

Firewall Competitive: WatchGuard vs Meraki

For Internal and Partner Audiences Only

Target Market

Meraki designs their MX UTM line for distributed environments that require remote administration, especially those with 10 to 100 locations. This frequently places them in competition with WatchGuard in the midsize enterprise space.

Target Industries:

Primary Education, Higher Education, Branch Networking, Retail, Service Provider, Hospitality, Manufacturing, Government

Key Facts and Financials

Founded in 2006, Meraki has grown to become an industry leader in the IT space, with over 230,000 customers and 3 million network devices around the world. They are part of Cisco's network security offering, which, in total, owns 16% of the network security appliance market.

Footprint and Flagship Customers

While once a small part of the Cisco network security business, investment in Meraki has grown recently. According to Gartner, "Meraki MX visibility, while still mostly limited to the U.S. and the U.K., has also improved, particularly in the retail industry."

Flagship Customers:

Peet's Coffee & Tea, Kindred Healthcare, Audi AG, Goucher College, Ottawa University, The Salvation Army, Nextdoor, InterContinental Hotels Group, Make-A-Wish, California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Product Offerings

Meraki UTMs

The Meraki series of UTMs represents Cisco's network security offering to the SMB market. They offer a range of tabletop, rackmount, and virtual appliances appropriate for environments with 50 to 10,000 users.

Cloud-based Management

Meraki MX UTMs feature Cloud-based centralized management for a unified view of all Meraki UTMs, as well as wireless APs, switching, MDM products and, IP phones through the Cloud. This is a powerful feature that can give them the upper hand in opportunities where network > security.

SD-WAN

Meraki SD-WAN features dual-active VPN uplinks, policy-based routing, and dynamic path selection. They heavily tout SD-WAN in their marketing of the MX UTM line.

Cloud Managed Wi-Fi

Meraki offers a range of indoor and outdoor wireless access points that are Cloud managed.

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Customer Reviews/Ratings – Trust Radius

WatchGuard Network Security

Score 9.1 out of 10

Cisco Meraki MX Reviews

Score 9.0 out of 10

<https://www.trustradius.com/products/watchguard-network-security/reviews>

<https://www.trustradius.com/products/cisco-meraki-mx/reviews>

Cloud Management Feature Comparison

	WatchGuard	Meraki
Multi Tier, Multi Tenant Service		
Multi tier, multi tenant capabilities	4	3
Simplicity of activation and navigation	4	4
Onboarding of Customers and Operators	3	2
Centralized Deployment & Management		
Zero-touch deployment	4	4
Deploy secure policies by default	4	3
Easily deploy across many customers	4	4
Offline Configuration	4	2
Configuration Templates	4	4
Management capabilities for security services	3	3
Policy management and configuration	4	3
Flexible Management		
Inventory management experience	4	4
Delegated management capabilities	4	3
Platform Accessibility		
Role-based access control	4	4
Identity-based management	4	4
Audit logs for changes	3	3
Licensing		
Licensing structure and options	4	2
Additional licenses for features or security services	4	4
Reporting & Visibility		
Reporting visuals and functionality	3	4
Custom reporting	4	4
Alerts and notifications	3	3
Custom branding	4	3
Dark Web Scan	4	0

Missing Essential Security Capabilities

The Meraki UTM offerings are missing significant security features common to nearly all other competitors in the space.

