servicenow™

ServiceNow Upgrades

Frequently Asked Questions

Now Platform® Family Release

As of Jan 2021

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Now Platform Family Release

Now Platform® family release and upgrades

Q: What is a Now Platform family release?
The Now Platform family release is a complete solution/new version of the product, which includes the latest features and functionality that add value to your business.

Q: What is a typical Now Platform family release cycle?
ServiceNow delivers two major releases each year.

Q: How is each Now Platform family release identified? What is considered N and N-1?
ServiceNow names releases after global cities in alphabetical order, such as New York, Orlando, Paris, Quebec, etc. When a customer's instance is on **N,** it refers to the current family release. It is on an **N-1** instance, if it is on the immediately previous release.

Q: What are ServiceNow upgrades and updates?
Upgrades move a customer's ServiceNow instance from one family release to another, for example moving from New York to Orlando. An update, on the other hand, are fix releases (for example patches and hotfixes) that are applied to your instance that move from one patch level to another within a release.

Q: What are patches and hotfixes?
A patch is a software update installed into an existing program. They are often temporary fixes between full releases of a software package. A patch supports existing functionality within the release family and is a collection of problem fixes and generally does not include new features. On the other hand, a hotfix is a small piece of code developed to correct a key software bug or fault and released as quickly as possible. A hotfix supports existing functionality within the family release with a targeted specific problem to fix.

Q: Why should ServiceNow you stay current?
Staying current by upgrading to new release families is crucial to your success with ServiceNow. It enables you to get the most value out of ServiceNow, by taking full advantage of the innovations made available through our releases, to deploy new products, and to get the highest levels of security, availability, and performance.

Q: What are the benefits of staying current?
Customers who have regularly upgraded their production instances have shared the following benefits:
- Upgrading regularly has allowed them to get and realize value fast, allowing them to prioritize resources and projects necessary to be current
- Staying current enabled them to be more productive and run their business more efficiently
- Finally, reducing risk and protecting their business from disruptions caused by outages is a key benefit to staying current.

Check out the Upgrade Value Calculator on the Customer Success Center to get an analysis of the total value that your organization can achieve by stay current.

ServiceNow's Support Life Policy

Q: What does a supported version of a release mean?
ServiceNow currently supports the most recent and the immediately previous release families. We refer to the most recent release as "N" and the immediately previous release as "N-1". ServiceNow's Support Life Policy or Upgrade Policy states that a minimum, customers will need to upgrade approximately once per year to stay on a supported release family. Read this article on ServiceNow's Support Life Policy on the HI Service Portal.

For any questions about ServiceNow's Upgrade policy, join the conversation on the Upgrade Advantage community. (INSERT LINK)

Q: Does ServiceNow provide patches and hotfixes?
Patches and hotfixes (updates) are only provided to supported release families, which is another important reason to stay current. A release family is considered to be "unsupported" when customers are no longer entitled to patches and hotfixes for that release family. You can view the patches and hotfixes that you are entitled to apply at any given time in the *Manage Instance* section on the HI Support Portal.

When you are on a supported release family, you can apply new patches and hot fixes as soon as they are available. These patches and/or hotfixes are called "updates". To ensure that you have the latest fixes, ServiceNow provides patch and hotfix targets via the ServiceNow Patching Program.

Customers are asked to update their instance to those patch/hotfix targets (or to a higher patch version if desired) within the month. If you have not updated to those targets, ServiceNow can apply the updates to your instance so that you are at the minimum target version for the month. It is important that, as a customer, you factor in both upgrades and updates to your instances as both are important and are required.

ServiceNow Upgrade Resources

Q: Does ServiceNow help customers upgrade to the latest family release?
ServiceNow is committed to helping customers stay on the latest family release. Our customers can access tools and capabilities as well as solutions and services to help you upgrade. These offerings have been designed to help you in three key areas:
- Simplification – We can help you simplify your upgrade activities
- Value realization – We can help you speed time to value
- Risk reduction – We can help you mitigate risk associated with upgrades

Q: Does ServiceNow provide detailed information about its releases?
Yes, ServiceNow publishes full product documentation for each release. Our documentation suite includes detailed information about all products, apps, features, and capabilities included in the release. In addition, ServiceNow also provides release highlights, which summarizes the top features and capabilities from each family release.

Q: Are releases available before market launch?
The **Release Testing Preview and Early Availability** program is an opportunity for you to upgrade your instances to a new release before market launch. By participating, you can take advantage of new features as soon as they are released, upgrade quickly, and report issues and feedback promptly. Read this article for more information.

Q: How do customers schedule upgrades? What resources are available to help schedule upgrades?
Customers schedules upgrade on the HI Service Portal. The **HI Upgrade Wizard** on the portal offers a step by step guide on how to schedule upgrades. In addition, qualified customers can opt-in to be automatically scheduled through **HI Upgrade Assist**. Visit this page for more information.

Q: Does the Now Platform have features that help customers simplify upgrades?
Yes, the Now Platform has features and capabilities that help you upgrade. Check out the Automated Test Framework which is a feature on the platform that allows customers to automate manual testing, reducing time to upgrade.

Q: Do we have upgrades experts that can help customers upgrade?
Customer Success Packages and Upgrade Services offer experts to help customers stay current. Here are some services available today:
- Jumpstart Your Upgrades
- Success Account Managers
- Upgrade Deployment Services

For more information, visit the Customer Success Package and the Upgrade Services page.

Q: How can I ask questions or join the conversation around upgrades today?
You can get engaged and join the conversation through the [Upgrade Advantage community](#) today. This is the right place to not only ask your questions and share feedback, but also meet upgrade experts and access upgrade-related announcements.

Q: What upgrade resources and best practices do you provide?
We offer extensive best practices guides and materials to support ServiceNow upgrades. You can access planning checklists, playbooks, industry studies, and more through the [Customer Success Center](#).