



IBM Software Group

IBM® WebSphere® Application Server V7

IBM Support Assistant workbench



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This presentation provides in-depth information about updates in the Version 4 release of the IBM Support Assistant Workbench and describes how to use the workbench to perform common tasks.

Agenda

- Overview and installation
- Enhancements in V4
- Performing common tasks



The first section of this presentation provides a high-level overview of workbench features and describes how to install the product. The second section focuses on features that have been added or updated in the Version 4 release of the workbench. The last section describes how to use the workbench to perform common tasks, like searching for product information and working with service requests.

Section

Overview and installation



This section provides an overview of the IBM Support Assistant Workbench, Version 4, including a summary of product features, information on supported platforms, and how to install the workbench.

IBM Support Assistant workbench

- IBM Support Assistant is a self help and support application that helps you resolve questions and problems with IBM software products
- With IBM Support Assistant, you can
 - ▶ Personalize your workbench with product and tool add-ons
 - WebSphere Application Server V7.0 add-on is available
 - Examples of other product add-ons: WebSphere Process Server, Rational® Application Developer, Lotus® Notes®
 - Examples of tool add-ons: Dump Analyzer, Memory Dump Diagnostic for Java, Garbage Collection and Memory Visualizer
 - ▶ Access product specific documentation
 - ▶ Search for product information
 - ▶ Use problem determination tools
 - ▶ Gather and organize diagnostic data
 - ▶ Work with service requests



The IBM Support Assistant Workbench is the client-facing portion of IBM Support Assistant that you install on your workstation. The workbench can be customized with a variety of product and tool add-ons. For example, you can download product add-ons for WebSphere Application Server, Rational Application Developer, WebSphere Process Server, and many other products. Product add-ons contain references to product documentation, articles, skill-building activities, information on important fixes, and related problem determination information for the Guided Troubleshooter. You can also download tool add-ons for your workbench. The sample tools listed above are for Java problem determination activities. The Dump Analyzer, Memory Dump Diagnostic for Java, and Garbage Collection and Memory Visualizer process Java core files, memory dumps, and verbose garbage collection logs. These tools process their input files and then provide recommendations to help solve your problem or improve your application's performance. The workbench also includes an integrated Guided Troubleshooter that walks you through the problem determination process. In addition to product add-ons and problem determination tools, you can use the workbench to organize diagnostic data and work with your service requests.

Packaging and platform support

- IBM Support Assistant Workbench V4 runs on Microsoft® Windows® and Linux®

Windows	
Installation image	IBM Support Assistant Workbench CD
OS levels	Microsoft Windows XP Professional Service Pack 1 and Service Pack 2
	Microsoft Windows Vista™; Vista Business and Vista Enterprise (with Aero™)

Linux	
Installation image	IBM Support Assistant Workbench CD
OS levels*	Red Hat Enterprise Linux 4.0 WS with GIMP Toolkit (GTK) support - Update 5
	Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5.0 Desktop with GTK support - Update 1
	SUSE Linux Enterprise Desktop 10 Fix Pack 1 (with XGL)

* Linux environments must be running GNOME or have the GNOME libraries installed

** All supported only on Intel® Pentium® processor or compatible

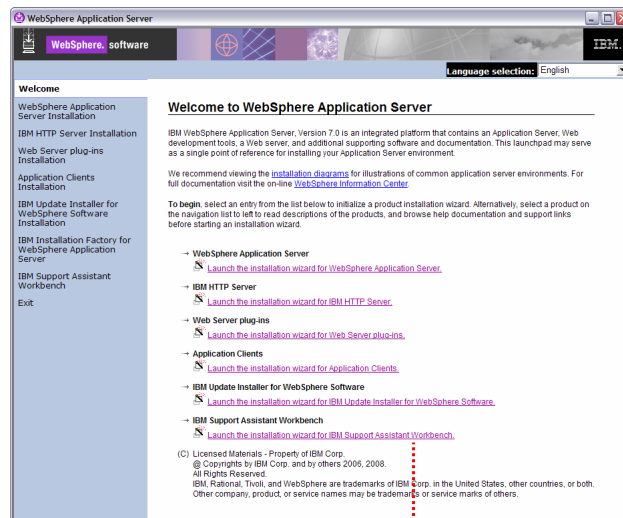


The workbench installation package is included with your WebSphere Application Server media, and it is also available as a no-charge download from the IBM Support Assistant Web site. The workbench is supported on Windows and Linux client platforms. The minimum supported operating system and patch levels are provided in the table above for reference.

