

# 11 Headless CMS to Consider for Modern Application

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on April 15, 2020

A majority of the companies who have an online presence either use or plan to use a content management system in some volume.

Unfortunately, traditional CMS (Content Management System) tools have failed to address the user needs in numerous ways, such as providing the required flexibility regarding delivering the content to an existing channel or integrating new delivery formats.

As the era of IoT (Internet of Things) descends upon the human world, the need for a headless CMS is accelerating higher as introducing **IoT to your application** can pose challenges in traditional CMS.

Curious already?

## What is a Headless CMS?

The term “Headless” refers to the lack of a frontend. A **headless CMS** merely contains an API and backend system where the content is stored and delivered.

The lack of frontend is fulfilled in such a way that the content is published to an API or web service which is capable of publishing the content to any smart device. From the technical point of view, instead of creating relationships between the code and content, headless CMS uses API calls to render content into the webpage.

Also, it does not require any hosts. Hence, many developers choose headless CMS over others as its easier to maintain.

## Features of headless CMS

- Modeling, creating and authorizing content
- Organizing content repositories
- Improving workflow and collaboration
- Multi-language

- Advanced image management
- Digital asset management
- Access controls

## Why headless CMS?

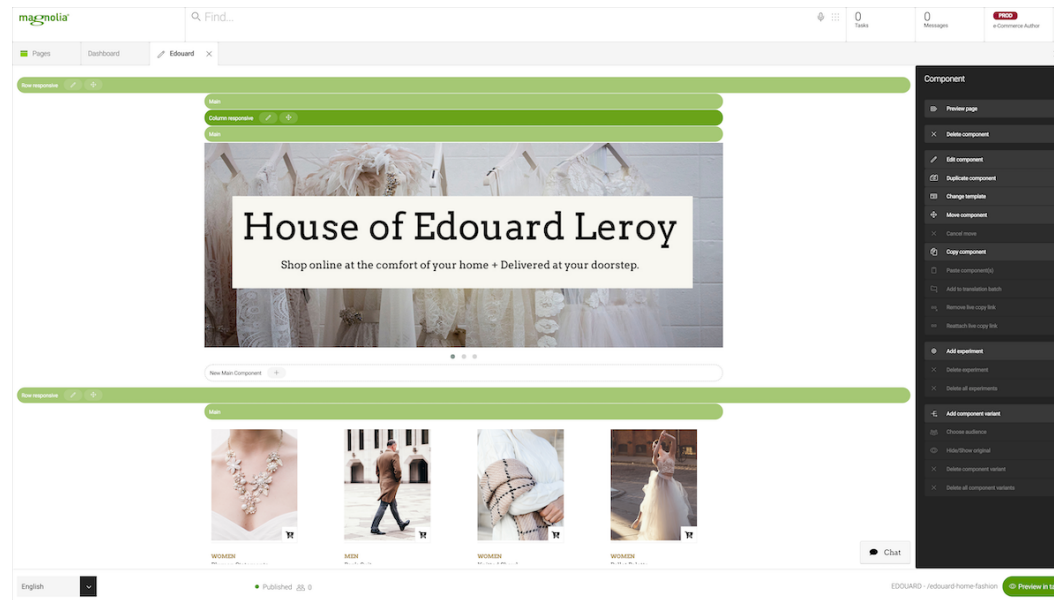
Let us look at some of the benefits of headless CMS:

- **Flexibility:** transitional CMS is very limiting and can be frustrating. Using a headless CMS will allow you to design your front end. Moreover, it comes with a well-defined API, thus, allocating more time to creating content rather than managing it.
- **Compatible:** You will be able to publish the content to any smart device while the backend can be controlled from one device.
- **Secured:** As the Content publishing environment isn't accessible from the database, using this will prevent malware attacks.
- **Scalable:** since the front end and back end are separated, there is no separate time needed for maintenance. This allows you to customize your website anytime without having to compromise the performance.
- **Control:** It does not have any rules and gives the developer complete control. The developer will be able to integrate with any codebase and use any preferred language of their choice.

Now that we know what a headless CMS is, let us look at some of the headless CMS available in the market.

### 1 Magnolia

**Magnolia** has provided headless content management long before its recent rise in popularity. Where Magnolia stands out is in its ability to give authors and editors benefits many headless CMS commonly lack, such as in-context editing, full preview, and personalization.



