

Driving Efficiencies with E-Business Suite Upgrades



The Opportunity

Upgrading E-Business Suite can be a challenge, in many cases driven by the need to make changes and test customizations and functional setups in the upgraded environments. With EBS 12.2, the amount of work and potential errors is compounded by the move to WebLogic and ADOP (online patching).

Typical Pain Points with EBS 12.2.x upgrades

- Many EBS customizations have not followed the Oracle standards. The 12.2 ADOP process enforces standards, and therefore results in customizations requiring some form of modification during the upgrade.
- Migrating customizations across environments can be time consuming and error prone. For many customers, this includes writing scripts, which takes time and resources.
- ADOP has a learning curve, whereby EBS administrators need to understand the detailed ADOP lifecycle and then write scripts to drive the lifecycle.
- EBS runs on WebLogic starting with 12.2. EBS customers with WebLogic expertise have a leg-up on those who don't have that experience. In any case, the move to WebLogic can increase the challenges of the upgrade, including the need to perform WebLogic provisioning and configuration management manually or write scripts to automate the processes. These activities can be time consuming and error prone.
- In many cases, the critical path in the upgrade project are developers changing and deploying code, testing, and iterating this process until the quality of the changes are satisfactory. This can be time consuming and extend the project duration and cost.
- Production-outage time associated with an upgrade is always a concern, and can require several days down time. This is not acceptable to many business, so the focus on reducing such outages is top priority.

When the upgrade lifecycle is managed through manual or heavily scripted processes, organizations deal with speed, quality, and cost issues stemming from human error, a lack of technical expertise, lack of visibility into what changes are deployed to which environments, and an overall lack of control.

The Solution

FlexDeploy is a market leading DevOps and Application Release Automation product which standardizes and automates software provisioning, build, deploy, and release processes. FlexDeploy includes pre-built plugins for Oracle's E-Business Suite and many other commercial and open-source technologies, and eliminates or minimizes many of the pain points typically experienced with an EBS upgrade.

FlexDeploy's robust support for Oracle EBS provides the following solution:

- Automated deployment of customizations, including support for all EBS object types. This automation removes human intervention, saving time and reducing risk. With the ADOP process enforcing standards, the benefits of automated deployments are compounded. Many customizations will require some form of modification, all of which will require additional migration and iteration across multiple environments.
- ADOP lifecycle management is enabled via operations on the FlexDeploy plugin. These plugin operations make it easy to perform patching, and eliminates manual actions and scripting.
- Automated WebLogic provisioning, configuration, and server management reduces the need to perform manual activities and/or write and maintain scripts. This out-of-the-box automation reduces the time required to maintain WebLogic resources.
- Automated changes are faster than manual changes and reduce outage time significantly. In addition, automated changes can be run in parallel, further removing outage time for an upgrade.
- Controls are built into FlexDeploy, helping ensure repeatability and consistency of the upgrade and deployment lifecycle. Examples of controls include approvals, scheduling, and a full role-based security model which provides segregation of duties.

- Visibility to changes via dashboards and reports provides real-time and historical information that allows IT teams to troubleshoot more effectively, address compliance and audit requirements, and continuously improve the software upgrade process.

Other FlexDeploy features increase the speed and quality of managing E-Business Suite changes, including within the context of an upgrade to 12.2.x.

- Automate the recompile of JSP and database objects.
- Automate scheduled tasks, server recycles, and activation/deactivation of workflow services.
- Roll back changes or discarding the patch edition easily.
- Generate and sign custom product jar files.
- Deploy changes directly to the Run Edition where appropriate; used for small changes or prior to online patching adoption.
- Deploy multiple projects/changes and schedule Finalize & Cut-over during non-peak hours or maintenance window.
- Leverage FlexDeploy's test automation support to perform smoke or regression tests using tools such as Oracle ATS or HP UFT.

Customer Example – Realizing the Benefits of FlexDeploy

One customer experienced the benefits of using FlexDeploy for an upgrade to E-Business Suite 12.2.5. They had been using FlexDeploy to manage their Oracle Fusion Middleware (WebLogic, SOA Suite, ADF, etc.) implementation and their E-Business Suite and Oracle Database applications, and relied on help from a hosting provider for some E-Business management.

When the time came to upgrade, this customer had about 1200 customizations, many of which had not followed Oracle standards during creation. The 12.2 ADOP process enforces standards, meaning the customer had many modifications to customizations that needed to be made during the upgrade. FlexDeploy removed that complexity and helped automate and manage the ADOP lifecycle behind the scenes. The EBS plugin pulls the changes from the SCM, automatically puts them into the ADOP apply phase (removing the need to write call scripts [write, test, re-write] and adding consistency), and re-deploys the customization base. In talking with the Technical Lead, he indicated that the ability to manage the apply phase automatically saved their hosting provider days of work, ultimately saving our customer dollars off the top.

The benefit was not only the hard costs, but also the added benefit of consistency. The Technical Lead noted they could easily and automatically redeploy, rather than having “a guy sitting there pushing buttons.” This person is now able to add value to the team elsewhere, which is greatly needed during any upgrade!

Finally, the Tech Lead shared that FlexDeploy greatly increased the speed of the deployments. At the outset of the upgrade, the Tech Lead estimated 30 hours of downtime for deployment activities. FlexDeploy managed the estimated 30 hours' worth of work in 30 minutes, reducing the overall outage time by 29 ½ hours; a 60x improvement.

The Conclusion

The upgrade to E-Business Suite version 12.2 has unique challenges which FlexDeploy helps address, ultimately resulting in happier IT leaders and business users. Everybody wins when you get higher quality software faster, and at a fraction of the cost.