

Red Hat Exchange Goes Live

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The company continues its focus on online services with Red Hat Exchange, an online service that delivers pre-configured, integrated stacks for 14 business applications.

Red Hat officially rolled out at its annual summit here May 10 an online service for North America that delivers pre-configured, fully integrated solution stacks for 14 business applications.

The new service, known as Red Hat Exchange, was previewed on March 14, when the Linux vendor announced the availability of Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5.

Red Hat is working with 14 open-source business application vendors on this service, including Alfresco Software on the content management front, Scalix and Zimbra on the messaging and collaboration front, ComPiere for ERP (enterprise resource planning) and GroundWork Open Source on the monitoring front.

The company, headquartered in Raleigh, N.C., is also working with companies like MySQL and EnterpriseDB on the infrastructure side.

The ISV partners will share in the revenue for the recurring annual subscriptions rather than receive a one-time payment, Donald Fischer, Red Hat's vice president of online services, told eWEEK in an interview.

"So, we are not just providing an online store where customers can buy that software. What we are providing is a fully integrated stack that

includes Enterprise Linux or the Red Hat Applications Stack, which is essentially a bundle of JBoss middleware and Enterprise Linux, along with the ISV application," Fischer said.

The software is delivered under a single subscription, which is similar to a traditional RHEL subscription, with one legal agreement that covers the entire stack and a single SLA (service-level agreement). The pre-configured stacks provide all of the infrastructure components required for specific applications, he said. Pricing information is available [here](#).

Asked if customers would get a discount for buying the stack rather than the individual components, Fischer said the prices were essentially the same as the product list price, so "there is no substantial discount involved, but the advantage is that this price includes the Red Hat infrastructure software as well as the partner application software, which is all delivered over Red Hat Network and is all supported by Red Hat."

Red Hat will be the single point of contact for its own and the ISV software, Fischer said. "We have mutual support agreements in place with each one of the ISVs, but we have designed the system to avoid the dreaded 'handoff.' We will hold the case through conclusion and manage any escalations," he said.

There will only be one level of support offered initially, which will be equivalent to the RHEL Basic Support offering, essentially a two-business-day response time. The early adopters of this service are expected to be SMBs (small and midsize businesses) with department-level deployments, and that was the support level most suited to them, Fischer said.

This support offering will likely be scaled up over time, particularly if there is enterprise demand for the service, Fischer said, adding that while a number of companies have been participating in the private beta

for the service, none were available for public reference.

Customers will also be able to buy Red Hat Exchange through a select set of Red Hat's VAR channel partners, which can provide additional services in support of these offerings.

The Red Hat Exchange Web site will allow user ratings, comments and reviews of the solution sets, and there will be a public peer-support capability around support issues and the knowledge base of issues that Red Hat has already seeded, Fischer said.

"As we work with customers to resolve their cases, we basically have a workflow that we will be contributing to that public knowledge base available to subscribers," he said.

Al Gillen, a vice president at research firm IDC, welcomed the move as a step toward addressing complexity for users.

"When customers can minimize the number of number of vendors they are dealing with and the associated number of support contracts, they can reduce the complexity and often the cost associated with managing workloads," he said.

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