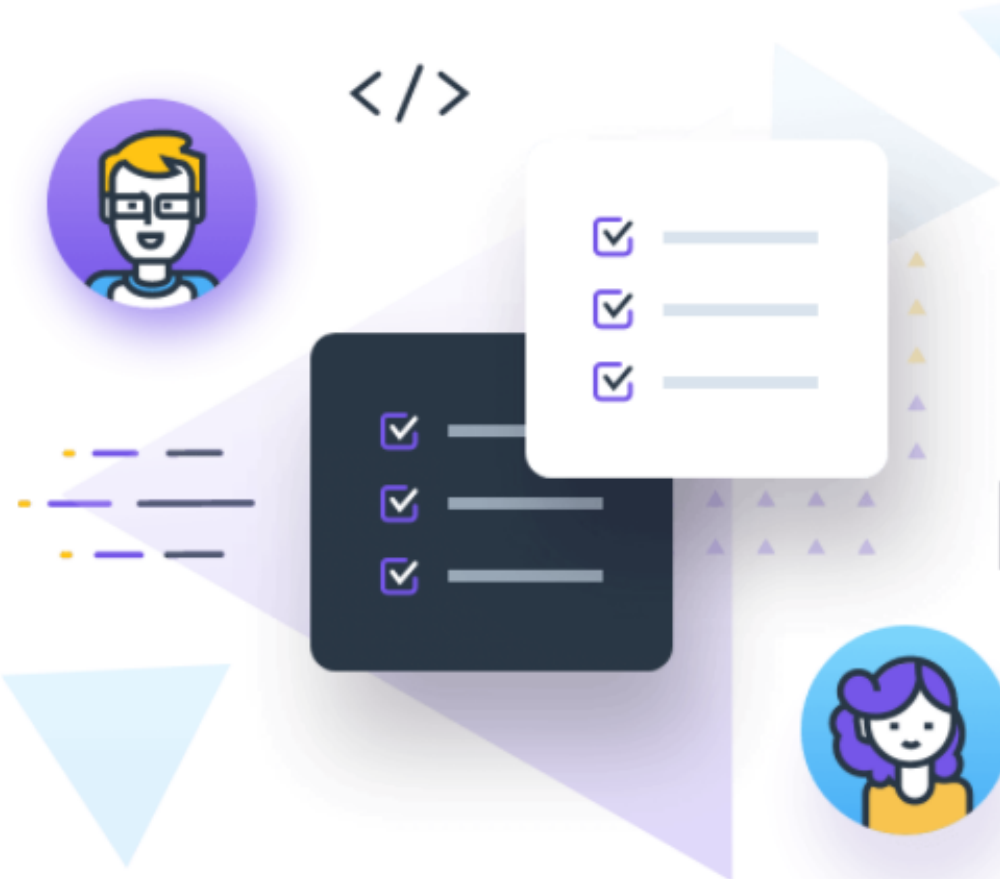


How To Choose The Best Headless CMS

agility

Guide

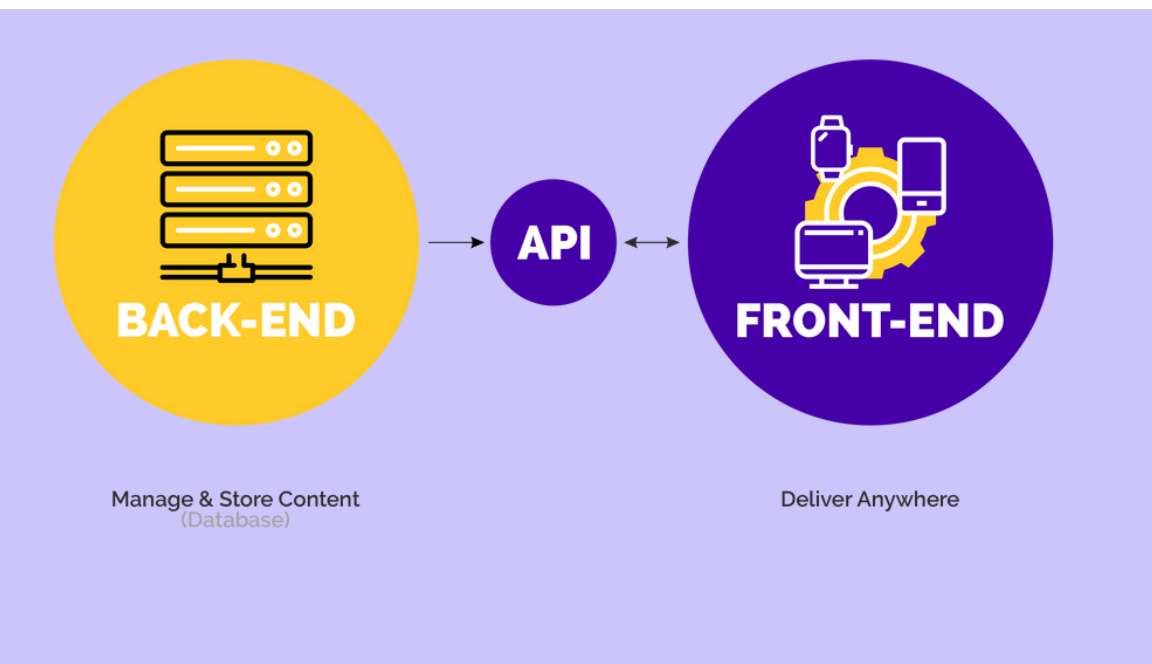
When deciding to build a new website, application, or digital experience, many businesses' first question is: what headless CMS should I choose?

Sure, comparing features is a start, but it's just as important to recognize that every company's needs are different and, accordingly, different headless CMS platforms will be best for different companies.

Furthermore, many brands get stuck on the question of open-source vs proprietary CMS, opting for whichever avenue they have experience with.

Or, they immediately narrow their shortlist down to headless content management systems that cater for their industry specifically. In both scenarios, we've found brands to be limiting themselves—and their options—for the sake of familiarity.

In fact, going for a platform that isn't an obvious choice for your industry may lead to great ideas and new opportunities for growth that you hadn't considered.



10 questions you should ask yourself and your stakeholders before choosing a headless or decoupled CMS

1. What's your budget for CMS? The first question before you even begin your search for a headless CMS platform is: what's your budget?

This will help you rule out whatever options are off the table from the very beginning and prevent you from wasting your time researching solutions that you will never be able to adopt.

Understanding the scope and size of your project, as well as of the CMS platforms available, is a good way of gauging what a reasonable budget may be.

Many CMSs now start with Free Trial and offer a number of pricing packages to fit your needs.

Is your organization paying too much for hosting, and licensing costs? A headless CMS uses a cloud-multitenant architecture. It eliminates the need for costly installations and upgrades to the hosting environment. We highly recommend this architecture because of its easy upgrades and security benefits.

For example, if a marketing department wishes to create a new series of product mini-sites, they can go straight into the CMS and start creating immediately without having to wait for developers to build CMS-based templates.

This means your up-front cost is diminished because you can start with smaller solutions and then build your way up versus starting with one BIG install. It's always best to start small and then scale up as you need to.

JAMStack approach can save you money because it allows you to update your website page by page instead of doing the full rebuild.



Enterprise CMS Security >

2. What is the purpose of your website?

Once you have budget considerations out of the way, the next thing you should consider is: what is the purpose of your digital system? Is it intended as a long-term business website, or are you building it for a short-term project?

