How to Create an Update Set in ServiceNow and Move Updates Between Sets

This guide walks you through how to create an update set in ServiceNow and move changes from the default global update set into it. Following this process ensures your customizations are tracked in the correct update set, which makes future migrations and reviews much easier.

Prerequisites

- Administrator or developer access to your ServiceNow instance.
- Familiarity with the System Settings menu and the Local Update Sets module.

Understanding the common mistake

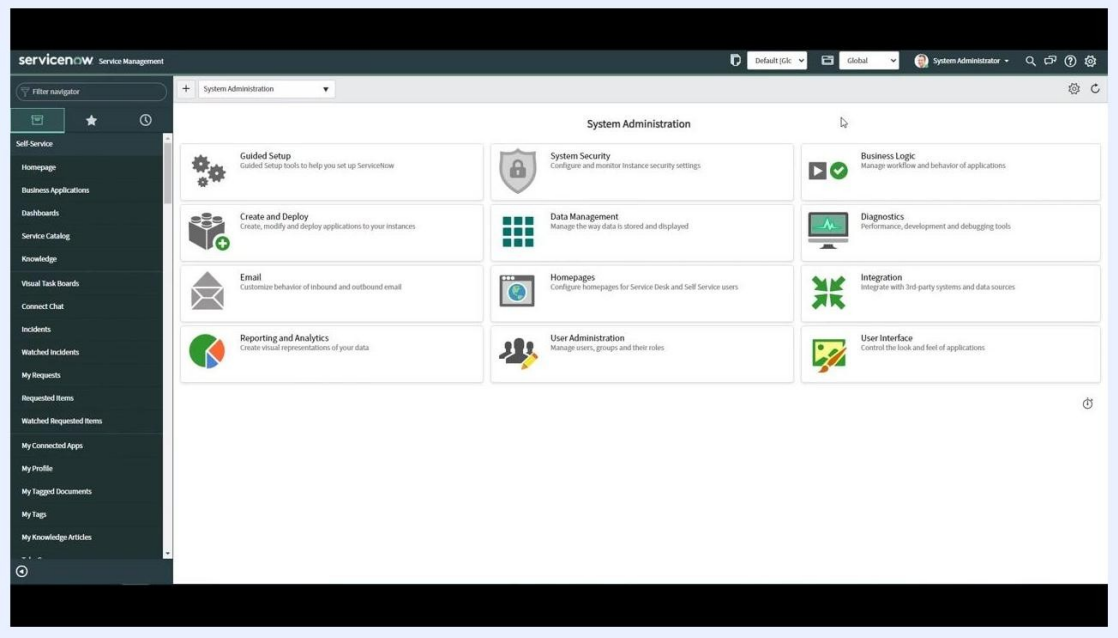
As a ServiceNow administrator or developer, it is common to accidentally make changes while the Default [Global] update set is active instead of the update set you intended to use. If this happens, you can move those changes to the correct update set with just a few clicks.

Step 1: Enable the update set and application pickers

1. Click the System Settings gear icon in the top right corner of the ServiceNow interface.
2. Open the Developer tab within System Settings.
3. Enable the following toggles:

- Show Application picker and header
- Show update set picker and header

Turning on these options displays the current application and update set in the header, so you can always see which update set you are working in.



ServiceNow System Administration dashboard with the System Settings gear icon visible in the top right corner, and the update set picker and application picker shown in the header