Workbench installation launchpad

1 Extract the workbench CD package and run the launchpad program

2 Click the link to **Launch the installation wizard for IBM Support Assistant Workbench**



You can launch the workbench installer directly from the standard WebSphere launchpad that you use to install the application server. Choose the option to Launch the installation wizard for IBM Support Assistant Workbench to bring up the installer. The installation wizard is a standard installer with just a few simple panels. Installing the workbench application should only take a few minutes.

Workbench installation wizard



Use the installation wizard to install the workbench:

- Accept the license agreement
- Choose an installation location
- Click **Install** to begin the installation process



The installation wizard has three steps. After the welcome screen, you are prompted to accept the license agreement. You have to accept the license to be able to continue with the installation. Next, choose an installation location for the product. Finally, you can review the installation options and click the Install button to run the installer and install the workbench binaries. When the installation is complete, you can close the installation wizard.

Section

Enhancements in V4



IBM Support Assistant V4.0 is released with a host of new features and enhancements, making this version the most comprehensive and flexible yet. This portion of the presentation describes these new features.

Enhancements in V4

- Installation and getting started
 - ▶ Customization wizard to configure workbench settings and find add-ons after installation
 - ▶ Tutorials for common tasks
 - ▶ Tools to migrate product plug-ins and tools from IBM Support Assistant V3



The workbench includes new tools to help you get started with IBM Support Assistant quickly. Once the workbench has been installed, you will want to customize it with content that you are interested in, based on the products and tools that you want to use. The first time that you start the workbench after installation, it will walk you through a customization wizard that will help you configure workbench settings and find and download product and tool add-ons. If you are behind a firewall and need a proxy or SOCKS server to access the internet, the configuration wizard will help you set it up. You can also access the customization wizard later from the Welcome page of the workbench under First Steps. Also on the Welcome Page, you will find a link to tutorials for common tasks. These tutorials provide recorded demonstrations of how to perform common tasks, like configuring remote system access, from your IBM Support Assistant Workbench. If you have used IBM Support Assistant V3, you might already have a workbench environment that is populated with tools and product information. You can use the migration tools in the workbench to replicate your V3 configuration in the new workbench.

Enhancements in V4

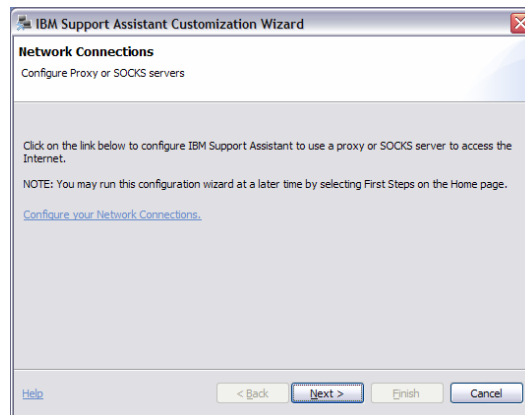
- Productivity improvements
 - ▶ Support for remote debugging through IBM Support Assistant Agents
 - ▶ Updated activity-based user interface
 - ▶ Product specific news feeds
 - ▶ Case manager for organizing troubleshooting documents around cases and incidents
 - ▶ Integrated guided troubleshooting tools
 - ▶ Automatic notification for updates to your installed products and tools
 - ▶ Data collection scripts for key JVM-related problem determination tasks
 - ▶ Enhanced tools



A major enhancement in IBM Support Assistant V4 is the ability to access remote systems from the workbench and perform troubleshooting activities. This is possible when you have an agent manager and service agents configured in your environment. The workbench user interface has changed substantially from V3, and it is now structured around performing common activities. The welcome page of the interface contains a news feed, and product information pages in add-ons can contain product-specific news feeds as well. The workbench contains a case manager that you can use to organize your troubleshooting documents around cases and incidents and then send the case files to IBM support for analysis. The workbench also includes an integrated Guided Troubleshooter that walks you through problem determination step-by-step using a simple wizard and guided questions. There are also enhanced tools that are available with the workbench, including data collection scripts for JVM-related problem determination tasks that are available with the WebSphere Application Server V7 product add-on.

