

Apple App Store and Automatic Updates

Developers are frequently updating applications and submitting new versions to Apple App Store. FileWave is automatically sending requests to devices to upgrade applications when a new version is available.

How does FileWave detect if there is an update?

For iOS 11.3 and later and macOS 10.13.4 and later:

[Apple's MDM protocol](#) returns the information when FileWave requests the list of installed applications: each application will provide, via the `HasUpdateAvailable` flag, if an update is available, and in this case, FileWave send the device a command to upgrade the application (`InstallApplication` command).


For previous OS versions:

Every hour, FileWave is contacting Apple's iTunes database and updates metadata about applications used in your environment. When a device checks in for Verify, we compare the application versions (on the device, from iTunes) and if the version from iTunes is higher we know there is an update.

The automatic update process does not work as expected, what could be the reasons?

If the flag is not provided by the device (older iOS / macOS version for instance), it may happen that the version from iTunes and the version reported by the device are not accurate (they are filled by hand by the developer and they may be incorrect). Apple introduced the `hasUpdateAvailable` flag exactly to solve this problem.

From Apple's documentation:

 If `true`, the app has an update available. This key is present only for App Store apps. In macOS, this key is present only for Volume Purchase Program (VPP) apps. This status updates daily and isn't always up-to-date when installing an app.

Unfortunately, the flag provided by the device is not 100% reliable. FileWave will only update the application once a day. The `InstallApplication` command will not be sent if the device reports `HasUpdateAvailable=True` and the same command has been already sent that same day. But if the flag is not properly updated by the device the next day, FileWave will request an update.

We have seen reports in the past that some iOS versions would not update the flag properly even if the application is up to date. And because the flag is not updated within 24h, FileWave will request the application to be reinstalled every day, which may be an issue for the end-user or for network bandwidth. In this situation, the best is to contact FileWave support and Apple Care. We will help you configuring both FileWave and your device to gather all the logs Apple will require to investigate the issue. Most of the time, upgrading iOS or macOS to the most recent available version solves the problem.

When looking at FileWave's Client Info for impacted devices, the Managed Applications tab will show you the value of the flag - if it is always "True", there is likely something wrong on at the device level.

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