Supercharge your website with a scalable CMS

webflow

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Tear down organizational silos and build better digital experiences

Building and maintaining an enterprise website will always be a team effort — but in too many organizations, the marketers, designers, and developers who share core responsibilities are siloed and separated.

As consumer expectations for engaging, personalized online experiences continue to rise, the old methods of producing and publishing content through traditional content management systems — or CMSs — are failing.

Competing priorities lead to bottlenecks and slow down progress. Conflicting processes dilute efforts to create the best possible experience for the end user. And disparate, often outdated technologies fracture ownership and prevent autonomy.

Webflow offers a better way: a visual-first, fully integrated CMS that increases autonomy and delivers potent functionality while meeting the highest standards of speed, security, and scalability for any enterprise business.

If you're looking for a new approach to powering your enterprise website with a visual CMS, keep reading.

This whitepaper will cover:

- ✓ The problems traditional CMS solutions leave unaddressed

- ✓ How an overreliance on code may be undermining your marketing team

- ✓ Why a fully integrated, visual-first CMS is the most sustainable path forward

Recognizing the limits of the traditional CMS

Most CMS solutions used today fall into one of two categories: legacy providers that rely on templates, or headless platforms that rely on code.

And the marketing teams that use these solutions are often frustrated by one of two limitations: their designers are too restricted by rigid templates, or their ability to get work done depends far too much on developers.

Restricted by templates or reliant on developers: an expensive lose-lose for marketing teams

Traditional CMS providers — like WordPress — promise to make content creation easy by using repeatable templates. But for modern teams, those templates are incredibly limiting. Designers aren't able to make their visions for more engaging or user-centric content experiences a reality — at least, not without tapping into engineering resources to update or replace a template through code.

And teams encounter the same core issue with newer headless CMS platforms like Contentful. Designers can create more customized front-end experiences, but they require front-end developers to bring them to life.

These limitations arise from different types of technology, but the outcome is the same.

When a time-consuming development cycle is required to create every new experience, marketing and design teams can't fully leverage their website to engage with customers or generate leads.

Their hands are tied, and they must rely on outside development support to edit or adjust the site's visual design or database models. This typically includes:

- Changing page styles

- Adding new page templates

- Adding new components to existing pages

- Creating new fields for blog posts

- Creating new data attributes

How relying on code holds marketers back

In most enterprise organizations, this reliance on code means two paths forward for the marketing and content teams tasked with producing and publishing content:

- Rely on in-house engineering resources to handle front-end development, or;

- Outsource development work to an agency that can build, implement, and maintain a separate CMS into the overall web tech stack.

In both cases, marketing teams lose true autonomy. Content workflows must incorporate external teams, and marketers' ability to execute their work becomes reliant on roadmaps, priorities, and timelines they can't control.

When engineering or agency teams have to play a role in creating or updating content on your website, your marketing team (and overall performance) will suffer in three ways: speed, feasibility, and flexibility.

Speed

Involving external teams, whether in-house or agency, slows down the cycle of planning, creating, and publishing content. In-house teams are often busy with other priorities, like building or improving your core product, which means website updates are often put on the back burner. And agency teams are often restricted on available hours or need advance notice to resource and incorporate new requests into their schedules.

If something as simple as updating the text on a button requires a product or project manager's time and energy, it's a good sign an overreliance on code is slowing down your productivity across teams.

Feasibility

When engineers need to incorporate requests from marketing teams into their cycles, they may push back on more creative or time-consuming requirements in favor of simpler, faster updates. And while an iterative approach may work well in agile software development, it can be incredibly frustrating for content teams who are fighting for resources and used to seeing their requests deprioritized and delayed.

If designers and marketers have to repeatedly compromise on their vision to make more feasible requests, you'll end up with a less innovative team, a less engaging website, and a poorer user experience.

Flexibility

Modern marketing leaders need to stay agile and respond swiftly to changing circumstances. Across industries, the expected cycle times for executing campaigns, advertising, testing, and implementation are speeding up. But when marketers need to account for weeks-long development cycles in their content plans, that hinders their team's ability to be nimble and proactive.

If engineering resources are needed to get new pages, banners, or headlines added to your website, your business is likely missing out on timely opportunities — or possibly putting your brand reputation at risk by responding too slowly in times of crisis.

When more teams are involved, more work is involved. And that means lower levels of productivity — and higher overhead.

Adding up the total cost of ownership for your website

In addition to the intangible costs of lost productivity and the missed opportunities described above, it's just downright expensive to build, maintain, and iterate an engineering-dependent website. The [total cost of ownership](#) for an enterprise website usually sprawls across teams, functions, and budgets.

