

Answer Server

Software Version 12.1.0

Release Notes



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Many areas of the portal require you to sign in with a Software Passport. If you need a Passport, you can create one when prompted to sign in. To learn about the different access levels the portal uses, see the [Access Levels descriptions](#).

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New in this Release

This section lists the enhancements to Answer Server version 12.1.0.

General

- Answer Server can use synonyms to expand queries. This increases the likelihood that Answer Server can find an answer to a question. Synonyms can be used with all Answer Server systems. You can manage your synonyms through the IDOL Data Admin interface.
- Question parsing has been improved for all languages, resulting in better answers from Fact Bank and Passage Extractor systems.
- The [AuthorizationRoles] section `StandardRoles` configuration parameter now accepts an asterisk (*) to represent all standard roles, so that you can easily set permissions for all roles.
- When importing parameters into your configuration file from another configuration file, you can use wildcards to select the parameters to include.

Fact Bank

- You can now configure Fact Bank to use a SQL database for codings information. This option might provide better performance. To configure the database in your Fact Bank system, set the new `CodifierType` parameter to **odbc**, and set `CodingsConfigSection` to the name of a configuration section where you define your coding database connection information. In this section, you set `ConnectionString` to the connection string to use to connect to the RDBMS that contains the coding information. For example:

```
[FactBank0]
Type=FactBank
CodifierType=odbc
CodingsConfigSection=FactBankCodings
```

```
[FactBankCodings]
ConnectionString=Driver={PostgreSQL};Server=sql-
host.mycompany.com;Port=5432;Database=codingsdb;Uid=postgres;password=password
```

The Answer Server installation package includes a Python script, `sql_import.py`, to allow you to migrate from coding files to the new database. For more information, refer to the *Answer Server Administration Guide*.

- The handling of date qualifiers for questions has been improved. In particular, facts that are qualified by a time period now return as answers if the question time qualifier (year) falls within that period, rather than having to coincide with the start or end year.

- Fact Bank supports Portuguese. A Portuguese question grammar and question grammar Lua script are supplied.
- Fact Bank has been optimized, to reduce the number of database lookups and improve response times.

Answer Bank

- Answer Server can check the spelling in rules that you submit to the `TestRule` action. The spelling of words is checked by querying an IDOL Content component. To check spelling set the new configuration parameter `SpellcheckEngine`.
- The Answer Server installation includes a default set of interrogative synonyms for English and German (in the `resources/synonyms` folder). These synonyms help Answer Server to answer questions that are posed in different ways. Instead of creating synonyms yourself, you can index the provided synonyms into the IDOL AgentStore component used by your QMS. To use these synonyms, you might need to update your stop list files (for more information, see [Notes, on page 7](#)).

Conversation Systems

- Answer Server can check the spelling of input to a conversation system. This means that if a user makes a spelling error, the conversation system can still suggest potential answers. The spelling of words is checked by querying an IDOL Content component. To check spelling set the new configuration parameter `SpellcheckEngine`.

Passage Extractor

- Passage Extractor returns up to five answers, sorted by confidence score, rather than a single answer.
- Performance has been improved for "what is...?", "who is...?", and "yes or no" questions. If you train your own question classifier, you can use the new question classification type `DESC:yesno`.
- Performance has been improved for "can" questions ("can I ... ?", "is ... permitted?").
- Answer Server uses the IDOL Content `TermExpand` action, so that it can find answers with different forms of the same terms (after stemming) as the question.
- Surface patterns are now supported for languages other than English, resulting in better scoring and answer extraction.
- Answer Server includes a question classifier for German.

Resolved Issues

This section lists the resolved issues in Answer Server version 12.1.0.

- JavaScript could be injected into the `GetRequestLog` response by sending actions to the server.

Notes

These notes provide extra information about installing and using Answer Server.

- Some of the files in the Answer Server package have been moved. Files that relate to a specific language have also been renamed to have a language code suffix (such as `en` for English). If you are upgrading from an earlier version of Answer Server you might need to update your configuration file with the new paths.

The default files for a Fact Bank system are now located at the following paths:

```
EductionQuestionGrammars=./resources/grammars/question_grammar_en.ecr
EductionLuaScript=./resources/lua/question_grammar_en.lua
EductionTimeGrammars=./resources/grammars/datetime_processing.ecr
TimeLuaScript=./resources/lua/datetime.lua
```

The default files for a Passage Extractor system are now located at the following paths:

```
EductionGrammars=./resources/grammars/question_grammar_en.ecr,
                ./passageextractor/eduction/number_en.ecr,
                ./passageextractor/eduction/person_en.ecr,
                ./passageextractor/eduction/date_en.ecr,
                ./passageextractor/eduction/money_en.ecr
EntityExtractionFile=./passageextractor/configuration/entity_extraction_en.json
SurfacePatternsFile=./passageextractor/configuration/surface_patterns_en.json
ClassifierBehaviorFile=./passageextractor/configuration/classifier_behavior.json
```

In this example the value of the `EductionGrammars` parameter is split across multiple lines for readability. In your configuration file the value must not include line breaks.

- To ensure optimum performance, using Fact Bank with PostgreSQL now requires PostgreSQL version 9.3 or later.
- To support the use of synonyms with Answer Bank, some changes are required to the configuration of the Answer Bank AgentStore. To enable synonyms, use the `DREEXPORTIDX` and `DREEXPORTXML` actions to export all of your data from the AgentStore index. Then, stop the AgentStore and update the configuration file as described below. Start the AgentStore and use the `DREINITIAL` action to clear the index. Finally, re-index your data with the `DREADD` action. The changes to the configuration file are as follows:

- Add `*/ORIGINAL_RULE` to the list of index fields, for example:

```
[FieldProcessing]
...
3=SetIndexFields

[SetIndexFields]
Property=IndexFields
PropertyFieldCSVs=*/DRECONTENT,*/DRETITLE,*/ANSWER,*/PROCESSED_
TEXT,*/ORIGINAL_RULE
```

- Add */SYNONYM_REFERENCE to the list of match fields, for example:

```
[FieldProcessing]
```

```
...
```

```
5=SetMatchFields
```

```
[SetMatchFields]
```

```
Property=MatchFields
```

```
PropertyFieldCSVs=*/ANSWER_ID,*/SAMPLE_QUESTION,*/STATE,*/DELETED,*/QUESTION_  
EQUIVALENCE_CLASS_ID,*/SYNONYM_REFERENCE
```

- If you want to use the interrogative synonyms that are supplied with Answer Server but are upgrading from an earlier version, you should also upgrade your stop list files. Otherwise, many of the synonyms will be considered to be stopwords. New stop list files are provided in the `resources/stoplists` folder of the Answer Server installation.

Documentation

The following documentation was updated for this release.

- *Answer Server Reference*
- *Answer Server Administration Guide*