Autoform DM and Java Licensing

Sunil Panchal - 2024-01-02 - Comments (0) - Autoform DM General Information

Java must be present on the server that will run Autoform DM. However, there are important issues to consider around the licensing of Java, which can influence what Java software a Formpipe customer chooses to install. To help with this decision, this article explains when, why, and how Java is used within the product, and provides accompanying information and advice to help customers to choose appropriate Java software.

Java Is Required at Install Time and Runtime

Java is required in two independent capacities. The first is during Autoform DM installation (install time), because the installer runs on Java. As a result, Java (either a JRE or JDK) must be present on the Autoform DM server prior to product installation, and it must be installed in a manner that makes it available to Java software running anywhere on that server.

The other time that Java is required is when running the Autoform DM software itself (runtime). A JDK must be available to run the application code and server. Both of these scenarios are covered in more detail in the following sections.

Install Time

Because the Autoform DM installer runs on Java, the customer must install a JRE or JDK on the Autoform DM server before running the Autoform DM installer.

Although this JRE or JDK can be obtained from any Java vendor (such as Oracle, or one of several alternatives such as Adoptium), it is very important that the customer carefully considers the licensing terms under which the chosen vendor supplies Java.

In simple terms, if obtaining Java from Oracle then the customer must ensure they are aware of what licence is in effect if they use this. The license applied depends on the chosen version of Java. For example, Java 1.8 (when supplied by Oracle) is covered by the OTN licence which has strict terms around commercial usage.

If in doubt, use a Java distribution from another vendor such as Adoptium because it will be covered by far more permissive licence terms.

Note
After Autoform DM is installed, the Java installation used during installation of Autoform DM can be removed from the system (unless it is needed for other purposes).

Runtime

The second place in which Java is used for Autoform DM is when Autoform DM itself runs (runtime). The requirement for Java at runtime is covered by a bundled JDK that is installed alongside Autoform DM. As a result, because a Java JDK is included in the Autoform DM installation, the customer does not need to separately install Java to run Autoform DM.

This bundled JDK is covered by the GNU General Public License v2 (GPLv2) which permits usage in a commercial capacity, free from any fees. As a result, there are no important licensing considerations around the bundled JDK that DM uses at runtime.

However, if the customer intends to make any significant changes around this Java setup it is essential that they consult Formpipe; for example, if they intend to install a different JDK for Autoform DM to run on.

Closing Advice

If a customer has any concerns around Java licensing, Formpipe recommends that they engage an external specialist in the area of licensing and compliance to advise them.

Note
The new No-Fee Terms and Conditions (NFTC) licensing model which Oracle Java uses from Java 17 onwards will reduce the complexity of licensing concerns in the future when Autoform DM moves to this Java version.