



December 7, 2016

53-1003919-04

ROUTING PRODUCTS

Brocade NetIron OS

Target Path Selection Guide

Brocade NetIron OS Target Path releases are recommended code levels for Brocade CES/CER, XMR/MLX, and MLXe platforms. Use these guidelines when trying to determine the ideal version of Brocade NetIron OS; consider these guidelines in conjunction with other requirements that may be unique to a particular environment. This document is updated on a periodic basis when Brocade has modified or added new Target Path release recommendations.

© 2016, Brocade Communications Systems, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Brocade, Brocade Assurance, the B-wing symbol, ClearLink, DCX, Fabric OS, HyperEdge, ICX, MLX, MyBrocade, OpenScript, VCS, VDX, Vplane, and Vyatta are registered trademarks, and Fabric Vision is a trademark of Brocade Communications Systems, Inc., in the United States and/or in other countries. Other brands, products, or service names mentioned may be trademarks of others.

Notice: This document is for informational purposes only and does not set forth any warranty, expressed or implied, concerning any equipment, equipment feature, or service offered or to be offered by Brocade. Brocade reserves the right to make changes to this document at any time, without notice, and assumes no responsibility for its use. This informational document describes features that may not be currently available. Contact a Brocade sales office for information on feature and product availability. Export of technical data contained in this document may require an export license from the United States government.

The authors and Brocade Communications Systems, Inc. assume no liability or responsibility to any person or entity with respect to the accuracy of this document or any loss, cost, liability, or damages arising from the information contained herein or the computer programs that accompany it.

The product described by this document may contain open source software covered by the GNU General Public License or other open source license agreements. To find out which open source software is included in Brocade products, view the licensing terms applicable to the open source software, and obtain a copy of the programming source code, please visit <http://www.brocade.com/support/oscd>.

Document History

Date Published	Comments
December 7, 2016	Updated the Target Path to 5.8.00f.
August 19, 2016	Removed 5.4 as a Target Path release. 5.4 is out of support.
July 28, 2016	Reposted to refresh the date and to show that the Target Path release has not changed. Added a comment about all patches following the Target Path release also being Target Path releases.
September 15, 2015	Initial version.

Contents

- Overview 4
- Definition of a Target Path Release 4
- Target Path Release Designations..... 5
- Future Target Path Releases 6

Overview

This document provides guidance for selecting an ideal Brocade® NetIron® code version for use on Brocade CES/CER, XMR/MLX, and MLXe router platforms and guidance for selecting optimum versions of code to use when migrating from one version of Brocade NetIron OS to another. These recommended Brocade NetIron versions are referred to as “Target Path” releases.

The Brocade NetIron Target Path release recommendations in this document should be used in conjunction with any special requirements and needs of your particular environment. Always refer to the Brocade NetIron release notes and carefully review the closed defect list before selecting and installing any version of Brocade NetIron OS on a router.

This document is updated on a periodic, as-needed basis to reflect the latest Brocade NetIron Target Path release recommendations.

Definition of a Target Path Release

A Brocade NetIron release may be identified as a Target Path release only if it meets the following criteria:

- The release is a Brocade NetIron version of firmware that was created primarily for stability and reliability and typically does not contain new major software features. This version is not used for support of new hardware. This version of firmware may contain reliability, availability, and serviceability (RAS) improvements and enhancements.
- The specified code level (or an earlier patch at the same release level) must be deployed in a sufficient number of end-user production environments for a period of at least three months and must have no known critical or pervasive issues or defects.

Once a specific Brocade NetIron code version is identified as a Target Path release, newer patches (that is, releases that vary only with a different letter appended to the release number) that are released on the same code stream can also be considered as safe as the designated Target Path release. In some situations, it may be ideal to select one of the later patch releases in order to pick up a fix for an issue that is applicable to a particular site or environment. These newer patch releases may also be formally announced as the Target Path release for that code level, and in some cases, they may be designated as a Target Path release after less than the three months of customer exposure time. Because patch releases typically contain minimal changes from their predecessors, it is not necessary to wait for this additional field exposure.

Always review the latest version of the Brocade NetIron release notes for the code level that you are loading—as well as for the code level that you are migrating from—before updating firmware. The Target Path designation does not guarantee that you will not encounter defects or that there are no limitations to upgrading or downgrading firmware levels. However, following the Target Path release recommendations produces the most trouble-free environments for campus customers using Brocade routing platforms.

Target Path Release Designations

Table 1 specifies the Target Path release for all product families of Brocade routing platforms. In general, Brocade recommends running the most recent major code level that is supported by a particular hardware platform, although you do not need to upgrade if you do not need the new features or capabilities introduced in the later major release levels.

For some release levels, the Target Path release may contain some exceptions for specific platforms and functionality. These exceptions might be called out in Table 1 when applicable.

Table 1. Target Path Releases by Major Brocade NetIron (NI) Level

Major Brocade NI Level	Target Path Release	Notes
NI 5.6	NI 5.6.00fb	<p>NI 5.6.00fb and all later patches remain the recommended versions for the NI 5.6 code levels.</p> <p>NI 5.6.00e is also a supported Target Path release.</p> <p>Extended release support for 5.6 officially ends on 12/9/2016. No further planned or scheduled patches will be delivered on the 5.6 code stream. However, fixes for critical issues will continue to be provided to allow for customers to plan and schedule their upgrades to the newest NI 5.8 Target Path code levels.</p>
NI 5.8	NI 5.8.00f	<p>NI 5.8.00f is the recommended Target Path release for all routing platforms.</p> <p>NI 5.8.00ec is also a supported Target Path release.</p> <p>All patches released after the listed Target Path release on the same code level are also considered Target Path releases. The recommendation for new upgrades is to always select the highest patch on the Target Path code stream.</p>

Note: There will be more recent versions of NI code that provide additional functionality. Customers who wish to deploy these latest features and who cannot wait for a Target Path designation on that release level should, as a general recommendation, use the latest release available.

Customers who do not have an immediate need for the latest features should follow the provided Target Path recommendations, selecting the latest Target Path release that provides the level of functionality required.

Future Target Path Releases

Because a Target Path release is based on proven reliability and a lack of critical issues, it is impossible to predict future Target Path releases. However, based on the very mature qualification process and planned release schedules for maintenance and patch releases, Brocade can provide some guidance as to the main code stream that the next Target Path release is likely to be in.

Brocade currently expects the next Target Path release to be a patch based on NI 5.8.

The future Target Path release level and timeframe are both subject to change without notice.