

Understanding Sources and Source Groups in Nagios Network Analyzer 2026

Purpose

This document describes how Sources and Source Groups work and what they are in Nagios Network Analyzer 2026.

Understanding Sources

A Source in Nagios Network Analyzer is the data collector. Whether it be sFlow or NetFlow, the Source is the same. Sources require a unique name and port to bind to. They create their own directory to store data and have what is called a data lifetime that determines the length of time the granular data is stored. The longer the data lifetime, the more disk space is going to be consumed.

Data Lifetime

Data lifetime was created to reduce the amount of disk space used by Sources. Granular flow data is stored for each Source you create in a directory and database files. These files can grow extremely large and fast. In order to combat the effects of requiring 10TB of disk space every month for a single Source in extreme conditions we created data lifetime.

What data lifetime does is, once data reaches the cutoff point (standard is set to 24 hours) the data is compressed, and only minimal aggregated information (such as bandwidth) is saved for viewing in graphs and other areas of the web interface. If you want longer granular data, you can set the data lifetime to longer, just be aware of the disk size requirements will vary depending on the number of flows that are received.

Source Groups

A Source Group is a Group of one or more Sources. Grouping Sources allows you to see traffic trends on a larger scale. No extra disk space is used when you create a Source Group. These Groups do not collect any data but share the data collected by each individual Source. Because of how Source Groups work, a Source Group's data lifetime is only as long as the shortest data lifetime of a Source in the Group.

System Timezone

Note that the upon initial install, or if changed afterward in **Administration > Global Settings**, the **Timezone** setting you choose will automatically update the Network Analyzer server OS timezone to match. This helps ensure that time data shown in the web interface displays correctly. Avoid changing the OS timezone setting manually, but if this does occur, be sure to update the **Timezone** setting in the UI to match the new OS timezone setting.

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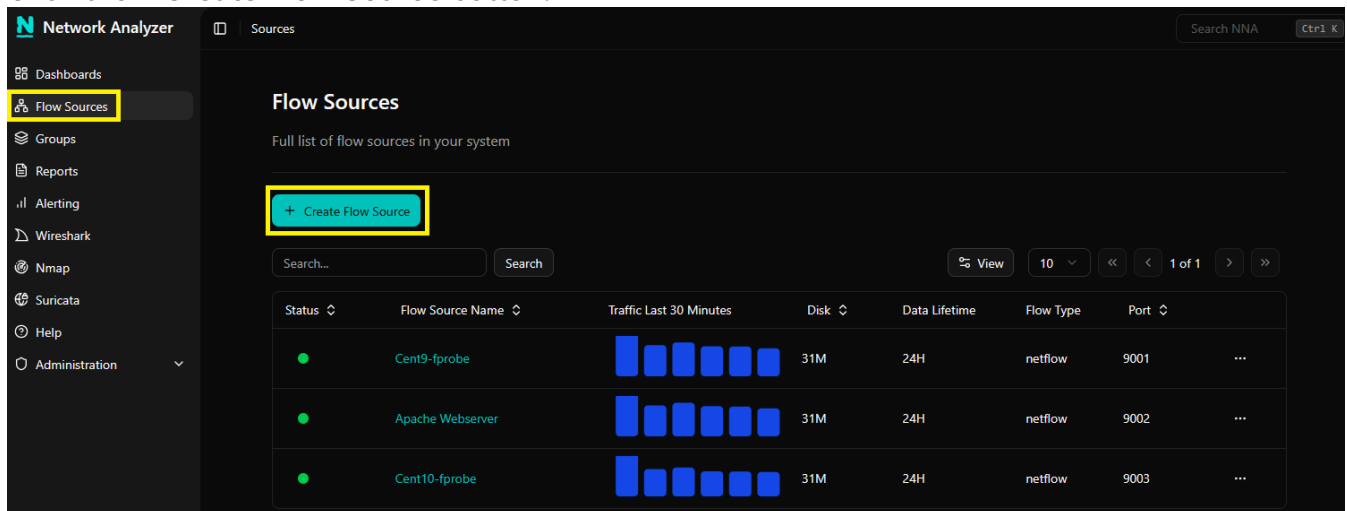
Creating A Source

In the following steps you will need to know the network port that your device will be sending flow data on. The following documentation provides steps on certain types of devices.

