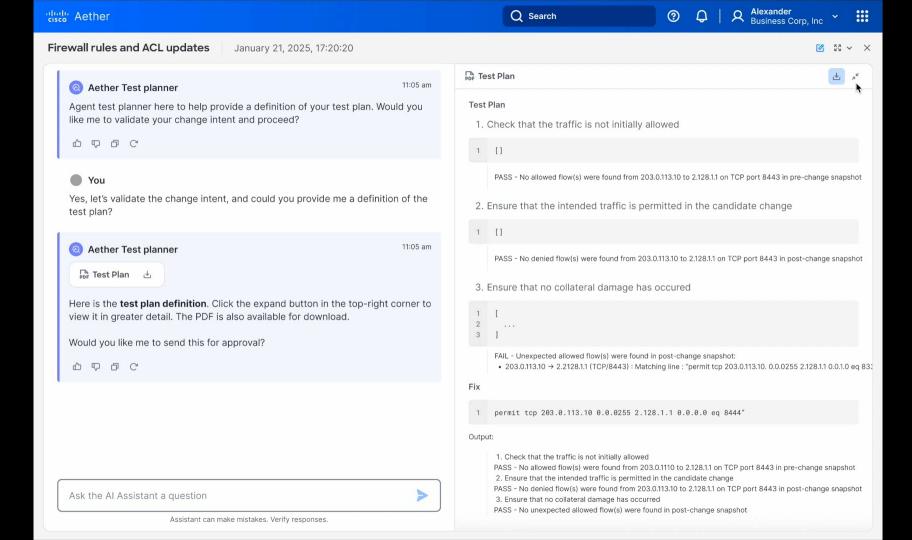


#### PR Creation & Test Execution Kick-Off

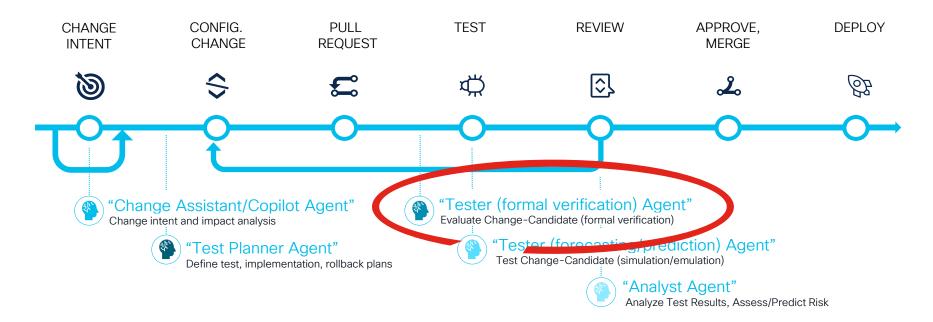


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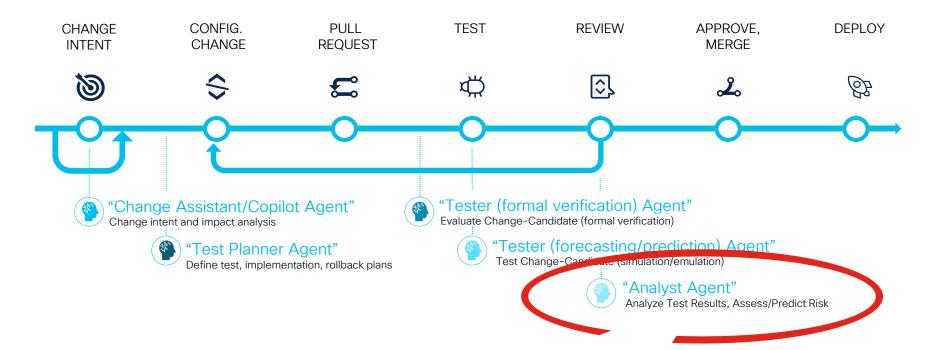


