ACQUIA

Why a Headless CMS Benefits Your Digital Experience Strategy

What you should know about headless CMS

83% To survive and thrive in competitive markets, brand leaders must share relevant, unique, and personalized content across their own and many different digital applications in an efficient manner.

79% **83% of marketers say that organization under pressure to deliver marketing content differently to ensure they stand out when representing their offerings to customers and prospects.**

Consumers expect compelling digital experiences with consistent messaging across the apps and channels they prefer to use.

92% **92% of customers say they expect brands to have a consistent message and appearance across all the digital platforms they interact with them on**

Marketers agree and know that is important.

78% **78% of marketers say they struggle to create content that can be rapidly released across all of their organization's digital platforms in one go.**[1]

But it's not always a simple task.

Marketers also understand that their customers' expectations are changing and are critical to maintaining changing like them.

Of the technologies marketers cited as having the biggest positive impact on customer experience in 2023, the CMS was second only to artificial intelligence (AI)[2]

$1.1 B Though CMSs featuring a traditional, unified architecture have served businesses well over the past two decades, the need for a more flexible approach has grown quickly.

What Drove the Need for Headless CMS Options?

When channels multiplied beyond just websites, brand leaders needed better ways to:

- **Maximize the value** of their content
- **Optimize reach** for their content
- **Deliver content in the most effective and efficient way possible**

What Makes a CMS "Headless?"

Let's take a closer look at the two conventional types of CMSs:

Easy to use

A traditional CMS has two ends that are closely linked together via a user-friendly interface. The content hard stuffs (data, text, images, and videos) is created, managed, and stored in the back end. The front end serves as the presentation layer. It renders the content and is sometimes referred to as the theme.

Content can be published quickly for basic websites

Operating in a coupled fashion makes it harder to integrate content outside the site

Better tested and reliable

In a headless CMS, the architecture is decoupled so that the content is separated from the display. Users create content through an editor and store it in a standalone database fronted by APIs.

Keep the Advantages and Disadvantages of Each Approach in Mind

Traditional CMS		Headless CMS	
Pros	Cons	Pros	Cons
Well known and proven approach with intuitive interfaces for technical users	Offers fewer customization options and limited scope for creativity	Easier to integrate with new channels	Technically demanding
Easy to use	Operating in a coupled fashion makes it harder to integrate content outside the site	The same content can be published on multiple channels, saving time	Difficult for marketers to use
Content can be published quickly for basic websites	Operating in a coupled fashion makes it harder to integrate content outside the site	IT has greater control	Less secure
Better tested and reliable		Separating the front end back ends gives developers more agility	

More Benefits of the Headless Approach Include:

Flexibility
Content editors and developers can work simultaneously on updating and editing content without being overly dependent on each other's presentation. Developers can create customized experiences for various channels using technologies and frameworks that suit them with the organization's long-term strategy.

Efficiency
With discrete bits of data that are structured and tagged in an organized, consistent manner, it can be repurposed endlessly and distributed across a number of platforms, apps, and devices.

Performance
Because the information is stored in a database, it can be based on what each user is specifically interested in, apps and websites can perform better and faster.

Security
Because the back end is separate from the user interface, it's less susceptible to exposed to DDoS attacks.

Longevity
Because you are not tied to one type of front end, your content can be more easily updated and effectively serves you for a longer time. This helps future-proof your tech stack.

However, a Headless CMS May Demand More From Your Team

More Complex
Developers need to know how to create custom front-end applications that deliver content from the CMS through APIs.

More Technical
Since purely headless CMS systems don't typically include drag-and-drop functionality, pre-built components, or simple WYSIWYG editors, content creators need to be comfortable pretty technical or rely heavily on developers.

The bottom line is that a growing number of organizations have moved beyond what a traditional unified CMS can efficiently deliver.

23%

23% of marketers are using a CMS that is headless, meaning it can provide content to multiple channels and endpoints through APIs.[3]

$751 Million (2021)

The market for headless CMS solutions is growing

$5.528 Million (2031)

7x

By 2032, the market for headless CMS software is forecasted to grow seven times or large as it was in 2022.

