



GIFTS Technical Bulletin

COMPATIBILITY POLICIES

Software vendors, such as Microsoft and Oracle, typically discontinue sales and support of earlier versions of their products upon the release of new versions. In such cases, the developers often no longer provide direct support for problems encountered and no longer release patches and bug fixes for those discontinued versions.

When helping clients using GIFTS in conjunction with those discontinued versions of third-party products, MicroEdge Technical Support may have difficulty in troubleshooting or resolving the issue, because third-party vendors no longer support a previous version.

A large number of new versions of third-party titles are continuously added to the ever-growing list of products with which GIFTS is certified as compatible. In order to provide you with new versions and maintenance releases of GIFTS in a timely fashion, and to keep GIFTS up-to-date with the products currently sold and supported by third-party vendors, MicroEdge has expanded our policies regarding the certification of GIFTS with such third-party products. The following describes these policies and its effects.

Certified vs. Supported Software

As outlined in our *Client Resource Guide*, “MicroEdge’s policy is to certify for only the two most recent versions of any supported package.”

Effective with the release of GIFTS Version 5.0 in June of 2001, we expanded this policy. In particular, we now distinguish between those third-party titles with which GIFTS is **certified** and those titles with which GIFTS is **supported**.

Certified versions of third-party products will continue to receive extensive testing prior to the release of a new version of GIFTS, as well as prior to the delivery of maintenance releases.

Our Technical Support and Research and Development teams will actively research any problems encountered by you in using GIFTS with certified versions of third-party products. Every effort will be made to address such problems through subsequent maintenance releases and versions of GIFTS.

It is important to note that GIFTS is not certified with specific combinations of third-party products. We will nevertheless support the use of GIFTS in conjunction with any combination of certified third-party products, and we encourage you to contact Technical Support with any problems that you may encounter under such circumstances. Please note, however, that MicroEdge will not support any combinations of third-party products that have not been certified as compatible by their respective developers. In particular, we ask that you refer to the Microsoft

website (<http://support.microsoft.com/support/kb/articles/Q122/3/52.asp>) or Oracle website (<http://support.oracle.com>) for further details on supported Windows versions for SQL Server or Oracle Client and Server.

Supported versions of third-party products *will not* receive testing prior to the release of a new version of GIFTS, nor with the issuance of maintenance releases. We encourage you to contact Technical Support if you encounter any difficulties with GIFTS when used in conjunction with supported versions of third-party products. However, it may be determined that a reported problem is caused specifically by the use of the supported version of a third-party program. Such problems may or may not be addressed in a subsequent maintenance release or version of GIFTS. Further, in such cases, the resolution proposed by MicroEdge may be to upgrade the third-party program to a more current, certified version.

Patch Sets, Service Packs and Maintenance Releases

Developers of third-party products frequently will release patch sets, service packs or maintenance releases for their products. These generally consist of bug fixes and, in some cases, additional functionality.

MicroEdge will certify each major release of GIFTS with the latest patch set or service pack available for each certified version of third-party products. Please note that third-party vendors do release interim patch sets, service packs and maintenance releases for versions of their products. MicroEdge *will not* specifically certify these third-party interim releases as part of our periodic maintenance releases. Exceptions to this policy would be considered for critical bug fixes that necessitate the installation of a given service pack or patch set. Such issues will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Please note that, while we will not specifically certify the compatibility of GIFTS with every service pack or patch set for certified versions of third-party products, we will nevertheless continue to support clients that may have applied any patches or service packs. Should you encounter problems with your GIFTS product following the application of such a patch or service pack, we encourage you to contact Technical Support for assistance.

Novell Netware

Due to the increasingly small number of our clients making use of Novell networks, we will be limiting our certification of GIFTS with Novell Netware to only major releases of GIFTS. With each new version of GIFTS, we will certify GIFTS with the most current version of Novell Netware at that time. Support of GIFTS will be extended to the one version of Novell Netware prior to the version certified with each new version of GIFTS. Exceptions to this policy may be made for critical bug fixes that may be made in new releases of Novell Netware. Such issues will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

ODBC Drivers

ODBC drivers are files that enable workstations to connect to and communicate with a database server. As such, GIFTS interacts with the ODBC drivers provided by either Oracle or Microsoft in client/server configurations.

MicroEdge will certify GIFTS with the latest versions of ODBC drivers for Microsoft SQL Server and Oracle database server, as they are released, in maintenance releases of the current GIFTS product. You should refer to the GIFTS Compatibility Fact Sheet (<http://www.microedge.com/support/compatibility/>) for the latest ODBC driver with which GIFTS has been certified as compatible.

Please note that previous versions (non-standard combinations) of drivers and database servers will not be certified for compatibility with GIFTS. Specifically, we cannot guarantee the proper functioning of older ODBC drivers with a later version of a given database product. We will, however, support the use of such non-standard combinations, provided that they are approved by Microsoft or Oracle. For example, as per Oracle, the Oracle 8i and ODBC driver may be used to connect to earlier versions of the Oracle database (Oracle 7 and Oracle 8). For specific details on the interoperability of given versions of ODBC drivers and the associated database product, we encourage you to visit the Oracle (www.oracle.com) or Microsoft (<http://www.microsoft.com/sql/default.htm>) website.

Oracle Server

Effective with the release GIFTS v5.0, we began synchronizing the GIFTS certification schedule for Oracle products with the Error Correction Support schedule set forth by Oracle. MicroEdge will cease certification of GIFTS with a given version of Oracle no more than three months following the termination of the Error Correction Support for that version of its database server product.

