



# Why the Hybrid CMS Is Becoming the CMS of Choice Among Marketers



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Why the Hybrid CMS is Becoming the  
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**The ability to create personalized, data-driven experiences has never been more crucial to competitive differentiation.**

This means having the speed and agility to move beyond the “one-size-fits-all” experience. It also means mobilizing more personalized content to more digital applications — even as those applications become more complex. From chatbots and voice-activated devices to Internet of Things (IoT) solutions and digital signage, there are many existing and emerging channels to service.

Flexibility is important too, especially when it comes to managing structured content across different presentation layers. Accomplishing this efficiently requires your team to have flexibility in the front-end frameworks that dominate the modern digital landscape.

That’s why we support **recommendations** from industry analysts, including Gartner, that most organizations consider moving away from the traditional and headless content management systems (CMSs) of old, and take a closer look at a hybrid CMS. A hybrid CMS is a single content platform that

brings together what IT and marketing both want: unmatched speed to market, efficient cost of ownership, and ease of use that empowers business users.

This is likely something you are already considering. In this e-book we outline a process you can use to validate your decision-making and, as a result, optimize your chances to succeed.



# How to Choose the Right CMS for Your Organization

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### Let's start by defining two conventional CMS types, and what makes them unique:

Most marketers are familiar with traditional CMSs. These are solutions where the back and front ends (presentation layer) are closely linked together via a user-friendly interface, dictating how and where content is published.

Another type of CMS to consider is referred to as headless. This is where 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.



# Questions for Your Team to Consider



When evaluating which type of CMS is right for you, optimize your decision-making process by gathering honest, accurate answers to the following questions:

◆ **How does your marketing and IT team work together to deliver experiences? Are your teams separate? Do you have specific IT members dedicated to supporting your marketing technology?**

We often see three different scenarios:

1. IT has primary responsibility for delivering the digital experience.
2. Marketing is heavily hands-on and has little developer support.

3. IT and marketing share the responsibility equally.

Think carefully about which scenario applies to you.

◆ **What core capabilities does your business rely on?**

A basic blog or website is much simpler to maintain than a complex e-commerce store, for example. Think about how many channels you want to push content to and how complex they are.

◆ **How quickly do you need to move?**

How fast do you need to publish and modify not just content, but its format and the overall experience? What is the frequency of these changes?

◆ **How much experience and bandwidth will your developer team have?**

Do you have the skills and resources required to build and maintain your own solution?

◆ **How will your needs change in the short and long term?**

Do you expect to scale your business significantly? If so, does your CMS need to scale with you? Will you need to publish content in a growing number of new digital channels?



Once you have gathered satisfactory answers to these questions, take some time to consider the key benefits and limitations of traditional and headless CMSs:

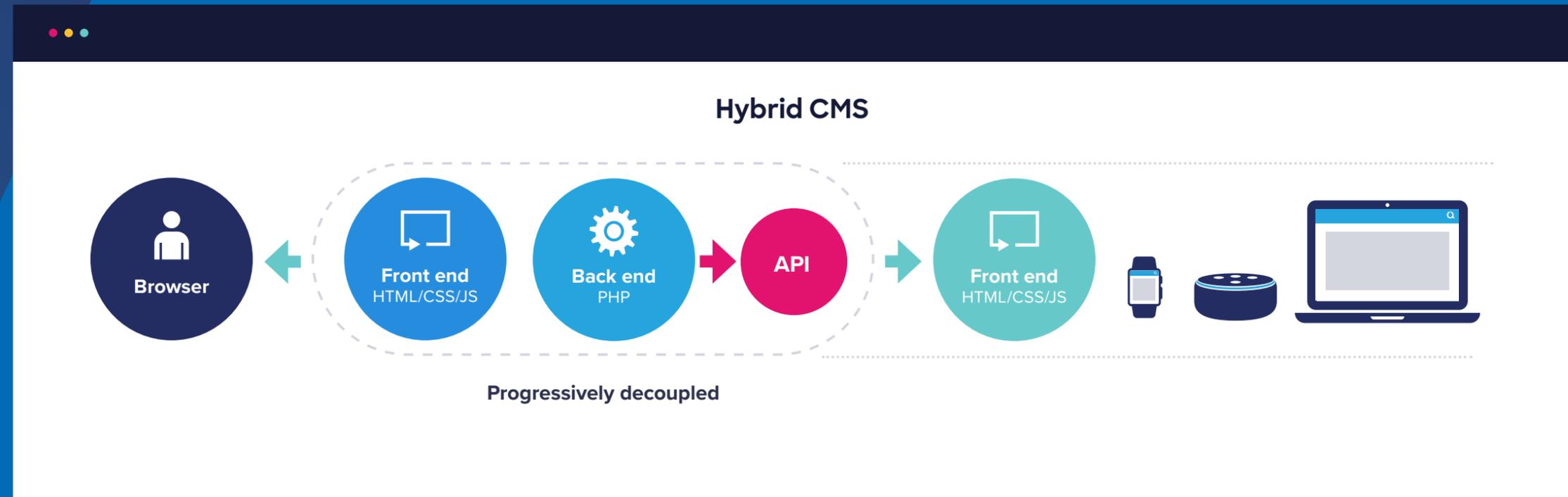
Traditional CMS		Headless CMS	
Pros	Cons	Pros	Cons
Well-known and popular among non-technical users	Offers basic functionality, with limited scope for creativity	Easier to integrate with new channels	Technically demanding
Easy to use	Can be more difficult to integrate with new channels	The same content 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 reuse content outside the site	IT has greater control	Less secure
Battle tested and reliable		Separating the front and back ends gives developers more agility	