Developers can work with preferred front-end frameworks like React, Angular and Vue, and integrate easily with other technologies through Magnolia's leading REST APIs.

### Features

- The Visual SPA Editor lets marketers edit Single Page Applications in context instead of being limited to form-based input.
- Content and data from outside systems – such as site analytics – can be accessed natively to eliminate back-and-forth between systems.
- Pre-built connectors for marketing automation, DAM, analytics, commerce, and others

### Pros

- Authors and editors can work independently without relying on developers for content changes.
- Create content once and publish to any channel without losing preview, in-context editing and personalization abilities

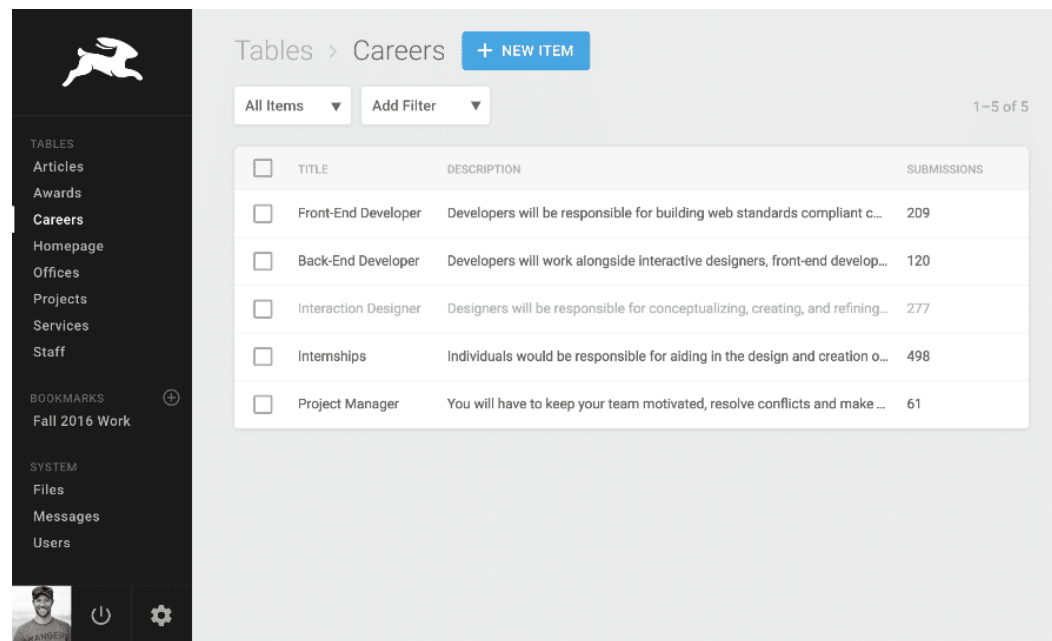
- Complete entire projects using front-end languages, both reducing costs and accelerating time-to-market

### Cons

- Not a good fit for brands with no developer resources for implementation
- Native Digital Asset Management has only basic capabilities.

## 2 Directus

**Directus** is an open-source CMS, is excellent for projects that require customized databases.



Written with backbone.js, the public API uses REST. Similar to other traditional CMS tools, it is powered by PHP; developers will thus, feel comfortable with the scripting language if known.

### Features

- Extremely simple to manage your content with an interface that requires no training.
- It stays up-to-date by pulling whatever is required from the database. It is as comfortable as entering credentials.
- It is fully decomposed and extensible.

#### Pros

- Directus adds the feature of uploading and managing files; databases do not typically handle files.
- Writing comments or a note at certain times is useful. Directus comment features prove to be very functional.
- All activity within directus is tracked, and rollbacks are possible. Hence, you never lose data.

