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FORBES TECH COUNCIL

The Benefits of a Headless CMS

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Traditionally, the role of the content management system (CMS) is to publish text, multimedia, documents, metadata and structure information (typically the content of an application), as well as visual layout assets and client-side code (generally referred to as design).

There are a number of benefits of storing and managing content and design within a CMS, but this does mean that the purpose of the content is limited to a particular channel. For example, if you build a website within your content management system, it's not going to be easy to offer this content to native mobile apps or third-party content users. For most organizations, a single piece of content can be used across Web, mobile, tablet, social media and other connected smart devices, commonly known as the IoT (internet of things). Business users are looking to publish content updates and affect all sites and applications that use this content.

To solve this problem, many organizations are turning to systems that provide a "headless CMS" style of implementation.

With a headless CMS, the CMS is responsible for publishing content and media only; layout, presentation and front-end technology are the responsibility of the development teams that consume content and use as required. With the headless CMS, content is published that is available to any application via API data services. This is commonly known as content as a service (CaaS).

This sounds like a simple solution (and it is) to ensure content is available to any channel and that it is de-coupled from the design.

There are a number of benefits to the headless CMS approach other than content de-coupling:

- The CMS implementation is cleaner. The CMS tool is purely storing content and isn't cluttered with stuff that's relevant to business users and other stuff that's development only.

- With little technical involvement required in the CMS, it's also a lot quicker for business teams to create new functionality. For example, if a marketing department wishes to create a new series of product mini-sites, it can go straight into the CMS and start creating the content immediately without having to wait for developers to build CMS-based templates.

- Companies no longer need large (and expensive) teams of specialist consultants who are knowledgeable in a particular CMS. Sure, some expertise is required, but not at the scale of a traditional CMS.

- It provides a better software architecture. A headless CMS is typically architected so that the CMS platform and the published content are separated.

There are a huge number of benefits to this, including:

Security: Access to the CMS is restructured internally within the organization, while content that is published outside is either approved for public consumption or can be secured/encrypted as required.

Scalability: Need to add more servers to prop up demand for a particular application? Simply spin up a new app server and point it to the content.

Availability: Should the CMS application go offline, there's no impact on the web applications.

- Future-proof updates. When it comes to re-branding one or more channels, there are literally no technical changes required within the CMS.

To summarize, a CMS is responsible for providing data storage, a user editing interface and a way to display and publish data, while a headless CMS provides a way to store and edit data but with a simple API to consume it without a specific way to publish such data.

The rise of the headless CMS approach and the benefits it provides for users, developers and operations mean it's only going to become the default way to implement true multi-channel, multi-brand applications going forward.

While we remain vendor agnostic, a number of CMS tools are really showing leadership in the headless CMS space.

Click **here** for more information on headless CMS selection and implementation.

This piece was originally published to Forbes Tech Council in November of 2017 and was updated in June of 2021.

For the original Forbes Tech Council article, click here.

About Content Bloom

Since 2011, Content Bloom has been implementing content managed solutions to create everything from web and mobile sites through to digital products and online marketing campaigns.

Our expertise is a unique blend of creativity, strategy, and technology that accelerates digital performance, delivering value that exceeds our clients' expectations.

Our cross-functional experts solve a variety of business challenges across the digital marketing spectrum — including CMS selection and installation, content creation, marketing automation, web development, systems integration, and project recovery — all supported by 24-hour managed services teams.

At Content Bloom we focus on quality and our ability to assemble high-performing teams; emphasizing clear communication and delivering via fine-tuned project management practices. We have strong commitment to sharing our knowledge with our customers and the CMS community. Upholding these values has yielded trust and long-term partnerships with our customers.

To find out more about Content Bloom, visit us at www.contentbloom.com.

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