The Case for Retiring the ARJServer site

tl;dr - It's time to put the old Advanced Roadmaps Server docs to rest.

Two years ago (*February 2021*), we decided to put redirects to the new documentation on the last (and default) version of the Advanced Roadmaps Server docs set. The older versions were kept accessible because they included information about the old Live Plans interface.

Despite our best efforts to steer people away from the old space, the outdated content remains a problem. Customers find these old docs, which have better SEO than all of our other docs, then contact support about our unhelpful documentation. Looking at CDStats, the old space gets roughly 22,000 views per month. In the last month alone, we've received seventeen feedback tickets complaining about outdated content from customers. Even internally, Support Engineers still find this old documentation space, and raise questions about outdated content. It's a headache, nay – a menace.

The two main reasons for keeping this old space alive — previous version support and for the Live Plans content — are either no longer relevant, or small concerns that are no longer worth the pains of keeping the old content alive.

1. Old version support is in the DC docs

When we merged the Advanced Roadmaps documentation to Jira Data Center's, we indicated which versions key features appeared in to prepare for an eventual closure of the old space:

Assign capacity from your timeline

ⓘ Capacity and velocity planning was introduced in Advanced Roadmaps version 3.28. If you're using an earlier version of Advanced Roadmaps, this process may be different or not available in your instance.
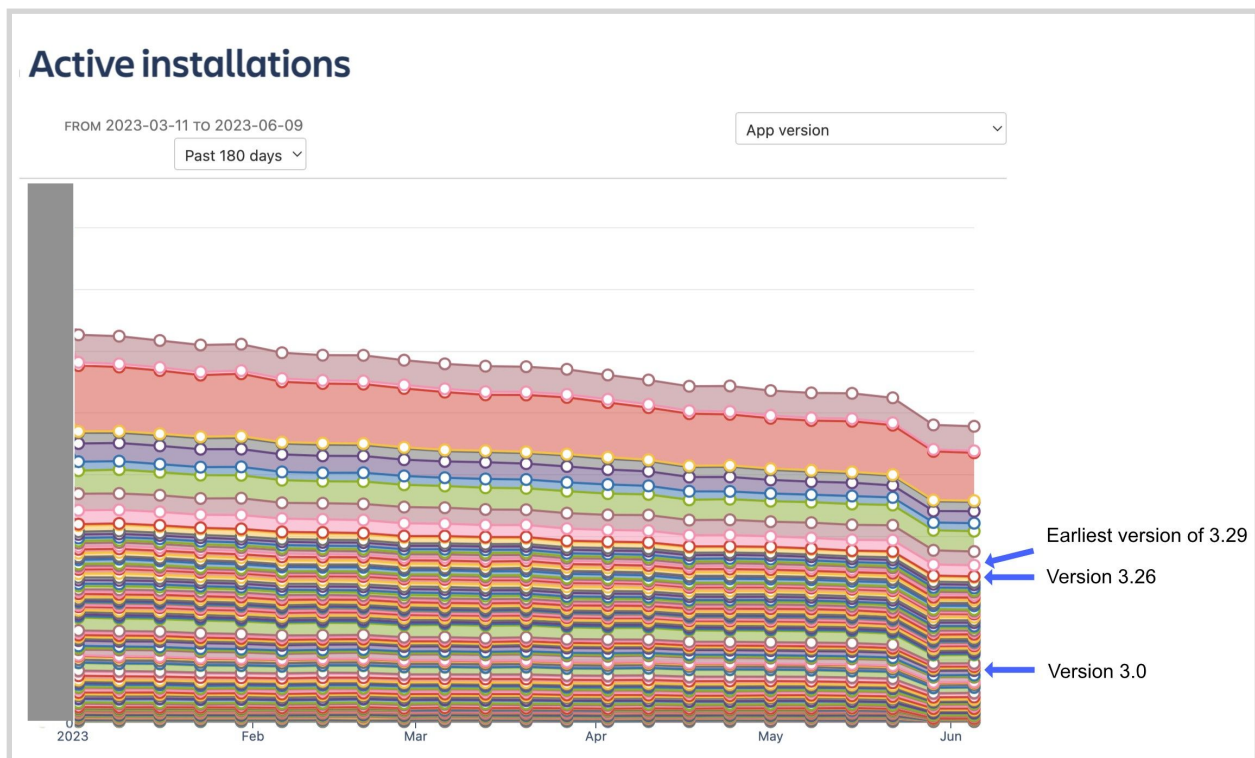
For a full list of when features shipped in Server, see List of features in past releases on Advanced Roadmaps Server.

Live Plans isn't getting any more relevant

The last update to Live plans was in 2018, but considering this is a Server plugin, we have no mechanism by which to force people off of it.

