

THINKING OF UPGRADING TO SAP BUSINESSOBJECTS 4.2 SP4?

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SAP BusinessObjects 4.2 SP4 offers numerous new features and many of these features have been anticipated for years. Below is just a sampling of all the great new enhancements found in SAP BusinessObjects 4.2 SP4.

1. The Web Intelligence DHTML designer can realistically now replace the Java Applet Designer. You can again create WebI reports with Google chrome and without the need to deploy an Oracle JRE.
2. There is a new optional HTML 5 (Fiori Style) BI LaunchPad and Web Intelligence viewer.
3. There is a new CMS Database Driver for metadata reporting against the CMS database. I always thought it was odd that you could not generate reports based on metadata generated by a BI reporting platform.
4. You can create Run-Time Server groups and they can be assigned to folders, users and security groups. This allows you to setup dedicated “server nodes” to process workloads.
5. New Virus Scan integrated support with the FRS Services.
6. A User Accounts status icons now appear when listing user accounts in the CMC. Quickly identify disabled user accounts.
7. Administrators can now limited the number on Inbox items. Just like with other folders, the system will delete the oldest documents when the limit is exceeded.
8. The Promotion Management (LCM) Command Line now allows you to define a batchJobQuery parameter. The query in this parameter acts like a cursor for the ExportQuery parameter. For each row returned by the Batch Job Query, the ExportQuery a value can be passed to the Export Query via a place holder.
9. Update the platform from a combined support package and patch stack. You no longer need to first apply a support pack and then apply its patch. This might be the most important enhancement of the group given the amount of time it saves.

See for yourself all of the enhancements available in 4.2 SP4:

<https://www.sap.com/documents/2017/04/5e2249b3-b57c-0010-82c7-eda71af511fa.html#https://help.sap.com/viewer/09fe9f205ee047d48d58665649fc4fae/4.2.4/en-US/43917cd3-6b75-4a1e-841e-1356e0647f6d.html>

Be cautious when upgrading!

While many of these enhancements are outstanding, there are a few issues related to performing an in-place upgrade on the Microsoft Windows OS. Specifically, SAP included an upgraded Windows OS installation compiler with the 4.2 SP4 media. The “compiler upgrade” impacts both historic patches and add-ons within the platform. Add-ons such as Lumira, Design Studio, AAOOffice and Explorer are all impacted by this change. [SAP Note 2485676](#) explains the impact in further detail.

The short version of the story is that you might want to consider deploying a fresh BOE 4.2 SP4 environment and then moving your existing content to it. Because the compiler was upgraded, you will not be able to remove prior patches, repair installations or remove add-ons. This assumes that you are performing an in-place upgrade without first removing all of the historic

patches and add-ons. I do not recommend that you attempt to remove all of the historic patch stacks or add-ons because historically that can create more problems than it solves.

In my experience, the 4.2 SP4 upgrade was very problematic. I had an issue with the Lumira and Design Studio plugin after the upgrade and the resolution was to run an installation repair. Unfortunately, the repair no longer worked after upgrading to 4.2 SP4. To resolve, I had to manually backup the CMS DB, FRS and configuration files and then uninstall the software using the steps outlined in [SAP Note 1691555](#). I then reinstalled from the base 4.2 SP4 full installer and recovered the DB, FRS and configuration files. I then installed compatible plug-ins using [SAP Note 2467541](#) as a guide. Compatible plug-ins use the same compiler as 4.2 SP4 and will not have this issue. However, the upgrade required almost 6 full days because of these unexpected issues.

SAP Note 2485676 indicates that you can install a new 4.2 SP4 system side-by-side with your existing 4.x system as a workaround. It also indicates that you can use the promotion manager GUI to migrate your content. However, as most experienced BOE administrators know, the promotion management GUI is not a scalable tool when you are trying to promote 20,000+ objects between two 4.x systems. With that said, based on enhancements in 4.2 SP4 Promotion Management Command Line Interface (CLI), it might now be a scalable option. Regardless, promotion manager is not the easiest way to promote mass content between two environments.

In addition to the recommendations from the SAP note there are two additional upgrade options that I will outline below. These options prevent the need to use promotion manager. However, they do take time to complete. You also truly need to be experienced and have a sound backup / restore solution in place.

Other options when upgrading to 4.2 SP4

- 1.) Upgrade the system in-place using the 4.2 SP4 upgrade. Backup for FRS, CMS DB and any configuration files. Manually remove the BOE binaries, installation metadata and registry settings using [SAP Note 1691555](#). Install BOE 4.2 SP4 using the full media and then restore the FRS and configuration files. In my case, I used the existing CMS and Audit DB during the full install without any impacts. The CMS DB backup is a “just-in-case” step. You can then install compatible plug-ins as needed.
- 2.) Upgrade the original systems in-place using the 4.2 SP4 upgrade media. Add additional hosts as if you were clustering in additional servers. On each additional host, use the full BOE 4.2 SP4 installer. Move all service operations to the new hosts. Install compatible plug-ins to each new host as needed. Remove the services and SIA from the original host using the CMC / CCM. This effectively de-clusters the old systems from the environment and those hosts can be retired. You now have all new systems without any compiler upgrade issues.