

Phire Frequently Asked Questions - FAQs

Phire Company Profile

Years in Business

How long has Phire been in business?

Phire was conceived in early 2003 by a group of experienced PeopleSoft professionals who saw a need for an ACM solution built using PeopleTools. Design for the Phire Architect application started immediately and the initial development was completed in July 2005. Phire went live with the first production customer in early 2006.

Financial Info / Funding / Revenue

Do you have any financial information about Phire that you can disclose? How is the company funded? What is your annual revenue?

Phire, Inc. is a privately held Virginia corporation and we do not release financial information to the public. Initial funding was provided by the founding members and additional funding has been received from private investors. Phire currently holds no debt and has achieved and maintained profitability since first quarter of 2007.

Location

Where is Phire located?

Phire is located in the Washington, DC metro area in McLean, Virginia. Our mailing address is:

Phire, Inc.
P.O. Box 9053
McLean, VA 22102

Customer Base

Who are some of your clients and contacts for references?

Our customer base includes some of the largest government, higher education, and public corporations in the world and is growing. We have key partnerships with Oracle and Accenture with whom we have jointly proposed Phire Architect on very large PeopleSoft implementations. Phire clients include: U.S. Department of State, State of Kansas, Washington University, University of Montreal, Capital One, Northrop Grumman, and Chesapeake Energy. We provide customer references upon request.

Number of Employees

How many employees does Phire have?

Phire is a growing company with a fairly small headcount. Despite our small size, we provide highly effective and responsive support as attested by our current customers.

Oracle Partnership

What is the relationship between Phire and Oracle?

Phire, Inc is an Official Partner to Oracle, USA and belongs to the Oracle Partner network. Phire is recognized by Oracle as an Independent Software Vendor and is able to obtain access to the latest Oracle PeopleSoft Enterprise integration information, product details, and education. We also participate in the Application Integration Architecture for Partners Initiative.

Installation and Consulting Services

Installation and Consulting Services

[Do you provide installation services? How about consulting services](#)

We offer four levels of packaged consulting services: Standard Installation, Silver Package (2 days on-site), Gold Package (3 days on-site), and Platinum Package (5 days on-site). The packaged offerings include installation, configuration, testing, and training services. In addition, we provide data conversion services and other general change management consulting services on a time and materials basis. Pricing information will be provided upon request.

Training

[Do you offer training?](#)

Phire Architect users consist of many different roles ranging from developers, migrators, testers, and approvers. Majority of the users of Phire functionality do not require any type of formal training. We provide custom on-site and online training services as part of the Packaged Consulting services (Silver, Gold, or Platinum).

Licensing and Pricing

Licensing Options

[What are the licensing options available?](#)

There are three types of software licenses offered by Phire: Enterprise, Standard, and Project License. Enterprise license is a perpetual license that provides for unlimited number of users and unlimited number of Phire installations to support unlimited number of applications. Standard license is a perpetual license that provides for unlimited number of users on a single installation of Phire to support unlimited number of applications. Project-based license provides for unlimited number of users on a single installation of Phire for a single named application with a predefined term after which the license expires.

Enterprise Licensing

[Are there additional license fees we have to pay if we want to use Phire for multiple systems? How about if we grow and add to our user base?](#)

Both the Enterprise and Standard Licenses provide for unlimited number of users, so addition to your user base will not result in any additional license cost to you. You can use Phire to support multiple systems. However, you can only have a single production installation of Phire Architect with the Standard License. The Enterprise license allows you to have unlimited number of Phire installations.

Ballpark Cost

[What is the approximate ballpark cost of the Phire Architect software license?](#)

We provide quotes for Software License upon request after few discovery questions are answered. Final pricing depends on the type of license sought and the specific terms of the license agreement. Generally, Phire Architect is very cost effective as compared to other Enterprise Application Change Management solutions. In addition, due to our ability to deploy rapidly and the ease of support, the total cost of ownership for Phire Architect is very low compared to competing solutions.

Support and Maintenance

Support Plan

[What type of Support Plan is available?](#)

Phire offers annual software support and maintenance plan that covers enhancements, fixes, bundles, and future upgrade versions of Phire Architect. Customers can report incidents via email, call the toll-free support number, or submit a ticket directly in the customer's own installation of Phire Architect.

Annual Maintenance Cost

How is the annual support and maintenance cost calculated?

The cost of the annual support and maintenance plan is based on a percentage of the license fee. This is a yearly fee and generally, we offer discounts if you prepay for multiple years of support. Our annual maintenance fees are very cost effective as compared to our competitors.

