

# How to pythonize the data from Cisco WLC



Roman Podoyntsyn

# The goal

- To introduce the Python parser for WLC config (aka wlc-pythonizer)
- To discuss the use cases available and gather ideas for future
- To demonstrate how it works
- To invite for collaboration

# How it all started

# The relationships between engineer and WLC config

- We often work with WLC config files
- These files contain a lot of semi-structured data in text format
- The information is really useful but hard to grasp in text editor
- Love it or hate it?

# Project goals

- Solve the problems asked by my Customers
- Save all historical configuration and operational data in easy-to-use format (export as pickle, json, yaml etc.)
- Get quick answer on my fingertips (easy to use filters)
- Be able to visualize data to find hidden patterns
- Improve Python skills and have fun!!!
- Try AI capabilities on collected dataset (\*future releases)

# Some disclaimers

- Work in progress, not a complete product or service to use
- Many undiscovered bugs may exist
- Some scalability tests were done (45 Mb config with ~2500 AP)
- Not a python guru, sometimes the code is awkward
- Tested with Python 3.7
- No fancy GUI, but some nice visualizations

# Why use customized objects?

- Clear representation
- Context help to quickly find attribute
- Human-readable syntax
- Customized methods (like compare whole config or its special part, filter by attribute or value)
- Fast customization (if needed)

# Winning combination for any config analysis task

- Your wireless network skills
- Basic knowledge of Python





# Examples of use cases

# Some examples that are easy to solve with tool

- What exactly changed in the config since the last (day, week, month)?
- Best practice rules – update, adjust and customize for your Cu
- Do we have the same SSID settings in every branch?
- How diverse is network configuration for 100 WLCs installed in Customer network?
- Which rogue APs have the most impact on our network?
- Etc.

And eventually...  
It's time for DEMO

# Demo scenarios

- Parse config file
- Explore data with context help (refer to object tree)
- Define best practice rules and check WLC config against them
- Compare SSID config for different WLCs
- Compare SSID configs of the same WLC collected in different time
- Config diversity
- Explore rogue APs
- Explore channel utilization and its impact factors

# Parse config

# The ways to import config

- From file

```
wlcs = parse_file('wlc_config_example.txt')
```

```
Following WLCs were parsed from file:  ['tac-test', 'wlc2']
```

# The ways to import config – via SSH

- Via SSH

```
wlcs = ssh_collect()  
Collecting config from WLC via SSH  
WLC IP address, please: >? 10.11.12.13  
Your username, please: >? admin  
Your password, please: >? *****  
sending username...  
sending pwd...  
Please, hold on, getting config, it can take some time...  
Collection is completed  
Please, hold on, parsing configs, it can take some time...  
Configs are written to file with name: WLC_config-IP 10.11.12.13-  
Tue Aug 7 111500 2021.txt  
Configs are sent to parser...  
Following WLCs were parsed..
```

# The ways to import config – via Cisco DNA Center

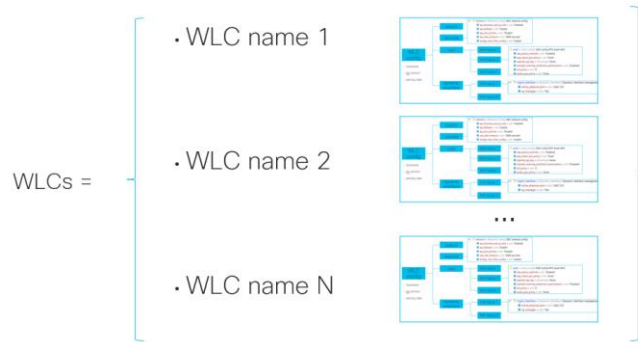
- Via DNAC API

```
wlcs = dnac_get_wlc_configs()
Enter the IP address of DNAC, please: >? 192.168.44.44
Your username, please: >? user
Your password, please: >? ****
Contacting Cisco DNA Center with IP address: 192.168.44.44
for username: user
Following WLC devices are found and reachable:
sdclwlc001
Starting config collection...
Waiting for collection results ...
DNA Center collected configs, grabbing config files from it...
WLC config files are successfully collected
Configs are written to file with name: all_WLC_config-DNAC-
Configs are sent to parser
...
Following WLCs were parsed from file: ['sdclwlc001']
```



## To access the WLC config – refer by hostname

- Files may contain the config from many WLCs
- All the functions above return the Python dictionary, keys are hostnames



To access the WLC config objects:

```
wlc1 = wlcs[<wlc1 hostname>]
```

```
wlc2 = wlc2[<wlc2 hostname>]
```

# Explore the data

# The ways to explore parsed data

- Just print the object name in console

```
wlc
```

```
WLC config for host: WC-Cisco-CX-020, version is 8.10.142.0,  
collection time is Sun Jul 7 00:00:07 2021,  
parsing date is Mon Aug 12 15:21:15 2021
```

# The ways to explore parsed data

- Add attributes after point (config section type 1)

```
wlc.network
```

```
WLC network config
```

```
wlc.switch
```

```
WLC switch config
```

# The ways to explore parsed data

- Add attributes after point (config section type 2)

```
wlc.dynamic_interfaces
```

```
Named List of length 7 with items Dynamic_Interface: management,  
redundancy-management, redundancy-port, service-port, virtual,  
wifi_guest, wifi_guest_bras, wifi_guest_old, wifi_cisco,  
wifi_users, wifi_users_vip, wifi_voice
```

```
wlc.ssid
```

```
Named List of length 7 with items Ssid_Config: Cisco_WLC,  
9800_best, AireOS, BEST-WIFI, Provision, Corporate, Guest WiFi
```