# Look Into a Solution That Works Well For Everyone

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While there are some advantages to each approach depending on what your role is, there are downsides for both marketers and IT to consider. Certainly, if your marketers own the digital experience, a headless-only CMS may not be right for you.

**The good news is that the traditional versus headless approach is a false dichotomy. There is now a better way.**

## Hybrid CMS: The Best of Both Worlds

A hybrid CMS blends the best attributes from both traditional and headless CMS types. Users create content through an editor and store it in a database. The content can be served flexibly either through the existing front-end rendering layer or retrieved by an entirely separate front-end rendering layer via APIs.

**A hybrid CMS allows marketers and other non-technical users to create digital experiences without relying on developers or other specialists.**

This will be important both to marketing stakeholders as well as their counterparts in IT. With a CMS that includes core messaging and images, generating new messages, pages, and even campaigns can be done faster — and even on the fly once fully optimized.

A true hybrid CMS provides the omnichannel support that developers need along with the low-code tools to empower marketers to own the experiences that they must deliver.

Hybrid CMS is the tool that can support the whole organization.

Because it allows you to store messages, images, and other assets in their simplest forms, a hybrid CMS then frees you to deploy content to new digital channels as they are introduced or added to your communication mix.





## You'll be better positioned to serve up content through mobile apps, chatbots, or IoT devices.

It gives you limitless possibilities when it comes to omnichannel personalized experience creation. For example, imagine being able to market your products across any digital channel, allowing your customers to interact with them in the same way as they would in real life.

What's clear is that forward-looking organizations are already radically changing how they build and integrate content across digital services.

While you may not be ready to capitalize on the opportunities presented by the ever-evolving new world immediately, you may want to soon. A hybrid CMS gives you the foundation to do that, just as soon as you are ready.

# Both Marketers and IT Can Make Work Easier



**Drupal is the leading hybrid CMS for organizations that require agility, flexibility, and resilience in designing digital experiences. Acquia's Starter Kits enable organizations to get started building content on Drupal right away.**

You no longer need to go through an information architecture process to find your content types, build and configure your content types, export them into code, and then allow your content entry team to start writing content. You can start doing it all on day one.

You can see your content in real time. Once you have created a piece of content, it will be placed in a template so you can see how

it will be displayed. You can then use components to create rich pages that can be delivered by non-technical people. There's no need to write code and no need to rely on engineers or developers.

If they wish, developers can extend the system with decoupled components in the framework of their choice that can be assembled with low-code tools. They can also augment the experience in any way they like.

What's more, Drupal is the open source CMS supported by a robust, vibrant community that easily and rapidly adapts to the ongoing evolution of our digital world. And with Acquia Starter Kits, you can get going with Drupal even faster.

The Acquia CMS Enterprise Low-Code Starter Kit offers dozens of pre-built templates and components. It features a visual layout canvas for simple, drag-and-drop page building, which is supported by preset, customizable design elements.

The Acquia CMS Headless Starter Kit accelerates headless Drupal builds by up to 50%. This starter kit ensures you have a working headless Drupal application on day one to deliver omnichannel content delivery across all digital channels. Pair it with Acquia's Next.JS Starter Kit and you'll have a JS front end in no time.



While managing more data and more applications does bring more risk, it's exactly why security has been so heavily prioritized across both Drupal and Acquia solutions. As an open source project, Drupal is scrutinized and maintained by thousands of developers worldwide. This attention makes Drupal one of the most secure and stable platforms on the market.