#### Cons

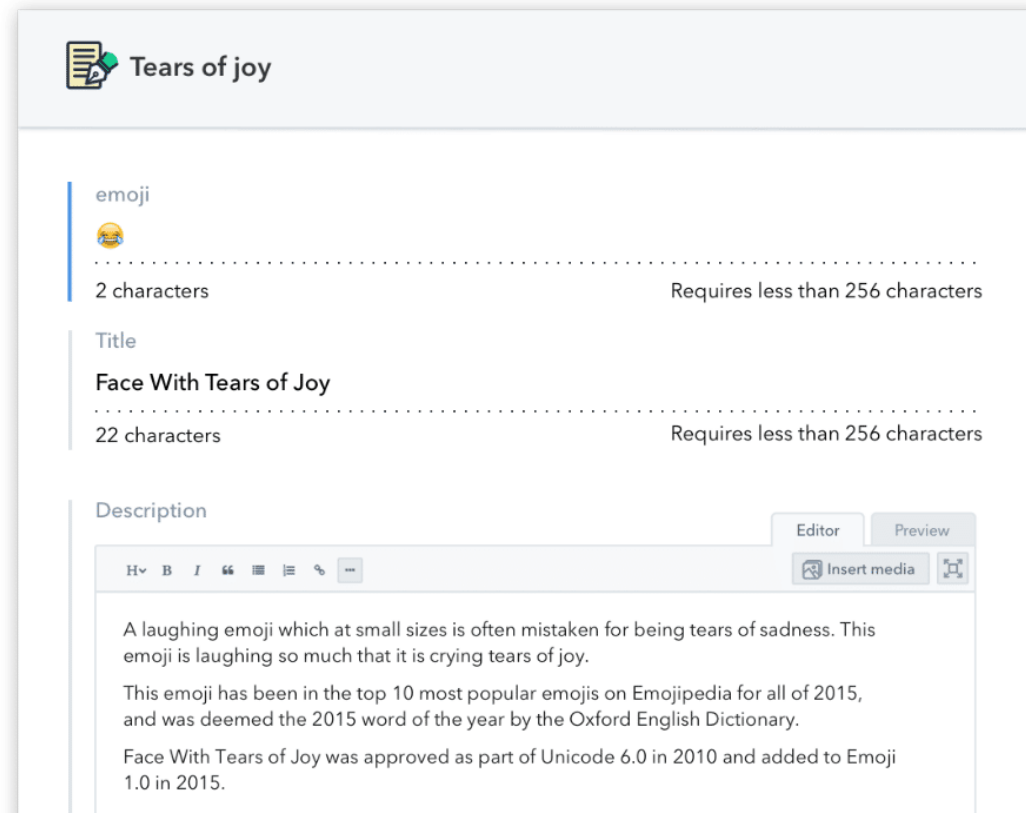
- Pre-uploading long videos fail.

You can either host Directus by yourself or try optimized hosting such as [A2](#).

### 3 Contentful

[Contentful](#) manages a headless CMS infrastructure platform where you focus on your content and backend.

It uses RESTful API development kits for all popular languages. Contentful is welcoming newcomers, so anyone can quickly create data entries.



It proves to be one of the most affordable options for small to medium scale businesses.

### Features

- Developers can manage and deliver content via APIs and are free to use their preferred languages and frameworks.
- Content creators will be able to create and manage content in the web app and have instant access to all new features.
- The fully decoupled write and read API ensures a fault-tolerant system.

### Pros

- Developers are not restricted to particular guidelines and are free to use their languages and frameworks they are comfortable with.
- It provides a one content infrastructure to all. Hence, you can edit the content anywhere, anytime, through a smart device.
- You can also integrate with other services like Dropbox. Hence, existing services can be used without restriction.

### Cons

- While API's help to a certain extent, Developers are left on their own and are held entirely responsible for functionality.
- Developers need to get comfortable with concepts like content-modeling and search-based management to get a proper workflow.

## 4 Butter CMS

Originated in 2014, Chicago based **butterCMS** allows the transfer of data from your old traditional CMS.

