



What's the impact on your implementation?

Everyone who uses ACORD standards must at one time or another address the issue of updating to a new version. It's essential to evaluate how the update will impact your implementation. It's important to analyze precisely how large an impact, if any, updating standards will have on your specific implementation.

None	Moderate	High
<p>You use nothing in the new version - data and/or messages.</p>	<p>There is some updated or new data you "need" in your current implementations.</p>	<p>There is a new message you want to use.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technically, you can announce that you support the new version within your own implementation specification. • Supporting a new version does NOT require that you add additional data or messages that you don't use. • Update OARS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update your Company Implementation Specification. • Communicate with partners the need for the new data. • Update tools and/or code to implement new data. • Update OARS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add to your Company Implementation Specification. • Communicate with potential partners • Coordinate development/release with potential partners. • Update OARS.

Implementation Tip

Company Implementation Specification

It's very important to create your own Company Implementation Specification which outlines those things specific to your work that may impact your partners. Include information such as: standards and version numbers implemented; data accepted; data required; connectivity details; custom extensions; etc. Sharing this information up front with your business partners provides increased ease of implementation for you and your partners and eliminates surprises.

To Update or Not to Update

There are several steps you should take when approaching an update. Following these steps will ensure that your transition is easier and more beneficial to you, your organization, and your partners.

Step 1: Analyze	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze the new version and see how it benefits your organization. Remember to judge it based on its impact: None, Moderate, High. Document the value of the new version to your organization. Consider the resources required to update. Understand that at some point you will have to support old and new versions. Note that existing partners will move to new standard on their own time line.
Step 2: Decide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide on the path that best suits your business and technology requirements. Create a business case for your decision to update or not to update. Clearly define the business reasons for upgrading to a new version.
Step 3: Communicate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once you decide, you need to communicate the reasons and rationale for the decision. This is not only an internal activity, but one you need to perform with each of your business partners. Create and publish a plan or timeline for use by your own organization as well as by your partners so that all involved share a common understanding and can coordinate efforts.
Step 4: Implement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once your plan is in place and your partners are on board, it's time to perform the actual implementation of the new standard version.
Step 5: Test & Pilot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrange to test your updates with two or more partners. Consider running a pilot within a subset of customers.
Step 6: Certify	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As with all implementations, it's essential that you certify the implementation so that all involved know that the messages being used are ACORD compliant.
Step 7: Report in OARS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reporting is essential and all activities should be reported in the OARS system.

Implementation Tip

Good Times to Update Versions

There are certain times that are particularly good for considering version updates:

- When adding new partners who have never implemented ACORD standards.
- When implementing a new message within an existing implementation.

