CRAFTER
SOFTWARE

7 REASONS WHY CRAFTER CMS SHOULD BE ON YOUR WEB CMS SHORTLIST

A recent Forrester study found two-thirds of customer experience professionals believe innovation is a key method of driving business growth. Innovation helps organizations anticipate and respond to customer needs which in turn builds loyalty and drives growth. Organizations that deliver more innovation for less money and less time have a clear advantage over their peers in the race to win the hearts and minds of customers.

Innovation in digital experience is rooted in personalized content, unique functionality, and omni-channel experiences at scale.To deliver on innovation with agility requires the collaboration of a multidisciplinary team consisting of content authors, software developers, and IT operations.Traditional CMS platforms designed primarily to support authors building web pages are obsolete in the face of today's scope and pace of innovation.

Crafter CMS is a new kind of CMS that is designed and built with an architecture and a technology stack to support a high rate of innovation. Crafter CMS enables content authors and devops to work together collaboratively to deliver personalized omni-channel digital experiences at scale faster and easier than ever before.

1: Ease of Use

Modern Content Authoring Tools

One of the most important ingredients is user-friendly, powerful tools for content authors.Today's content must be multi-channel, multi-language and dynamically aggregated and personalized for the consumer. So content authors need to be able to create and visualize their content through combinations of these various lenses.They also need tools that support the other aspects of their job including auditing, rollbacks, approval workflows, digital asset management, scheduling and publishing and they need the ability to handle complex authoring scenarios like rebrands and information architecture reorgs. It's easy to see why a successful CMS implementation must provide them with easy-to-use tools that easily and quickly allow them to tackle daily challenges without the need for IT developers or operations.

Crafter CMS provides web-based, easy-to-use visual tools that authors need and expect in order to do their job effectively:

In-context editing

Drag-and-drop layout and content construction

In-context, multi-channel preview for personalized content

Easy-to-use workflow tools for content review, approval

Powerful versioning and rollback capabilities

Multi-language and localization support

Image, video and document management

Support for rebrands, redesigns and other major changes occur concurrently with daily publishing

A Better Headless CMS for Authors

A growing buzzword in CMS today is the so-called "Headless CMS", which refers to the ability to serve content as an API rather than a rendered web page. The mainstream headless CMS approach has improved the reusability of content and better enabled modern development frameworks, but it has come at a high price for authors. Headless CMS platforms have set authoring tools back at least a decade with a form-based, non-visual editing experience, and little to no support for personalization and other modern requirements of content authoring workflow and process.
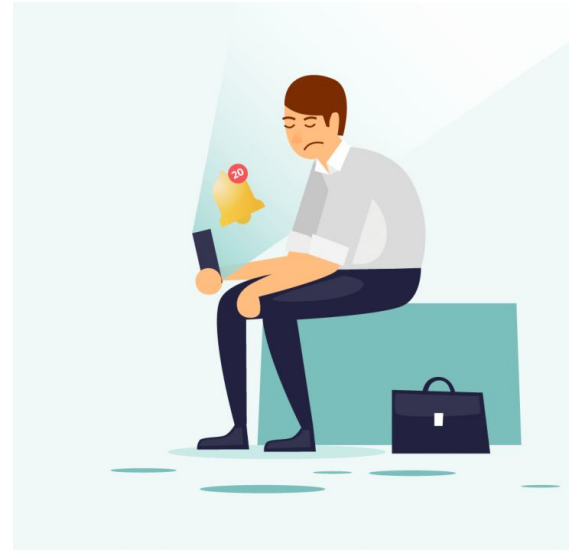
Crafter CMS addresses these limitations in two ways. First, we offer -- and have always offered -- headless capabilities without compromising on author tooling and capabilities. Crafter's API-first, headless capability comes with a full content authoring experience including drag/drop, in-context editing, workflow, and more. Second, Crafter recognizes that headless architecture is only part of the solution for the challenges we face today with complex content, development, and deployment, and therefore provides additional capabilities to fill the remaining gaps.

