Scanner Appliance Versioning

Scanner appliance versioning can be broken down into the following components:

- Scanning software and signatures (ML, VULNSIGS).
- Scanner communication software (TAGGER, SCAND, etc.)
- Operating system software
- For physical appliances: Hardware generation
- For virtual appliances: Image bootstrap version (qVSA-X.Y)

Usually, all supported scanner appliances (i.e., appliances that have not reached end-of-support) are automatically updated to the same version of all components without the need for customer involvement, with exceptions as indicated below. This also means that customers usually do not need to manually re-deploy virtual appliances from new images.

Scanning software is updated automatically on all supported scanner appliances. VULNSIGS is updated several times a week, ML typically six to seven times a year, and all other components as needed to fix bugs, security issues or to add features. Scanner appliances that are no longer supported may still receive partial signature updates for a period of time after end-of-support, but no longer receive updates to other parts of the scanning software.

Scanner communication software is updated automatically on all supported scanner appliances. Updates happen to fix bugs, and security issues or to add features. Scanner appliances that are no longer supported no longer receive any updates to the scanner communication software.

Operating system software is updated automatically on all supported scanner appliances, typically to fix bugs or security issues. The QAL2 operating system currently deployed on scanner appliances uses a "rolling update" model without distinct version numbers, i.e., all supported scanner appliances automatically run the same operating system. The exception is the kernel as kernel versions can drift to some degree between different appliances to reduce the need for reboots, and kernels are generally only updated as needed for security or functionality reasons. Older physical scanner appliances that shipped with an older (i.e., pre-QAL2) operating system no longer receive any updates to the operating system. However, some older models are eligible for in-the-field upgrades to QAL2, as detailed here.

Physical Scanner Appliances with Serial Numbers 3001-17970

These hardware appliances shipped with an older operating system, are no longer supported, and cannot be upgraded in the field. Please refer to the Notice of End of Support.

Physical Scanner Appliances with Serial Numbers 18000-28999

These hardware appliances shipped with an older operating system but are eligible for in-the-field operating system upgrades to QAL2 and are fully supported after the upgrade. However, these appliances are not 64-bit-ready and will drop out of support once the scanner appliance operating system switches to 64-bit, which is expected to happen in the 2023-2025 timeframe.

Qualys is currently running a project to upgrade these older scanners to the latest Qualys distro package. The upgrade is scheduled with customers on an individual basis. Why upgrade? Post Q1 2020, this series of scanners will not receive new module launchers or signature updates. Scanners must be upgraded to the latest version to support new features, including IPv6 VLAN,

FQDN proxy, and time synchronization. Reach out to Qualys Support or your Technical Account Manager if you have any questions.

Supported Physical Scanner Appliance Models

Model QGSA-4120-A1 (Serial Numbers 29000-38999)
Model QGSA-5120-A1 (Serial Numbers 39000+)
Model QGSA-6120-A1 (Serial Numbers 42000+)

64-bit Kernel Support
64-bit Kernel is supported starting Model QGSA-6120-A1 (Serial Numbers 42000+). Previous Physical Scanner Appliance models cannot be upgraded to 64-bit kernel.

Virtual Scanner Appliances

For virtual appliances, the "qVSA-X.Y" version number only indicates the version of the bootstrap image, not the version of the scanner software. New images with new bootstrap image versions are released any time the bootstrap mechanism used by the image needs to be updated, typically to fix bugs or to support new virtualization or cloud environments.

During the bootstrap process ("personalization"), an appliance updates its software. After bootstrapping, all virtual appliances run the same version of the operating system and all other software, with exceptions, as explained above, regarding the kernel. This means there is generally no need to redeploy existing virtual appliances from newer images. However, when adding a new virtual appliance, it is advisable always to use the latest available appliance image, to reduce the chance of problems during bootstrapping. The only time virtual appliances must be redeployed from a new image is when the operating system switches to a completely new generation, which we expect to happen in the 2023-2025 timeframe for the switch to 64-bit.
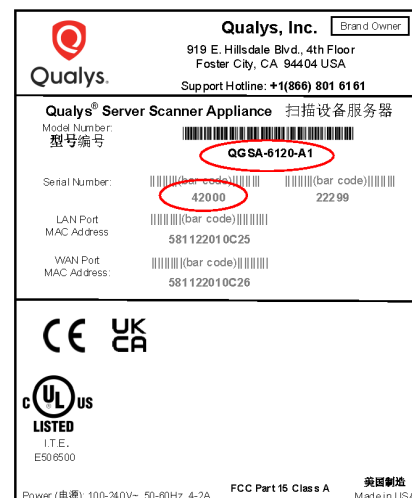
How to Identify Your Appliance

Follow the steps below to identify the appliances deployed in your account.

From the UI

1) Log in to your Qualys account and go to **VM/VMDR** > **Scans** > **Appliances**.

2) In the Personalization Code column, you'll see the serial number for each physical appliance and a personalization code for each virtual appliance.

From the Appliance Sticker

You can find a sticker on the bottom of physical appliances with the model number and serial number. Check out the sample sticker on the right.

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