

Simple Network Management Protocol (SNMP)

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Simple Network Management Protocol (SNMP) is an [Application Layer](#) protocol within the [Open Systems Interconnection \(OSI\) Model](#) stack. It is used for monitoring and managing network devices on a [Local Area Network \(LAN\)](#) or [Wide Area Network \(WAN\)](#).

The purpose of **SNMP** is to provide network devices, such as [Routers](#), [Servers](#) and printers, with a common language for sharing information with a [Network Management System \(NMS\)](#).

SNMP's client-server architecture has the three following components:

- an **SNMP** manager;
- an **SNMP** agent; and
- a **Management Information Base (MIB)**.

The **SNMP** manager acts as the client, the SNMP agent acts as the server, and the MIB acts as the server's database. When the **SNMP** manager asks the agent a question, the agent uses the MIB to supply the answer.

SNMP is so popular that most network devices come pre-bundled with **SNMP** agents. To make use of the protocol, however, network administrators must first change the default configuration settings of their network devices so **SNMP** agents can communicate with the NMS.

SNMP is part of the original [Internet Protocol \(IP\)](#) suite as defined by the [Internet Engineering Task Force \(IETF\)](#). Multiple versions of the **SNMP** protocol exist. The most recent version, **SNMPv3**, includes security mechanisms for authentication, encryption and access control.

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