

Extreme's Third Act Shines with Extreme Platform ONE Unified Management

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SUMMARY

Issue

This May, Extreme Networks held its user conference in Paris, France marking a pivotal moment in the company's evolution as it transitions into its "third act."

The highlight of the conference was the announcement of Extreme Platform ONE, a unified enterprise networking platform designed to streamline network management. Set for full availability in Q3 2025, this platform aims to simplify operations with a single management interface built on modern cloud architecture, while also offering local installation options for security-sensitive customers. Key features include AI-assisted workflows for asset management, licensing, and security, along with interactive dashboards for real-time reporting.

Extreme Platform ONE also integrates AI capabilities for automated diagnostics and policy recommendations, significantly reducing problem resolution times. However, the effectiveness of its conversational AI interface remains uncertain, as network administrators may struggle to adapt to this new mode of interaction.

Key Takeaways

- Extreme Networks recently marked a transition into its "third act" with a unified product line and the new Extreme Platform ONE to manage all functions.
- The company has evolved from a hardware-focused firm to a solutions provider through strategic acquisitions over the years.
- Extreme Platform ONE aims to unify network management with a single interface and AI-assisted functionalities.
- Key features for Extreme Platform ONE include AI Canvas for custom dashboards, automated diagnostics, and enhanced security management capabilities.
- Extreme Platform ONE includes agentic AI for recommendations on resolving problems as well as for setting security policy.
- Extreme Platform ONE also includes management of security policies using the ExtremeCloud Universal ZTNA, and some support for third-party security solutions.

Perspective

Current Perspective

This spring in late May 2025, Extreme Networks held its latest user conference in Paris, France. Extreme's customers as well as press and industry analysts attended the event. Extreme holds its user conferences in Europe every other year, with the alternating years within the continental US. Extreme has made some interesting announcements at the show, while the larger story is more about Extreme transitioning into its third act.

To the Way-Back Machine

To illustrate this transition, it is necessary to engage in a little bit of company history of who Extreme was and how the company became the Extreme of today. Extreme Networks was founded in 1996 in California's Silicon Valley area. Just three years later in 1999 it became a public company. The early years of Extreme Networks during and somewhat after the dot com boom, was one of a highly dedicated hardware company, making switches and routers known for speed and reliability.

Then in the first decade of the 2000s, changes in the market such as the rise of merchant silicon and Wi-Fi led to over a decade of relatively flat growth. This was Extreme's first act. In the early 2010s things began to change again with the acquisition of Enterasys Networks.

Extreme's second act followed marked by years of acquisition. These acquisitions included Zebra Technologies wireless division, Avaya's networking division, the switching, routing, and analytics division of Brocade (which was the assets of former Extreme rival Foundry Networks). In 2019, Extreme acquired Aerohive Networks, which had a popular portfolio of cloud-managed Wi-Fi and switching products. The company's latest major acquisition in 2021 was the Ipanema SD-WAN business from Infovista. These acquisitions came with existing customers of the acquired firms, many of which are now loyal to Extreme. But the acquisitions left Extreme and its customers with a network/device management problem – how to manage these products while Extreme works towards product line rationalization and normalization. That brings us up to date and the start of Extreme's third act.

The Third Act

The third act revolves around Extreme's enterprise networking platform, Extreme Platform ONE. At the Paris Extreme Connect event, it announced limited availability of the platform. It released the new Extreme Platform ONE for managed service providers and E-Rate customers earlier in the year. Full general availability is planned for Q3 2025. The timing is slightly awkward; clearly the limited availability release was done to promote the product at the annual user gathering. However, when it comes to a customer moving to an entirely new network management platform, it's unlikely that there are many, if any, customers that would be ready to move before the end of Q3 2025.

Extreme Platform ONE is designed to be the new foundation of Extreme's offerings. This is important on several fronts. First, of course, is having a single pane-of-glass management system for the network built on modern cloud architecture, but still able to be installed locally for customers that cannot have its network management system installed outside of their own facilities. This reduces the complexity and number of tools needed to manage the network and having a unified UI makes it a lot simpler to learn to use the system across its various toolsets.

The Extreme Platform ONE also handles security and lifecycle duties, such as inventory management including license management, purchase, and renewal. There are AI-assisted workflows for assets, subscriptions, licensing, and contracting. This is augmented by usage and financial reporting that includes forecasts via interactive AI analytics, dashboards, and agents. All these functions are augmented by Extreme's AI assistance in planning and delivery. This is on top of simplified licensing that includes network management, security, AI, and support services.

The Extreme AI included in Platform ONE can work in several modes, first being the aforementioned interactive analytics, dashboards, and agents. The primary interface to the AI is conversational – with the AI keeping context and making suggestions where appropriate. The jury is still out on whether AI conversational interfaces for management of networks and security are going to be successful in the long term, but they are being put in every AI-enabled network management platform, not just Extreme's. There is a fundamental difference in how administrators think. They think in what can be described as a technical or command line modes that don't translate well to AI-driven conversational interfaces. This is not an uncrossable gulf, but long-term use of the conversational interface may be far less 'conversational' and more command-line like than what the industry is assuming.

Another feature of Extreme Platform ONE is called AI Canvas, which allows customers to create custom dashboards that can be real-time and interactive. This enables administrators to create reports for status updates or to simply illustrate a point visually in minutes. This can be combined with the extensive visualization that is available in the product making it easier to not only see different layers of the networks but also allows a wide range of views from the entire network estate worldwide, down to the individual devices, policies, and the attached licensing as well. The visibility can include geographic maps (including building maps), topological maps, and fabric overlays.

An additional feature of Extreme Platform ONE is the ability to manage security, including third-party security (of course with some limitations). In particular, Extreme Platform ONE, in conjunction with ExtremeCloud Universal ZTNA can bring AI-assisted policy recommendations that then can be quickly applied, bringing unified policy for users, applications, networks, and locations. Further, an AI agent validates access requests with suggestions regarding which groups and policies would be best suited for that request. This is part of the overall reduction of steps and streamlining of common tasks that can be accomplished by Extreme Platform ONE.

Other agentic AI functions in Extreme Platform ONE are automated diagnostics, to cut problem resolution time by a claimed 98%. The Extreme Service AI Agent gathers all relevant information on the devices, logs, and telemetry regarding the problem and offers a solution, which it can implement with a click, ensuring that there is a human in the loop. Ultimately, common problems can be solved automatically, but it will take some time for enterprise network administrators to become comfortable enough to allow the AI to function without human supervision.

Conclusions

With this third act for Extreme Networks, the company is in a good technical position, with clearer solutions offerings, with a unified management platform for its flagship unified products. Extreme's deep vertical penetration into healthcare, education, and event venues are also huge advantages for the company in those verticals. But competition in less verticalized enterprise accounts is fierce – the majority of Extreme's competitors have announced platforms similar to Extreme Platform ONE, with many of the same claims for time-saving and innovative AI. Further, Extreme has issues with visibility. Extreme's customers are very loyal, and the company has been successful bidding against larger rivals. However, Extreme misses out on many other bids because the company is simply not on the radar to bid for enterprise IT buyers and administrators. Extreme Platform ONE does what a good platform should do; it gives Extreme a place to shout from – and Extreme will need to shout more about itself as the pace of the enterprise networking market picks up with AI enhancements and a focus on simplicity and efficiency.