# The ways to explore parsed data

- Add [name] to get the item from list (config section type 2)

```
wlc.dynamic_interfaces['management']
```

```
Dynamic interface management
```

```
wlc.ssid['Guest']
```

```
SSID config Guest
```

# The ways to explore parsed data

- Add point and the attribute name to get the value

```
wlc.dynamic_interfaces['management'].ip_address
```

```
'192.168.176.129'
```

```
wlc.dynamic_interfaces['management'].active_physical_port
```

```
'LAG (13)'
```

**Hint:** Don't remember the name of attribute? Stay calm and start printing!

(Tab button is your friend for context help)

# List is too long? - Use “filter” method

SYNTAX:

```
Object.filter(<ATTRIBUTE NAME>,<VALUE>)
```

```
wlc.ap_rf
```

```
Named List of length 651 with items Ap_Rf_Config: WA-KUR-KRCH-001-  
1100_slot0, ...
```

```
#Find all radios with failed noise profile
```

```
wlc.ap_rf.filter('noise_profile','FAILED')
```

```
Named List of length 2 with items Ap_Rf_Config:  
WA-MSK-CWK_slot0, WA-MSK-SBC-002_slot0
```

```
#Double filtering is allowed too ;)
```

```
wlc.rogue_aps.filter('channel','11').filter('state','Alert')
```



# Display all values? – Use “show” command

SYNTAX:

```
show(object)
```

```
object.show()
```

```
#Display all attributes of network config section
```

```
wlc.network.show()
```

```
...
```

```
rf_network_name wifimsk
```

```
dns_server_ip 192.168.0.41
```

```
web_mode Disable
```

```
secure_web_mode Enable
```

```
secure_web_mode_cipher_option_high Enable
```

```
secure_web_mode_ssl_protocol Disable
```

```
web_csrf_check Enable
```

```
ocsp Disabled
```

```
...
```

# Find attribute or value? – Use “grep” command

SYNTAX:

```
grep(object,'value')
```

```
object.grep('value')
```

#Find all IPv6 MLD parameters

```
wlc.grep('mld')
```

```
WLC network config mld_snooping Disabled
```

```
WLC network config mld_timeout 60 seconds
```

```
WLC network config mld_query_interval 20 seconds
```

#Find all timeouts for SSID

```
wlc.ssid['Guest'].grep('second')
```

```
SSID config Guest exclusionlist_timeout 60 seconds
```

```
SSID config Guest session_timeout 1800 seconds
```

```
SSID config Guest scan_defer_time 100 milliseconds
```

#Find all radios with FAILED profiles

```
wlc.ap_rf.grep('FAIL')
```

```
AP RF config WA-MSK-SSH-001_slot0 interference_profile FAILED
```

```
AP RF config WA-MSK-TEL-003_slot0 noise_profile FAILED
```

# Using list comprehension - 1

```
[x for x in range(6)]
```

```
[0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5]
```

```
[ssid.name for ssid in wlc.ssid] # get all names of SSIDs configured
```

```
['Guest_WiFi',  
 'Users',  
 '9800-1x',  
 '9800-EOGRE',  
 'Provision',  
 'Corporate',  
 'Cisco Guest WiFi']
```

## Using list comprehension - 2

```
[(x,x*2) for x in range(6)] # get pairs of number, doubled number  
  
[(0, 0), (1, 2), (2, 4), (3, 6), (4, 8), (5, 10)]
```

```
# get name and status of SSIDs configured  
[(ssid.name, ssid.status) for ssid in wlc.ssid]  
  
[('Guest_WiFi', 'Disabled'),  
 ('9800-1X', 'Enabled'),  
 ('Users', 'Enabled'),  
 ('Provision', 'Enabled'),  
 ('Corporate', 'Enabled'),  
 ('Guest WiFi', 'Enabled')]
```

## Using list comprehension - 3

```
[(x,x*2) for x in range(10) if x%2 ==0] # get pairs for odd numbers  
  
[(0, 0), (2, 4), (4, 8)]
```

```
# get the names of SSIDs in Disabled status  
[ssid.name for ssid in wlc.ssid if ssid.status == 'Disabled']  
  
['Guest_WiFi']  
# get the names of SSIDs with AAA override  
[ssid.name for ssid in wlc.ssid  
    if ssid.aaa_policy_override == 'Enabled']  
  
# get the names of SSIDs with CWA  
[ssid.name for ssid in wlc.ssid  
    if ssid.aaa_policy_override == 'Enabled' and  
    'Guest' in ssid.name]
```

# Best practice check

# To check the BP rule – use tools available

- Translate the BP rule into Python code
- Usually one string is enough
- Example: 'Telnet service should be disabled on AP'

```
#Get all AP names with telnet enabled
```

```
[ap.name for ap in wlc.ap_configs if 'Enable' in ap.telnet_state]
```