New Releases and Bundles

How often do you deliver new releases and bundles?

Application bundles are released twice a year. A collection of two bundles constitute a new release, so a new release is made available once a year. Each bundle normally takes about one hour to apply.

Support for New PeopleTools Version

How soon after a new version of PeopleTools is released by PeopleSoft is it supported by Phire?

In most cases, Phire certifies the new version of PeopleTools in conjunction with the release of the new PeopleTools version to the general public by Oracle Corporation. Our goal at Phire is to certify new versions of PeopleTools within 30 days of release by Oracle.

Installation

Requirements for Install

What are the requirements for the installation of Phire Architect?

Phire Architect must be installed onto a database containing PeopleTools. If you install Phire onto an existing PeopleSoft database, you can leverage the existing PeopleSoft components. If you decide to install Phire onto a new database, you will need to install and configure a separate PeopleSoft application server, web server, and process scheduler for the Phire application.

Installation Tasks / Self-Install

What is involved in the installation of Phire Architect? Can we do a self-install? How long does the installation take?

Installation of Phire Architect involves importing an Application Designer project, executing few DMS and SQL scripts, and manual online tasks. If you are familiar with applying PeopleSoft bundles, you will be able to perform a self-install. Phire recommends you have one of our installers perform the installation. The installation takes 2-4 hours and another 4-6 hours to configure and test basic functionality.

Where to Install

We have multiple PeopleSoft application. Where should we install Phire?

Phire is a production application and therefore, should be installed in the Production environment. You have three choices for how you install Phire: 1) install one instance of Phire in a new database to manage all your PeopleSoft applications; 2) install Phire directly into each of the PeopleSoft applications you have; 3) pick one of your existing PeopleSoft database (e.g. Financials Production) and install Phire there to manage all your PeopleSoft applications. Generally, if you have only one PeopleSoft application to manage, we recommend option #2 to simplify infrastructure maintenance. If you have more than one PeopleSoft application, we recommend option #1 to simplify maintenance of Phire configuration and security data.

Technical Architecture

High-Level Architecture

[What is the high-level architecture utilized by Phire Architect?](#)

Phire Architect is built on PeopleTools and utilizes the Pure Internet Architecture (PIA) of PeopleSoft applications which is a multi-tiered architecture that consists of a Web Server which communicates to an Application Server which utilizes messaging to issue SQL calls to the relational database.

Footprint

[What kind of footprint does Phire Architect leave on the database where it is installed?](#)

Phire Architect has a small footprint. There are no agents and no code that need to be applied to any database other than the database where Phire is installed. All the Phire objects have the "PHI" prefix in the name. Most of the Phire transactional data is stored in about dozen tables and require very little disk space. The setup data for Phire fits in less than 50 MB of disk space. Actual disk space requirements for transactional and version data will depend on transactional volume. Typical customers report that one year of Phire Architect data requires approximately 1-2 GB of disk space.

Access to Phire from PeopleSoft Application

[Can we access Phire if we house it in a separate PeopleTools instance from our PeopleSoft application?](#)

Users will be able to access Phire directly from any PeopleSoft application even if Phire is installed on a separate database. You will need to add a Portal Registry entry in the PeopleSoft application to point to Phire and configure PeopleSoft single signon. Refer to PeopleBooks on how to configure Portal registry entries to a different database.

Supported Platforms

[Which hardware platforms does Phire Architect support?](#)

Phire is committed to providing support for majority of the platforms supported by Oracle for their PeopleSoft Enterprise applications. Generally, the list of platforms that are supported by Phire at a point in time is usually similar as those that are supported by Oracle for the PeopleSoft Enterprise line of applications. However, due to large numbers of platform combinations, Phire is not able to conduct extensive testing on all platforms and therefore certifies only a subset of the platforms supported by Oracle. If a platform is supported, but not certified, it means that Phire has not completed the certification test process for that platform. The full list of certified platforms is found on our web site.

Database Refreshes

[What is the impact to Phire when lower environments are refreshed? Can Phire be used to help database refreshes?](#)

As long as Phire is installed in the production environment, Phire is not impacted when lower environments are refreshed using a copy of production. Phire is a great tool to help re-apply customizations that are in process into a recently refreshed database. For test and other databases where changes are made by a migration, Phire keeps track of which migrations need to happen to that database and will facilitate the re-application of those migrations. For development databases where changes are made directly by developers, Phire makes it easy for developers to save the work in progress into the Phire repository and restore back immediately after the database refresh.

