

# Oracle Forms Statement of Direction

STATEMENT OF DIRECTION / OCTOBER 2019

## PURPOSE STATEMENT

This document provides an overview of features and enhancements included in latest release of Oracle Forms. It is intended solely to help you assess the business benefits of upgrading to the latest release and to plan your I.T. projects. This document also provides recommendations to help organizations decide how and when upgrading and updating is most appropriate.

## DISCLAIMER

This document is not part of your license agreement nor can it be incorporated into any contractual agreement with Oracle or its subsidiaries or affiliates.

This document is for informational purposes only and is intended solely to assist you in planning for the implementation and upgrade of the product features described. It is not a commitment to deliver any material, code, or functionality, and should not be relied upon in making purchasing decisions. The development, release, and timing of any features or functionality described in this document remains at the sole discretion of Oracle.

Due to the nature of the product architecture, it may not be possible to safely include all features described in this document without risking significant destabilization of the code.

## INTRODUCTION

For over four decades, Oracle Forms has been one of the most widely used application development tools in the world for creating enterprise-class applications against the Oracle Database. Oracle Forms, a product/technology in the Oracle Fusion Middleware family, is made up of two high level components: Forms Developer and Forms Services.

With Oracle Forms Developer, business application developers quickly build, in a declarative rapid application development (RAD) environment, comprehensive Java client applications without writing any Java code. These applications have rich user-interfaces, are deployed in a three-tier architecture, and are available on demand for rapid processing of large amounts of data and rapid completion of complex calculations, analysis and transactions. The development environment provides powerful declarative features, such as wizards, built-ins, and drag-and-drop. Using Forms Developer, an application developer can create fully functional applications from database definitions with minimal coding in a small amount of time. Oracle Forms also provides an open, extensible client user interface model that allows full customization and extension of applications with Java.

Oracle Forms Services provides all the components necessary to deploy Oracle Forms applications in an Oracle WebLogic Server environment. Oracle Forms Services built-in features include transaction management, record caching, record locking, exception handling, and much more. Oracle Forms Services built-in services also provide a critical infrastructure that developers would otherwise have to code and re-code by hand many times throughout all parts of the application. In addition, with the included integration features, connecting an Oracle Forms application to other products and/or technologies is simple.

Oracle Forms continues to be a core component in many Oracle products such as the following:

- Oracle E-Business Suite
- Oracle Utilities
- Oracle Retail
- Oracle Life Sciences
- Oracle Hospitality
- Oracle Insurance

## THE CURRENT VERSION OF ORACLE FORMS

Oracle Forms 12c was first released in October 2015 along with many other components in the Oracle Fusion Middleware (FMW) 12c technology stack. In addition to the many improvements delivered as part of FMW 12c, Oracle Forms specifically includes many new features and enhancements. Updates included in Oracle Forms 12c offer the ability to not only freshen up the appearance of aging applications, but also greatly improve performance, and make administration easier. The new browser-less client configuration options offer a way to no longer worry about compatibility with constantly changing browser versions and their underlying technologies.

New features in 12c include, but are not limited to the following:

- Integration with BI-Publisher
- Forms Application Deployment Services (FADS)
- Browser-less client configurations
- Java Script integration for Java Web Start and Forms Standalone Launcher configurations
- Improved image support
- Form Builder productivity improvements
- Form Builder module auto-backup
- New applet parameters for easily customizing runtime behavior
- New and enhanced object properties
- Customizable Color Schemes
- New and enhanced security features
- New and enhanced JVM Controller features to improve performance and diagnosability
- Performance improvements for record handling
- System Events
- Improved SSO integration
- Improved diagnostic features
- New installation options
- Support for newer Java versions
- Support for newer operating systems

Refer to the Oracle Forms 12c Documentation Library for more information about new features and enhancements in current release.

For information on Support availability, refer to the Fusion Middleware [Lifetime Support Policy Guide](#).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Upgrading to the latest version from the immediate previous release is much easier than moving from significantly older releases to the latest. Therefore, Oracle recommends updating often and upgrading when new major releases become available.

Users of Oracle Forms versions older than the current release should immediately begin working on a plan to upgrade as soon as possible. Upgrading to the latest version will help to ensure that the system has the latest security, stability, and performance updates and features. The latest Oracle Forms release is certified with many of the latest operating systems and newer Oracle product versions.

Users of versions like 6.0.8 (6i) or older may find it necessary to first upgrade to version 10.1.2 (10gR2) before moving to the latest release. Refer to the Oracle Forms Upgrade Guide for more information about moving from Forms 6 or older. Customers upgrading from version 11.1.x to 12.2.1.x simply need to install the new software and use the v12.2.1.x Form Compiler (or Builder) to regenerate all application modules associated with the application to complete the upgrade process. Application code changes are not expected when upgrading from v11.1 or newer however may be necessary to make minor user interface adjustments.