- [Configuring Switches And Routers To Send Netflow Data To Network Analyzer](#)
- [Configuring A Linux Server To Send Netflow Data To Network Analyzer](#)
- [Installing And Configuring Windows Netflow Exporters For Network Analyzer](#)

You can configure the devices before or after creating a Source, there is no specific requirement.

1. In Nagios Network Analyzer, select **Flow Sources** from the side navigation bar.
2. Click the + **Create Flow Source** button.



3. The **Create Source** screen will appear. Populate the following fields and selections.
 - **Source Name** - Must be unique.
 - **Flow Source Description** – Details about the devices sending flow data to the Source (information only, not a field that impacts Source functionality).
 - **Listening Port** - Must be unique and over port 1024. This is the network port that the device(s) sending flow information will be received on.
 - **Incoming Flow Type** - Select the [flow type](#), either NetFlow, Sflow, jFlow, or IPFIX.
 - **Raw Data Lifetime** - As explained earlier in this document, it is the data lifetime for granular data.

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- **Data Directory** - Instead of using the default data directory (`/usr/local/nagiosna/var/`) to store the flow data, you can specify an alternate folder. The directory requires `nna:users` as the owner/group and the permissions of `775` granted to that folder. When the Source is created, a subdirectory will be created using the Source ID inside the directory given.

Create Flow Source

When adding a new source, make sure you set up the source to send flow data to your NNA installation IP address at the port you specify below to receive data.

Flow Source Name
Name of the flow data collector, must be a unique name.

Flow Source Description
Description of devices sending flow data to this source.

Port
Unique port that flow data is being recieved on.

Flow Type

Raw Data Lifetime
Length of time you want granular flow data to be stored.

Data Directory
The directory where the source's flow data is stored. The directory location requires `nna:users` ownership and `775` permissions to be written to. A directory will be created with the source id inside the directory you specify.

4. Click the **Create Source** button when you have finished populating the fields and making selections.

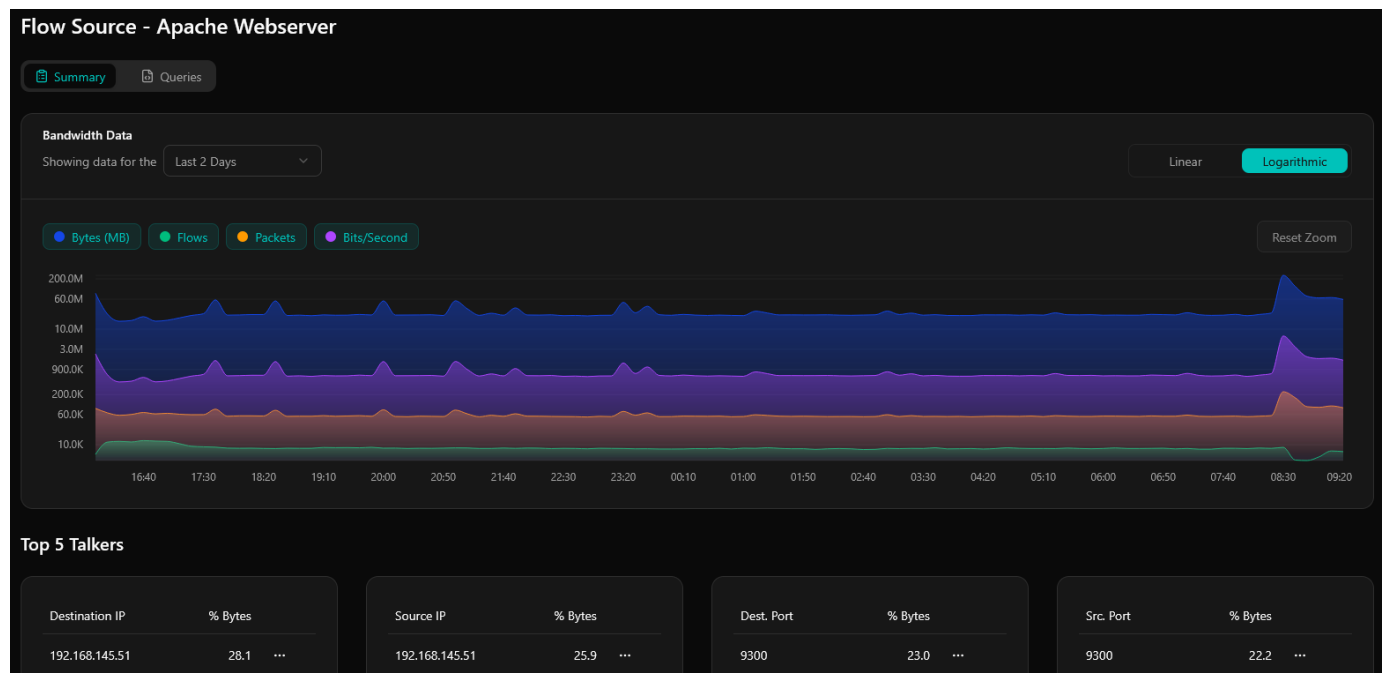
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- The Source will be created and will be displayed on the **Flow Sources** page with a status of running shown by the green circle:

Status	Flow Source Name	Traffic Last 30 Minutes	Disk	Data Lifetime	Flow Type	Port
●	Cent9-fprobe		31M	24H	netflow	9001
●	Apache Webserver		31M	24H	netflow	9002
●	Cent10-fprobe		31M	24H	netflow	9003
●	New Source	No Data	1.3M	24H	netflow	9004

- Clicking on the blue Flow Source Name will bring up the details page of the Source with the **Summary** tab selected by default. It will take at least 15 minutes before the graph appears and 5 minutes before any data appears under the **Top 5 Talkers**.

Here is an example Source after it has been running for over a day:

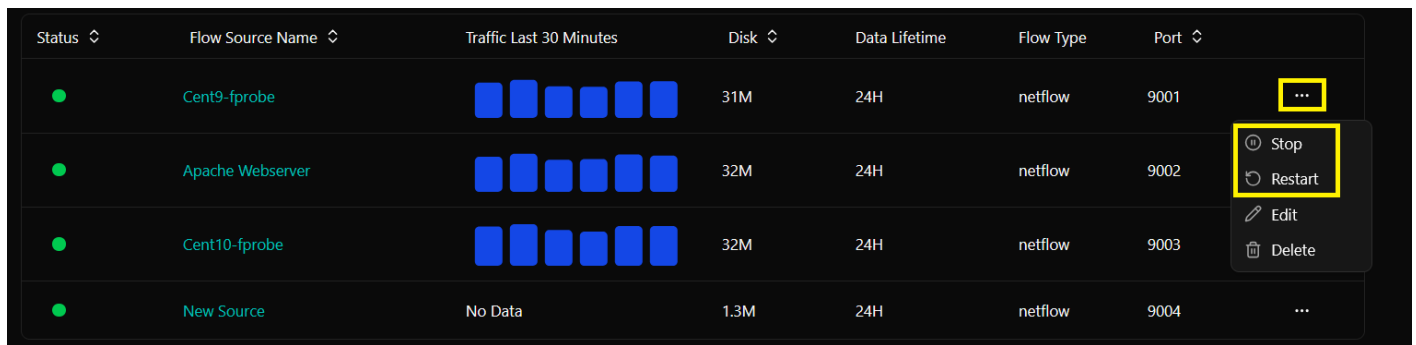


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Stopping / Starting A Source

Stopping a Source will stop the Source from collecting data that is being sent to it from the sender. The sender will still be sending data, unless you do something to stop it. Starting and stopping a source can be done two ways.