In fact, Drupal's advanced enterprise security ensures:

- ◆ **User access control**
- ◆ **Database encryption**
- ◆ **Information sharing via security reports**
- ◆ **Auto-update and core validation work in partnership with GitHub**

- ◆ **Prevention of malicious data entry**
- ◆ **Mitigation of denial of service (DoS) attacks**
- ◆ **Patching of issues before they're exploited**

Likewise, Acquia provides best-in-class security to protect your data and content from attacks.

We will never waiver from our commitment to risk mitigation, governance, and compliance. And it's all handled by our team so you can focus on creating great digital experiences day after day.

It's a win-win scenario. Marketers now have the self-service tools they need, freeing up developers to build the components, integrations, and external applications that can consume data in new and exciting ways.

# How U.S. Broadcaster KCTS 9 is Reimagining Public Television in the Age of Streaming Apps



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**As its traditional linear audience was declining, Seattle-based public broadcasting service KCTS 9 realized it needed to better meet the needs of modern content consumers.**

That's why it is focused on building a next-generation streaming station, via an over-the-top (OTT) platform offering video-on-demand (VOD) content.

KCTS chose Drupal as its CMS. It uses it to take data in, to augment it, to add extra metadata around

it, and to leverage the power of taxonomy.

As a result, a very small team is able to control the content in a smart way and then feed it out to OTT apps including Roku, Apple TV, and Fire TV.

“

*We will continue to add to that list. Drupal is the main brains behind our content lineup. It allows us to scale and grow to multiple systems in a smart, cost-effective way.”*



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**Kevin Colligan, executive director of programming, product and technology at Cascade Public Media**



# Summary and Takeaways

Today's pioneering marketers are focused on delivering the most compelling digital experience possible. And content is at the core of the experience creation process.

While traditional CMSs are generally easy to use, they are not nearly as well-equipped to support new channels and are far from customizable. Headless solutions, meanwhile, generally require extensive developer skill or involvement to add new content or make updates to the website.

### The good news is that there's now a new solution: Hybrid CMS.

Drupal and Acquia combined bring together what IT and marketing both want into a single content platform: **unmatched speed to market, efficient cost of ownership, and ease of use that empowers business users.**

As a result, marketers and other non-technical users can create digital experiences without relying on developers or other

specialists. The strong security inherent to both these platforms helps organizations fulfill their data protection requirements and meet regulatory compliance standards.

And that's not all. Drupal lets you deploy content to new digital channels as they are introduced, so you are better positioned to deliver omnichannel digital experiences across a growing number of channels like digital signage, smart devices, and more.

# Want to find out more about how simple and fast it is to get started with Drupal with Acquia CMS Starter Kits?

[Request A Demo](#)

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The screenshot shows a user interface for the Acquia CMS Administration Tour. At the top, there is a breadcrumb trail: Home > Administration > Tour. Below this is the title "CMS Dashboard". A paragraph of text explains that ACMS organizes features into modules and that the configuration dashboard/wizard setup will help with required and optional modules. Below the text is a blue horizontal line. The main section is titled "Starter Kit Selection" and contains a paragraph explaining that Acquia CMS starter kits provide different starting points for a site. Below this is a table with two columns: "Starter Kit" and "Description". The table lists three options: "Acquia CMS Enterprise low-code", "Acquia CMS Community", and "Acquia CMS Headless". Below the table is a dropdown menu with "Acquia CMS Enterprise low-code" selected.

Home > Administration > Tour

## CMS Dashboard

ACMS organizes its features into individual components called modules. The configuration dashboard/wizard setup will help you select the modules that are required by default, and some optional modules are left disabled on install. A checklist is provided to help you keep track of the modules you have selected.

### Starter Kit Selection

Acquia CMS starter kits provide different starting points for your site depending on your requirements. Select the starter kits below to enable the modules.

Starter Kit	Description
Acquia CMS Enterprise low-code	Acquia CMS with Site Studio
Acquia CMS Community	Acquia CMS with Drupal
Acquia CMS Headless	Acquia CMS with Drupal

Acquia CMS Enterprise low-code ▾

# Acquia

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## About Acquia

Acquia empowers the world's most ambitious brands to create digital customer experiences that matter.

With open source Drupal at its core, the Acquia Digital Experience Platform (DXP) enables marketers, developers, and IT operations teams at thousands of global organizations to rapidly compose and deploy digital products and services that engage customers, enhance conversions, and help businesses stand out.

