



A Marketer's Guide to

# Selecting a Web Content Management System

Find the Right WCM  
to streamline your Enterprise's  
Content Publishing



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## About the Whitepaper

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Until recently, web content management involved little more than keeping a static website updated with current information. So long as the business contact information and product list was viewable, not much more was needed other than to check for broken links. Visitors accessed the site from a desktop or laptop computer. Purchasing online was less common as buyers would more often call in their orders or use the Internet to find a local retailer they could visit in person.

That was how things typically worked in the days before the use of mobile devices for Internet access became widespread and before the proliferation of social media sites. Marketers today have to connect with their customers across a wide range of platforms, devices and interconnected sites. Done correctly, a well-implemented web content management system (WCMS) enhances the customer experience and improves marketing efficiency.

Technology continues to advance at break-neck speeds. People have become accustomed to frequent updates and better online experiences. Any business that fails to employ the "latest and greatest" technology runs the risk of appearing too "old-school" for a more tech-savvy population. Therefore, a marketing plan must include provisions to manage all online content.

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section one

# Does Your Enterprise need a WCMS?



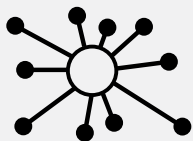
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# WCMS

Web customers have high expectations, and it is not an exaggeration to state that you need a WCMS if you have an online presence. With the rise of social media, mobile apps, blogs and other digital channels, your customers expect an informative, educational and entertaining experience when engaging your company via your websites or other web properties. Brochure-ware websites that serve up pages of static information fall far short in meeting these demands, driving visitors away often in less than just a few seconds.

With much at stake to provide a dynamic online experience, many companies are employing Website Content Management Systems (WCMS) to deliver a steady stream of fresh and relevant digital content to customers across enterprise websites, mobile devices and social networks. WCMS platforms provide a What You See Is What You Get (WYSIWYG) interface so that content creators require no web development knowledge to create, edit and manage meaningful content from a broad range of structured and unstructured internal and external data. Marketers and sales departments use WCMS to post and share rich content — blogs, videos, podcasts, webinars and more — across company customer touch points to secure desired outcomes: a lead, sale or membership application and more. Through the use of WCMS platforms, you can align your operations, build your brand identity and secure customer loyalty with your web presence to ensure more profitable outcomes.

To give you an idea of how managing your web content can benefit your business, consider the way that Bell Helicopter uses its WCMS. Bell maintains extranet, intranet and Internet sites for multiple locations in numerous countries. Should an employee need a file, he can access it through the website and print what he needs. When new content needs to be published, the employees can do it without the services of a webmaster; for example, the public relations department can submit a news story to the Internet, extranet and intranet simultaneously and without additional help. When an immediate change is critical, it can be done quickly and by a lower level employee.



## Content Hub [kon-tent huhb] Noun

A centralized repository of information and communication mechanisms to distribute the information.

*Antonym:* Information in heaps of spaghetti mess inside and outside of your organization communicated by crossing your fingers and hoping someone sees it.

*Synonym:* Online Channel Optimization (OCO) platform

[Download our introductory whitepaper to know how a content hub can harmonize your marketing](#)

