

The Future of Rational Rose

(This page last updated February 20, 2007)

Executive Summary: Retirement of Rational Rose is inevitable, but even the approximate timing of that retirement cannot yet be foreseen. Rose will continue to be supported for years to come.

Market conditions and product requirements can always be counted on to change. And so as with all commercial software products, it was inevitable that eventually Rational Rose would either be retired and replaced by something else, or modified in ways that would make its later versions unrecognizable to someone familiar only with its early versions.

In the case of Model Driven Development (MDD), the market and technologies have changed profoundly over the course of the current decade...

- 1999 – MDD market begins to express desire to have modeling embedded in an IDE. Rational Rose customers express desires for capabilities such as multiple models that can directly reference each others' elements.
- 2000, 2001 – Microsoft introduces .NET. IBM introduces Eclipse. Visual Studio and Eclipse begin to emerge as likely IDE market leaders. Rational XDE is introduced in response to market drivers and Rose enhancement requests, and supports installation into Visual Studio 2003 and Eclipse-based IDEs
- 2002, 2003 – both IBM (with Eclipse) and Microsoft (with Visual Studio) begin adding substantial new modeling infrastructure to their IDEs. As the UML2 specification begins to gel, the *de facto* reference implementation of the UML metamodel is built on Eclipse EMF. IBM acquires Rational Software
- 2004 – IBM introduces Rational Software Architect and Rational Software Modeler as the initial offerings in a new MDD product line that is natively based on Eclipse modeling infrastructure, including the UML 2 metamodel. Adoption of Eclipse soars and it begins to emerge as the *de facto* industry standard open source development tools platform. The Eclipse Foundation becomes a fully independent entity and its list of contributing members continues to grow.
- 2005 – a third-party licensing issue forces IBM to begin the end of life process for the XDE product. Microsoft introduces Visual Studio 2005, marking its first delivery of MDD capabilities. Microsoft ends support for Visual Basic
- 2006 – IBM introduces Rational Systems Developer and Rational Data Architect as additions to the new MDD product line. IBM also contributes substantial code to the Eclipse GMF project.
- 2007 – IBM introduces Rational Modeling Extension for Microsoft .NET as the latest addition to its new MDD product line

In addition to the points noted above, it has also become clear that IBM's customers feel MDD must begin to deliver more value than it has in the past, in areas such as architecture management and automation of development. They have also made it clear that MDD must support *Business Driven* Development and consequently, we have recognized that MDD must span and integrate semantic domains such as BPMN and BPEL for business process modeling and execution, SQL for data modeling, and 3GLs for code modeling, along with UML.

Accordingly, the architecture of the new IBM Rational MDD product line provides for capabilities such as

- model-to-model transformations
- model-to-code and code-to-model transformations
- "mixed modeling" with diagrams that depict elements from multiple semantic domains

Had we attempted to evolve Rose in response to all of these forces and requirements, it obviously would look nothing like it does today. It would be Rose in name only. Evolving Rose to ...

- support multiple, cross-referenceable models
- install into an IDE
- support UML 2

- support modeling of other semantic domains

... and so on, would have meant wholesale changes to its architecture, to its user experience, and to its model formats. Rose customers would have been required to undergo a number of model migration and retraining efforts along the way. So instead we chose to introduce Rose's eventual replacements under other names, and to define paths and processes for migrating from Rose to those replacements. This enables our Rose customers to keep using Rose in their production projects without significant disruptions, while evaluating the newer products and planning ahead for their eventual adoption.

Simple economics dictate that IBM cannot continue to maintain and support two MDD product lines indefinitely. At some point the Rose product line will be retired. That process will involve two significant milestones

1. End of Marketing (when Rose ceases to be sold)
2. End of Service (when Rose ceases to be maintained or supported, except under terms of "extended support agreements")

According to the [IBM Software Group Lifecycle Policy](http://www-306.ibm.com/software/rational/support/lifecycle/) <http://www-306.ibm.com/software/rational/support/lifecycle/>, End of Service must be *at least* one year after End of Marketing, but may be substantially later than that.

And when will these milestones occur? At this point it is simply too soon to say. We are sensitive to the fact that many of our customers are using Rose in long-running, mission-critical projects and their schedules cannot absorb the impact of adopting a replacement tool set. We are also sensitive to the fact that some of those projects will ramp up over time, and additional purchases of Rose must be transacted. And because the number of Rose customers is quite large, thus far it has not been possible to fully understand all customers' situations well enough to identify what a workable timeline might look like.

The bottom line, as of February 2007:

- you can count on being able to purchase additional Rose products for at least several more years
- you can count on being able to use Rose on a supported basis for at least a year beyond that.
- your ownership of Rose entitles you to the equivalent replacement products
- the replacement products already represent significant functional capabilities and potential business value over-and-above Rose, and they will continue to be the focus of significant product development efforts
- our investments in Rose will become increasingly limited over time, and Rose defects and enhancement requests that have meaningful counterparts in the replacement products will be addressed in those replacement products, not in Rose
- you should begin planning now for eventual adoption of the replacement products
- as the likely timeframes for the Rose retirement milestones begin to come into focus, we will update this page to help with your planning process