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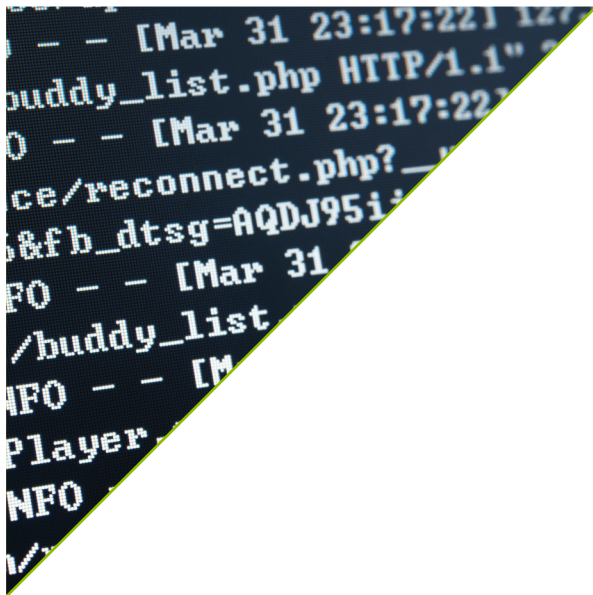
Why Upgrade?

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As the leader in the MultiValue space for big data, one of the common themes we see across our existing customer base is a general slowness to upgrade to the latest release. In a world where many software updates are "pushed" regularly over the air (OTA) to your smartphone, your browser, your cable box, and even your car, it seems counterintuitive that some of the most important enterprise software in the world is "pulled" for updates and yet, not pulled very often at all. This hesitancy for organizations to stay up-to-date with a current version of the Application Platform spans customers of all types, sizes, industries, and geographies.

We at Rocket want to ensure that our customers are getting the most value out of their support and maintenance dollars by providing the best experience, performance, and service. Upgrading the Application Platform (at least annually) should be a natural and expected part of any business that has customers depending on the data in that system. With that said, this thread is designed to open up the dialogue as to what the real reasons are for not upgrading (so we can better address them), and ultimately the top 10 reasons you should upgrade… and continue to do so regularly.

This "shy behavior" that a portion of the market is demonstrating implies several things are potentially happening… So first let's try to understand the most likely misconceptions that are causing customers to avoid regular upgrades of their MultiValue Application Platform:

- **Previous Version Reliability**: Rocket's existing MultiValue Application Platform products and support are known to be extremely robust and reliable. (This is often referred to as the "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." Mentality.)
    - Rocket's MultiValue Application Platform products help corporations, government agencies, educational institutions, and other organizations achieve their business goals day in, day out; however, waiting for a reason to upgrade is a risky business proposition given the speed at which software evolves.
    - Rocket's Support team is particularly effective in assisting customers with workarounds, hotfixes, and timely support feedback when issues arise. In many situations, issues are resolved without upgrading wherever possible. Why test 100 fixes, when all you need is 1 (that you know of)? I'll tell you why… Leveraging years of manual workarounds and/or several one-off patches on an outdated Application Platform version is risky! When that knowledge of the workaround leaves your company, or when it comes time to debug issues that no one else but you are experiencing, unraveling the web of duct-tape and bailing wire around your system costs you more time and money in the long-run. Workarounds and patches offered by support are designed to be temporary solutions to buy you time until you can upgrade to a release that fixes these issues.
- **Risk Avoidance**: Unlike upgrading other business software in the stack, the MultiValue Application Platform is mission-critical enterprise software that is providing the core functionality of an organization's business or solution… timely and accurate data. Customers' business data is their livelihood. To an organization that has not bothered with upgrading their Application Platform in over five years, upgrading the Application Platform could easily be viewed as introducing unnecessary risk (possibly breaking several dependencies) and would require extensive acceptance testing upfront. Thus, upgrading for the sake of upgrading becomes an unnecessary risk, which only grows more daunting with time as the gap widens between the release a customer is running in production and the release currently available from Rocket. It's imperative that organizations recognize that avoiding upgrading risk in the short-term only compounds more risk in the long-term, as the time and effort to test changes increases exponentially.

