

# Compare the IBM Informix 15 editions

---

[Carlton Doe](#)

First published: December 2007

21<sup>th</sup> Edition, published: November 2024

Last updated: November 14, 2024

A PDF copy can be downloaded from [here](#). The comparison table, in spreadsheet form, is available [here](#).

For an archived view of the Informix v.14.10 version of this document, click for the [PDF](#) and [spreadsheet](#).

There is an IBM document on the IBM / HCL relationship and the ongoing development and support of Informix. You can access it [here](#).

## Introduction

IBM Informix is IBM's premier database for high-volume online transaction processing (OLTP), embedded database, edge processing, integrated applications, and breathtakingly fast data warehouse / analytical workloads. IBM Informix has built an incredible reputation over time as the database server that "just works!" IBM Informix has kept pace with its customers as they've grown and expanded without costing them a fortune for ongoing maintenance and administration. In most cases, these companies have grown without requiring significant infrastructure upgrades or additional personnel because IBM Informix is so efficient.

In April 2017, IBM made a significant and positive announcement regarding the IBM Informix product family -- a 15 year [Intellectual Property Partnership \(IPP\)](#) with [HCL](#) to jointly develop, support and sell /market IBM Informix products. It is important to understand this was NOT a sale of IBM Informix, rather HCL assumed responsibility for the development and advanced support of IBM Informix products. Since that time, nothing has changed for existing IBM customers. IBM continues to sell IBM Informix and handle all current IBM Informix customer interactions. IBM continues to control product direction and development.

Customers choose IBM Informix because of its reliability, flexibility, ease of use, and low total cost of ownership. IBM Informix works without a problem or major administrative issues regardless of the operating system it is running on. As a result, applications can be managed as the business dictates, not by technological limitations. In short, IBM Informix is "Stronger, Faster and more Flexible." IBM Informix is available across a broad range platforms and 64-bit operating systems, including AIX®, Linux®, Linux®-IBM Power (Little Endian), and Windows®. IBM Informix is also available in a Docker container for those

who wish to deploy in that type of environment. Regardless of which platform you choose, IBM Informix will be “Stronger, Faster and more Flexible” than other database products you’re familiar with.

Not all customers need the same database features and functionality. In some cases, this is a technological decision. For example, a customer may require advanced data replication, or support for special data types such as spatial, time series, or unstructured data in JavaScript Object Notation (JSON) / Binary JSON (BSON). In other cases, licensing requirements and budgets drive these decisions. The IBM Informix licensing model was designed to address technology, licensing, and budget needs.

IBM continues to enhance and evolve the IBM Informix licensing model to meet market and customer demands. IBM Informix has "no-cost" editions that can be downloaded and used for development, test, and limited production workloads, and enterprise-class "for-purchase" editions. All editions are tailored from a price and functionality perspective to a specific market segment. As with a lot of IBM software, IBM Informix provides sub-capacity license options to help clients control costs. All editions may be deployed in on-premise, within virtual machines, in public/private cloud or container environments giving customers complete deployment flexibility.

In addition to being a high-performance operational or OLTP database engine, IBM Informix has additional functionality that can be added to Enterprise Edition to serve as a high-performance data warehouse or data analysis server. Called the IBM Informix Warehouse Accelerator (IWA) and sold as the Advanced Enterprise Edition, this technology uses a number of proprietary data processing technologies as well as compression and a columnar approach to storing and accessing data in-memory as opposed to row-oriented, disk-based system like most database engines. In-memory columnar processing enables IBM Informix to provide virtually unlimited data warehouse growth while providing data response times that are hundreds of times faster than many conventional data-warehouse systems.

## IBM Informix v.15 key enhancements

With the release of IBM Informix v.15 in November 2024, IBM Informix continued building on its "Simply Powerful" foundation by adding nearly limitless database storage scalability along with other features to its already impressive portfolio of database functionality.

The new scalability option brings near infinite scalability to the database instance; it allows an instance to store *half a yottabyte* data! If you’re not familiar with a yottabyte, it’s the largest internationally recognized computer storage measurement. It’s about 1 trillion terabytes in size!! The disk cost and number of data centers required to store and maintain this volume of data are so large, it’s essentially impossible to run out of storage space in Informix v.15. You’ll run out of money first!

