

[Central](#) / Configuration Model 04-Nov-25

Central Configuration Model

HPE Aruba Networking Central provides comprehensive, cloud-based configuration for switches, gateways, and access points in a single pane of glass.

In Central's configuration model, objects contain the building blocks of network configuration. These objects are applied to devices using a flexible, directory-style structure that can accommodate small organizations to large enterprises. This approach ensures consistency and reduces administrative overhead by aggregating blocks of configuration across a large number of devices and device types, while maintaining the ability to customize configuration for individual devices or groups of devices.

This chapter provides an overview of the process to easily apply configuration to devices and achieve a consistent, error-free network deployments.

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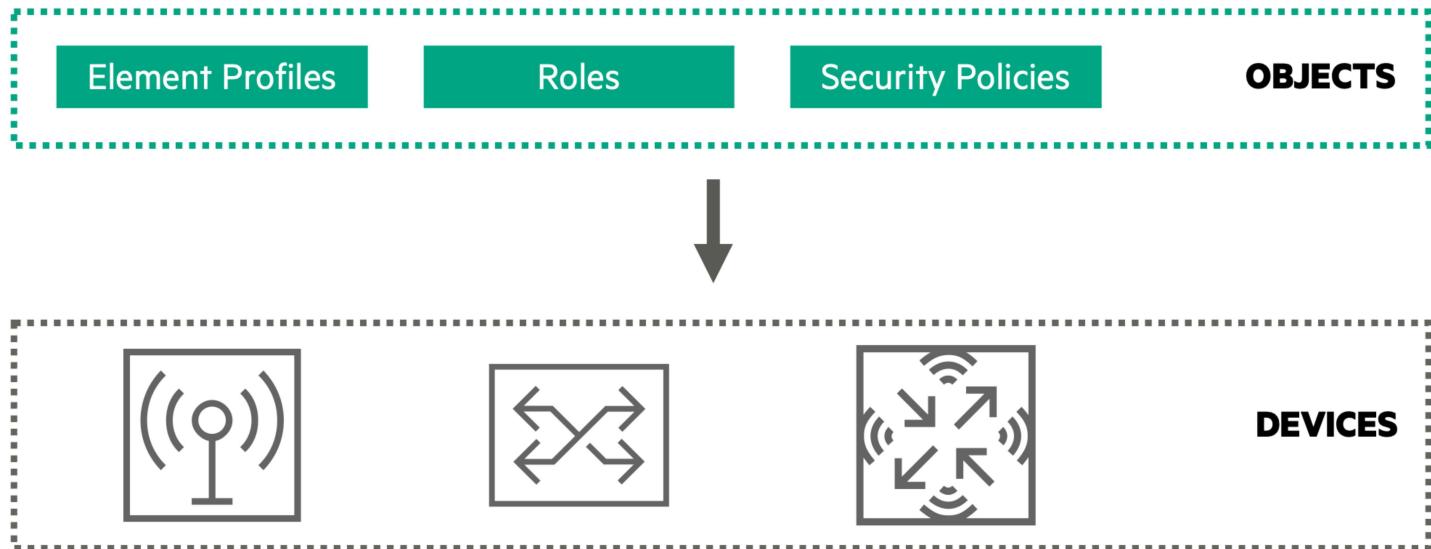
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Configuration Objects

Central stores general device configuration in element profiles (WLANS, VLANs, DNS servers, etc.) and policy-related configuration in roles and security policies. Each object type consists of one or more parameters that are pushed as a block of configuration to network devices.



Configuration objects are stored in Central's **Library**, which is a repository of all shared configuration components in a Central account. Objects defined in Central's Library represent potential configuration. Central

pushes configuration to network devices only after an object is assigned a **device function** and a **scope**, as described later in this chapter.

The **Library** is accessible at the top of the **Configuration Overview** menu.

The screenshot shows the HPE Aruba Central interface. At the top left is the HPE Aruba networking logo. To its right, the word "Central" is displayed. Below this, there's a navigation bar with icons for Home, Global, and Library. The "Library" icon is highlighted with a blue square. The main title "Configuration Overview" is centered above a section titled "Information about the Library". This section contains several categories: "Library" (highlighted with an orange vertical bar), "Global", "Site Collections" (with "6 collections"), "Sites" (with "22 sites"), and "Devices" (with "121 devices"). Below these is another section titled "Device Groups" (with "15 groups").

Element Profile

Profiles contain sets of configuration focused on specific subject areas, defined by profile type. Examples of profile types include WLAN, Authentication Server, VLAN, and DNS Server. A single profile can be applied across multiple device types and operating systems. The configuration values contained in a profile represent network operator intent and are generally independent of device-specific implementation.

For example, an administrator can create a **DNS Server** profile named **OWL-DNS** to specify a list of DNS server IP addresses. The profile captures the operator's intent to configure a common set of DNS servers in an operating-system-agnostic parameter list. When the profile is applied to different device types, Central configures each device based on its individual operating system's requirements.

Note: When a profile type contains a subset of configuration parameters that are applicable only for one specific device type, the profile organizes the configuration elements using appropriate heading such as **Switch Parameters**. This allows a single profile to enable device-specific features while still applying common configuration parameters across multiple device types. Additionally, some element profiles apply only to a single device type that supports a specialized function. For example, the **WLAN** profile can only be applied to campus access points and gateways.

The **Profiles** tab is selected by default in Central's horizontal configuration menu. Central organizes profile types by configuration topic areas in multi-page tiles. For example, wireless related profile types such as **WLAN** and **RF** are grouped in the **Wireless** tile. Individual pages within a tile are accessible by clicking the dot at the bottom of the tile. Click **Manage** to display all element profile types grouped in the tile category.

The screenshot shows the HPE Aruba Central interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the HPE Aruba networking logo, the word "Central", and a "Public Preview" button. A search bar with a magnifying glass icon and the placeholder "Search Central" is also present. Below the navigation, there are three main sections: "GLOBAL Configuration Overview" (with a house icon), "Information about the Library" (with a list icon), and "Library" (which is currently selected, indicated by a highlighted background). The "Library" section contains categories like "Global", "Site Collections" (6 collections), "Sites" (22 sites), "Devices" (123 devices), and "Device Groups" (15 groups). On the right, there is a "Profiles Management" section with tabs for "Profiles", "Roles & Policies", "Named Objects", and "Services". The "Profiles" tab is selected. It displays two main tiles: "Wireless" and "VLANs & Networks". The "Wireless" tile shows profiles for WLAN, RF, Mesh, and MPSK. The "VLANs & Networks" tile shows profiles for VLAN, Named VLANs, STP, and VRRP Router. Each tile has a "Manage" button at the bottom right.

Click a profile type to display a list of currently defined profiles and a **Create Profile** button. A context path displays below the menu. Use the search field to find existing profiles quickly.

This screenshot shows the "Profiles" section of the HPE Aruba Central interface. The "Profiles" tab is selected. A context path is visible above the content: "Library > VLANs & Networks > VLAN". Below this, there is a search bar with a magnifying glass icon and the placeholder "Search". A "Create Profile" button is located on the right. The main area displays a table with the following data:

VLAN ID	Name	Assigned Device Function	Assigned Scope
4000	UBT_CLIENT	-	-
3999	VSX Routed-Transit VLAN	Aggregation Switch	HERCP-CNX

Click an individual profile to display its configured parameters.

Edit Profile X

Properties **References**

VLAN ID *

Name

This configuration is only applicable to Switches

Description

Description Alias

Switch Specific Parameters

Enable L3

IPv4 Alias

Role

A role represents a group of users or devices, assigned when connecting to the network. Users and devices typically are grouped using a common set of role-based security requirements. The roles are then used to define network security policies.

Roles are described in the [Central Policy Configuration](#) guide.

Security Policy

A policy is a set of rules that governs permitted behavior on the network. Central policy rules specify allowable communication between roles, applications, and network resources.

Both role and security policy objects can be managed from the **Roles & Policies** tab.

Security policy is described in the [Central Policy Configuration](#) guide.

Configuration Enhancements

Two additional, planned profile types will further streamline configuration.