We will cease support of GIFTS in conjunction with a given version of Oracle server no more than 3 months after Oracle ceases Extended Assistance Support for that version of its database server product.

Effects of This Policy

Windows 95

Effective December 31, 2001, Microsoft discontinued support for the Windows 95 operating system. For more information on Microsoft's support policy, please refer to the following article on the Microsoft website: <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/lifecycle.asp>.

With this in mind, MicroEdge will cease support for GIFTS on the Windows 95 operating system, effective January 1, 2003. If you have not done so already, we strongly recommend that you consider the migration of any Windows 95 workstations that are running GIFTS to a more recent, certified version of the Windows operating system at your earliest convenience.

Windows NT v4.0 and Windows 98

Effective June 30, 2002, Microsoft will be moving the Windows NT v4.0 and Windows 98 desktop operating systems from the Mainstream support phase to the Extended support phase. As such, support for these products will be on a limited, pay-per-incident basis. Further, Microsoft has scheduled the cessation of support for both of these products effective June 30, 2003. For more information on Microsoft's support policy, please refer to the following article on the Microsoft website: <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/lifecycle.asp>.

With this in mind, our current plan is to cease certification of GIFTS for compatibility with the Windows 98 and Windows NT v4.0 desktop operating systems, effective January 1, 2003. Use of GIFTS on these desktop operating systems will continue to be supported, as per our policies for Supported third-party titles. However, we plan to cease support of GIFTS altogether on either of these desktop operating systems on June 30, 2003.

If you have not done so already, we encourage you to consider the migration of any Windows 98 or Windows NT v4.0 workstations that are running GIFTS to a more recent, certified version of the Windows operating system at your earliest convenience.

SQL Server

We are currently planning to cease certification of SQL Server 6.5 effective January 1, 2003. We will, however, continue to support users of GIFTS v6.0 on Microsoft SQL Server 6.5, as per our policies for Supported third-party titles. If you have not done so already, we encourage you to consider a migration to a certified version of Microsoft SQL Server (either SQL Server 7.0 or SQL Server 2000).

Oracle Server

With the releases of the GIFTS Connections suite of products, and future development of the GIFTS product line, it has become necessary to implement features of the Oracle database not available in earlier versions of the Oracle server products. As such, effective January 1, 2003, we will be ceasing support of any version of Oracle prior to v8.0.5. If you are currently running one of these earlier versions, we strongly recommend that you consider the migration of your Oracle database server to a more recent, certified version at your earliest convenience.

Effective October of 2001, Oracle ceased Error Correction Support for version 8.1.6 of its database server product. As such, we currently plan to cease certification of Oracle 8.1.6 effective upon the release of GIFTS v6.0.

MicroEdge plans to continue to support all previously certified versions of Oracle (versions 8.0.5, 8.0.6 and 8.1.6) until the termination of Oracle Extended Assistance Support for these versions. Additional information regarding the de-support schedule of Oracle products can be found in the Metalink area of the Oracle website (metalink.oracle.com).

Microsoft Office 97

Currently Microsoft offers support for the Office 97 suite of products on a limited, pay-per-incident basis. With this in mind, our current plan is to cease certification for GIFTS with the Office 97 suite, including Word 97, Excel 97 and Outlook 97/98, effective January 1, 2003. Use of GIFTS with this version of Microsoft Office will continue to be supported, as per our policies for Supported third-party titles. If you have not done so already, we strongly recommend that you consider the migration to a more recent, certified version of the Microsoft Office suite at your earliest convenience.

WordPerfect 8 and Lotus 1-2-3 v5

In October of 1999, we announced that we would begin phasing out support for both WordPerfect and Lotus 1-2-3. To that end, we ceased any further development of functionality related to these two applications beginning with GIFTS v4.0. Effective January 1, 2003 we will no longer certify either WordPerfect 8 or Lotus 1-2-3 v5 for compatibility with GIFTS. We will continue to support both of these products, however, as per our policies for Supported third-party titles.

Seagate Crystal Reports

With the release of GIFTS v5.0, we updated the Crystal system files used by the GIFTS system to display reports to Crystal Reports v8.0. As such, you should install neither Crystal 6 nor Crystal 7 on the same workstation on which GIFTS v5.0 or later is installed. You may, however, continue to use Crystal 6 or Crystal 7 as your report writer, as reports created in those versions may be run through Crystal 8.

Custom Crystal Reports

As noted in our *Client Resource Guide*, any Custom Reports that you may be using may need to be revisited after your upgrade to the next major version of GIFTS. For further details on this, please refer to our *Client Resource Guide*.

Summary of GIFTS Certification & Support Effective January 1, 2003

Workstation Operating Systems

Supported

Windows 98
Windows NT 4.0

Certified

Windows Millennium Edition
Windows 2000 Professional
Windows XP Professional

Network Operating Systems

Supported

Novell Netware 5
Windows 98 (peer-to-peer)

Certified

Windows NT 4.0 Server
Windows 2000 Server
Windows 2000 Advanced Server
Novell Netware 5.1

Client/Server

Supported

Oracle 8.0.5
Oracle 8.0.6
Oracle 8.1.6
SQL Server 6.5

Certified

SQL Server 7.0
SQL Server 2000
Oracle 8.1.7
Oracle 9i

Word Processors

Supported

WordPerfect 8
Word 97

Certified

Word 2000
Word XP (2002)

Spreadsheets

Supported

Lotus 1-2-3 v5
Excel 97

Certified

Excel 2000
Excel XP (2002)