But it’s not just size that’s important, it’s the flexibility and freedom it brings that is most important. With IBM Informix’s advanced data type support, instead of creating and maintaining a cumbersome collection of data sources, often called a “data lake,” You can transfer all the data into IBM Informix then maintain a single system. For example, customers needing to use spatial (or flat earth modeling) technology can choose the geospatial referencing and projection system, including customer-specific or developed systems, that best meet their needs. Customers can also define and use the spatial measurement that works best for their environment (e.g. the US foot or the international foot). IBM Informix supports sub-second GPS readings for spatio-temporal (time and location) applications. Customers can create geofences for GPS values to easily detect erroneous or potentially fraudulent GPS readings. Or perhaps customers need the flexibility to store and use data in a non-relational format like JSON. This is trivial to do in IBM Informix with its native data types and ability to use them, in conjunction with other data in a single SQL or JavaScript operation. With IBM Informix’s advanced analytical processing that covers these and other complex data problems, customers can easily solve the most difficult questions with minimal effort. And with its “always on” reputation, minimal staffing is required to keep the environment working.

IBM Informix also brings new enhancements to the application developer and / or database administrator. For example, it's now possible to look at the optimizer access plan while the operation is in flight rather than waiting until after completion to see how it directed the operation to access the data. With that, is the ability to make one of more indexes "invisible" to see the impact of the index(es) to the operation's access plan. Finally, updated Global Language Support libraries are included to provide more application flexibility where English is not the primary language.

IBM Informix v.15 includes the InformixHQ (IHQ) graphical tool. An elegant and modular tool, it gives administrators and / or users the ability to monitor instances and their components (disk, memory, load, etc.) they feel are most important to them. IHQ provides a dashboard view across instances and their statistics and operations with varying access levels as directed by administrators. With IBM Informix v.15, IHQ moves to v.3 and includes light and dark modes, a point-and-click interface to Enterprise Replication cluster building, replication rule implementation and administration afterwards, enhanced SQL statement processing and the ability to work offline.

With IBM Informix v.15, several O/S support and licensing modifications were made. IBM Informix is only available on 64-bit ports of the supported operating systems. Some O/Ss are no longer supported by IBM Informix v.15 such as HP-UX and Solaris. The license documents now codify the licensing metrics of H/A cluster secondary nodes which were previously loosely defined.

Some editions have restrictions on the breadth and depth of features and functionality that can be used, and pricing for these editions varies accordingly. Regardless of the edition used, all IBM Informix editions come with the full implementation of the Dynamic Scalable Architecture (DSA) with its unmatched performance, reliability, ease of use, and availability.

Below is a brief comparison of the IBM Informix editions and their feature sets.

## No-cost editions

IBM Informix no-cost editions can be downloaded and used for development / test purposes or limited production usage.

- **IBM Informix Developer Edition**— For application development and testing only, this edition packs the full suite of IBM Informix functionality into an attractive price point: free! The Developer Edition includes all the functionality available in the IBM Informix Enterprise Edition however there are scalability constraints including processing, memory, storage, and connection limitations. It is available on a wide range of operating systems. Since the intent of the IBM Informix Developer Edition is for system development and test only, it cannot be used in a production environment, and there is no optional support package. Customers can migrate to or from the Developer Edition directly to / from any other edition simply by re-executing the new Edition Installer to install the appropriate license key.
- **IBM Informix Innovator-C Edition**— For customers looking for a robust database environment that can support small production workloads, this edition provides the most widely used data processing functionality. Available on all supported platforms, this edition is limited to one core and a total of 8GB of RAM operating from the same install. The IBM Informix Innovator-C Edition can be used for small end-user production workloads without a license fee. Redistribution requires a separate paid license. Support is community-based though an optional for-charge service and support package is available for the IBM Informix Innovator-C edition. This Elite Software Support package provides full support and product updates for the term of the contract. For more information about this package, see [IBM Elite Support for IBM Informix Innovator-C](#)

[Edition](#). Community support is available through discussion forums hosted by the International Informix User Group (IIUG) or the IBM Community. Customers can migrate to or from the Innovator-C Edition directly to / from any other edition simply by re-executing the new Edition Installer to install the appropriate license key.

## Fee (aka for-purchase) editions

- **IBM Informix Express Edition**— The Express Edition is best suited for in-house or independent application developers or other third-party developers looking to embed a database engine within the application itself to support the application's functionality. Available on all supported platforms, this edition is limited to four cores and a total of 8GB of RAM operating from the same IBM Informix install. In addition, there are other functional limitations including limiting ER / grid clusters to two nodes (root nodes only) and restricting an H/A cluster to one secondary of any type.