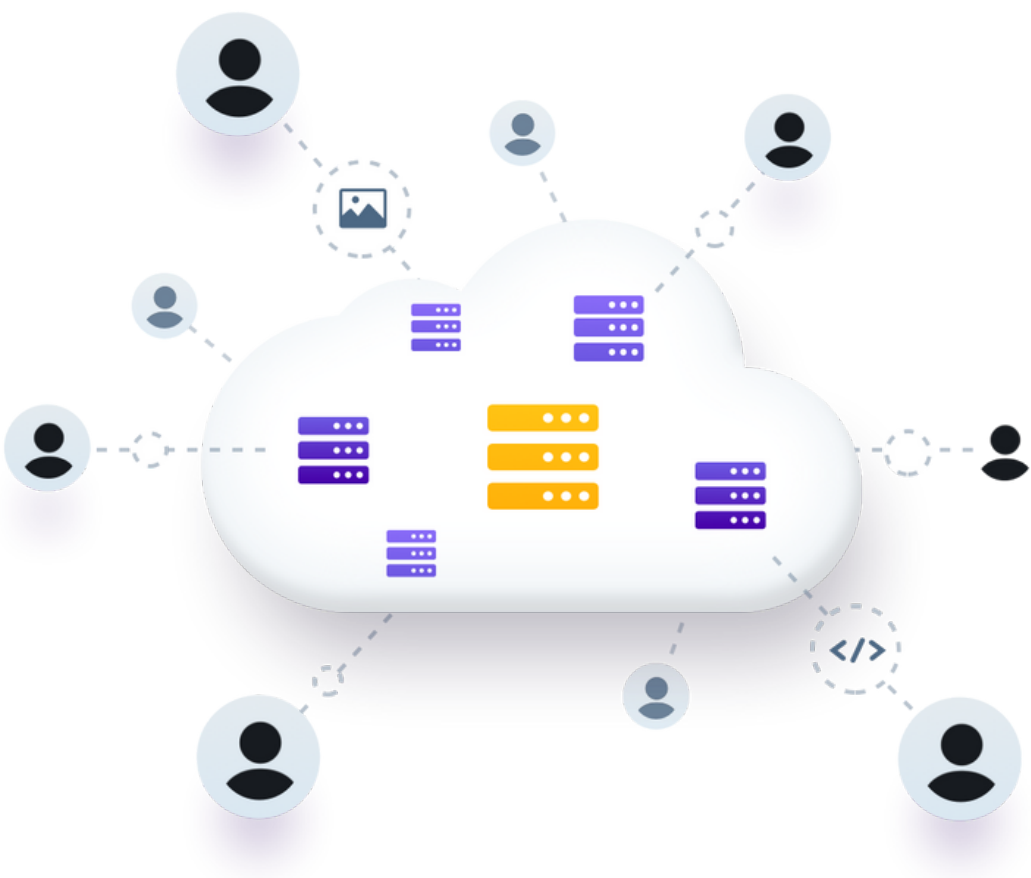
This question will be important when considering your site's content architecture; if you're thinking long-term, your site should be built in a way that is flexible enough for any future developments, growth, and use cases. This approach will help you avoid any future unforeseen costs brought on by a badly planned content architecture.

If, on the other hand, you're building a short-term site, you may want to put all your efforts into making the site look exactly the way you'd like it to look right now, potentially saving time and resources that you would otherwise spend planning your content architecture.

Keep this in mind when choosing a headless CMS, as different platforms may be geared towards different timelines and take different approaches to content architecture.

Another aspect to think about in regard to your site's purpose is whether you're looking only for a CMS, or for a CMS provider

Integrations >



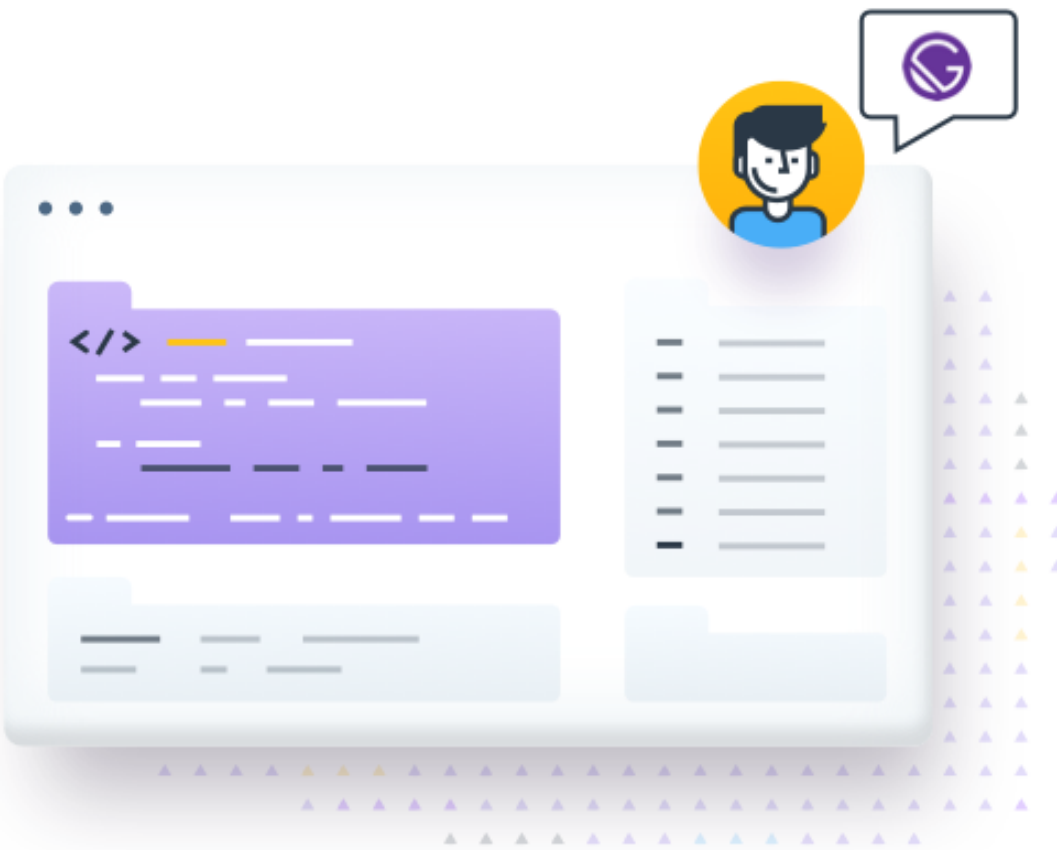
3. What are your performance and integration needs?