De-coupled and headless CMS architectures are recent buzzwords in the industry, but Crafter CMS has been decoupled and designed to enable content management for any front-end technology from its inception. With Crafter, authors get all of the benefits of headless CMS without the need to sacrifice on the tooling they need.

2: Faster Continuous Innovation

Today's competitive landscape requires that content authors constantly anticipate and respond to the needs of their users through fresher more relevant content and new functionality. The process of innovating and the process of rolling out innovation should be seamless and should not significantly impact daily operations yet, today this is not the reality for content teams who work in innovative environments. Content freezes, double publishing, and other IT or technology-related bottlenecks and outages are, unfortunately, the norm.

Crafter CMS introduces a revolutionary new repository and workflow capability that makes major process pain points like content freezes and double publishing a thing of the past. Crafter's Code Forward, Content Back™ continuous integration and delivery process leverages technology that enables authors and developers to collaborate and work side by side to innovate and deliver new content and dynamic features with zero friction. Innovation drives business growth. Crafter CMS enables teams to innovate more, and to iterate quickly.

3: Ease of Development

Support Modern Development Technologies

Developers gravitate towards technologies that improve their efficiency and result in a better product. "One size fits all" is the wrong answer in software development. Yet traditional CMS platforms force specific languages, frameworks, and approaches on developers.
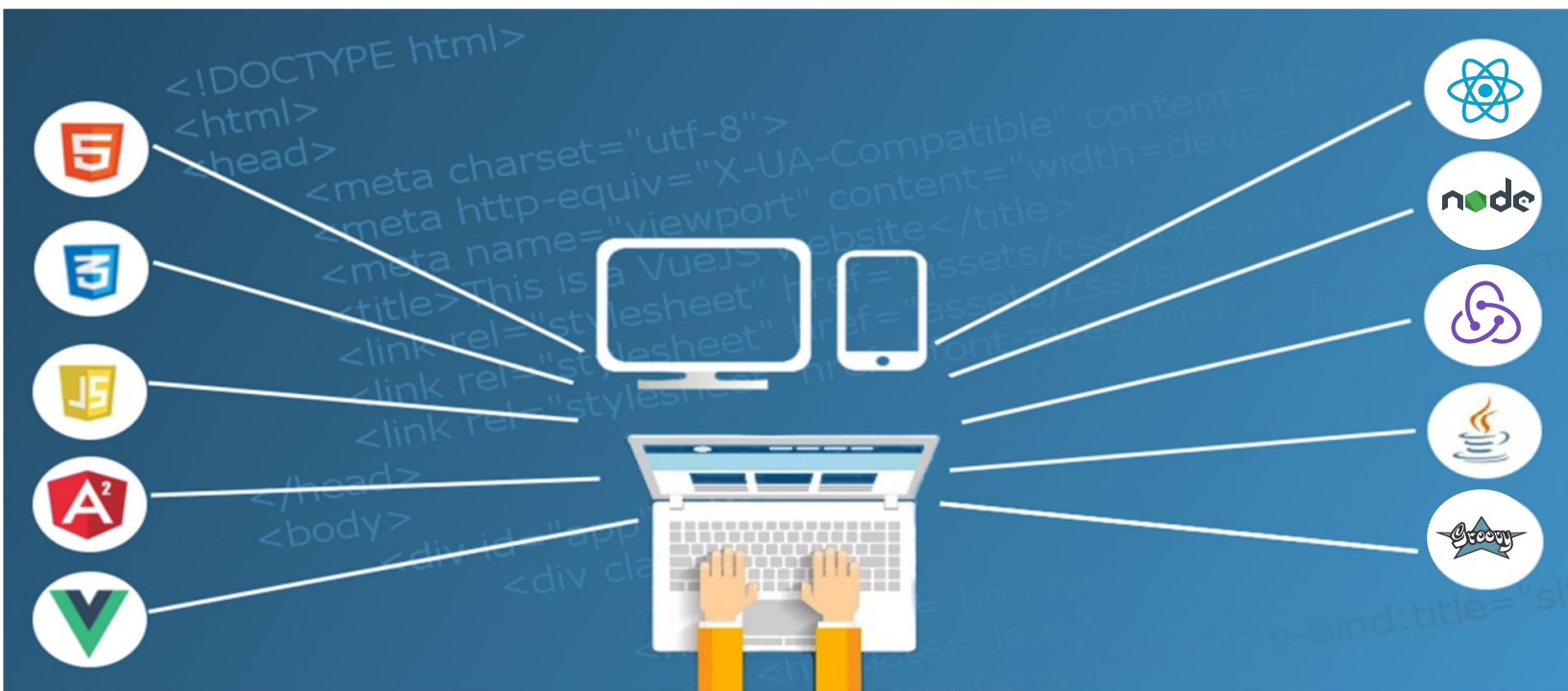
Crafter is a headless CMS that supports any front-end technology, so whether you want to use Bootstrap, React, Angular, Vue, native mobile app frameworks, or anything else, Crafter fully supports you. Need to develop on the server? Crafter supports Java and Groovy, NodeJS, .Net and LAMP. All of Crafter's capabilities are addressable via universal RESTful APIs and platform oriented SDKs. Crafter CMS gives developers the freedom to use the technology, process, and tools that work best for them today, and allows them to adopt new tools tomorrow with no constraints.

