CMS **COMPARISON**

For organizations focused on the .NET stack seeking a content management system – navigating the options and evaluating systems can be time consuming. This guide is intended to provide insight into the primary differentiators of some of the biggest players.

OVERVIEW

The .NET Content Management landscape is going through significant change across the board. Platforms are adjusting to multi-channel demands, making significant architectural changes as they all are in varying degrees of migrating off the deprecated Microsoft ASP.NET Webforms framework and racing toward .NET Core.

As a result, apples-to-apples comparisons of feature sets – though important – may be overshadowed by each platform's roadmaps and strategy related to the underlying architecture.

Add to that the increasing relevance of headless content management platforms to support more extensive multi-channel strategies, the traditional grids and checklists may not prove insightful or adequate. Ultimately, each platform reviewed in this analysis presents a flexible, scalable and secure option.

DIGITAL EXPERIENCE PLATFORMS

Sitecore wants to be the hub of a digital ecosystem – and it has the architecture to do that, with the price to match. Saying that, it is best to think of Sitecore as a framework – it doesn't provide a lot of out-of-the-box features, but you can build anything you can imagine with it. The front-end MVC architecture is not proprietary and easy for .NET developers to quickly learn and adapt to. The architecture includes headless services – enabling multi-channel use of content. As a company, Sitecore is strong with Experience Management at the center of their success. While once looked at as a slow-moving behemoth, they have embraced more agile methodologies and support leading technologies.
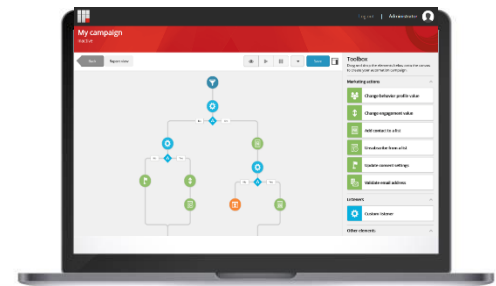
Standout: Their marketing features (personalization, A/B testing) are strong and they've perfected multi-lingual/multi-national sites.

Best fit: Larger enterprises prepared to pay for a world-class platform who are seeking a robust, all-in-one tool.

Sitefinity focuses above all on an intuitive authoring experience to power a solid web presence. The admin and authoring experience – though not easily customized – is intuitive and impressive and easily one of the strongest features of the tool. The front-end MVC architecture is a proprietary framework called Feather, requiring some additional training and expertise for real proficiency. Primarily targeting mid-market, Sitefinity invested significantly in building out the content management portion of digital experience, while building out strong integration capabilities to support marketing automation. With the release of Sitefinity insight, they pushed that one-step further, providing a one-stop place to analyze and personalize online journeys.
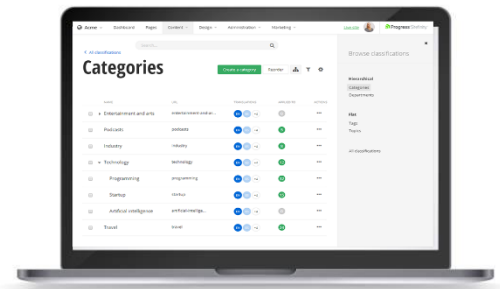
Standout: The authoring experience is spectacular – yes, it's drag and drop but the intuitive features really go one step further.

Best fit: Mid-market organizations with small marketing teams who need robust features without a lot of customization.

Umbraco is the only open-source platform in our analysis. As a result, it is often thought of in an entirely different category – but the investment in features and architecture to support enterprise demands means it should absolutely be considered in a .NET CMS evaluation. Umbraco's editing and authoring experience is very simple and really embraces a natural workflow. Pair that with Umbraco's easy capabilities in extending their API layer and the platform emerges as a strong option for content management within more complex .NET applications. The platform is based on C#, javaScript and Razor – so getting developers up to speed is quick and does not require any knowledge of proprietary languages or tools. And, with a [publicly available roadmap](), you can get a sense of where their focus and investment will be in the months and years to come.
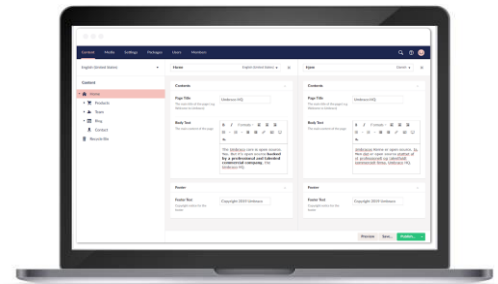
Standout: Umbraco is made for editors. Pair that with a $0 price tag and for some organizations it's a no-brainer.

Best fit: "Brochure" sites supporting smaller marketing teams or complex applications that require basic content management functionality with easy integration.

Xperience by Kentico is a highly adaptable and flexible platform that can serve equally well for larger builds and more rapid development cycles. Its focus on being a developer-friendly tool means integrations are straightforward and the non-proprietary front-end MVC architecture means it's straightforward for skilled developers to quickly become experts. Kentico as a company is doubling down on a content-first philosophy – providing leading-edge thinking around future-proofed architectures. As a company they really focus on transparency, being one of the only licensed products with published pricing and a publicly available roadmap. The all-in-one marketing features serve the mid-market well, enabling marketing automation, personalization, A/B testing and more in a single platform at a very respectable price point.
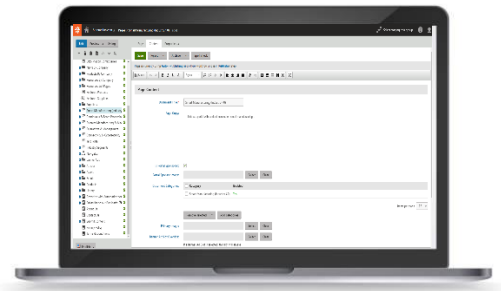
Standout: Xperience is particularly strong in its flexibility for developers and its strong feature set for end-to-end marketing.

Best fit: Xperience is a home run for mid-market – it provides the kind of flexibility generally seen in larger enterprise frameworks while enabling for rapid development to help the organization continually optimize.

HEADLESS PLATFORMS

Given the changing content management landscape, any evaluation should at least consider the many headless options available. Headless Content Management Systems more purely decouple the content from the display – often acting as a repository for your content across your website AND your organization.

In particular, if your organization has a significant number of authors across departments, regions or countries, headless platforms like Kontent by Kentico, Contentstack and Contentful can be a strong option. These tools allow for much more simplified authoring and media management while not ignoring the needs for basic 'web page' management. For a deeper dive on Headless CMS and if it's something that should be in your evaluation list you can download our Headless CMS Factsheet.

ABOUT BLUEMODUS

BlueModus is a certified partner with most of the major players within the .NET CMS space. For a more detailed comparison and insight into licensing structures, system architecture and integration support contact curious@bluemodus.com.