The nature of your site will determine what your hosting and integration needs are and it's important to think of these in advance. Particularly online storefronts tend to be integration-heavy and often require scalable hosting options to prevent the site from crashing during high-traffic streaks.

Even if your site is not an online store, it is still important to determine first what your performance and integration needs are and then choose a headless CMS solution that can accommodate these.

This goes hand in hand with planning your content architecture; as long as you've mapped out your entire site, you'll be aware of what particular integrations are needed. In the same way, thinking about your top use cases and expected traffic fluctuations will give you a better idea of what your hosting needs will be.

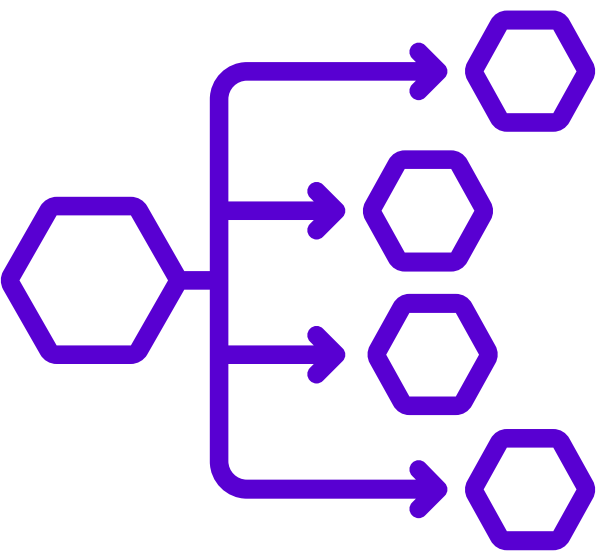
Mapping all this in advance will help you make a better choice of which headless CMS to go with.



4. Which channels do you want a presence on?

Headless CMSs allow you to provide an omnichannel experience for your customers. This added flexibility offers an advantage as it means that things can remain the same across multiple touchpoints within the customer journey. However, you do need to decide what channels will work best for your product or service.

At the very least, you are likely to have a web page or app with mobile capabilities. However, knowing beforehand which additional channels will work best for your audience, whether that be digital signage, smart speaker apps, or something else entirely can go a long way. The channels you decide to be on will help to determine your overall marketing strategy, and your CMS needs to be able to provide a robust experience. The key to a great omnichannel experience is consistency. You can't just have a presence on a platform; you also need to be able to personalize the experience on different platforms.



5. What are your internal resource capabilities?

Once you've established your integration and performance needs, it's time to think logistics. Who will actually build and maintain your website? Do you have in-house developers? Are your content editors technical or non-technical?

If you have in-house developers, keeping them in the decision-making process will be a key way to ensure that whatever headless CMS platform you choose uses programming languages that your developers are familiar with. Many will agree that the biggest benefit of a headless CMS is how easy and fast it is to manage your content.

