

# Introducing This Year's Annual Release: Version 2018.3

10 October, 2018 by David Butcher, Editor



New in v2018.3 Annual Release: Default Task Name.

[Click image for larger view.](#) [Show Full Caption](#)

MasterControl version 2018.3 has arrived for on-premise, Spark, and cloud customers! The release introduces brand-new features designed to provide more flexibility, greater security, and a better overall user experience.

Because v2018.3 is an annual release, customers not on the quarterly release schedule can expect all the updates that were introduced with the previous three quarterly product releases if they upgrade.

## What's New in v2018.3: Flexibility and Security

As a new release, [MasterControl v2018.3](#) offers a number of added capabilities, including:

- **Modify Step from Tracking Details** – Route owners can perform a "modify" step directly from the Tracking Details page. Users can change workflow users when checking workflow status from Tracking Details.
- **Default Task Name** – The document title defaults as the Task Name of a document packet when using the New Packet Task option from the InfoCard. Having one less field to complete streamlines packet creation. *(See image above.)*
- **Cleaner Signature Manifest** – The signature manifest will now only display users who signed off on the task, meaning users who were part of the step, but who did not complete the task, are no longer displayed.

- **Explorer Contents Report** – A PDF file containing an explorer’s table of contents can be generated, attached to an InfoCard, and routed for approval, thereby streamlining the DHF approval process.
- **Basic User View Right (TMF/Registrations)** – View-only users can now be assigned view rights to access a TMF or Registration project. Moreover, the rights structure has been refined to improve access to control.

With v2018.3, users also gain system improvements with an eye toward bolstering security.

For instance, updates to password security for the Standard version of MasterControl include six-character password length, six attempts before lockout, and 180-day password expiration. Additionally, enhancements to the FDA version of MasterControl include eight-character minimum password length and a maximum of 10 attempts before lockout.

In addition to these new password security features, the MasterControl system now supports login authentication via smart cards common access cards (CAC), and personal identity cards (PIV).

“Users in industries where CAC or PIV is required, such as the federal government, will especially benefit in being able to use these smart cards for MasterControl authentication,” according to Dave Hunter, product management director.

## What Else Is in the Annual Release: Benefits of the Previous 3 Releases

Because it is an annual release, not just a quarterly release, v2018.3 also offers all the enhancements that went into v2017.2, v2018.1, and v2018.2, including:

- **v2017.2 updates** – The [v2017.2](#) release introduced customer-driven capabilities developed at the 2017 Masters Summit, including reassigning tasks to multiple users and toggling as a sysadmin, plus the innovative Validation Excellence Tool (VxT) and methodology.
- **v2018.1 updates** – New features in [v2018.1](#) included two special user options for document workflows (InfoCard Author and Owner), an “Export as PDF Binder” option in the Explorer Gateway, and enhancements specific to the Registrations and eTMF Manager solutions.

- **v2018.2 updates** – The [v2018.2](#) release introduced new features and functionality that make it easier for users to keep track of their Microsoft Office files within collaboration, batch-import files to their system, and reorder checklist sections and line items (Registrations/TMF).

“Especially for customers who are not on the quarterly release schedule – and who thus have not gotten to experience the quarterly features introduced with versions 2017.2, 2018.1, or 2018.2 – the added value in v2018.3 is pretty significant,” Dave said.

View a full list of features and enhancements included with the annual release [here](#).

## What Support Services to Expect: Annual or Quarterly

Earlier this year, we standardized [our product release schedule](#) to be one Annual Release each year and we introduced a Quarterly Release option for cloud customers who prefer more frequent, automatic upgrades. The Annual Release aligns with the Quarterly Release each fall, which is why v2018.3 serves as both the third Quarterly Release of the year and this year’s Annual Release.

Each product-release path comes with corresponding support services based on our [Product Support Lifecycles](#):

- **Annual Release Overview** – Taking the Annual Release approach, on-premise and hosted customers can expect mainstream patchable support for two years from the release date, while annual cloud customers can expect continuous mainstream patchable support because they are automatically upgraded to each Annual Release. Patches, which contain only critical fixes, are delivered as needed.
- **Quarterly (Cloud) Release Overview** – Taking the Quarterly Release approach, Spark and quarterly cloud customers can expect an automatic upgrade up to four times a year, roughly every three months, as well as automatic, continuous mainstream patchable support, so Spark and cloud customers are always [up to date with the latest software](#).

Software upgrades can be challenging, but it’s important to remember that the longer you wait, the more difficult and unpredictable upgrades can become. Staying on the most current software version can make upgrades easier and less disruptive.