The Qt Company

FAQ

Frequently asked questions and answers for LTS, small business edition and installer login change

Why are you making long-term support commercial-only?

We are making this change because we believe, it will benefit the entire Qt ecosystem in the long run, including open-source users.

The continuous improvement of Qt, making it more stable and adding more features, for everyone, requires a significant amount of investment. The means by which we at the Qt Company source this investment is via revenue from paid licenses.

The LTS-releases are supported and worked on over a longer period of time, with the goal being stability. This makes the LTS releases the ideal choice for companies who build their products on a specific release and rely on it to run for a long time and benefit from the premium support.

This change allows us to make our commercial offering more attractive for companies that earn money based on Qt. Those investments in turn let us pay salaries to our developers, who are working hard to improve Qt for all of our customers, including open-source users.

Why are you making having an account mandatory?

1. We want open-source users to help improve Qt in one form or another, be that through bug reports, forums, code reviews, or similar. These are currently only accessible from a Qt account, which is why having one will become mandatory.
A Qt account also gives users access to the Qt Marketplace, which offers opportunities to acquire from and distribute plugins throughout the entire Qt ecosystem from one centralized platform.

2. Related to the first question, it lets us open a dialogue with companies, that earn money with products built with an open-source version of Qt.

Will requiring the Qt Account drive away all Qt users?

We have had the Qt Account as an option for over 4 years, and during that time there has been already nearly a million people who have registered and verified their Qt Account. It is obvious that that in the world that we live today having an account for a service is not a blocker for people in general. Everyone has the option of building Qt from sources if they do not like the installer, but we believe that we provide value to our users through the installer and the Qt Marketplace to justify the Qt Account.

What part of the LTS release would be available for everyone and what part is commercial only?

The key diference between a regular and LTS release is that while the regular release only receives patch releases during the first 6 months until the next feature release is out, a long term supported release receives patch releases also after the next feature release is available. So when we say that the LTS becomes commercial only, it means that for open-source users all releases are similar – receiving patch releaes until the next feature release is out. For commercial users some releases, such as Qt 5.15, are defined to be long-term supported and receive patch level releases also after the first 6 months after release.

How many patch releases are done before the "LTS phase" starts?

This depends upon multiple things, typically 2-3 patch level releases are done during the first 6 months after initial release. Similar level is expected also for Qt 5.15.

How is the development and release process planned to change to enable this?

Development process of Qt is changing so that all changes, including bug fixes, are first merged to the development (dev) branch of Qt and then cherry picked back to the relevant older releases. This has already been the case of the later phases of current LTS releases, but will now be taken into use for all releases. It will be a task for The Qt Company to ensure bug fixes done by the community contributors get cherry picked into the LTS patch releasses, when needed.

If only the online installer is available by default, what should users do that are working in an offline setup (no internet connection)?

Commercial users can request offline installers from The Qt Company, or possibly these are given to everyone via Qt Account like currently. Open-source user would need to build from source or go commercial.

What should users do that need to install Qt in a CI / scripted setup?

The non-LTS part of the releases is available in the Qt repositories for everyone just like currently. For commercial license holders, the access is granted for the LTS part using their Qt Account.

Have the start-up licenses changed?

Previously the main focus of the startup license were mobile platforms. Now, it is a full Qt for Device Creation license, albeit without any distribution licenses, and with installation support only instead of the full support of a commercial license. Another key difference is that now the offering is more clearly geared towards individuals and small start-ups. There will be limit of max number of people in the company and revenue/funding for a company to be eligible to procure a start-up license.

In that sense, this offering is relatively new, and we plan on fine-tuning it based on customer feedback.