# Example of function to check BP rule

```
def bp4(wlc_config):
    description = Best_Practice_Description()
    description.id = 4
    description.name = 'Dynamic interface should not have IP address 0.0.0.0'
    description.author = 'CX WLNA Subcomm'
    description.severity = 'Low'
    description.section = 'Architecture'
    list_names_of_non_compliant_items = [interface.name for interface in wlc_config.dynamic_interfaces if interface.ip_address == '0.0.0.0']
    number_of_config_items = len(wlc_config.dynamic_interfaces)
    number_of_non_compliant_items = len(list_names_of_non_compliant_items)
    if number_of_config_items == number_of_non_compliant_items:
        compliance_status = 'Non compliant'
    elif number_of_non_compliant_items == 0:
        compliance_status = 'Compliant'
    else:
        compliance_status = 'Partially compliant'
    compliance_rate = round((1 - number_of_non_compliant_items/float(number_of_config_items))*100)
    return description, compliance_status, compliance_rate, list_names_of_non_compliant_items
```



# To apply the set of BP rules – use “bp\_check”

SYNTAX:

```
bp_check(wlc_config)
```

#Check WLC config against the set of rules

```
bp_check(wlc)
```

Best practices compliance report

ID	Status	Rate	Name
1	Compliant	100	Telnet should be disabled in all APs
2	Compliant	100	Each SSID is mapped with unique interface in controller if no AAA override is enabled
3	Compliant	100	Local Client profiling using HTTP and DHCP is enabled unless RADIUS profiling is in use
4	Compliant	100	Dynamic interface should not have IP address 0.0.0.0
5	Compliant	100	Primary and secondary DHCP server IP addresses are configured for WLC dynamic interfaces

# Some advantages

- Relatively easy translation of business requirements into code
- Customize and implement if needed
- Fast automated checking
- Double-check values in the same tool if in doubt

# Compare config files or its sections

# Compare config? – Use “compare” function

SYNTAX:

```
compare(object1, object2)
```

```
#Get the same SSID config from the same device during last 3 weeks
```

```
ssid1 = archive['Week 31']['WC-MSK-CX'].ssid['Corporate']
```

```
ssid2 = archive['Week 32']['WC-MSK-CX'].ssid['Corporate']
```

```
ssid3 = archive['Week 33']['WC-MSK-CX'].ssid['Corporate']
```

```
#Call compare function
```

```
a = compare(ssid1,ssid2)
```

```
Compare called for  SSID config Corporate
```

```
SSID config:
```

```
Subdiffs:
```

- 0 #Zero changes between Week 31 and 32
- 196 #196 parameters were compared

# Compare config? – Use “compare” function

SYNTAX:

```
compare(object1, object2)
```

*#Call compare function*

```
a = compare(ssid2,ssid3)
```

Compare called for SSID config Corporate

SSID config:

Subdiffs:

- 3 *#3 parameters were changed between Week 32 and 33*
- 196 *#196 parameters were compared*

d\_802\_11k\_neighbor\_list: *# <-The name of parameter*

- Disabled *# <-The value for Week 32*
- Enabled *# <-The value for Week 32*

d\_802\_11v\_bss\_transition\_service:

- Disabled
- Enabled

security\_ft\_support:

- Disabled
- Adaptive

# “Compare” function

- Works with any config section
- Recursively calls every branch in config tree
- If called for list, compares only items with the same name, for example SSID ‘Corporate’ with SSID “Corporate’
- Calculates the number of parameters compared
- Calculates the number of differences in values

# Know the diversity of configs

# Compare without details – get the “big picture”

- Diversity metric defined as:

$$\text{Diversity} = \frac{\text{Number of differences found}}{\text{Number of parameters analyzed}}$$

- Can take values from:

0% - no differences, configs are completely identical

100% - all values are different



# Measure the diversity– Use “config\_diversity”

SYNTAX:

```
config_diversity([object 1, object 2,...,object N]) # list as input!!!
```

```
#Compare SSID configs
```

```
config_diversity([ssid1,ssid2])
```

```
Diversity metric is equal 0 %
```

```
This metric is calculated for 2 config items of type SSID config
```

```
#Compare SSID configs
```

```
Diversity metric is equal 1 %
```

```
This metric is calculated for 2 config items of type SSID config
```

- **Hint:** Get the big picture first, then dig deeper into details

# Analyze rogue APs

# Can we do something useful with this list?

```
Rogue Detection Security Level..... custom
Rogue Pending Time..... 180 secs
Rogue on wire Auto-Contain..... Disabled
Rogue using our SSID Auto-Contain..... Disabled
Valid client on rogue AP Auto-Contain..... Disabled
Rogue AP timeout..... 1200
Rogue Detection Report Interval..... 10
Rogue Detection Min Rssi..... -128
Rogue Detection Transient Interval..... 0
Rogue Detection Client Num Thershold..... 0
Total Rogues (AP+Ad-hoc) supported..... 2000
Total Rogues classified..... 1004
```