The true cost of engineering-dependent websites

- Initial design and development labor

- Site domain purchases and renewals

- CMS to organize data and content

- Web hosting

- Bespoke tech stack with tools, plugins, and services

- Ongoing development labor for monitoring and maintenance

- Time spent finding and vetting developer talent (in-house or outsourced)

- Time spent project-managing requests between teams or agencies

- Opportunities lost due to launch delays, bottlenecks, and resourcing limitations

Don't underestimate the compounding costs of continuous overhead associated with making any code change to a developer-reliant website. When a marketing team member needs to update content, build a new page, or add a new section to the site, that takes time and resources to plan, communicate, prioritize, code, test, and deploy.

Whether you rely on outsourced development resources, like an agency, or in-house teams — the total cost of relying on engineers to make every code change will be steep. Plus, no matter the type, it's likely your budgets will hide a significant portion of the total cost of ownership for your engineering-dependent website.

Siloing your CMS adds friction

Beyond slowing down marketing teams and running up organizational budgets, the traditional approach to content management adds friction by separating the CMS from the rest of the tech stack involved in content creation, design, website hosting, and integrations.

How a decoupled CMS sits in the tech

Classic platforms like WordPress or Drupal are monoliths:
the front end and the back end of a website are connected
in an application code base. They contain everything
from the database for content all the way up through the
presentation layer, requiring development teams to write
code to bring content and design to life. These tools include
templates to give non-development teams the ability to
publish and update static content, but as discussed earlier,
creative teams are restricted in what kind of content they
can build with these preapproved pages and layouts.

CMS content fields   Code-driven
                            template creation   Content template pages
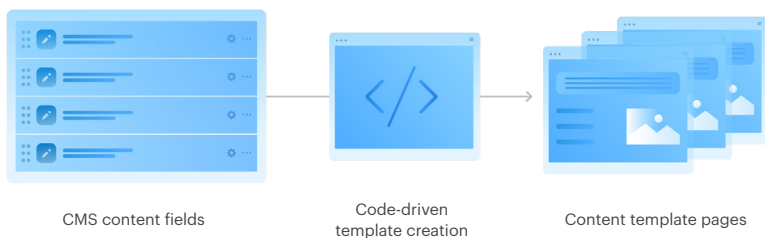
With monolithic platforms, all changes to existing templates
must be handed off from content teams to developers.

By contrast, headless CMSs like Contentful provide the back-end structure, while developers build out the front-end presentation and connect the layers of the website via application programming interfaces (APIs). Essentially, these tools treat the CMS as a microservice by using API calls to create, preview, deliver, and modify content types like text, images, and video. While this approach is more modern than the monolithic platforms, the same limitation remains: Marketers and designers are reliant on engineers to create new digital experiences.

How a traditional CMS adds complexity to decision-making

Beyond the creative process, treating the CMS as a separate layer introduces complexity and restrictions around deciding which platform to use in the first place. With traditional content management solutions, engineering and IT teams have to integrate the platform with hosting, security, databases, and other layers of the tech stack that tend to already be in place. So while the marketing or design team may have a preference for a specific platform, they may be overruled by tech teams who feel their chosen tool isn't compatible with the existing ecosystem.

How a siloed CMS disconnects creatives from the user experience

These kinds of CMS solutions aren't just siloed from other web-related tools — they tend to be siloed from other marketing tech.

For years, the process of creating, designing, and publishing web content has been a multistep process accomplished across multiple technologies. Copy is written in a text document, visuals are mocked up in design tools, and interaction flows are mapped out in UX software. Feedback and review processes are complicated and version control can become a nightmare. And once everything is finally approved, files are handed off to a developer while the creative team crosses their fingers, hopes for the best, and waits to see what their work will actually look like once it's ready to preview (or is actually published) within the CMS.

This disparate process often leaves writers and designers unclear about what the end user will actually encounter once the content is live. Without a seamless, real-time idea of how content will be experienced, it becomes difficult for creatives to put themselves in their audience's shoes and make improvements accordingly.

Key Takeaways

Traditional CMS solutions are holding
your organization back by:

- ✓ Slowing down your marketing team
- ✓ Preventing innovative user experiences
- ✓ Bloating your total cost of site ownership
- ✓ Creating harmful silos within your tech stack

Forward-thinking teams are beginning to demand something
new: a CMS that empowers better user experiences,
streamlines the creative process, and liberates marketing
teams from an overreliance on engineering.

