BLOG | ECOMMERCE

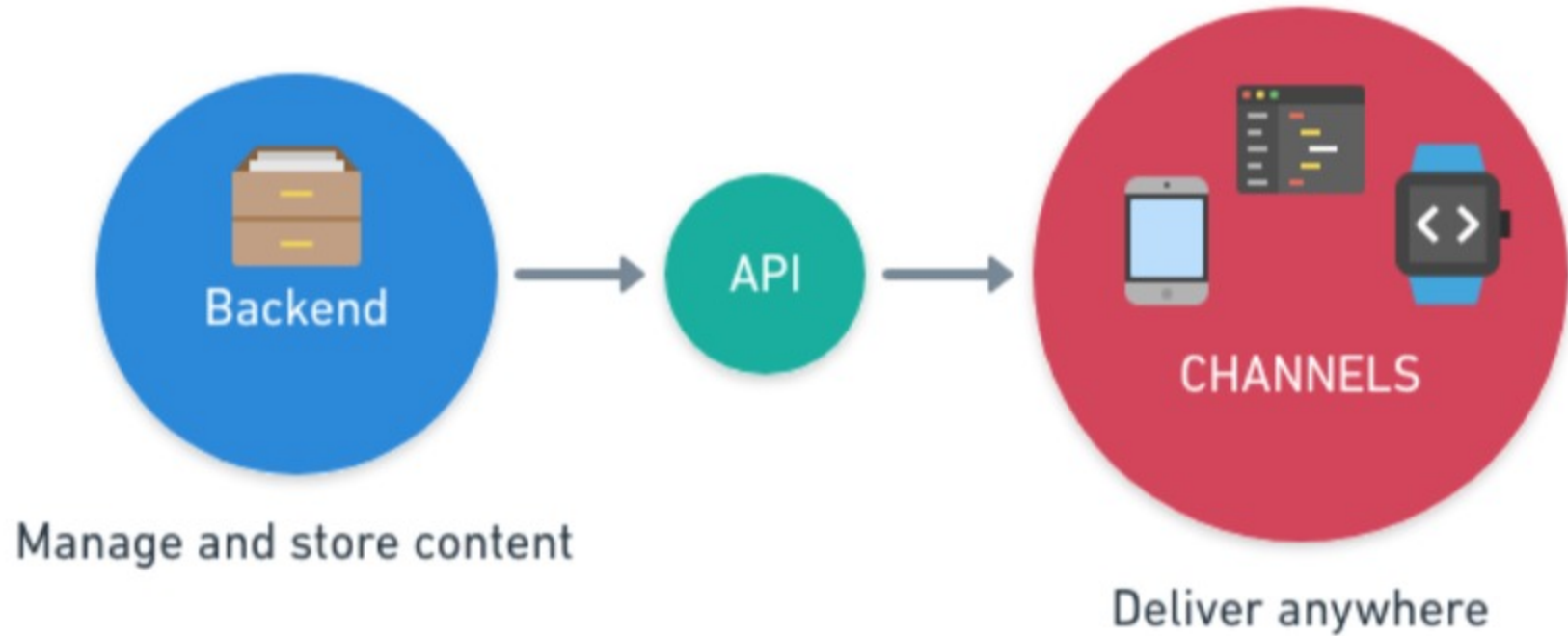# Headless eCommerce vs traditional eCommerce platforms

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Those who are continuously looking to reinvent commerce and improve customer experience are probably already familiar with the term headless. But what really stands behind this term? Are all **headless commerce** solutions the same?