MAC Address	Classification	# APs	# Clients	Last Heard
00:04:56:eb:a6:69	Unclassified	2	0	Tue Aug 13 19:05:55 2019
00:0d:88:9b:66:66	Unclassified	4	0	Tue Aug 13 19:16:40 2019
00:0e:8f:06:a7:f2	Unclassified	0	0	Not Heard
00:0e:8f:0f:05:c4	Unclassified	1	0	Tue Aug 13 19:06:00 2019
00:0e:c6:05:0d:07	Unclassified	2	0	Tue Aug 13 19:08:57 2019
00:11:95:8e:cd:12	Unclassified	6	0	Tue Aug 13 19:16:49 2019
00:11:f6:af:d0:6c	Unclassified	2	0	Tue Aug 13 18:59:20 2019
00:11:f6:b0:7a:d3	Unclassified	2	0	Tue Aug 13 18:58:19 2019
00:14:6c:c7:05:40	Unclassified	3	0	Tue Aug 13 19:16:46 2019
00:18:e7:be:8f:a2	Unclassified	1	0	Tue Aug 13 19:16:34 2019
00:19:e1:00:59:40	Unclassified	2	0	Tue Aug 13 19:16:47 2019
00:1d:c9:07:67:76	Unclassified	1	0	Tue Aug 13 18:55:43 2019
00:1d:e5:80:8b:00	Unclassified	1	0	Tue Aug 13 19:15:22 2019

# Get the nice summary for all rogue APs - 1

SYNTAX:

```
Rogue_ap_summary(wlc_config)
```

#See how many rogue APs are dangerous ones (close to our APs)

Rogue AP summary for WC-MSK-CISCO-CX:

The overall number of rogue APs : 1998

The number of rogue AP with highest RSSI	-10	dBm =	0
The number of rogue AP with highest RSSI	-20	dBm =	5
The number of rogue AP with highest RSSI	-30	dBm =	19
The number of rogue AP with highest RSSI	-40	dBm =	51
The number of rogue AP with highest RSSI	-50	dBm =	125
The number of rogue AP with highest RSSI	-60	dBm =	236
The number of rogue AP with highest RSSI	-70	dBm =	432
The number of rogue AP with highest RSSI	-80	dBm =	853
The number of rogue AP with highest RSSI	-90	dBm =	1989

<..output continues next page..>

# Get the nice summary for all rogue APs - 2

SYNTAX:

```
Rogue_ap_summary(wlc_config)
```

*#See which rogue APs has the most impact*

The most impacting rogue APs in this environment:

Currently hardcoded values for impact are:

- \* RSSI > -50 dBm

- \* number of detecting APs > 3

54:4a:00:d1:fd:00 *#Check these rogues first - they MIGHT have high impact*

a0:93:51:38:a8:60

f0:9e:63:70:ef:b0

00:fc:ba:0b:b9:e0

<..output continues next page..>

# Get the nice summary for all rogue APs - 3

SYNTAX:

```
Rogue_ap_summary(wlc_config)
```

#See which APs from our network are impacted

The impacted APs in this environment:

WA-MSK-CX-001 60 %

WA-MSK-CX-006 30 %

WA-MSK-CX-215 20 %

WA-MSK-CX-007 53 %

WA-MSK-CX-330 28 %

WA-MSK-CX-003 16 %

<..output omitted..>

#Know manufacturers of rogue APs

Most common manufacturers of rogue APs are:

```
[('Cisco', 199), ('Sercomm', 168), ('RuckusWi', 158), ('ZyxelCom', 127),  
('Routerboard', 115)]
```

# Visualize the channel utilization

# Why not to turn text data into graph?

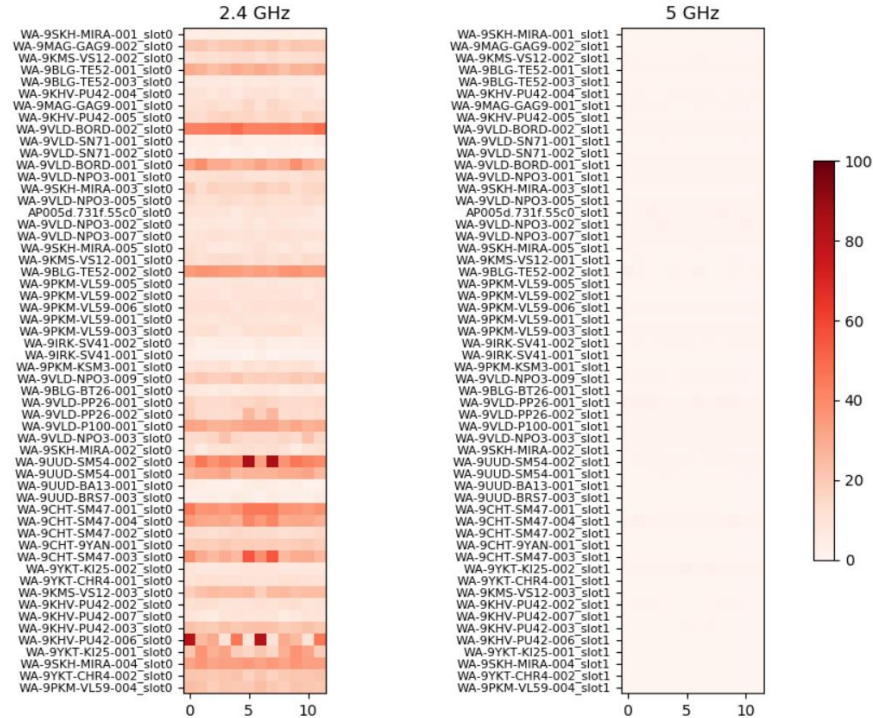
- One picture worth a thousands of text words
- Find some patterns based on data

Examples:

- Periodically collected WLC config -> channel utilization changes in time
- Which factors define channel utilization? -> scatterplot data for every AP in network

