



BEA WebLogic Server^R Administration Console

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Table of Contents

Performance Enhancements.....	3
On-Demand Internal App Deployment.....	3
Updated Console Appearance.....	3
Core Console Extensions	4
New Console Features	4
Security Configuration.....	4
Server Control.....	5
Migration.....	5
WebServices	5
SCA Deployments	5
Spring Applications	5
Information for Extension Developers.....	5
Portal Look and Feel Specifics	6
Miscellaneous Extension Updates	6
Specifying an alternate help link.....	7

Performance Enhancements

A number of performance enhancements have been incorporated into the Administration Console in this release. These enhancements significantly improve the responsiveness and memory requirements for the Console application. For the most part, these enhancements will be transparent to all Console users but may have an impact on extensions which provide an alternate look and feel for the Console application.

The performance enhancements that may be relevant to console extension developers include:

- Use of Portal tree optimization
- Use of new Portal look and feel structure
- Multi-threaded backing files
- Better sharing of string resource property files

Additional information on these changes can be found in a following section.

On-Demand Internal App Deployment

As part of this release, a new attribute has been added to the domain configuration which can be used to trade off server startup time and memory requirements vs. the initial response time for internal applications, such as the Administration Console.

By default in Development domains, internal applications are now deployed on first access. In the case of the administration console, this means that the console application will not consume any memory or processor time until a user requests it from a browser. This setting improves the server startup responsiveness for developers who may be making frequent server restarts at the cost of a few additional seconds to display the console login page. The default for Production domains is to deploy the internal applications during startup as before.

This behavior can be changed using the console by modifying this setting on the Configuration:General configuration page for each domain.

Updated Console Appearance

As part of this release, the default out-of-the-box look and feel of the Administration Console has been updated to better reflect the appearance of other BEA products. These changes are more than just skin deep and provide the following benefits:

- Performance. Removing hard coded style from pages and using CSS rather than tables for layout resulted in much smaller pages. Smaller pages reduce network transfer and rendering time and contribute to better overall performance.

- Accessibility. Using semantic markup helps assistive technologies understand the pages better.
- Browser support. Improving the validity of the HTML leads to more consistent behavior between the IE and Firefox browsers.
- Branding improvements. Console look and feel extension writers will have an easier time branding the Console because more style changes can be accomplished with CSS alone. This is due to removing hard coded style from the HTML and using CSS rather than tables for layout. Also the new look and feel is simpler with fewer files.

Core Console Extensions

Over time, the Administration Console is evolving to be a more modular, customizable application that better reflects each WebLogic Server environment.

As part of this release, portions of the Administration Console have been refactored as console extensions:

- WebLogic Tuxedo Connection pages are now located in an extension named `wtc-console-extension.jar`
- Jolt Connection Pool pages are now located in an extension named `jolt-console-extension.jar`
- Security pages to support the configuration of security settings in older (7.0) upgraded domains are now located in `compatibility-security-console-extension.jar`

Each of these extension can be found in the `$WL_HOME/server/lib/console-ext/autodeploy` directory and are included in the console application automatically each time that it is deployed. Future releases may include additional extension refactoring and mechanisms by which some of these extensions may be excluded.

New Console Features

The Administration Console has been updated with a number of new and changed pages. Here are the highlights:

Security Configuration

WebLogic Server now supports the use of SAML2 security providers. The Console has been updated to provide new pages for SAML2 identity asserters and credential mappers, and new server-specific security configuration pages.

New pages are also included to configure the new file based and RDBMS security store features of WebLogic Server.

All pages which include an encrypted password field now also include confirmation fields for those passwords.

Console pages which export security configuration information to external files now check for the existence of those files before overwriting.

Credential mappings may now be edited from within the console.

Server Control

The Servers link on the home page and domain navigation tree now link to two different server tables, the previous Configuration perspective page and a new Control perspective page. The Control page supports starting and stopping any server in a domain, and functions very similarly to the existing Control:Servers page for a domain.

Migration

WebLogic Server now supports additional capabilities for automatically migrating failed servers and services from one server to another. The console pages for configuring MigratableTargets have been updated to reflect those changes.

WebServices

New Console pages have been developed to support the configuration of Reliable Messaging settings for WebServices.

SCA Deployments

The Administration Console now supports the deployment and control of SCA deployments.

Spring Applications

The Administration Console now includes the ability to inspect and interact with Spring Applications. This feature has been packaged as a console extension named “spring-console-extension.jar” located in the `$WL_HOME/server/lib/console-ext` directory. This console extension is not automatically deployed by default, but may be included by copying this archive into the `$WL_HOME/server/lib/console-ext/autodeploy` directory.

Information for Extension Developers

The following section describes changes which are of particular relevance to those who are developing or maintaining console extensions.

Portal Look and Feel Specifics

The Administration Console utilizes a new Portal look and feel, called wlsconsole, that is based on the WebLogic Portal 10.0 look and feel. The following are the main differences from WebLogic Portal 10.0:

- Renamed CSS selector prefix from wlp-bighorn- to wlsconsole-.
- Customizations to singlelevelmenu.jsp and abstractmenu.jsp to support extra console functionality in tabs.
- The footer and header skeletons are console specific
- Removed msie classification and borderless theme.
- Added conditional logic to generate extra markup needed for gray round corner frame style to book.jsp, and window.jsp.
- Two new layouts were added. twocollayout.jsp is a two column layout where one column is fixed width and the other is dynamic. nolayout.jsp is a layout that adds no extra markup.

The following look and feel features have not been tested in the WLS Console and should be avoided in extensions.

- multilevelmenu
- float portlet, delete portlet
- gridlayout
- themes

The console no longer uses themes. This greatly reduces the number of look and feel files and simplifies extensions. Any portlet specific styles are handled by CSS.

Miscellaneous Extension Updates

A number of the console tags (in console-html.tld) have been improved to remove hard coded style and produce valid html.

A number of JSP templates (in the layouts folder) have been deprecated. See the comments in the JSP files for details.

The documentation for rebranding the Console instruct you to copy the look and feel files from the Medrec sample but this sample has not yet been updated to use the new console look and feel.

The set of css files have changed. Until the documentation is updated you will need to look at the css files in the css and framework\skins\wlsconsole\css folders.

There is no need to modify LoginError.jsp any longer because now it just forwards to the LoginForm.jsp.

Avoid using skeletonUri attributes in your portal files. Instead use presentationClass and presentationId attributes and then style with CSS.

To add books or portlets that have the gray round corner frame like the rest of the Console simply add presentationClass="wlsc-frame" attribute to top level books or portlets that have a titlebar.

Specifying an alternate help link

Console extension developers frequently need to reference their own online help, which may be serviced by the console help webapp, by their own local help webapp, or by an external web site. The console now supports an additional metadata tag, "*helpurlpattern*", which can be used to specify how help will be sourced.

If not present, then the default pattern applied is:

`"/console-help/help/doc/${locale}/com/bea/wlserver/pagehelp/${helpid}.html"`