

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 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 implemented Phire on very large PeopleSoft implementations. Phire clients include: U.S. Department of State, United Nations, IMF, State of Kansas, State of Ohio, Washington University, University of Nebraska, Capital One, Wells Fargo, United Health, Viacom, Bloomberg, and United Airlines. We provide customer references upon request.

Number of Employees

How many employees does Phire have?

Phire is a growing company with a 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 Gold 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.

Oracle Validated Integrations

[Has the Phire solution been validated by Oracle?](#)

Phire has achieved Oracle Validated Integration. Oracle Validated Integration provides customers with the confidence that the integration has been tested as technically and functionally sound and will perform as documented. Validated integrations reduce risk, simplify upgrades, and lower ownership costs for joint Oracle customers.

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 (1 day on-site), Silver Package (2 days on-site), Gold Package (3 days on-site), and Platinum Package (5 days on-site). The packaged offerings include software installation, application configuration, testing, and on-site 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 users consist of many different roles ranging from application administrator, developer, migrator, tester, and approver. Majority of the users of Phire functionality do not require formal training. In conjunction with the software delivery, we provide tutorial documents that can be used for training purposes. Furthermore, we provide custom on-site and online training services as part of the Packaged Consulting services (Silver, Gold, and 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 support for 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 a single named application. 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 must pay if we want to use Phire for multiple applications? How about if we grow and add to our user base?](#)

All three Licensing options provide for unlimited number of users, so additions to your user base will not result in any additional license cost to you. With the Enterprise License, you can use Phire to support multiple applications. With the Standard and Project License, you are limited to using Phire to support one application that is named in the License Agreement.

Ballpark Cost

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

We provide quotes for the 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 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 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. Customers can report incidents via email, call the toll-free support number, or submit a ticket directly using the customer's own installation of Phire.

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 retail license fee. This is a yearly fee and 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 requires about one hour to apply for each Phire installation.

Support for New PeopleTools Version

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

In most cases, Phire certifies the new version of PeopleTools within 2 weeks of the release of the new PeopleTools version to the general public by Oracle. 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?

Phire must be installed on a database containing PeopleTools. If you install Phire into an existing PeopleSoft database, you can leverage the existing PeopleSoft infrastructure components. If you decide to install Phire into 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? Can we do a self-install? How long does the installation take?

Installation of Phire involves importing an Application Designer project, executing few DMS scripts, and completing some manual online tasks. If you are familiar with applying a PeopleSoft bundle, you will be able to perform a self-install. Phire recommends you have one of our installers perform the installation and the initial configuration. The installation takes 1-2 hours and another 4-6 hours to configure and test basic functionality.

Where to Install

Where should we install Phire?

Phire must be installed onto a database containing PeopleTools 8.4x and above. Phire is a production application and therefore, should be installed in the Production environment. You have a choice of implementing a single centralized installation of Phire or multiple installations each to manage a different application. To simplify maintenance, leverage common setup data, and to facilitate information sharing, Phire recommends centralized install in which a single Phire installation will service one or more applications.

You have the option to install Phire into an existing PeopleSoft Application (shared) or into a new PeopleTools-Only SYS database (dedicated). The shared option allows you to leverage existing infrastructure components like the database, application server, web server, and process scheduler. The dedicated option requires you to create a new database, application server, web server, and a process scheduler for the Phire application.

If you have a single PeopleSoft application to be managed, we recommend the shared install into the existing PeopleSoft application. If you are in a hosted environment and there are costs associated with creating new infrastructure components (e.g. database, web, and application server), we recommend the shared option, which eliminates the need for any new infrastructure components. If you have PeopleSoft Portal application deployed, we recommend installation of Phire onto the Portal application since transactions are usually low and it contains all the user profiles. If you have multiple PeopleSoft applications to manage, do not have PeopleSoft Portal, and the costs associated with maintaining additional infrastructure components is not a factor, then we recommend the installation of Phire on a single, dedicated PeopleTools-Only database.

Technical Architecture

High-Level Architecture

What is the high-level architecture utilized by Phire?

Phire 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 leave on the database where it is installed?

Phire has a small footprint. There are no agents and no code that need to be installed to any database other than the database where Phire is installed. All the Phire objects have the "PHI" prefix in the name. Majority of the core transactional data is stored in couple dozen tables and require very little disk space. The setup data for Phire require less than 100 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 data requires approximately 1-5 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 can access Phire directly from anywhere simply by inputting the URL to the Phire application in the browser. Alternatively, users can access Phire directly from any PeopleSoft application using the built-in single signon features.

