

DO YOU ACTUALLY OWN YOUR SOFTWARE?

The 10-minute test — 8 yes/no questions that reveal whether your business runs on assets or on rentals

Most business owners believe they own their software the way they own their building or their equipment. Then one day the vendor raises prices 40%, sunsets the product, gets acquired, or "adds AI" to the tool that holds your customer data — and the truth arrives: **you were never the owner. You were the tenant.**

Here's the test. Answer honestly for the 2–3 systems your business would hurt worst without. Ten minutes, eight questions.

The test

- 1. Could you export ALL of your data today, in a format another system could actually use?** Not a PDF report. The real records — customers, transactions, history, files. ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
- 2. If the vendor doubled the price at renewal, would you have a realistic alternative within 12 months?** "We'd have to pay it" means no. ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
- 3. Do you have — or could you obtain — the source code for the systems custom-built for you?** If a developer built it and you can't produce the code, you bought a demonstration, not an asset. ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
- 4. Could a different firm take over maintaining your critical systems without starting from scratch?** Ownership you can't transfer isn't ownership. ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
- 5. When your headcount grows 30%, does your software cost grow 30% too?** Per-seat pricing means you pay a tax on your own growth, forever. ☐ We'd pay more ☐ Cost stays flat
- 6. Have AI features appeared in your tools in the last year without your explicit consent?** Check the release notes of your CRM, email, and document tools. Then check where that AI sends your data. ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
- 7. Does your workflow bend to fit the software, or does the software fit your workflow?** Count the spreadsheets living *alongside* your main system. Each one is the software failing quietly. ☐ We bend ☐ It fits
- 8. If this vendor disappeared next quarter, do you have a written answer for what happens?** ☐ Yes ☐ No

Scoring

Count your "No" and "Don't know" answers (for #5 and #7, count the first option):

- 0–2:** You're in rare company. Guard it.
- 3–5:** You're renting more of your business than you think. Each "no" is a negotiation you've already lost — you just haven't received the invoice yet.
- 6–8:** Your vendors own your operations; you own the login. Every strategic decision you make for the next five years will quietly route through their pricing table and their roadmap.

"Don't know" counts as "No." In ownership questions, uncertainty always resolves in the landlord's favor.

Why this matters more right now than it did two years ago

For decades, the excuse for renting was honest: custom software was too expensive to build and too risky to maintain. **AI just broke that math.** Custom systems now get built in weeks, on standard technology any developer can maintain — which means the old trade-off ("rent forever, or pay a fortune to own") is gone. Owning is on the table for mid-sized companies for the first time.

The vendors know this. It's why the lock-in is getting quieter and the AI add-ons are getting pushier. The window where you can choose to own is open — and the businesses that walk through it will spend the next decade compounding while their competitors keep paying rent.

Slingr builds custom business software you own outright — the source code and data we build for you, on standard technology any developer could maintain. Portable if you ever need to move it — which is exactly what earns the trust to stay.
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