- **Device Profiles** bundle sets of the most common element profiles for a specific device type such as a switch, gateway, or access point. Placing common element profiles together in a unified pane provides an efficient, intuitive workflow.
- **Network Profiles** build intent-based configuration across all relevant devices—APs, switches, and gateways—in a single workflow. This facilitates the translation of business intent into a fully configured network implementation.

Applying Configuration

Configuration objects are assigned **device functions** to limit which device types and switch roles receive configuration, and **scopes** to govern which devices receive configuration based on organizational structure and administrator-defined groups.

This approach offers network operators the following benefits:

- A powerful approach to standardizing configuration.
- An efficient method to distribute configuration to a large number of devices.
- The ability to ensure that configuration is applied only to devices intended to receive it.
- Customization of configuration based on organizational structure, network function, or individual device requirements.

Device Functions

Device functions are assigned to devices during the on-boarding process described in the [Central Readiness](#) chapter. Functions for gateways and campus access points are auto-assigned. Switches can be assigned to the *Access Switch*, *Aggregation Switch*, or *Core Switch* device functions.

Device functions enable administrators to control the assignment of profiles based on a device's role in the network. For example, an OSPF profile might be applied to core and aggregation switches, but not assigned to access switches or mobility gateways.

The device functions used in this guide are:

- Campus Access Point
- Mobility Gateway
- Core Switch
- Aggregation Switch
- Access Switch

Central's online help provides a [full list of device functions](#) and descriptions.

When viewing profiles in the Library or within a specific scope, the **Device Function** menu automatically filters the profile types applicable to the selected function.

The screenshot shows the 'Profiles' tab selected in the top navigation bar. The main area is titled 'Profiles Management' under the heading 'Device Function'. On the left, a sidebar lists device types: All, Access Switch, Aggregation Switch, Core Switch, Bridge, Campus Access Point, and Mobility Gateway. 'Aggregation Switch' is selected and highlighted with a blue border. At the bottom of the sidebar is a 'View Selection' button. To the right, a section titled 'Interfaces' displays a table of profile types and their counts. The table includes:

Type	Profiles
Device Profile	0
Fault Monitoring	0
Interface Profile (Beta)	0
Management Interface	1

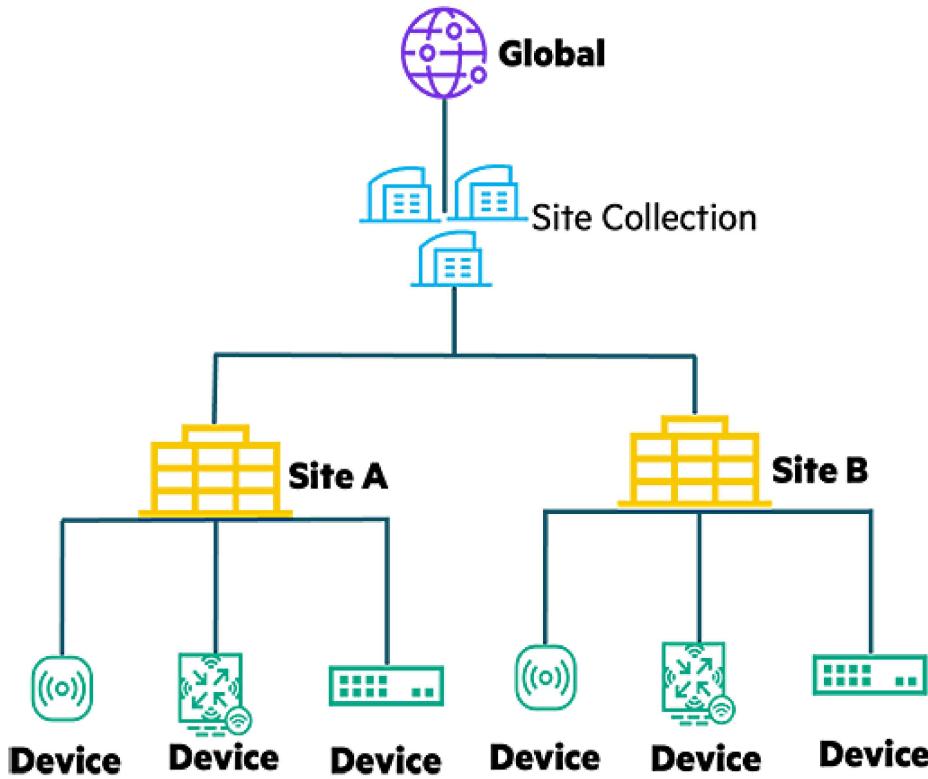
Below the table are two circular icons: one orange with a white dot and one white with an orange dot. A 'Manage' button is located at the bottom right of the interface.

Scopes

Central defines five configuration scopes to further control how configuration is applied to devices. Four scopes are organized in a top-down hierarchy similar to common directory structures, while the fifth enables grouping devices based on administrator preference.

Hierarchy-Based Scopes

The hierarchy-based scopes are designed to align to organizational structure. The following illustration shows the four scopes in Central's top-down hierarchy.



Objects assigned to higher levels propagate their configuration downward using [inheritance](#). This provides an intuitive method of applying configuration to large numbers or sets of devices, while also providing customization at natural delineation points in the organization.

- The **Global** scope applies configuration consistent across all elements of the organization. Examples include company-standard WLANs, named VLANs, roles, and policies. When configuration is assigned to the Global scope, Central applies the associated configuration to all site collections, sites, and devices.
- **Site Collections** are not mandatory, but enable large organizations to apply common configuration across regions or business units (such as “North America” or “retail stores”). This makes it easy to push regional or business-unit-specific settings, such as RADIUS servers for all branches in a single country.
- **Sites** typically represent a specific physical location, such as a branch, warehouse, or headquarters. Profiles with site-specific configurations are assigned to a site scope. Examples include site-specific VLANs, local WLANs, or the local timezone.
- Each individual access point, gateway, and switch is located in the **Device** scope. Configuration made in this scope is assigned directly to an individual device, which provides full customization of parameters such as hostnames and IP address assignments.

Device Groups

Using Device Groups, administrators can logically group any set of devices based on other affinities, such as unique RF settings or selective WLAN assignments. Devices assigned to a group may be part of a single site or may comprise devices from multiple sites. This function is analogous to AP groups in earlier AOS management solutions, but now applies to all device types managed by Central.

Assigning a configuration object to a device group provides the flexibility to standardize configuration for a range of devices based on administrator preferred criteria, outside the confines of organizational structure.

Note: Assignment of devices to a **Device Group** is mandatory at the time of this writing, as a part of the [onboarding process](#). Applying configuration to Device Groups is optional.

Understanding Inheritance

Inheritance governs which Central configuration objects are applied to devices based on automated propagation through scopes and resolves conflicts by applying a preference to each scope layer.

Configuration Object Propagation

Objects assigned at one scope are propagated to additional scopes using the following two paths:

- Global → Site Collections → Site → Device
- Device Groups → Device

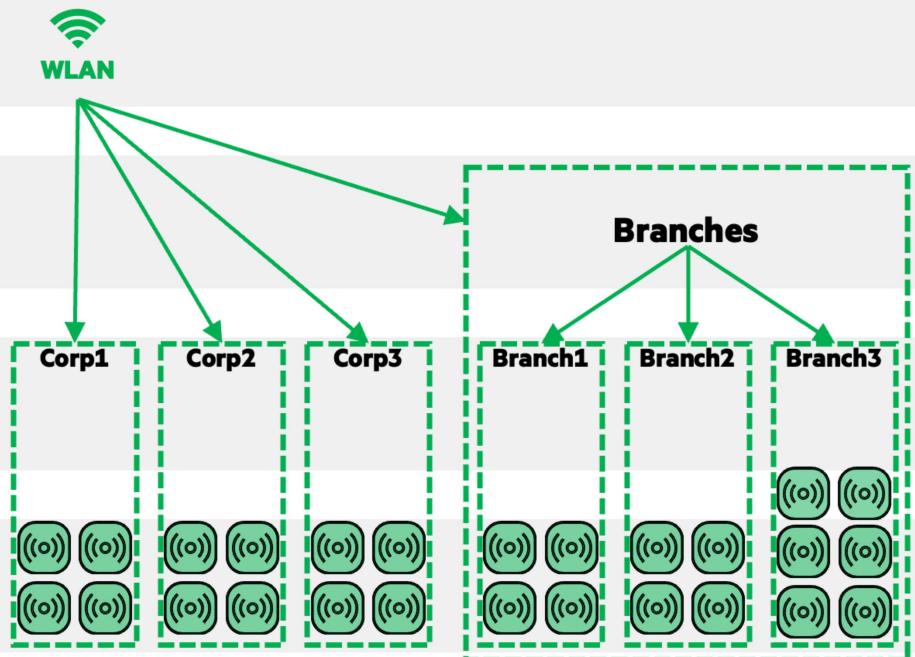
Because objects can be assigned to multiple scopes and two distinct paths propagate object configuration to devices, it is possible for configuration conflicts to occur. Central's inheritance uses [precedence](#), covered later in this chapter, to resolve propagation conflicts in a predictable manner.