It's time to talk about the no-code movement and visual
web development.

CHAPTER II

Unlocking the power of a fully integrated, visual-first CMS

Today, most websites and applications rely on code. But fewer than 1% of the world´s population can write code - which stops most people from bringing ideas to life.

Only [1 out of every 125 people](#) in today's workforce are fluent in standard programming languages — 1.4 million fewer than global demand calls for.

That is, until no-code, low-code, and visual-first development platforms began to remove the barrier to building for the web: the ability to write code.

These tools apply an abstraction layer over code, translating the fundamentals into a visual interface that allows any creator to build a modern website or app. And we're not just talking about a simple, static page like the WYSIWYG editors of the past — rich, dynamic websites full of interactions, animations, and functionalities.

Webflow delivers on this promise. Combined with our visual-first Designer, Editor, and other web building features, the Webflow CMS is a game changer.

Because when the reliance on knowing how to code is removed from the equation of managing an enterprise website, marketing teams unlock real autonomy — and endless possibilities.

With Webflow, anyone can manage their site content end-to-end

Webflow was built to empower anyone to manage the end-to-end website experience — from content writing to visual design to publishing to the web — without writing a single line of code. And while our platform has evolved in functionality and sophistication over the years, that core mission hasn't changed.

The end result of that mission: marketing teams regain autonomy, engineering teams free up resources, and creative processes thrive.

Marketing teams regain autonomy

Webflow gives your creative and marketing teams invaluable autonomy, and not just over static pages or blog posts. Designers can build new responsive layouts, styles, interactions, and animations in the Webflow Designer and watch as the platform translates their instructions into clean, semantic code. Writers and editors can create or update content in the Webflow Editor. And when pages are ready, teams can publish them straight to the web or share production-ready code. Creatives no longer need to hand off files, wireframes, or diagrams — or valuable control — to developers.

From making simple updates to creating content-rich experiences, Webflow allows your marketing and design teams to work faster, publish more, and take back control over your website.

Development teams free up resources

Giving marketing and design teams the keys to a powerful, yet flexible visual web development platform like Webflow brings a dramatic decrease in demands on developers' time. Rather than updating button copy or coding new page templates, in-house engineering teams can focus their efforts on building and innovating around your core products — the primary reason why many engineers benefit from no-code or visual-first tools.

And if you previously relied on agencies or freelance development support, those budgets should shrink substantially or disappear completely.

Creative processes and user experiences thrive

Beyond returning control to creative and marketing teams, Webflow provides a more seamless way for them to build digital experiences. Content, design, and user experience teams are no longer separated by siloed tools or fragmented processes. Instead, they can all work directly in Webflow.

This means creatives no longer have to imagine what the end result of their work will look like. They can build with live content, get real-time previews of how it appears with design, and make immediate adjustments to land on the best possible experience. Feedback loops get shorter, approvals get easier, and the overall creative process becomes more efficient and powerful for every team.

And while visual-first development is all about empowerment, you can assign roles and permissions within Webflow to oversee which team members have access to create, design, edit, or publish content.

Case study: How MURAL solved engineering dependency with Webflow

Online collaboration software MURAL used a patchwork of custom-developed tools and technologies to power their website. And these tools were managed part-time by one engineer whose priority was usually product development, not marketing site updates.

The design and marketing team felt the pain of depending on another team to update the site. They had visually inconsistent one-off pages instead of a central design system, needed to file tickets and wait days or weeks for simple copy changes, and had limited capacity to bring their own projects to life — let alone respond to requests and ideas from other teams.

But after migrating their site to Webflow, with ongoing support from Webflow's Enterprise team, everything changed. MURAL's design and marketing team can now design and publish new pages more seamlessly thanks to a unified design system. Any needed changes can be made by designers, without rounds of feedback and iteration with engineering. And the marketing team can create, publish, and edit content on their own terms — no development resources required.

> *"Ultimately, we wanted to control our own destiny when it came to the website, and Webflow gives us the freedom to make the changes we need without relying on other teams."*
>
> - David Chin, Design Strategist, MURAL

Since making the switch and giving the marketing team control over their website, site performance improved significantly. MURAL saw a 37% increase in revenue share from self-serve visitors and more than doubled their conversion rate from visitor to free trial sign up.

Scalable storage + customizable collections

While vital to improving user experience, this seamless approach to design and content is just one piece of the Webflow puzzle. Its complement is the visual database that powers the CMS.