Customization wizard

- The first time you launch the workbench after installation, the customization wizard will run
 - ▶ Can also be launched later from the **First Steps** page
- Configure network connections
 - ▶ Set up a proxy server to access the internet
- Configure update notifications
 - ▶ When and where to check for updates
- Search for product and tool add-ons



Your workbench becomes much more useful as you personalize it with custom content related to your environment. The first time that you start the workbench after installation, the customization wizard will launch automatically. You need to be able to access the internet to download custom content, and the customization wizard will help you set up proxy server access, if needed. The wizard will also guide you through the process of downloading and installing add-ons and configuring automatic update options. For example, you can configure your workbench to automatically check for updates to your installed add-ons each week so that your content is always up-to-date.

Updated user interface

Activity-based user interface helps you find the information you need to analyze your problems and get support

Configuration tools and task-based tutorials to help you get started

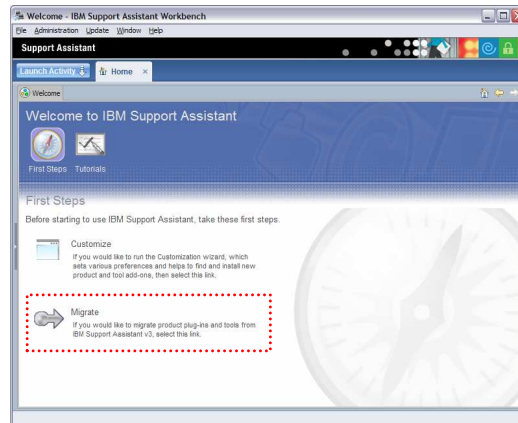
Support assistant news feed for latest feature updates, tools and announcements

IBM Support Assistant workbench © 2008 IBM Corporation

This is the home page of the new workbench interface, which is designed around an activity-based workflow. In the main panel on the left, the three major activity groups are listed – Find Information, Analyze Problem, and Manage Service Request. The Find Information activity is where you want to go to access the information contained in your product add-ons and to do searches. Under the Analyze Problem activity, you can directly access the new Guided Troubleshooter and load any problem determination tools that you have installed. The Manage Service Request activity allows you to interact with your service requests, including submitting new problem reports to IBM and collecting and sending diagnostic data to IBM support. You can also access these main activity areas through the Launch Activity dropdown menu that is highlighted in the upper left of the display. In the upper right, you will find a link to configuration tools under First Steps and several instructional recordings in the Tutorials section. The home page also contains a news feed that is regularly updated with feature and tool updates, announcements, and information about important fixes.

Migration tools

- Wizard migrates product plug-ins and tools from your V3 workbench
 - ▶ Functionality of tools will not change
- Access the migration wizard from the **Home** page of your V4 workbench, under **First Steps**
 - ▶ Click the **Migrate** icon to start the wizard
 - ▶ Provide the installation location of your V3 workbench
 - ▶ Select the product plug-ins and tools you want to migrate
 - ▶ You are prompted to accept the plug-in migration
 - ▶ IBM Support Assistant will need to restart after migration is complete



The migration tools, which you can access through the First Steps menu, will guide you through the process of migrating product and tool plug-ins from your Version 3 workbench to your new Version 4 workbench. All you need to do is launch the installer, tell it the location of your Version 3 workbench, and choose which plug-ins you want to migrate. The migration wizard will go out to the Version 4 download site and attempt to download the new versions of all of the plug-ins that you previously had installed in your workbench. You are prompted to accept the plug-in migration, and the workbench will need to be restarted after the migration is finished.