This post will attempt to give you some solid answers to help you transition into the world of headless innovation and disruptive retail experiences.
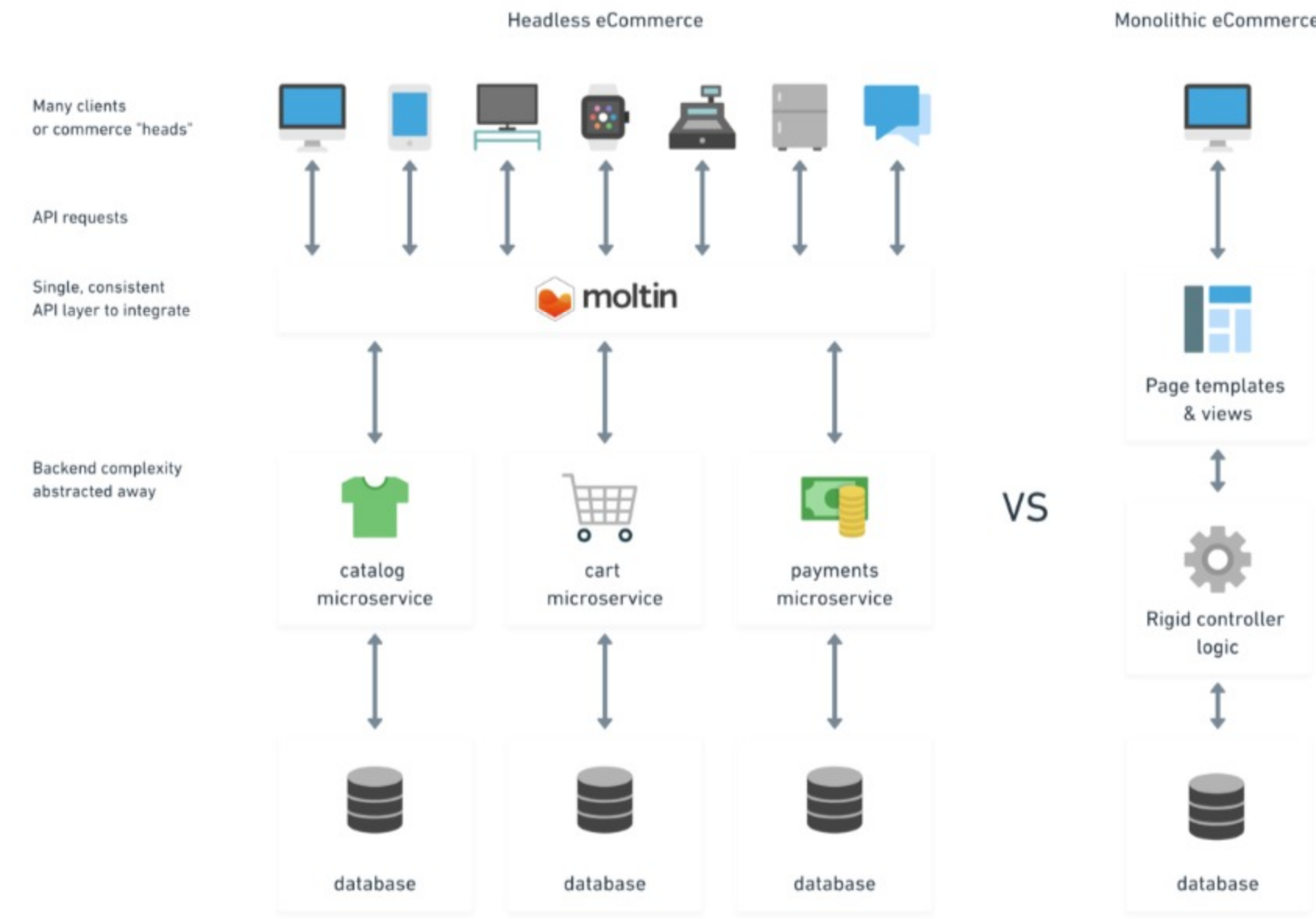
What's headless, and why is everybody making such a big fuss around it?

Headless is a term used to describe a software architecture pattern where the frontend code / UI layer (the head) is separated from the backend logic engine (the body).

Why is headless considered groundbreaking?

Decoupling the frontend removes any constraining dependencies with the backend, and opens a free pathway to innovate the frontend without any restrictions. That's why headless offers a truly cutting-edge way of managing the web content and user experience. Frontend developers can solely focus on providing highly innovative content without the need to worry about the backend.

