

# Software Configuration Manager FAQ

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## General Overview

### 1. What is Software Configuration Manager (SCM)?

Software Configuration Manager is a proactive support capability included in Oracle Premier Support, accessible via *MetaLink*. Built as an extension to Oracle Enterprise Manager, SCM is Oracle's support framework for collecting and centralizing configuration information based on the Oracle technology stack. SCM simplifies and accelerates the Service Request logging and tracking process, speeds up problem resolution, facilitates diagnosis of system issues before they become critical, and reduces IT risks and costs. By collecting configuration information about the Oracle environment and uploading it to Oracle Support, Oracle support engineers can more quickly diagnose, resolve, and help prevent system-critical issues.

The SCM infrastructure consists of: (a) the interface, accessible via Oracle *MetaLink*; and (b) the collector software that needs to be deployed on customer systems, also known as Oracle Configuration Manager (OCM).

**2. Do Oracle customers have to pay an additional services fee to use Software Configuration Manager?**

No. Software Configuration Manager is available to Oracle customers as part of their annual Premier Support contract.

**3. Does Oracle have multiple configuration management solutions?**

No. Oracle has a single configuration management solution delivered through Oracle Enterprise Manager. This solution has both a product offering and a product support component. Oracle Enterprise Manager and Enterprise Manager Configuration Management Packs (CMP) are the product offerings and the product support component is Software Configuration Manager (SCM), included with Oracle Premier Support.

**4. What are the benefits of Software Configuration Manager?**

Software Configuration Manager provides:

- Simplified configuration management
  - A centralized view of Oracle projects and configurations
  - Simplified workflow for logging and tracking Service Requests and for supporting configurations
- Faster problem resolution
  - Secure, fast, and accurate information exchange between the customer's environment and Oracle Support
  - Optimized handling of service requests in the context of the customer's business priorities
- Proactive issue notification
  - Identifies critical Security and General Alerts associated with a configuration
  - Provides a link to documentation and bug description
- Optimize performance
  - Health checks—dynamically run against Oracle Configuration Manager uploaded configurations—provide immediate findings, risks, and recommendations
  - Continuously updated rules from expert system applied against configuration information
  - Closed-loop feedback of identified issues to Oracle Product Development
- Personalized and customizable dashboards
  - Making crystal clear what users need to know, and what users need to do

Software Configuration Manager customers report these results:

- A 30% reduction in the time it takes to log a Service Request
- A 20% faster response time to Service Requests
- 40% faster issue resolution
- 25% problem avoidance with Alerts and HealthChecks

**5. How does Software Configuration Manager accelerate problem resolution?**

Software Configuration Manager makes it easier and faster for Oracle customers to submit Service Requests with more accurate and complete configuration information by allowing them to access configuration information that has been automatically collected and uploaded by the Oracle Configuration Manager tool. This eliminates the need to manually enter configuration information each time a Service Request is logged and accelerates the exchange of information between customers and Oracle support engineers, resulting in faster problem diagnosis and reduced time to resolution. Plus, since Oracle Support Engineers can view critical configuration information across the customer's environment—within the context of key projects and deadlines—they can provide more intelligent problem resolution. Customers have reported up to 40% faster issue resolution with Software Configuration Manager.

**6. How does Software Configuration Manager optimize performance?**

Customers can keep their Oracle environment tuned to Oracle's best support practices and latest technical advice. Health checks based on customer configuration data help them streamline the isolation and resolution of performance issues during implementation, production, and upgrades. Automated component validation checks help customers avoid outages and optimize performance, even during peak system loads.

**7. How does proactive issue notification—offered with Software Configuration Manager—improve the support experience?**

Software Configuration Manager saves customers time by eliminating the need to search the Oracle Support Knowledgebase for the latest General and Security Alerts. Through the System Health region in the Software Configuration Manager, customers can view configuration-specific General and Security Alerts followed by system recommendations. Proactive alerts about potential problems benefit customers by facilitating more efficient use of their IT resources and significantly reducing risk to their enterprises.

