

Re: Major Version Upgrade – 4.11 to 5.x

Source: <http://unix.derkeiler.com/Mailing-Lists/FreeBSD/questions/2006-12/msg00784.html>

- *From:* "Chad Gross" <avatar4d@xxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Mon, 11 Dec 2006 20:05:04 -0500
-

First I would address the first question. Only you can really answer whether or not there is a benefit. Is there a specific need (e.g. software/hardware support) for you to upgrade? If not then I would recommend against the upgrade. If yes, I why not move to 6.x? I have been running FBSD since 4.0 and have run every revision since and would not suggest using 5.x. Either stick with 4.x or move to 6.x based on your requirements.

To answer your second question, the best place to look for help is the handbook (http://www.freebsd.org/doc/en_US.ISO8859-1/books/handbook/makeworld.html). Also make sure to read /usr/src/UPDATING as this may contain special instructions. It is a general rule of thumb to do a clean install between major revisions though. I have personally done them with success, but would not recommend doing it on a production server if it is your first time doing one (as it sounds to be). Stick to upgrading between minor revisions until you are familiar with the build/make process. Also these mailing lists are a great resource for help as is <http://www.bsdforums.org/> (and a few others, use Google).

Finally, as mentioned above, from personal experience it is best to stick with a clean install between major revisions.

Good luck again,

Chad

On 12/11/06, James Long <list@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

On Sunday 10 December 2006 15:41, Valen Jones wrote:
> I'm interested in upgrading from 4.11 to 5.x. I currently track 4.x
> stable using cvsup, but I've never done a major version upgrade.
>
> First, should I bother? My hardware has dual pentium 1.13 processors
> with 1G ram (I'm considering maxing it out at 4). I host a few domains
> on this machine and I have four jails configured on it which will have
> to be upgraded too. I have users counting particularly on mail service
> not being down for too long.
>

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- > Other than the obvious advice to start with a good backup, can anyone
- > tell me:
- >
- > 1) Will I gain a major benefit from upgrading
- >
- > 2) Where should I look for instructions / advice on upgrading
- >
- > 3) Also any general advice from personal experience.

Beech's advice is sound. I would stress that the simplest and easiest by far is indeed a clean install. And take two backups, if you have customers counting on things going right. Make sure your backups are readable, usable and complete (no bad spots on tape media, no files inadvertently omitted, etc.).

If at all possible, leave the production system running and begin the new installation on separate hardware. If you have a fast new machine to migrate onto, do that. However your current hardware sounds adequate for the light load you describe. If you have just a spare machine of nearly the same horsepower and configuration, you could do the new installation on the spare machine, get it configured and tested, and then backup the old machine twice, wipe the drive and re-partition, and then transfer the newly-built configuration onto your production hardware. Watch out for /etc/fstab gotchas, like if the test machine has an ad0 ATA drive and the production is da0 SCSI.

This will allow you to do a lot of migration, testing and tweaking off-line, without your customers noticing much downtime, except for the final changeover.

How current are your installed ports? Review the ports you do have installed, and see whether you're really still using them. It will save you a little time on the new machine by not having to build ports you don't really need anymore. Look at your key applications, and where there are significant version changes between what you're running and what's current, familiarize yourself with the upgrade issues (if any) that each port presents. Be prepared to test any new features you hope to use, or to regression test to make sure that legacy functionality still works the way you expect. This might be the time to switch to Apache 2, for example, if you want to. But some things that worked under 1.3 will have to be adjusted to work under 2. At the least, it would be good to upgrade to the latest 1.3.x, to use Apache as an example.

As for #3, I have grown fond of using a FreeBSD or other live CD for steps like booting the migration/test box to create a backup image of the new 6.X filesystem, and then also to boot the production box for the final changeover to transfer that backup image onto the production disk. That way your file system is in an off-line (inactive) state, where you can cleanly backup the old production filesystem (twice!), then wipe and re-partition, and transfer the new configuration image

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onto the production drive likewise in a clean state. If you haven't already, spend some time just experimenting on a test machine, and make friends with FreesBIE and/or the Fixit live CD mode of FreeBSD installation media.

Good luck!

Jim

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