Red Hat

Upgrading your Red Hat Enterprise Linux infrastructure

Preparation is the key to success

Identify the unknown

We understand it can be difficult to determine which applications and hardware are compatible with the latest versions of Red Hat® Enterprise Linux®, so we have created a **preupgrade analysis report** to identify potential challenges that are unique to your environment and provide remediation suggestions. Run this report to determine application compatibility and remediate possible issues.

Once you have identified the unknown and successfully remediated areas of concern, you then can consider which version of Red Hat Enterprise Linux will best meet your needs.

Your subscription gives you flexibility and freedom to deploy any version

Red Hat Enterprise Linux offers customers the freedom and stability to deploy applications and operate anywhere. As a Linux distribution for enterprise use cases, it provides built-in security and management features that allow organizations to run critical workloads confidently on a stable, high-performance platform, whether deployed on bare metal hardware, public, private, or hybrid clouds, or at the far edge.

In the past, upgrades could come with significant disruption as they required lift-and-shift actions for organizations. Red Hat Enterprise Linux ships with Leapp as the supported upgrade management tool that delivers a single, automatable path to upgrade to the next major version of Red Hat Enterprise Linux.

Innovation with support

Consider a swift-moving enterprise that values innovation reinforced with support from software and hardware vendors: this customer is interested in upgrading because of the latest enhancements, updated applications, and development runtimes.

Upgrading helps make sure that business continuity is maintained as customers benefit from using supported products that have the latest enhancements, fixes, and patches.

In addition, performance improvements lower your total cost of ownership, while technological advancements mean businesses can use new features to give them a competitive edge.

Long life cycle and stability

Other enterprises value the long lifespan and stability of Red Hat Enterprise Linux. For these organizations, in-place upgrades offer an opportunity to rebase their systems onto a newer version with continued bug fix and security errata support.

With tools like detailed preassessment reports, Red Hat helps mitigate the risks associated with compatibility and planning. The Red Hat certified hardware, software, and cloud provider catalogs allow you to validate your environment as part of your upgrade planning.

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A predictable release cadence

Red Hat Enterprise Linux operates on a predictable three year release cycle and a subscription is valid for any currently supported version of Red Hat Enterprise Linux. This benefits fast-moving enterprises by having access to the latest technology as new versions become available. A major version of Red Hat Enterprise Linux is supported for 10 years and is broken into two support phases.

The first phase, which is five years after General Availability (GA), is appropriately named Full Support. Red Hat understands the importance of life cycle planning for customers, partners, independent software vendors (ISVs), independent hardware vendors (IHVs), cloud service providers, and the ecosystem of Red Hat Enterprise Linux. New features are added, updated applications and development languages released, new hardware is supported, and issues and bugs are fixed. It is during this phase where fast-moving customers realize the value of remaining current.

The second phase is called Maintenance Support and lasts for five years. Enterprises who choose to take advantage of this portion of the release cycle get Red Hat defined "Critical and Important" security errata, as well as selected bug fix updates as they become available. New features are neither available during this phase nor are newer versions of applications or language frameworks.

Extended Support Options

While Red Hat Enterprise Linux has a 10 year life cycle, customers need to be mindful that the support changes and Add-On subscriptions, like Red Hat Enterprise Linux Extended Update Support Add-On (EUS), are available for supporting specific minor releases of Red Hat Enterprise Linux for up to two years from their GA date. Limited support is available for major versions of Red Hat Enterprise Linux for two years after its end-of-maintenance date through an Add-On subscription called Red Hat Enterprise Linux Extended Life Cycle Support Add-On (ELS). It is important to understand that support for EUS and ELS subscriptions is limited.

Minor releases have a six-month release cadence through the Full Support phase, allowing enterprises to plan accordingly. This empowers businesses to effectively plan projects to release updates and new features of software distributed with application streams, including applications, language runtimes, and databases.

The fast-moving organization can take advantage of the six-month release cadence that provides newer application and runtime options. This organization can take advantage of upstream life cycle options when planning a new project and plan to release new features and solutions in line with the three year Red Hat Enterprise Linux release cadence. They can potentially start prototyping using the CentOS Stream community project or a Red Hat Enterprise Linux Beta release and not only have a general idea of when an updated Red Hat Enterprise Linux release will occur, but also what is going to be in it.

Customers concerned with long service life can benefit from the predictable release cadence of Red Hat Enterprise Linux by knowing when major and minor releases occur. They can include Red Hat Enterprise Linux releases in already established application or hardware refresh procedures. It should not be a surprise when Red Hat Enterprise Linux updates are available.

Red Hat Enterprise Linux retired life cycle dates: https://access.redhat.com/articles/4038291

Planning for the future

Knowing when an end-of-maintenance event occurs is an opportunity to plan accordingly and to adopt new features. Organizations can use technologies like Leapp to upgrade systems with minimal disruption to their services.

It is recommended that customers start planning their upgrade and migration with two years left in the Maintenance Support phase, giving ample time to move critical applications prior to the scheduled end of maintenance for a Red Hat Enterprise Linux release. ELS Add-On subscriptions are still an option if customers are unable to move applications and workloads before a Red Hat Enterprise Linux version's end of the Maintenance Support date.

About Red Hat

Red Hat helps customers standardize across environments, develop cloud-native applications, and integrate, automate, secure, and manage complex environments with award-winning support, training, and consulting services.

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