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HP to scrap e3000 Server line

By [LEE COPELAND](#)

(November 14, 2001)

Hewlett-Packard Co., struggling in the distressed marketplace and facing an uphill battle to acquire Compaq Computer Corp., today [announced](#) that it's discontinuing the decades-old HP e3000 server line.

HP launched the 3000 series server in 1972. Facing eroding market share for the midrange server line in recent years, officials decided to phase out the proprietary platform and emphasize the company's HP-UX, Windows and Linux operating systems. The HP e3000 runs on the MPE/IX proprietary operating system.

Winston Prather, general manager of HP e3000 business, said HP will continue to sell and enhance the HP e3000 until October 2003 and provide support services for the platform until December 2006.

The demise of the HP e3000 series is no surprise because proprietary or specialized operating environments have lost favor with customers in recent years, said Rich Partridge, vice

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president of enterprise servers at D.H. Brown Associates Inc., a market research firm in Port Chester, N.Y.

"While MPE added 'IX' at the end [of its name] to say it added Unix-type APIs and to say it looks a lot like Unix, many people decided they wanted to go all the way to Unix," Partridge said. "For new applications, they want to pick among standardized platforms and need [proprietary systems] less."

HP considered scrapping the HP e3000 several years ago but decided instead to overhaul the platform in 1999. HP added support for the faster 240-MHz, PA-RISC 8200 processor and for the Lightweight Directory Access Protocol.

"There had been a big push a couple years ago to shut it down," said a senior systems programmer at a pharmaceutical retailer, who asked not to be named. "It didn't work, so we held on. We have to do something obviously now but aren't sure what that is at this point."

"I think this is the real deal," said Ron Horner, HP 3000 systems administrator at J.C. Penney Co. "It's just a matter of when we hear something officially." Horner said HP's five-year transition plan gives the Plano, Texas-based retailer ample time to transition to another HP operating system.

Transformix Computer Corp. in Oceanside, Calif., and Sector7 USA Inc. in Austin, Texas, are two companies that provide migration services for the MPE operating environment.

HP said it would provide trade-in credits and discounts to HP e3000 customers that purchase HP-UX, Windows or Linux replacement machines.

Horner said rumors of the HP e3000's demise have been circulating on Internet newsgroups for several weeks. One such site, www.hp3000links.com, posted a [letter](#) (download .pdf) about the discontinuation, dated today and signed by Prather and Jim Murphy, general manager of HP server support.

But users say it's not over until it's over.

"There have been attempts in the past by HP to get the 3000 off market," said Horner. "At the last minute, someone always snatches it from the pit of fire."

But Partridge said HP's planned merger with Compaq may have less to do with scrapping the e3000 than the economic slump. "At some point, HP focused its development dollars elsewhere," he said. "This is an overall review of HP investments, triggered by the economy softening and coupled with that, they're reviewing key, critical components and things that will lead HP forward in the next few years."

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