Developers love headless, but what about the business side of it? Is it really a good idea to invest in headless, and burden customers with potential site timeouts?

Due to a separate display logic, any headless application tends to work faster, is more responsive and easier to maintain or update. It is also better prepared for localization and translation to reach the global audience, if this is important to you. Such a flexible approach is ideal for brands that aspire to evolve and grow in the future or all those who need a very specific frontend.

Additionally, every time an update is needed, or you wish to implement a new feature, all of this can be developed in isolation. In other words, with a headless approach, there's never going to be any site timeout due to development work.

How headless can you be?

Another great aspect of headless is the ability to plug it in any existing platform, regardless if it's another headless or a monolithic system. This means that there's no need to tear the existing architecture, if there's no real benefit in doing so.

What is a traditional approach?

A traditional approach to designing complex software involves a monogamous system based on huge libraries that create internal dependencies to allow their components to work with each other.

Problems of a traditional approach

Typically, the components associated with a traditional model have to run in a specific order for the entire system to work as expected.

Updating such systems without breaking existing integrations requires highly-trained specialists and is time consuming. Moreover, monolithic software is often distributed as packaged applications that are deployed on-premise, and customized to meet the individual business needs. Due to the heavy data handling, a full onboarding process generally takes several months, and involves delegating a trained field engineer to work full-time on a single task.

If headless is so great, why do retailers still use rigid platforms like Magento?

Many people see the **main problem with headless commerce platforms is its flexibility**, the thing that also makes it so powerful. It opens the door of innumerable possibilities to reinvent retail, and imposes a creative approach to creating commerce experiences. This may be a problem for all those who are used to templates and pre-packaged software that dictates the user experience, and takes away the decision-making process. Therefore headless probably isn't the right choice for you, if you're after a more cookie-cutter store where all architectural decisions have been made for you.

In general, businesses that choose headless eCommerce solution, are those who are after a highly customized platform that could be easily integrated with other third party services.

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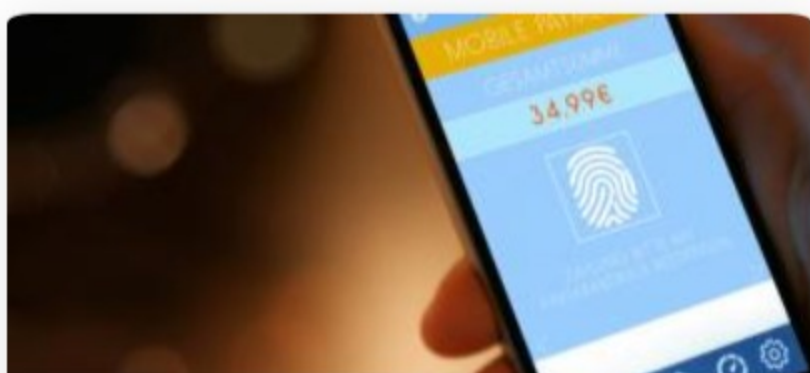
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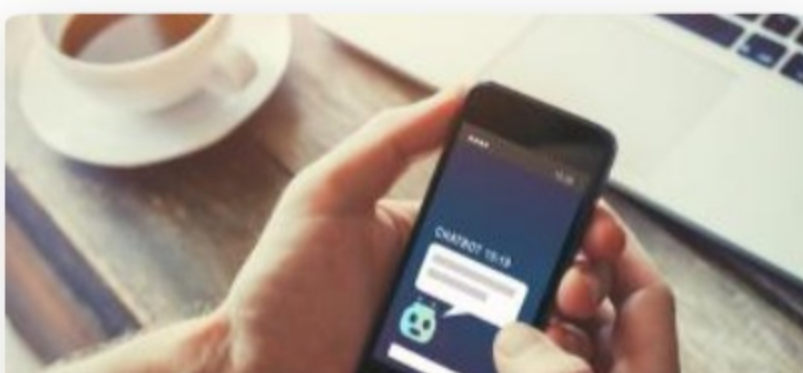

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