**8. Which Oracle products does Software Configuration Manager (SCM) support?**

Currently, SCM supports data uploaded by Oracle Configuration Manager (the collector software used to upload data to Software Configuration Manager) for the following products: Oracle Collaboration Suite 10.1.0.2 and higher, Oracle E-Business Suite 11.5.1 and higher, Oracle Database 8.1.7 and higher, Oracle Application Server 9.0.2 and higher, Oracle Enterprise Manager 10.2.0.1 and higher, and Siebel CRM 7.7, 7.8, and 8.0. Oracle plans to extend coverage to additional product lines, and will announce support for additional products as it becomes available.

## Using Software Configuration Manager

### 9. What's new in the latest release of Software Configuration Manager?

The latest update to SCM features new Knowledge and Service Request dashboards, new ways to access, filter, and analyze your data, and more.

- Complete dashboards for Knowledge and Service Request home pages are now available as part of SCM as top-level tabs, incorporating all features available in the classic MetaLink interfaces as well as additional capabilities.
- Two new types of regions have been added to the main dashboard: “Task: Associate Collectors” allows users with multiple CSIs in their profile to link unassociated OCM instances to a CSI, and “Targets” shows a more granular view of all targets in the enterprise without needing to drill into a configuration.
- PowerView filters can now be instantly created from existing configurations, projects, or Service Requests, allowing you to easily view other systems that are similar to the selected item in various ways.
- You can now view a snapshot of a target's configuration at various points in the past, as well as compare the state of that configuration between different times to identify changes.
- Several improvements have been implemented that make SCM easier to use, including better management of favorites, the ability to export data to CSV files or present it in a print-friendly format, the ability to save PowerView filter sets for future access, etc.

### 10. What features have been changed from previous versions of SCM, or have not yet been implemented?

The following features have been deprecated, altered or not yet implemented:

- Listing of Agent discovered products (deprecated)
- All Computers tab (host information is now accessible from the Hosts section of the Inventory and Usage report)
- Functions relating to manually defining configurations or computers (replaced by OCM disconnected mode)
- Patch recommendations for E-Business Suite (not yet being shown)
- Configuration value searching (to be implemented)
- The ability to file an SR from anywhere in the detailed configuration UI, on the corresponding product being viewed (to be implemented)
- Email address and phone number information is not currently shown for people associated with a configuration or a project (to be implemented)
- User access to configurations that belong to the organization that the CSIs in the user's MetaLink profile belong to, as opposed to access only to configurations uploaded using the CSI in the user's MetaLink profile (to be implemented)
- The “Custom Web Content Region” is no longer supported (feature removed)

## **11. What known issues currently exist in SCM?**

Oracle is continually working to improve the features and functionality of Software Configuration Manager. Some features may not be working as expected, and are to be addressed in future releases:

- Once all regions have been removed from some screens, users are unable to add any regions back
  - To resolve this issue, simply click the browser reload button to refresh the page; the ability to add regions to that screen will then function correctly
- When logging into SCM as a user with administrative privileges immediately after logging out of SCM as a user without those privileges, the “Administration” link will not be visible.
  - To resolve this issue, simply click the browser reload button to refresh the page
- If a user does not have any configurations, they are unable to create projects

## **12. How can I personalize my SCM experience so that it’s most relevant to my function or to my configurations?**

Software Configuration Manager provides several ways in which you can modify the display to show data most relevant to your situation. Using SCM’s PowerView, you can define a number of sophisticated filters to apply to your entire dashboard, which allows you very granular control over which systems’ details are shown. You can customize target information by defining custom attributes for individual targets or groups of targets. You can also customize the appearance and layout of the dashboard itself, by adding or removing regions and controlling the types of information shown within regions.

## **13. Is there any good way for me to organize the items that I’ve designated as favorites?**

The most recent release of the Software Configuration Manager interface offers the ability to manage favorites, by clicking the “Manage Favorites…” link from the “Favorites” drop-down. That screen lets you easily remove favorites, group by type of object, identify favorites have haven’t been easily used, and sort and search through the list of favorites to identify the ones you may be looking for.

## **14. Why don’t I see as many articles as expected in the Knowledge Home?**

The Knowledge Home within Software Configuration Manager takes into account any PowerView filters that have been enabled. You may be able to see more selections by turning off PowerView.