$1.6 B **$1.6 Billion investment was raised in just two years in order to bring more headless CMS solutions to market.**[4]

If you've already begun your search for a headless CMS solution, you have soon there's no shortage of new options available.

Where a Headless Approach Makes Sense

Discrete Data From Live Events
Ticketing systems, IoT devices, advertising systems, and other sources of data that change your website and mobile apps.

Strong Content, and Data Updates
Your organization needs to quickly and easily update content across a variety of channels and platforms in a central system.

Sharing Targeted, Personalized Content Across Channels
You want to dramatically accelerate the speed at which you can deliver highly relevant, and personalized content that can be shared across all relevant channels.

When Developers Want More Flexibility
Your developers want the chance to choose the specific tools they use to deliver content, including frameworks, experience across mobile, digital, devices, and platforms.

Useful Infrastructure for Chief Technology
You need to deliver specific business outcomes, and the CMS design should serve as a decomposition interface.

Achieve Your Headless Goals Faster With Drupal CMS

Drupal is the leading headless CMS for organizations that require agility, flexibility, and resiliency in designing digital experiences.

Drupal CMS is:

- **Open source, for maximum flexibility**
- **Supported by a robust, vibrant community**
- **API-First (not API-only)**

Why Organizations Choose Drupal and Acquia Solutions to Manage Their Headless Strategy

Altrides
11% uplift
Through a headless Drupal approach, AB InBev used gamification to foster continuous buying through 18,000 sales representatives in BEES. The campaign achieved an 11% uplift versus non-gamification campaigns.[5]

BIC
20% more schedulable appointments
Following the launch of an updated, headless implementation of their Drupal-based platform, organization BJC saw site page views and unique visitors double, which helped contribute to a 20% increase in schedulable appointments and clinical inquiries.[6]

PRZ
2x hours of video viewed
Moving applied a new headless CMS approach supported by Drupal and Acquia solutions, helped PRZ double the number of hours people viewed video content on their site in the first year.[7]

ARSHA Solutions
#1 app in category
Arsha UK Trains used Drupal and Acquia Lift solutions to develop a custom-tailored offering that helped its clients and companies to use their own UX and UI. The apps developed on top of the headless solution hold the #1 and #2 most downloaded apps in the App Store and Google Play in the UK.[8]

Lonestone
5x mobile performance improvements
Shifting to a headless implementation into LionWire integrate Drupal content into two versions of the website, improving overall site performance. With this new approach, Google Lighthouse mobile performance improved from around 10 to over 50.[9]

For many organizations, the benefits of going headless have become clear. Drupal CMS, Acquia Lift, and Acquia Cloud Platform are all well-suited to support that one market-tested solution across a wide range of use cases and offer maximum flexibility going forward.

Accelerate Headless Drupal Builds by up to 50%

Acquia XMS Starter Kits for Drupal enable organizations to jump-start building content-driven digital experiences. With the Acquia CMS Headless Starter Kit, you can implement a headless content management system (CMS) with a decoupled, decentralized content platform. Quickly. Pick up with Acquia's Next JS Starter Kit and you'll have a JS front end in no time.

Request a Demo

Notes:

1. "Marketo Unify Marketer's Guide to Delivering Customer Experiences." Marketo, https://www.marketo.com/ebooks/marketo-unify-marketers-guide-to-delivering-customer-experiences/
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3. "Content Management Systems Experiences." Lucent Insight, Nielsen, 2023.
4. "Headless CMS Software Market Size, Share, Growth Analysis, Industry Trends, Forecast Report, 2031." Fortune Business Insights, https://www.fortunebusinessinsights.com/headless-cms-software-market-102966
5. "Anheuser-Busch InBev Case Study." Acquia, https://www.acquia.com/customer-success/anheuser-busch-inbev
6. "Headless CMS Software Market Size, Share, Growth Analysis, Industry Trends, Forecast Report, 2031." Fortune Business Insights, https://www.fortunebusinessinsights.com/headless-cms-software-market-102966
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8. "Arsha Solutions Case Study." Acquia, https://www.acquia.com/customer-success/arsha-solutions
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