Hierarchy-Based Scope Propagation

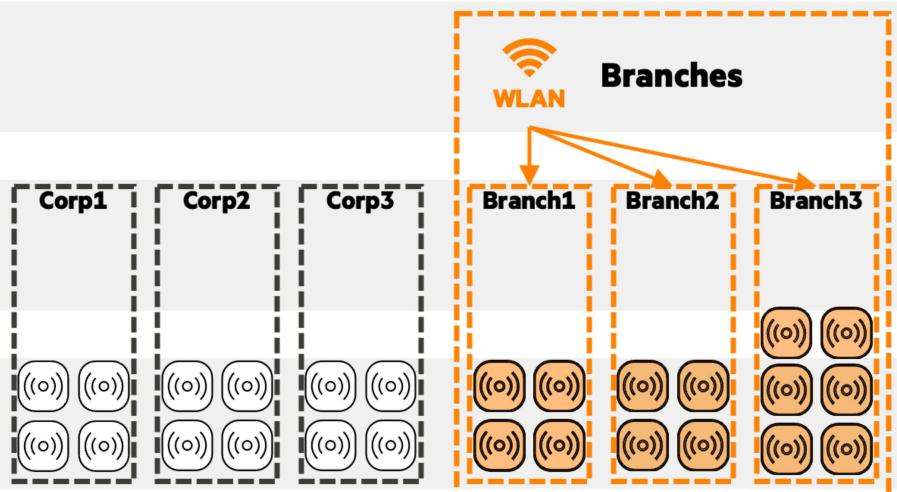
Most Central configuration is applied using a top-down model: object settings assigned at a higher level scope cascade down to lower level scopes.

The default propagation for assignment at each hierarchy-based scope is described below, followed by an example illustration. In each diagram, a WLAN profile is assigned to a scope, and arrows indicate the propagation of the profile through additional scopes. The APs receiving the configuration are highlighted in the same color as the WLAN profile.

- **Global Scope Assignment:** An object assigned to the **Global** scope is automatically propagated to every site collection, site, and device in the organization. Objects are propagated directly to sites that are not members of an optional site collection.

Global**Site Collections****Sites****Devices**

- **Site Collection Assignment** – An object assigned to a site collection is propagated to only its member sites and devices in those sites.

Global**Site Collections****Sites****Devices**

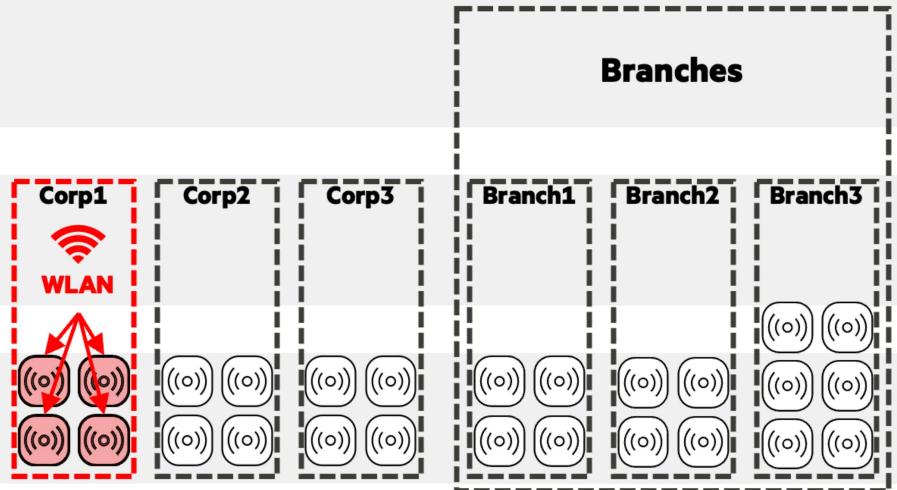
- **Site Assignment** – An object assigned to a site applies to only devices assigned to the individual site.

Global

Site Collections

Sites

Devices



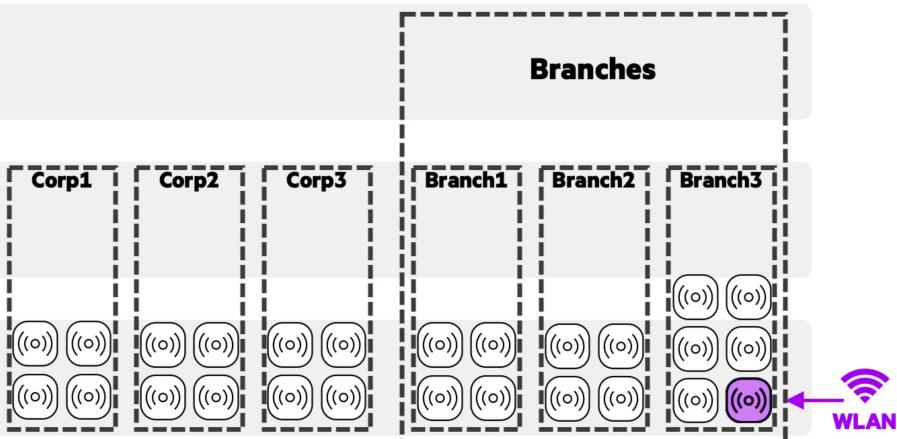
- **Device Assignment** – An object assigned to an individual device applies only to that device. A single profile can be assigned ad hoc to multiple devices in cases where a **Device Group** is not applicable.