## **15. How do I give feedback on SCM?**

In the top right-hand corner of the Software Configuration Manager interface, you’ll see a “Feedback” link. Please feel free to click on it to offer your comments, suggestions, or feature requests. Unfortunately the Oracle team cannot respond to

every individual comment, but rest assured that we appreciate feedback and consider it to be a valuable tool for improving SCM.

Please do not use the “Feedback” link to report technical problems with Software Configuration Manager or the Oracle Configuration Manager collector software.

**16. What do I do if I encounter technical problems with SCM or the collector?**

If you have any technical issues and need to open a Service Request against the Software Configuration Manager UI or against Oracle Configuration Manager (including Collector Installation, Collector Uploads, or Healthchecks), use the Create SR button and select the Standard SR method from the “SR Type” list of values. Next, click “Expand the Product List” button to see the full set of products. Choose “Software Configuration Manager”. You will then be asked to provide a Problem Type (either requesting advice or experiencing a problem) and a Problem Clarification to match the issue.

**17. What are the browser requirements for accessing Software Configuration Manager?**

Software Configuration Manager supports all of the browsers that Oracle *MetaLink* supports; additionally, it requires the Adobe Flash Player browser plug-in. The Flash Player can be downloaded from:

<http://www.adobe.com/products/flashplayer/>

**18. How do I access Software Configuration Manager (SCM)? Do I have to install anything?**

Oracle Premier Support customers can access Software Configuration Manager by logging into Oracle *MetaLink* and selecting the Software Configuration Manager tab. To take advantage of SCM’s ability to display and manage automatically collected and uploaded configuration data, you are required to deploy the collector software used by SCM, known as Oracle Configuration Manager (OCM). To install Oracle Configuration Manager, click on the Collectors tab from within SCM. The *OCM Installation and Administration Guide*—accessible within the Collectors tab—will provide installation information, including instructions for deployment across multiple environments. Oracle Configuration Manager also comes preinstalled on selected Oracle products.

Please note that unlike in older versions of Software Configuration Manager, creating manually-defined configurations is not supported, and manually-defined configurations that had been previously created will not be accessible. To replace this capability, OCM supports collection in “disconnected mode” which permits hosts without an Internet connection to have their configuration data collected; for more information, please see the documentation on OCM, available on the Collectors tab of SCM.

**19. Why do my Software Configuration Manager regions show sample data?**

If you do not have any configurations created by OCM, the collector software used by SCM, then many of your dashboard regions will be populated with sample data. This allows you to view example health check results, see how patch alerts work, look at examples of typical configurations, etc. Regions displaying sample data will display a banner stating “Sample Data Shown”; some regions (including Service Requests) will still display live data even if others are displaying sample data.

In order to remove the sample data and begin viewing live data, you need only deploy OCM software in your environment. Once it begins collecting and uploading data, SCM regions which had been showing sample data will then be activated to show the real data and the “sample” banner will disappear.

**20. How can I deploy OCM, the collector software used by Software Configuration Manager, across all of my Oracle instances?**

The *OCM Installation and Administration Guide* (found on *MetaLink* and on the Collectors tab of SCM) provides instructions on how to deploy Oracle Configuration Manager – the software that performs configuration collection for Software Configuration Manager – across multiple environments. Options include NFS, RCP/RSH, and Oracle Enterprise Manager Grid Control.

**21. How will Software Configuration Manager (SCM) upgrades impact the software installed in the customer environment?**

The SCM interface is part of *MetaLink* and as such, upgrades to the interface will have no impact on any deployed software. The SCM collector software, known as Oracle Configuration Manager (OCM), has the ability to auto-update itself. With this functionality, each time the OCM collector uploads the latest configuration data, it will query to determine if new updates are available. These updates are purely to OCM and never alter any other software or system settings.

**22. If I have to install additional software on my systems, how much additional resource does it consume?**

OCM, the software used by SCM to collect configuration information, contains a series of collection scripts that execute each time a scheduled collection takes place. There are minimal requirements on system resources. Oracle Support has received no reports of issues pertaining to performance or excessive resource consumption.

