

Symantec LiveState to Altiris Package Conversion Utility FAQ

Background

Shortly after finalizing its purchase of Altiris, Symantec announced that it would be discontinuing support for its Symantec LiveState™ products in favor of comparable offerings from the Altiris product portfolio.

LiveState customers with current maintenance contracts were given the opportunity to exchange their licenses for an equivalent number of Altiris licenses.

One of the primary obstacles to overcome in migrating from LiveState products to Altiris solutions is that many of the software packages that customers created with LiveState are in a proprietary format that can only be distributed via LiveState Delivery.

Q1. How does the Symantec LiveState to Altiris Package Conversion Utility assist customers in migrating from LiveState to Altiris solutions?

The LiveState to Altiris Package Conversion Utility assists customers in migrating from LiveState to Altiris solutions by converting LiveState packages to a form that enables them to be independently distributed via Altiris® Software Delivery Solution™.

Many LiveState packages require a connection between the LiveState agent and LiveState database server to pass parameter values to the program being executed.

This release will enable customers to convert existing LiveState software packages to a format that is not dependent on the LiveState agent or database server, so that the converted packages can be distributed by Altiris Software Delivery Solution.

Q2. How can customers obtain the LiveState to Altiris Package Conversion Utility?

The LiveState to Altiris Package Conversion utility is available free of charge through the Altiris Solution Center and Symantec's technical support Web pages for LiveState Delivery and ON iCommand.

The Altiris Solution Center can be accessed through the Altiris Notification Server Console. Customers can access the technical support Web pages for LiveState Delivery and ON iCommand at:

<http://www.symantec.com/business/support/downloads.jsp?pid=52029>

<http://www.symantec.com/business/support/downloads.jsp?pid=52068>

The product includes an End User License Agreement, but does not require a license key to install.

Q3. Is the LiveState to Altiris Package Conversion Utility available to partners?

Yes, the LiveState to Altiris Package Conversion utility is available to all. Its distribution is not limited to registered LiveState customers.

Q4. Which versions of LiveState are supported?

The LiveState to Altiris Package Conversion Utility can convert packages created with:

- iCommand 3.0
- CCM 5.0-5.4.1, or
- LiveState Delivery (6.0.1.x)

Q5. How does the LiveState to Altiris Package Conversion Utility work?

The product consists of two tools: a package conversion utility and a parameter editor.

The package conversion utility requires simultaneous connections to the LiveState server and the Altiris Notification Server™ database during the package conversion process. The package conversion utility converts the LiveState package to a format that enables it to be distributed by Altiris Software Delivery Solution.

The package conversion utility creates entries for the converted packages in the Altiris Notification Server console, where they can be distributed by Altiris Software Delivery Solution.

The package conversion utility also creates a configuration file that contains the installation parameter values and associated client records defined in LiveState.

The parameter editing tool enables administrators to edit the configuration files created by the package conversion utility, so that they can add, delete or modify installation parameter values and associated client records.

The converted package and associated parameter file are distributed to the target collection of computers by Altiris Software Delivery Solution. At the time the package is executed, the appropriate installation parameter values are extracted from the configuration file and applied to the installation.

Connection to the LiveState server is not required to distribute packages via Altiris Software Delivery Solution.

Q6. Can the converted packages be installed without end-user interaction?

Yes. The converted packages can be executed in one of three execution modes. When in “hidden desktop” mode, the package execution is completely hidden and is not available to the user. By contrast, “legacy” execution mode logs off any users, logs back on with a special “smclnt” account and locks the keyboard and mouse during package execution. The “visible” execution mode is only intended to be used for debugging purposes.

Q7. Does the LiveState to Altiris Package Conversion Utility have any limitations?

Yes, the LiveState to Altiris Package Conversion does have some known issues or limitations:

- Packages that are written in a manner that require a user to be logged in (for example, ones that use shell dialogs such as the common File Open or File Save As dialogs) will hang when executed in “hidden desktop” mode. (The use of shell browse dialogs in an automated execution is not advisable. The use of administration parameters to place paths into text fields is recommended to make packages more portable.
- There may also be occasions in which the selected user security context (in the NS program execution options) may result in unexpected behavior when the package is executed in "hidden desktop" mode. One such case involving the Nero installer was identified in the lab. When running under a specific user context in a hidden desktop, the Nero installer halted. This was solved by changing the user context to run as SYSTEM user.
- Packages that refer to absolute paths may not run correctly after migration.
- Packages that refer to tools outside of the package may not run correctly, unless such tools are included in the package.
- Packages that contain reboots will need to be manually converted to sequential software delivery tasks within Altiris Software Delivery Solution. You may need to manually convert these packages to sequential software delivery tasks in Altiris Software Delivery Solution.

Q8. Are packages created by the LiveState to Altiris Package Conversion Utility Vista compatible?

Packages created by the LiveState to Altiris Package Conversion Utility most likely will not be Windows Vista compatible because most packages created with the LiveState packaging tools are not Vista compatible. The utility is not designed to address any Vista incompatibility issues.

Q9. Can the converted packages be distributed with Altiris Deployment Solution™?

The packages created by the utility are not designed to be distributed by Altiris Deployment Solution™; however, Symantec Professional Services may be able to assist you in preparing the converted packages for distribution via Altiris Deployment Solution.

Q10. How will the LiveState to Altiris Package Conversion Utility be supported?

Primary technical support for the product will be provided by the LiveState Delivery technical support team.

Q11. Will Transcript Recorder be replaced?

There are no immediate plans to replace Transcript Recorder. The majority of packages for Windows applications distributed by vendors are now in the Windows Installer (.MSI) format. These packages can be customized by creating a transform (.MST) file using tools such as InstallTailor, which is included in Symantec's Wise Package Studio® product.

Q12. How do I handle packages that cannot be converted by the utility?

One option is to repackage applications into the Windows Installer format using a product such as Wise Package Studio. Windows Installer packages can be natively distributed by Altiris Software Delivery Solution.

A second option is to use Symantec consulting services and partners, who can provide assistance with package conversion challenges. Software repackaging services are also available through the Altiris Software Packaging Factory.