Preparing for SQL Server 2005 End of Support

Support for Microsoft SQL Server 2005 is ending on April 12, 2016. What should you be doing now to prepare?

Perhaps the first order of business is to not mislead yourself or your colleagues into thinking the need to prepare can be delayed or postponed.

As T.K. Rengarajan, a corporate vice president of data platform for Microsoft, stated in an April 2015 blog post:

"A year sounds like plenty of time to plan your migration, but, depending on the type of application, the migration destination, the scale of the move and resources allocated, migrations can take several months. In addition to SQL Server 2005, you may have heard that support for Windows Server 2003 is ending soon. As you plan your SQL Server migration, you should also plan your infrastructure migration to get the most out of our modern platform. Planning now will ensure that you are able to make the move in time."

Microsoft is suggesting users move to newer products in the SQL Server family or to Microsoft Azure's database platform.

What does end of support mean? It means there will no longer be any hotfixes or security updates provided for SQL Server 2005.

Some companies with "custom support" agreements through Microsoft Premier Support may be able to extend the life of SQL Server 2005 a bit, but as Kurt Mackie, writing on the Microsoft Certified Professional Magazine website, notes, this is not without additional costs. Such support may only last a year.

Why Migrate Away From SQL Server 2005?

Although some companies may opt to stick with SQL Server 2005 because it works for their enterprise, those companies with closely regulated operations may have to upgrade.

It is not merely a matter of security, Tiffany Wissner, senior director of data platform marketing, told eWEEK, but also regulations that "require you to maintain compliant software."

Microsoft notes that in addition to the benefits associated with migrating to the newest data platform, there are savings associated with doing so. The expenses associated with the maintenance, security, compliance and other issues associated with running an unsupported database are significantly greater.

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eWeek added:

"It's not just hackers, regulatory bodies or ballooning IT costs that businesses should fear. Falling behind the technological curve can also negatively impact businesses in fiercely competitive markets."

Migrating to Newer SQL Server Versions

Migration can take take several months. This is a conservative and optimistic average. The actual length of migration depends on numerous factors including the applications involved, the intended destination of the application(s), and the size of the move.

As mentioned, Microsoft is suggesting its customers upgrade to either SQL Server 2014 or Microsoft Azure. To sweeten the deal, it is offering free trials as well as some upgrade tools.

Start by determining the environment in which you wish your applications to reside. The options may have changed since your last upgrade. You now can select on-premises, virtualized, or cloud-based versions of SQL Server.

Microsoft has published guidance and tools on its website for those migrating. These include technical guides and migration wizards.

Database administration services like Datavail can also help your organization make the transition to the newest version of SQL Server. Datavail can create a custom SQL Server solution designed for your enterprise and our experts can help with your ongoing SQL Server operations. For more solutions to common and advanced database administration related questions, visit Datavail's frequently updated blog.

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Experienced in the management of large DBA teams involving offshore staff, Eric specializes in ITIL certification, management of local and remote staff, project coordination, database administration, change management, server OS administration, programming and scripting. Eric's years of experience as a DBA programmer, ITIL implementer, and change control manager allow him to run high-performance DBA teams providing exceptional customer support. In his off time Eric enjoys spending time with his family, snowboarding, karate, running and computer games.