**23. Is the Software Configuration Manager information transfer secure and maintained in a secure manner?**

Yes. Security is of the highest importance to Oracle. When transmitting data between a customer site and Oracle, we ensure that only the intended recipient (Oracle in this case) receives access to the data. We utilize and leverage industry standard security methods, Secure Socket Layer (SSL), HTTPS and standard ports for all communications. In addition to using SSL and HTTPS, the Oracle

Configuration Manager only initiates outbound communications with Oracle. It does not listen for inbound communications. No specialized inbound firewall rules are required. The Customer Configuration Repository is secured inside Oracle's datacenter. All access to the Customer Configuration Repository goes through a rigorous security review.

**24. What kind of information is transferred from the Oracle customer environment to *MetaLink*? Is it limited to configuration information or is other information sent as well?**

Oracle Configuration Manager – the collector software used by Software Configuration Manager – captures configuration information about the host, local Oracle software, and associations to systems or software referred to within the local configuration settings. All data that is transferred to Oracle is viewable by the customer before transferring. For additional information, consult the Technical Documentation for Oracle Configuration Manager, accessible from the Collectors tab within Software Configuration Manager.

**25. Do I have the ability to audit the information that is sent to Oracle?**

Yes. Each time Oracle Configuration Manager – the configuration collection tool used by SCM – performs a collection, the details are written locally to a directory. Inside this directory is an XML file and associated style sheet that when viewed with a browser provides a report of the collected data. Instructions on how to execute this function are included in the *OCM Frequently Asked Questions*, accessible from the Collectors tab within Software Configuration Manager.

**26. When my Oracle instance is distributed across multiple servers, is the configuration captured correctly?**

Yes. Oracle Configuration Manager will automatically discover all Oracle software associated with an Oracle home and represent the topology correctly, as long as the OCM software has been manually installed in each Oracle home. For example, Oracle E-Business Suite distributed across several servers will be displayed as one configuration with all of the associated components.

**27. How soon after deploying Oracle Configuration Manager and performing an initial configuration collection will my configuration appear in SCM?**

Within 24 hours of the initial OCM configuration collection and upload, the collected details will be modeled as a “configuration” and viewable in the Configurations region, as well as included in System Health and Patch Alert calculations, etc. The host and Oracle Home information is processed immediately and targets representing that information can be viewed right away through the Inventory and Usage report.

## Configuration Management

### **28. How does Software Configuration Manager simplify configuration management?**

SCM offers Premier Support customers a simpler way to track, manage, and support their Oracle configurations. Customers can centrally view their configurations—including application, middleware, and database versions, plus operating system and hardware platform details—along with the associated Service Requests, Product Alerts, and projects. This results in reduced administrative effort and greater control of their Oracle environment.

### **29. When should I use Enterprise Manager Configuration Management Packs (CMP) versus Software Configuration Manager (SCM) for configuration management?**

You should use CMP when your primary concern is monitoring and managing your Oracle products. CMP is the primary means to help plan and actively manage your Oracle environment. CMP enables you to track, analyze and report on configurations while capturing and storing configuration data that is used for the administration of the entire change management process, including change automation and active system diagnostics.

SCM is Oracle's support framework for collecting and centralizing configuration information based on the Oracle technology stack. SCM simplifies and accelerates the Service Request logging and tracking process, speeds up problem resolution, and facilitates diagnosis of system issues before they become critical. You should use SCM to support your Oracle products.

SCM and Enterprise Manager Configuration Management Pack (CMP) are complementary. When used together they address a wide set of requirements for administrators seeking to reduce the time and cost it takes to manage IT environments. With SCM and CMP, you can manage the full lifecycle of configurations from initial rollout through maintenance and upgrade.

### **30. If I purchased Enterprise Manager Configuration Management Packs (CMP), are the Software Configuration Manager (SCM) capabilities included?**

No. SCM is provided as part of the Oracle Premier Support contract at no additional cost. It is not included with CMP.

