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Sybase releases free Express database for Linux

Company hopes to attract customers to its software

By Stacy Cowley, IDG News Service
September 08, 2004

In a bid to expand the customer base for its database software, **Sybase** ([Profile](#), [Products](#), [Articles](#)) Inc. released on Tuesday a free, limited version of its software for deployment on Linux systems.

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Sybase ASE (Adaptive Server Enterprise) Express Edition for Linux uses the same technology as Sybase's flagship ASE RDBMS (relational database management system), which competes against enterprise database software from **Oracle** ([Profile](#), [Products](#), [Articles](#))

Corp., **IBM** ([Profile](#), [Products](#), [Articles](#)) Corp. and **Microsoft** ([Profile](#), [Products](#), [Articles](#)) Corp. The new ASE Express Edition is free for both development and production use, though it is limited to one CPU (central processing unit), 2G bytes of RAM and 5G bytes of total data storage. The software can be downloaded from Sybase's Web site, at <http://www.sybase.com/linuxpromo/>.

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, with a fee of \$24,995 per processor. Support plans are available for ASE Express starting at \$2,200 per year, but customers are not 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, California, hopes those customers will instead 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.

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TECH WATCH SQL

Dual-core rivalry between AMD and Intel includes HP

Joining the dual-core race sponsored by AMD and Intel, Hewlett-Packard unveiled new servers, the HP ProLiant BL45p for the HP BladeSystem and the dual-core HP ProLiant DL585, which use AMD's new dual-core AMD Opteron processor. HP said it also plans ...

(Momentary) Rain on Sun's Java parade

Sun Microsystems today held its 10th birthday bash for the Java language, at the Sun campus in Santa

"What we're finding is people are moving to **Intel** ([Profile](#), [Products](#), [Articles](#))-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 offering 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 reliability, availability and performance."

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