



## Aries Development and Release Models Transition Frequently Asked Questions

Aries Systems has moved from a Waterfall development and release model to an Agile development model and a CI/CD release model. Please consult your Aries Account Coordinator (AC) if you have additional questions.

### ***Why is Aries switching to new development and release models?***

Aries Systems is dedicated to constantly improving our processes and procedures. Our transition of internal development and release operations supports our commitment to continuous product innovation and process improvements. There is a great deal of value gained for both internal stakeholders and our customers by moving towards a more modern and collaborative approach to development.

### ***What is the Waterfall model?***

For nearly 20 years, Aries has successfully followed the Waterfall Delivery release model. Under this methodology, Aries has divided software development into linear phases to release two versions of EM/PM each year. This model is sequential in design, meaning all phases of development are completed in order before the finished product is released. Aries completes concept, design, coding and development, and testing of all features scheduled for the next version before the final product is released. Each step is handled one block at a time before moving to the next phase, which can cause silos in code development or release.

### ***What is the Agile model?***

Agile is a development methodology that is an iterative, collaborative process that allows for work to be more responsive to clarifications of requirements, streamlining changes, etc. and enables teams to complete multiple incremental releases called “sprints.” The specific agile framework Aries will follow is called Scrum, which has its own unique set of rules for team structure, development planning and organization, and deliver-to-market approach.

### ***What is the CI/CD model?***

“CI/CD” is a software release methodology that combines the practices of Continuous Integration and Continuous Delivery (or Continuous Development). Continuous Integration (CI) allows organizations to continuously integrate code into a single shared and easy to access repository. Continuous Delivery (CD) allows for the code stored in the repository to be continuously delivered to production. Together, CI/CD enables developers to test, integrate and release code (new features and bug fixes) with the highest-possible frequency. This approach, paired with an agile development methodology, streamlines the release process by removing the silos and bottlenecks associated with the Waterfall method, and creates a fast and effective process of releasing features and bug fixes to customers.

### ***How will Aries and EM/PM customers benefit from these new models?***

Implementing an agile and CI/CD development and release model will enable Aries to release new functionality more frequently, resulting in faster turn-around times and increased efficiency. Customers will no longer have to wait for the next major software version to access the latest available features for their journal sites! Under these methodologies, features will be tested as soon as they are coded, allowing Aries the opportunity to catch bugs sooner, and begin repairing them faster. This will help improve the overall quality of our code and reliability of our systems' stability for customers.

### ***When will this model transition take effect?***

Aries is officially implementing a monthly release model following the completion of the EM/PM version 17.0 rollout (in late Q2/early Q3 2021), which will be the last “version” release. Aries has already begun transitioning our internal teams to an agile development methodology.

### ***How often will features be released under these new methodologies?***

Rather than releasing larger quantities of features in bulk through a new version upgrade, smaller batches of features will be released through our existing monthly release schedule. There is potential to achieve an even shorter release cadence in the future as Aries continues to refine our processes and practices.

## ***How will customers be notified of newly released features under the new methodologies?***

Customers will receive an email from Aries\* as each new monthly release becomes available. These email communications will include a link to documented release notes on the Aries website. Aries will continue to highlight the latest EM/PM functionality through bi-annual training webinars, user group meetings, webinars, blog posts, independent EM/PM listserv, videos, and monthly-newsletters.

*\*Note: To ensure you are receiving all system maintenance and release alerts via email, check your spam/junk folder regularly, ensure you have whitelisted our email address (news@ariessys.ccsend.com) and remove any spam filters from your inbox.*

## ***Will Aries release the same number of features under the new models compared to the Waterfall model?***

We expect to release 3-5 new features or separated deliverables for a feature per month. This will be consistent with (and in some cases more than) what Aries typically releases through the Waterfall model per year. We anticipate this transition to make our feature releases more efficient long-term.

## ***Will there be a version 17.1?***

No. Aries will not continue with our standard sequential version label system. 17.0 will be the final release under the Waterfall model, and will not continue to 17.1, 18.0, 18.1, etc. Moving forward, all releases will be labelled by the Month and Year in which it was released.

## ***Will the new release model impact customer EM/PM sites or productivity?***

At this time, we do not anticipate any impact to site performance as releases are implemented monthly. We will continue to monitor all EM/PM sites moving forward and customers should not experience any negative impact on their productivity as we shift models.

## ***Will there be BETA periods for features released under the new methodologies?***

BETA periods/testing no longer applies under the new development and release models as we are not launching new versions beyond version 17.0. Features will be released to customers on a monthly basis after rigorous testing by the Aries Quality team, with no need for dedicated BETA periods.

## ***How will customers test newly developed features under the agile development model?***

Clone sites will be made available to customers upon request for a 3-month testing period following the release of a feature. This site will be free of charge if requested within 6 months of feature deployment, or if the customer has paid for the feature.

## ***What can customers expect for timing around custom development under the new development and release models?***

Under the updated development process, once a customer is presented with a Feature Request Analysis (FRA), Aries will now provide a two-quarter range (e.g. Q3-Q4) for when that entire feature, or the separated deliverables for that feature, can be anticipated, given approval is received within a certain timeframe – all customer requested/funded development will be handled on a case by case basis and timelines are dependent on many factors. As time progresses, Aries will narrow down the timeframe to a single quarter, two releases (e.g. 21-09 or 21-10), and eventually a single target release as the delivery date gets closer. Your Aries Account Coordinator (AC) will be in contact with you throughout the development process to ensure clear communication and understanding of delivery targets.

## ***What is Acceptance Criteria?***

Acceptance criteria will be shared with clients in place of functional specifications ("specs"). It is a set of criteria and requirements that are used to define the scope of a feature request that must be successfully met. It sets the limits and framework of the tasks that must be fulfilled before a feature can be marked as 'complete'. The Aries team writes the Acceptance Criteria based on the requirements previously agreed upon in the FRA (Feature Request Analysis), and is then provided to clients for approval.