Navigate to the **Flow Sources** page and click the Actions icon (three horizontal dots) on the right to access the **Start**, **Restart** and **Stop** options:

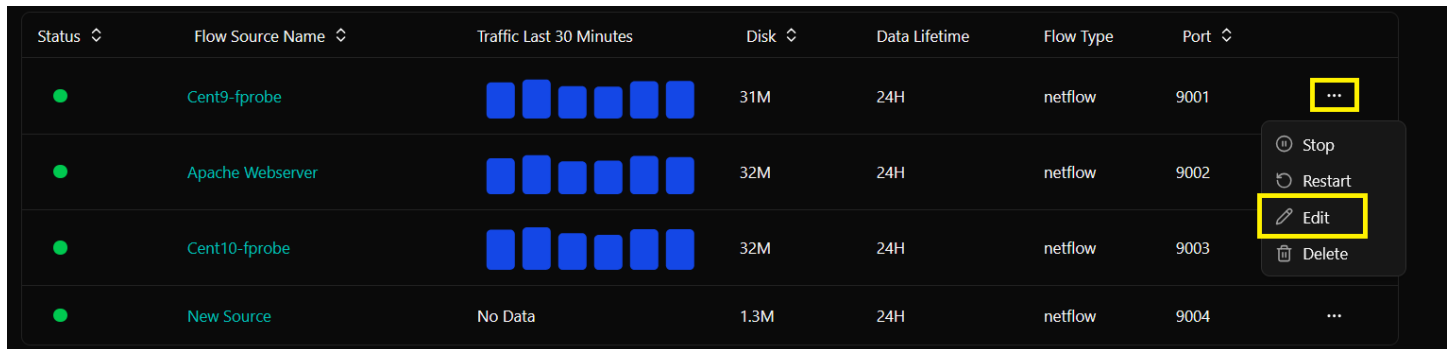


Status	Flow Source Name	Traffic Last 30 Minutes	Disk	Data Lifetime	Flow Type	Port	Actions
●	Cent9-fprobe		31M	24H	netflow	9001	⋮
●	Apache Webserver		32M	24H	netflow	9002	⋮
●	Cent10-fprobe		32M	24H	netflow	9003	⋮
●	New Source	No Data	1.3M	24H	netflow	9004	⋮

The actions menu for the selected source includes: Stop, Restart, Edit, and Delete.

Editing A Source

Editing a Source can be done on the details page of the selected Source. Click **Edit**, under the three dots, on the line of the Source:



Status	Flow Source Name	Traffic Last 30 Minutes	Disk	Data Lifetime	Flow Type	Port	Actions
●	Cent9-fprobe		31M	24H	netflow	9001	⋮
●	Apache Webserver		32M	24H	netflow	9002	⋮
●	Cent10-fprobe		32M	24H	netflow	9003	⋮
●	New Source	No Data	1.3M	24H	netflow	9004	⋮

The actions menu for the selected source includes: Stop, Restart, Edit, and Delete.

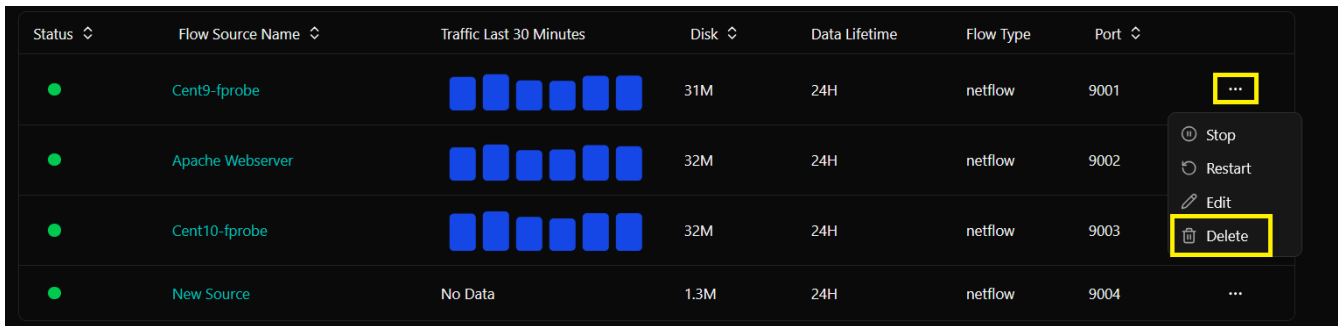
The Edit options are the same as those presented in the [Creating a Source](#) section.