## Test Execution - Change Candidate Testing

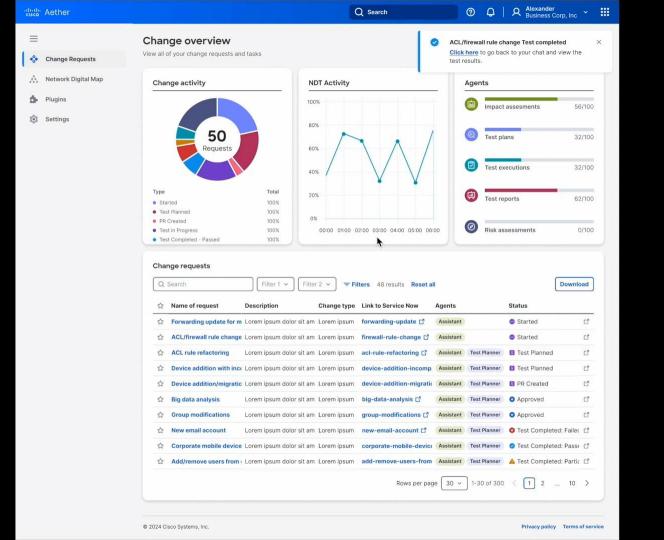




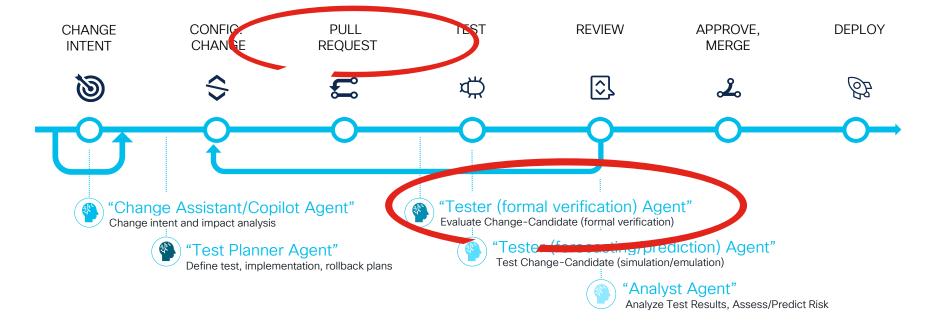
#### Test Results Analysis







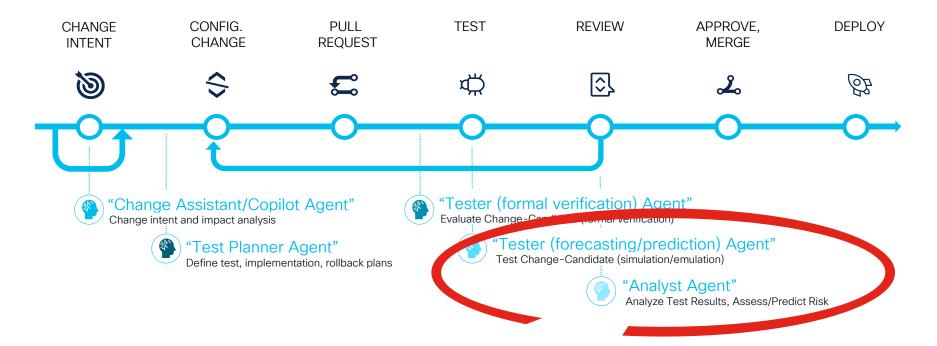
#### PR Update & Test Execution

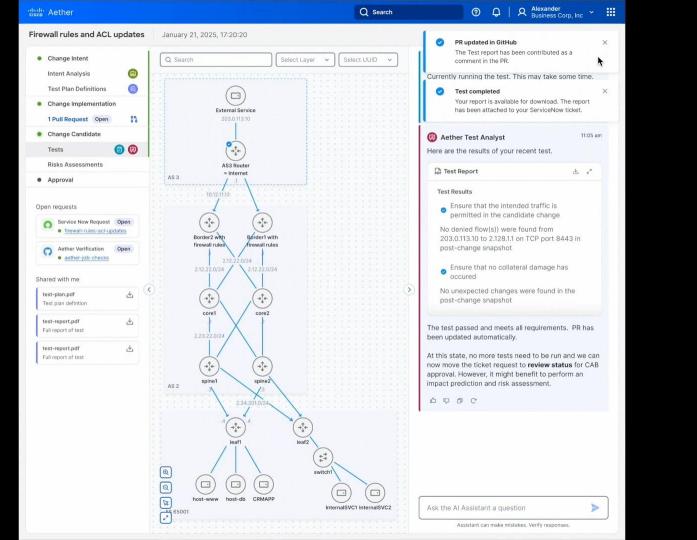


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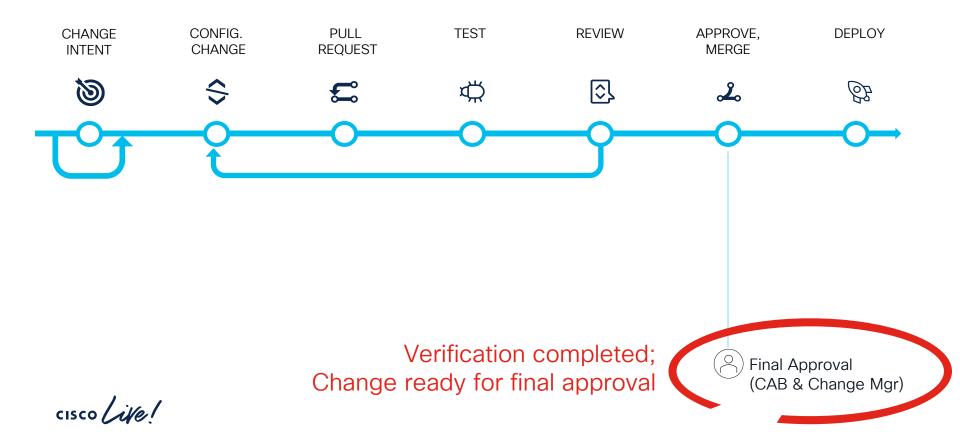