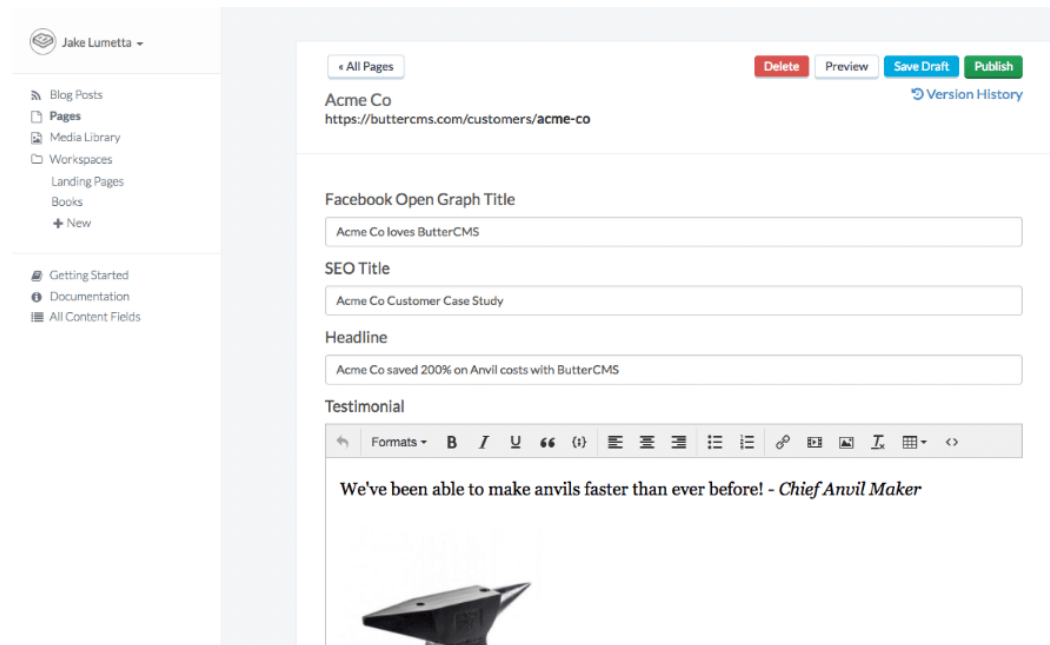
It focuses on delivering two products:

1. Headless CMS
2. Blog Engine

### Features

- Being completely headless, it takes much lesser time.
- It requires zero maintenance. Hence you don't need to worry about hosting, upgrades, security, or performance.
- It provides a powerful admin interface.





### Pros

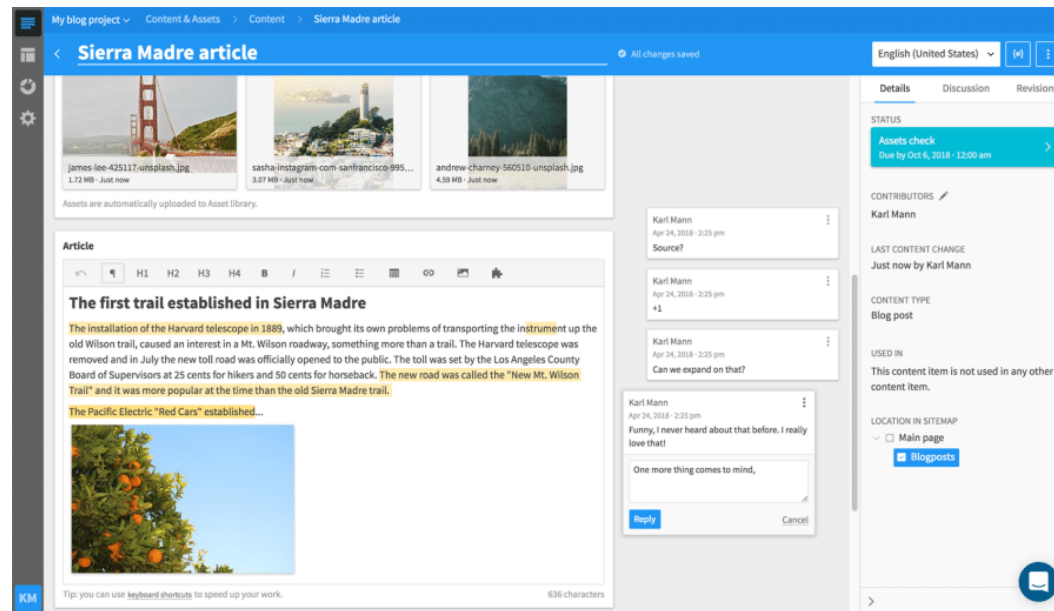
- The SEO support of butter CMS helps significantly boost your page views.
- Installing and integrating requires very little time.
- Their simple API and client libraries integrate with any language/framework.

### Cons

- The user interface could be improved in specific areas.
- Lacks commonly used templates.

