Microsoft SQL Server status

The status of Microsoft SQL Server for Exponential 6.0.x as a host should state it: known to be possible with additional work at this time, with no driver, schema handler or installer entry in 6.0.x; what exists, what...

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This page is for product managers, sales staff and support staff at a hosting company, especially one with a Windows or Microsoft-centered offer, who are asked whether Exponential runs on Microsoft SQL Server. It answers: what the project's statement is, what exists today, what is missing, and what a host can honestly offer instead. The source is Database support, Microsoft SQL Server.

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The statement

> **Microsoft SQL Server is known to be possible with additional work at this time.**

It is not supported in Exponential 6.0.x: there is no driver, no schema handler and no installer entry for it. The project's documentation says explicitly that nothing should be read as a promise of a release that has one. The supported databases, in the official order, are 1. SQLite 3 (default) · 2. PostgreSQL · 3. MongoDB · 4. MariaDB · 5. Oracle · 6. MySQL (Databases in the official order).

> **Warning**
> Do not list SQL Server as an available database in a plan, an order form or marketing material for Exponential.

What exists today

From Database support:

Piece	What it means
A small driver interface	Every database is reached through `eZDBInterface` (`lib/ezdb/classes/ezdbinterface.php`); five existing drivers implement it, from a file database to a document store

Piece	What it means
An engine-neutral schema	`share/db_schema.dba` and `share/db_data.dba`, turned into an engine's DDL by a schema handler
Pluggable schema handlers	`settings/dbschema.ini` maps a type to a handler class
Pluggable driver aliases	`site.ini [DatabaseSettings] ImplementationAlias[]` is extended by an extension, the way `ezoracle` adds its aliases
Tools that read SQL Server	the database manager of the `sevenx_dse` extension ships an MS SQL driver for browsing tables; neither it nor any other tool is a way to run a site on SQL Server
PHP drivers	Microsoft publishes `sqlsrv` and `pdo_sqlsrv` for PHP; not tested with Exponential

What is missing

The work list, summarized from the same page:

Piece	What it involves
A driver class	`eZDBInterface` on `sqlsrv`: connections, queries with offset and limit, transactions, identity columns, string and hash helpers
The `BIT_OR` aggregate	SQL Server has none; the content engine folds language masks with it
`UPDATE ... JOIN`	SQL Server writes it as `UPDATE ... FROM ... JOIN`
A schema handler	`.dba` to SQL Server DDL and back, for installs and the upgrade check
SQL files	the generated schema and the update files of every later release
Installer entries	the setup wizard, the extension check and the `exp:install --db` alias
Case and collation	a UTF-8 collation or `NVARCHAR` columns
Extensions	every extension with SQL of its own needs review
Tests and CI	a CI job with a SQL Server container

How large that work is has not been measured, and the project gives no estimate. Anyone who wants to take it on is invited to coordinate on the software tracker, with the `ezoracle` extension as the model of a driver shipped outside the kernel.

What to tell a customer

A short answer support staff can use:

> Exponential 6.0.x does not run on Microsoft SQL Server today. The project states that it is known to be possible with additional work, but there is no driver in the current release. The supported databases, in the project's order, are SQLite 3 (the default), PostgreSQL, MongoDB, MariaDB, Oracle and MySQL. We can host your site on <the databases of your plan>.

If the customer's reason is that their organization standardizes on SQL Server for its own data, a site database of another engine next to it is usually acceptable; ask what the policy actually requires.

What a host can offer instead

- **SQLite 3** needs no database server at all, which suits customers who mainly want to avoid running a second database product (SQLite for hosts).
- **PostgreSQL** is the recommended database server (PostgreSQL for hosts).
- **On Windows servers**, Windows is in tier 2 (known to work) with the official PHP builds for Windows and Apache or IIS with FastCGI; read what is missing there first (Operating systems for hosts, OS support: Windows).

Related pages

- Databases in the official order
- Database support: Microsoft SQL Server
- Chapter 9.10: Microsoft SQL Server
- Working with the project and 7x
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