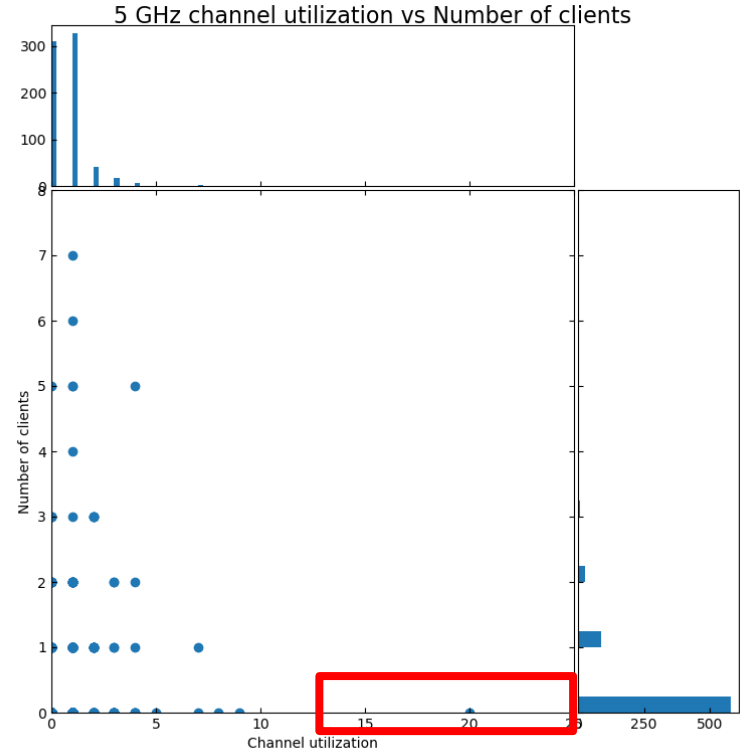
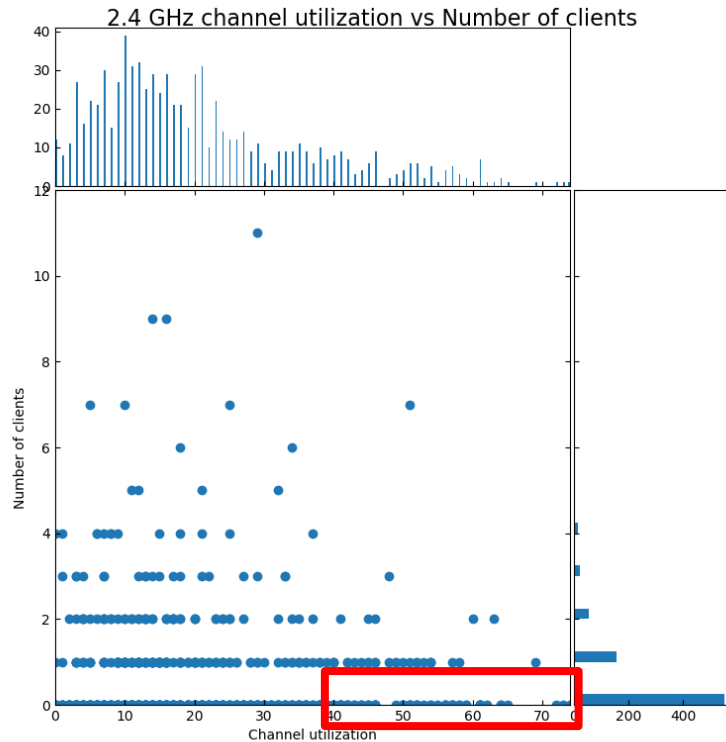