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Selecting a WCMS

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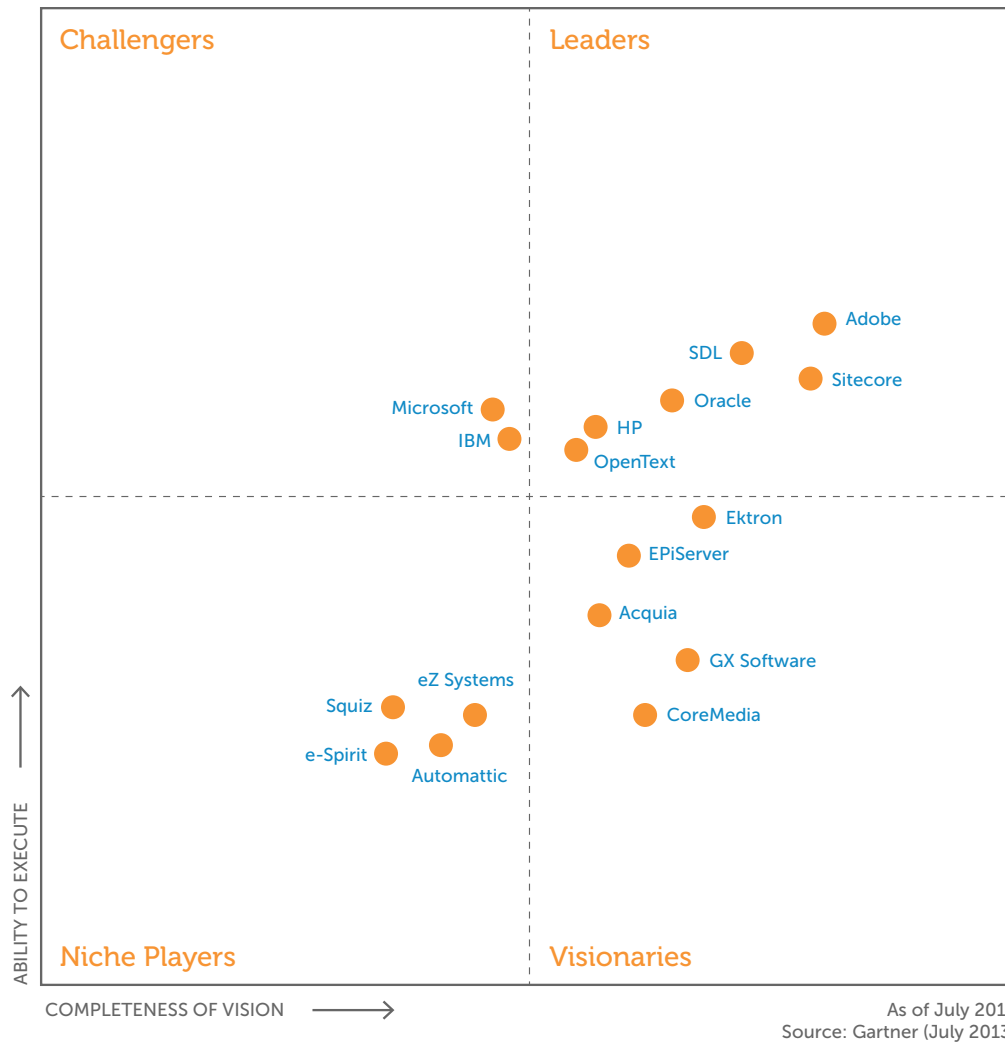
section two

# Which WCMS Vendors should You Consider?



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As evidenced by Gartner’s Magic Quadrant, there is no shortage of WCMS vendors from which to choose. They range from small startups with one or two employees to the tech-industry giants and leaders in the space, such as Sitecore. A comprehensive list of WCMS vendors is beyond the scope of this paper and it would also be quickly outdated as more tech companies begin to offer WCMS solutions virtually every day. Therefore, the WCMS vendors discussed here are the most active ones, generating the most talk in the industry and with proven track records.

## 2.1 Leaders

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### sitecore®

Sitecore's focus has expanded beyond simple WCMS to encompass customer engagement. The company frequently appears on WCMS vendor shortlists for both companies needing ambitious endeavors, such as digital marketing and those seeking more modest solutions. Sitecore's flagship products use .Net technology that work well with SharePoint. Products perform well even for challenging needs, such as multichannel or multilingual requirements.

### Adobe®

Adobe uses Java-based solutions for its typical WCMS solutions. This normally allows rapid deployment, and the solution is modularized, allowing you to add additional components, such as digital asset management, to the base platform. However, Adobe may have features that you do not need and may never use although you will pay for them. Think of it as deciding between a Lamborghini and a sedan. If your driving time is limited to a daily commute down congested freeways, you might prefer the comfort of a sedan over the ability to achieve a top speed of 215+ mph.



## 2.2 Visionaries

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### ektron

Ektron's initial forays into WCMS were primarily focused on small to mid-sized businesses, but it has since garnered a good deal of business from larger corporations. Ektron uses .Net technology for most of its WCMS implementations and the company also has some strong partners, such as Google and Marketo.

### Acquia

Venture-funded Acquia is one of the younger players in the WCMS industry, but since its founding in 2008, the company has gained prominence as a Drupal solutions provider. Acquia is known for its in-depth understanding of social media strategies.

### EPiSERVER

EPiServer is perhaps better known in Sweden, its home country, but the company has made an acquisition that increased its staff in the United States. Its flagship CMS uses .Net technology and its graphical user interface (GUI) is especially popular with non-technical users. The company uses modular architecture to enable new add-ons and interfaces without needing to reinvent the wheel.

section three

# What You Should Look for in a WCMS



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Selecting a WCMS can be confusing, especially if you focus too much on features. A better approach is to think about precisely what your business needs, now and in the future, and ensure that the selected WCMS meets the needs of each type of user.



