

Upgrading Notes Clients

Best Practices for a Smooth Upgrade

A Cooperteam White Paper

Index

1	Introduction.....	3
2	Process Overview.....	3
3	The Cooperteam Solution	3
3.1	Desktop Upgrader, an upgrading tool seamlessly integrated with Desktop Manager... 4	
3.2	Desktop Manager Core Features..... 5	
3.3	Desktop Upgrader Core features	5
4	Best Practices	6
4.1	Planning	6
4.1.1	Build Support For The Upgrade	6
4.1.2	The Business Requirements Document..... 6	
4.1.3	The Technical Requirements Document	7
4.1.4	Communications and Training Plan	7
4.2	Testing	8
4.3	Change Management Considerations for a successful upgrade..... 8	
4.3.1	Minimizing disruption..... 8	
4.3.2	Notes applications	8
4.3.3	Mail-in Databases..... 8	
4.3.4	Third-party systems and devices	8
1.1.1	Lotus Domino Policies	9
5	Conclusion	9

1 Introduction

Each subsequent version of IBM Lotus Notes brings incremental or even dramatic improvements in e-mail, calendar, scheduling, collaboration, and user interface. Release 8.5 is no exception to this rule, delivering capabilities to optimize resources and maximize end user productivity.

For those organizations that have made the decision to upgrade, the key question quickly becomes "how?" – how do we push out an upgrade in the most effective and efficient manner?

2 Process Overview

There are four basic steps common to any Lotus Notes clients upgrade plan:

Step 1: Client PC Hardware and Software Audit:

First, it is important to determine what end users are currently running and what their hardware is. As with most software, later versions of Notes typically have ever-increasing requirements in terms of disk space, RAM, etc.

Step 2: Audit Result Analysis:

The audit results must be analyzed to determine which systems can receive the upgrade, a Notes upgrade should not be pushed onto a machine ill-equipped to run it.

Step 3: Client Preparation

Next it is necessary to prepare the deployment of the install program on each client. That implies a number of details, such as how to get the software to the desktop, how to minimize the impact on the network etc...

Step 4: Migration and Upgrade

Finally, the install program has to be deployed on each PC.

Once the new version of Notes is installed, settings that are relevant to your organization must be applied. For instance it may be necessary to disable ports that won't be used, configure the home page, set up local replicas, etc. These settings vary widely and will depend on each environment.

As a final point, it will probably be required to upgrade the design of the user's mail file with the latest template, as the new features of a particular version are often highlighted in the user's mail box, and reapply any organization specific customization.

3 The Cooperteam Solution

Desktop Upgrader provides out-of-the box functionality for upgrading Notes clients. **Desktop Upgrader** takes advantage of capabilities of **Desktop Manager**, such as the audit results and ability to run scripts on the client, to automate Notes client upgrades.

Using the capabilities of **Desktop Manager** after performing the upgrade assures the integrity of the desktops post-migration.

"Get it right and keep it right"

Cooperteam has offered **Desktop Manager** for over five years and it is installed on over one and a half a million Notes clients.

In the latest version (2.6), **Desktop Manager** offers the capability to execute scripts outside of Notes, controlled by the DskMgr.exe.

This allows administrators to:

- copy files,
- move files,
- mount network drives,
- modify text files like notes.ini,
- zip and unzip files,
- run executables, etc.

These scripts use simple syntax and can use IF THEN GOTO logic, which is convenient when you want to write smart scripts.

3.1 Desktop Upgrader, an upgrading tool seamlessly integrated with Desktop Manager

Desktop Upgrader, and the integration process of Desktop Upgrader and Desktop Manager were designed to fully automate Lotus Notes release upgrades, dramatically reducing project costs, project duration and impact on end users.

The process designed by Cooperteam, represented in the next figure, includes every step of the upgrade project, from the monitoring to the actual upgrade, for every system of the environment.

