

GridApp Offers Patch Management Service for DBs

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GridApp Systems is offering a managed service that will handle the testing and delivery of patches for databases.

GridApp Systems has plans for an automated managed service that builds and delivers customized patching workflow bundles to cut the cost and time involved in patch deployment for databases.

The service , which supports Oracle and MS SQL Server, will be generally available in June for an annual subscription fee. Dubbed Patchworks, the service is aimed at reducing security risks and costs by making customized patch packages available for download.

The patches will be pre-tested on a microcosm of the customer's environment in accordance with the customer's standards and what GridApp considers the best practices, said Matt Zito, the NY-based company's chief scientist.

Instead of spending weeks scanning for patches, building workflows and testing patches against existing environments, enterprises subscribing to Patchworks can hand that burden off to GridApp and reduce their involvement in the deployment to a single click of the mouse, GridApp officials said.

Automating the process is important as database providers are forced to plug security holes uncovered by attackers and security researchers, analyst Jasmine Noel said in an interview with eWEEK.

"Databases are incredibly complex, time-consuming pieces to manage," said Noel, an analyst at Ptak, Noel & Associates in New York City. "The number of patches and fixes and things that are coming from the vendors is going up and up every year."

Database administrators, who once spent most of their time focused on performance issues, increasingly have to focus on making sure the proper patches are applied - and they have to work without compromising vital programs, Noel said.

Since the start of 2007, Oracle alone has issued more than 30 critical patch updates for its databases, many of which addressed serious vulnerabilities that could be easily exploitable, GridApp officials said.

For organizations with large and complex environments, keeping pace with the latest patch updates can be the difference between being hacked and protecting mission-critical data, GridApp officials said.

IDC analyst Stephen Elliot said the SAAS (software as a service) model typified here by GridApp is gaining traction, but as with all managed services, companies need to consider the terms of the service-level agreement and how well Patchworks integrates into their existing processes.

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