Netformx Discovery Release Notes v21.x

August 2021

Announcing the Netformx Discovery v21.x GA

Netformx DesignXpert **21.0.0.x** includes the GA release of the completely redesigned Netformx Discovery experience v21.x, including an updated User Interface (UI) and Engine. The legacy Netformx Discovery engine is now End of Life (EOL) see the important note below for more details.

Netformx Discovery Overview

Netformx Discovery v21.x is the completely redesigned SNMP/SSH/Telnet-based audit and multi-vendor network discovery solution that is also included in Netformx DesignXpert®. Netformx enables presales, systems, and design engineers to quickly and accurately identify and audit networking assets. Netformx Discovery exposes the network topology using Simple Network Management Protocol (SNMP), SSH & Telnet, Cisco Discovery Protocol (CDP), and Link Layer Discovery Protocol (LLDP), along with Command Line Interface (CLI-Inspection) based equipment and configuration data to interrogate and expose node details. It can capture a baseline of existing equipment with detailed specs for each device. Used in conjunction with the Cisco Smart Advisor (CSA) formerly known as the Cisco Discovery Service (CDS), the DesignXpert Discovery Report outputs can assist during the analysis phase by identifying device EoX milestone events (End of Life, End of Support, etc.), IOS versions, Cisco Product Security Incident Response Team (PSIRTs), Field Notices, and resources and gaps in the discovered network.

Special Note: Motivation for CLI-Inspection

Previously, the legacy Discovery engine collected and analyzed a networking walk based primarily on SNMP data. An SNMP-only approach encountered the following limitations

- SNMP disabled or not deployed due to security concerns
- SNMP data does not expose all the required details for complete analysis (inventory, ARP neighbors, physical connectivity, etc.)
- Not all vendors program their SNMP public MIB variables adequately

Due to the demand for more comprehensive network walks and analysis and to overcome environmental restrictions, Netformx enhanced the Discovery collection engine (v21.x) with an alternative approach. It is now possible to invoke CLI commands via Telnet or SSH and for the application to parse the data for a limited set of manufacturers.
The V21.x release adds predefined CLI device-level calls to the engine's network walk phase. Combined with the existing SNMP call functionality, this enhancement allows the engine to recognize and expose more vendors and their device-level details during the collection and analysis phases. V21.x currently supports CLI-calls and analysis for the following vendors: Cisco, Juniper Networks, Palo Alto Networks, Dell, Fortinet, VMWare, and 3COM/H3C.

Special Note: Discovering Meraki Equipment

Traditionally, the typical Netformx SNMP Discovery walk did not uncover Meraki assets for a few key reasons

- Not all Meraki products support or respond to CLI commands
- Not all Meraki SKUs support or respond to typical SNMP calls
- SNMP calls to Meraki products must leverage the Meraki Cloud *enhanced* SNMP methodology

However, by leveraging the Meraki Cloud data sources and defining an additional set of credentials and settings, the v21.x Discovery walk can now find, process, and present the Meraki assets for the customer's environment.

Important Note:
The Legacy Discovery UI and Engine are now End-of-Life

Starting with the v21.x release, users can no longer perform a Discovery network walk with the legacy Engine nor work with the Legacy UI. However, users can import a legacy-based .ndr Discovery run into new DesignXpert Projects and view the Discovery details via the new v21.x UI.

For full details on the v21.x Engine & UI, please see the Netformx Step-by-Step User Guide.