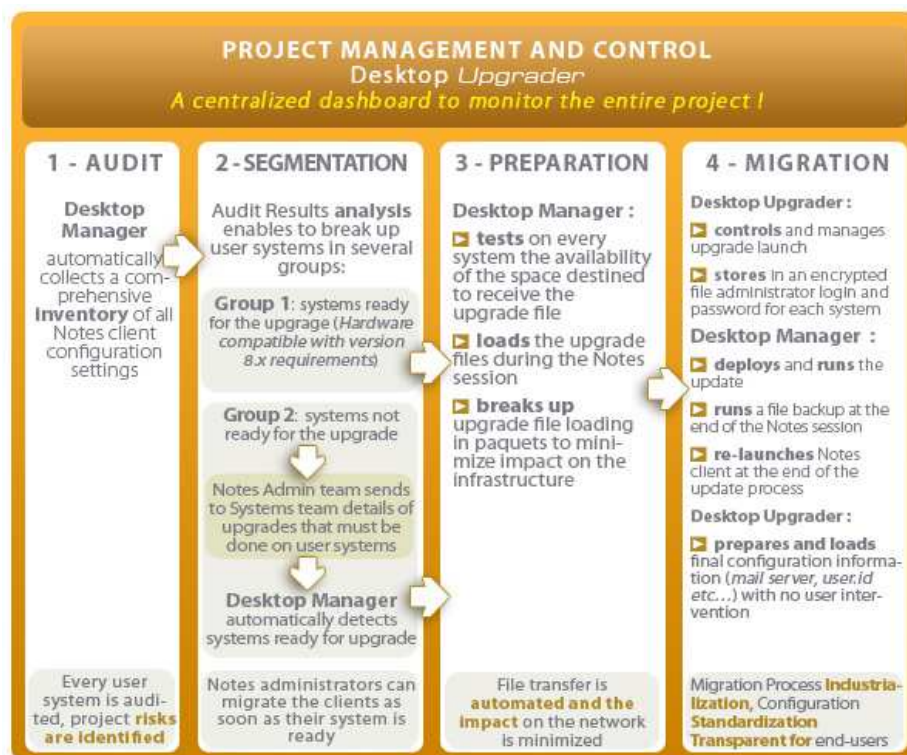


Figure 1: Upgrade Project Process when upgrading Lotus Notes clients with Desktop Upgrader and Desktop Manager.

Additionally:

- **Desktop Upgrader** allows administrators to manage errors during the migration process (server side as well as client side).
- **Desktop Manager** assures that the integrity of the desktop settings and configurations is maintained AFTER the upgrade

The key advantage of Cooperteam's Desktop Upgrader lies in its integration with Desktop Manager. Once the upgrade is completed, Desktop Manager assures that the integrity of the desktop settings and configurations is maintained and reduces both the post-upgrade spike in Helpdesk calls and the on-going number of calls and their duration.

3.2 Desktop Manager Core Features

Audit: Notes client audit of (detecting the user id, notes ini, cache, desktop, cluster, database coordinates, database icons, missing databases, local databases, user preferences, replication settings)

Avoid Problems with Profiles: Enforce best practices across Notes clients to apply approved company settings and avoid users changing those settings and thus creating support issues/costs.

Fix Problems Quickly with Tasks: Single or group tasks can be created in response to a problem or change in environment. This allows *any* setting on any Notes client to be modified.

3.3 Desktop Upgrader Core Features

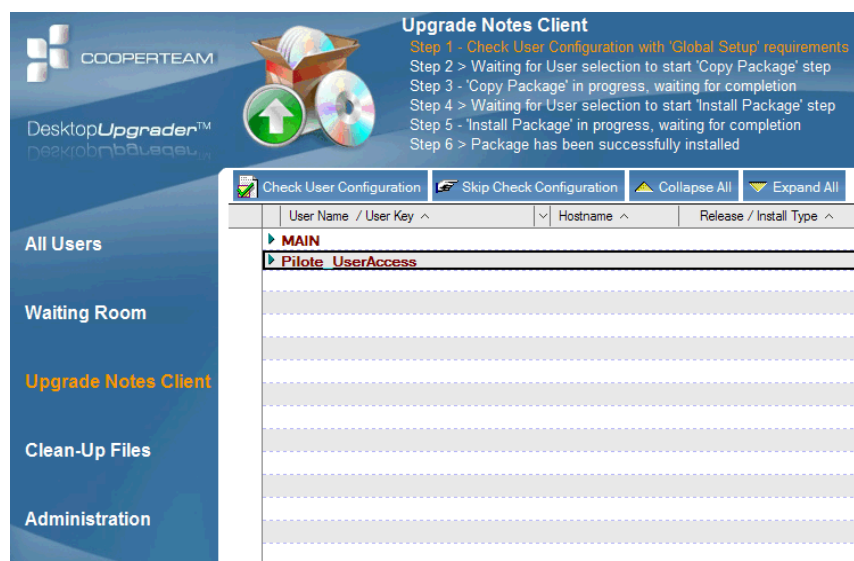


Figure 2: screen shot showing how users are tracked throughout the upgrader process.

