

WHITE PAPER

7 REASONS WHY CRAFTER SHOULD BE ON YOUR WEB CMS SHORTLIST

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The evolution of the Web over the years has deeply immersed us into a new era of engagement, and enterprises are striving to achieve higher levels of customer engagement across all of their online channels. Selecting the right Web CMS to build your solution upon is a critical component to its success. Now more than ever, your next Web CMS must enable you to fully manage and optimize the total Web experience of your target audience across multiple digital channels.

This guide will address each consideration along with how Crafter CMS helps meet each requirement.

CONSIDERATION 1: ENGAGEMENT

Engaging your site visitors is the most important capability of any Web CMS. Engagement is about maintaining an on-going bi-directional conversation with customers and their associated lifecycle. There are many Web CMS capabilities that can enable site visitor engagement.

Brands reach people through a variety of mechanisms — SEO, word of mouth over social media, online advertising, etc. — which brings initial brand awareness. From there, we can increase awareness through a variety of marketing tactics such as lead capture, email campaigns, and targeted messaging.

For optimal engagement, the conversation needs to go both ways — your audience also needs a way to share their feedback with you directly and with the market at large. It's these types of engaging behaviors — user comments, ratings, social media — that give you necessary insight to what your audience wants by providing them with a voice.

In addition, delivering targeted, personal and consistent content and experiences across various channels is essential to initiating and holding those meaningful conversations. Collecting relevant user behavior and preferences data will allow you to deliver personalized targeted content that speak directly to their needs.

Moreover, effective communication requires the ability to listen and to respond quickly and accurately. Just as important as getting the message out is the need to capture feedback, measure the response and to react to the effectiveness of your communications. You will always want to monitor page views as this provides a general sense of value for each piece of content. However, to get true insight into how you're adding value to your customers, it's necessary to look directly at the interaction itself.

The best indication of what the user wants is based on activity that signals engagement. Viewing a page is a relatively weak indicator; however, engagement-based activity such as opting into a newsletter, adding an item to a cart, or printing an article is a strong indication of interest. Measuring these activities helps to focus your efforts and to reduce wasted time and cost on ineffective initiatives.

CRAFTER AND ENGAGEMENT

Out of the box, Crafter includes many useful engagement features — personalization and content targeting based on visitor profiles and behavior intelligence, multi-channel publishing to provide a consistent site visitor experience across all online channels, and built-in Google Analytics to track site visitor behavior for overall website performance and campaign effectiveness evaluation. Integration with third party analytics tools is straightforward, and social media integration is built in.

CONSIDERATION 2: MULTI-CHANNEL

The ability to publish to all on-line and off-line channels — including one or more websites, mini- and micro-sites, social media sites like Facebook and Twitter, mobile applications, among others — is imperative. We want to facilitate and engage in conversations across all channels to speak directly to individuals with high-value, immediately useful information, on their terms.

A Web CMS platform needs to not only enable distribution of the content in a way that's appropriate for each channel and all types of mobile devices, but also be able to provide authors with the ability to preview and tweak the content for each channel.

CRAFTER AND MULTI-CHANNEL

Crafter is designed to naturally support multi-channel publishing, and mobile devices and applications are enabled by means of both native device support (iOS and Android) and HTML5 support. Crafter cleanly separates content and presentation through a decoupled authoring and delivery architecture, allowing each system to be optimized for its purpose, audience and scalability requirements.

In addition, Crafter provides authoring tools specifically designed for multi-channel publishing and a delivery framework that can detect and respond to varying channel needs through utilization of channel-specific templates.

CONSIDERATION 3: EASE OF INTEGRATION

To maximize the effectiveness of a complete Web Experience Management solution and optimize user engagement, you'll likely need to integrate with other enterprise systems or third party services that already exist within the organization — CRM, ERP, Analytics, E-commerce, social media and other cloud services.

Web CMS platforms that attempt to provide a wide range of in-platform capabilities for critical functionality — such as e-commerce, analytics, CRM, lead generation and more — often do so at a mediocre level at best. In-platform capabilities are fine when they meet the need. However, at Crafter Software we believe the key to a successful, modern Web CMS implementation is to take an integration-based approach by utilizing best-of-breed software applications. It is critical for a Web CMS to have the ability to integrate with other systems without increasing complexity or reducing maintainability.

CRAFTER AND EASE OF INTEGRATION

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. The modular packaging model used for integrations and enhancements makes for easy extensibility and upgrade management.

A key feature of Crafter Engine, Crafter's content delivery application, is its ease of integration. Crafter Engine provides out-of-the-box integration with numerous data sources and application services. And as a

Spring application, it can easily be integrated with other applications such as CRM and sales force automation, marketing and email campaign management, and other enterprise systems required for optimizing the Web experience for your audience.

CONSIDERATION 4: EASE OF USE

One of the most important ingredients is ease of use for the business users, which ultimately results in the user adoption necessary for a new solution's success.

As the amount of content produced increases, today's Web content teams need to move faster to keep up with the demands. Content managers are managing multiple sites, in multiple languages, across various channels, and with content targeting on top of that. It's easy to see why a successful Web 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 and other departments.

CRAFTER AND EASE OF USE

Crafter presents business users with the toolset they need to effectively take control of their content authoring and publishing needs without IT involvement. Through a robust set of business user tools — powerful, easy-to-use authoring tools, a simple template language suitable for even beginners, scripting for basic dynamic functionality that doesn't require heavy deployments, in-context preview, workflow for content approval and publishing — Crafter decouples the business and IT units, thus reducing IT's involvement and freeing up valuable IT resources to focus on other mission critical initiatives.