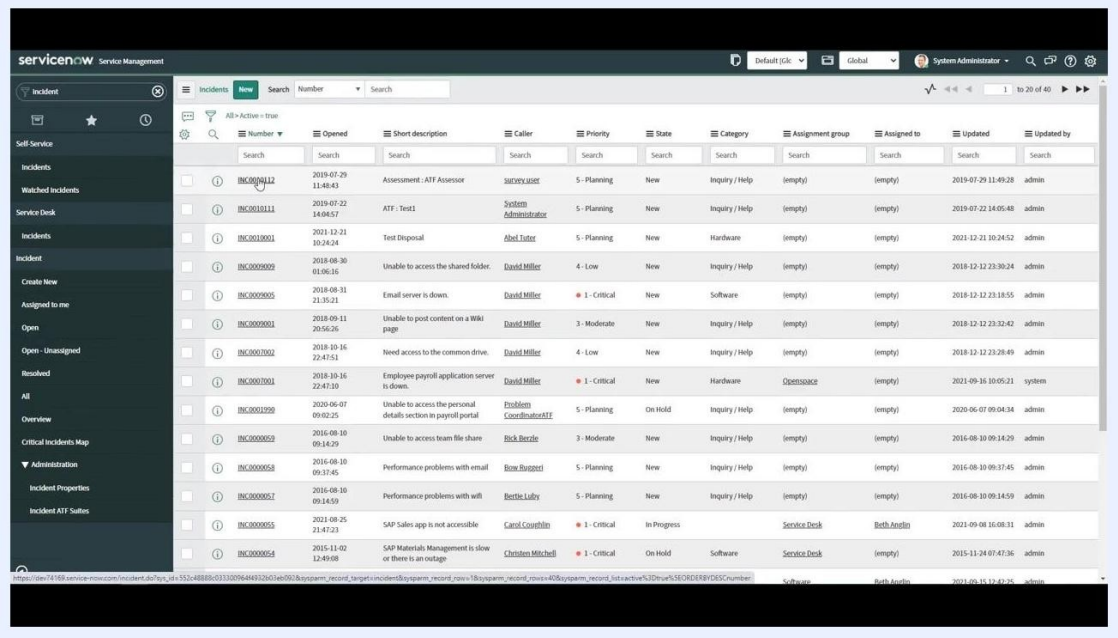
Step 2: Verify the current update set

Check the header to confirm you are currently working in the Default [Global] update set. This is the state you want to avoid working in when making intentional changes.

Step 3: Make a change in the wrong update set (demo)

4. Use the left navigation pane to open Incident under the Service Desk section.
5. On the Incident form, add a new string field named demo field.

This creates an update that is recorded in the currently active update set — in this case, the Default global update set.

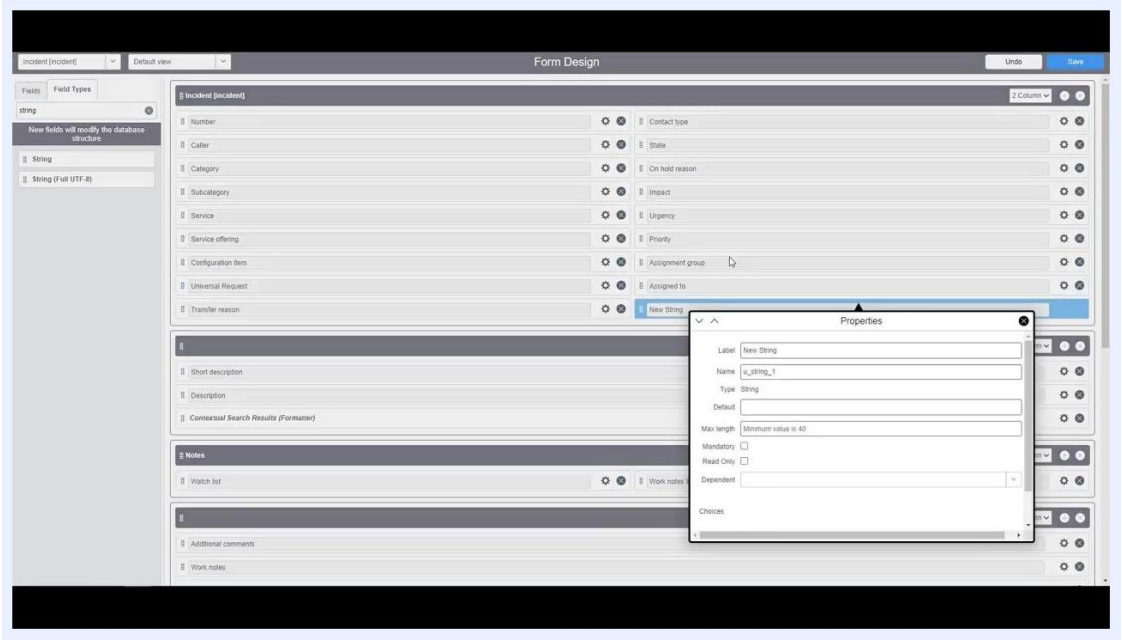


ServiceNow Incident list view with various incidents displayed, the navigation pane on the left, and the update set picker visible in the header