This is how Webflow makes it possible for enterprise organizations to create rich, complex content experiences at scale — without writing code.

These items can include pages, parts of pages, or any custom-created schema. For example, an item could be as simple as the name of an author you need to dynamically populate throughout your blog posts or as complex as the full structure of a resource library. Items are organized into collections that can be stored and referenced throughout your website.

Example items you can store in Webflow include:

- Articles
- Images
- Testimonials
- Product descriptions
- Zip codes
- Author bios
- SEO metadata
- CTAs
- Custom code snippets
- Events

Scalable storage of CMS items may seem like table stakes for an enterprise website. And, frankly, it is. But where Webflow stands apart is how our platform makes this database completely customizable, at scale, without needing to write code.

When your teams need to add or edit data fields within your CMS, it's as simple as adding a new field within the Webflow interface. Anyone can customize the CMS database — no engineering resources required.

Case study: How SmugMug customizes content data at scale

When it came time for a site redesign at photography platform [SmugMug](#), the design team took advantage of the opportunity to gain more freedom and flexibility by moving away from their headless CMS with a custom front end that required developers to implement even the smallest updates.

They persuaded company leadership to make the switch to Webflow by creating example pages that showed how easy it was to build layouts, put together interactions and animations, and publish changes with a click. And since Webflow checked the boxes for everything else they needed, such as A/B testing, backup restoration, and autosave, the team got the green light for the switch.

After moving to Webflow, the content and design team could experiment with richer, dynamic content. They used the Webflow CMS to build out and manage the [SmugMug Films](#) section of their site: a creative showcase of contributor interviews and portfolios. And since adding new videos to the page only requires plugging and playing, the content team can add or edit these spotlights on their own — no developer needed. The team also brings colors from the featured images into the CMS, making design customization and cohesiveness a breeze.

> *"Making the move to Webflow has been a tremendous asset. Gone are the days of tracking down engineering resources. Our marketers are happy, our engineers are happy, and most importance to me, our creatives are happy."*
>
> - Andrew Tower, Creative Director, SmugMug

The focus on improved design and user experience paid off. After being redesigned in Webflow, the SmugMug website saw a noticeable uptick in signups and pageviews, with a 52% increase in conversions and 44% decrease in bounce rate.

Growing with your enterprise business

Supporting scalable storage is just part of our ongoing commitment to grow with enterprise businesses. As our own product has grown in popularity, the Webflow community has pushed the limits of what can be done with a visual development platform — and we're continually investing in supporting bigger and better storage solutions that include hundreds of thousands of items to make more powerful websites possible.

Content-rich experiences enterprise businesses are creating in Webflow

- Blogs, whitepapers, & case studies

- Resource libraries

- Product catalogs

- News and media centers

- Help documentation

- FAQs

- Microsites

- Location pages

- Team member bios

- Templated landing pages at scale

The CMS API

Finally, teams can use the Webflow CMS API to programmatically add, update, or delete items from the Webflow CMS, opening up new possibilities for how you can populate your site with content.

For example, you can use the API to pull data into Webflow from other sources, like Eventbrite, Airtable, or industry databases. This allows you to include items like local events or dynamic rates to your collections and automatically publish them across your site.

Or, you can use the API to push data or content out from Webflow to other applications, like a mobile app or CRM.

Case study: How Freshly Uses the Webflow CMS API

When meal delivery service [Freshly](#) wanted to expand their content marketing efforts, the content team knew they needed more autonomy. So they replaced an outdated WordPress instance that frequently required engineering resources with Webflow, moved their blog to the Webflow CMS, and integrated analytics tools to keep custom tracking in place.

Webflow also gave the mobile engineering team the opportunity to connect the Freshly blog with their mobile app via the CMS API — passing all new content from the blog to the app for customers who want to read on the go.

Since making the switch to Webflow, Freshly's blog traffic has doubled.

> *"Now that we're building in Webflow, we're much faster to a live prototype that we can review across browsers and devices. That means it's a lot cheaper for us to make changes on the fly - and we can go live faster."*
>
> - Christopher Patota, Product Manager, Freshly

Key Takeaways

The Webflow CMS empowers your team to:

- ✓ Add, edit, and publish content without
  writing a single line of code

- ✓ Create better user experiences with visual-first tools

- ✓ Build content-rich sites with zero engineering resources

- ✓ Store and customize database items at scale

- ✓ Populate your site with content via API

CHAPTER III

How Webflow solves problems for enterprise engineering teams

In addition to managing content and visual design, a CMS that's integrated with the full website tech stack solves problems that marketing teams have traditionally relied on engineers to scope, prioritize, and address.