PeopleTools Version and Upgrade Dependence

Minimum Version of PeopleTools

[What is the minimum and latest version of PeopleTools supported?](#)

The Phire Architect application requires at least PeopleTools 8.40. Phire supports all the latest version of PeopleTools including 8.5.

[Support for Multiple PeopleTools Releases from Single Install](#)

[Can a single instance of Phire support applications on multiple PeopleTools releases?](#)

A single installation of Phire can support databases running on multiple PeopleTools versions. For example, Phire installed on a PeopleTools 8.49 database can version and migrate objects in a Financials databases running PT 8.48 and HCM databases running PT 8.45 and EPM database running on PT 8.5.

[What Version of PeopleTools to Install](#)

[If we want to install Phire on a stand-alone database, what version of PeopleTools should we install on?](#)

If Phire is to be installed on a stand-alone instance, there is no dependence on which version of PeopleTools to use as long as it is at least version 8.40 and above. The PeopleTools version of Phire is not dependent on the PeopleTools version of your existing PeopleSoft applications. However, for maintenance reasons, we recommend that you install Phire on the highest PeopleTools release currently deployed in your environment.

[Customer Upgrades PeopleTools](#)

[What is the impact to Phire Architect if we upgrade our PeopleSoft Application version or the PeopleTools version?](#)

There is no impact to Phire Architect when you upgrade your PeopleSoft application or PeopleTools. Phire Architect is not dependent on the application or PeopleTools version of your PeopleSoft applications. The only required action when you upgrade PeopleTools is to update the database configuration in Phire with the new release level for the database that was upgraded.

[Impact to Phire when a New PeopleTools is Released](#)

[What is the impact to Phire Architect when Oracle releases a new version of PeopleTools?](#)

Phire Architect is initially delivered with support for all existing PeopleTools versions. If you want to upgrade to a new PeopleTools version that was not certified at the time of your initial Phire installation, then you will need to apply a patch from Phire that provides support for the new PeopleTools release. This patch consists of a DMS script and a small Application Designer project and usually takes less than one hour to apply.

Application Features

[Impact Analysis](#)

[How does Phire help evaluate the impact of patches \(delivered\) or customizations before it is applied?](#)

Phire Architect has features that allow customers to easily determine the list of all the previous change requests that required changes to be made to a particular object. In addition, online and real time reports allow customers to view other dependent objects that are impacted as well as the ability to capture impact analysis data in our online document forms.

[SOX Compliance](#)

[What is Phire Architect's role in Segregation of Duties for SOX compliance?](#)

Phire's workflow feature coupled with row level security allows organizations to define custom change management processes that segregate tasks depending on the role. This allows the separation of tasks among developers, testers, migrators, and approvers. For example, Phire enables companies to completely remove access to Application Designer in production to developers, yet provide them with a mechanism by which they can view or bring PeopleTools or file objects from production back to development.

[Object Locking](#)

[How does Object Locking work in Phire?](#)

There are two types of Object Locking in Phire. First, Phire is integrated with PeopleSoft change control to lock or unlock objects directly in Application Designer. You can configure this type of locking at the database level and have Phire automatically lock or unlock objects as you add objects to Phire or complete a Phire migration. The second type of locking is a feature that prevents migrations to the next environment unless all the objects in the Change Request are locked. This feature will also make developers aware of any dependencies with other open change requests as soon as objects are added to the change request.

[How to Fail a Task?](#)

[What happens when you have migrated to a testing instance and the testing was not successful so the change must go back to the developer?](#)

You can define a change request task to be “failable”. If a task is defined to be failable, then you can control which task to fallback. For example, if testing fails, you can define the task to go back to the developer, back to the migrator, or to any other previous task in the workflow.

[Change Assistant and Applying PeopleSoft Patches / Bundles](#)

[How does Phire fit into applying PeopleSoft patches and bundles?](#)

Phire Architect does not replace Change Assistant. You should continue using Change Assistant to apply PeopleSoft application patches and bundles. Some of our customers have defined a separate workflow in Phire to manage the process for applying bundles and tax updates. They also use Phire to version and migrate the PeopleTools and file objects in the bundle and continue to use Change Assistant to execute other required steps that are defined in the delivered bundle template.

[Minimum Tasks Needed for Migration](#)

[What are the minimum steps that need to be completed in Phire to perform a migration?](#)

The important thing to keep in mind is that with Phire Architect, the set of workflow tasks is completely configurable, so you have complete control over the number of steps required to complete the migration. You need to perform 4 basic tasks to complete a migration: 1. Identify the list of objects to be migrated (Add objects to CR), 2. Backup those objects (Create Migration Set), 3. Create a migration request to the target database (Migration Request), 4. Execute the migration (Migrate).