	WatchGuard	Meraki
Cloud Sandboxing	✓	✓
Detection and Response	✓	✗
DNS-filtering	✓	✗
DLP	✓	✗
Access Portal	✓	✗
AI-powered Antimalware	✓	✗

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Strengths

- + **100% Cloud Managed**
Meraki receives accolades for the simplicity of their cloud management platform.
- + **Built-in SD-WAN**
Meraki is a network appliance, more than a network security appliance. WatchGuard Firebox appliances support common SD-WAN use cases, while providing comprehensive security.
- + **Easy to deploy**
Meraki MX appliances are designed to be easy to deploy even for non-skilled IT teams
- + **Fault Tolerance and Redundancy**

Weaknesses

- ✗ **Weak security platform.** The Meraki UTM offerings are missing significant security features common to nearly all other competitors in the space, and offers virus scanning that can't inspect compressed files, or javascript.
- ✗ **No HTTPS or IPv6 inspection means Meraki can't see threats disguised in encrypted traffic,** which represents roughly 80% of Internet traffic today, or over IPv6 which relates to 15% of traffic in some countries.
- ✗ **Missing essential networking features.** Meraki offers only one option for mobile VPN (L2TP), and can't be used for internal segmentation, a common UTM use case.
- ✗ **Security and visibility cost extra.** Meraki charges extra for AMP endpoint licenses, sandboxing, and a visibility dashboard.

HTTPS Inspection is STILL in BETA (3 years!)

Meraki marketing materials disguise their poor support for encrypted traffic inspection.

Their HTTPS inspection feature:

- Is still in beta and "not recommended for production networks"
- DOESN'T SUPPORT TLS 1.3... and likely won't...

Cisco Meraki vs. Cisco ASA

You may encounter situations in which a prospect will be steered toward either Cisco Meraki or Cisco ASA depending on customer requirements. Generally, Cisco positions their products as follows:

Meraki is for Customers who:

- Prefer Cloud-management, ease of use over security
- Have a lean IT staff
- Would not purchase ASA because of complexity

Cisco ASA is for Customers who:

- Are a technically proficient customer with security expertise.
- Have a data center, campus, or high-performance central location deployment
- Have government certifications requirements (CC, FIPS, EAL-4)

Landmine Questions to Ask

1. **Are you okay not being able to inspect encrypted traffic?**
Why it works? The majority of a business's web traffic is now encrypted, and Meraki can't inspect it.
2. **Would you like to prevent malware from entering your network?**
Why it works? Meraki's AV solution can't scan compressed files, or javascript
3. **Are you comfortable using only L2TP for your mobile VPN needs?**
Why it works? Meraki only offers mobile VPN via L2TP.
4. **Do you want you use your UTMs for any internal segmentation?**
Why it works? Meraki devices require direct connectivity to the cloud, and as such cannot be used to segment internal networks from each other, which is considered a security best practice.

Meraki Lacks IPv6 Support... in 2021

IPv6 was proposed in 1998, and is the next generation Internet Protocol (IP) address standard intended to supplement and eventually replace IPv4. It was ratified as an Internet Standard THREE YEARS AGO, yet Meraki still does not support it on the MX series.

Comparative Feeds and Speeds

	T20	MX64	MIX67	MX68	T40	T80	MX75	M290	MIX85	ME90	MX105	ME90	MX250	M4800	MX450	M5800
Firewall (Mbps)	1780	250	450	450	3400	4700	1000	5800	1000	18000	3000	20000	4000	49600	6000	87000
UTM (Mbps)	154	200	300	300	294	631	750	1100	750	2600	1500	3300	2000	5213	4000	11328
VPN (Mbps)	485	100	200	200	650	1400	500	2400	500	5280	1000	6840	1000	16400	2000	18800
# of Ports	5x Gb	5x Gb	5x Gb	12x Gb	5x Gb	8x Gb + 1x Modules	12x Gb	8x Gb + 1x Modules	10x Gb	8x Gb + 1x Modules	4x Gb	8x Gb + 1x Modules	8x Gb	8x Gb + 2x Modules	8x Gb	8x Gb + 2x Modules
Integrated Wireless	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Total 3-Year	\$1,400	\$ 1,801	\$ 2,102	\$ 2,504	\$2,650	\$4,505	\$ 6,016	\$6,420	\$ 7,521	\$9,310.00	\$ 15,047	\$15,705.00	\$ 30,099	\$46,120	\$ 60,204	\$107,110