VMware's vSphere Express and the lesson in licensing risk

10 November 2026 · 4 min read · blogs.iictp.org/vsphere-express-virtualization-licensing-lessons

Ars Technica reports that Broadcom's VMware announced vSphere Express, an entry-level virtualization product for organisations that need "cost-effective essential virtualization", with support for up to 128 cores.

TL;DR The short version

- Broadcom's VMware announced vSphere Express, an entry-level virtualisation product supporting up to 128 cores.
- Ars Technica says it follows complaints from small and mid-sized customers pushed toward more expensive bundles.
- The lesson applies to any platform: pricing and packaging can change, and your options then depend on earlier choices.

Read online, listen to it, or change the text size: https://blogs.iictp.org/vsphere-express-virtualization-licensing-lessons

What was reported

- Ars says the product follows complaints from small and mid-sized customers who reported being pushed toward VMware Cloud Foundation, a larger private-cloud bundle with features they did not need.
- Some customers reported being told the earlier entry-level product, vSphere Standard, was no longer available.
- A VMware executive is quoted as saying the company "started listening" to its lower-end customers.

The practitioner's takeaway

Whatever you think of any one vendor, the pattern applies everywhere: the price and packaging of a platform you depend on can change, and your options at that moment depend on choices you made earlier.

- Keep a record of every platform dependency and its contract renewal date.
- For each one, write down the realistic exit path and a rough cost and time to leave. If you cannot, that is the risk.
- Prefer open formats and standard interfaces where the cost of doing so is small.
- Review licensing as part of architecture review, not only in procurement.

Facts in this post were read from the sources listed below on 10 November 2026; this is a developing story or product and details may have changed since.

Sources and further reading

1. Ars Technica. VMware releases vSphere Express for virtualization on up to 128 cores. 4 November 2026. arstechnica.com/information-technology/2026/11/vmware-releases-vsphere-express-for-virtualization-on-up-to-128-cores/

Published by IICTP, an independent technical credential body, on 10 November 2026. The current version of this post is at https://blogs.iictp.org/vsphere-express-virtualization-licensing-lessons. More guides: blogs.iictp.org.