

THE INFOBLOX NETWORK AUTOMATION

SURVIVAL GUIDE

CONTROL YOUR ENVIRONMENT.

CONTROL YOUR SUCCESS.

CONTROL YOUR NETWORK.



THE INFOBLOX NETWORK AUTOMATION SURVIVAL GUIDE

Ten Strategies to Ensure Your Safety and Success

INTRODUCTION

If you've ever ventured into the network wilderness equipped only with manual processes, you know how challenging it can be to slog through a morass of unforeseen issues, one by one. While we applaud your pluck and fortitude, we'd like to suggest some more innovative strategies. As you'll discover, this handy survival guide illustrates how Infoblox can help you use network automation to reduce costs, increase efficiency, and prevent human error. Using Infoblox NetMRI to intuitively manage layer-2 and layer-3 network devices, you'll experience the joys of automated discovery and visualization, change and configuration management, and compliance and policy validation, enabling you to run a highly dynamic network infrastructure and ensure your survival and continued success.



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1



KNOW WHERE THE HAZARDS ARE



Would you run through the woods blindfolded?

Trying to manage a network with limited visibility is akin to blundering through the wilderness with hazards at every turn. Don't let your novice campers stumble into a hornet's nest, or worse, a mama bear's stomping grounds. With NetMRI in your backpack, it's easy to auto-discover multi-vendor devices and identify new devices before someone gets stung—or eaten alive. And, with up-to-date layer-2 physical and layer-3 logical data with multiple topology views, you can depend on the accuracy of the information, so you and your troop can forge ahead with courage and conviction.



Tip from the Trail

Never assume that your employees will follow directions. After all, just because you told that new college grad that he couldn't add a wireless router to your network without approval, doesn't mean he was listening. Fortunately, NetMRI makes it easy to find unplanned devices proactively.

2



DON'T INVITE TROUBLE



Would you ever leave out food scraps that could attract a hungry bear?

In any kind of wilderness, issues create vulnerabilities, allowing problems to creep into cubicles and campsites alike. But, as any seasoned IT pro knows, dangers lurk when devices have PSIRTS, field notices, and security alerts, and hidden traps exist when EOL, EOS, and/or maintenance status aren't tracked closely. The good news is that with NetMRI, you can request a simple report to check status on Cisco devices. In less time than it takes for that marauding bear to claw your fellow camper, you'll have powerful, actionable data about potential danger areas.



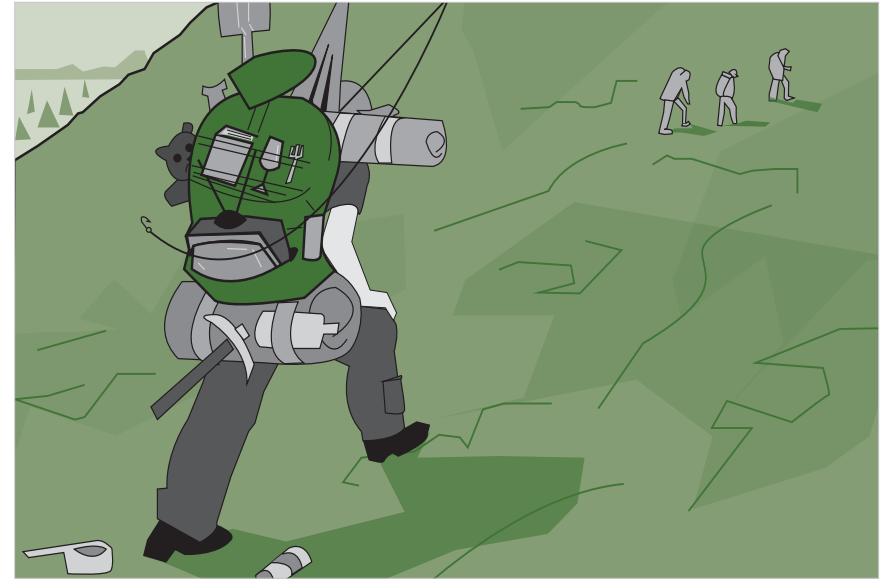
Tip from the Trail

Stop trying to keep up to date with RSS feeds and email alerts. As you know, even if you comb through a massive volume of alerts and updates, you're still likely to be out of date. Conversely, doing nothing, hoping that all vulnerabilities will be addressed with the next release, is like hearing some rustling outside your tent and pretending that it's just a bad dream.

3



AVOID OVER-PROVISIONING



Would you ever pack two tents for every camper?

Whether you're working on a complex IT project or portaging a canoe (fancy term for carrying), manual burdens can feel extra-heavy. In the wilderness, you can reduce your load by carrying a single skillet for cooking breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and scrubbing it out with a handful of salt in between meals. Back in the office, NetMRI functions as a trusty, multi-purpose tool, eliminating over-provisioning by enabling optimum capacity planning. By identifying used, free, and available ports, NetMRI streamlines capacity planning so you can spend less time at the campsite and more time gliding on the water or snapping selfies on the summit.



Tip from the Trail

Stop beating your head against the switch rack. Instead of relying on your team to tell you when an app or server is decommissioned, NetMRI puts the information at your fingertips, without the guesswork—or having to deal with campers you'd rather not interact with.

4



DOCUMENT YOUR ROUTE



Would you ever head into the wilderness without a map?

In any organization—or on any expedition—change-management processes are vital to survival and success. In the wilderness, should you run into a group of hikers who suggest an alternate trail, be sure to note the detour on your map so you don't get lost on the return trip. Inside the network, you can rely on NetMRI to do it for you. By tracking every planned or unplanned configuration change to any network device, and archiving the various configurations and topologies, NetMRI eliminates blind spots and keeps you on the right path.