Step 4: Create a new update set

6. In the left navigation pane, open the Local Update Sets module under the System Update Sets application.

7. Click the green New button at the top of the list view to open a new update set form.

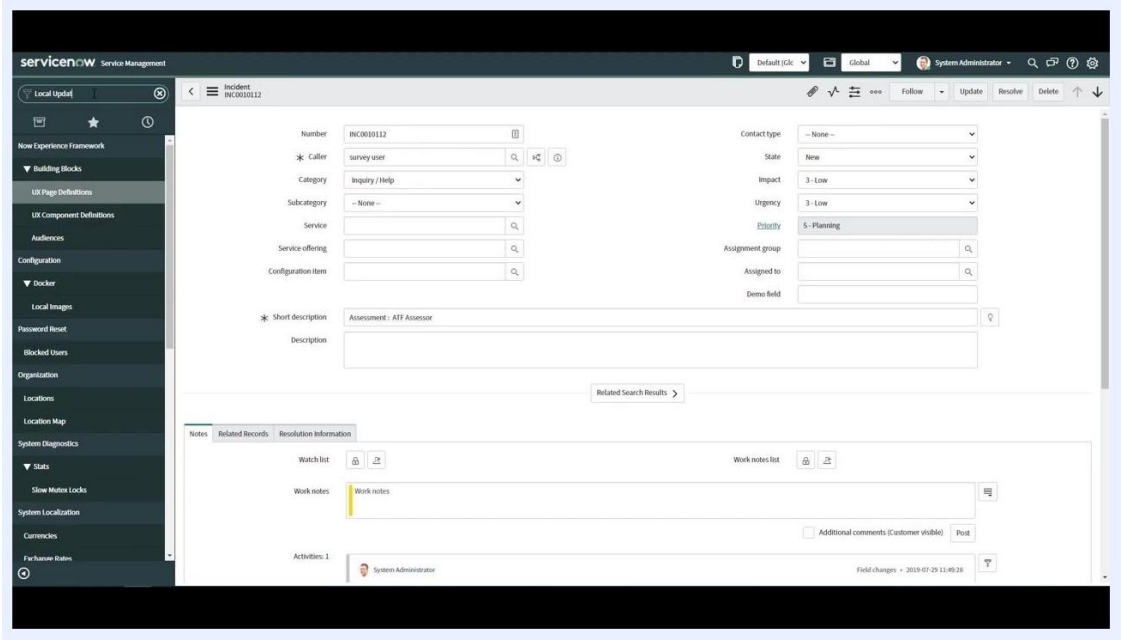


ServiceNow Local Update Sets list view with the New button highlighted at the top, showing existing update sets and their statuses

8. Fill in the update set details:

- Name: New Field on the Incident Form
- State: In progress
- Application: Global

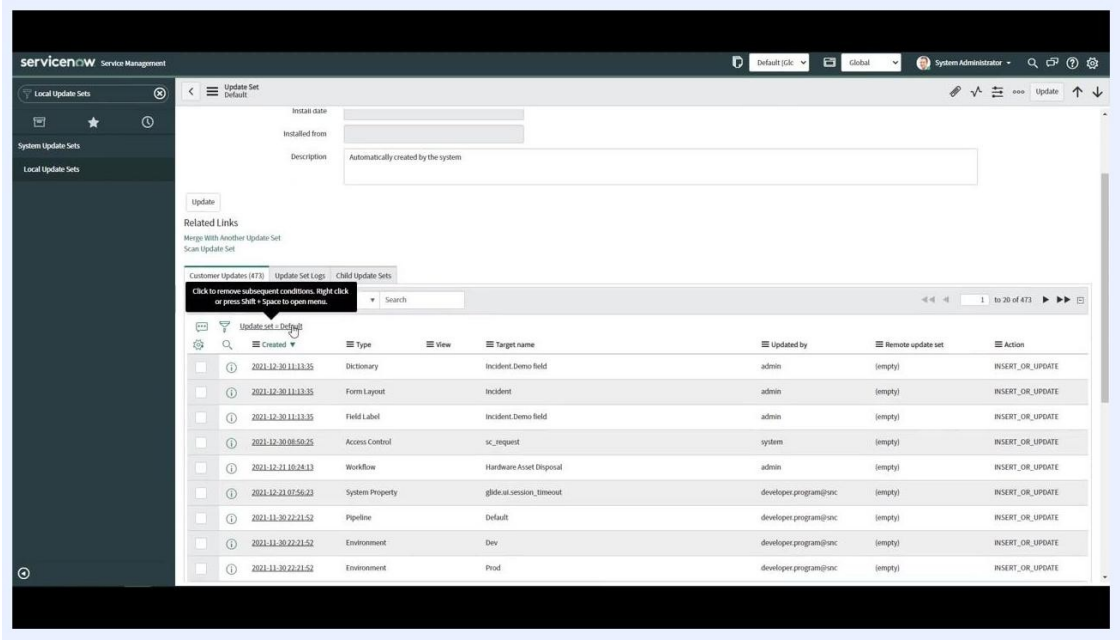
- Leave Parent, Release date, and Description blank unless your requirements call for them.