Global

Site Collections

Sites

Devices

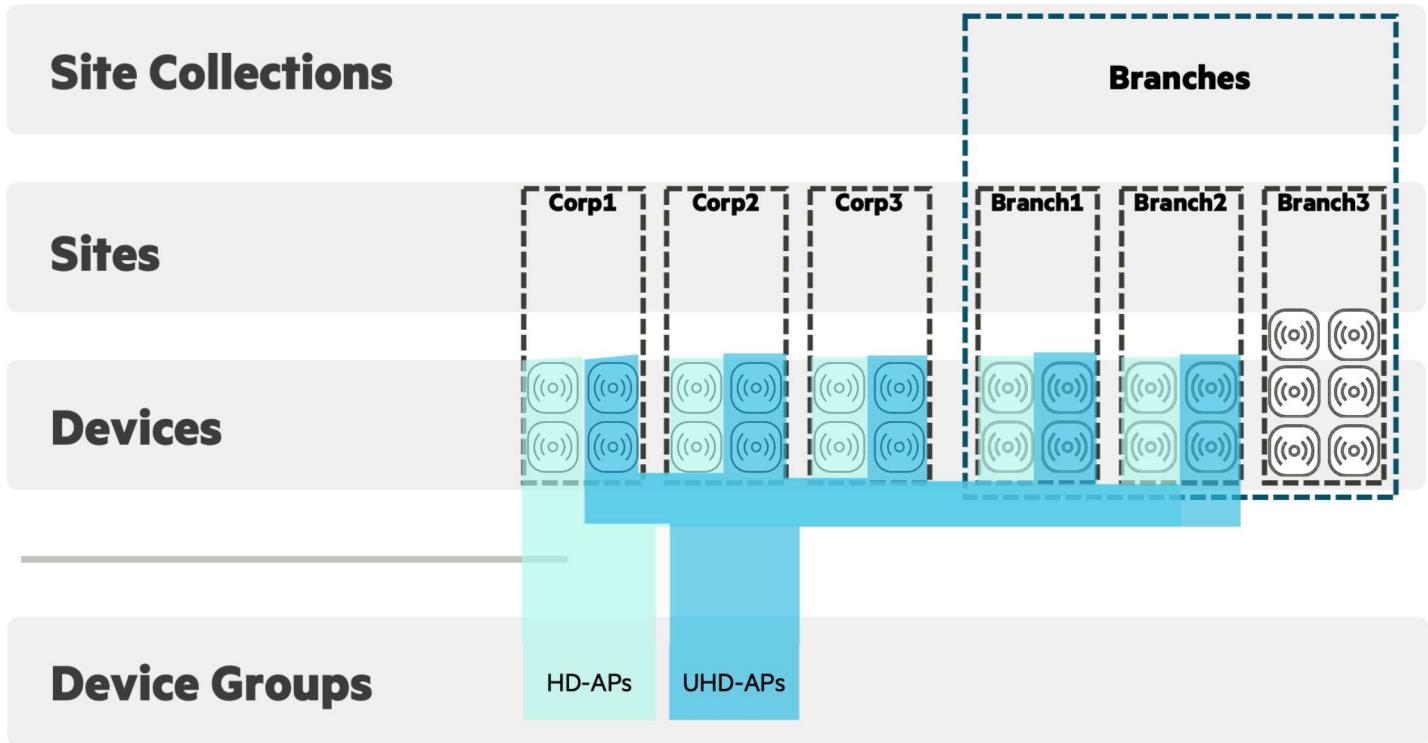


Device Group Propagation

Device Groups provide a flexible method of grouping devices independent of organizational structure. Devices can be grouped within a single site or across multiple sites based on common configuration requirements, such as office APs or warehouse APs, similar to AP Groups in AOS 6 and 8.

The example below shows APs assigned to different device groups based on the wireless user density in the AP's location: HD-APs (high-density access points) and UHD-APs (ultra-high-density access points). Using this strategy, RF profiles that meet wireless user density requirements are assigned to APs across multiple sites.

Global



Additive Profile Propagation

Roles, security policies, and some element profiles represent one *entry* in a configuration list. For example, each WLAN and VLAN profile represents one instance in the list of WLANs and VLANs on a device. This provides administrative flexibility to assign **WLAN**, **VLAN**, and other additive profiles at multiple scope layers, with all assignments propagating to those devices.

The diagram below illustrates assigning a unique WLAN profile at each scope, followed by a summary of their application to devices using an additive process.

Global

WLAN Profile: OWL_EMPLOYEE

Site Collections**Branches**

WLAN Profile: BRANCH_GUEST

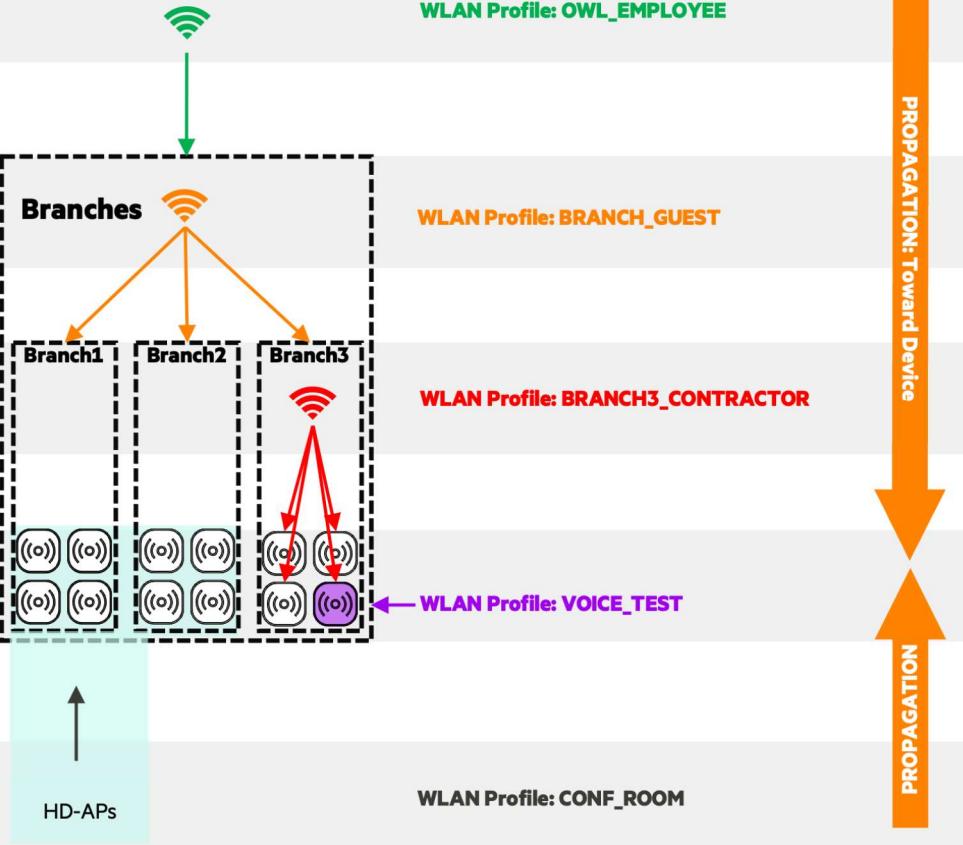
Sites**Devices****Device Groups**

HD-APs

WLAN Profile: BRANCH3_CONTRACTOR

WLAN Profile: VOICE_TEST

WLAN Profile: CONF_ROOM



The WLANs are applied as follows:

	Inherited WLANs
Branch1 & Branch2 APs	CONF_ROOM (from HD-APs device group) OWL_EMPLOYEE (from Global) BRANCH_GUEST (from BRANCHES site collection)
Branch3 APs (white APs)	CONF_ROOM (from HD-APs device group) OWL_EMPLOYEE (from Global) BRANCH_GUEST (from BRANCHES site collection) BRANCH3_CONTRACTOR (from Branch3 site)
Branch3 Test AP (purple AP)	OWL_EMPLOYEE (from Global) BRANCH_GUEST (from BRANCHES site collection) BRANCH3_CONTRACTOR (from Branch3 site) VOICE_TEST (from specific device assignment)

Note: Only a subset of profile objects are propagated using the additive process. Most profiles represent a complete configuration block and multiple profiles applied at different scopes are treated as representing the same configuration. For example, a **DNS Server** profile represents the complete list of DNS servers applied to a device. DNS Server profiles applied at multiple scopes are not treated using an