CONSIDERATION 5: DEVELOPER FRIENDLY

A great Web CMS will enable business users to perform their day-to-day publishing needs without any development. Content authors will be able to easily create and publish new content and even make simple content model and presentation changes when necessary, without any IT involvement. However, it is not uncommon for an organization to require a few business-specific functional customizations or integration with critical backend systems.

Developers need an extensible platform that enables easy customizations and support for standard, modern tools, so they can focus on innovation instead of being encumbered by older heavy weight technologies.

CRAFTER AND DEVELOPER FRIENDLY

Crafter is extremely developer friendly and leverages today's most modern and best-in-class technologies for Java-based software development. At the core of the system is Spring MVC, the leading application framework for Java-based applications, and Freemarker, an extremely fast and easy-to-use templating language.

CONSIDERATION 6: HIGH PERFORMANCE

Our next consideration is high performance. A Web CMS can have all of the features in the world, but if it's unstable and doesn't produce a website that responds quickly, then basically it's dead from the start. Website responsiveness can be directly tied to revenue. Your Web CMS needs to perform well with a small footprint, and when it does scale, it needs to do so simply, and horizontally without adding a lot of cost and complexity.

Typically, high performance equates to higher hardware costs, complexity, and increased IT footprint. However, using high performing software can reduce the required IT footprint, resulting in lower complexity, lower costs, higher reliability, and simpler horizontal scalability.

CRAFTER AND HIGH PERFORMANCE

Built using best-in-class open source and standards-based technologies, Crafter delivers extremely high-performance. Our performance tests have shown that Crafter can deliver between one and five million fully dynamic pages per second on a single CPU depending on page complexity.

CONSIDERATION 7: OPEN

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 — it transcends any particular repository or display technology. In this era of engagement, you will find your content delivered on many different types of devices and distributed across the internet via blogs, social networks, and other services. That's why it's so important to allow that content to flow freely in and out of your content management system and clearly separate from any specific presentation.

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, most efficient tools available, without losing focus on serving audiences across all channels. These systems need to be modular and pluggable, allowing for quick and easy adaptability and scalability when and where it is needed. In addition, it's important to keep your hosting options open — between on premise, cloud and hybrid deployment options — to one that best suits your organizational needs.

Open Source — Every Web CMS and website 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 AND OPEN

Crafter has an extremely open architecture with pluggable components. Being composed of two separate applications for authoring and delivery means a site is created, managed and previewed on the authoring side, and after going through the appropriate workflow approval process, is then deployed separately to a highly scalable content delivery tier. Even more, all the components of the default Alfresco repository that Crafter sits on are also pluggable.

With Crafter, content remains portable — everything is stored as XML, allowing content to easily be ported between systems as well as integrated with various third party services.

In addition, Crafter allows for a wide variety of hosting options, from on premise — where servers are hosted internally — to cloud deployments — where only a browser is needed for access. It's also possible to deploy hybrid cloud models for additional performance as well as to support advanced collaborative workflows with outside partners and vendors.

Lastly, Crafter Community Edition is completely free and open source software licensed under the GNU General Public License (GPL) version 3.0. Organizations currently evaluating WEM solutions can easily download Crafter and test it out for themselves — it only takes a few minutes to get a site up and running. Crafter Software also offers a fully supported Crafter Enterprise Edition for business-critical deployments.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT SOLUTION

Choosing a Web CMS that meets these seven considerations — Engagement, Multi-Channel, Ease of Integration, Ease of Use, Developer Friendly, High-Performance, and Open — provides enterprises with a flexible, reliable and scalable platform necessary for building a solution to provide the rich and engaging site visitor experience that meet the demands of the modern Web user.

An open and agile WEM solution based on Crafter provides enterprises with a robust and reliable enterprise-grade platform that's flexible enough to cater to each organization's unique needs. Crafter CMS enables business users, marketers, and content editors to easily create and manage sophisticated, dynamic Web experiences across multiple online channels. By leveraging leading enterprise-grade open source technology to deliver engaging customer experiences, Crafter provides the flexibility, agility, and innovation organizations need to quickly accomplish the tasks that drive results and propel business growth.

GET STARTED TODAY

Crafter Software has partnered with leading system integrators to provide expert consulting services for our customers. Through uniquely tailored open source solutions that enable innovation and project success through best-of-breed tools and seasoned development expertise, organizations can now transform static content and outdated technical infrastructure into more productive and creative strategies and flexible systems to create personalized and engaging Web experiences for their customers.

TO LEARN MORE

For more information about Crafter, visit our website at craftersoftware.com.

ABOUT CRAFTER SOFTWARE

Crafter Software enables the creation of rich and engaging websites, mobile applications, and multi-channel digital experiences. The company's software solutions are based on the award-winning Crafter CMS open source project, which was built from the ground up as a modern platform for creating more relevant web experiences through targeted delivery of personalized content.

Serving as the lynchpin between enterprise systems and end users, Crafter's solutions enable marketing, sales and support teams to author and manage content while harvesting analytics and data-driven insights to deliver engaging experiences across all digital channels - the web, mobile, social, and more. For more information, visit craftersoftware.com and craftercms.org.