Minimal framework friction, overhead and learning curve

Steep, vendor-specific CMS technology and learning curves cost organizations time and money. Moreover, they typecast developer skill sets that confine them to specific teams and projects. Everyone loses when this happens yet it's an unfortunate and common occurrence.
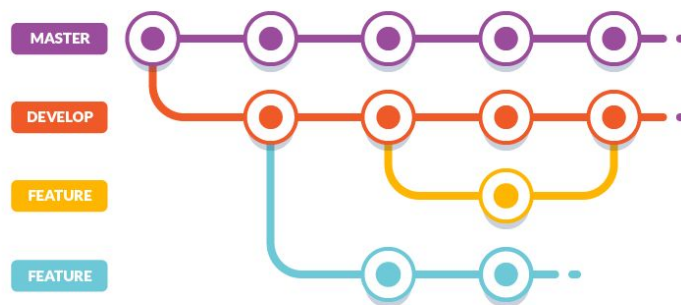
Crafter's has chosen a different approach. Instead of building niche, vendor-specific technology we leverage battle-proven open standard and open source technologies like Git, ElasticSearch, and GraphQL as foundational components of our platform. Further, we strive only to introduce as much homework as is needed. Much of the magic in Crafter is found the technology mix and the hard work of identifying the right technologies and combining and integrating them in an architecture that is both powerful and scalable. Ultimately this approach leverages and bolsters a developer's existing skills without typecasting them as a platform-specific developer. Developers come up to speed quicker, are more productive and they cultivate skills and knowledge that is widely applicable.

7 Reasons Why Crafter CMS Should Be On Your Web CMS Shortlist

4: Git-based Workflow

To the Craftsman, there is no substitute for having the right tool for a given job. Developers are constantly improving their tools and process. However, for a variety of reasons related to technology and architecture choices, most CMS platforms have a difficult time adapting to changes in process and tooling. CMS platforms commonly lack:

- The ability to choose development languages and frameworks
- Support for working in teams
- Support for concurrent teams and parallel development
- Support for local and offline development
- Support for the latest developer tools
- Support for continuous integration and delivery (CI/CD) process and automation

Crafter CMS changes all of that. We know that in order to enable developers to innovate with agility, we must empower multiple teams to run concurrently and enable them to use the tools and process of their own choosing. Crafter CMS is built on a Git-based repository and a technology stack that natively supports these needs. Leveraging standard Git-based mechanics, developers can work locally with their own tools while remaining collaborative with their teams and fully integrated with modern DevOps and CI/CD processes. Further, Crafter's Code Forward, Content Back ™ process enables multiple teams to work on features concurrently while product management teams manage release pipelines and timing.

5: Integration Friendly

Integration is a key strategy for delivering impactful innovation. Given this, you'll likely need to integrate with other enterprise systems or third-party services that already exist within your organization or in the cloud – CRM, ERP, analytics, e-commerce, social media, AI/ML services, video processing, and more. Platforms that attempt to provide an all-in-one digital experience platform for critical functionality only do so at a mediocre level at best.