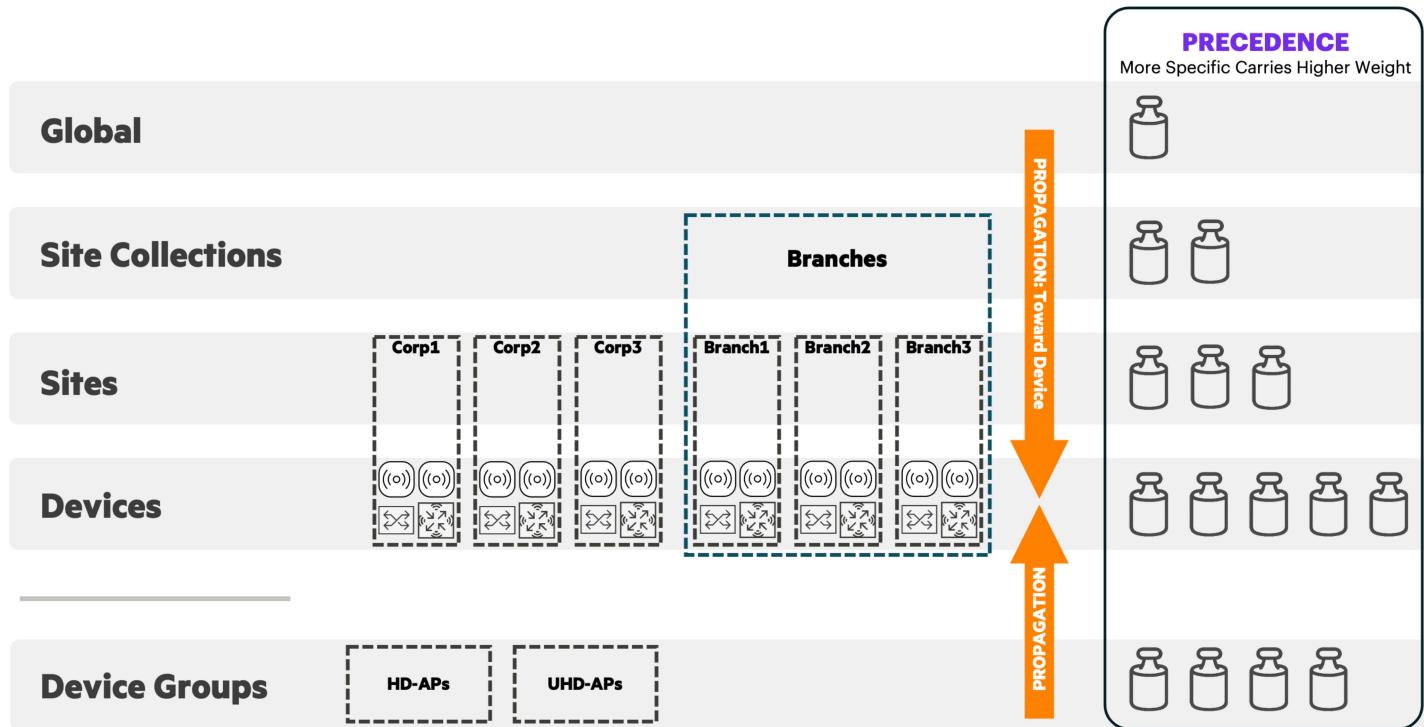
additive process, and only one of the DNS Server profiles is selected using the rules of precedence described below.

Configuration Precedence

As described in the previous section, different objects of the same type can be assigned to multiple scopes. This gives administrators flexible configuration control, but can result in a configuration conflict, when two objects configure the same parameters on a device. Central resolves conflicts by assigning a preference to each scope. The object with the greatest preference, or weight, contains the configuration that is pushed to a device.

The order of precedence is: **Device > Device Group > Site > Site Collection > Global**

The following diagram illustrates both object propagation through Central scopes and a visualization of precedence weight applied to objects assigned at each scope.



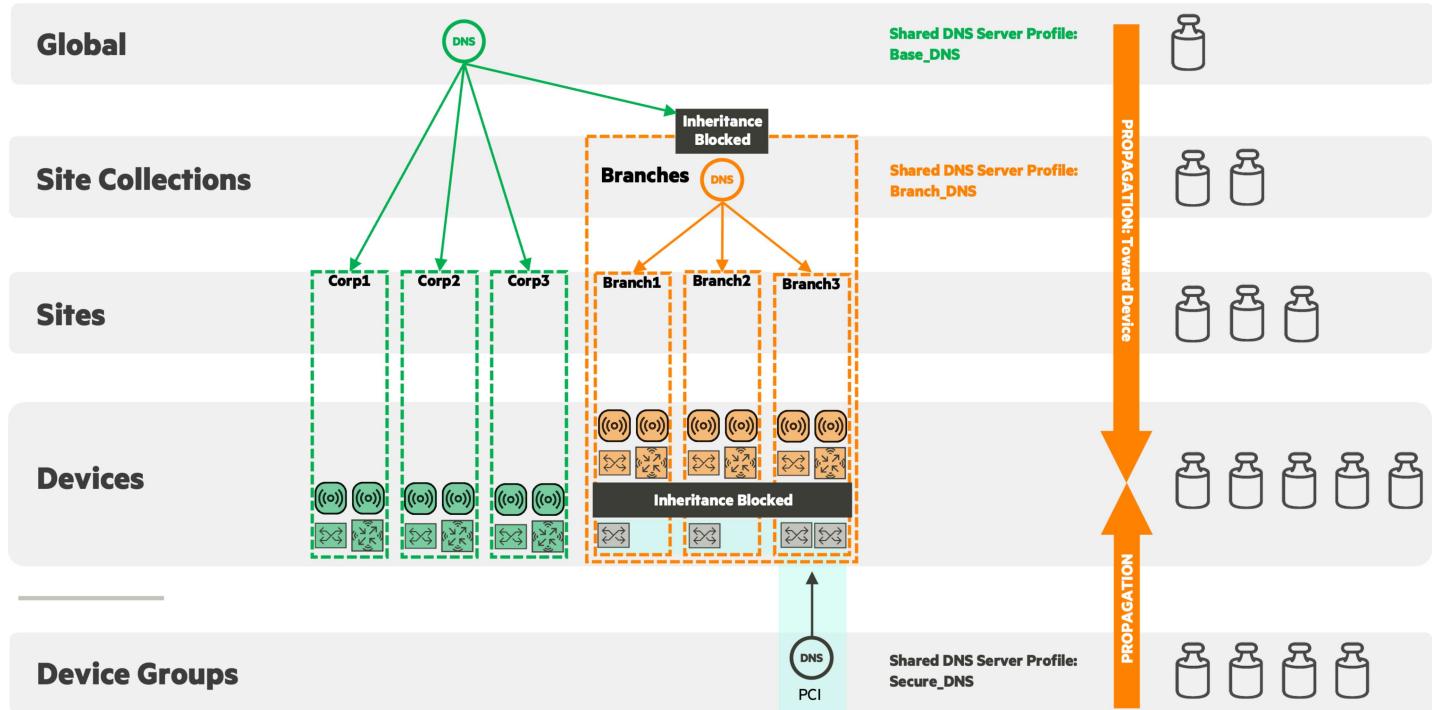
In the hierarchy-based scopes, the closer a scope is to a device, the more weight it carries. If two profiles conflict, the object assigned to the scope closest in relation to the device are used.

Although Device Groups are positioned outside the hierarchy-based scopes with respect to propagation, they can be visualized as sitting between Sites and Devices from the perspective of precedence. Objects assigned to a Device Group override all hierarchical scope assignments for a device, except for profiles applied directly at the device level.

Device-level configuration always outweighs all other scopes when a configuration conflict is present.

When a conflict occurs, Central applies only the configured parameters defined in the selected profile or role. Central does not evaluate individual parameter values for conflict.

The following diagram illustrates the use of precedence to resolve conflicts for several DNS Server profiles applied at multiple scopes. The **Base_DNS** profile assigned to the Global scope propagates to the three Corp sites. The **Branch_DNS** profile assigned to the **Branches** site collection blocks inheritance of the **Base_DNS** profile, because it has higher precedence. The **Branch_DNS** profile is inherited by all branch devices, except devices assigned to the **PCI** device group, because device groups have higher precedence than a site collection.



Configuration Customization

Although a key principle of inheritance is to resolve propagation conflicts, it is better understood as a powerful administrative tool for customizing configuration. Two primary methods are used to apply inheritance.

- **Assign a profile to a scope that targets the intended devices for configuration.** The WLAN profile example above illustrates the propagation of WLANs to targeted APs based on scope assignment.
- **Overwrite inherited configuration by assigning a profile to a scope with a higher precedence.** The DNS Server example above assigns a different set of DNS servers based on scope assignment and precedence.

The second strategy requires some additional detail. In order for one configuration object to overwrite an inherited object, the two objects must represent the same device configuration.

Most profiles in Central are applied to devices as an atomic unit: the profile parameters are applied as a set and treated as a single block of configuration. Example profiles include DNS Server, NTP Server, OSPF, BGP, and STP. These profiles always represent the same configuration, and only one profile can be applied to a device. The inheritance process described above selects the profile with the highest precedence when a device belongs to multiple scopes with the same profile type applied. The DNS Server profile example applies inheritance in this manner.

Unlike profiles that are treated as an atomic unit, additive profiles only represent a portion of configuration for the configuration subject. Examples include WLAN, VLAN, and Authentication Server profiles. Each WLAN, VLAN,

and authentication server requires its own profile, and a set of profiles for each type is required to deliver the intended configuration. The profiles are logically added together when pushing configuration to a device.