# Heatmap of channel utilization in time

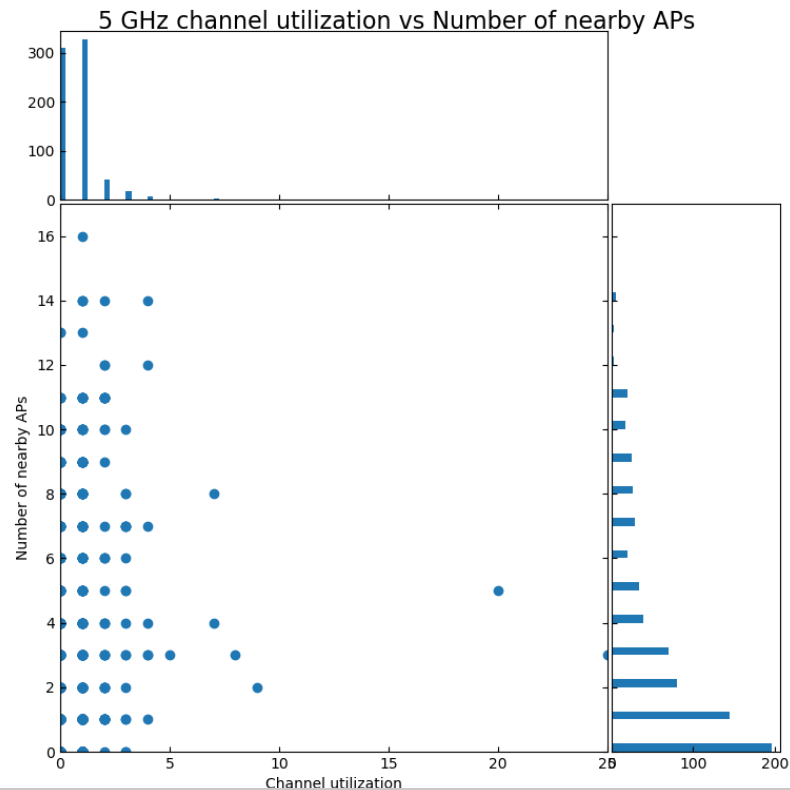
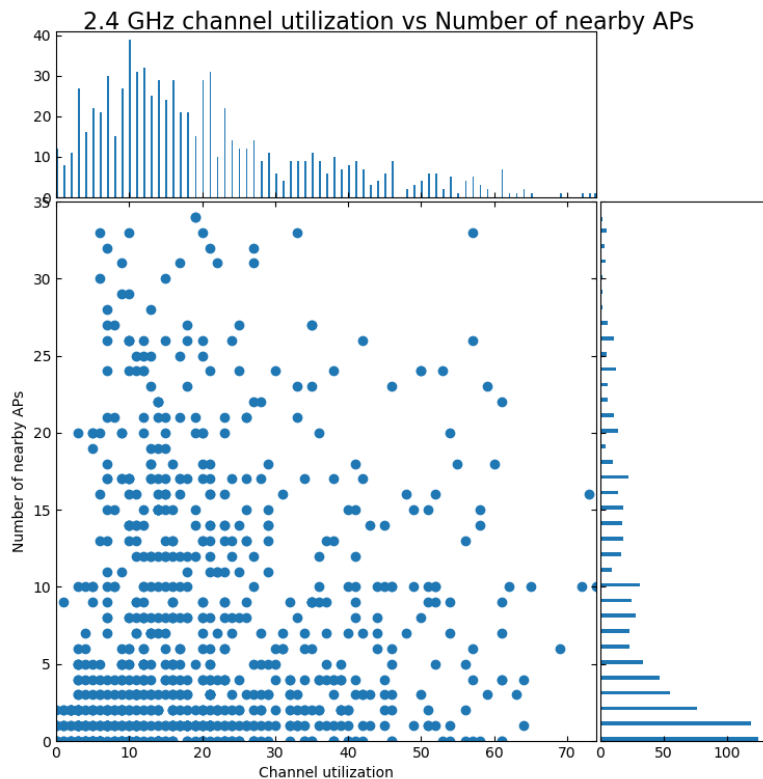


SYNTAX:  
`channel_utilization_visual(archive)`

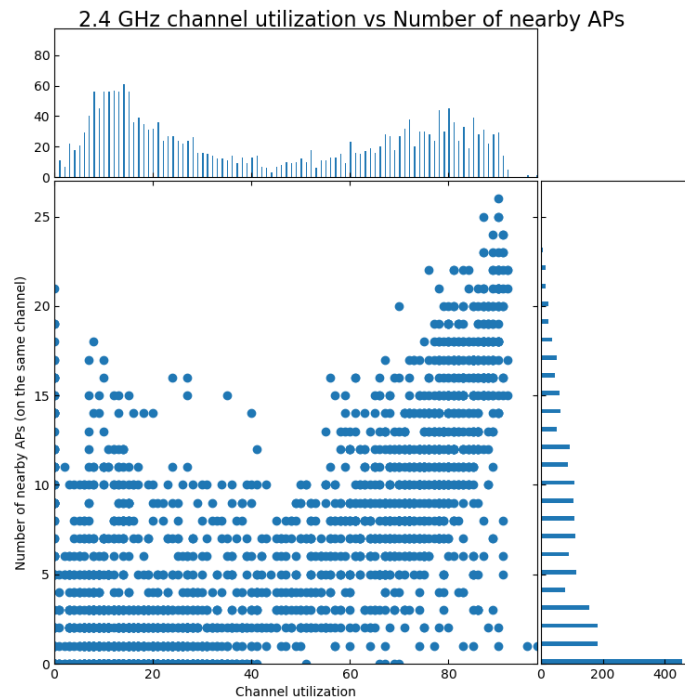
# Does channel utilization depends on # of clients?



# Does channel utilization depends on nearby APs?



# Does channel utilization depends on nearby APs?



SYNTAX:

```
utilization_same_channel_nearby_aps_scatterplot(archive)
```

# What is next?

# Next steps and call to action

- First and foremost - **Test and give feedback**
- Share ideas for the problems and tasks you face in everyday job
- Join the development

# How to join?

HERE IS THE link to DevNet github repo!



The approach to  
parsing (if you would  
like to co-develop)



# WLC config file

- Quite large for text file (up to 50 Mbytes)
- Mix of configuration and operational data
- Structured to some extent

# WLC config sections

```
142 Switch Configuration ←
143 802.3x Flow Control Mode..... Disable
144 FIPS prerequisite features..... Disabled
145 WLANCC prerequisite features..... Disabled
146 UCAPL prerequisite features..... Disabled
147 DTLS WLC MIC ..... SHA2
148 secret obfuscation..... Enabled
149 Strong Password Check Features
150   case-check..... Enabled
151   consecutive-check..... Enabled
152   default-check..... Enabled
153   username-check..... Enabled
154   position-check..... Disabled
155   case-digit-check..... Disabled
156   Min. Password length..... 3
157   Min. Upper case chars..... 0
158   Min. Lower case chars..... 0
159   Min. Digits chars..... 0
160   Min. Special chars..... 0
161 Mgmt User
162   Password Lifetime [days]..... 0
163   Password Lockout..... Disabled
164   Lockout Attempts..... 0
165   Lockout Timeout [mins]..... 0
166 SNMPv3 User
167   Password Lifetime [days]..... 0
168   Password Lockout..... Disabled
169   Lockout Attempts..... 3
170   Lockout Timeout [mins]..... 5
171
172
173
174 Network Information ←
175 RF-Network Name..... RFG_Ural
176 DNS Server IP.....
177 Web Mode..... Disable
178 Secure Web Mode..... Enable
```

