

Upgrading FileMaker from Earlier Versions

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On this page:

- Overview
- Upgrading from versions 12-15
 - Features Compatibility
 - Hosting and Security Compatibility
- Upgrading from versions 11 and earlier
- Running a mixed version environment
- Assistance

Overview

FileMaker 16 is the current recommended version of the FileMaker platform at MIT, and we encourage anyone running FileMaker Pro and (if applicable) FileMaker Server to upgrade to the latest version.

FileMaker databases with the `.fmp12` file format, used by versions 12 and up, may be opened by FileMaker Pro 16 and hosted by FileMaker Server 16, with no file conversion necessary. However, there are some compatibility issues between v16 and v12-15 to keep in mind. See *Upgrading from versions 12-15* below for more information.

Databases with the `.fmp7` file format or earlier, used by versions 11 and earlier, must be converted to the `.fmp12` format in order to be opened by FileMaker 16. See below for more information on file conversion.

If you are thinking of upgrading to the latest version of FileMaker, now is also good opportunity to take inventory of all of your FileMaker files to determine if they are properly secured and to make sure that they are not being used to store PIRN data. Please review MIT's policies about storage of data on the Security Team's [InfoProtect](#) web pages. Inactive files required for archival purposes should be converted to the current version of FileMaker and backed up or archived, and earlier versions of those files sitting on your computer should be removed from your local machine.

Upgrading from versions 12-15

FileMaker 16 uses the same `.fmp12` file format as v12-15, so upgrading to the latest version does not require a file conversion of the database file(s) themselves. Users simply upgrade their client to FileMaker Pro 16, and for hosted databases, the server is upgraded to FileMaker Server 16. There are, however, a few compatibility issues to be aware of.

Features Compatibility

Each new version of FileMaker comes with new client-facing features available for implementation. While versions 12-16 all work with the same file format, new features in later versions are not backward compatible and will not be available to users of earlier versions. In most cases, such features would simply be invisible to clients running earlier versions. For example, v12 users will not see slide controls or popovers which were introduced in v13. Version 16 introduced few major end user changes of note, but if you are developing in FileMaker 16, it is best to make sure all the users of your system have updated to 16 as well. You also may want to enable the file setting that specifies the minimum version of FileMaker Pro allowed to open your database file(s); this will prevent users running earlier versions from logging in and seeing unexpected results.

Hosting and Security Compatibility

If your database(s) are hosted, there are potential security-related compatibility issues when the version of FileMaker Server doesn't match the version of FileMaker Pro used to open the hosted database. In general, it's best practice to ensure FileMaker Server and all FileMaker Pro users accessing that server are all running on the same version of the platform.

Some examples of issues with mismatched server and client versions:

- Users running FileMaker Pro 16 cannot access FileMaker Server 13 and earlier.
- Users running FileMaker Pro 13 and earlier cannot access FileMaker Server 16 and later.
- Users running FileMaker Pro 13.0v9 and up cannot access FileMaker Server 13.0v5 and earlier if the server has SSL encryption enabled but does not have a custom SSL certificate installed.
- Users running FileMaker Pro 13.0v5 and earlier cannot access FileMaker Server 13.0v9 and up if the server has SSL encryption enabled but does not have a custom SSL certificate installed.

- Users running FileMaker Pro 12 cannot access FileMaker Server 14.0.4a and later.

Upgrading from versions 11 and earlier

The current FileMaker file format, `.fmp12`, has been in use since the release of the v12 product line in 2012. Versions of FileMaker prior to 12 used earlier file formats (`.fpx7` for v7-11, `.fpx5` for v5-6, and `.fpx3` for v3-4). At present it's fairly rare to see databases with an earlier file format that are still in use, or that are being used to house legacy data that may from time to time need to be accessed; but they do pop up from time to time. Databases in one of these older file formats will need to be converted to `.fmp12` before they can be opened or hosted with the latest version of FileMaker.

Converting `.fpx7` databases to `.fmp12` is fairly straightforward. The act of simply opening older files with the latest version of FileMaker Pro initiates the conversion process. The file conversion may introduce a few minor cosmetic issues such as a 1pt shift of certain layout objects and the removal of certain de-supported object styles, but these are rare, are often unnoticeable, and can be easily fixed.

Converting `.fpx5` and `.fpx3` databases is more involved and requires first converting to `.fpx7` (using FileMaker Pro 11) and then converting to `.fmp12`. These types of conversions have the potential to introduce more significant post-conversion issues as the underlying FileMaker database architecture changed drastically between the `.fpx5` and `.fpx7` formats.

For more information on file conversions, refer to the following FileMaker Inc. documentation:

- [Converting older FileMaker Pro files to the .fmp12 file format.](#)
- [Conversion Checklist](#)

Running a mixed version environment

It is possible for more than one version of FileMaker Pro to reside on a single machine, though it's recommended that only the latest version of FileMaker be installed on any given end user machine. Developers and system administrators may find it useful to have multiple versions installed for testing and conversion purposes.

Only one version of FileMaker Server may be installed on a server machine at any given time.

Assistance

For any additional questions on FileMaker upgrades or file conversions, contact filemaker-support@mit.edu.