## 3.1 Usability Requirements for a Business User

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A business user is someone who has expertise and in-depth knowledge of the services or products — a subject matter expert. Business users may perform administrative tasks, provide support for marketing efforts or handle a variety of other tasks. For the typical business user, two areas are usually of importance.



### CONTENT MANAGEMENT

At the most basic level, you need the ability to store, sort and organize files. You will need to decide whether you require features such as version control, multilingual support, runtime indexing and the like. You should also consider the types of files you will be managing, such as embedded videos or audio files.



### EDITORIAL EMPOWERMENT

If you would like the ability to create and publish material without the need to rely on IT, you likely want to determine how easily it can be done by non-technical personnel. WYSIWYG editing tools, logical navigation schemes and well-designed GUI are some qualities you might want to evaluate to ensure the system is easy to use.

## 3.2 Functional Requirements from the Marketing Department

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### MOBILE EXPERIENCE

Increasingly, employees are bringing their own mobile devices to their jobs. Your current and potential clients will also be looking for mobile access. This means that your WCMS will need to provide a good mobile experience regardless of the platform or device used to access your content. This is especially important for your marketing efforts, because your message is less likely to reach your intended audience if your mobile capabilities are poor. Look for a WCMS that allows you to preview content layout for different devices and screen sizes. The ability to re-purpose or reuse existing content to tailor delivery to different devices can not only save you time and money, but will also enhance your customer's user experience.



### SOCIAL INTERACTION

Social media sites have seen explosive growth over the past decade and the trend shows no signs of slowing in the near future. Engaging prospective clients is easier when you go to where they are most likely to be. The WCMS you select should support social interaction and allow you to conduct marketing campaigns across multiple coordinated channels. For example, your company might have a Facebook page on which you post a status update about an informational article on your website, which in turn encourages visitors to learn more about your services.



### CONTEXTUAL ENGAGEMENT

Today, it is no longer enough to just deliver content. You need to make sure that each visitor receives the content that is most appropriate, based on historical data, such as past behavior, as well as predictive data. For example, your WCMS might offer external users the option to create an account for storing their preferences or posting in your forum. Information they provide can be used

to help you customize the content they view. The WCMS you choose should support the metrics and analytics you need to personalize the user's experience.

## MARKETING AUTOMATION



Marketing automation harnesses the power of technology to automate routine tasks and to market online across multiple channels, such as social media sites, websites and email. It is a trend that is expected to continue to increase dramatically. For example, inbound marketing has been proven to offer a higher ROI than traditional outbound methods. Your new WCMS should support existing automated marketing efforts and enhance them. The ability to create personalized marketing messages and tailor them to specific recipients is typically of critical importance.

## 3.3 Integration Requirements from the IT Department

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Unless you are planning to replace your legacy system entirely, you need to consider how you will integrate your WCMS. Your implementation plan should include the requirements to get data in from your CRM, ERP or other systems as well as how to transfer data to your CRM or a third party.



## CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT (CRM)

Your CRM system is likely to be an important part of your marketing and customer service departments. Therefore, it is especially important that your new WCMS integrates seamlessly with your existing CRM. Otherwise, you risk losing valuable marketing analytics that help you determine your true marketing ROI.



## WEB ANALYTICS SOFTWARE

Collecting data on user behavior is important, but without the ability to analyze and utilize it, it serves little purpose. At minimum, your WCMS should include the ability to offer data-driven marketing tools, as well as test landing page designs and copy. For example, if you know the articles that a buyer read immediately before making a purchase — or leaving your site — you'll have a better idea of whether your copy is effective.

## 3.4 Security and Compliance Requirements from the Legal Department

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### INTERNAL SECURITY

You want to ensure that only authorized users can access sensitive information, revise content or publish new content. You might want to restrict permissions or require additional authorization, such as having all content reviewed for accuracy and suitability before it goes “live.” In addition to maintaining accuracy and consistency for your content, this also helps you ensure compliance with legal requirements.



### LEGAL COMPLIANCE

Certain industries must comply with legal regulations regarding content. For example, companies offering debt counseling or bankruptcy information must include a disclaimer on all content. Therefore, when content is approved, the person issuing the authorization must verify not only the message, but also whether the disclaimer is present and properly worded.

section four

# Things to Consider when Shortlisting WCMS



Once you have defined your business needs, you can begin to prepare a list of potential vendors. It is often best to consider two additional factors beyond your business needs: your technology requirements and each vendor's expertise with the different use cases you are likely to encounter.

