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## OpenVMS Support To Continue Indefinitely

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OpenVMS, developed by Digital Equipment Corporation and acquired by HP via a series of acquisitions, began life as VAX/VMS in 1977. It has been running mission-critical systems for over three decades.



In June, 2013, HP released its updated roadmap for OpenVMS.<sup>1</sup> To the consternation of OpenVMS users, HP announced a schedule for the end of support for OpenVMS. The current version of OpenVMS, version 8.4, would be supported on HP Integrity i2 systems at least until 2020; and mature product support without sustaining engineering (i.e., no new patches) would be extended through at least 2025. OpenVMS would not be migrated to HP Integrity i4 systems using the Poulson eight-core Itanium chips.

HP has now corrected this situation. OpenVMS will be ported to new HP systems and will be supported indefinitely. HP accomplished this by completing a perpetual and exclusive licensing agreement with VMS Software, Inc. (VSI) to extend indefinitely the lifespan of OpenVMS.

### The VSI Licensing Agreement

Under the licensing agreement with HP, VSI will be the sole developer of future versions of OpenVMS. VSI will produce new versions of OpenVMS for the HP Itanium i4 systems and for the next version of Itanium servers scheduled to use the Kittson Intel chip. It will also develop an OpenVMS version to support x86 HP servers.

HP will continue to sell and support the current (version 8.4) and previous versions of OpenVMS according to its published product and services roadmaps. Both HP and VSI will sell VSI's future releases of OpenVMS, and both will support OpenVMS on HP Integrity i4 services. HP will announce future support plans as VSI develops new versions.

Current (v8.4) and previous versions of OpenVMS cannot be purchased from VSI. They must be purchased through HP. However, when HP ends support for a version, VSI will offer support for that version.

HP will install VSI versions of OpenVMS (beyond v8.4) on future models of HP servers (beyond i2) if specified in a customer's purchase order.

VSI licensing for its versions of OpenVMS will be the same as HP's licensing agreements for HP 8.4 on i2 servers. The VSI versions will be licensed on a per-socket basis except for certain layered products that will be licensed per concurrent user.

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<sup>1</sup> [Updated OpenVMS Roadmap and HP Letter](#), *OpenVMS.org*; June 6, 2013.

The VSI OpenVMS roadmap can be found at [http://www.vmssoftware.com/news/announcement/RM/VMS\\_Software\\_Roadmap.pdf](http://www.vmssoftware.com/news/announcement/RM/VMS_Software_Roadmap.pdf). The roadmap shows the development of OpenVMS for HP Integrity i4 servers first, followed by Kittson HP servers and then by x86 HP servers.

## VSI

VMS Software, Inc. ([www.vmssoftware.com](http://www.vmssoftware.com)) is headquartered in Bolton, Massachusetts, outside of Boston near Maynard, Massachusetts, the former home of Digital Equipment Corp.



VSI is a new company with old roots. It was recently formed by a group of investors and executives from Nemonix, a company that has provided OpenVMS support for the older VAX and Alpha systems for thirty years. VSI has assembled an on-shore team of veteran OpenVMS developers, many of whom date back to the DEC days.

According to VSI's web site,

"Our mission is to develop, sell, and support innovative and advanced releases of OpenVMS, the most secure operating system on the planet. We are engaged in this mission with one core motivation: to support and enable our customers in running their mission critical applications at the legendary uptime levels OpenVMS is known for, at maximum performance levels, today and into the future."

## Answering User Concerns

The concerns of OpenVMS users about the ultimate termination of support for the venerable operating system were recently voiced in an open letter from the French OpenVMS Users Group to Meg Whitman, CEO of HP. The letter reads in part:

"It is impossible to think that HP could not actively maintain support for dependable systems that are such an important part of its portfolio. OpenVMS is one of its most crucial systems in quality and industrial impact. Like other major IT players, HP must adapt itself to different speeds and varying policies between large, fast-paced markets and specialized, slower-paced markets.

"These software products are the result of decades of precise programming, inscribed in precise coding imperative for such functional necessities. A majority of them use functions specific to OpenVMS and still run on OpenVMS, as these custom features are hard to find elsewhere."

Interestingly, the letter was posted just days before HP's announcement about its VSI partnership. Fortunately, HP did not need this sort of encouragement in order to see the importance of the future of OpenVMS.

## Summary

After a year of anguish from HP's first announcement of the OpenVMS sunset, HP has now made a U-turn. It has guaranteed the continuing usefulness of one of its most revered operating systems. With this assurance in mind, customers now can continue to implement their mission-critical environments with OpenVMS on current and future HP server generations.