## 5 Kentico Kontent

If you're continually producing content, then **Kentico** platform will be the right choice for you as all of your content can be created in one place.



It's a Content-as-a-Service platform that gives enterprises all the headless CMS benefits while empowering marketers at the same time thanks to its rich content operations features.

### Features

- Organize and collaborate with your team through a cloud-based content hub.
- Uses super-fast API to render content in web pages.
- Track and analyze the customer experience.

### Pros

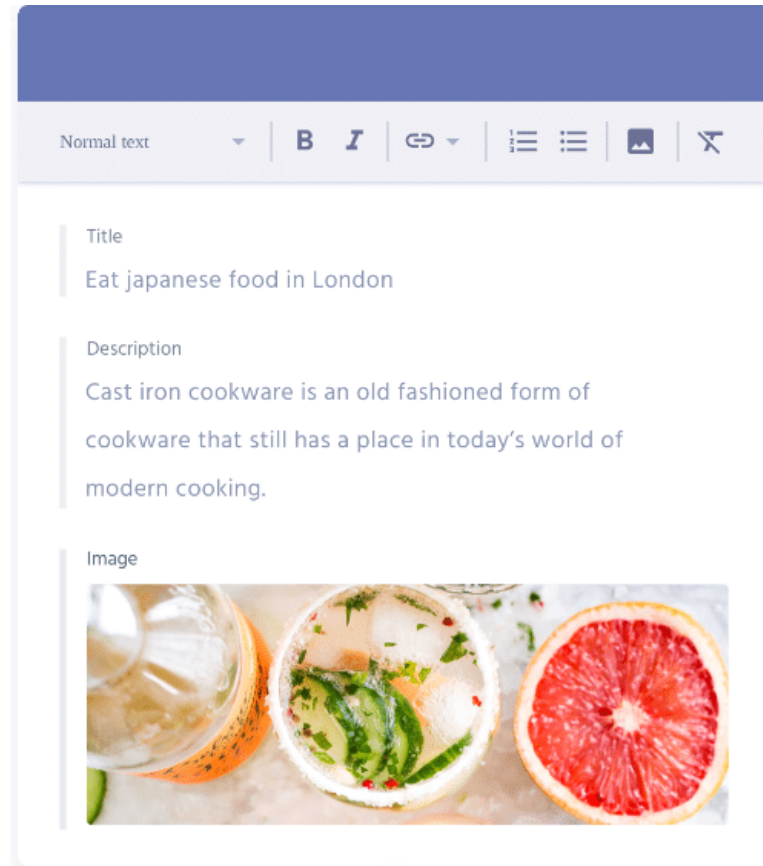
- It's known for its exclusive user-interface.
- User-friendly

### Cons

- Although it offers a free version initially, if the users or the content API increases, prices increase quickly.

## 6 Prismic

With **Prismic** CMS, teams of developers and marketers can launch websites, also allowing front-end developers to customize the front-end and use any programming language.



Launched in 2013, Prismic is a SaaS-based headless CMS that is used by leading companies like Google and eBay.

### Features

- It supports Multi-language to get a better reach.
- Capable of Integrating with other resources

- Scheduling and previews are possible.

#### Pros

- Installing and setting up hardly consumes time.
- User-friendly experience.
- Drag and drop, rich text editors make the **SEO customization** easier.

#### Cons

- A rich text editor is relatively basic.
- Not suitable for brands without developers.

## 7 **Squidex**

**Squidex**, at a type of headless CMS, lets you have complete control over the data.



The software is built with a neat and efficient user-interface, which lets you create and edit the content through any smart device, anywhere!

### Features

- Approval process control
- Document management
- Rich text editor
- Version control

