

HOW OPEN SOURCE SOLUTIONS DELIVER BUSINESS VALUE

Providing guidance, stability, and security for mission-critical applications

INTRODUCTION

Organizations want to be able to use technology in more places and ways than ever before. According to a survey by IT research firm Gartner, 91% of IT professionals are in no doubt that they have a role to play in their organization's digital transformation.¹ They want modern applications, connectivity, and control, and they are looking to open source software (OSS) to accomplish their goals.

Although IT leaders anticipate that their industries will be disrupted by digital trends, only 41% think that their IT organization is prepared for the digital business of the next two years.¹ IT groups need vendors that can help them adapt to this new competitive environment. Corporate executives are seeking a reliable, experienced partner who can provide guidance to IT staff as they plan and deploy OSS products and help them connect to the right resources when they need help.

Red Hat® subscriptions are designed to meet that need. The Red Hat subscription model gives customers the ability to download and install enterprise-grade OSS products, operate them efficiently and securely, and receive ongoing technical support with Red Hat behind them every step of the way. With a Red Hat subscription, customers make use of the intuitive, information rich Red Hat Customer Portal to access the full spectrum of subscriber resources. IT groups can build their expertise by using the Red Hat Knowledgebase to find resources and product documentation and participate in the open source community.

Red Hat provides a level of proactive engagement that is unprecedented in the open source community. One prominent example is Red Hat Customer Portal Labs, which offers customers access to professional tools that our engineers have developed for troubleshooting, performance improvement, security, and other uses.

The bottom line is that a Red Hat subscription goes beyond support to provide customers with a full range of assets to help guide their digital transformation with open source technology. A subscription can be thought of as an ongoing relationship between Red Hat and the customer that delivers business value and helps the customer thrive.

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¹ Survey of 948 clients across 30 countries. Gartner Newsroom, Gartner Survey Finds That Two-Fifths of IT Professionals Consider Their IT Organisation Ready for Digital Business. July 2016. <http://www.gartner.com/newsroom/id/3375817>

THE RED HAT ADVANTAGE

Why should you purchase a subscription from Red Hat? This document outlines in some detail the features and benefits of a Red Hat subscription, but the overriding reason is Red Hat's focus on the customer experience, which can be seen in a number of tangible ways:

CONTINUOUS CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

Supporting customers for more than two decades, Red Hat knows that an effective subscription program must deliver a consistently excellent experience to make customers successful with our products. Whether via chat sessions, social media, or other sources, Red Hat takes the feedback it receives seriously. For example, comments about slow page loads on the Red Hat Customer Portal led Red Hat engineers to improve database caching, which reduced page loading times by up to 75%.

OWNERSHIP OF MULTIVENDOR CASES

The most difficult issues to resolve are those that affect products from two or more vendors. Unlike other vendors, Red Hat takes ownership of any issue that involves one of our products. Red Hat engineers rely on their own extensive knowledge of open source products as well as relationships with other vendors and the open source community to find a solution that encompasses all of the relevant products.

NO REQUIREMENT TO REPRODUCE ISSUES

There are times when customers have a problem that is difficult or even impossible for them to reproduce. Red Hat support engineers take on these challenges, working closely with the customer to thoroughly understand the circumstances, and look for solutions based on both experience and intuition.

AUTOMATED SERVICES

Our customers find significant value in Red Hat automated services such as the recommendations engine, which integrate diagnostics directly into specific Red Hat products. Red Hat Customer Portal Labs gives customers access to custom tools developed by Red Hat engineers to resolve specific issues. Read more detailed information in the "Automated services" section under "The Red Hat subscription model."

PRODUCT LIFE-CYCLE ASSURANCE

Unlike proprietary software licenses, Red Hat subscriptions are not tied to a specific version, but cover the entire life cycle of the product. With a Red Hat subscription, customers can upgrade to any supported version of Red Hat software and deploy the software on physical, virtual, or cloud-based servers. By maintaining their active Red Hat subscriptions, customers have access to all supported versions in both binary and source form, including all enterprise product documentation, security updates, and bug fixes.