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Deleting A Source

Deleting a Source is a destructive process and all data relating to the Source will be lost. Deleting a Source can be done on the Flow Sources page:

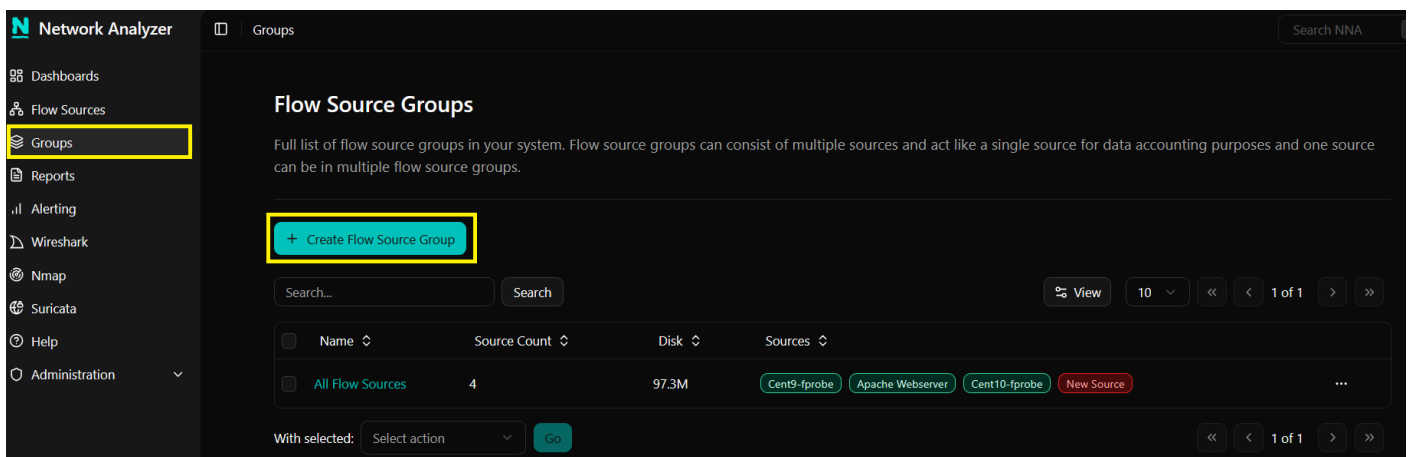
Navigate to the **Flow Sources** page and use the **Delete** option in the Actions dropdown to delete a source:



Status	Flow Source Name	Traffic Last 30 Minutes	Disk	Data Lifetime	Flow Type	Port	Actions
●	Cent9-fprobe		31M	24H	netflow	9001	⋮
●	Apache Webserver		32M	24H	netflow	9002	⋮
●	Cent10-fprobe		32M	24H	netflow	9003	⋮
●	New Source	No Data	1.3M	24H	netflow	9004	⋮

Creating A Source Group

1. In Nagios Network Analyzer, select **Groups** from the left side navigation bar.
2. Click the + **Create Flow Source Group** button.



Network Analyzer | Groups

Flow Source Groups

Full list of flow source groups in your system. Flow source groups can consist of multiple sources and act like a single source for data accounting purposes and one source can be in multiple flow source groups.

[+ Create Flow Source Group](#)

Search...

Name	Source Count	Disk	Sources
All Flow Sources	4	97.3M	Cent9-fprobe Apache Webserver Cent10-fprobe New Source

With selected: Select action [Go](#)

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3. The **Create Source Group** screen will appear. Populate the following fields and selections.
 - Provide a **Flow Source Group Name** for the Source Group.
 - Select the Sources you want to add to the Group from the **Available Sources** column on the left. You can add as many Sources as you want to a single Source Group.