ServiceNow update set creation form with the Name field filled in as 'New Field on the Incident Form', State set to 'In progress', and Application set to 'Global'

9. Click Submit at the bottom left of the form to create the update set.

10. Confirm that New Field on the Incident Form now appears in the Local Update Sets list, with the state In progress and application Global.

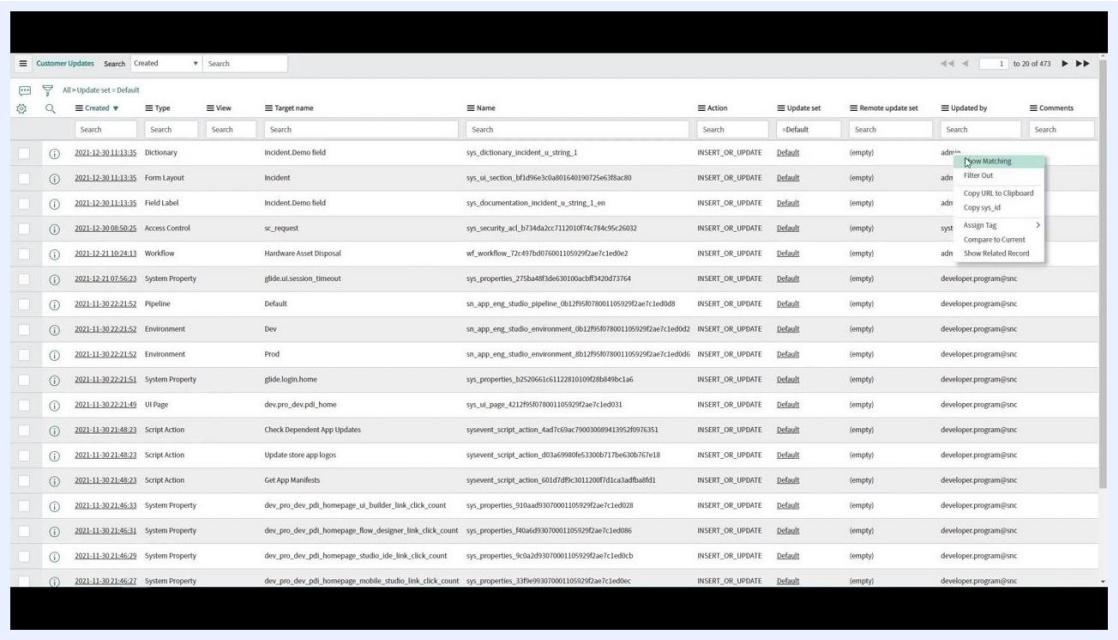


ServiceNow Local Update Sets list view showing the newly created update set 'New Field on the Incident Form' among other update sets