- **Time Savings / Scheduling**: A customer may not have allocated or anticipated time in their schedule to have their team re-certify their applications running against the new MultiValue Application Platform version. Especially (as noted above) if it has been several years since the last Application Platform certification was conducted. Testing an upgrade requires planning and resources to do the work that could be allocated to other roadmap items already committed. To combat this, organizations need to build this time into their regular operations and schedules. As an example, manufacturing companies often block out several weeks a year in their schedule for "retooling" in an effort to replace outdated machinery and install upgraded equipment to remain competitive in the following year. Application Platform software that underpins your core business requires the same type of disciplined approach to remain competitive.

- **Procrastination / Stalling**: It could be plausible that MultiValue Application Platform customers and administrators are reluctant to upgrade until they are absolutely forced to by an outside influence. If the customer is already wary of an Application Platform upgrade (for any of the reasons listed above), procrastination is often a natural reaction for someone who is concerned with something going wrong with an upgrade. In fact, procrastinating until necessary may simply be someone's strategy to shift the responsibility (and potential blame) if an upgrade is feared to have problems. Some examples of outside influences that may ultimately cause the need to upgrade the Application Platform include:
  - Compliance reasons / Anticipating an IT audit (a feature that's necessary to be "in compliance" with the latest standards may only exist in later releases)
  - IT upgrades in hardware and/or OS software (upgrading to a 64-bit OS, requires upgrading to an Application Platform that is certified against that OS)
  - End-User or Customer requires a feature that is only in the latest release (or would only be developed on the latest release)

Now that we have reviewed some of the theories for the stagnation in upgrading, here are the top 10 reasons to upgrade your MultiValue Application Platform:

10 **Reduce 3rd Party Compatibly Surprises** – Users that stay relatively current with the latest versions are less likely to encounter compatibility issues from the field with 3rd party updates or changes to other products. Rocket takes the time to establish what is compatible and test the latest versions of 3rd Party code with our releases and document what is supported and what is not.

9 **Upgrade with Confidence Going Forward** - The ease of upgrading is increased the closer the version numbers are to each other. Taking a proactive stance towards upgrading now will allow for simpler and faster updates later on, as the scope of changes will be lessened and there will have been more testing coverage on a popular upgrade path, as opposed to a less popular upgrade path.

8 **Proactively Avoid PLC Impacts** – As any prudent software company must do, Rocket's older versions of products are periodically graduated through the various lifecycle stages. GA'd versions slowly transition to "End of Marketing" (EOM), EOM versions transition to "End of Service" (EOS), and EOS versions ultimately transition to "End of Life" (EOL). Don't be stuck on a release that is likely to become EOS where technical support is no longer equipped to reproduce your problem, or EOL where new or additional licenses are no longer available.

7 **Support's Knowledge and Familiarity** – Our global support team is educated and tooled to address the most common, and most recent issues faced by the majority of customers. They are trained on the latest releases and are better equipped to address an issue that is reproducible on the current version, rather than an issue that only occurs on a version that is "EOS" in its lifecycle. As time goes on, the availability of "experts" to help you with your old, patched version diminishes. Information and environments are archived to make room for the new.

6 **More Stable Code Bases** – Believe it or not, even though Rocket's MultiValue Application Platform product lines are mature, they are constantly being refined. Decades of code contributions are being "cleaned up" and refactored to be more efficient and more reliable on the various platform ports. Continuous Integration (CI) is running on the latest versions of the Application Platform code bases to ensure that check-ins are not breaking existing functionality or causing build errors on any platform port. These efforts are forward-looking, allowing for more flexibility to debug complex issues, fix, test, and release incrementally and faster.

