



IBM Software Group

SW5706

Reporting a problem to IBM



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After completing this unit, you should be able to determine when to contact IBM for support, perform the most gather activities, and contact IBM support.

Unit objectives

After completing this unit, you should be able to:

- Determine when to contact IBM for support
- Perform the *must gather* activities so that IBM support can troubleshoot the problem
- Know how to contact the IBM support organization



After completing this unit, you should be able to determine when to contact IBM for support, how to perform the Must Gather activities, and how to contact the IBM support organization. This unit investigates those times when it is necessary to engage IBM support in order to resolve an issue.

Determining when to contact IBM (1 of 4)

- IBM should be contacted immediately if a problem arises that impacts the success of the enterprise system in any way
 - ▶ This includes lost revenue through failed or slow transactions, system crashes, functionality regressions, and so on
- If a problem is going to arise, it is typically during migration from one middleware version to another or during the development and deployment of a new application
 - ▶ In many cases, issues are uncovered during the system test and system integration phase, prior to deployment into the production environment
- There are some simple activities that can be performed to eliminate possible causes for commonly encountered problems
 - ▶ One of the first documents to consult is the product release notes or readme file that shipped with WebSphere Application Server V6, located in the install root directory of the product

IBM should be contacted immediately if a problem impacts the success of the enterprise system in any way. Problems often occur during production or system migration. Some simple activities to avoid these issues are found in the product release notes that ship with WebSphere Application Server in the install root directory.

Determining when to contact IBM (2 of 4)

- IBM's Web-based support is extensive and complete. Most impediments to a successful deployment have been discovered and their resolution has been documented. In particular, the following Web sites usually lead to a swift resolution of the problem:
 - ▶ WebSphere Application Server Library
<http://www.ibm.com/software/webservers/appserv/was/library/>
 - ▶ Information centers and support sites for WebSphere and related products
<http://www.ibm.com/support/docview.wss?rs=180&context=SSEQTP&uid=swg27005001>
 - ▶ Weekly e-mail notifications about IBM product updates with *MySupport* (enhanced)
<http://www.ibm.com/support/docview.wss?uid=swg21159292>



IBM provides a wealth of information on known resolutions and problem determination techniques. The information center provides production information and there are also weekly e-mail notifications to which you can subscribe to known as MySupport. Additionally, external search engines are very useful in searching for help information.

Determining when to contact IBM (3 of 4)

- The first step is to determine if your problem is a known issue that has already been resolved
 - ▶ Resolved problems are posted to the information centers and support sites for WebSphere and related products at <http://www.ibm.com/support/docview.wss?rs=180&context=SSEQTP&uid=swg27005001>
- If your problem is common, then there is probably a patch or new release that addresses the issue you've encountered
 - ▶ The issues that a maintenance level resolves are helpful for comparing against the problem currently encountered
- If your problem has not been previously reported and addressed in a maintenance release or a newer version of the product, then it is time to contact IBM support for assistance



Resolved problems are posted to the information centers and support sites for WebSphere and related products. If your problem is common, it is likely that there is a patch or document related to the issue. If your problem has not been previously reported, then it is time to contact IBM support for assistance.

Determining when to contact IBM (4 of 4)

- IBM software support has a list of severities that it uses to rate each problem. They are:
 - ▶ **Severity 1: Critical business impact** – You are unable to use the program resulting in a critical impact on operations. This condition requires an immediate solution
 - ▶ **Severity 2: Significant business impact** – The program is useable but severely limited
 - ▶ **Severity 3: Some business impact** – The program is useable with less significant features (not critical to operations) unavailable
 - ▶ **Severity 4: Minimal business impact** – The problem causes little impact on operations, or a reasonable circumvention to problem has been implemented

The severity of the problem is important to convey properly to IBM support. Severity 1 is a critical business impact with no immediate workaround. Severity 2 is a significant business impact, although the system is somewhat usable. Severity 3 is some business impact with some non-critical features of the system disabled. Severity 4 is minimal business impact with a reasonable workaround to the main problem.