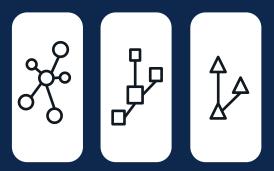
## Test Results Analysis & Impact Prediction





# Change Verification Workflow





Assumption:

Data is not consolidated into a single

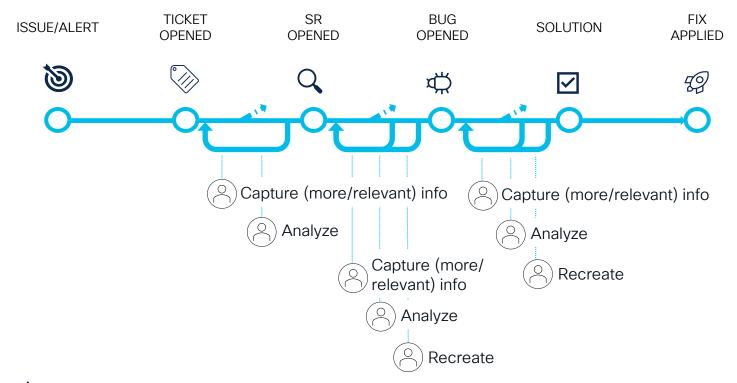
schema but follows organizational and business constraints

Agentic Al for probabilistic Analysis:

Example: Root-cause and Impact Analysis

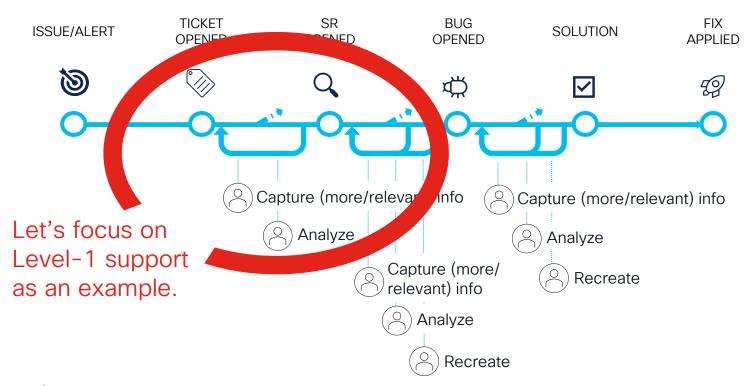


# Troubleshooting Scenario



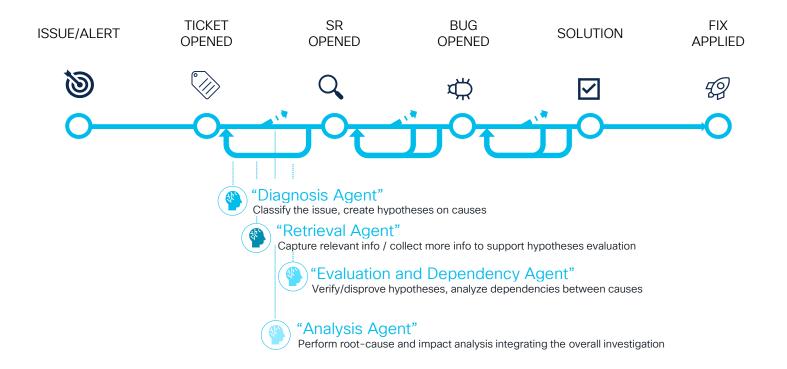


# Troubleshooting Scenario



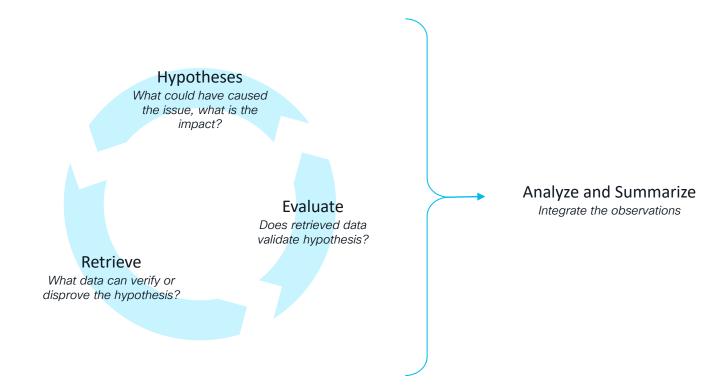


# Al Agents supporting Troubleshooting: Focused on L1 Support





# Troubleshooting like Humans



# Al Agents Troubleshooting like Humans



#### "Diagnosis Agent"

Classify the issue, create hypotheses on causes

#### **Hypotheses**

What could have caused the issue, what is the impact?



Does retrieved data validate hypothesis?



#### "Evaluation Agent"

Verify/disprove hypotheses, analyze dependencies between causes



#### "Analysis Agent"

Perform root-cause and impact analysis integrating the overall investigation



What data can verify or disprove the hypothesis?

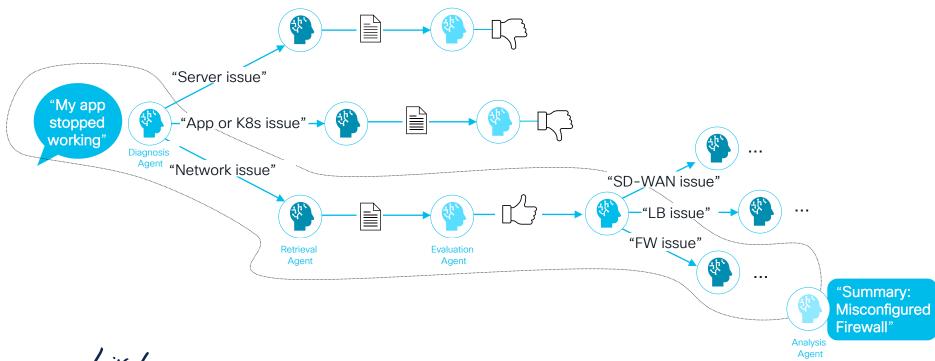


#### "Retrieval Agent"

Capture relevant info / collect more info to support hypotheses evaluation



# Example



Diagnosis Agent, Evaluation Agent, Analysis Agent need to reason about the provided data and issue description.

How does the system reason?



#### "Schema-based"

#### **Integrated Data Representation**

(across all domains and layers)

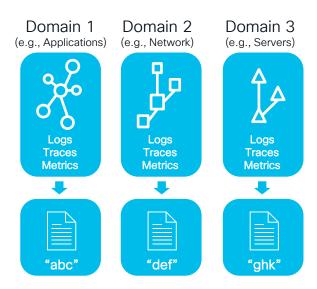


Leverage definitions of data structure, semantics and dependencies to employ formal, rule-based/ontology-based decision logic;

