

An Oracle White Paper

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Frequently Asked Questions for Oracle Forms 11g

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Frequently Asked Questions for Oracle Forms Services & Developer

This white paper addresses some of the questions users of Oracle Forms 11g may have and some of the questions already asked on forums, mailing lists and blogs. Its divided up into these sections:

- Strategy and Roadmap
- Oracle Fusion Middleware Forms Services
- Upgrade
- Builder
- Integration
- Single Sign-on
- Security
- Miscellaneous

Strategy and Roadmap

Read about Oracle's plans for Oracle Forms in this section.

How long will Oracle Forms continue to be supported?

Oracle Forms has a large and active user base. It continues to be developed and enhanced, and is an important component of Oracle Fusion Middleware. Oracle remains committed to the development and support of Oracle Forms. This commitment is outlined in the Statement of Direction: <http://www.oracle.com/technology/products/forms/pdf/10g/ToolsSOD.pdf>

I am on client/server or character mode. How can I move forward, and preserve my investment in Forms?

This is a broad question and can't be answered in this small space since there are so many varying factors from customer to customer. However Oracle's general recommendation can be summarized here: upgrade and integrate.

Upgrade

If you are on client/server or character mode, you should upgrade to Forms on the web so that you are on the latest version of Forms, in a supported environment, and integrated with Oracle Fusion Middleware. For the majority of customers, upgrading to Forms on the web is relatively straight forward. The Forms Upgrade Center contains a lot of information about how to upgrade to Forms on the web, such as whitepapers, tips, customer testimonials, etc:

<http://www.oracle.com/technology/products/forms/htdocs/upgrade>

You can then enhance your existing applications using new features in Forms, add new functionality to your applications, or build new applications using Forms.

Integrate

For an Oracle Forms application deployed on Oracle Fusion Middleware, you can also integrate with the features of the platform, such as security, load balancing and management, as well as integrate with other technologies such as the Java EE platform.

See <http://otn.oracle.com/goto/formsmodernize> for more information on modernizing you Forms applications.

Oracle Forms Services

This section covers the runtime components of Forms Services.

Will there be a Standalone version of Forms and Reports in 11g

Yes but it will be integrated into the normal install process and not be a separate install package as it was in 10gR2.

Will Forms work with Weblogic Server?

Forms will work with and be a part of the Weblogic Server. Currently the licensing options for Oracle Forms is to run with Weblogic Server Basic or Weblogic Server Suite.

Will Forms be ported to Java so that it can run on the Weblogic Server?

The Forms client is already ported to Java and it runs on the client tier using a Java plug-in. The Forms Listener Servlet (which is message broker that makes it possible for Forms to work through firewalls) and the Forms Servlet (used at startup) are both written in Java and will use the Weblogic Java runtime in 11g.

The Forms Server process is written in C and some C++. There are no plans to port this element of the Forms architecture to Java.

How will the switch to the Weblogic Java Runtime affect my application?

There should be only limited, or no impact to a Forms installation. The Oracle Installer will install and configure the Java runtime to suit Forms' needs. Forms will use the Java runtime as it has used the OC4J Java runtime in some recent versions and the Tomcat Java runtime in versions before that. The change in Java runtime should be transparent to Forms users and developers.

What version of the JDK is used on the server side in 11g?

Sun's JDK versions 1.6 will be used on the server side in Oracle Weblogic Server 11g.

Platform Support

This section covers the different platforms Oracle Forms will run on. It includes browsers, Java plug-ins as well as operating systems and hardware.

Will I need JInitiator to run Oracle Forms 11g?

No, JInitiator is not going to be supported with Oracle Forms 11g. But a Java plug-in is required on the client. Oracle will test and certify Sun's JRE 1.6 and 1.5. Forms will be configured by the installer to use Sun's JRE 1.6.

What browsers are supported?

Forms will be verified on very many browsers. See this web page for certification information: http://www.oracle.com/technology/software/products/ias/files/fusion_certification.html

Or the main Forms OTN page

What hardware will Forms run on?

Forms Services will run on all hardware on which Weblogic Server 11g is certified. The Forms Development organization does not currently certify platforms independently from the Application Server it is a part of.