Create Flow Source Group ×

You will need to add one or more source(s) to a sourcegroup. Fill out all information below.

Flow Source Group Name
Name of the flow source group, must be a unique name.

Description
Description of the flow source group.

Sources
Select the sources you want in this flow source group.

Available Sources

- Apache-Webserver

Selected Sources

- Cent9-fprobe
- SP Firewall

4. Click the **Create Flow Source Group** button when you have finished selecting all of the Sources.
5. The Source Group will be created and will be displayed on the **Groups** page. All of the Sources associated to the Source Group are listed in the Source Groups table.

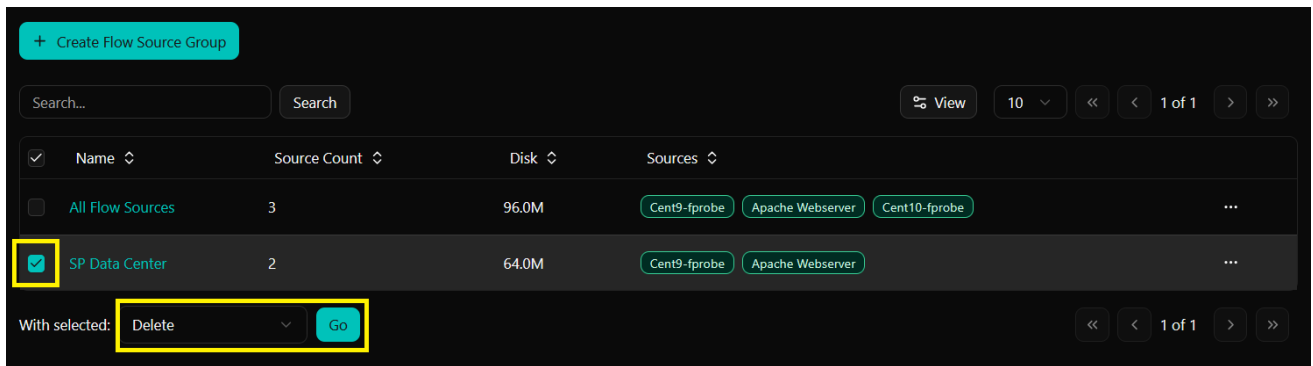
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A Source Group does not "start" or "run" like a Source. The Source Group only displays data collected by the Sources associated with that Source Group.

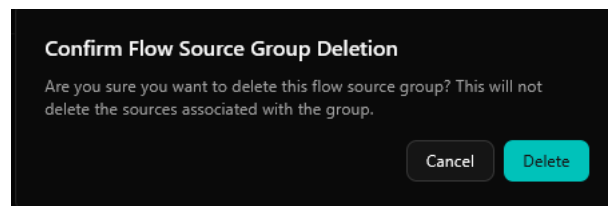
Deleting A Flow Source Group

Deleting a Source Group only removes the Group itself, it does not do anything destructive to the Sources that are in the Flow Source Group. Deleting a Flow Source Group can be done by the following:

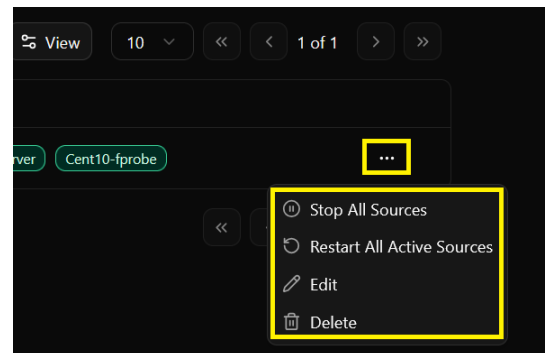
1. Navigate to the **Flow Source Groups** page, check the Flow Source Group you would like to delete by checking the left box, then use the dropdown below the list "With selected" and select action of "Delete", then click "Go":



2. Confirm you want to delete by clicking **Delete**:



Alternately, you can use the Actions dropdown to not only **Delete** and **Edit** groups, but also to **Start/Stop/Restart** all Sources in a group.