Deterministic results

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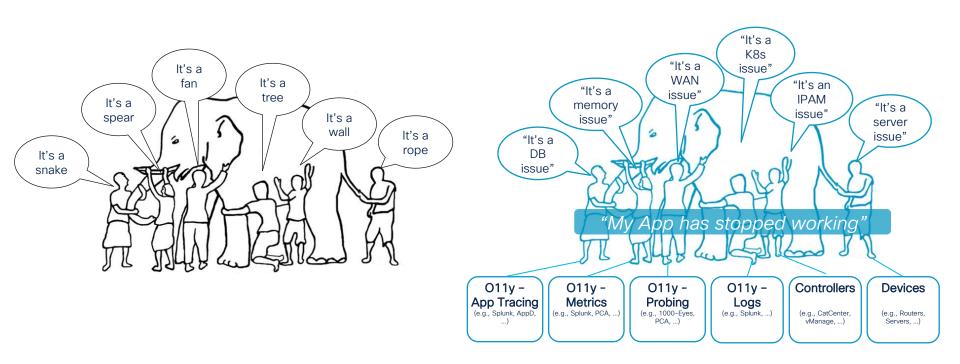
#### "Human-like"



Assume unstructured data and Derive semantics and dependencies using natural language with GenAl;

Probabilistic results

# Remember the classic "Blind persons touching the elephant"?





Schematize the world [..] is just impossible to do.

Maybe the way to do that is how we schematize, how the human brain does it, through language and inner monologue and reasoning

Satya Nadella, December 12, 2024

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9NtsnzRFJ\_o&t=1065s



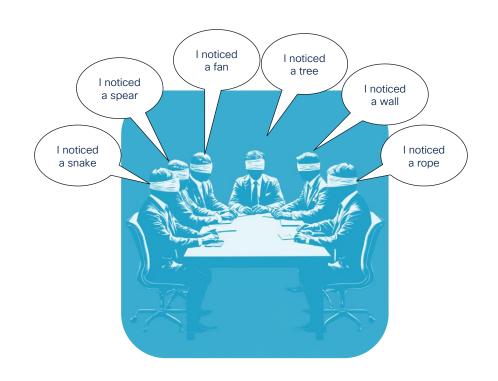
# Solution Approach

#### Classic:

"Blind men" meet in a room, discuss observations and reason in natural language to arrive at a "system-level" understanding

#### New:

Al Agents meet, discuss observations and reason in natural language to arrive at a system-level understanding



# Al Agents for Diagnostics



Diagnosis Agent

Create hypotheses on potential causes and impacts of a given problem statement.

Refine hypotheses using additional relevant data provided



Retrieval Agent

Retrieve relevant information from backend knowledge bases (incl. past diagnoses, CDETS, ...)

Retrieve information from the live system and observability systems

Categorize, filter retrieved data using tools (embedders, statistics, etc.)



Eval & Dependency
Agent

Determine causal dependencies

Evaluate hypotheses and their dependencies wrt/ accuracy and likelihood



Analysis Agent

Integrate hypotheses and dependencies into a final diagnosis

Determine confidence score for the provided diagnosis

Store and qualify results for future use



Let's consider an example scenario



## Imagine...

You are an IT Ops engineer tasked with troubleshooting a customer issue:

"The "vote" web app is not reachable anymore"





#### Setup

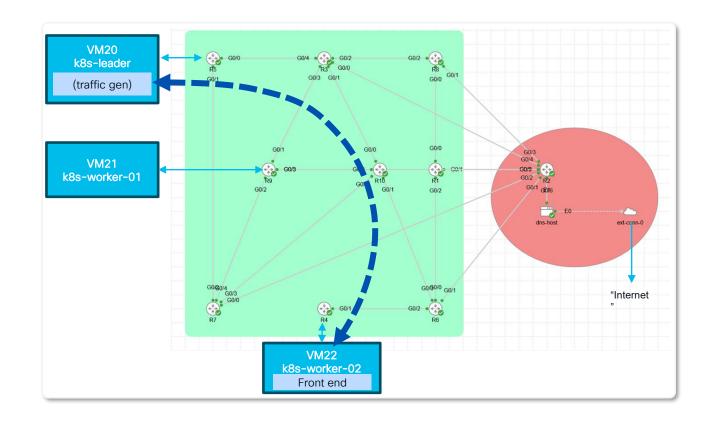
- Voting app: K8s-based microservices app
- "traffic gen" makes requests to the front-end