Red Hat product life cycles are generally three, five, or seven years, with extended life support available for up to 10 years. Committed, longer life cycles mean more choice and flexibility, reduced cost and risk, and more ease of planning.

DATACENTER SECURITY

Red Hat develops software in collaboration with customers from a range of industries, including government and financial services. It uses this valuable feedback to build rigorous security protocols into our software. Red Hat's unique subscription model gives customers access to a dedicated team of experts who support our technology 24x7. Read the security section for more information.

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THE RED HAT SUBSCRIPTION MODEL

The Red Hat subscription model has been developed over more than two decades based on extensive customer feedback. A Red Hat subscription allows customers to download Red Hat tested and certified enterprise software and provides access to the guidance, stability, and security they need to confidently deploy these products, even in their most mission-critical environments. An active Red Hat subscription gives the customer continuous access to Red Hat software as it is created, tested, and certified by Red Hat and its partners.

The key features of a Red Hat subscription include:

EXPERTISE BUILDING

As a major contributor to numerous open source projects, Red Hat has established itself as a leader in the open source community. Not surprisingly, Red Hat has developed a great deal of internal expertise in Linux®, Red Hat JBoss® Middleware, and other open source projects. One of the key benefits of a Red Hat subscription is to provide customer access to this valuable knowledge, so they can continue to grow their understanding of Red Hat products and OSS in general.

KNOWLEDGEBASE

When things go wrong in a production software environment, the ability to access the right information quickly can be the difference between a fast return to normal operations and a costly outage. Red Hat provides its subscribers with a wealth of relevant, accurate knowledge that can be quickly and efficiently accessed via the Red Hat Knowledgebase.

When time is of the essence, the search field on the Red Hat Customer Portal helps customers locate articles, technical briefs, and product documentation that are most relevant to the problem at hand. System architects can browse detailed technical case studies that Red Hat engineers have designed, tested, and benchmarked. They can watch videos in which Red Hat experts explain technical concepts and product usage and participate in open source communities.

CONTINUOUS KNOWLEDGE UPDATES

Because of the unique position Red Hat occupies in the open source community, our subscribers can participate in and influence technology and industry innovation. Customer feedback and requests for enhancements are funneled directly into the Red Hat engineering organization. Red Hat's leadership position in the open source community enables the integration of customer feedback into upstream projects as required.

The Red Hat Knowledgebase is an organic resource, continually growing as Red Hat develops content in response to specific customer requests. In one example, a customer wanted to migrate directly from Red Hat Enterprise Linux version 5 to version 7. Realizing that others would want to do the same, the Red Hat team worked out the solution, captured it in a technical note, and shared it through the Red Hat Knowledgebase.

In the case of security issues, the benefits can be far-reaching. Red Hat engineers have played an important role in several high-profile vulnerabilities, posting articles with information about the exploit and recommending remediation activities. Red Hat also contributed security fixes for upstream projects that were ultimately adopted by the entire open source community, including the upstream developers themselves.

PRODUCT PAGES

When customers need to locate information quickly, they can turn to Red Hat product pages on the Red Hat Customer Portal. Each product page aggregates multiple web pages of support information for a single product, for example, Red Hat Enterprise Linux or Red Hat JBoss Middleware. Red Hat product pages function as the definitive source of knowledge and support for that product.

SECURITY

RED HAT PRODUCT SECURITY

Red Hat's stable code is backed by a dedicated team of engineers who monitor, identify, and address risks to protect our customers' data from meaningful security concerns. If a vulnerability occurs, customers can rely on the clear, calm, and accurate advice from the Product Security team to help them quickly assess the risk to their environment and minimize impact to their business.

RED HAT DATA SECURITY

Red Hat is committed to protecting customer data and privacy. The [Trust Red Hat page](#) on the Red Hat Customer Portal consolidates our data security information—including product security, regulations, policy, and privacy—all in one place.

