



Product Bulletin

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Enhancements to the Data ONTAP Release Model

Revision History

12 July 2010 - Initial version

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This product bulletin announces changes to the Data ONTAP® release model.

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1. Summary

Over the past 24 months NetApp has instituted a number of changes in our designation, development, and test processes for Data ONTAP releases. Many of these changes were instituted to achieve a higher level of stability sooner in a release's lifetime and also to improve the overall quality of Data ONTAP releases.

In concert with these changes we adopted a policy of having all releases initially post as release candidate (RC) releases, which are only eligible to receive the general availability (GA) designation after four to six weeks of customer usage.

RC releases are ready for installation on production systems. The GA designation simply implies that all NetApp specific Data ONTAP certifications with client applications and platforms are completed and the release has customer usage with no critical product defects.

Going forward, in addition to continuing to have all releases post initially as RC releases and over time achieve the GA designation, we will also be doing the following:

1. Improvements to Test and Development	Test and development processes will be managed so as to make sure that RC releases have production quality day 1.
2. Publish Release Uptake Numbers	Release uptake numbers will be posted on the NOW™ site on a weekly basis.
3. Data ONTAP Certifications	
a. NetApp Certifications	Data ONTAP certifications specific to NetApp, including those that were historically done as part of the GD designation process, will be done prior to a release obtaining the GA designation.

b. Partner Certifications	Partner certifications that require a GA version of Data ONTAP to commence testing will be completed within 90 days after the initial availability of the GA release.
4. GD Designation	The GD designation will be eliminated for all Data ONTAP releases following Data ONTAP 7.3.3 and Data ONTAP 8.0.

2. What's New?

The Data ONTAP release model has changed. The changes are:

- Complete all Data ONTAP certifications specific to NetApp before the GA designation
- Publish release uptake data on the NOW site
- Introduce new Data ONTAP releases as release candidates
- Eliminate the GD designation for releases after Data ONTAP 7.3.3 and Data ONTAP 8.0

3. Sales and Customer-Ready Tools (Training, SE, Customer Presentations, Datasheets, Sales Guides)

There is a [release model binder](#) on the field portal with the following documents:

- FAQ on the release model change
- Presentation for SEs and Channel Partners to learn about the change
- Presentation to use when describing the release model change to customers

In addition, the recording of June Solution Insight Webcast, which covered the release model change, is available on the field portal at <https://netapp-events.webex.com/netapp-events/jsr.php?AT=pb&SP=EC&rID=2435212&rKey=7cc0a128c56e5b53>.

Customers will be communicated about this change during the third week of July through an update to the Release Model document on the NOW site, including a customer production communication (CPC). SEs are encouraged to communicate this change to their respective accounts before end of July.

4. System Requirements

This change applies to all Data ONTAP releases going forward.
For 7.x, GD designation will be eliminated starting with 7.3.4.
For 8.x, GD designation will be eliminated starting with 8.0.

5. Product Information

N/A

6. Regulatory Compliance

N/A

7. Warranty and Service

N/A

8. Additional Information

Contact information: Please contact your NetApp sales or channel partner representative with questions concerning this bulletin.