At Crafter Software, we believe the key to a successful, modern CMS implementation is to take an integration-based approach by utilizing best-of-breed software applications. It is critical for a CMS to have the ability to integrate with other systems without increasing complexity or reducing maintainability. Crafter doesn't try to implement every single feature under the sun. Instead, the platform puts a high value on the underlying architecture and integration capabilities. Crafter's API-first architecture, scripting support and modular packaging model used for integrations and enhancements makes for easy extensibility and upgrade management.
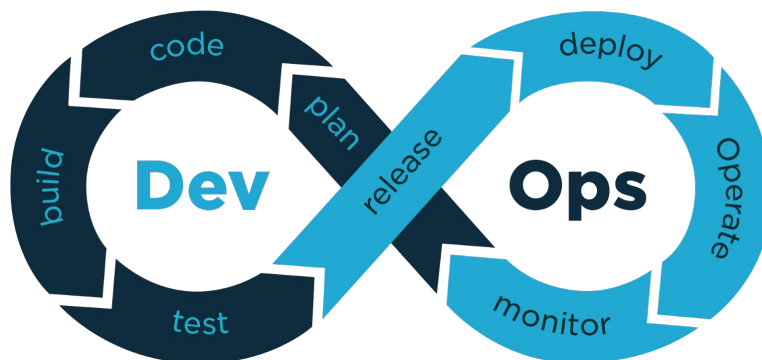
6: CMS Meets DevOps

Companies are rushing to take advantage of the time and cost benefits afforded by modern on-demand platforms, process automation and application deployment strategies championed by the DevOps movement. Such strategies are more reliable, more scalable, more secure, better aligned with business needs and remarkably, due to massive advances in technology, are more cost-effective. Unfortunately nearly every CMS relies on centralized, database-oriented content stores and an application architecture that was designed 20 years ago; as a result, they are incapable of benefitting from DevOps advantages.

DevOps has broken down the barriers between development and operations, but the barrier between content management and DevOps still remains. Does the CMS you are evaluating easily support moving both code and content between environments - Dev/QA/Staging/Production? Does it fit into your automation framework? Is it multi-tenant? Can it be easily scaled up and down? Can you deploy it globally? The ability to solve these challenges is the mark of a truly DevOps friendly CMS.
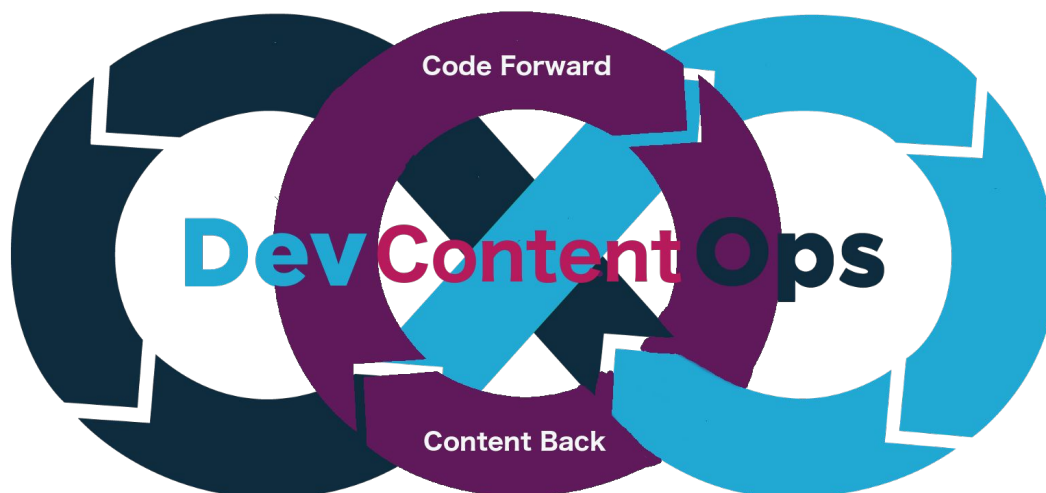
What about typical headless CMS architectures? Being headless does not dictate backend technology nor architecture, and thus it does not intrinsically say anything about how the CMS supports DevOps.

