



Opinion: Meraki – Best in class

Full disclosure, yes we are Cisco partners. We are Cisco partners because they are the industry leader and best at what they do (or make: e.i., firewalls). However, the purpose of this article is not to push or tout a company's particular product, but rather - as it has always been our intent - to educate.

Firewalls date way back to the early days of the Internet when the World Wide Web was known as ARPANET (Advanced Research Projects Agency Network). And just like the internet, firewalls have continued to evolve. They have transformed into something much more than just packet-filtering mechanisms. It is difficult to envision a world now days without firewalls. First developed as a method for allowing or restricting outside access to network resources, firewalls are currently capable of enforcing network security policies, logging internet activity and securing a company's exposure to outside threats. But let us introduce to you Meraki and the concept of cloud managed networking. Meraki's entire line of firewalls is way ahead of the curve with rich features and a wide range of capabilities (that is why Cisco payed a hefty 1.2 billion to purchase Meraki back in 2012).

In a nutshell, Meraki's technology provides Wi-Fi, switching, security and mobile device management via a centralized cloud platform.

If you've never put your hands on or seen a cloud managed firewall like a Meraki MX device, then preaching its benefits by simply regurgitating a data sheet is meaningless. You can visit <https://www.meraki.com> on your own if all you care about is specs and numbers (which you probably don't but luckily for you, we do!). One cool benefit we would like to mention here is how Meraki -under a technology called "AutoVPN" - makes site to site VPNs easier than ever before. Typically, site to site VPNs are a very messy affair, full of pre-shared keys, algorithm matching, and other detailed trial and error rubbish. But as long as branch offices are all on a Meraki MX-line device, establishing connectivity between two or more branches is a click-click affair. And for an industry first, you don't even need static IPs at your offices - AutoVPN manages everything with a free integrated DNS hostname service.

To sum things up, all firewalls in the MX line from Meraki come with access to the best of the best of what sets Meraki apart: a clean, browser-based control console that administers (nearly) every aspect of Meraki units in a single pane of glass. It's extremely powerful, yet cleverly intuitive which makes it easier for us to help keep your network secure! Nearly after two years of successfully deploying Meraki firewalls at several of our clients and seeing what Meraki has to offer, we can safely say that Meraki represents the face of the modern, scalable and here to stay firewall!

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