The CMS implementation is cleaner meaning the CMS tool is purely for storing content and isn't cluttered with "stuff" that's irrelevant to business users and other resources that are a development only.

You will also need to work with your development team, agency or CMS provider to ensure that the site is coded in a way that reduces content editors' reliance on developers as much as possible, especially if your content editors are non-technical.

If every time you make an update to your website you need to rely on developers, you will waste precious time and resources, so make sure that your CMS allows you to do this.

6. Are you forgetting your marketers?

One of the issues with some CMS platforms is creating and editing the content is quickly done by non-technical team members, but, then the job of displaying the content in a visually appealing way is only possible with the help of tech-savvy developers.

Too often, going headless means sacrificing marketer autonomy and speed for developmental freedom and more channels. It would be best if you opted for a hybrid headless CMS that can offer both without compromise.

Developers want to spend their time coding new features and not fixing minor issues or updating content. The best CMS platforms make it easy for developers to set up proper structures and workflows for marketers and content editors to operate; empowering both the marketer and the developer to produce the best content.

7. How soon do you need your solution?

What is your project timeline? Are you planning a long-term website and ready to wait a few months to ensure the site is optimal? Or do you need something quick within a few days or weeks?

If you need something fast, the best option may be to go for a pre-templated solution, although this will mean being quite restricted in terms of design.

Picking a CMS that provides templates and that allows your team to quickly put a site together without relying on any external parties will be the best option.

If you're thinking long-term, focusing on ensuring your design serves your unique business needs, and not the other way around, will enable you to build a more effective site and, ultimately, a more valuable tool in the long run.

8. What are your security requirements?

Security is always a concern for businesses building new websites, although how much of a priority it is will depend on the nature of your company. The key is to ensure that your site has the necessary security measures in place, without hindering performance or user experience.

The general perception is that open source platforms aren't as secure as proprietary platforms, which isn't always the case. However, as a rule of thumb, make sure that the platform you choose can be made secure according to your unique needs and that it has the necessary certifications.

Thinking about this in advance will prevent any unforeseen security hiccups along the way.



9. Is commerce part of your brand's future?

When deciding on which CMS platform you should use, you should determine if you plan to offer a commerce option in the future. The likelihood that you answer yes to this question is quite high as by the year 2040, as much as 95% of shopping will be facilitated by eCommerce.

That said, it is vital to go with a CMS that has robust commerce platform integrations and APIs that won't hinder headless commerce projects.

There are several eCommerce platforms able to provide your customers with an online shopping experience, but they aren't all right for your brand. The best CMS gives you the flexibility to choose the right one for you.

Ecommerce happens over multiple touchpoints and channels and therefore falls under the same requirements for an omnichannel experience. Factors such as UX design play a crucial role in whether a customer decides to purchase from a particular brand or not. Also, many customers make purchases from brands that they resonate with, or that have a great story they can support.

Those brands that are successful when it comes to eCommerce have various content types that help to tell their story. They also provide international buying options and can deliver their content and products to any device from a web page to a kiosk screen, smartwatch, or smart speaker. None of that would be possible without the right CMS.

10. Are you planning to scale and grow into new markets?

Not thinking far enough into the future is a big mistake we see brands making when choosing a headless CMS. If you plan to keep your digital presence small and local, then feel free to skip this point. If not, read on.

A headless CMS is only as good as its infrastructure. Without enterprise-grade hosting and content delivery networks (CDNs), your digital experience will become slow, difficult to manage, and near-impossible to scale when traffic spikes occur. Poor infrastructure will also hinder you when it comes to launching your website or app in new regions and continents.

To ensure your headless CMS can grow with you, be sure to choose one that's leveraging the cloud hosting prowess of leading hosting solutions like Microsoft's Azure or Amazon's AWS.



Headless CMS Use Cases:

Visit Orlando, the official tourism association for Orlando, Florida - home to Disney World and one of the most visited tourist destinations in the US - wanted to increase their engagement, conversion rate metrics, and ticket sales.

To achieve this goal they wanted to manage their content across various channels and personalize marketing campaigns for a targeted audience.

Visit Orlando was severely hampered by an inefficient ticket management system and process and needed to revamp its entire digital strategy and bring everything under one umbrella.