#### Issue to Diagnose

Alert from customer:
 <<The "vote" web app
 is not reachable
 anymore>>

#### What happened?

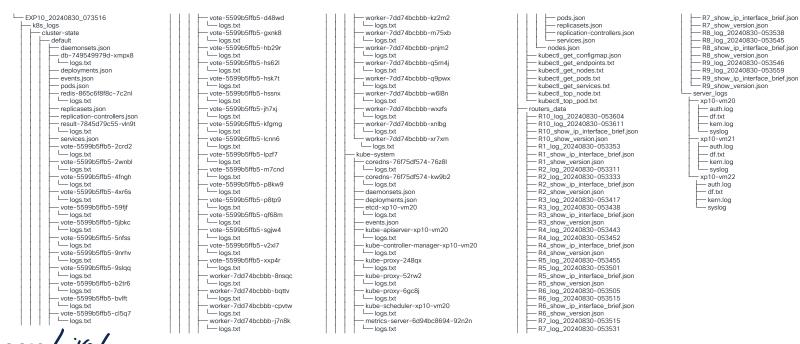
 Disk full on k8s-worker-02





# Information collected post the alert: EXP10\_20240830\_073516 dataset

**127** Files in 65 directories – different types of logs, show command outputs, system command outputs. Total of **6,584,646** bytes



#### Potential issue

[8 / 9.365] Network issues preventing access to the vote web app on port 31000.

Starting point

[None / 10.0] the "vote" web app (available on port 31000) is not reachable anymore

# Investigation Graph

"Disk Pressure" GPT-4o-mini 2194 calls ~10min



#### Potential issue

[9 / 8.87999999999999] Vote pod is not running or has crashed.

#### Potential issue

[8 / 8.395] Misconfiguration in the Kubernetes service for the vote app.



[9 / 7.7038753665229995] The node is experiencing DiskPressure due to low ephemeral-storage, which prevents the 'vote' web app pod from being admitted to the node.
[EXP10\_20240830\_073516/k8s\_logs/cluster-state/default/events.json]

items.....107...message...The node was low on resource: ephemeral-storage. Threshold quantity: 5255592423, available: 83120Ki. Container worker was using 32Ki, request is 0, has larger consumption of ephemeral-storage.

[8 / 7.6835344999999995] Service for 'vote' is not correctly configured

[9 / 7.738396586883333] Node was low on resource: ephemeral-storage

#### Starting point

[None / 10.0] the "vote" web app (available on port 31000) is not reachable anymore

[9 / 7.74035465799999] The 'vote' web app pod failed to be admitted to the node due to DiskPressure, indicating resource constraints that prevent the app from running. [EXP10\_20240830\_073516/server\_logs/xp10-vm22/syslog]

Aug 30 07:56:48 xp10-vm22 kubelet[1755]: 10830 07:56:48.201949 1755 eviction\_manager.go:173] "Failed to admit pod to node" pod="default/vote-5599b5ffb5-jh7x;" nodeCondition=["DiskPressure"]

 $[8\ /\ 8.395]$  Misconfiguration in the Kubernetes service for the vote app.

## Investigation Graph

"Disk Pressure" GPT-4o-mini 2194 calls ~10min

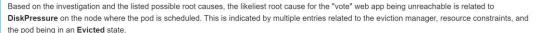


[9 / 8.41936666666667] The deployment for the 'vote' web app is not available, as indicated by the 'Available' condition being 0. [EXP10\_20240830\_073516/k8s\_logs/cluster-state/default/deployments.json] items.....2...status...conditions......0...type...Available



## Final Diagnose...

## ... which is correct!



#### Chain of Events Leading to the Reported Issue:

- DiskPressure Condition: The node is experiencing DiskPressure, which means it is running low on ephemeral storage. This can prevent the scheduling of new pods and lead to existing pods being evicted to reclaim resources.
- Pod Eviction: The eviction manager attempts to reclaim resources by evicting pods. The "vote" web app pod is thus evicted due to the DiskPressure condition, which means it is no longer running on the node.
- Pod Termination: The "vote" pod is terminated, leading to its unavailability. As a result, of the pod not running, the web app cannot be accessed on port 31000.
- 4. Network Issues: The presence of node.kubernetes.io/network-unavailable may indicate that the node is additionally experiencing network issues. However, the primary issue remains the DiskPressure leading to pod eviction.
- 5. Failed Deployment: The logs indicate that the deployment for the "vote" web app is not available, which aligns with the pod being evicted and not running.