- Start with easy distinguishable word sequence
- First step to parsing
- About 80 sections

# Two types of config sections – type 1

```
51416
51417
51418
51419 Redundancy Information
51420 Redundancy Mode..... SSO ENABLED
51421 Local State..... ACTIVE
51422 Peer State..... STANDBY HOT
51423 Unit..... Secondary (Inherited AP License Count = 500)
51424 Unit ID..... 00:F2:8B:98:2A:00
51425 Redundancy State..... SSO
51426 Mobility MAC..... 00:F2:8B:98:29:C0
51427 Redundancy Management IP Address..... 192.168.176.132
51428 Peer Redundancy Management IP Address..... 192.168.176.131
51429 Redundancy Port IP Address..... 169.254.176.132
51430 Peer Redundancy Port IP Address..... 169.254.176.131
51431 Peer Service Port IP Address..... 192.168.176.145
51432
51433
51434
51435
```

- Every parameter is unique and not repeated
- Usually it is WLC (whole system) config
- The number of parameters is usually the same (may differ with sw version)

# Two types of config sections – type 2

```
2
3 AP Config
4 Cisco AP Identifier..... 3
5 Cisco AP Name..... WA-7PRM-SV50-204
6 Country code..... RU - Russian Federation
7 Regulatory Domain allowed by Country..... 802.11bg:-AER 802.11a:-AER
8 AP Country code..... RU - Russian Federation
9 AP Regulatory Domain..... -R
10 Switch Port Number ..... 13
11 MAC Address..... 78:da:6e:52:31:48
12 IP Address Configuration..... DHCP
13 IP Address..... 10.100.34.129
14
15 .....
16 RX SOP threshold..... AUTO
17 CCA threshold..... AUTO
18
19 Cisco AP Identifier..... 4
20 Cisco AP Name..... WA-7EKB-VN40-405
21 Country code..... RU - Russian Federation
22 Regulatory Domain allowed by Country..... 802.11bg:-AER 802.11a:-AER
23 AP Country code..... RU - Russian Federation
24 AP Regulatory Domain..... -R
25
26 .....
27 RX SOP threshold..... AUTO
28 CCA threshold..... AUTO
29
30 Cisco AP Identifier..... 5
31 Cisco AP Name..... WA-7NVR-2PU1-001
32 Country code..... RU - Russian Federation
33 Regulatory Domain allowed by Country..... 802.11bg:-AER 802.11a:-AER
34
35 .....
```

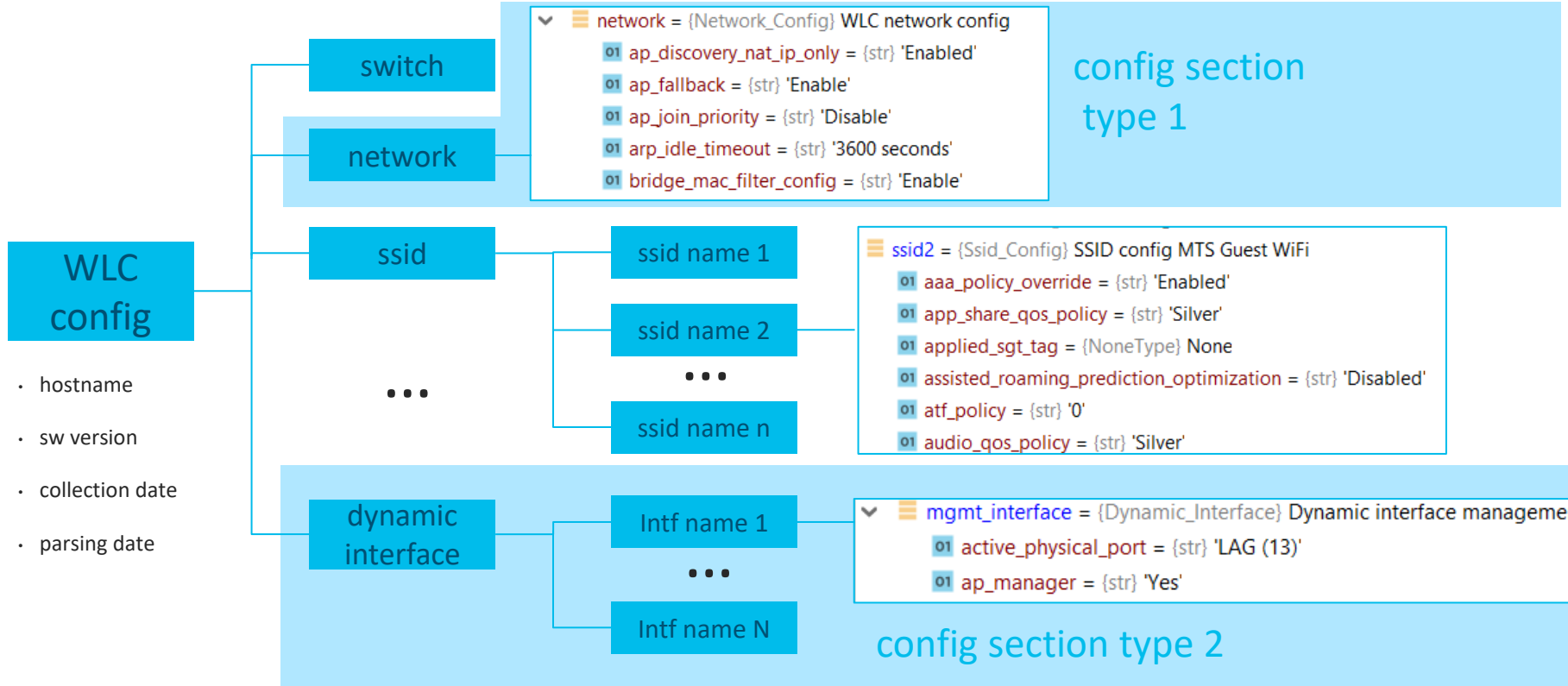
- Contains the list of objects
- Objects have identifier of some sort
- The same repetitive set of parameters for every object
- The number of objects in list may differ (WLANs configured, AP associated etc.)