Since the Webflow CMS is just one part of our larger website platform — versus a separate solution that only manages content — issues that engineering teams care about can be addressed holistically. Your team only has to support one tool that handles content, visual development, hosting, code deployment, and more — all in a single, end-to-end platform.

Meeting enterprise standards

Webflow checks the vital boxes for enterprise expectations around security, scalable performance, and hosting.

Security

The [Webflow security program](#) maps to industry standards like ISO 27001 and the CIS Critical Security Controls. Our platform is backed by [SOC 2 Type II](#) certification, and we comply with CCPA and GDPR regulations. Webflow is hosted primarily in AWS, and our application security features include two-factor authentication, SSO capabilities, role-based permissions, custom SSL certificates, and backups and versioning.

And since Webflow is fully integrated, unlike traditional CMS platforms like Wordpress, your development team won't have to worry about vulnerabilities introduced by third-party plugins.

Performance

Webflow supports scalable performance during traffic spikes
and surges with our AWS-powered hosting services and
custom hosting clusters. Our website builder also supports
.Webp images while automatically applying features like
lazy-load photos and scalable responsive images — keeping
page load times optimized while taking the burden off your
content and engineering teams. We also provide enterprise
customers with MSAs and SLAs to guarantee compliance
and 99.99% uptime.

Hosting

Webflow can include [fully managed hosting](#) for your website,
powered by the global infrastructure of AWS and Fastly
CDN (content delivery network). All Webflow-hosted sites
meet HTTP/2 standards to ensure fast load times. Our
performance standards meet enterprise needs, with over
10 billion pageviews currently processed every month.

With this kind of infrastructure support in place, the CMS
becomes a tightly integrated layer of the web tech stack
that doesn't add unnecessary complexity or burdens to
engineering teams. This means less demand on in-house
development resources, lower bills from outsourced
engineers, and fewer bottlenecks.

Performance and scale are natively built into the
Webflow platform:

- Manages hosting

- Manages local deployments

- Built-in functionality (no plugins or updates to manage)

- Fine-tunes database performance

- Scalable storage

- Performant

- Fast load times

⚙ Case study: How Virta Health built a faster, more secure site with Webflow

When healthcare brand [Virta](#) was in need of a rebrand,
the marketing and design teams decided to re-platform
their custom-built site and WordPress blog on a new
CMS — and landed on Webflow as their preferred solution.

But since ensuring HIPAA compliance was a top priority for
the healthcare organization, Virta's security team needed to
get involved. Webflow's Enterprise team worked closely with
security stakeholders to answer questions about their unique
requirements. Ultimately, Virta's leadership concluded that
Webflow was indeed the best choice.

"The whole plugin ecosystem introduces so many vulnerabilities that moving away from WordPress worked out in our favor during the security discussion," said Garrett Voorhees, Senior UX Design Manager. And for his design team, "It came down to that Webflow gives you all the design control you need without having to go deep into the code."

> "I recommend Webflow to other companies, and I´m delighted to do it. Webflow provides both power and flexibility, and dramatically increases the speed of frequent and simple changes while optimizing our team´s resources."
>
> - Paul Sytsma, Senior Director of Corporate Marketing, Virta Health

The new website is performing at a higher standard than Virta's previous custom-coded site. "Our site loaded literally twice as fast after switching to Webflow, even without rigorously optimizing every image," said Garrett. The new site has maintained and improved on their SEO and keyword rankings as well.

Key Takeaways

✓ Providing security, performance,
and hosting infrastructure

✓ Streamlining attention to one platform
instead of multiple layers

✓ Reducing the need for development
resources and budgets

Start building powerful web experiences with a visual-first CMS

As you look to the future of how content and end-to-end websites will be managed, it's clear that the current approaches of relying on templates or writing custom code are falling — and will continue to fall — short.

Modern marketers need to move fast and work independently, and engineering teams shouldn't be wasting their time updating static content or managing overly siloed tech stacks.

Visual web development presents a better option: an integrated, scalable CMS that puts user experience at the center of how web content is created. Webflow can relieve the burden of reliance on programming fluency while giving creative and marketing teams the freedom they need to do their best work.

webflow

Ready to scale your website with confidence?

Get in touch with our team of experts to learn how Webflow Enterprise can help you build a better website, faster.

Learn more today

Need help or have a question?

You can always check our <u>forums</u> or our <u>University</u>, and you can always contact us at <u>contact@webflow.com</u>