DevOps for Content Managed Apps

How do you know when DevOps is working well? When it's felt but not seen. When development is moving forward without friction. When supporting multiple environments is simple. When new features and functionality are rolled out without impacting or interrupting business activities. When the overhead and cost of running systems is right-sized to the need.

Crafter is the first CMS to extend the benefits of DevOps to content-managed apps. The heart and soul of Crafter's DevOps support is our decentralized, highly scalable architecture and our Code Forward, Content Back™ process. Crafter's Git-based repository and CI/CD integration enable DevOps to support concurrent development teams across the entire development and certification process consisting of multiple environment landscapes - it's what we call DevContentOps™. Content can easily be moved back from production to lower environments. Code can easily be moved forward to production and once approved be deployed anywhere in the world at the touch of a button. Crafter CMS and its unique support for DevContentOps™ facilitates a high rate of concurrent innovation without impacting on-going business operations.

On-Demand and Planet Scale

Modern deployment models enable global distribution, on-demand, elastic scaling, serverless computing and sometime, even support for scenarios that are disconnected (from the internet). These models make deploying applications more cost-effective and address difficult operational scenarios. Many organizations have authors and end-users distributed throughout the globe. Operations teams want their deployments to be as small as possible in order to reduce cost and risk exposure, but also want the system to grow in capacity when and if it needs to. And some organizations need to take their content wherever they go: to disconnected environments like cruise ships, airplanes, remote areas, and eventually, beyond earth. Most CMS platforms couldn't dream of meeting these requirements.
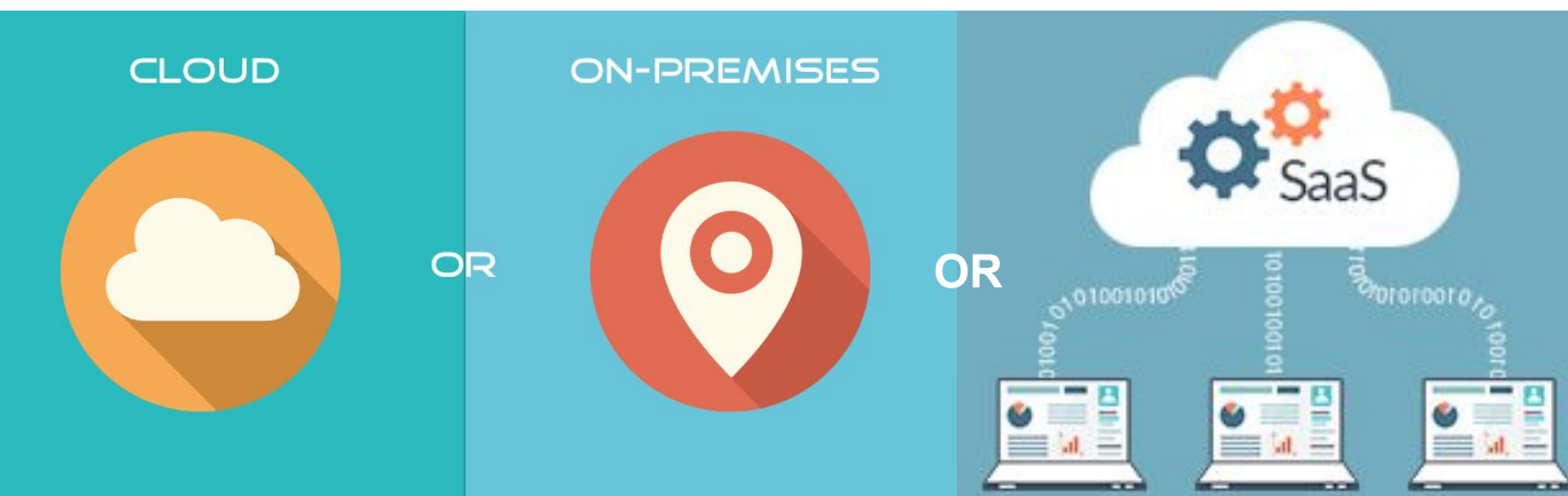
Crafter does today. Crafter is designed and built based on a distributed architecture that can be deployed anywhere in the world and can be elastically scaled on-demand. Crafter's Git-based repository and deployment mechanism combined with a distributed architecture provide operations team with a globally deployable CMS platform that is easily packaged and deployed in Docker and managed with orchestration platforms like Kubernetes.

