Blackboard

Learn - Solaris End-of-Support Announcement

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Product: Blackboard Learn

Bulletin/Advisory Information:

Solaris End of Support Announcement for Blackboard Learn

Blackboard develops Blackboard Learn to be compatible with a number of deployment types and technologies, providing our clients with tremendous flexibility in public cloud deployment, private cloud, and on-premise options. This means developing for, testing against, and supporting many permutations of technologies for our application, each of which requires its own set of time and effort.

One of the technologies supported since the earliest versions of Blackboard Learn has been Solaris from Oracle. Since that time, the share of customers leveraging Solaris has diminished to just a few, and Oracle has significantly reduced its investment in the future of this operating system.

In order to better focus our time and efforts on quality releases for the technologies we see our clients adopting for the future, today we announce that we will be ending support for Blackboard Learn application servers running Solaris. The final supported version will be Blackboard Learn 9.1 Q2 2018 which was released in April 2018. That release would continue to be supported, receiving periodic Solaris-specific maintenance releases (Cumulative Updates), in accordance with the [Blackboard Learn version support policy](#).

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is Blackboard making this change?

Blackboard Learn is an application that utilizes a number of technologies, software libraries, and services. Increasingly, we are running into scenarios where we cannot make a given tool or feature work the desired way because an underlying technology no longer supports Solaris. Recent products and features such as Ally for Learn and support for the Caliper standard couldn't be brought to Solaris because the common code libraries used for these capabilities do not exist. We expect to increasingly encounter this situation—as Oracle divests of Solaris, so too have other developers and the open source community.

What changes will I see after Release 9.1 Q2 2018?

Downloadable installers for Blackboard Learn self-hosted customers will only be available for Windows and RedHat Linux starting with Release 9.1 Q4 2018. Solaris installers of Cumulative Updates for earlier versions of Blackboard Learn will still be available in accordance with the [Blackboard Learn version support policy](#).

Are there any other changes happening with the 9.1 Q2 2018 release?

Yes. The Blackboard Learn 9.1 Q2 2018 release will only support Solaris 11. Solaris 10 will no longer be supported because Oracle has moved it out of its premier support category.

Can I continue to run Oracle Database on Solaris?

Yes. A few years ago, the support policy was revised and simplified so that rather than specific application/database configurations being certified, we would support specific application configurations and database JDBC compatibility. That is, for the database we'd support to the JDBC layer, but any further issues encountered with the database and its configuration would require working with the database vendor for support. Because we generically support the Oracle Database 12c JDBC interface for Unix environments, you could choose to run the Blackboard Learn application on Redhat Linux and the Oracle Database on Solaris.

Can I continue to use my existing hardware?

As noted above, database changes are not necessary. You can continue to use existing hardware for Oracle Database.

Hardware based on SPARC used for Blackboard Learn application servers is not compatible with RedHat Linux. We recommend not purchasing SPARC-based hardware for your application servers during your next hardware replacement cycle.

How do I change my application servers to use Redhat Linux?

Because both Solaris and Linux are types of Unix, transitioning from one to the other is relatively straightforward. We will provide some best practices documentation to assist with the transition around the time of the Q4 2018 release, but Blackboard Product Support will not provide support for the transition itself. Blackboard Consulting can assist by providing services to support the transition from Solaris to Linux.

What should we do if we just purchased new hardware for our application servers that is SPARC?

If your hardware replacement cycle for your SPARC-based application servers puts you into 2020 or beyond, please contact your account executive. We want to partner with you and ensure your success, working together to find a solution.

I'm in Managed Hosting or SaaS. Am I impacted?

No. These deployment types do not use Solaris.

I self-host using Linux or Windows. Am I impacted?

No. We have no plans at this time to make other changes to the self-hosted technologies other than keeping the supported technologies up-to-date; for example, Learn 9.1 Q2 2018 was updated to support Windows Server 2016 and SQL Server 2017.