### Pros

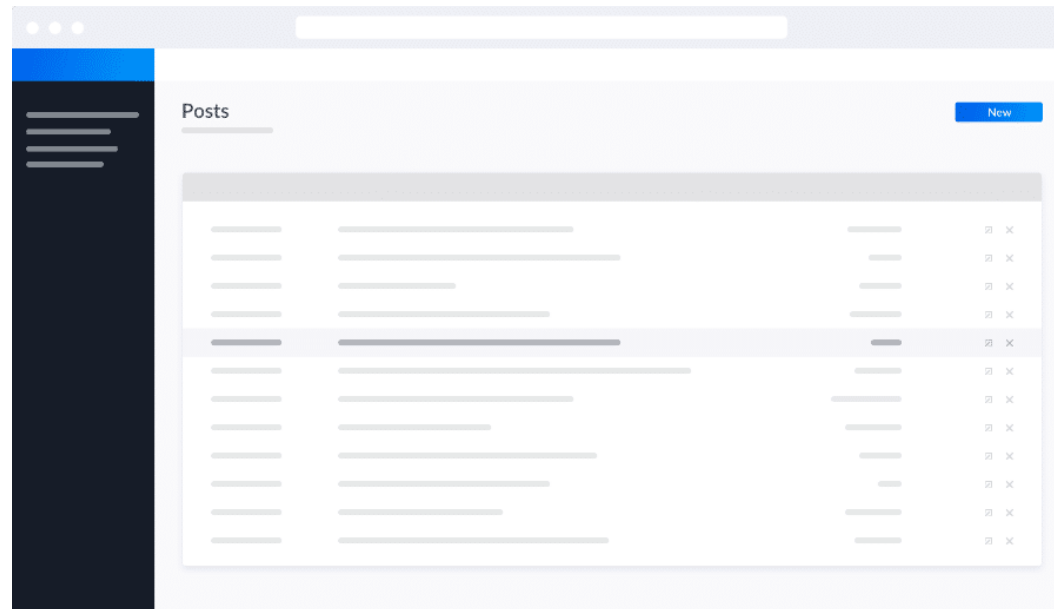
- Squidex is a powerful open-source software that lets you create and edit content with excellent efficiency.
- Gives a reliable content distribution system.
- Developers can configure the system according to their needs.

### Cons

- Lacks workflow for visioning

## 8 Strapi

**Strapi** is an opensource CMS intended to be transparent and striving to be a perfect balance between a CMS, framework, and an automation tool to speed-up back-end development and management.



The main aim of Strapi is to build a robust API and to provide an advanced CMS.

### Features

- Elegant, fully customizable and extensible admin panel

- Plugins oriented
- Capable of integrating with any frameworks

#### Pros

- It comes with a blueprint that lets you create, read, update, and delete your data.
- Managing user sessions is convenient.
- Easier to manage your applications.

#### Cons

- Drag and drop sometimes result in repeated images.
- Error with array field type

## 9 Scrivito

**Scrivito** is a cloud-based javascript CMS, built for digital businesses and suited for medium to large size.



It provides a highly flexible and reliable foundation for your business sites wherever the customers are.

#### Features

- Scrivito requires zero maintenance.
- Powered by ReactJs.
- It combines unmatched WYSIWYG usability for editors.
- High Client-side rendering technology for developers.

#### Pros

- The concept of a workspace is highly efficient.
- Headless design
- User-friendly environment