However, it's been five years since we last updated this interface, we don't include this interface in our product anymore. On our End of Life Support page, we list the standalone Server plugin as no longer being supported by Atlassian and no longer allow new downloads of it, so our user can only get smaller from here. Customers who are still using it probably don't have many unanswered questions about how it works anymore (speculation, but also ¯_(ツ)_/¯).

Let's break down some numbers:

According to Redash (via a researcher), we currently have **x,xxx Data Center licenses using Advanced Roadmaps**. That's compared to **x,xxx active instances using the plugin** according to the marketplace listing for the Advanced Roadmaps plugin

- Since the start of 2023, **xxx** (**27%** of customers at the time) have stopped using the plugin, leaving remaining x,xxx instances. Of that:
  - **x,xxx (49%)** are using version 3.29.x – the last version of the plugin that has no major differences from what was included with 8.15 Jira DC, and are served by the content we've already migrated to those docs.
  - **An additional 3%** are using versions 3.26, 3.27 or 3.28 - in these versions some of the most substantial features of Advanced Roadmaps were shipped. These customers are also covered by the migrated content, as we've called out the features from these versions.
  - **x,xxx (70%)** are using plugin version 3.x which has access to the new interface.

- There are eight versions of Jira Data Center from which customers *can* use the Live Plans interface for Advanced Roadmaps. In the plugin, 30% (roughly xxx instances) are using a version of the plugin that only has Live Plans.

- 9.0 was released in June 2022 so Live Plans has been dead for a year in DC. Assuming that we have x,xxx instances using Advanced Roadmaps[1], if:
  - 5% are using Live Plans, then that's xxx instances
  - 10% are using Live Plans, then that's xxx instances
  - 25% are using Live Plans, then that's xxx instances

From this I can conclude that most customers using any version of Advanced Roadmaps Server — which is an overall dwindling number — are served by the content we migrated to the Jira Data Center documentation.

The remaining Live Plans customers (x,xxx sites) represent a shrinking number that don't justify the pain caused by our current solution.

1 - The data analyst for the Jira DC team helped me get a partial picture, but I've asked 1,000 questions already and this was as close as I could get to a real number and I don't want to annoy him, so it's good enough for now.

Conclusion: we should close advancedroadmapsserver

Considering that most existing Server plugin customers are adequately served by the Jira Data Center documentation, we should do the following:

- take the old server documentation offline

- maintain the Live Plans content in a way that doesn't pollute our SEO

We should do this because:

- the past versions of the plugin will continue to become less important to customers as they upgrade to DC or move to Cloud and our solution for marking what versions features were released in the DC documentation is sufficient

- we don't need Live Plans content to be as prominent anymore

The benefits of ending it are:

- customers can more easily fine up-to-date documentation through Google Search
- happier customers and internal support staff
- this is the last time I'll have to talk about this topic

Extra: What to do with Live Plans content

Before we can restrict access to advancedroadmapsserver space full-stop, we need to decide what to do with the old Live Plans content.

"But Eddie," you're saying. "We just agreed that it's old and useless and dull." Yes, but while we shouldn't give it such prominence, we still need the content to be available for the few customers who use this feature.

Despite being unable to get clear-cut numbers, I feel confident in stating that Live Plans content does not need to be preserved by keeping the whole docset alive.
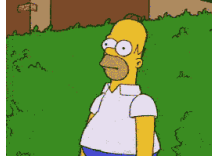
What can we do with it?

Decision: Option 3

LP = Live Plans

	Option 1: Don't migrate LP content	Option 2: Migrate the content to DC	Option 3: Make LP content downloadable from DC RECOMMENDED	Option 4: Make it internal for support staff only
What this means	When the advancedroadmapsserver space goes away, so does all of the LP content.	We migrate the pages to the DC space before we close advancedroadmapsserver	We create a page within the DC docset called "Live Plans in Advanced Roadmaps" with a link to all the docs as a PDF.	We move the content to a Hello page for support engineers to help customers.

| **What this looks like** | | |

Link to download pdf | **Same content, just on an internal page** |

| Pros | • Aligns with the fact that we don't support Live Plans anymore

• No more content to manage | • Support for small cohort who are still using Live Plans | • Still provides some level of support for those using Live Plans

  - searchable using Preview

  - links still work in above PDF (internally within the file)

• Doesn't pollute SEO results, but still findable by Google

  - Live Plans in the page title means that customers can find it if they need it

• Aligns with the rest of our positioning of Live Plans support
  - "It's here, but we're not enthusiastic about it." | • Doesn't pollute SEO

• No content to manage

• Live Plans would officially be no longer supported by us, but we'd still be able to help those who write in |

Cons	• No support for small cohort who are still using Live Plans	• Potential for confusion when customers find outdated content • Conflicting page names hurt SEO • Many pages have duplicate names as current content; CMS problem • More content to manage, links to maintain	• Requires customers to download a file	• Requires customers to write in to get help on basic questions - potential for increased workload for support staff • Not easily accessible internally - Potential for it to get lost as Hello gets reorganized, moved