Tip from the Trail

Never assume that changes document themselves. Instead of trying to track down which person changed what on which device—a thankless task guaranteed to suck the life out of even the best network engineer—NetMRI makes it easy to verify exactly what's going on.

5



ASSEMBLE THE RIGHT TEAM



Would you get in a canoe if no one knew how to paddle?

Trying to operate with a single CCIE or old-timer who knows how to solve complex issues is like going camping with only one person who knows how to build a campfire and open a beer bottle without a church key. Just like a super-deluxe Swiss Army knife, the NetMRI platform aggregates all built-in jobs, customizable templates, and imported Perl scripts within a single interface for use by multiple individuals. With user-based access controls that ensure the right individuals are executing according to your change-management process, you can empower your fellow campers, crack open a cold beer, and relax by the fire.



Tip from the Trail

Don't let a single person become a single point of failure. Instead of scrambling to recover when key people retire or hit the lottery, NetMRI makes it easy to optimize staff, capture institutional knowledge, and leverage a repeatable process.

6



USE THE RIGHT GEAR



Would you rely on two sticks to start a campfire?

Making changes to routers, switches, and other layer-2 and layer-3 devices, configuration by configuration, is like starting a campfire by rubbing two sticks together. It's cool in an old-school kind of way, but if you don't also carry waterproof matches, your fellow campers will think you're a dinosaur, or something even worse. To eliminate that possibility in the office, trust NetMRI to establish your reputation as an innovator. NetMRI combines an intuitive interface with a powerful, customizable job-automation engine that performs simple and complex tasks, eliminating custom scripts and leveraging a repeatable process.



Tip from the Trail

Don't be constrained by excessive control. Instead of trying to survive with a spear and two sticks, give up your inner caveman and let NetMRI help you empower your staff to manage change effectively.

7



KEEP THINGS SHIPSHAPE



How well could you function in a sloppy campsite?

Networking gold standards and best practice configurations are vital to maintaining consistency and reducing the risk of outages. In the great outdoors, before you start telling tall tales of epic expeditions to impress your fellow campers, you'd better know how to pitch a tight tent to withstand wind, rain, and marauding raccoons. In the network, NetMRI helps ensure that your desired state matches your as-is state. Simply customize your gold standards, leveraging embedded policies and templates. Then, as the system compares each change against your defined standards, changes that violate your policy are flagged for immediate resolution.



Tip from the Trail

Don't wait until your network is inconsistent. Instead of manually trying to find a single character within tens of thousands of characters, which is tedious, time-consuming, and enormously frustrating, NetMRI makes it easy to find minor issues before they escalate into major problems.

8



EMBRACE COMPLIANCE



Would you want to get on the park ranger's bad side?

In the network wilderness, compliance auditors are like park rangers—pesky but necessary to ensure a consistent and secure network infrastructure. In the great outdoors, park rangers aren't there to confiscate your cooler of craft beer and ruin your day—they're simply making sure that our pristine national wilderness stays that way. And, when the network or security auditors stop by to check on you, NetMRI makes it easy to automate the compliance reporting process by tracking, auditing, archiving, analyzing, and reporting across complex requirements. To prove success, simply click to collect the data and tabulate the results in a matter of seconds.



Tip from the Trail

Don't waste valuable time creating ad hoc teams for each audit. Instead of manually going device by device, trying to recreate what happened throughout the year, NetMRI makes it easy to leverage an ongoing management platform to simplify the process.

9



\$#*% HAPPENS



Are you prepared for unexpected surprises?

In the IT world, problems lurk everywhere, causing angry bosses and customers to growl and lick their chops like hungry mountain lions. When you're in the real wilderness, it wouldn't be an epic outdoor expedition if something didn't go awry. But, as long as you live to tell the story of how you scared off that enormous black bear as he tried to steal the food pack, it's all good. In similar heroic fashion, NetMRI uses embedded networking expertise and ongoing policy monitoring to proactively identify devices with violations, and alert your team so that the issues can be fixed or resolved before they cause an outage.



Tip from the Trail

Don't let unintended events catch you by surprise. Instead of combing the network wilderness for life-threatening issues like mismatched duplex settings, running configs not saved, and HSRP/VRRP network recognizing peers, NetMRI makes it easy to find them before they find you.

10



TAKE THE WILD OUT OF THE WILDERNESS



Would you enjoy digging a new latrine every day?

In the network wilderness, digging through millions of lines of data, doing repetitive manual tasks, and relying on a small number of people is unproductive. In the natural wilderness, digging your own latrine stinks—literally—which is why it's okay to pick a state or national park where the bathrooms are clean and plentiful. To that end, why continue to do things the way you've always done when there's a better alternative? NetMRI enables you to automate all the many mission-critical tasks you don't have the time or the desire to do. Bottom line—Infoblox does the dirty work and you get all the credit.



Tip from the Trail

Don't waste any more valuable time sifting through extreme amounts of data and doing tasks one by one. NetMRI makes it easy to start leveraging intelligent searching and automation today.



REMEMBER, NETWORK AUTOMATION IS THE KEY TO NETWORK SURVIVAL

Sure, you could huddle in a hollow log, eating bugs, and hoping that lightning doesn't strike your campsite, but why would you, when Infoblox NetMRI can ensure a smooth, successful expedition into the network wilderness. Learn more at infoblox.com/netmri

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