Additive profiles also can be overwritten to customize settings by assigning a new profile with the same profile name or ID to a scope with higher precedence. It is best practice to use local profile [overrides](#), discussed below, when a profile is additive.

Note: WLAN profiles have additional considerations. As an additive profile, the name of WLAN profiles must match for Central to consider the profiles as representing the same configuration block. Since the WLAN profile's **Name** parameter and **ESSID Name** parameter are not required to match, it is possible to assign multiple profiles to a device for the same advertised SSID. For example, the profiles named *Guest* and *Branch-Guest* are considered two distinct profiles by Central, and they do not conflict. However, it is possible that both WLAN profiles assign the same value to the **ESSID Name** parameter, resulting in a single device inheriting multiple WLAN profiles for the same SSID. Using profile overrides helps avoid this issue by creating profiles with the same profile name by default.

Shared and Local Objects

Element profiles and roles can be *shared* or *local*, which determines if an object is reusable across multiple contexts and where the object is stored in Central.

Inheritance and precedence are applied in the same manner to both shared and local objects.

Shared Objects

By default, most configuration objects are shared when created. This means they are reusable and can be applied at any scope. Shared objects are stored in Central's configuration Library. The Library's purpose is simply to store reusable configuration.

Note: The only configuration objects not shared by default are [scope-specific profiles](#).

Shared profiles, roles, and policies can be created in the Library context or in any scope context. Objects created in the Library context represent potential configuration. An object's configuration is applied to devices only after it is assigned at least one scope and device function.

By default, an object created at a specific scope is added automatically as a shared profile to the Library and assigned the scope and device function from the context in which it was created. The device function context is set from the current value of the Device Function filter. Additional scope and device function assignments can be made to the profile after its initial creation.

Local Objects

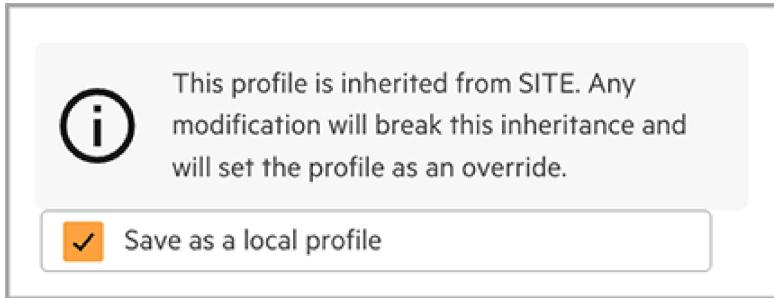
Element profiles and roles can be created as local configuration objects. Local objects are assigned to a specific scope and are intentionally not propagated to the Library, so they cannot be applied to additional scopes. Local objects are stored in a separate database from the Library.

There are two primary purposes for creating a local profile:

- Define a non-reusable profile that cannot be assigned to other contexts. For example, a WLAN that should exist only at one site can be created as a *local* profile assigned to the individual site, which prohibits propagation of the WLAN profile to the Library and therefore cannot be applied to other sites.
- Assign override values to an inherited object to customize configuration for a site or a device. Overrides are most often used to apply device-specific configuration.

Because local profiles are not stored in the library, this is the only method of blocking inheritance for an additive profile, which requires both profiles to use the same name or ID to reference the same configuration block. The Library cannot contain two profiles with the same name.

A local profile or role is created by checking **Create as a local profile** on a new object or **Save as local profile** on an inherited object. The checkbox is located at the top of the first page of any profile or role configuration window.



Note: A new local profile must be created in a specific scope context.

Profile Overrides

When a local profile is branched from an inherited profile by checking the **Save as local profile** checkbox, it is called an override. The new local profile is considered distinct from its parent, and it is governed by the same inheritance rules as any other profile. The new override profile's initial values are the same as the original profile, but its parameter values can be modified further to provide customized control at a specific scope.

Profile overrides are applied most often to define device specific values, such as IP addresses.

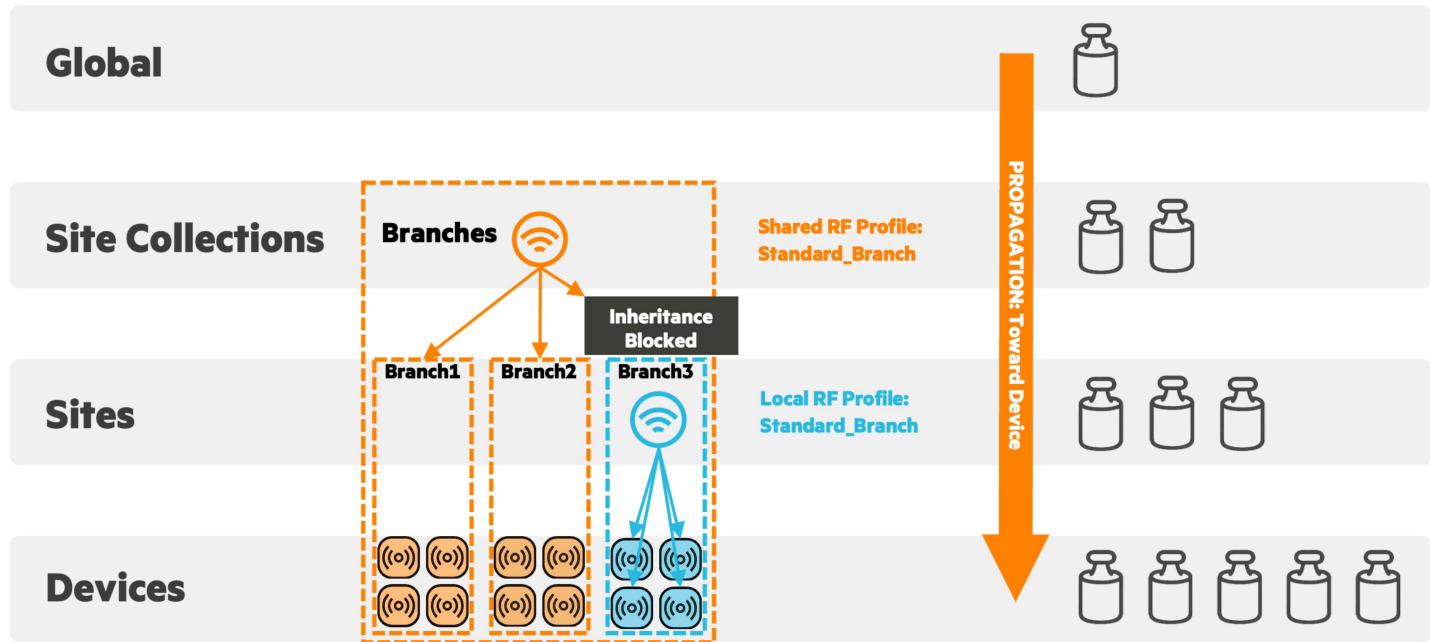
Note: Profile overrides are recommended when customizing additive objects. This avoids ambiguous inheritance in the Central UI, where a single device may appear to inherit multiple profiles for the same configuration.

Administrators can remove overrides using two methods:

- Select **Clear Overrides** from the ... menu at the right of the profile name.
- Delete the local profile.

Profile overrides are supported in all scopes of the hierarchy, and system-generated default profiles also support overrides.

The example below illustrates creating a local profile to change inherited configuration. An RF profile named **Standard_Branch** is applied to the site collection named **Branches**. This profile is inherited by **Branch1** and **Branch2**. The profile override created at **Branch3** initially contains the same values as the inherited profile, including the profile name. After an administrator applies customized values to the local profile, all devices at **Branch3** inherit the new local profile values, because a Site profile has higher precedence than a Site Collection.



Scope-Specific Profiles

Some element profiles must be applied at specific scope layers and are visible only at scopes where they can be applied. They do not appear and are not configurable in the **Library**. The inheritance rules described above apply to scope-specific profiles.

Some examples of scope-specific elements include:

- AirMatch Service: **Global** scope
- Gateway Clustering: **Device Group** scope
- VSX: **Site** and **Device Group** scopes
- VSF: **Site** scope
- System Information (hostname): **Device** scope
- Interface configuration: **Device** scope

Config Sync and YANG Models

When a profile is applied, the Central configuration engine uses **Config Sync** to push changes to appropriate devices. This process uses **YANG models**, which are data modeling languages used to define network configurations. Central uses YANG to ensure that the configuration is pushed to the device as a structured data model, rather than as a set of CLI commands. This method is more robust and less prone to errors than simply pushing text-based CLI commands.