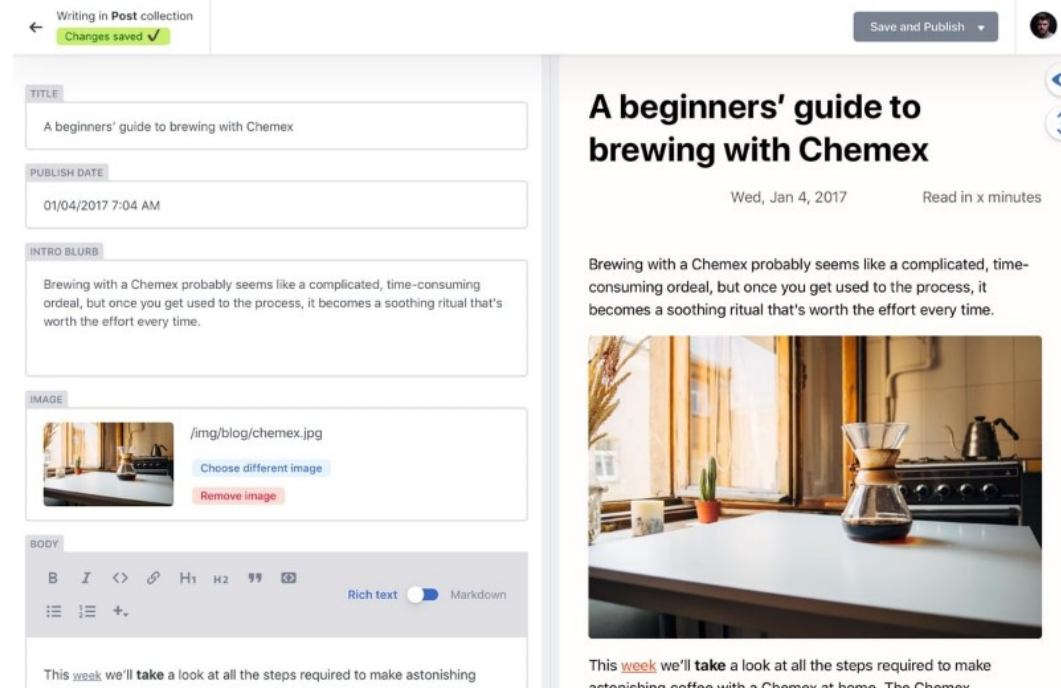
#### Cons

- Lacks administration of a web server.

## 10 Netlify

**Netlify** is an extensible CMS built as a single pack react app. It can be used with any static site generator for a faster and flexible web project.





By making sure all assets are optimized and served with perfect caching-headers with a cookie-less domain, it processes your site to a greater extent.

## Features

- Editor-friendly user interface
- Intuitive workflow for content teams
- With Git Gateway, you can add CMS access for any team member
- Fastest static hosting.

## Pros

- With Netlify, creating a website is extremely simple
- Both web-based and command-line services are available. You can upload your website to Netlify by merely using the drag and drop option.
- Can pull all the updates from Github and Gitlab automatically.

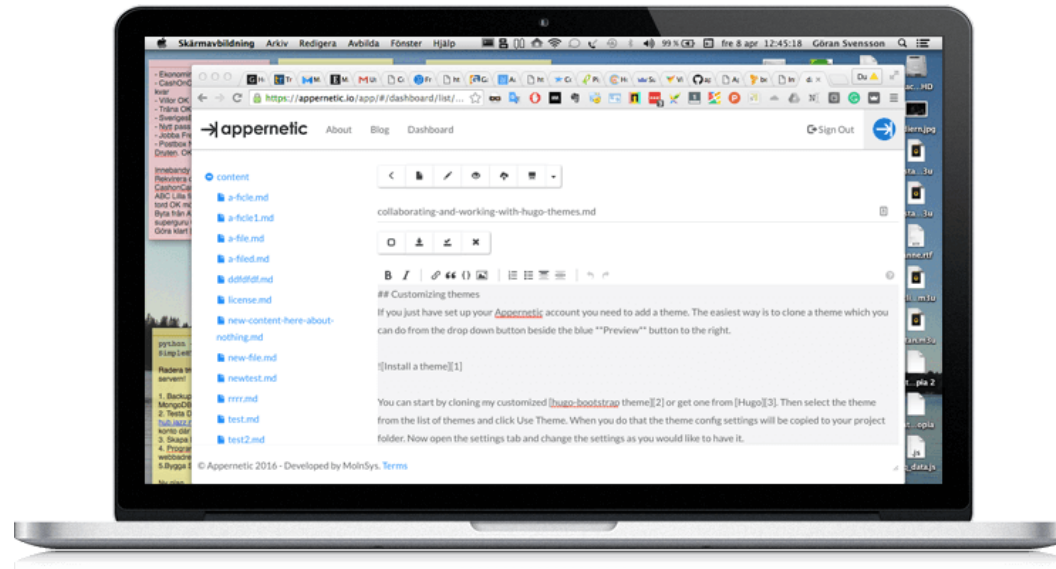
- Supports HTTPS.

### Cons

- Prices can increase in the future.

## 11 Appernetic

**Appernetic** is a static site generator as a form of service (SaAs), acting as a bridge between the simplicity of static web pages and user-friendly CMS.



It allows the creation of faster and more secure websites.

### Features

- Responsive layout.
- Fast and secure
- Using the visual tree view, you can navigate between file systems.
- Configuration
- Neat Organisation of data.