Step 5: Locate the updates in the default update set

11. In the Local Update Sets list, click the Default update set to open its details.

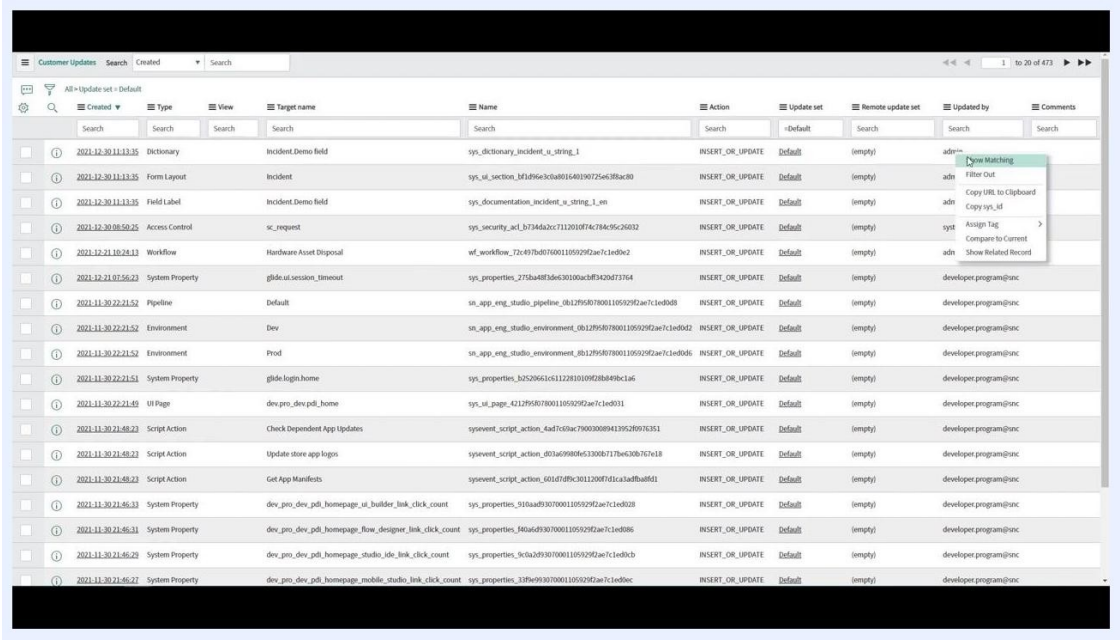
12. Scroll down to the Customer Updates related list, which shows all updates currently tracked in the Default update set (such as Dictionary, Form Layout, and Field Label entries).



ServiceNow update set 'Default' form with the Customer Updates related list visible, showing updates such as Dictionary, Form Layout, and Field Label

13. Right-click the Update set = Default filter condition in the Customer Updates list.

14. Select Open new window from the context menu to view and filter the updates in a separate window.



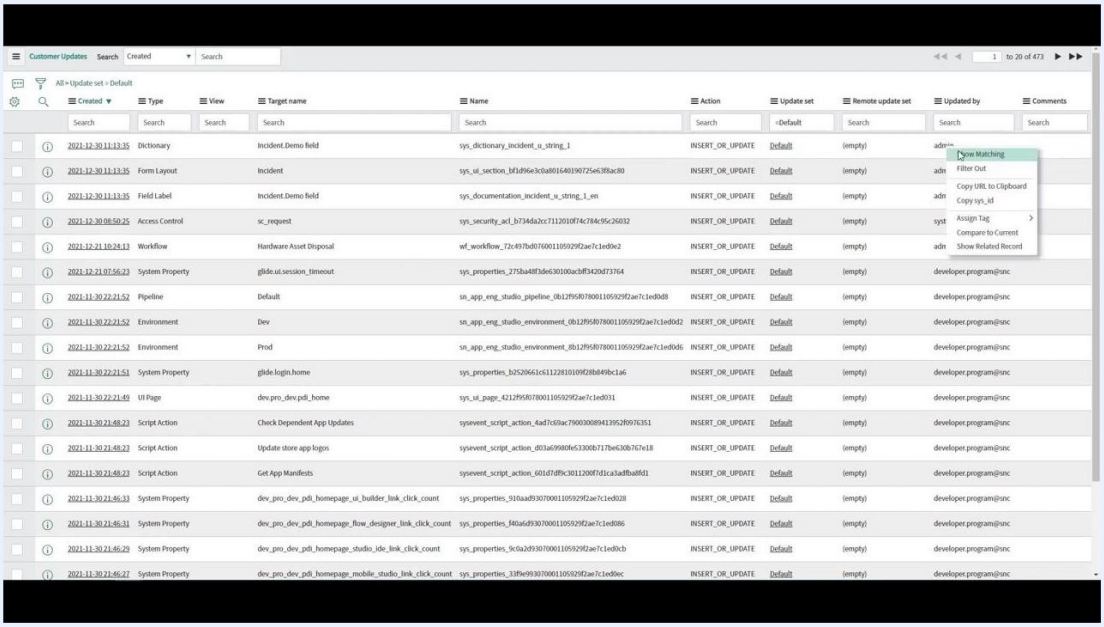
ServiceNow Customer Updates list with the right-click menu open on the 'Update set = Default' filter condition

Step 6: Filter updates by user and date

In the new window, filter the list so it only shows updates relevant to your session:

- Use the Updated by column to enter your username (for example, admin).
- Use the Created column to filter for today's date.

This narrows the list down to only the updates you made during your session.

