Revenue from as-a-Service arrangements is recognized either on a straight-line basis or on a usage basis as described in the Services section above. Installation services are accounted for as distinct performance obligations with revenue recognized as the services are performed. Shipping and handling activities that occur after the client has obtained control of a product are accounted for as an activity to fulfill the promise to transfer the product rather than as an additional promised service and, therefore, no revenue is deferred and recognized over the shipping period.

Software

The company's software offerings include cognitive applications, which contains many of the company's strategic areas including analytics, data and security; cloud and data platforms, which contains the company's distributed middleware and data platform software, including Red Hat; transaction processing platforms, which primarily supports mission-critical systems for clients; and, operating systems software, which provides operating systems for IBM Z and Power Systems hardware. These offerings primarily include proprietary software and, in some cases, open source software, and many can be delivered entirely or partially through as-a-Service or cloud delivery models, while others are delivered as on-premise software licenses.

Revenue from proprietary perpetual (one-time charge) license software is recognized at a point in time at the inception of the arrangement when control transfers to the client, if the software license is distinct from the PCS offered by the company. In limited circumstances, when the software requires continuous updates to provide the intended functionality, the software license and PCS are not distinct and revenue for the single performance obligation is recognized over time as the PCS is provided. This is only applicable to certain security software perpetual licenses offered by the company.

Revenue from proprietary term license software is recognized at a point in time for the committed term of the contract (which is typically one month due to client termination rights), unless consideration depends on client usage, in which case revenue is recognized when the usage occurs. Clients may contract to convert their existing IBM term license software into perpetual license software plus PCS. When proprietary term license software is converted to perpetual license software, the consideration becomes fixed with no cancellability and, therefore, revenue for the perpetual license is recognized upon conversion, consistent with the accounting for other perpetual licenses, as described above. PCS revenue is recognized as described below.

The company also has open source software offerings. Since open source software is offered under an open source licensing model and therefore, the license is available for free, the standalone selling price is zero. As such, when the license is sold with PCS or other products and services, no consideration is allocated to the license when it is a distinct performance obligation and therefore no revenue is recognized when control of the license transfers to the client. Revenue is recognized over the PCS period. In certain cases, open source software is bundled with proprietary software and, if the open source software is not considered distinct, the software bundle (e.g., Cloud Pak) is accounted for under a proprietary software model.

Revenue from PCS is recognized over the contract term on a straight-line basis because the company is providing a service of standing ready to provide support, when-and-if needed, and is providing unspecified software upgrades on a when-and-if available basis over the contract term.

Revenue from software hosting or Software-as-a-Service arrangements is recognized either on a straight-line basis or on a usage basis as described in the Services section above. In software hosting arrangements, the rights provided to the client (e.g., ownership of a license, contract termination provisions and the feasibility of the client to operate the software) are considered in determining whether the arrangement includes a license. In arrangements that include a software license, the associated revenue is recognized in accordance with the software license recognition policy above rather than over time as a service.

Financing

Financing income attributable to sales-type leases, direct financing leases and loans is recognized on the accrual basis using the effective interest method. Operating lease income is recognized on a straight-line basis over the term of the lease.

Standalone Selling Price

The company allocates the transaction price to each performance obligation on a relative standalone selling price basis. The standalone selling price (SSP) is the price at which the company would sell a promised product or service separately to a client. In most cases, the company is able to establish SSP based on the observable prices of products or services sold separately in comparable circumstances to similar clients. The company typically establishes SSP ranges for its products and services which are reassessed on a periodic basis or when facts and circumstances change.

In certain instances, the company may not be able to establish a SSP range based on observable prices and the company estimates SSP. The company estimates SSP by considering multiple factors including, but not limited to, overall market conditions, including geographic or regional specific factors, competitive positioning, competitor actions, internal costs, profit objectives and pricing practices. Additionally, in certain circumstances, the company may estimate SSP for a product or service by applying the residual approach. This approach is most commonly used when certain perpetual software licenses are only sold bundled with one year of PCS and a price has not been established for the software. Estimating SSP is a formal process that includes review and approval by the company's management.

Services Costs

Recurring operating costs for services contracts are recognized as incurred. For fixed-price design and build contracts, the costs of external hardware and software accounted for under the cost-to-cost measure of progress are deferred and recognized based on the labor costs incurred to date (i.e., the measure of progress), as a percentage of the total estimated labor costs to fulfill the contract as control transfers over time for these performance obligations. Certain eligible, nonrecurring costs (i.e., setup costs) incurred in the initial phases of outsourcing contracts and other cloud-based services contracts, including Software-as-a-Service arrangements, are capitalized when the costs relate directly to the contract, the costs generate or