### **31. If I have Enterprise Manager Configuration Management Packs (CMP) agents running in my enterprise, is it necessary to install additional software to use Software Configuration Manager (SCM)?**

Yes. The collector software used by SCM (also known as Oracle Configuration Manager or OCM) operates independently from any CMP agents in the environment. The CMP agent, versions 10.2.0.2 and above, provides the option to

deploy OCM into the Oracle home of the agent as part of the agent install, but OCM is still required in each Oracle home. Consequently, if the CMP agent and an Oracle database exist on the same host, OCM would need to be installed into both Oracle homes.

**32. Can I use the EMAGENT to capture and transmit configuration information to Oracle?**

No. Software Configuration Manager is available to all Premier Support customers accessible via *MetaLink*. The auto configuration upload feature is available only when Oracle Configuration Manager (OCM), the collector software for Software Configuration Manager, is installed. OCM is a lightweight utility, run just once a day, that uploads only configuration data without the overhead of an always-running Enterprise Manager agent that monitors a system at all times. The OCM software performs different functions from the EMAGENT.

**33. If I have already purchased Oracle Premier Support, why do I need Enterprise Manager Configuration Management Packs (CMP)?**

CMP is a comprehensive configuration management solution. Oracle recommends CMP for customers who want to implement a configuration management process capable of supporting change execution, automation, problem resolution, and service level management. CMP provides the following features:

- Ad-hoc search and analysis
- Configuration History and Tracking
- Configuration Comparison
- Impact Analysis
- Notifications and escalations
- Ability to integrate with active management such as configuration change, patching, and provisioning.

CMP integrates with security and vulnerability advisories from third-party software vendors like Security Updates from Microsoft, Red Hat and Sun. CMP can also be used to integrate with other CMDB's or management frameworks.

The breadth of functionality offered by CMP provides strong support for managing corporate compliance and adhering to regulatory requirements, such as Sarbanes-Oxley. Additionally, CMP can be easily mapped to popular frameworks such as ITIL and CoBIT.

**34. How are Software Configuration Manager (SCM) HealthChecks different from Enterprise Manager Configuration Management Packs (CMP) HealthChecks?**

Many of the HealthChecks provided by SCM and CMP are similar by design. Much like the core functionality common to CMP and SCM, the value of HealthChecks is in how they are used. The SCM HealthChecks are used to provide support advice

and the CMP HealthChecks are integrated with automated tools and administrative capabilities provided by the Enterprise Manager configuration management framework to help customers perform advanced analysis and change management, patching and provisioning.

**35. If Oracle has my configuration information accessible through Software Configuration Manager (SCM), do I still need to capture it in the Enterprise Manager Configuration Management Packs (CMP) repository?**

Yes. The information collected by the Oracle Configuration Manager for use in SCM is for managing support interactions and is entirely separate from the information collected by the CMP agent for storage in the CMP repository.

**36. Will Software Configuration Manager (SCM) push and apply patches to my environment?**

No. SCM provides a Patch Analysis Health Check that will inform you of missing critical patches specific to your configurations. The distribution and application of patches is left to your discretion.

**37. Can Software Configuration Manager (SCM) take configuration information from the Enterprise Manager Configuration Management Packs (CMP) repository and send it to Oracle Support?**

No. SCM has no access to configuration data collected by a CMP agent and stored in a CMP repository.

**38. If configuration data exists in two places (CMP repository as well as SCM), which one should be considered accurate and current?**

The same configuration data often exists in both and is accurate and current, but, but they are used for different purposes. SCM is Oracle's support framework for collecting and centralizing configuration information based on the Oracle technology stack. It simplifies the Service Request logging and tracking process, speeds up problem resolution, facilitates diagnosing of system issues before they become critical, and reduces IT risks and costs. CMP should be used when more detailed searching, reporting, and comparison—as well active management including change management—is required.

## **Training For Software Configuration Manager**

**39. Is customer training available for Software Configuration Manager?**

Yes. Oracle Support experts conduct weekly Software Configuration Manager education sessions. Each session is live and includes an open question and answer session at the end of each presentation. Please see Metalink Note: 398877.1 (Support Tools and Process Seminars) for the weekly schedule. Oracle also offers

dedicated education sessions for customers who have a large number of personnel who may require training. Email [support-training\\_us@oracle.com](mailto:support-training_us@oracle.com) to request a dedicated session.

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