Through Agility's Headless CMS they now have a multi-site, multi-channel content management system and a new ticket sales and POS solution. Their team is now able to focus on adding new properties onto the platform, both as new website instances or as digital channels.

"In December, my team had taken a 4-day weekend for Thanksgiving for the first time in many years, thanks to Agility CMS!"

- Shawn Hart, Director of Web Development & Enterprise Applications Visit Orlando



VisitOrlando

Visit Orlando: 20% increase in revenue with agile Headless Commerce

Agility helped Visit Orlando reduce manual processes and increase revenue by 20%.

10%
Conversion rate increased

20%
Online Revenue Increased

25%
Online engagement increased

Cineplex: Ultimate Performance, Scalability and Usability for Movie Theater Giant

"With Agility we can decouple content from code, allowing content editors to work on their updates while we focus on what really matters: making our platform better for our users." - Vinícius Philot, Frontend Web Developer

1.6M	90k	+15%
Daily Page Views	App Installs	Ad Revenue

Cineplex

Cineplex, a leading name in the Film Entertainment and Content, Amusement and Leisure, and Media sectors, accommodates over 70 million guests per year on its digital platforms.

The initial challenges Cineplex faced was a system that didn't allow freedom of design and was extremely limiting in terms of performance, scalability, usability, and multilingual capabilities.

They needed to improve the overall customer experience across various channels and improve conversation rates.

Agility's CMS has allowed Cineplex to increase the scalability of the site and to optimize its hosting resources.

The latest iteration utilizes a new hosting environment across load-balanced servers for optimal site speed and performance.

The site is now handling more traffic with less CPU load than in previous years.



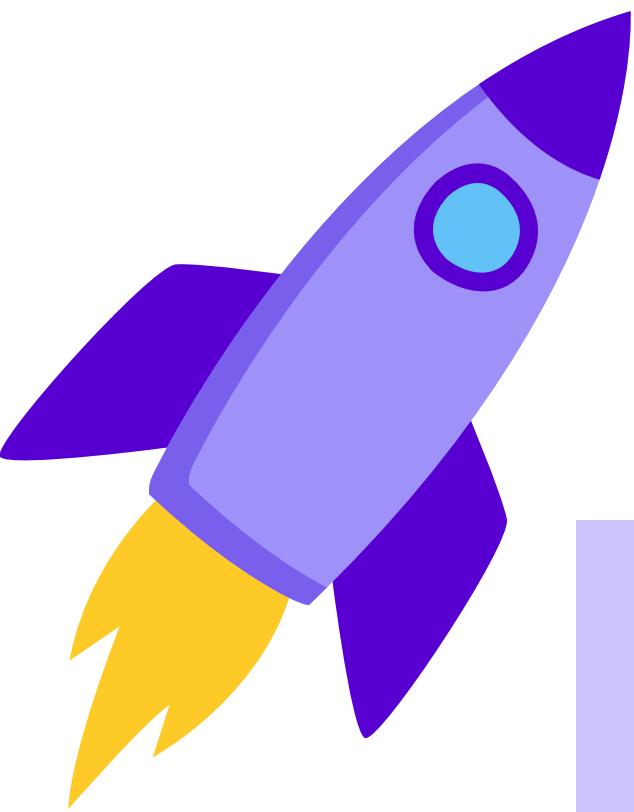
"The platform provides a consistent user experience for our content team to easily make updates to movie/theatre details, content and metadata, news, blogs, contests and more."

- Jeffrey Kent, Former Chief Technology Officer at Cineplex

Headless CMS: Go Content-first to Future-proof your Brand

Consumers are making use of more devices and channels than ever before, and brands have to meet them there to provide quality omnichannel experiences. Going headless, whether that's through a pure headless CMS or a decoupled CMS, is the simplest way to achieve that.

Adopting a content-first approach, which seeks to make your content the focal point of your digital presence, while your many front-ends and their frameworks can be evolved and expanded, is the most logical way to ensure that your brand and its content can meet consumers wherever they end up going. Whether that's smart speakers, digital signage, VR headsets, or something else exciting.



About Agility CMS: The only Headless CMS with Powerful Page Management Built-in

Agility CMS allows you to define 3 things that make working with website pages really easy for both content editors and developers:

- Page Management

- Module Definitions

- Digital Channels & Sitemaps

Developers set up the templates and definitions, while content editors determine on what pages they want to use those templates and definitions.