IBM Informix Express Edition can be licensed by Authorized User Single Install, PVU, VPC and LU Virtual Server metrics. From a licensing perspective, since ER / grid nodes are stand-alone, each one must be fully licensed. IBM Informix Express Edition supports one H/A cluster secondary node of any type. If the secondary node is only functioning as a backup / failover secondary, it can be deployed without an additional IBM Informix license charge. However, if the H/A cluster secondary node is used for SQL or NoSQL operations, the secondary node must be fully licensed. Customers can migrate to or from the Express Edition directly to / from any other edition simply by re-executing the new Edition Installer to install the appropriate license key.

- **IBM Informix Workgroup Edition**— Available on all supported platforms, this edition is perfect for midsize companies or departmental servers in an enterprise deployment. IBM Informix Workgroup Edition can be deployed on up to 24 cores and 32GB of RAM operating from the same IBM Informix install. IBM Informix Workgroup Edition can be licensed by Authorized User Single Install, PVU and VPC.

IBM Informix Workgroup Edition provides additional database functionality over Express Edition, including unlimited ER / grid cluster nodes of any type to send or receive data updates within the cluster. From a licensing perspective, since ER / grid nodes are stand-alone, each one must be fully licensed. IBM Informix Workgroup Edition supports up to two H/A cluster secondary nodes of any type. If the secondary node is only functioning as a backup/failover secondary, it can be deployed without an additional IBM Informix license charge. However, if any H/A cluster secondary node is used for SQL or NoSQL operations, the secondary node must be fully licensed. Customers can migrate to or from the Workgroup Edition directly to / from any other edition simply by re-executing the new Edition Installer to install the appropriate license key.

- **IBM Informix Enterprise Edition**— Includes all IBM Informix features and functionality with unlimited scalability required for the highest OLTP and warehousing performance with the exception of the optional IBM Informix Warehouse Accelerator (IWA) technology in the Advanced Enterprise Edition. Available on all supported platforms, this edition can be licensed by PVU, Authorized User Single Install and VPC metrics. With this edition, full H/A cluster and ER / grid functionality is available, including unlimited nodes. From a licensing perspective, since ER / grid nodes are stand-alone, each one must be fully licensed. For H/A clusters, if the secondary node is only functioning as a backup/failover secondary, it can be deployed without an additional IBM Informix license charge. However, if any H/A cluster secondary node is used for SQL or NoSQL operations, the secondary node must be fully licensed.

The storage optimization feature with its functionality, introduced in IBM Informix v.12.10, is now included in the base license providing more value for customers and their IBM Informix purchase.

This feature provides two key elements of functionality. The first is index and data compression on disk to help reduce storage and backup/recovery costs and administration and providing improved performance. The second is backup de-duplication if that functionality is supported in the backup tool.

Customers can migrate to or from the Enterprise Edition directly to / from any other edition simply by re-executing the new Edition Installer to install the appropriate license key.

- **IBM Informix Advanced Enterprise Edition**— The Advanced Enterprise edition represents the ultimate in OLTP and data warehouse performance since it includes entitlements to IBM Informix Enterprise Edition and the IBM Informix Warehouse Accelerator (IWA). For this edition only, the Enterprise Edition component as well as the IWA component are only available on either Intel-based Linux or AIX PowerPC LE systems. This edition can be licensed by PVU or VPC metrics. With this edition, full H/A cluster and ER / grid functionality of the Enterprise Edition component is available, including unlimited ER / grid and H/A cluster nodes. From a licensing perspective, since ER / grid nodes are stand-alone, each one must be fully licensed. For H/A clusters, if the secondary node is only functioning as a backup/failover secondary, it can be deployed without an additional IBM Informix license charge. However, if any H/A cluster secondary node is used for SQL or NoSQL operations, the secondary node must be fully licensed. All IBM Informix features, and functionality are included with this edition.

Customers can migrate to or from the Advanced Enterprise Edition directly to / from any other edition simply by re-executing the new Edition Installer to install the appropriate license key.

- **IBM Informix Advanced Developer Edition**— Includes all IBM Informix features and functionality of IBM Informix Enterprise and Advanced Enterprise editions with unlimited scalability. Available on all supported platforms, this edition is licensed by Authorized User only and is intended for pre-production development and testing only. This edition can **NOT** be used for production purposes. Customers can migrate to or from the Advanced Developer Edition directly to / from any other edition simply by re-executing the new Edition Installer to install the appropriate license key.

