# What Software Support Is

* Software support is a service provided by the publisher of a software product.
* Usually, help from support engineers is available for registered users.
* Support engineers may respond in different ways, and the response time may also vary depending on the type of issue and the support team’s responsibilities outlined in the support contract.
* Usually, such services are on-demand, and support representatives only get actively involved when users experience complex issues.
* Customer support consists of different levels, or tiers, which determine the type and extent of technical assistance.
* For instance, the lowest level of support is self-help.
* In some situations, you only need to provide users with the necessary information so that they can follow clear instructions and solve the problem themselves.
* The next level is basic support that may address such problems as password reset or other basic issues. In this case, you need entry-level support staff.
* The higher the level of support, the more trained and skilled staff you need.

# Why Software Support Is Important

* We’ve already mentioned the importance of customer service for customer retention and revenue growth.
* If you offer a software product, you must make sure that your users are able to get all the necessary assistance.
* However, not only is software support important for software publishers, but it’s even more important for users.
* For example, if you have a B2B company, it means that whole businesses depend on your product.

# Adopt a Proactive Approach

* No matter what kind of software you offer, it should be improved and updated regularly.
* First, some bugs can be identified after the product has already been launched. Secondly, you should constantly improve usability and add new features to withstand competition.
* Besides, you might need to address security vulnerabilities. It’s also important to update your software in response to updates in operating systems to ensure the best stability possible.

# Types of Software Support

* You may choose different approaches to customer support, and all of them have their advantages and disadvantages. Let’s consider them in more detail.

## In-house support

* Such an approach implies setting up an in-house support team so you can manage all customers’ requests internally.
* In-house support enables your team to have immediate access to all the necessary information and sources.
* Besides, having an in-house team means that if any processes need updating or can be optimized, you can make the necessary improvements and provide the staff with the necessary training quickly.
* However, this is also the most expensive option, and the costs of in-house support outweigh the benefits for small and mid-sized companies.

## Third-party support

* You can also outsource software support to a third-party provider.
* Such an option is significantly less expensive than having an in-house support team so other areas of your business can get more funding.
* However, in this case, you should make sure that the third-party provider knows your product well.
* Besides, such an approach means having less control and more supervision issues.
* When choosing third-party support providers, it can be difficult to ensure the required level of support because the provider’s management is out of your reach.

## Offshore support

* Such an approach has become very popular recently, and one of the reasons is that this is the cheapest option that requires fewer resources than other models.
* Offshore support also puts less pressure on your team so it can focus on other tasks.
* However, this approach also has some significant disadvantages.
* Offshore support means language barriers and cultural differences.
* Many customers expect to receive a more localized kind of support so the satisfaction level may be low.