Desktop Upgrader will perform (and report on) the following tasks for groups of users:

- **Verify** that the user's workstation meets the minimum h/w and s/w requirements specified by the Administrator for the new client software.
- **Copy the install package** files (package, applicable fix-packs, installation 'Transform Manifest' .mst files) from a network drive to the Temp folder of the user (local). Because copying these files could take a long time or choke the network if too many users attempt it at once, *Desktop Upgrader* offers the capability to copy the file in definable size blocs, even over several days if needed.
- **Backup** the user's files (notes.ini, bookmark.nsf, user.id, names.nsf, desktop.dsk) in case it is necessary to revert to the prior version.
- **Prepare** a command-line script file to launch the package with its associated .msi (configuration choice) files, fix-packs, and apply any required command-line options. This command line can be customized by they end-user if required.
- **Switch off the Notes client** and run the script using Administrator Credentials.

- **Present the user with the web page** of the Administrator's choice while the upgrade is underway. This can be a link to an intranet page describing the benefits of the new release or offering training resources.
- **Restart the new Notes client** with **Desktop Manager** to update the remaining settings as specified in Desktop Manager Profile documents. In other words, it will automatically apply your organization specific settings, such as which ports to use and locations to enable, settings usually lost in an upgrade, even if they were set properly prior to the upgrade.
- **Notify** the *Desktop Upgrader* database all along the way so that the user's progress can be tracked easily.
- **Delete the old files** (Upgrade Package, Script, backup...)

4 Best Practices

Upgrade projects are highly visible and potentially time consuming. It is important to get them right so that users are not unnecessarily disturbed and so that IT's reputation be maintained.

This section identifies best practices for planning, managing, and executing a successful upgrade project.

4.1 Planning

4.1.1 Build Support For The Upgrade

Before doing *anything* else, establish *why* the upgrade should happen. If this part is done correctly, the rest of the process will be much, much easier. The first challenge is to communicate the new features and functions of the latest Notes/Domino release to the appropriate people. Find out what is important to them, so that whether or not to implement certain features during the upgrade is known. What Notes/Domino can do must be shown because features are not always obvious. Be sure to demonstrate the cool new features and find something that you can get people excited about. Have special sessions for Help Desk and Support teams. Find champions in the organization that can help you build the business case.

4.1.2 The Business Requirements Document

Now that some champions have been identified and have an idea of why upgrading Notes matters to *them* (as opposed to why it matters to the technical team), it is time to write the Business Requirements Document. Even if this has not been asked for, write a Business Requirements Document that spells out the compelling reasons for the upgrade from a business perspective. Keep it short and high-level. Collaborate with support teams and user groups when writing this document, and if possible, let the document be jointly-authored to show collaboration between IT and the business groups.

The Business Requirements Document will help build support at all levels of management and provide solid ground for establishing a budget. The business requirements also establish credibility for the actions that are about to be taken. This credibility is necessary because changes are about to be made that will affect everyone who uses Lotus Notes.

Start the document with a section called Executive Summary, which hits the high points, with something such as:

"Our team has evaluated the latest version of Notes and Domino and determined that an upgrade will enhance user productivity/save the company money/better meet business objectives, etc... The upgrade will also make it simpler for IT to manage and customize the environment. Server upgrades will begin in September and be completed in November. Notes client upgrades begin in December."

Use the rest of the document to set forth facts to substantiate the claims made in the Executive Summary. Explain why the latest version of Notes is better than the one currently deployed. Talk about how the Notes client can be automatically provisioned, resulting in simpler management, reduced support requirements, easier future upgrades, and customizations the enterprise. Be sure to mention how the interface is more intuitive to use, from instant spell checkers to the sidebar, if appropriate.

Run a "Power User" workshop for the executive personal assistance to get this "high influence" users onsite.

4.1.3 The Technical Requirements Document

Next a Technical Requirements Document is needed. The Technical Requirements Document specifies how Notes will look after the upgrade. This document focuses on the features that are going to be implemented and, as with the Business Requirements Document, should be a collaborative effort with the user community, application developers, administrators, server support teams, and business units.

As a result of all of this communication a Technical Requirements Document which becomes the "scope of work". It should include absolute statements of what will and will not provide as part of the upgrade, such as:

- Eclipse client will be used on all desktops with at least 1 GB of RAM
- DB2 data storage will not be implemented
- The following policies will be set for mail recall...
- The Recent Contacts functionality will be enabled
- Instant spell checking will be enabled

The Technical Requirements Document should also describe clearly the minimum hardware and software specifications for the Notes client upgrade to occur. The necessary network capabilities should also be outlined, for example: correct DNS settings, DHCP configuration, network card and VPN / remote access software client/hardware versions

4.1.4 Communications and Training Plan

Carefully review the communications and training requirements of the project.