AUTOMATED SERVICES

Most customers prefer to access information themselves, if that information can be located quickly and is effective at meeting their needs. The Red Hat Access program encompasses tools, targeted recommendations, and embedded diagnostics to help customers find answers, often eliminating the need to submit a formal support case. The program also provides access to an extensive library of web applications and allows customers to engage support through their Red Hat products.

RED HAT CUSTOMER PORTAL LABS

In the course of resolving issues, Red Hat engineers frequently develop custom tools to diagnose issues, identify security problems, and more. Red Hat makes many of these tools available via Red Hat Customer Portal Labs. Tools span a wide range of needs, such as configuration, deployment, troubleshooting, security, and more.

Keeping true to the community spirit of open source, customers are encouraged to provide feedback on the tools in Red Hat Customer Portal Labs. Comments are regularly reviewed and often lead to improvements and enhancements. Red Hat also tracks tool usage to gauge effectiveness in solving customer needs and uses this information to make improvements to the tools.

SOLUTION ENGINE

The Red Hat Customer Portal's [Solution Engine](#) connects customers to the right information by matching keywords, phrases, and statements from the customer against the knowledge repository. The result is a highly relevant list of Knowledgebase articles, product documentation, and other resources. The self-service tool helps customers resolve issues quickly and efficiently on their own, reducing the need to open a support case.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Technical support is a key aspect of Red Hat's customer engagement philosophy. The focal point for technical support is the Red Hat Customer Portal. The [Red Hat Customer Portal](#) provides access to the full range of resources encompassed by a Red Hat subscription and offers a convenient way to manage and renew subscriptions in a single location.

With a Red Hat subscription, customers have around-the-clock access to our global network of experienced, motivated, and knowledgeable technical support engineers through our award-winning portal.² The Red Hat Customer Portal helps solve problems better, faster, and smarter.

Red Hat customers are not required to reproduce or justify an issue to receive technical support from a support engineer. Customers do not have to have an issue already identified to benefit from a Red Hat subscription—the goal is to avoid issues to begin with. With unlimited incidents and 24x7 access to the unmatched technical expertise of Red Hat engineers, Red Hat guides its customers through planning, deployment, and operation. In addition, a Red Hat subscription includes service-level agreements with response times from two business days to one hour.

REMOTE CHAT AND SUPPORT

Customers can directly access available Red Hat support engineers via a chat session. When support engineers determine a need for hands-on support, they can initiate a remote session to view and access the customer's computer. Often the responding engineer can resolve the problem, but in cases requiring additional help, the engineer can collaborate with other Red Hat experts during the remote session.

CASE MANAGEMENT

Customers can open support cases in several ways—from the Red Hat Customer Portal, directly within Red Hat products with Red Hat Access, or by phone through their local support center. Once a case is opened, it is assigned to a specialized team of product-specific technical experts. Red Hat support teams collaborate cross-functionally with product engineering and product security. If the issue is known, customers are directed to the appropriate content residing in the Red Hat Knowledgebase within the portal. Otherwise, Red Hat identifies a resolution, documents the resolution, adds the information to the Knowledgebase, and shares it with the Red Hat community.

The Red Hat Customer Portal provides a convenient way to track activity on open cases and look back at records of closed cases when needed.

² Red Hat Customer Portal, Awards and recognition. <https://access.redhat.com/recognition/>

ADDITIONAL VALUE FEATURES

Beyond the key value areas already described, a Red Hat subscription also includes a number of important certifications and assurances.

CERTIFICATIONS

For more than 10 years, Red Hat customers have benefited from the largest commercial partner ecosystem of certified, third-party solutions that are fully supported on Red Hat Enterprise Linux. The designation “Certified by Red Hat” identifies products and services that are tested, supported, and certified to perform with Red Hat technologies.