Once on the latest version, it is further recommended that application developers take advantage of included new features and technologies that can help enhance and modernize outdated applications. Oracle Forms offers many unique features not found in most HTML-based web applications. As an example of one such feature, with the phasing out of browser plug-in technologies, transitioning to a browser-less solution like Forms Standalone Launcher (FSAL) will not only help to overcome problems associated with maintaining browser and Java plug-in compatibility, it can also help to improve application performance and stability. This important feature is only found in Forms 12.2.1+.

By upgrading and modernizing your existing Oracle Forms investment, end-user can work more efficiently and productively. More importantly, by retaining, modernizing and improving your existing applications, the high cost of a complete application rewrite using other technologies can be avoided.

Organizations desiring mobile solutions or modernization beyond the scope of what Forms can provide should not abandon their Oracle Forms investment. Instead, these organizations should consider extending existing applications by exposing the needed data through other technologies like Oracle's Visual Builder Cloud Service (VBCS). VBCS is an application development technology that offers the ability to render applications on mobile devices, as well as the desktop. In order to avoid creating new applications completely from scratch, consider the offerings of Oracle Partners who specialize in working with Oracle Forms. Oracle Partners can provide products and services an organization may need to upgrade, modernize, and/or mobilize at a much lower cost than starting from scratch with existing or alternative technologies. In some cases, using an alternative technology may not be avoidable, but in many cases, an application face-lift is all that is needed and this can be easily accomplished using the latest Forms release.

For organizations wanting to take advantage of Oracle Cloud, they should consider using Oracle Cloud Infrastructure (OCI) for the Oracle Forms environment. To accommodate the application's database needs, consider Database as a Service (DBaaS). Not really interested in installing and configuring your own software? Consider the Forms VM image in Oracle Cloud Marketplace. Refer to the section below for details.

## ORACLE FORMS IN CLOUD MARKETPLACE

Beginning with Fusion Middleware 12.2.1.3, Oracle Forms is available as a Cloud Marketplace VM Image. New Marketplace VM images are planned to be made available shortly after any new production release of the on-premise software becomes available. The Oracle Forms 12c VM image in Cloud Marketplace is a ready-to-run VM image that allows you to rapidly provision an Oracle Forms environment in OCI. By deploying the Oracle Forms image in OCI, you can dramatically reduce the time and cost to develop, test, and deploy Oracle Forms applications.

<https://cloudmarketplace.oracle.com/marketplace>

In just minutes, you can have an Oracle Forms 12c environment up and running, ready to receive your application or create a new one. Forms Cloud Marketplace VM images includes all the software needed to develop, test, and run nearly any Oracle Forms 12c compatible application. Extending this environment is accomplished quickly and easily as needed.

## ORACLE FORMS ROADMAP AHEAD

Oracle continues its commitment to Oracle Forms. New releases are planned and new features and other improvements are currently being considered. New releases are planned to include some of the following enhancements, as well as others. Which new features may be included will vary depending on market demand, feasibility to deliver, and Oracle business decisions.

- Support for accessing data through REST
- Improved provisioning options of Forms in Oracle Cloud
- Improved integration with Developer Cloud Service (DevCS)
- Design-time productivity improvements
- Performance improvements
- Forms Standalone Launcher improvements
- New and enhanced object properties
- New runtime User Interface (UI) improvements
- New and improved integration with various Oracle products and technologies
- Enhanced security features
- Support for new Java versions
- Support for new operating systems

With Cloud Computing being such an important part of today's I.T. landscape, Oracle is investigating what possibilities the Cloud may offer for the Oracle Forms product and its customers. Using Oracle Forms in the Oracle Public Cloud could offer significant cost savings simply by reducing the typical cost of hardware upgrades and maintenance. For Independent Software Vendors (ISV), and other software providers, the use of the Oracle Public Cloud could make the delivery and accessibility of Oracle Forms based applications much easier and cost effective.

In addition, a significant part of modern computing is mobile technologies. Working closely with Oracle Partners, Oracle will continue to investigate possible mobile and other modernization solutions and how they may apply to Oracle Forms customers.

Refer to the Oracle Forms on the [Oracle.com](https://www.oracle.com) for the latest information and downloads.

## CONCLUSION

While Oracle Forms may be a mature application development technology, it remains widely used by many organizations around the world. Oracle's continued commitment to this product means that updates are planned for the coming years. The ability to use Forms in Cloud has now become much easier with the announcement of availability in Oracle Cloud Marketplace. Plans to improve this offering and develop future images are being considered, so using Forms in Cloud is something that should be on any organization's roadmap.

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## Integrated Cloud Applications & Platform Services

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