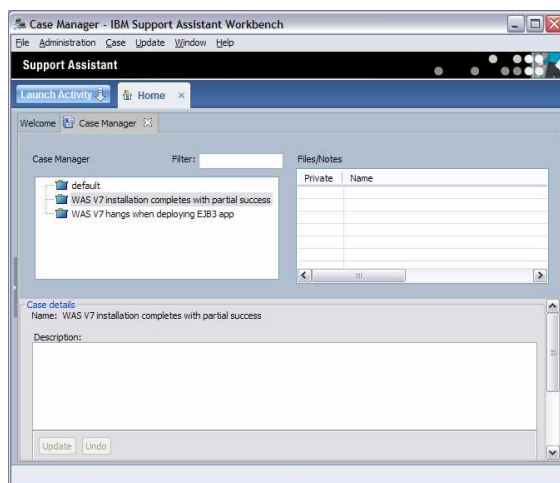
Guided troubleshooter overview

- The guided troubleshooter provides convenient access to appropriate tools and helps keep your problem determination activities organized
 - ▶ Uses a wizard with guided questions to help you isolate problems and find solutions
 - ▶ Product add-ons can contain custom guided troubleshooter content
 - ▶ The tool starts a new case each time you start a new activity
 - ▶ Your progress is automatically saved so you can easily stop and resume later
- Access the troubleshooter from the **Analyze Problem** activity under the **Guided Troubleshooter** tab



The Guided Troubleshooter uses a wizard with guided questions to help you isolate problems and find solutions. The troubleshooter is integrated throughout the workbench – for example, you can launch into the Guided Troubleshooter from within the service request management portion of the workbench – but you can access it directly under the Analyze Problem activity in the Guided Troubleshooter tab. Product add-ons can contain custom troubleshooting content. The WebSphere Application Server V7 product add-on, for example, includes problem determination content that can help you identify the cause of a product locking up or hanging. The Guided Troubleshooter is integrated with the case manager, so each time you start a troubleshooting activity, a new case is created to store all of the related diagnostic data. Your progress through the troubleshooter is automatically saved, making it easy to stop and resume your activity later.

Case manager



- Cases act as containers to store artifacts related to a problem investigation
 - ▶ Organize data with folders
 - ▶ Group related files, send to IBM support
 - ▶ Add incidents to a case to track data for a specific problem occurrence
 - ▶ Import and export cases
- Open the case manager under **Administration > Manage Cases**
 - ▶ Adds a Case section to the top menu bar



The case manager allows you to organize your troubleshooting data in "cases," then export and share these cases with other problem analysts or with IBM Support. Each case is a folder that holds the artifacts related to a problem investigation. You can also create incidents inside of a case; incidents are designed to represent a specific occurrence of a problem. If you have an application that is hanging, you might want to re-create the hang under different conditions. Each time you re-create the failure, you can store the related log files in a different incident to keep them organized. If you have remote agents configured, you can use the workbench to directly access data on remote systems and add that information to a case file. The case manager is available from the Administration menu, under Manage Cases.

Section

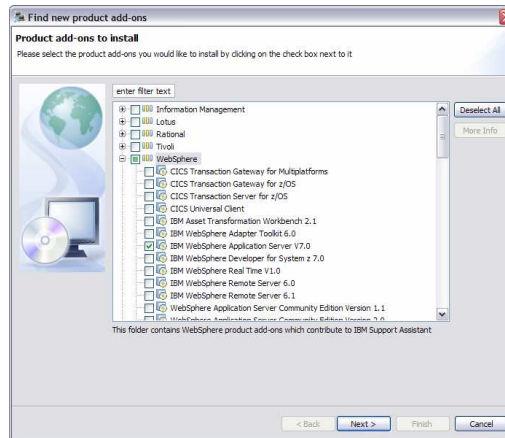
Performing common tasks



This section describes how to perform common tasks with the IBM Support Assistant Workbench V4.

Installing and updating add-ons

- Search for new product and tool add-ons under
 - ▶ **Update > Find New... >**
- Use the **Update** menu to check for updates to existing add-ons
 - ▶ Can configure automatic check for updates
- Add-on for WebSphere Application Server V7 is available
- Product and tool add-ons can be found and installed independently
- Product information pages can contain news feeds