Practical Example

The following example illustrates how Central's hierarchy-based scopes work together in an enterprise environment.

In this example, the company's network spans a corporate headquarters in Barcelona, two distribution centers in Milan and Rotterdam, and three retail stores located in London, Madrid, and Paris.

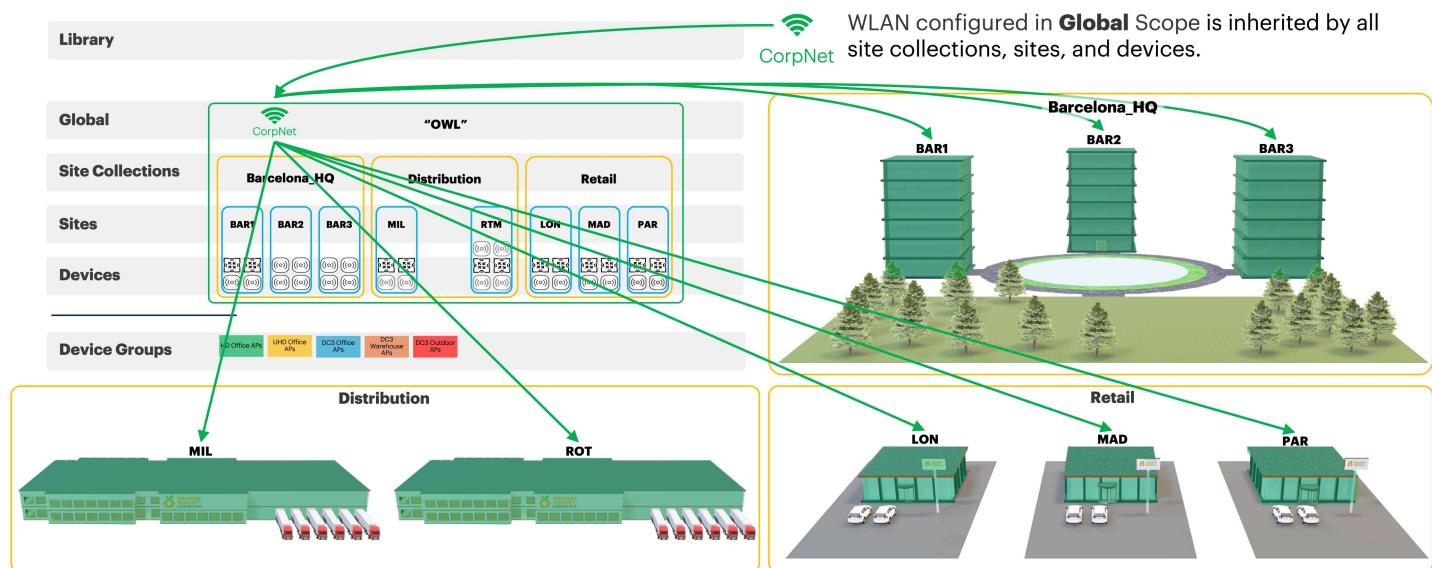
Each configuration scope builds on the previous one, ensuring consistency at scale while maintaining flexibility at the regional and site levels.

Global Scope - Corporate WLAN

At the Global scope, the IT team defines a common corporate WLAN (CorpNet) used across all sites.

Because configuration applied at Global is inherited by all Site Collections, Sites, and Devices, this ensures that every AP across the enterprise advertises the same secure WLAN with consistent access policies.

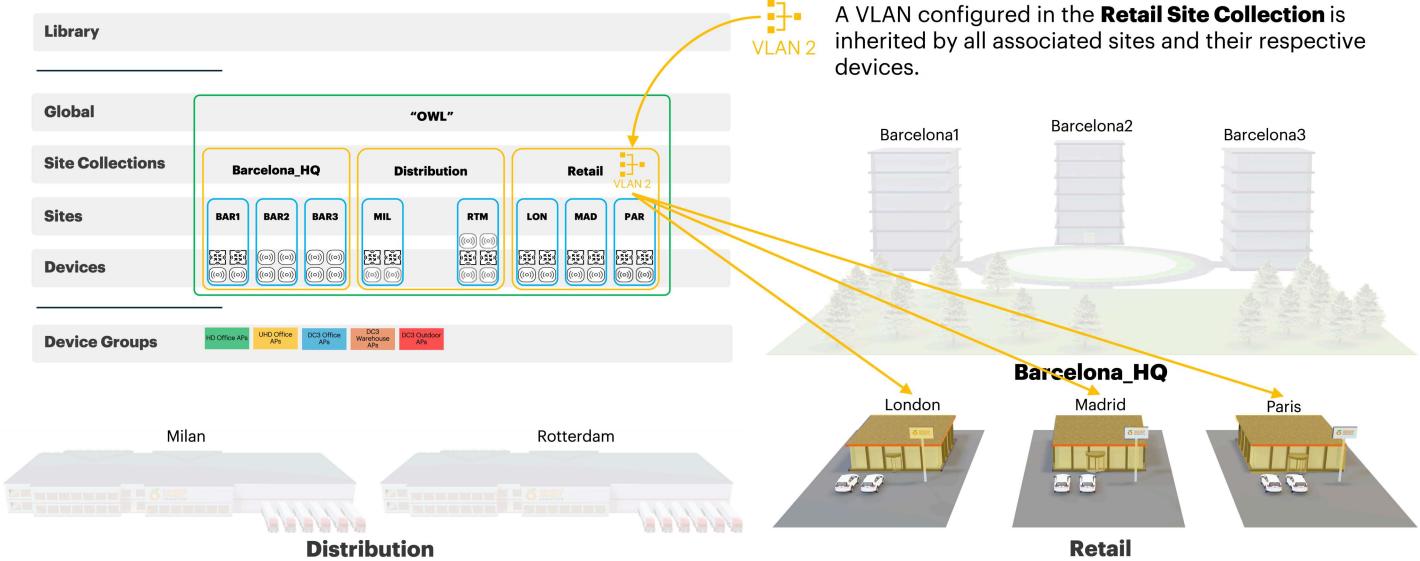
Profile Configured in Global Scope



Site Collection - Customer Role Configuration

Next, the Retail Site Collection defines additional configuration for store environments. A new VLAN is created here to segment customer guest traffic in retail stores. This VLAN is inherited by all sites and devices within the Retail site collection - in this case, the London, Madrid, and Paris stores - without affecting the corporate distribution environments.