This part of the content architecture is fundamental to the success of any CMS solution that includes a website.

Essentially, Agility CMS is a Headless CMS that keeps your website pages organized and easy to manage for everyone on your team - developers, marketers, content editors, SEO teams, etc.

> "We have been working with Agility for just over two years. The easy-to-use platform provides the flexibility we need to easily create and publish content to all of our websites. Their excellent customer service team and online support library are great resources for our team to learn and grow with the Agility CMS platform."

ANDREA DI TOMAS
Graphic Arts Technician at the English Montreal School Board



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Agility CMS is a Content Management System (CMS) with built-in Hybrid components for better Editor Experience.

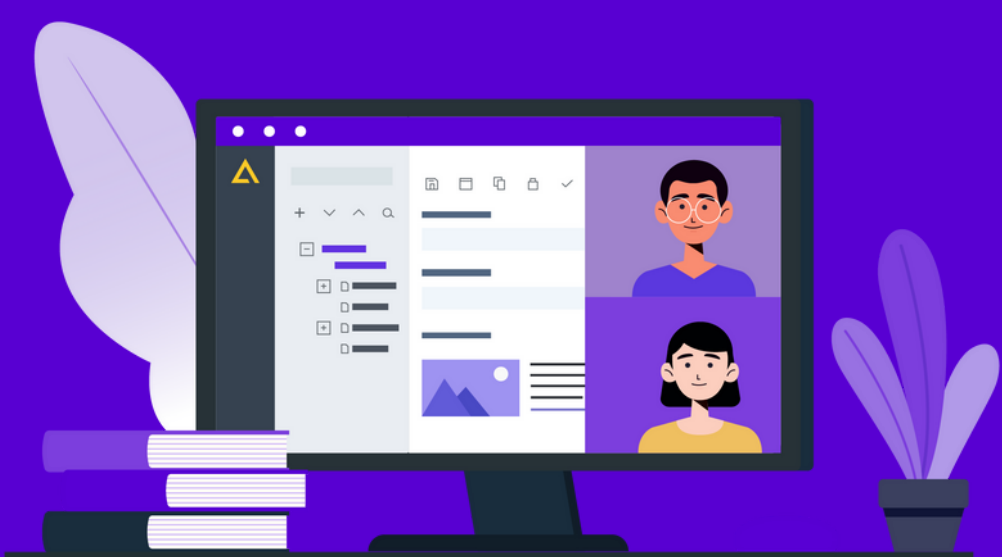
The platform adopts all the aspect of Headless CMS that makes an omnichannel approach easy, with the understanding that Page Management is of utmost importance in any website project.

Agility is proprietary CMS with full Support and Security that gives creative freedom to both Developers and Marketers and eliminates friction between the teams.

Developers have full freedom to use any coding language and any framework and code and define custom Page Templates and Module Definitions.

These pre-defined custom Modules and Page Templates are available to the Marketing Teams to effortlessly create a variety of pages to meet their fast-changing needs and market requirements. Agility CMS believes in Content First Approach and heavily invests in helping clients to build future-proof Content Architecture.

Book a Demo >



Agility CMS Differentiators

- *It is a modern Enterprise-grade Composable DXP with flexible Headless approach in its heart.*
- *Unlike many other Headless CMS, Agility CMS also offers tools for Enterprise teams to effortlessly manage content delivery to websites and apps like Page Management, Sitemaps, Content Modelling.*
- *With Page Management built-in, developers don't have to build an entirely new way to manage pages and routing. At the same time, marketers can easily edit content across a variety of channels without any coding experience.*
- *Agility CMS provides enterprise-level security and support, it is SOC2 compliant.*
- *Agility CMS is Jamstack friendly and allows to start quickly with your favorite frameworks and deploy with a few clicks.*

Details



License Model: *Agility CMS is a multi-tenant SaaS platform, and hosted on MicrosoftAzure Cloud*



Price: *Starts with FREE Developer Edition. Paid plans have extensive TRIAL. Learn more.*



Key Components: *Page Management, Content Relationships, Content Modelling, POS, Search, User Generated Content, Personalization, Digital Asset Management. Unlimited content models, Locales, API calls,*



Upgrades: *Automatic, monthly platform updates.*

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