#### Steps to Resolve the Issue:

- 2. Free Up Disk Space:
  - o Identify large files or logs that can be deleted or archived to free up space.
  - o Disk usage can be checked using this command: df -h
  - o If necessary, delete unused Docker images or containers: docker system prune -a
- 3. Check Pod Status: Verify the status of the "vote" pod and its deployment:

```
kubectl get pods -n <namespace> kubectl describe pod <vote-pod-name> -n <namespace>
```

4. Recreate the Pod: If the pod is, indeed, evicted, you may need to delete it and let the deployment recreate it:

```
kubectl delete pod <vote-pod-name> -n <namespace>
```

- 5. Monitor Resource Usage: After freeing up space, monitor resource usage on the node to ensure it does not reach critical levels again: kubectl top nodes kubectl top pods -n <namespace>
- 7. Check for Image Pull Issues: If the pod fails to start after being recreated, check for image pull issues: kubect1 describe pod <vote-pod-name> -n <namespace>
- 8. Review Logs: If the pod is still not running, review the logs for any errors: kubect1 logs <vote-pod-name> -n <namespace>

By following these steps, you should be able to identify and resolve the underlying issues causing the "vote" web app to be unreachable.

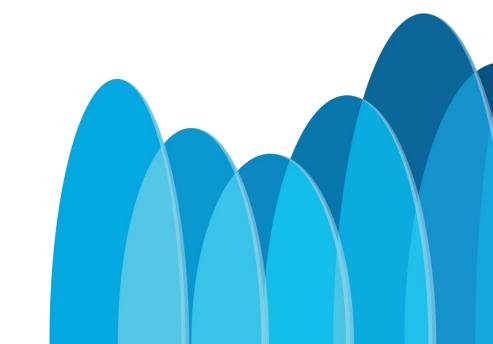


## A few considerations

- Context
  - Inventory/Topology, Knowledge Bases, Human in the Loop (for initial context and feedback)
- Comprehensive CMELT data
  - O11y systems and live system access
- Team memory
  - Learn from earlier investigations
- Purpose-fit Models (embedders, LLMs)
- Adaptive Data Retrieval and Preprocessing
  - Variety of retrieval tools; data type specific pre-processing/chunking/etc.
- Reasoning
  - Dependencies, Confidence Score, Termination Decisions