Flexible Deployment Models

Need to deploy on-premise because of your policies, data security, integrations or other operating conditions? Want to go with Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) and let someone else manage your deployment entirely? Does your operations team want to be "in the cloud" but still need to manage the installation? Or maybe you need a hybrid approach that combines several of these scenarios? The fact is that companies need choice when it comes to where and how their software solutions are deployed. Most platforms offer one or the other.

Crafter Software provides you with a CMS platform that can be deployed in the ways that work best for your organization. Crafter CMS Enterprise Edition deploys on-prem or in private clouds such as Amazon AWS, Google Cloud and Azure. CrafterCloud.io is a SaaS subscription for Crafter CMS that is fully hosted and managed by Crafter Software. With Crafter, you can use the deployment model or a combination of deployment models that work for your organization.

7: Openness

We believe openness is a crucial factor for successful Web content and experience management, especially over the long term. There are several aspects of being open:

Open Content – Content is what represents your business, transcending any particular repository or front-end UI technology. In this era of engagement, your content must be delivered to variety of digital channels and cloud services. Cleanly separate it from any specific presentation technology. Beware any system that keeps your content in proprietary formats or closed repositories.

Open Architecture – Each organization has unique demands that result in their own unique requirements. Architecturally, a decoupled system with a separate delivery technology allows content authors to have the best tools available. These systems need to be modular and pluggable, allowing for easy adaptability and scalability when and where it is needed.

Open Source – Every CMS, website, and/or digital experience involves development to some degree. At Crafter Software, we know there is no better way to build and distribute software and to support a community of developers than to open the source code. Open source improves development efficiency and effectiveness while driving innovation.

Crafter provides an open architecture with pluggable components. In addition, Crafter allows for a wide variety of hosting options, from on-premise – where servers are hosted internally – to cloud deployments. Crafter Community Edition is completely free and open source software licensed under the GNU General Public License (GPL v3.0). Crafter Software also offers a fully supported and commercially licensed Crafter Enterprise Edition for business-critical deployments.

Choosing the Right Solution

Innovation drives business growth. The easier it is for you to innovate and to roll out innovation at the scale you need the more competitive you will be. Traditional CMS platforms can't meet today's innovation demands and are obsolete. The industry has responded with headless systems that only meet some of the needs. A whole new approach is needed.

Crafter CMS is a Git-based, DevOps friendly, headless CMS that provides the features and functionality that innovative organizations require. Putting innovation first, Crafter CMS is specifically designed with a repository and a technology stack that's great for authors, amazing for developers and fantastic for operations. Moreover, Crafter enables all these key stakeholders to work together in collaboration without friction to deliver a continuous stream of innovation anywhere, to any channel, at any scale.

If digital innovation is critical for your organization, Crafter CMS must be on your short list.

Getting Started

Looking learn more?
- Video: Introduction to Crafter CMS 3.x
- Download Crafter CMS: Download
- Launch an AWS instance of Crafter CMS: Launch AMI
- Request a Trial: Contact us

About Crafter Software

Crafter Software is on a mission to replace the broken paradigm of traditional content management, and to usher in a new era of fast, agile and easier development of innovative digital experiences. Our flagship product, Crafter CMS, is amazing for developers, easy for content authors, and fantastic for DevOps. We build our software solutions on the foundation of open source, transparency, robust architecture, high performance, superior quality and outstanding customer support. Available on premise in the enterprise or SaaS in the cloud. Learn more at https://craftersoftware.com and https://craftercms.org.

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