### Pros

- Fast setup
- Developers have complete control over the source code
- Integrated with Github and Gitlab
- You can automatically get a clouldinary link.
- Powerful content model

### Cons

- Lack of better themes
- There is no asset pipeline
- Adding a plugin or extension engine is hard

### A quick comparison table to give you an idea about various headless CMS solutions.

CMS	Opensource?	Highlights	Type	Supported Site Generators
Magnolia	No	Headless CMS, Smart Personalization, Fast	API	All
Directus	Yes	Headless CMS managing not workflow but the content	API	All
Contentful	No	Content management developer platform managed by an API core	API	All

Butter CMS	No	Helps in swiftly creating CMS-powered websites using any programming language.	API	All
Kentico Kontent	No	Headless CMS based on cloud computing services	API	All
Prismic	No	CMS handled by API which serves as a backend for websites and apps	API	All
Squidex	Yes	Headless CMS which is scalable for developers	API	All
Strapi	Yes	Most developed Node.js CMS aiding in building powerful API conveniently	API	All
Scrivito	No	CMS based on cloud computing and ReactJS, set up for digital agencies and large-scale businesses	API	All
Netlify	Yes	Single page CMS wrote in React,	Git-based	All

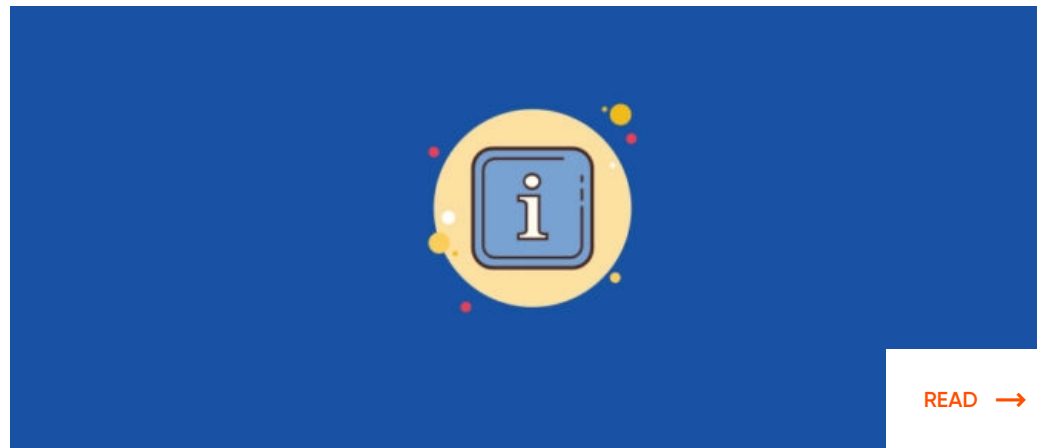
fabricated for static  
site generators

Appernetic	No	This CMS blends the user-friendliness of CMS and the simplicity of static websites	Git-based	Hugo
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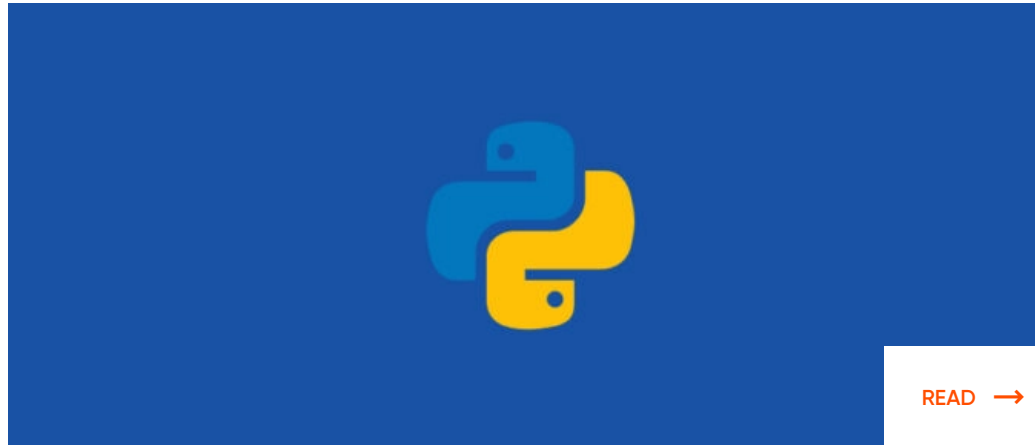
Headless CMS is getting popular than ever. If you are a developer or business owner, then I hope the above gives you an idea about available solutions.



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## Kinsta

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