For Forms certification see the same page referenced in the last question.

Upgrading

Oracle Forms is a mature product and many customers are using versions prior to 10.1.2. This section covers how to upgrade those applications to 11g.

Can I upgrade from earlier versions of Forms to 11g?

Yes. We will support upgrading from 6.0.8 and later versions of Forms directly to 11g. Applications written in versions earlier than that need to first be upgraded to 10.1.2 and then upgraded to 11g.

What changes do I need to do to my application before upgrading?

Many client server and character mode features have been removed from the Forms for versions released after 6i . The removed features mainly relate to features that were only maintained in Forms 6i for the purpose of backwards compatibility. A detailed list of all of the obsolete features can be found on OTN

See <http://otn.oracle.com/products/forms/pdf/featuresobsolescence.pdf> for more information.

Single Sign-on

Many customers use not just Forms but other Oracle and non-Oracle products in their systems. Having a single sign-on solution is very useful in those systems. This section covers Forms support for Oracle's single sign-on solutions.

Will Forms work with Oracle Access Manager?

Forms will make it possible to use Oracle Single Sign-on but will not be specifically coded to use, nor tested with, Oracle Access Manager. Other Oracle products, such as ADF, Web Center and

Portal, will also support Oracle Single-Sign-on. Oracle has plans to support Oracle Access Manager in future versions of Oracle Forms 11g.

Single Sign-on version 10.1.3 will **not** ship with Weblogic Server Suite in 11g. It will have to be requested specifically and obtained separately.

Can I use LDAP to authenticate Forms Services?

Oracle Login Server is able to authenticate against a LDAP directory and thus a Forms application can take advantage of this in an SSO environment. You cannot however use access control information stored in a LDAP directory with Forms.

Can I use Microsoft's Active Directory to authenticate Forms users?

Oracle Login Server is able to authenticate against an Active Directory and thus a Forms application can take advantage of this in an SSO environment. Unfortunately, you cannot use access control information stored in a MS Active Directory directly.

Security

This section covers the security aspect of Oracle Forms 11g.

Is Forms traffic encrypted when running in HTTP mode?

When running in HTTPS mode the traffic between the Forms client and the Forms Server process is encrypted with industry standard SSL encryption. When running in HTTP mode Oracle has added a proprietary encryption scheme that is not as strong as the SSL standard.

Is the database login information encrypted?

The database login information is encrypted when running in HTTPS mode.

Is the communication from WebUtil to the Server encrypted? For example, during file transfer?

If SSL is used all traffic between the client and the server is encrypted.

Is there any way to determine (from within Forms code) if a user has connected using HTTP or HTTPS?

There is no function in Forms that will return the mode the user is connected with.

Miscellaneous

What is the earliest version of Motif needed on a Linux box to run the Forms Compiler.

Motif 2.1 or greater is needed to run the compiler on Linux.

Will WebUtil be installed and configured by the Oracle Installer?

WebUtil will be installed and configured in v11g for both the runtime and the Builder. The OLE2 functionality will not work however since we will not install the Jacob libraries. Any deployment that needs OLE2 functionality will need to download and configure that part after the install.

Have any features been deprecated in Forms 11g?

Our support for Graphics 6.0.8 is deprecated in 11g. Oracle recommends using BI Enterprise Beans or third party graphics packages.

We now use Weblogic as our server side JVM so any features in the old JVM that could potentially have been used for Java integration are also either effectively deprecated or work differently in Weblogic. Most features in OC4J have been ported to Weblogic so the loss should be minimal.

No other features have been deprecated

Will Forms ship with a version of the Java plugin?

No. The latest version of the Java plugin can be obtained from Sun's site:

<http://java.sun.com/javase/downloads/index.jsp>



FAQ for Oracle Forms 11g
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Author: Jan Carlin
Contributing Authors: Grant Ronald

Oracle Corporation
World Headquarters
500 Oracle Parkway
Redwood Shores, CA 94065
U.S.A.

Worldwide Inquiries:
Phone: +1.650.506.7000
Fax: +1.650.506.7200
oracle.com



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