Performing the *must gather* activity (1 of 4)

- Once IBM WebSphere support has been contacted, you will be asked to perform the *must gather* activity
- The *must gather* activity consists of capturing data about the static and runtime environment
- The IBM Support Assistant, presented in a previous module, includes data collection services that can gather the data required by IBM support and automatically transfer the data to the internal IBM server

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Performing the *must gather* activity consists of capturing data about the static and runtime environment related to the problems. The IBM Support Assistant is a great tool in helping with the data collection required by IBM support and automatically transfers the data to internal IBM servers.

Performing the *must gather* activity (2 of 4)

1 [View all](#) MustGather documents.

Upgrade Policies	
Components	IBM Education Assistant
100% CPU Usage	read
Administrative Console (all non-scripting)	learn
Administrative Scripting Tools (for example: wsadmin or ANT)	learn
Application Client	read
Application Server Toolkit (AST)	
2 Classloader	3 learn
Crash	4 read
Data Replication Services	learn
DB Connections/Connection Pooling	learn
Deploy (for example: AAT or ANT or EAR/WAR/JAR)	learn
Double Byte Character Set (DBCS)	
Dynamic Cache	
Edge Component	
EJB Container	learn
General	learn
Hangs/Performance Degradation	learn
HTTP Transport	
IBM HTTP Server	
Install	learn
Java 2 Connectivity (J2C)	
Java Management Extensions (JMX) or JMX client API	
Java Message Service (JMS)	learn
Java Security (JSSE/JCE)	learn

The MustGather web site for each product is highly interactive and is constantly updated with the most common problem activities.

Performing the *must gather* activity (3 of 4)

- The remaining must gather documentation will depend on the nature of the problem that you are experiencing
- The MustGather guide will be used to communicate the activities to follow based on the nature of the problem you are experiencing
- Sometimes, the problem be detected as a combination of symptoms, resulting in several must gather activities
 - ▶ Obviously, it is not necessary to duplicate any of the activities, such as running the collector multiple times or retrieving multiple core files
- All the *Must Gather* activities are automated through the IBM Support Assistant. By installing ISA, performing a *Must Gather* activity is greatly simplified.
 - ▶ The ISA data collection includes activating trace specifications and automatically starting and stopping the application server



The MustGather guide will usually be related to a specific configuration or Operating System, and often times, multiple MustGather scripts must be run through for the necessary information for IBM support. All of these activities are automated through the IBM Support Assistant.

Performing the *must gather* activity (4 of 4)

- Once all of the information is gathered it will need to be sent to IBM support. ISA will do this automatically
- The PMR format is xxxxx,bbb,ccc.<description>.zip
 - ▶ **xxxxxx** is the PMR number
 - ▶ **bbb** is the branch number
 - ▶ **ccc** is the country code
- The PMR naming convention must be followed so that the documentation that has been uploaded will be processed correctly
- By using IBM Support Assistant, opening a PMR, doing a data collection, and transferring the data to IBM is automated



Once all of the information is gathered, the file must be uploaded to the PMR with the name of the ePMR in the file name. Again, the IBM Support Assistant can help in opening a PMR, doing the data collection, and transferring the data to IBM.

Contacting IBM support

- A request to IBM for support results in the opening of a Problem Management Request (PMR)
- A PMR can be opened through a phone call to IBM support or through the Electronic Service Request (ESR) Web application
 - ▶ <http://www.ibm.com/software/support/probsub.html>
- The ESR online application can be used for distributed customers with an IBM Passport Advantage maintenance license
- Besides support requests, the PMR system can also be used to submit technical questions
- If, for any reason, you are not satisfied with the support you are receiving, you can contact IBM support or your IBM sales representative 24 hours a day, 7 days a week



The PMR, or Problem Management Request, is a ticket opened with IBM through the phone, the IBM Support Assistant, or through an Electronic Service Request, to ask IBM for support on a product issue. The PMR system can also be used to submit technical questions. If you are not satisfied with the support you are receiving, please contact your IBM sales representative.

Unit summary

Having completed this unit, you should be able to:

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