## 4.1 Technology Requirements

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Determine which technologies each vendor utilizes and how comfortable each is with the different technologies. If you have an in-house IT department, you might want to consider how well your staff's skills match the vendor's technology. Ask vendors to explain the benefits and limitations of their preferred technologies. For example, a WCMS platform that relies heavily on .Net technology has the strength of Microsoft, but one using OSS may be less expensive.

## 4.2 Request a Demo

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Vendors should be able to provide you with an effective demo that is actually relevant to your industry and your needs. Ask each vendor to provide you with a demo for evaluation purposes. During this stage, you should also ask vendors the following questions:

1. Are there examples available of the vendor's WCMS in actual use by a company in your industry?
2. How often does the vendor add new features, and what is the vendor's product management process?
3. What experience does the vendor have integrating with your existing systems, such as your ERP or CRM?



## 4.3 Use Real-World Scenarios for Testing

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The next step is to create case-based scenarios about how your users will interact with the system to accomplish their tasks or objectives. Present the scenarios to different vendors to determine whether their systems support your needs. To create effective scenarios:

1. Make it revolve around a common — but important — task
2. Tailor it to include specific users
3. Make sure it applies to the content that you will need to manage
4. Leave it sufficiently open-ended to reveal differences in vendor approach and product design

### AN EXAMPLE:

As an example, consider the following scenario:

Tom is the marketing director who supervises a staff of 10 that generates and supports micro-sites for promotions and other events. He needs a new micro-site for an upcoming contest the company is sponsoring, so he assigns the task to Lisa, one of his staff members.

Lisa contacts Joe, one of the company's graphic designers, for new imagery. While Joe is preparing the new graphics, Lisa writes the copy. She submits her copy to Tom for approval and Joe submits the new imagery to Lisa for approval. Lisa approves the graphics and forwards to Tom.

Tom discovers that the image matches the copy that Lisa wrote, but the product code linked to the prize is incorrect. How does each vendor's solution approach this problem?

section five

# Broaden Your Search for a WCMS Vendor



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Finding the best WCMS can sometimes come down to attributes that are not easily quantified. You should expand your search to include three basic factors as well as any that are specific to your business or industry.

**MARKET RESPONSIVENESS** — Look for vendors who are innovators and have a good vision for the future of WCMS. Technology changes rapidly and you will need to keep pace with it. For example, some vendors specializing in website development were caught unprepared by the increase in users wanting to make purchases via their mobile devices. You want a vendor who looks ahead and prepares for the next generation of WCMS so that you can remain current — and competitive.

**TRACK RECORD** — The vendor you ultimately select should be able to demonstrate stability, focus and reliability. For example, is the primary business WCMS, CRM and similar products or is the vendor a late-comer whose history has been primarily hardware design? Can the vendor provide testimonials or references from clients that you can verify? What is the turnover rate for key team members, and how much experience do the team members who will be handling your project have with the type of solution you need? (You can visit GlassDoor.com to check the tenure of the vendor's employees.)

**DEFINE TCO** — Your vendor should be able to provide you with the total cost of ownership for your WCMS. Make sure the estimate includes both indirect and direct costs.



section six

# Engage a True Technology Partner



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There is a big difference between a software supplier and a technology partner. If all you needed was a canned WCMS program, you could go to your nearest big-box store and buy one off the shelf. Of course, the stock clerk directing you to the proper aisle and the cashier ringing up your purchase likely will have little to offer in the way of advice or support. It would be up to you to decide which program you need, install it, learn to use it and sort through any issues.



A technology partner, however, can help you every step of the way. Your partner can provide you with proof of concept to help you select the best solution for your specific needs. A proof of concept is a type of enhanced demo that is used to prove that the solution will meet your specific requirements. For example, it may not only demonstrate how user-friendly the interface is, but also how integration with legacy applications is achieved.

Your technology partner should be able to provide you with case studies so that you can compare similar situations to your own. By evaluating the effectiveness of solutions that others have chosen, you can gain a better understanding of the best approach to solve your challenges.

section seven

# Conclusion

In conclusion, here are the key points you need to keep in mind about a WCMS:

1. If you have a website, kiosk, mobile app or other online presence, you need a WCMS
2. Base your selection on what your business actually needs rather than the dazzling array of features offered
3. Choose a vendor whose technology, vision and expertise most closely matches your requirements
4. Use scenarios to test vendor's understanding of your needs and ability to offer solutions
5. Include intangibles or unusual requirements to help you choose the best vendor
6. Select a true technology partner to guide you through selection, implementation and beyond

# Thank You

We'd love to discuss your interest in a content management solution and how we, as an experienced technology partner can assist you in harnessing the power of digital content.

Contact Us



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