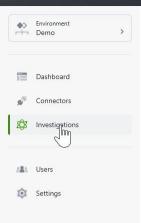
# Concept Demo



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#### Investigations

Q Search 7 results Source v



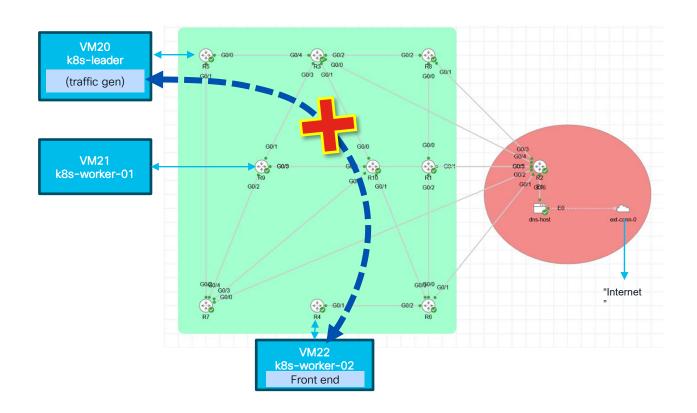
The Vote web application is down	Completed	Kubernetes node disk pressure issue EXP10 network connectivity issue	To mitigate the disk pressure issue, you should check the disk usage on the affected node and free up space by deleting unnecessary files or increasing the disk capacity. Additionally, consider reviewing the pod resource requests and limits to ensure they are appropriately set to	***
		Network connectivity issue on EXP10	avoid overconsumption of disk resources.	
		Network connectivity issue on Explo	To resolve the 'NetworkUnavailable' issue, check the network configuration of the node 'EXP10'. Ensure that all network interfaces are up	
The Vote application (pod) is down	Completed	Kubernetes node disk pressure issue	To mitigate the disk pressure issue, consider the following actions: 1. Identify and delete unnecessary files or logs on the node to free up	
			disk space. 2. Increase the disk size if possible, or add additional storage resources. 3. Review and optimize the workloads running on the	
			node to ensure they are not consuming excessive disk space. 4. Implement monitoring and alerting for disk usage to proactively manage	
			disk space in the future.	
The Vote application	Completed	Kubernetes node low on ephemeral storage	To resolve this issue, increase the ephemeral storage available on the node or optimize the storage usage of the containers. You can also set	V.
is down (pod			resource requests and limits for the containers to prevent them from consuming excessive ephemeral storage. Additionally, consider	
restart?)			cleaning up unused resources or increasing the node's storage capacity.	
The Vote application is down (not reachable)	Completed	GigabitEthernet0/1 administratively down	To resolve this issue, check the configuration of the GigabitEthernet0/1 interface. Ensure that it is not administratively shut down by issuing	11
		issue	the command 'no shutdown' in the interface configuration mode. Additionally, verify the physical connections and ensure that the interface	
			is properly connected to the network.	
The Vote application is down (access)	Completed	GigabitEthernet0/1 administratively down	To resolve this issue, check the configuration of the interface GigabitEthernet0/1 and ensure it is enabled. Use the command 'no shutdown'	
		issue	in the interface configuration mode. Additionally, verify that there are no access control lists (ACLs) or other configurations preventing the	
			interface from coming up. If the interface is intended to be down, ensure that the configuration aligns with the network design.	
Bi Report app is	Completed	Fan failure on R99 causing overheating.	Inspect and replace the faulty fan in router R99 to prevent further overheating.	
slow		Slow query on MongoDB affecting app performance.	Optimize MongoDB queries and check the network path for any issues.	
Bi Report error	Completed	Configuration change on R99	Revert the configuration changes made on router R99 or analyze the configuration history to identify and correct the specific change that led to blocking Internet access.	**

https://a3po-ui.dev.outshift.io/investigations

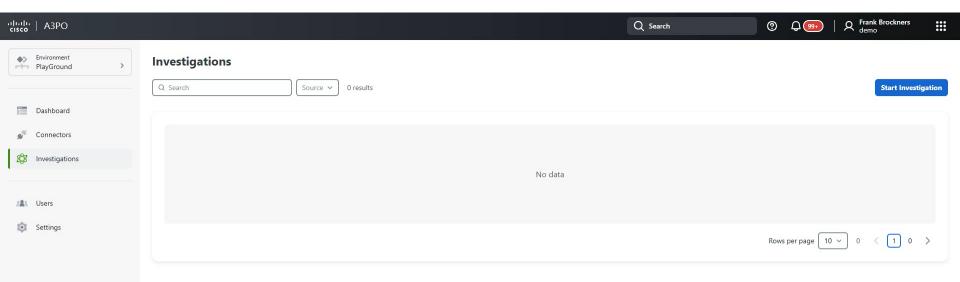
63

Let's start a new investigation...









In Summary...



# Agentic AI can Evolve Deductive and Inductive Analysis - turning Services into Software



#### Deductive

Fit the data to a human-defined schema Upfront definition of structure and semantics

Closed World: Limited domain Customized to use-case and deployment

Incremental extension of Ontologies

deterministic



#### Inductive

Derive the schema from data using GenAl Natural language query of unstructured data

#### Open world

Generically applicable

Exponential growth of corpus ("world data")

probabilistic



## Webex App

#### **Questions?**

Use the Webex app to chat with the speaker after the session

#### How

- 1 Find this session in the Cisco Events mobile app
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- 3 Install the Webex app or go directly to the Webex space
- 4 Enter messages/questions in the Webex space

Webex spaces will be moderated by the speaker until February 28, 2025.





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(from 11:30 on Thursday, while supplies last)





All surveys can be taken in the Cisco Events mobile app or by logging in to the Session Catalog and clicking the 'Participant Dashboard'



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   Sessions from this event will be available from March 3.

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Thank you



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GO BEYOND