[Reporting](#)

[What reports and reporting tools are delivered with Phire?](#)

Phire Architect is delivered with a large catalog of pre-defined management, exception, and compliance reports and queries to meet many of your reporting needs. Phire Architect also has an easy to use online report builder which reduces the time to develop recurring or ad-hoc reports. Additionally, since Phire runs on the PeopleSoft infrastructure, all of the robust reporting solutions supported by PeopleSoft are at your disposal for extending the delivered reporting capability.

Version Control

[Version History and Revert to Previous Version](#)

[Does Phire keep track of old internal code versions? Can we revert back to a code version based on date?](#)

Every version of the object that is made is recorded in the version history with information such as the source database, date, and time of the version, and who made the version. This information is easily accessible by clicking the version history button next to the object. Reverting back to a previous version is just as easy. A restore button is available next to each version of the code and clicking the restore button allows you to revert back to the previous version.

[Add Objects by Reading in a Project](#)

[Can we add the list of objects by reading in an Application Designer project?](#)

You have the flexibility of adding objects by importing the object list from one or more Application Designer projects or by adding each object individually. In addition, you have the option to synchronize the CR object list with the objects contained within an Application Designer project.

File Object Versioning

[How does Phire handle external object versioning? Where is the file version stored?](#)

External file versions are kept in the Phire repository which consists of a set of database tables; file object versions are not stored on the file system. You define the source server and directory for each file type for each database and Phire makes a version from that location and stores it in the Phire repository. During migration, Phire uses FTP, SFTP, or XCOPY to migrate files from the repository to the target server and directory you specified in the configuration for that particular database.

Other External Objects

[Can Phire version and migrate non-PeopleSoft related files such as HTML or EXE files?](#)

Any type of external files can be managed in Phire by defining the server and directory locations associated with the file type for each environment. This is the same way that SQR, Crystal and other typical PeopleSoft-related external files are handled. Thus, you can use Phire to version, restore, and migrate files for non-PeopleSoft applications that are file based.

Need to Version before Migration

[Do we need to version the objects before we migrate to the target database?](#)

You are required to version the objects from the source before the objects can be migrated. This versioning process copies the objects from the source database into the Phire repository tables. Once in the Phire repository, these objects are protected from inadvertent overwrites. This feature gives you the assurance that each migration will produce the same results since you are migrating the objects from the Phire repository (not from the source database).

Migrations

Migration Mechanism

[How does the migration mechanism work?](#)

All Phire migrations are initiated from a Change Request (CR). Once a migration request is created, a button will automatically appear in the CR which allows the migrator to perform the migration of the objects in the migration list (including files) to the target database. Behind the scenes, for PeopleTools objects, Phire selects the object versions from the Phire repository tables and performs inserts into the PeopleTools tables in the target. File objects to be migrated are extracted from the Phire repository to a working directory and then transferred to the defined target server and directory using the file transfer method specified for the target server.

Action Flags

[How are the Action flags for each object determined and set?](#)

The Action setting for each object in the Phire Change Request is the action that will be performed by Phire during the migration. If the Application Designer project is initially used to import the object list into Phire, then Phire simply sets the action flags in Phire to match the settings that are in the project. If the object was added individually, the default action is set to "Copy". In either case, you have the ability to set the action for each object from the CR Objects page.

Automatic Baseline Version

[Are objects automatically backed up and versioned before a migration?](#)

You have the option to backup the objects in the target database automatically prior to the migration so that you can easily rollback any migrations. If you do not want the additional overhead associated with a baseline backup, you can optionally turn this feature off on a database by database level.

[Migration Rollback](#)

[Does Phire allow migration rollback at the project level or partial rollback at the object level?](#)

By clicking on the Rollback or the Restore version set button, you can restore the entire contents at the project level including file objects. Alternatively, you can click the restore object button available next to a single object to restore a single object.

[SQL, DMS, OS Script Support](#)

[Can you run SQL, DMS, or OS scripts using Phire?](#)

Phire provides support to execute SQL, DMS, and OS scripts directly from a Change Request using a browser. The output and the log of the script execution are made available via a link directly from the Change Request. For SQL scripts, you can execute in Rollback mode to obtain affected row counts prior to executing in Commit mode. Also, there is row level security that enables you to specify which users or roles have the ability to execute the script for a specific database.