# Key element of data model

- Attribute (key) = name of parameter
- Value = configuration applied
- Dictionary-like: quickly access value by name of attribute

```
01 mgmt_user_lockout_attempts = {str} '3'  
01 mgmt_user_lockout_timeout_mins = {str} '5'  
01 mgmt_user_password_lifetime_days = {str} '0'  
01 mgmt_user_password_lockout = {str} 'Disabled'
```

# The object tree for WLC config



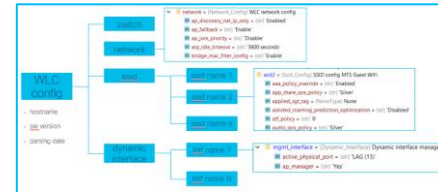
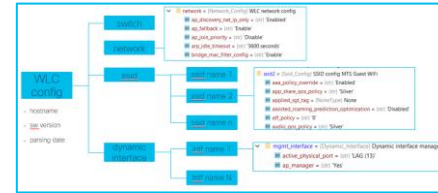
# Multiple WLCs can be combined into one element

WLCs =

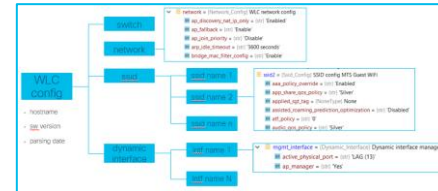
- WLC name 1

- WLC name 2

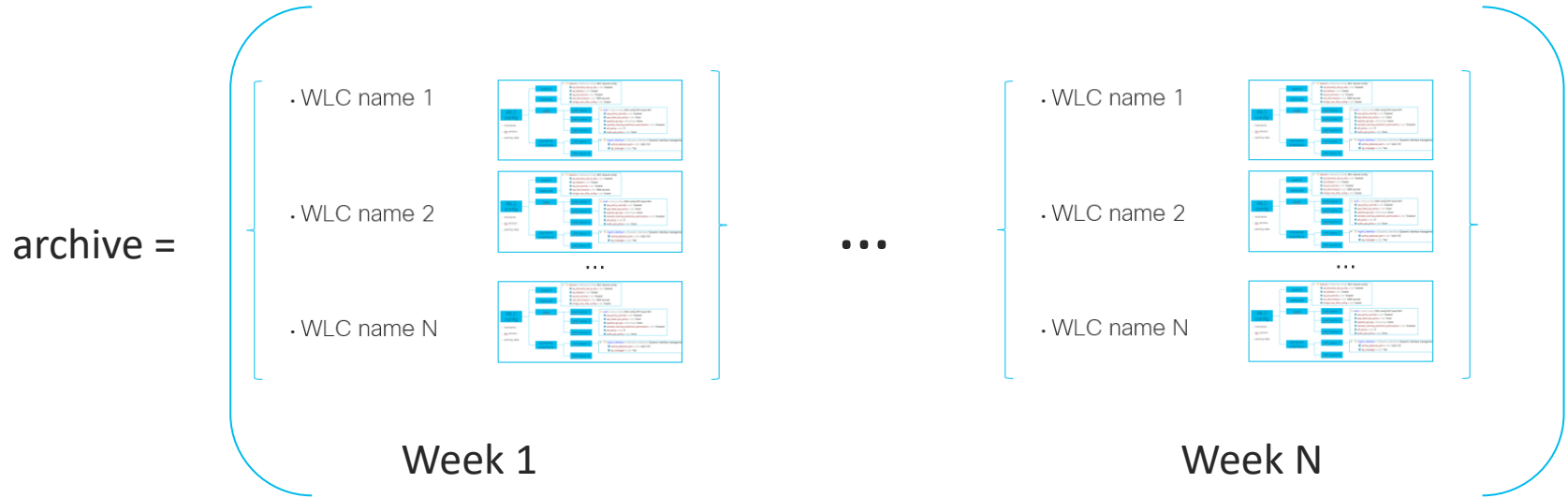
- WLC name N



...



# Multiple WLCs, multiple periodic config collection





# Overview of parsing procedure

- Separate config sections by start words
- Parse every section into Python object – two types of objects to represent two section types
- Attach the section object to WLC config object
- Repeat for every WLC in file