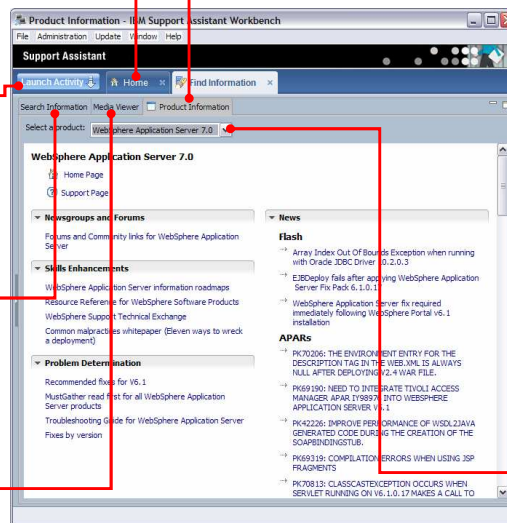
One of the first things that you will want to do after installing the workbench is customize with product and tool add-ons. You can search for add-ons using the Update menu, under the Find New option. An example of the product add-on panel is shown on this page. You can see that there are a variety of different product add-ons available across all IBM software brands. If you are installing the version of the workbench that is provided with WebSphere Application Server V7, it will come with the application server add-on already integrated into the workbench. In Version 4, product and tool add-ons can be found and installed independently. For example, you can download and use a JVM problem determination tool without having any Java-related product add-ons installed.

Find information activity

Start the **Find Information** activity from the **Home** page or the **Launch Activity** dropdown menu

Concurrently search across repositories within the **Search Information** activity

Access education content and create customized playlists in the **Media Viewer**



Browse relevant newsgroup and forum links, training resources, and troubleshooting help in the **Product Information** activity; this section can also contain news links to recent fixes

Select a product from the dropdown menu of product add-ons to view information for that product



The find information activity is available from the home page or by using the Launch Activity dropdown menu. Under the Product Information tab, use the dropdown menu to select the product that you want to view information for. You will need to install at least one product add-on before you can access product information. On the product's information page, browse relevant newsgroup and forum links, skill enhancement resources, and troubleshooting help. From this portion of the tool, you can also access search tools from the Search Information tab. Use these tools to concurrently search across multiple repositories, like developerWorks, product documentation, and newsgroups, to find answers to your software questions.

Analyze problem activity

Start the **Analyze Problem** activity from the **Home** page or the **Launch Activity** dropdown menu

Use **Collectors** (system or product collectors) to gather diagnostic data locally, or create a portable Collector

Use the **Guided Troubleshooter** to walk through the problem troubleshooting process

Launch tools from add-ons that you have installed from the **Tools** tab

The Analyze Problem activity has three components – Collect Data, Guided Troubleshooter, and Tools. From the Collect Data tab, you can generate collectors – either system collectors or product collectors – to gather diagnostic data locally, on the system where you are running the workbench. From this tab, you can also generate portable collector scripts that you transfer to a remote system, then run the script, and it creates a JAR file that contains diagnostic data. Then you can manually send that archive over to IBM support for analysis. The Guided Troubleshooter, discussed earlier, will walk you through a troubleshooting session step-by-step using a series of guided questions. Finally, if you have installed any tool add-ons, you can launch those tools from the Tools tab.

Manage service request activity

Start the Manage Service Request activity from the Home page or the Launch Activity dropdown menu

Use the Guided Troubleshooter to walk through the steps you should perform before engaging IBM support

Use Collectors to gather diagnostic data

In the Service Requests tab, open and work with service requests for IBM software and hardware

Click the bar to collapse the Guided Activity Assistant

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The Manage Service Request activity allows you to open service requests or work with existing service requests for IBM software and hardware issues. This portion of the interface also links back to problem analysis tools – like data collectors and the Guided Troubleshooter – that are very useful in gathering the information necessary for you to get support for your problems.

Section

Summary and reference



This section contains a summary and reference.

Summary

- IBM Support Assistant Workbench V4 provides
 - ▶ Product search and information pages
 - ▶ Problem determination tools
 - ▶ Automated data collection facilities
 - ▶ Simple user interface based on common activities
 - ▶ Built-in guided troubleshooting tool
 - ▶ Case manager for organizing diagnostic data
 - ▶ Assistance for submitting PMRs to IBM



In Version 4, the IBM Support Assistant Workbench continues to serve as a one-stop-shop solution to research, analyze, and resolve software issues. You can customize your workbench with product information and problem determination tools, use integrated troubleshooting tools and data collectors, organize diagnostic data with the case manager, and work with your IBM service requests.

Reference

- IBM Support Assistant

<http://www.ibm.com/software/support/isa/>



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