



Product Bulletin:

SANscreen® Release Model

Revision History

01 March 2010 - Initial version

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This PRODUCT bulletin informs NetApp sales and NetApp partners about new or changed NetApp® products or services.

1. Summary
2. First Customer Ship (FCS)
3. General Availability (GA)
4. Major Feature (x.0.0) Release
5. Minor Feature (x.y.0) Release
6. Maintenance (x.y.z) Release
7. Service Pack Release
8. Data Source Patch
8. Additional Information

1. Summary

This document gives an overview of the release model for SANscreen® and provides a clear understanding of the release process so that customers can choose the software releases that best fit their needs.

This release model provides customers the flexibility to choose the type of releases that are best suited to their environment. Striking the right balance and flexibility for each customer's needs—from early adopters who want new features that serve their operational needs to more conservative customers who want to roll out field-proven releases that have a wide adoption. This release model addresses the varied needs of the customer base, allowing them to achieve their business goals. In addition, this allows NetApp to continue its innovation while catering to the stability and flexibility demands of the customer base.

The release model provides an accurate characterization of the release in the software lifecycle, with information on various milestones associated with each release family, their definitions, and expected timing. It provides a predictable timeline with periodic milestones, adding a higher level of interoperability and stability, enabling customers to plan the deployment of their chosen releases.

As a best practice, NetApp recommends that customers qualify major feature releases in their test environments prior to rollout in their production environments.

Release Classification

To indicate the classification level of a release, NetApp uses the following two designations:

- First Customer Ship (FCS)
- General Availability (GA)

2. First Customer Ship (FCS)

This is the classification given to each major feature release of software when it is initially posted to the NetApp NOW site. This classification indicates that the product has completed a comprehensive development and release procedure including extensive testing for functionality, reliability, and full regression. In addition, it has gone through testing at selected customer sites. Fixes to any significant problems reported by these customers are addressed in the FCS release and has now fully met the NetApp criteria for production deployment.

NetApp encourages customers to use FCS releases if they contain the features that are not available in a GA release.

3. General Availability (GA)

GA classification is provided to the release family after the release has demonstrated availability and reliability across a significant number of customer sites. This is typically about 4-6 months after the First Customer Ship (FCS) release.

NetApp monitors several metrics associated with the installed base of every release family. Some of the key metrics that NetApp uses to determine whether a release family is ready to be classified GA include:

- (1) critical bugs reported by customers for the release family have been addressed
- (2) overall adoption in the field, and
- (3) call volume on various releases.

Note that these are guidelines for classifying a release as GA. NetApp reserves the right to make appropriate adjustments to these guidelines to meet business needs while not compromising on quality standards.

When a release is determined by NetApp to have met the criteria, it is considered for GA designation. Bug fixes allowed into GA candidates are carefully selected by NetApp to address serious customer-encountered problems while minimizing changes in a release family. In general, no additional functionality will be added into GA releases and the focus will be around the highest level of stability.

When a release family is classified GA, all subsequent maintenance or revision releases will receive the GA designation upon initial posting to NOW. These types of releases are defined below in the "Release Definitions" section.

Any major feature release, minor feature release, or maintenance release may be classified as GA. A release first released as FCS can later be changed to GA once the necessary additional certifications are complete. There is no specific requirement that a maintenance release be created to achieve the GA designation.

Release Definitions

4. Major Feature (x.0.0) Release

These are the vehicle through which NetApp delivers many major features and changes, and are always initially designated FCS. To achieve GA classification, major releases are often replaced by a maintenance release. However, they can become GA if no such additional release is required to achieve the certification for GA.

Major releases are numbered using three digits (such as "5.0.0" or "6.0.0 "). A release family is the set of releases that have the same feature release denoted by the same first two digits of the release number (e.g. 5.0.1, 6.0.1).

Major releases are fully tested by NetApp (as described in the First Customer Ship section above), including tests at selected customer beta sites, before being released.

5. Minor Feature (x.y.0) Release

These are the vehicles through which NetApp delivers minor features and changes, and these minor releases are always initially designated FCS. To achieve GA classification, minor releases are often replaced by a maintenance release however they can become GA if no such additional release is required to achieve the certification for GA.

Minor releases are numbered using three digits (such as "4.7.0" or "5.1.0 "). A release family is the set of releases that have the same feature release denoted by the same first two digits of the release number (e.g. 4.7.3, 5.1.2).

6. Maintenance (x.y.z) Release

Maintenance releases are numbered using three digits (such as "4.7.3").

These releases are part of the maintenance release stream for each release family. These are designed to assist customers in validating and gaining stability on the specific release family, and are therefore primarily to deliver bug fixes (as recommended by NetApp Global Services) that are based on customer impact.

NetApp regularly assesses the stability of the existing release in the field throughout the lifecycle of the release family, and determines whether a maintenance release is needed.

In addition, maintenance releases may be issued for extended data sources or OS support. These are not used for major features, but NetApp may, under special circumstances, add some minor features into maintenance releases.

Maintenance releases are fully tested by NetApp with a specific focus on the bug fixes and other changes, as well as selected regression testing of unchanged features.

7. Service Pack Release

When many data source patch releases are being delivered, NetApp may decide to issue a service pack release. This is an aggregate or roll-up of most of the fixes in the patch releases, and it is made available so that multiple customers can benefit from these bug fixes.

Service Pack releases can be created from any other type of releases by adding a fourth digit number (such as "5.1.1.2", "5.0.1.1", etc.).

In addition to testing the specific bug fixes, service pack releases receive some regression testing before they are released.

7. Data Source Patch

These are exception hot-fix releases that are used on an as-needed basis for data sources. They are mainly integration bugs, supporting for new firmware, and changes to API. They usually roll into next maintenance and service pack release.

These are available for all customers, but if the customers do not experience a problem, it is recommended to wait for the next service pack release.

Data source patch releases are not fully regression-tested by NetApp, but the specific bug fixes have been tested.

8. Additional Information

Contact Information: Please contact Thuy L. Nguyen, SANscreen - Program Manager at nthuy@netapp.com with questions concerning this bulletin.



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495 E. Java Drive, Sunnyvale, CA 94089 USA