Supported Platforms

Which hardware platforms does Phire 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 similar to those that are supported by Oracle for the PeopleSoft Enterprise line of applications. However, due to the large number of combinations of platforms, 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 Testing and other databases where changes are applied via 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 application requires minimum of PeopleTools 8.41. Phire supports all the latest version of PeopleTools including 8.56.

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 8.55 database can version and migrate objects in a Financials database running PT 8.54 and a HCM database running PT 8.53 and EPM database running on PT 8.56.

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 install Phire. 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 if we upgrade our PeopleSoft Application version or the PeopleTools version?

There is no impact to Phire when you upgrade your PeopleSoft application or PeopleTools version. Phire 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 when Oracle releases a new version of PeopleTools?](#)

Phire is initially delivered with support for all existing PeopleTools versions. If you want to upgrade to a new PeopleTools version that was not available at the time of your initial Phire installation, then you will need to upgrade to a newer release of Phire that contains support for the new PeopleTools release or 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

[Non-PeopleSoft Applications](#)

[Can Phire be used to manage non-PeopleSoft applications?](#)

Phire can be used to manage the change control needs of non-PeopleSoft applications. You will be able to take advantage of features such as workflow, notifications, task assignments, approvals, and change tracking. Furthermore, you will be able to version, compare, and migrate any file based codes using Phire. Since Phire supports scripts executions, you can use Phire to manage changes to your database objects such as triggers, stored procedures, and tables.

[Impact Analysis](#)

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

Phire 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'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 the ability to 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 restores or migrations to the environment unless all the objects in the Change Request are locked. This feature enables the developers to be 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 what happens when the task is failed. For example, if testing fails, you can define the task to go back to the developer, or 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 does not replace Change Assistant. The application of PeopleSoft patch, bundle, or maintenance pack involves much more than just migrating a project or files. PeopleSoft delivers a Job Template that may contain many different tasks. Thus, you should continue to use Change Assistant to apply patches, bundles, and maintenance packs. Some of our customers do use Phire workflow to track and manage the "Process" for applying the bundle (notifications, assignments, approvals, etc.). But, the actual application of the bundle is performed using Change Assistant. You also have the option to use Phire to backup and migrate objects using Phire once it has been applied to DEMO using Change Assistant. However, most Phire customers choose to only use Phire to track and manage the process of applying the bundle and use Change Assistant to perform all the required tasks in the job 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, the set of workflow tasks is completely configurable. You have complete control over the number of steps required to complete the migration. You need to perform 3 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. Execute the migration and build (Migrate).

[Reporting](#)

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

Phire is delivered with a large catalog of pre-defined management, exception, and compliance reports and queries to meet many of your reporting needs. Phire 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 the robust reporting solutions supported by PeopleSoft are at your disposal for extending the delivered reporting capability.

[Compare Reports](#)

[What kinds of code compare reports are available?](#)

Code compares can be initiated from the Change Request. You can compare: 1. the current version of an object in two connected databases 2. two historical versions of an object saved in the Phire repository 3. an object version from the repository and the current version in a connected database 4. a version set in the Phire repository and the current versions in a connected database. The resulting reports are generated in HTML format and are color coded to highlight the differences in the code.

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 code object that is backed up is recorded in the version history with information such as the source database, date and time of the backup, and who made the backup. This information is available online by clicking the version history button next to the object. Reverting 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 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 file 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 a migration, Phire uses FTP, SFTP, PSFTP, or XCOPY to migrate files from the repository to the target server and directory you specified in the configuration for that 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 database before the objects can be migrated. This versioning process copies the objects from the source 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 appears in the CR which allows the migrator to perform the migration of the objects in the migration list (including files) to the target database. 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 the action flags are set in the CR 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 can change 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 migration. If you do not want the additional overhead associated with a baseline backup, you can optionally turn this feature off during a migration.

Migration Rollback

Does Phire allow migration rollback at the project level or partial rollback at the object level?

By clicking the Rollback button next to the migration, you can rollback all the objects at the project level including the 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 view affected row counts prior to executing in Commit mode. Also, there is row level security that enables you to specify which users or roles can execute the script for a specific database.