5 **Drive New Feature Development** – Customers that have adopted the latest release are often selected to participate in Beta programs and Customer Advisory Boards (CABs) because they are giving us feedback on the latest version and what's missing. Upgrade now, and ask our support team how you can participate in the next Beta program to gain access to the latest new features as they're being developed. There is no better way to get your input heard directly by the product team than when they are in the design and development stage of a new feature. You can directly impact the quality of the new feature by validating it within your environment ahead of launch, and ultimately improve time-to-market.

4 **Utilize the Best New Features** – Taking the best ideas from our customer base and integrating them into seamless solutions all happens with the latest versions of the MultiValue Application Platform products. Enhancements that are designed to give you a competitive advantage when preparing for the future of your business are only available in the latest versions of the products. Generally, new features are not ported to previous releases (only severe bug fixes are ported). If you have waited three or more years to upgrade, chances are that there are many new and exciting features waiting to help you manage, secure, share, scale, and harness the power of your data in new and exciting ways. Let us show you what you can do with the latest releases of our product so you can grow your business confidently.

3 **OS Platform Certifications** – Has your underlying Operating System (OS) software become outdated? Is it still being actively supported by the manufacturer? If yes, do you know when it will expire? Is your MultiValue Application Platform version certified against the OS platform where you are running it? If you answered "no" to any of these questions, you are taking a risk of your production system encountering an issue where there is no other solution but to upgrade. The cost of supporting all previous OS versions in addition to all the latest OS versions is insurmountable for many organizations, including Rocket. Keep your OS and Application Platform versions current and in lock-step. Upgrading either should always involve a plan for upgrading both.

2 **Avoid Security Vulnerabilities** – Stay current with the latest security patches and security best practices that are developed within the Application Platform code. The latest versions of the U2 database now allow you to patch your OpenSSL libraries (as available from Rocket) as new updates come out without having to wait for the next upgrade release (security patches are available before software releases). You can also encrypt your data automatically and control access with user or group level security. These are no longer optional features, as the era of data security breaches around the world is only beginning by some estimates. Rocket puts security first, especially in its latest releases, and we are constantly providing security features and updates to protect your critical business data from unauthorized access and malicious attacks.

1   **Rocket will never let you fail** – Ever! Our company was built on the value of putting our customers and partners first. A win for you, is a win for Rocket… and we want you to be successful! Let our skilled engineers help your business with the amazing work that they have done over the years. Your business deserves the best and that is what we provide. If you are active on maintenance, you are paying for the ability to upgrade to the latest software version whether you use it or not. Rocket MultiValue has an arsenal of tools ready to make your upgrade process as simple and painless as possible:

   - You can self-service the information you need right now! Download a Trial edition of the latest MultiValue Application Platform version from http://www.rocketsoftware.com and get your team started on getting familiar with the new release today!   There are installation guides, recorded webinars about the features, and a wealth of product information available on the new www.rocketsoftware.com web site.   If you can't find what you're looking for, let us know via the 'Contact Us' links so we can help.
   - Talk to your salesperson about your upgrade plans. If it's still too daunting of a task, consider involving our MultiValue Lab Services team to help you succeed with upgrading.
   - If you've adopted the latest release and have encountered some issues in the process, ask a support ATS about a Fast Track Release. If you are fully intent on running the latest release in production, we will work with you to solve these issues in a timely release that meets your needs.
   - Talk to us! Let us know your specific problems with upgrading so we can help solve them. We want to know what's holding you back! Our commitment to your success in upgrading has never been stronger.

Now that you know the top 10 reasons to upgrade your MultiValue Application Platform to a current version, what are your thoughts on upgrading to the latest MultiValue Application Platform version? Are there other reasons we missed as to why you may or may not want to upgrade? Help us better understand them so we can tackle these challenges together! Thanks for your time and we look forward to opening up this conversation so that we can help each other provide the best possible Rocket MultiValue experience.

rocketsoftware.com
info@rocketsoftware.com
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www.youtube.com/
rocketsource
www.linkedin.com/company/
rocket-software
www.facebook.com/
RocketSoftwareInc
blog.rocketsoftware.com

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