
Why Monday.com decided to build its new database instead of buying one

Description

Monday.com launched more than a decade ago looking to help companies build a highly flexible set of business tools like CRM, marketing, operations and HR, built in customized ways you simply couldn't find out of the box. It learned that companies not only liked that flexibility, but they also pushed the boundaries so far that it was going to outpace the ability of the underlying database technology to continue to handle all of the use cases.

So the company began looking for a replacement. With myriad database choices available off-the-shelf, you would think finding a suitable one would only be a matter of time and testing, but after reviewing several options, and talking to some experts, Monday concluded it needed something more than what was available in the market.

One of the main issues was flexibility; Monday.com had no idea how its customers would fashion the building blocks into applications. That meant it needed a schemaless database to handle whatever customers decided to build. That's when it decided to build its own, but with a twist: It wouldn't build a single database to take over all the future capabilities. Instead, it would layer on some other databases to handle particular tasks. It called [the new solution MondayDB](#).

The new database has been in place since July, but as the company makes the transition to the new database, the old one still exists as another layer in the complexity that is Monday.com architecture.

Startups have to realize that no matter how careful they may be with [technology choices](#) — and [often it's impossible](#), as they struggle to get a product to market — there is no way to anticipate how products will grow and develop over time. That said, at some point, companies will have to pay off [their technical debt](#) by starting with some entirely new architecture, just as Monday.com has had to do.

We sat down with chief product and technology officer Daniel Lereya to learn how the team decided to build this solution and the challenges it faced in finding a database technology to meet these unique requirements.

Just another manic Monday

The process that led to building a database has been ongoing for a couple of years. In fact, in January 2021, the company began exploring ideas for a new database with a completely open mind. Lereya says the reason customers value Monday.com is the flexibility it brings, and the company needed a solution that could manage an adaptable approach.

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