As announced in June 2008, Server Express v5.0 and the related COBOL Server products entered the “Sundown” state at the end of July 2009 and “End of Service” in July 2010. All versions of Server Express and Object COBOL Developer Suite (OCDS) have already reached End of Service.

As the products are End of Service, there will be no further updates issued. Users will still have access to the Customer Care on-line knowledgebase and phone support and be entitled to version updates to the latest version while under maintenance.

If users haven’t upgraded to v5.1 yet, now is the time to do so.

Benefits of v5.1

As a minor increment to v5.0, the upgrade is straight-forward and low risk. It delivers the additional improvements to performance and stability that were delivered with the initial v5.1 release and continually improved with each subsequent WebSync release (Server Express v5.1 is currently at WebSync 3).

For users of Server Express, perhaps the most important new feature of v5.1 is that it is fully supported and no Sundown or End of Service date has been published. Regular maintenance releases are being delivered to customers on maintenance to ensure they are up to date with the latest stability, performance and security changes.

However there are additional benefits for users of v5.1 not available with earlier versions. For example:

Platform Support

With each release of Server Express and subsequent WebSyncs, the supported platforms list is reviewed and updated to keep it current with operating system, database and application server releases. New platforms are not supported with earlier Micro Focus releases, so as users upgrade their operating environment, they should review the version of their Micro Focus products to ensure they have the reassurance that their new platform is fully supported.

COBOL Enhancements

Besides the regular maintenance, v5.1 of Server Express added Test Coverage capabilities so that users can generate reports to show how effective their testing has been.

Eclipse IDE

The Eclipse IDE is probably the widest used integrated development environment across Linux, UNIX and Windows. The Micro Focus COBOL integration makes COBOL a first-class citizen within the IDE where advanced features including COBOL syntax highlighting, margins, reference lookups, COBOL data query/modification and graphical Interface Mapper (which makes it easy to turn your existing COBOL into Web or Java services).

Server Express Remote Development Option (RDO) is also available with Server Express v5.1 so that programmers can use the high-performance Eclipse IDE on their Windows desktops but have all their source code, build systems, databases and other assets kept on a UNIX or Linux Server.

See http://www.microfocus.com/eclipse for more information.

Data Base Connectors

In various circumstances, for example to standardize the storage of all data in a standard Relational Database (RDBMS), however this could have significant impact on COBOL programs which expect to be able to access standard ISAM data files. With the Micro Focus Database Connectors, existing COBOL programs can access data stored in a database (SQL Server, Oracle or DB2) using standard COBOL OPEN, READ, WRITE and CLOSE verbs – no re-write is needed.
Frequently, COBOL applications store important data that business analysts or other line of business users need to access. They use tools such as Microsoft Access, Business Objects etc. which cannot access the COBOL data. With XDBC, it is easy to create a standard ODBC interface on the COBOL data allowing those tools to do their reporting without having to change the entire COBOL system to a RDBMS.

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**Extended Support**

In situations where it’s not feasible to upgrade to v5.1 immediately but the reassurance of on-going support is required, then it is possible to purchase an “Extended Support” plan from Micro Focus. Please contact your Micro Focus account team for details.