## Licensing IBM Informix

IBM Informix can be licensed by one of several pricing metrics depending on your needs. A brief description of each metric is listed below. In 2010, IBM introduced a new definition called an *install* to make sub-capacity licensing conditions (such as logical or physical partitioning of a physical server or virtual machine images) easier to understand and purchase. IBM defines an install as an installed copy of a product (in this case, IBM Informix) on a physical server (or partition thereof) or in a virtual machine image. For example, if a physical server is segmented into partitions, whether logical (LPARs) or physical, each partition containing IBM Informix is considered a separate IBM Informix “install” for licensing purposes and restrictions. The concept of an install applies to the licensing limits specified for all IBM Informix editions. For more information on authorized sub-capacity technology, see the [Limited Use Virtual Server and Limited Use Socket Sub-capacity Licensing Guide](#). You can read more about [eligible virtualization technologies](#) here.

**Note:** The descriptions are only a summary of the licensing definitions. They are not intended to be full and legally binding. For a full and complete description, refer to the [IBM Informix license information](#) documents that provide the terms for each edition and version.

- **Processor Value Unit (PVU)** (also known as processor-based pricing) — PVU’s are calculated using the number of processor cores in the physical or virtual server multiplied by the corresponding value units based on processor architecture as described [here](#). Licensing by

PVU's is an unlimited-user or connection license only dependent on the server processors or cores and is usually the optimal choice when the user or session load cannot be controlled or counted.

- **Authorized User Single Install (AUSI)**— A single named user or specific individual accessing one IBM Informix instance on one physical or virtual server on a 1:1 basis. The authorized user can establish multiple connections to that single IBM Informix instance however each connection is for the exclusive use of that one authorized user from a single client device. If a specific user needs access to multiple instances, multiple AUSI's are required. This license type can NOT be used to multiplex connections from multiple clients through a single shared or cached connection to the database.
- **Authorized User (AU)**— Only for use with the IBM Informix Advanced Developer Edition. Purchasing an Authorized User license allows a single named user or specific individual access to all instances using the IBM Informix Advanced Developer Edition regardless of the physical or virtual server where it's installed.
- **Limited Use Virtual Server (LUVS)**— An LU Virtual Server is a physical server or a virtual server created by partitioning the resources available on a physical server using an [eligible virtualization technology](#). This licensing metric does have specific scalability limitations -- specifically no more than four cores may be allocated to the server created through physical or virtual partitioning.
- **Virtual Processor Core (VPC)**— A relatively new IBM licensing metric, it is available for on-prem or virtual IBM Informix environments. [IBM describes a VPC](#) as a “virtual” core in a virtual machine or a physical core in a non-partitioned server. As such, it is an enhancement to the PVU metric making it easier to determine the correct licensing scheme. For example, before this metric was introduced if a physical server had 16 cores which supported 5 virtual machines, each defined with 4 cores, did a customer license software on 16 or 20 cores? Now the answer is simple, you use the either the physical or virtual core count whichever is lower. In the example given, a customer would license 16 VPCs because that's the hardware capacity. If the same server supported a single VM with 12 configured cores, 12 VPCs should be licensed since it's the lower core count.

Not all pricing models are available for all IBM Informix fee editions.

## Easy comparison table

Confused about which edition to use? The following table is designed to make it easier to determine the unique characteristics of each IBM Informix edition. If a specific feature is not listed in the table, you can assume, for the most part, that it exists in all IBM Informix editions. Again, this is only a general description of the features and license parameters. For exact definitions, refer to the [Software license agreements](#).

A spreadsheet version of this table can be downloaded from [here](#).

[insert spreadsheet here]

## Conclusion

To quote a commonly used phrase: “Your needs may vary.” Regardless of the data processing requirements, the “near infinite scalability” IBM Informix has the right blend of technological capabilities and feature options to provide a cost-effective, robust, and scalable foundation on which to build. And

since “Informix just works!” customers can rest assured that IBM Informix has the flexibility to grow and extend the power of their IBM Informix environments when needed.

## Related topics

- [Discover the Stronger, Faster and more Flexible IBM Informix technology](#) and find the latest sales and marketing information on IBM Informix.
- Visit the IBM [Informix product trials and downloads](#) site to download the unlimited functionality (though scalability-limited) IBM Informix Developer Edition on the platform of your choice as well as time-limited versions of other IBM Informix editions.
- Tell IBM Informix development what you need! Register your feature requests and view and vote on other requests to help the team decide what to work on next. Visit the [IBM Informix Request for Enhancement](#) site.

## Notice

The information in this article is presented on a best-effort basis from the author’s personal knowledge and is not intended to be an official communication from IBM. Neither the author nor IBM is liable for any incorrect information in this article.