

Recent Changes to SQL Server “Additional Software” Rights

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It's rare for Microsoft to respond to public criticism about licensing, but it happened in 2014 after Microsoft stripped important rights from SQL Server licensing. LinkedIn forums were filled with indignation over changes to “Additional Software” rights when SQL Server 2014 was released. In Oct. 2014, Microsoft restored most of them.

Additional Software is software that is available (usually as a free download) and can be used without a license. Having a list of this software is particularly important when counting licensing requirements. If inventory tools such as System Center Configuration Manager find software identifying itself as SQL Server Management Tools on a computer, does that computer need a full SQL Server License?

One of the first places to look is in the Additional Software appendix of Microsoft's Product Use Rights document. If the product is listed there, it doesn't require a license.

Many people were outraged when, with the release of SQL Server 2014 in April 2014, Microsoft ripped out most of the Additional Software rights for SQL Server. Microsoft never (to my knowledge) makes any public announcement about these changes, buried 80 pages down in the Product Use Rights. We only found out about the change when the sharp eyes of Danish licensing specialist Jesper Bodholdt spotted it in the spring of 2014 and raised the issue on the Microsoft Licensing Professionals Network on LinkedIn.

Few customers even know about the Microsoft Product Use Rights document, let alone read it. Come audit or true-up time, however, they learn their lesson when, for example, Microsoft demands costly SQL Server licenses for servers or desktops running software that was previously free.

We're pleased to report that most of the Additional Software rights were restored in October. (Took us a month or two to spot that, as well.) Below is a list of the rights in each PUR as well as a list of the net changes over the course of the year..

We're happy to see the change, particularly from the SQL Server team. In our view, this team holds the record for jerking customer licensing rights around, often with severe consequences for customer budgets. In this case, however, they jerked them back to a more customer-friendly list.

Licensing Advisory

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Product Use Rights Edition	SQL Server Additional Software
January 2014	Business Intelligence Development Studio Client Tools Backward Compatibility Client Tools Connectivity Client Tools SDK Data Quality Client Distributed Replay Client Management Tools - Basic Management Tools - Complete Reporting Services Add-in for SharePoint Products Sync Framework SQL Client Connectivity SDK SQL Server 2012 Books Online
April and July 2014	Client Tools Connectivity Documentation Components
October 2014	Client Quality Connectivity Client Tools Backwards Compatibility Client Tools Connectivity Client Tools SDK Data Quality Client Distributed Reply Client* Documentation Components Management Tools – Basic Management Tools – Complete Reporting Services Add-in For SharePoint Products SQL Client Connectivity SDK
Net change, Jan. 2014 – Jan. 2015	Removed Business Intelligence Development Studio Sync Framework SQL Server 2012 Books Online Added Documentation Components Client Quality Connectivity

*"Reply" appears to be a typo. It is more likely the Distributed Replay Client, which was removed in April 2014.

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