

53-1003915-06

August 7, 2017

DATA CENTER

Brocade Network OS

Target Path Selection Guide

Brocade Network OS Target Path releases are recommended code levels for Brocade VDX Ethernet Data Center switch platforms. Use the guidelines in this document when trying to determine the ideal version of Brocade Network OS software; consider these guidelines with other requirements that may be unique to your particular environment. This document is updated periodically when Brocade has modified or added new Target Path release recommendations.

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Document History

Date Published	Comments
August 7, 2017	Updated 7.x recommendations
March 28, 2017	Updated 6.x recommendations
March 17, 2017	Updated 6.x recommendations
July 21, 2016	Updated recommendation to show Brocade Network OS 6.0.2b and 5.0.2c as Target Path releases
April 18, 2016	Updated recommendation to show Brocade Network OS 5.0.2b as a Target Path release
July 23, 2015	Updated recommendations to show Brocade Network OS 5.0.1d and 4.1.3b as Target Path releases
January 12, 2015	Updated Target Path releases to Brocade Network OS 4.1.3a and 4.0.2b
July 10, 2014	First version

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Overview

This document provides guidance for selecting an ideal Brocade Network OS code version for use on Brocade VDX Data Center Ethernet (DC-IP) switch platforms and optimum versions of code to use when migrating from one version of Brocade Network OS to another. These recommended Brocade Network OS versions are referred to as “Target Path” releases.

Use the Brocade Network OS Target Path release recommendations in this document with any special requirements of your particular environment. Always refer to the Brocade Network OS release notes, and carefully review the “Important Notes and Known Defects” information before selecting and installing any version of Brocade Network OS on a switch.

This document is updated on a periodic, as-needed basis to reflect the latest Brocade Network OS Target Path release recommendations. Always consult the latest version of this document when planning to install a new Brocade Network OS release on a Brocade VDX switch.

Definition of a Target Path Release

A Brocade Network OS release may be identified as a Target Path release only when it meets the following criteria:

- The release is a Brocade Network OS version of firmware that was created primarily for stability and reliability and not for the introduction of new features. This version of firmware may contain Reliability, Availability, and Serviceability (RAS) improvements and enhancements, but it typically does not contain new software features or support for new hardware.
- 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 at least two months and must have no known critical or pervasive issues or defects.

After a specific Brocade Network OS 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 safe as the designated Target Path release. In some situations, it may be ideal to select one of the later patch releases 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 fewer than the two months of customer exposure. 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 Network OS release notes for the code level you are loading—and for the code level you from which you are migrating—before updating firmware. The Target Path designation does not guarantee that you will not encounter defects or that there are no limitations in upgrading or downgrading firmware levels. However, following the Target Path release recommendations produces the most trouble-free environments for data center customers using Brocade VDX switching platforms.

Target Path Release Designations

Table 1 specifies the Target Path release for each major version or family of Brocade Network OS releases that is actively supported in the field. In general, Brocade recommends running the most recent major code level that is supported by a particular hardware platform, although it is not necessary 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 special-purpose hardware platforms and functionality, such as embedded switches. The Notes column in Table 1 lists these exceptions for each major release.

Table 1. Target Path Releases by Major Brocade Network OS (NOS) Level

Major Brocade NOS Level	Target Path Release	Notes
NOS 4.1	NOS 4.1.3d	Recommended Target Path for all Brocade VDX platforms. NOS 4.1.3c remains a valid Target Path version. All patches released after the listed Target Path on the same code level are also considered Target Path. The recommendation for new upgrades is to always select the highest patch on the Target Path code stream.
NOS 5.0	NOS 5.0.2c	Recommended Target Path for all Brocade VDX platforms. All patches released after the listed Target Path on the same code level are also considered Target Path. The recommendation for new upgrades is to always select the highest patch on the Target Path code stream.
NOS 6.0	NOS 6.0.2f	Recommended Target Path for all Brocade VDX platforms. NOS 6.0.2b onward are valid Target Path versions (except 6.0.2d). Currently 6.0.2f is the latest Target Path release.
NOS 7.0	NOS 7.01c	Recommended Target Path for all Brocade VDX platforms. All patches released after the listed Target Path on the same code level are also considered Target Path. The recommendation for new upgrades is to always select the highest patch on the Target Path code stream.

Note: More-recent versions of Brocade Network OS code provide additional functionality. Customers who want to deploy these latest features and who cannot wait for a Target Path designation on that release level should use the latest release available as a general recommendation.

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 required level of functionality.

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 for the next Target Path release.

Brocade currently expects the next Target Path release to be a patch based on Brocade Network OS 7.1.0x code.

The future Target Path release level and time frame are subject to change without notice.