BrightSign®

TECHNICAL NOTES

Evaluating Firmware and Software Updates

INTRODUCTION

We frequently release new versions of BrightSign player firmware and BrightAuthor software to expand the feature set of the players and fix important bugs in the software. It might seem essentail to keep your firmware and software up to date. However, bug fixes usually address specific features or configurations and are, therefore, not essential for overall system stability; likewise, new features may not be applicable to your current digital signage setup.

If you have a distributed signage system that cannot be updated remotely, frequently updating the players may be taxing on your time and resources. Furthermore, since updates might have unpredictable effects on your presentation setup, we recommend testing new versions in a demo/lab environment before going live with them.

In other words, you shouldn't update to a new version unless it is completely necessary. This tech note will help you determine if an update is worth your time and will guide you through the firmware and software updpate process.

Finding and Using Release Notes

Each firmware and software update file comes bundled with a PDF file containing release notes. You can also find the PDF next to the **Download Now** button on the **Software Downloads** page. These release notes can help you determine whether any of the updates in the release are important enough to warrant an upgrade. Each release notes document is divided into New Features, Bug Fixes, and Improvements:

- **New Features** are completely new pieces of functionality that have been added to the firmware or software. Please note that some new firmware features may only be available through custom scripts, not BrightAuthor. They may become available through BrightAuthor at a later time.
- **Bug Fixes** are resolutions to issues in the firmware or software. We only announce fixes for problems that are found in public releases of firmware or software.
- **Improvements** are changes made to existing features meant to improve ease of use or increase accessibility.

Pairing Firmware and Software Updates

It may seem difficult to determine whether a certain BrightAuthor version will work with a certain newer or older version of firmware (or vice versa). However, you can use these two rules to determine if your firmware/software combination will work:

A. **Old versions of BrightAuthor are compatible with new versions of firmware**: This means that you can update the firmware on your players even if you don't want to republish the presentation using a new version of BrightAuthor.
B. **Old versions of firmware are incompatible with new versions of BrightAuthor**: The BrightAuthor presentation files that are published to the player may request system processes that the firmware does not recognize, resulting in system instability or crashes. If the firmware is out of date, the player will indicate on the display that the firmware needs to be updated to a certain version before it attempts to run the presentation.

Note: *The minimum firmware version needed for a version of BrightAuthor is also listed in the **Specify Firmware Update** window, which can be accessed in the **BrightSign Unit Setup** window and in the **Publish** tab.*

Beta vs. Official

Each firmware or software version on the Software Downloads page will be listed as either an "Official" or "Beta" version. Beta versions have important new features and bug fixes, but they may also contain known or unknown stability issues. If the absolute reliability of your digital signage system is more valuable than new features and improvements, it may be better to wait until those features become available in an Official version.

Localization

There will always be at least one Official version of BrightAuthor that contains localization. The following languages are supported as of version 3.5.0.31: English, Chinese (simplified), French, German, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, and Spanish.

Updating BrightAuthor Software

If you update to a newer version of BrightAuthor, your preferences and save history will be preserved.
1. Download the desired version from the [Software Downloads](#) page.
2. Unzip the file to a location on your PC.
3. Locate and double-click the **Setup.exe** file.
4. Follow the on-screen instructions to install the BrightAuthor software.

Note: *If you wish to install an earlier version of BrightAuthor than the one you currently have, you will first need to uninstall the current version of BrightAuthor by navigating to **Control Panel > Programs > Programs and Features** (in Windows 7).*

Updating Player Firmware

1. On the [Software Downloads](#) page, click the **Download Now** button below the model number that corresponds to your BrightSign player.

Note: *HD and XD firmware versions are sometimes designated with the same number, but they are still different files. Make sure to download the update file that corresponds to the model number of your BrightSign player.*
2. Unzip the downloaded file and copy the *.bsfw* file to the root directory of your SD card.
3. Insert the SD card into your BrightSign player.
4. Power on the BrightSign player.
5. Ensure that the yellow update LED is blinking during the update process. Once the player has finished updating, it will automatically delete the *.bsfw* file from the SD card and reboot.

Alternatively, you can update the player firmware in BrightAuthor when setting up a unit or publishing a presentation (see the [BrightAuthor User Guide](#) for more details).