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Sybase releases free Express database for Linux

It hopes to expand the customer base for its database software

News Story by Stacy Cowley

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[\(IDG NEWS SERVICE\)](#) - In a bid to expand the customer base for its database software, Sybase Inc. yesterday released a free limited version of its software for deployment on Linux systems.

Sybase Adaptive Server Enterprise (ASE) Express Edition for Linux uses the same technology as Sybase's flagship ASE relational database management system, which competes against enterprise database software from Oracle Corp., IBM and Microsoft Corp. The new ASE Express Edition is free for both development and production use, though it is limited to one CPU, 2GB of RAM and 5GB of total data storage. The [software](#) can be downloaded from Sybase's Web site.

David Jacobson, Sybase's senior director of database and tools marketing, said the company is releasing ASE Express for free in hopes of attracting customers who will later upgrade to Sybase's ASE Small Business Edition, which has a license fee of \$4,995 per processor, or Enterprise Edition, which has a fee of \$24,995 per processor. Support plans are available for ASE Express starting at \$2,200 per year, but customers aren't required to purchase a support plan.

"What we've found is that a lot of customers are turning to open-source databases because of tight budgets," Jacobson said. "But open-source databases are harder to use than conventional databases -- you have to download, compile, develop, deploy and manage them."

Sybase, based in Dublin, Calif., hopes those customers will turn to its software. Although Sybase ASE is available for Windows, Linux and Unix, Sybase is releasing only ASE Express for Linux. Jacobson said that's where the company sees demand.

"What we're finding is people are moving to Intel-based platforms off Unix machines," he said. "Microsoft has entry-level products, but for those moving from Unix to Linux, there's a gap."

Forrester Research Inc. analyst Noel Yuhanna said the move is a good way for Sybase to recapture some of the market share it has lost in recent years to Oracle, IBM and Microsoft. "I think this will help customers have a second look at Sybase," he said. "It's definitely a good value proposition compared to open-source databases. Sybase is a very mature database, known for

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reliability, availability and performance."

Yuhanna's chief complaint about ASE Express is the tight limitation on data storage. For most customers, 5GB isn't enough -- projects using free, open-source databases tend to average 10GB to 20GB, he said.

"Five gigabytes isn't going to attract as many people," Yuhanna said. "If they want to compete, they need to increase that."

Sybase partner Amit Okhandiar, president of Irvine, Calif., consulting and services firm mLogica Inc., said he expects to use ASE Express on several upcoming projects for customers.

"I'm dealing with a lot of midsize and small companies, and cost is definitely an issue for them," Okhandiar said. "Open-source is a good way to go, but down the line, as they grow, it becomes an issue. They start small and look for a free program like MySQL, but the problem with MySQL is that they can't sustain themselves with it."

Okhandiar said he will likely use ASE Express for an upcoming portal project for a fitness center. The software's 1 CPU, 5GB limits are tight, he said, but still allow enough room for pilot projects.

"We'll use Sybase to do it, and if it's successful, then the client sees that it's worth the investment [to upgrade]," he said. "This allows customers that don't want to spend too much to get started."

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