If the project is occurring in a change controlled environment, spend time to engage with the various Business Units representatives and Change Control Coordinators. They are key to the success of the project.

Develop a communications plan that identifies exactly what communications are sent to users and at what point. These may be broadcast or 'point in time' communications sent at the various stages of the project. Agree on the language to be used and the timing.

Have a kick-off communication from the project sponsor (preferably a senior-level executive), so that everyone understands the importance of the project.

Use the company intranet, to promote the upgrade project and provide updates on the progress. Use it to provide helpful tips and links to training information.

Evaluate the training needs of the whole company. Consider: face-to-face, on-line presentations, printed desktop cheat/hint sheets, hand-holding on day one for key users. User acceptance will be higher if they feel that adequate training has been made available - even if they opt not to use it.

If moving between two very major releases of the Notes client, it may be necessary to anticipate any changes in the way Calendaring and Scheduling behaves, and forewarn the user base of the potential issues.

Focus on 'Power-Users' like personal assistants and executives. They may require more detailed specialist training and assistance; particularly if they are heavy users of calendaring and scheduling.

4.2 Testing

Develop a cyclic Pilot, Review, Adjust strategy for the Notes Client Upgrade Procedure : adequate testing of the Notes Client upgrade methodology is a key factor in making an upgrade project a success. Testing that has not explored a wide enough range of potential upgrade scenarios can easily increase the cost and support overhead of a project, or even cause it to fail if significant negative comment is generated in the user base.

A cycle of piloting the procedure, reviewing the results, and modifying the procedure based on this information, can go a long way to avoid potential issues. Be prepared, and allow enough time to go through several cycles of this process. Piloting with a wide enough range of end-users is also important, particularly if there exists a wide variety of hardware and software configurations.

4.3 Change Management Considerations for a Successful Upgrade

4.3.1 Minimizing disruption

Consider the 'pace' of the upgrade. Move quickly to migrate as many people as possible as quickly as possible in order to minimize disruption. Try to migrate business units that communicate a lot with each other and vertical hierarchies together as much as possible.

Develop a 'roll-back' In the event of unexpected events or failed upgrades, it is important to be able to quickly and fully revert a client to the original configuration until the issue can be resolved.

4.3.2 Notes applications

Evaluate the impact of a client upgrade on the Notes application (as opposed to mail) environment. It may be necessary to perform an audit of Notes applications in use. This is a golden opportunity to identify any which are unused or under-used and perform archiving. Using an application like **Cooperteam's InfoNSF** can help to identify these.

For the remaining applications, consider sorting them into the following groups: Business Critical, High Visibility, and Low Visibility. For the more important applications it will be necessary to analyze them any for custom code or design elements and validate that there are no undiscovered compatibility issues with the new Notes client. This is a golden opportunity to get the business unit 'champions' from the customer base involved. Check also to see that any work-flows in use still function as intended.

4.3.3 Mail-in Databases

Review the list of mail-in databases, and assess whether it will be necessary to upgrade the design of the associated mailboxes. If they are based on a standard mailbox template, it may be worthwhile considering leaving the design upgrade of these until the bulk of users are on the upgraded client version to avoid any incompatibilities.

4.3.4 Third-party systems and devices

Review the impact of a Notes Client upgrade on third-party systems which integrate with the Notes/Domino environment. Focus on any which use the installed Notes client software to do their work.

Review any applications which interact with Enterprise data systems, and ensure that they function correctly.

If there are handheld devices like BlackBerry or iPhone, evaluate whether template changes will impact Notes clients and their devices. Address book synchronization technologies have changed significantly between recent versions of the Lotus Notes clients.

4.3.5 Lotus Domino Policies

Assess the potential impact of Lotus Domino policies on the Notes clients. These changes significantly with each new release and it may be valuable to assess whether these are still working as previously configured and whether any changes are necessary to cater to additional features in the Lotus Notes client.

5 Conclusion

Upgrade projects are highly visible and potentially time consuming.

Cooperteam tools are tested daily in large, complicated environments by administrators who need to solve real problems. Cooperteam products are continuously improved based on feedback from hundreds of sites and this experience can benefit you directly by ensuring that your upgrade process goes smoothly from a technical perspective.

Ensuring that the project goes smoothly from an organizational perspective is essential. Find non-IT champions within the organization and work with them to build and promote a Business Requirements Document that can be used to promote the project.



Excellence
in Messaging Systems

Contacts

E-mail: info@cooperteam.com
www.cooperteam.com

Americas: +1 617 859 8900
EMEA/Asia Pacific: +33(0)497138700
UK: +44(0)20 7060 1028