Created in a Site Collection

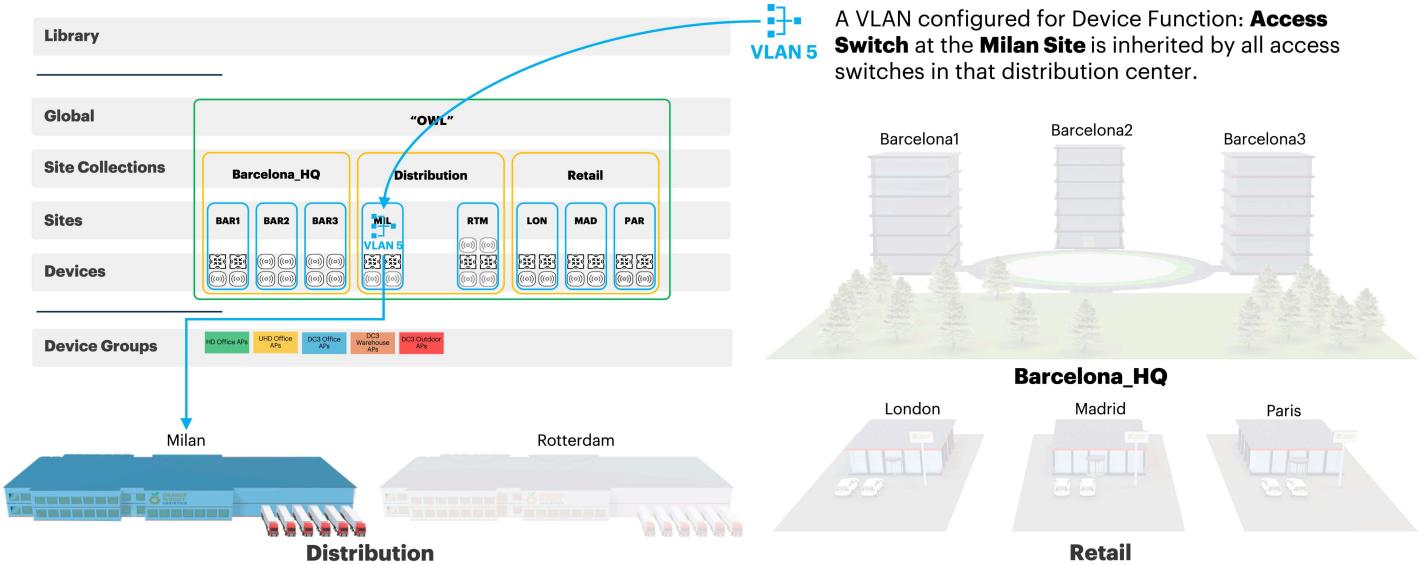


Site Scope - VLAN Configuration for Milan Distribution Center

At the Milan Site, a local access switch VLAN configuration is defined to segment wired clients specific to that site. The VLAN 5 configuration created here is inherited by all access switches in the Milan Distribution Center, ensuring consistent tagging and traffic separation within that location.

This allows regional teams to maintain control of their local addressing and segmentation policies while still inheriting global WLANs and roles.

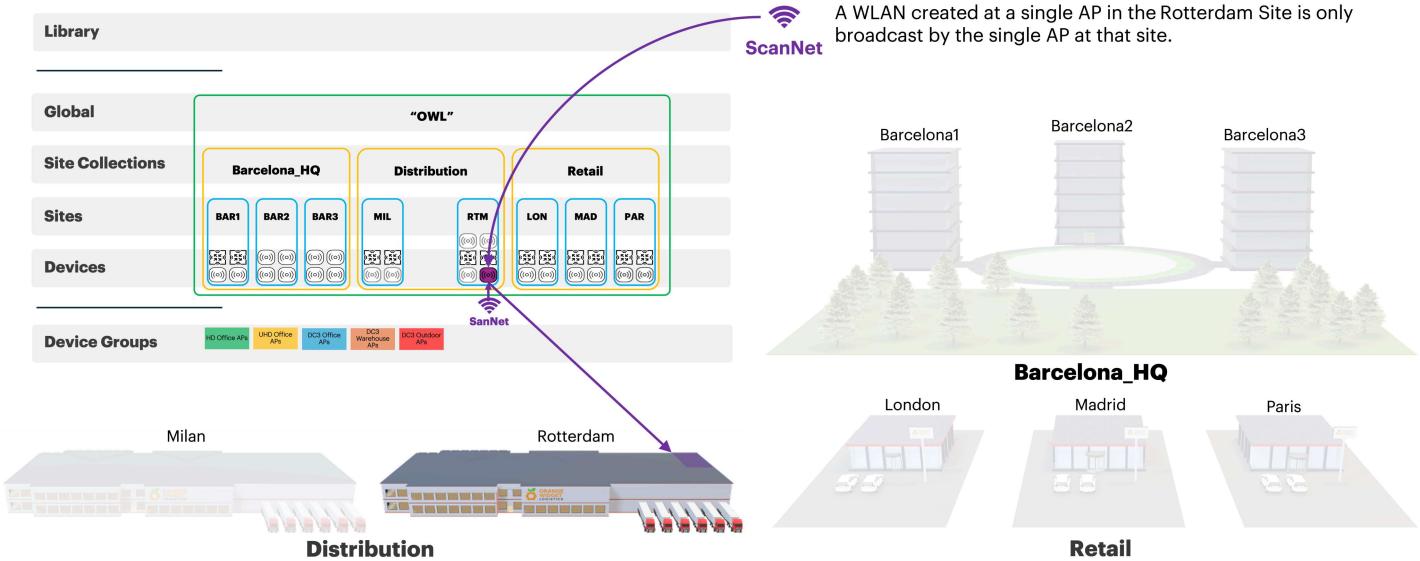
Created in a Site Scope



Device-Level and Library Integration - Test WLAN Replication

IT engineers create a pilot WLAN (ScanNet) on a single AP in Rotterdam to validate connectivity for new handheld scanners being staged and tested.

Created in a Device Scope



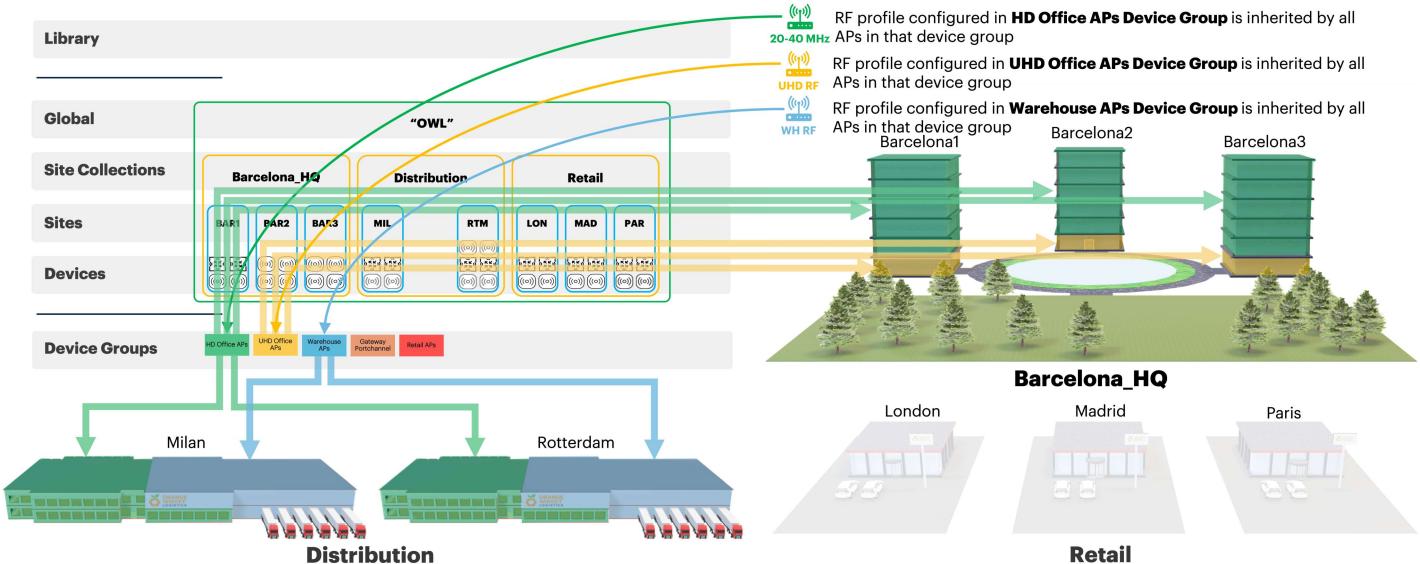
Device Groups

Device Groups provide a horizontally scalable way to apply configuration across similar device types, regardless of their physical locations. In this example, three RF profiles are defined at the Device Group level:

- HD Office APs: Optimized for dense office areas using 20-40 MHz channels.
- UHD Office APs: Tuned for ultra-high-density spaces requiring greater client capacity.
- Warehouse APs: Designed for large open areas such as distribution centers, providing extended coverage and stable connectivity.

Each Device Group's configuration is inherited by all APs assigned to that group - across sites in Barcelona HQ, Milan, and Rotterdam - ensuring consistent RF behavior enterprise-wide while allowing per-device overrides when needed.

Created in a Device Group



Conclusion

Central's configuration model provides a structured method to balance consistency and flexibility.

Administrators can use scopes and device functions to reduce duplication and simplify management. Device groups provide targeted control across sites, while device-level overrides ensure that unique requirements can be met without impacting the broader design.

This approach results in a configuration model that is easier to maintain, scales predictably, and provides clear visibility into where and how configuration is applied.

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