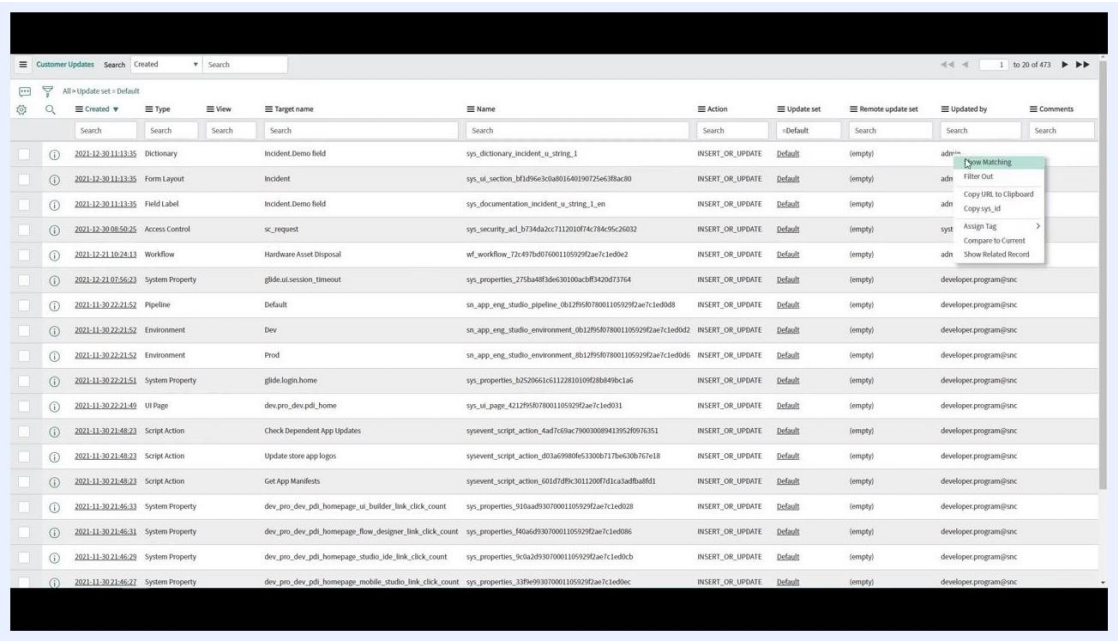


ServiceNow Customer Updates list filtered by 'Updated by = admin' and today's date, showing only the relevant updates

Step 7: Move the updates to the new update set

15. Highlight the cells in the Update set column for the updates you want to move. Use Shift + Down Arrow to select multiple rows at once.
16. Change the value in the Update set column from Default to New Field on the Incident Form.

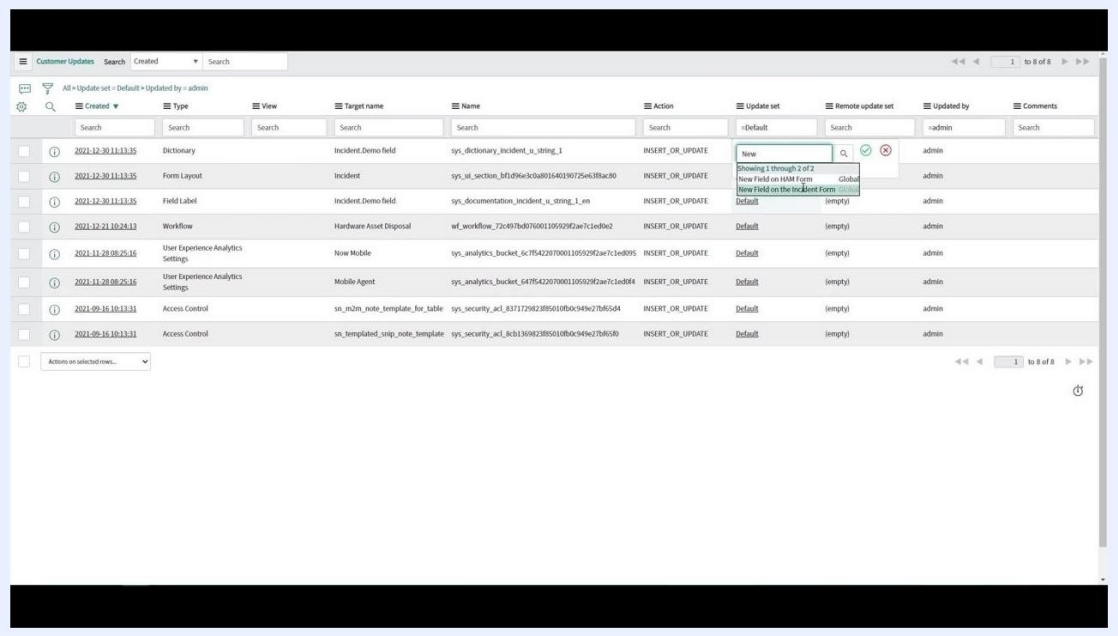
This reassigns the selected updates to your new update set.



