

BackBox Network Automation Platform vs SolarWinds Network Configuration Manager

Automation vs Configuration Management

In comparing BackBox to SolarWinds NCM it's important to consider the difference between configuration management and automation. The difference between the two is that automation can be used for configuration management and for so much more.

SolarWinds is a GUI driven tool, designed to support network management activities. BackBox is an API-first tool designed to automate anything done by network administrators – even complex software updates of thousands of machines at a time.

Key Architecture Elements that Make BackBox the Better Choice

■ Distributed Architecture

A distributed architecture gives the product scale by removing the central point of scale from being the main automation servers. SolarWinds doesn't have a distributed architecture and is therefore limited in how automations are executed across the network. Our distributed architecture also allows us to keep backups locally or transfer the backup files back to the central site, providing optionality that can adapt to network security or bandwidth circumstances.

■ Built on Linux

The BackBox server and agents are built on Linux, providing richer automations because of the CLI parsing Linux enables. SolarWinds, based on Windows, doesn't have the ability to parse what the CLI returns nor can it use the information in chained automations.

■ RESTful, API-First Approach

BackBox is friendly to the enterprise and integrates with all the systems you have in place already with an open, Swagger API. SolarWinds is mostly concerned with their proprietary platform integration for help desk or network monitoring integration.

■ Built for both Network and Security Devices

BackBox is built from the ground up to automate the administration of network and security devices. As such, we support more firewalls and support them better than SolarWinds does. For example, we support complex backup and 1-click restores of firewalls and can do multi-step updates of high availability pairs of devices without experiencing downtime, across thousands of devices at a time.

Other ways BackBox delivers a more comprehensive automation solution than SolarWinds:



Platform		
Built for..	Security and Network Devices	Network Devices
Scripting	No scripting language, same language as CLI or API	Has its own scripting language that administrators need to learn on top of what they already know.
Deployment	On Prem, Cloud, SaaS	On Prem, Cloud
Scalability	Distributed architecture	Monolithic
API	RESTful, API-First Approach	Limited
Abstractions	Purpose-built automation platform with the right abstraction entities makes scale and management simpler	Missing the right abstraction entities means that product doesn't scale as well to complex automation use cases
Automation Library	Over 3,000 automations out of the box	Limited
Pricing	Simple	7 different license types
IPv6 Support	Native, full	No
Backup & Restore		
Backups	1-click restore. Rich history comparisons. Backs up OS and Configs	Backs up configurations only. Limited backup comparisons.
Backup Replication	Local, remote, or cloud	Remote Only
Automations		
Discovery	Full device support for discovery	Limited device types
Complex Automations	Yes	No
Automation Chaining	Yes	No
Hands-off OS Updates	Yes	No
Vulnerability & Threat Intelligence	All Vendors	Cisco Only
Remediation	Built-in	Needs a separate product
Integrations		
Network Monitoring Integration	Any via API	Primary focus is integrating with SolarWinds NPM