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Sources / Source Groups Details

When viewing a Source or a Source Group, many of the features available are common to both. This section will explore what is available on these pages.

Summary Tab

The Summary tab provides a **Bandwidth Graph** and a **Top 5 Talkers** table. The **Bandwidth Graph** has two views that can be selected: **Logarithmic** and **Linear**. Click the source name to open the Flow Source or Source Group detail pages:

Flow Sources

Full list of flow sources in your system

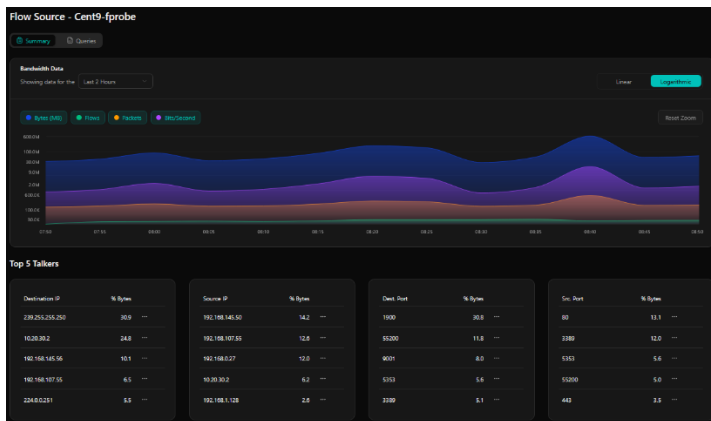
+ Create Flow Source

Search... Search View 10 1 of 1

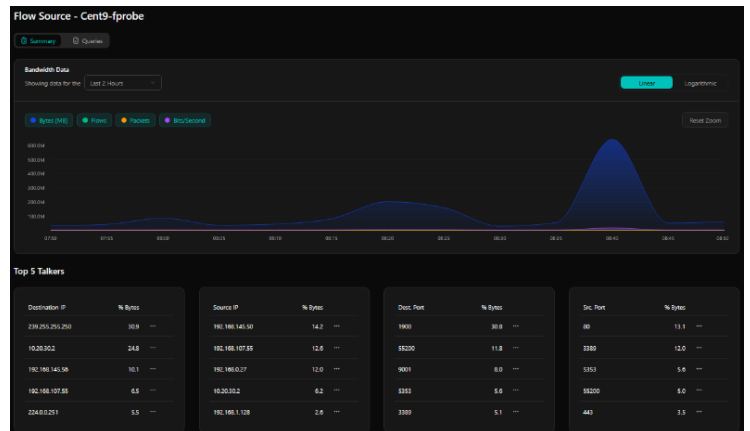
Status	Flow Source Name	Traffic Last 30 Minutes	Disk	Data Lifetime	Flow Type	Port
●	Cent9-fprobe	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	32M	24H	netflow	9001
●	Apache Webserver	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	32M	24H	netflow	9002

The two screenshots below of the source detail page were taken one after the other, so the data they are generated from is identical. As you can see, the **Linear** view is a more realistic view of the traffic flow (when looking at bytes), however, a large peak can prevent you from seeing the overall trend of the traffic, which the Logarithmic view is useful for.

Logarithmic



Linear



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You can also enable/disable **Bytes**, **Flows**, **Packets**, and **Bytes/Sec** on the graph by clicking on the buttons above the graph. Here is an example of a Linear graph with only Flows selected:

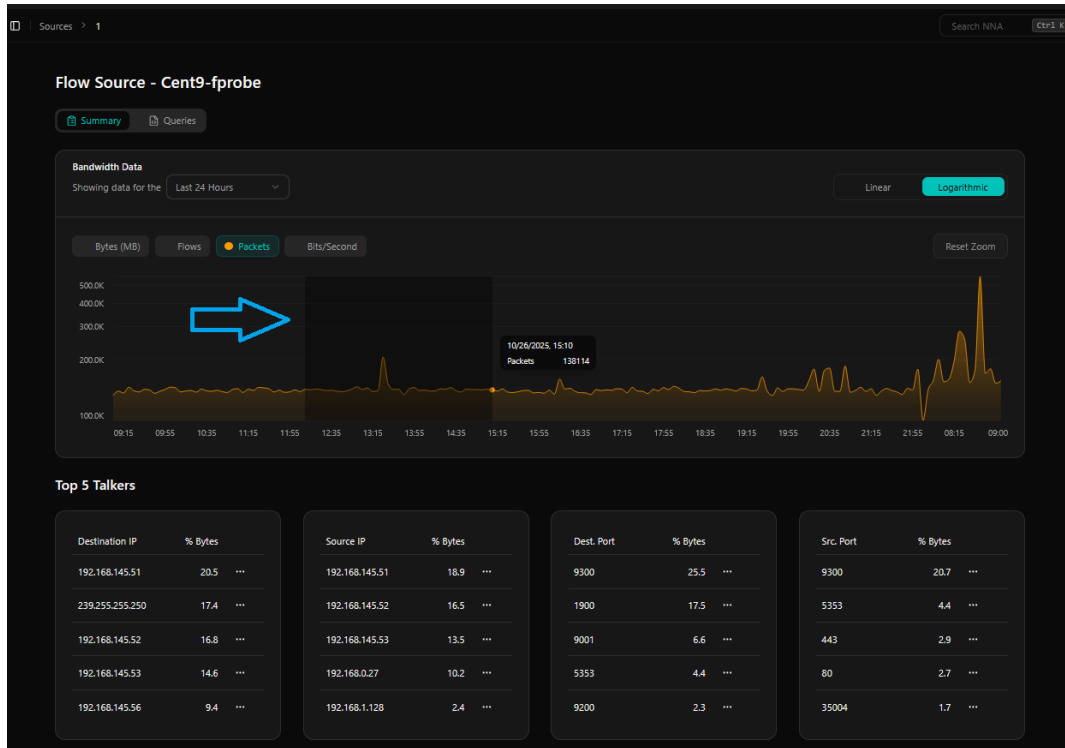


You can change the time period of the **Bandwidth Graph** by selecting from the drop-down list above the graph.

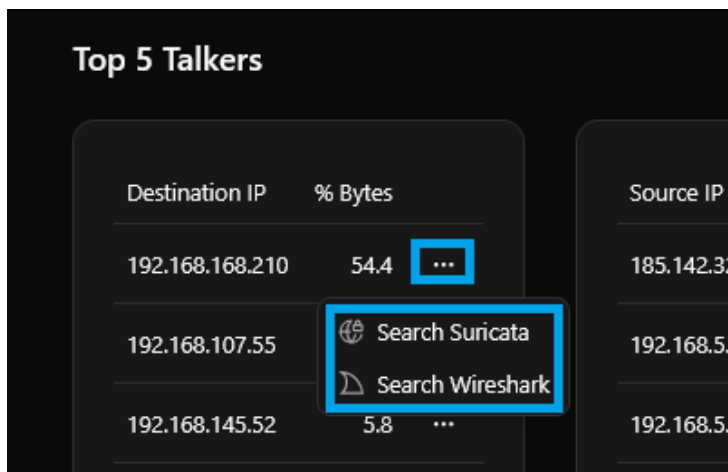


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You can zoom in on a specific time period by clicking and holding on a section, then dragging the mouse cursor over the time period that you want to focus on.



You also have the ability to search either Suricata or Wireshark for the IPs and Ports shown in Top 5 Talkers. To do so, click the **Actions** icon, then select which you'd like to search. Note that the Wireshark Ring Buffer must be active for the Wireshark search option to work.



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Queries Tab

The **Queries** tab is explained in more detail in the following documentation:

[Understanding And Using Custom Queries In Network Analyzer](#)

Finishing Up

This completes the documentation on understanding Sources and Source Groups in Nagios Network Analyzer. If you have additional questions or other support-related questions, please visit us at our Nagios Support Forum, Nagios Knowledge Base, or Nagios Library:

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