ServiceNow Customer Updates list with the Update set column being edited, ready to change from 'Default' to the new update set

Step 8: Verify the updates moved correctly

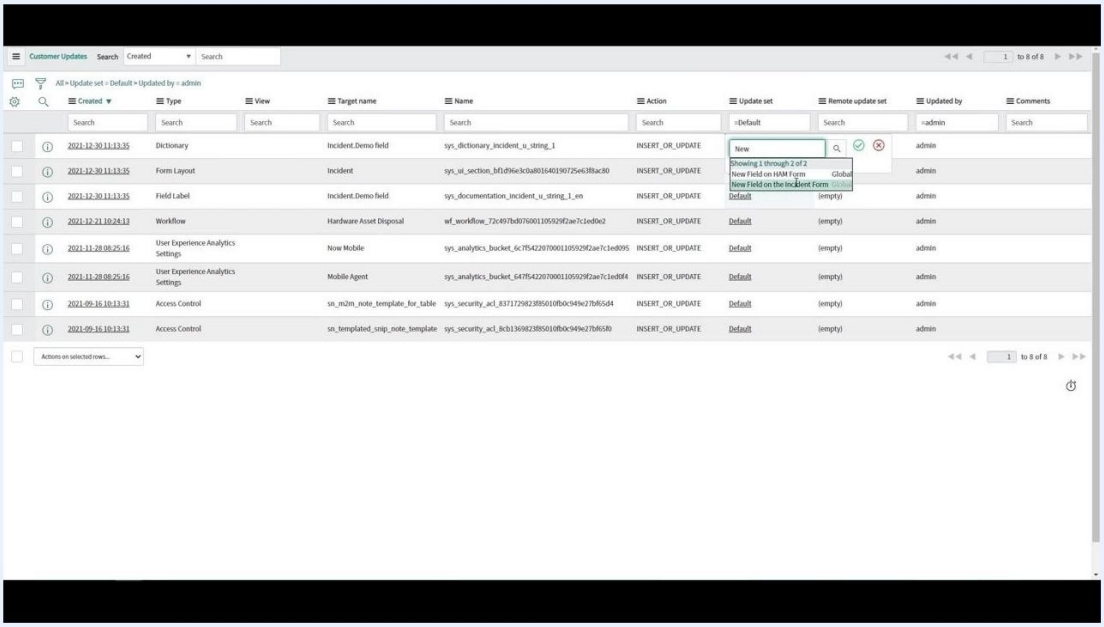
17. In the Customer Updates list, confirm that the Update set column for the relevant updates now displays New Field on the Incident Form instead of Default.



ServiceNow Customer Updates list showing updates with the Update set column changed from 'Default' to 'New Field on the Incident Form'

18. Navigate back to the Local Update Sets list and open the New Field on the Incident Form update set.

19. Scroll down to the Customer Updates related list and verify that all the moved updates (such as Dictionary, Form Layout, and the Field Label for Incident.Demo field) are now listed under this update set.