As part of our certification program, we maintain a robust list of certified application programming interfaces (APIs). Software changes quickly, making it challenging for application developers to deploy across a variety of software releases. Red Hat ensures that previously developed applications will be compatible with both current and future versions. Red Hat certifies software to ensure you are less likely to encounter compatibility issues. Red Hat offers three kinds of certifications:

- Certified hardware ensures that Red Hat solutions are running on tested, verified, and supported hardware.
- Certified software identifies third-party software solutions tested specifically on the Red Hat platform.
- Certified cloud providers offer trusted clouds where customers can run applications on Red Hat technologies.

The strong relationships that Red Hat has formed with its partners facilitate open communication and collaboration that result in Red Hat product releases based on a combination of customer and partner requirements. These products are rigorously tested by Red Hat and our partners and are included in high-touch betas with customers that demand the tightest possible integration of the hardware and operating system features.

ASSURANCES

A Red Hat subscription includes a set of assurances that contribute to our customers’ successes by providing product life-cycle upgrades, quality testing to ensure product performance and usability, and protection from legal harm when using OSS:

- **Product upgrades:** Unlike proprietary software licenses, Red Hat subscriptions apply to the entire life cycle of the product through all its versions. Customers are entitled to unlimited upgrades but are never forced to upgrade. This principle ensures that customers are in control of the timing of upgrades.
- **Quality testing:** The Red Hat Quality Assurance team works closely with our product development teams and provides the final engineering check before Red Hat open source products are released to our customers and partners. The program includes acceptance, functionality, regression, integration, and performance testing aimed at achieving the high quality that characterizes Red Hat products.
- **Legal protection:** The Red Hat Open Source Assurance program provides a level of protection from legal harm for customers who develop and deploy open source solutions. The program includes assurances for customers purchasing subscriptions to Red Hat Enterprise Linux, Red Hat JBoss Middleware, and other subscription products branded by Red Hat.



SERVICE OVERVIEW How open source solutions deliver business value

PARTNER ECOSYSTEM

As more organizations depend on OSS for critical applications, demand is increasing for industrial-strength platforms and experienced integrators with a deep knowledge of these technologies. Red Hat customers use OSS every day to overcome challenges. As part of the Red Hat ecosystem, they are also connected to other customers, Red Hat partners, and the open source community. Often customers require solutions that go beyond the capabilities of a single vendor and rely on each vendor's complementary strengths to minimize costs, maximize efficiency, and avoid proprietary lock-in.

Red Hat works with a global ecosystem of partners to ensure that in this rapidly changing economy, our shared customers have access to innovative, cost-effective solutions that are valuable and responsive to their business needs. Our partners run the gamut from Fortune 100 companies to independent software vendors. Red Hat certifies partner offerings, including hardware, software, and cloud technologies, with our industry-leading platforms and technologies.

FINE PRINT

Customers purchase Red Hat subscriptions directly from Red Hat or from an authorized Red Hat business partner. Red Hat also works with thousands of system integrators, independent software vendors, and independent hardware vendors to build, optimize, sell, and deliver complete solutions to customers. Some of these partners, including authorized **original equipment manufacturers (OEMs)**, are also authorized to provide frontline support.

Red Hat products are provided on a per-instance or per-installation subscription basis, which gives customers access to all subscription benefits during the subscription term. Red Hat measures the full value of subscriptions by counting the number of instances or installations of Red Hat software that the customer uses. Customers must maintain an active subscription for every instance or installation of Red Hat software being used in their environment.

"We have found the support from Red Hat to be exemplary. Whenever we need anything from them, they have given it... Red Hat is now our backbone. Our business cannot run if Red Hat is not there."

ASHISHKUMAR CHAUHAN
CEO, BSE



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ABOUT RED HAT

Red Hat is the world's leading provider of open source software solutions, using a community-powered approach to reliable and high-performing cloud, Linux, middleware, storage, and virtualization technologies. Red Hat also offers award-winning support, training, and consulting services. As a connective hub in a global network of enterprises, partners, and open source communities, Red Hat helps create relevant, innovative technologies that liberate resources for growth and prepare customers for the future of IT.

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