CentOS vs CentOS Stream

CentOS (Community ENTerprise Operating System):

- **Overview**: CentOS was a free, community-supported rebuild of RHEL. It was designed to be a **stable, production-ready** operating system that closely mirrored RHEL's enterprise-grade stability.
- **Release Model**: CentOS followed a **downstream** release model, meaning it was based on RHEL versions after RHEL had been tested and released. CentOS versions would come out after the corresponding RHEL version, with the same features, patches, and stability.
- **Use Case**: CentOS was widely used for **production environments** that needed stability, security, and long-term support, but without the cost of RHEL's commercial subscription.
- **End of Life (EOL)**: The traditional CentOS (specifically CentOS 8) reached its end of life in **December 2021** and was replaced by CentOS Stream. However, CentOS 7 is supported until **June 2024**.

2. CentOS Stream:

- **Overview**: CentOS Stream is a **rolling-release distribution** that serves as a **midstream** between Fedora (upstream development) and RHEL (downstream stable). It acts as a preview or **development branch** for what the next minor RHEL updates will look like.
- **Release Model**: CentOS Stream receives updates **ahead of RHEL** but after they've been tested in Fedora. It is constantly evolving, meaning users can see and use features that will appear in future RHEL versions before they are officially released. This makes CentOS Stream a **development preview** of the next RHEL updates.
- **Use Case**: CentOS Stream is suited for **developers**, **contributors**, and organizations that want to track the upcoming features and updates that will eventually go into RHEL. It is less focused on being a "stable, production-ready" OS like the old CentOS, and more on those who need to stay close to RHEL development.
- **Rolling Updates**: Since CentOS Stream is a rolling release, updates are pushed out continuously, without the need for major version changes, offering a way to track the evolution of RHEL in real time.