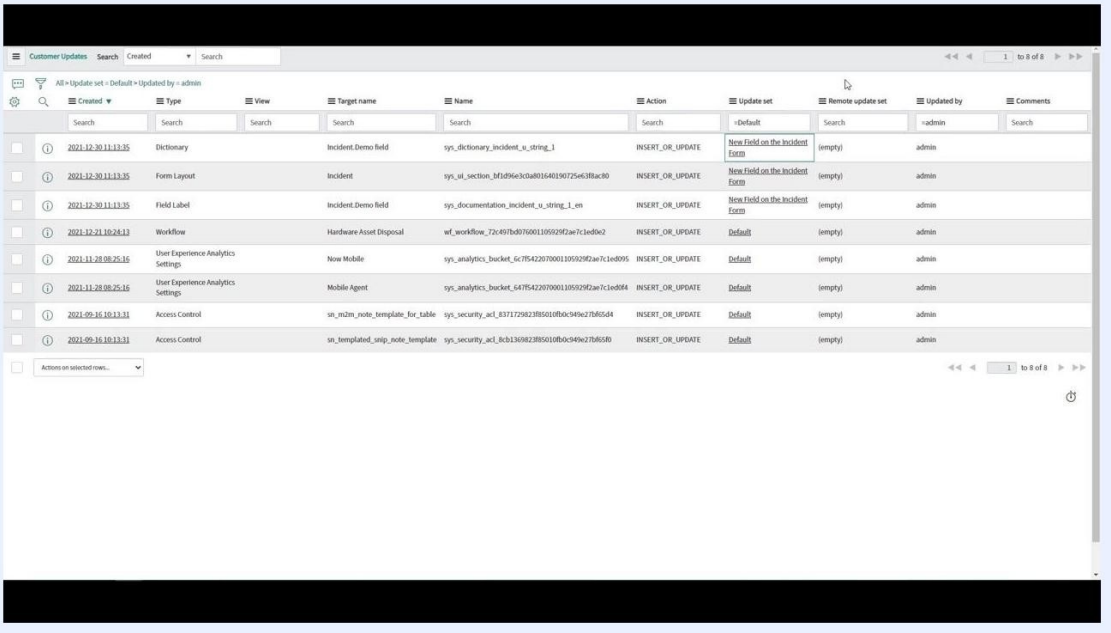
ServiceNow update set form for 'New Field on the Incident Form' with the Customer Updates related list showing the moved updates

Step 9: Confirm the final update set details

Review the update set to make sure everything is correct:

- Name: New Field on the Incident Form
- State: In progress
- Application: Global
- Created by: admin

- Customer Updates tab lists all relevant updates.



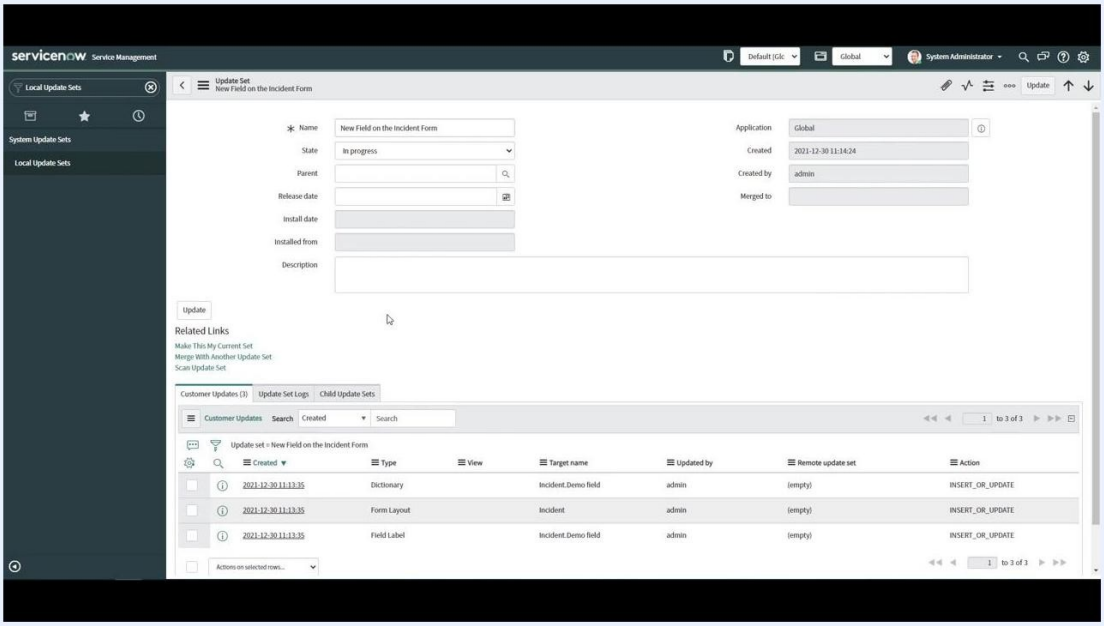
ServiceNow update set form for 'New Field on the Incident Form' showing all details and the Customer Updates list

Summary

You have learned how to create an update set in ServiceNow, filter and select updates from the default global update set, move them into your new update set, and verify that the updates are correctly tracked. Following this process helps you follow best practices for managing and migrating changes across your ServiceNow environments.

What's next

With your changes now properly tracked in a dedicated update set, you can continue development work, complete the update set when ready, and move it through your instance migration process as needed.



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