



Version 4.4.22a and 4.5.0 Release Notes

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Introduction

This document describes the changes made to release 4.4.22 of Sumac to create release 4.4.22a and subsequently 4.5.0. This is a two stage release that incorporates major changes to the interactions between Sumac and Java.

Both versions are available on January 9th, 2019, and all clients *must manually upgrade* to version 4.5.0 before February 13th, 2019.

Sumac and Java

Java is a programming language that is used as the basis for many software applications and websites. Sumac is an example of one of the programs written in Java. In order to run any Java based software, your computer must be able to read and understand Java. Most computers do not come with this language built into their operating systems, so Java needs to be installed separately in order to allow usage of Java based applications. In the past, users would need to visit the Java site to download standalone software that allowed their computers to run any Java based application. The same was true for Sumac versions 4.4.22a and older. All instances of our software depended on the separate installation of Java on all user computers.

Java Update

Recently, the developers of Java have announced that with Java 11 they are changing the way they allow software companies and end users to interact with Java. This change does not affect the fundamental ways that Java based applications work, but it does change the requirements for how software companies are able to provide their applications.

With the update from Java 8 to Java 11, independent users are no longer able to download a free version of Java that would support their Java based applications. The solution to this is to package the Java components that users need into the software itself. The result is a version of Sumac that is still written in Java, but now comes packaged with all the Java components your computer requires to run to software.

Does This Affect Us?

Sumac is still written in Java, so this release does not change any of the baseline functionality of our software. The difference is in the Java services that install and run Sumac. With Java 8 (and older), we required all computers running Sumac to have Java downloaded and installed separately. This meant that our users went to the Java website to download an application, then would return to our website to download Sumac. Then, whenever you ran Sumac, a Java Web Start application popped up, indicating that Sumac was being started. With Sumac 4.5.0 and Java 11, this process is no longer necessary.

By upgrading to the new version of Java, we move away from requiring a separate application installed on your computer. Instead, we provide a version of Sumac that has all the components your computer needs included into one downloadable package. Then, when you run Sumac for the first time, the Sumac Launcher opens to set up our software on your computer.

What Are The Next Steps?

In order to roll out the Java 11 update, Sumac is implementing a two stage process. We have designed the steps in such a way to give you time to update all your Sumac versions at the pace that works for you. This way, you are able to decide on a time that works best for your organization before you move to Sumac 4.5.0.

An overview of the stages follows:

1. Sumac 4.4.22a (Java 8 compatible): Automatically delivered minor release

This version of Sumac is the last version available to be compatible with Java 8. As with our past releases, version 4.4.22a is automatically pulled to your computer the first time you open Sumac after the release date. All computers that were previously running Sumac 4.4.22 are now running version 4.4.22a. The change that you can expect with this version is the addition of a dialog box that notifies all users of the new version of Sumac available. There are no other changes made to this version.

Note that this version expires on February 13th, 2019. It is mandatory that all clients upgrade to stage 2 before this date.

2. Sumac 4.5.0 (Java 11 compatible): Manually downloaded major release

This version of Sumac is the first available to be compatible with Java 11. One of the main changes between Java 8 and Java 11 is the way that Sumac launches and checks for available updates. Previously, this check and update process was managed by the separate Java Web Start application. Sumac 4.5.0 comes packaged with Sumac Launcher, which replaces Java Web Start and manages the running and update functions for Sumac. Due to this change, users must manually download the first version of Sumac that uses Sumac Launcher.

Each subsequent update of Sumac is expected to resume to the normal automatically delivered update format. You will notice that the steps to download the new version of Sumac are slightly different than the ones we have had in the past. Please consult <https://sumac.com/install/> for the most up to date instructions.