IBM Offers Paid Support for No-Cost Data Server

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IBM will now offer users of its DB2 Enterprise-C data server a paid annual support subscription.

The move, announced last week by IBM, made the company the first of the three largest database players to offer an annual support option for the no-cost version of its respective database. The option includes technical support around the clock, seven days a week, as well as regular maintenance and upgrade protection, high-availability clustering free of charge, and off-site disaster recovery. Customers also have the ability to replicate data with remote data servers at no additional cost, IBM officials said.

"Our customers and our business partners asked for the new support option," Steven Miller, manager of IBM data servers, said in an interview with eWEEK. "When we polled our customers and partners we found that most preferred the subscription model over a one-time charge model. The new support option gives our customers and business partners the flexibility to choose the model that works best for them."

The ability to replicate data with other DB2 servers means clients that outgrow DB2 Express can migrate more easily to other editions of DB2, said officials of IBM, based in Armonk, N.Y.

Database rivals Microsoft and Oracle also offer free versions of their database products. Traditionally, the free database offerings from the three vendors have been seen by many as an answer to open-source

database providers such as My SQL, headquartered in Uppsala, Sweden.

However, officials at MySQL, which already offered a free database with optional support, said they are not concerned by IBM's latest move.

"First off, we don't believe that MySQL competes against DB2 Express-C at all," said Zack Urlocker, MySQL's executive vice president of products. "Our user bases have completely different database needs and applications. Most of the time, we see MySQL co-existing with the big three databases in the IT data center. If IBM's DB2 Express-C users need support for their applications, we think it's great that IBM is offering it to them."

The support option is available at a price of $2,995, according to IBM.

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