



Case Study



Agency helps enterprise clients transition to WordPress.

When DevMethods' enterprise-level clients started to request WordPress, they sought out a digital experience platform in line with their needs.

Industry

Digital Agency

Site

devmethods.com

Challenge

Clients request WordPress; DevMethods requires an enterprise-level digital experience platform.

Solution

DevMethods works with WP Engine to create a tailor-made solution that met the needs of client, Cox Media.

Results

WP Engine provides DevMethods and their clients with the agility, performance, and support they need to succeed.

DevMethods is a design and development firm whose extensive skill set provides clients with a one-stop-shop for project development. They work clients to create unique brands or carry client's existing brand elements into new projects. They rely on intelligent, relevant, and well-planned software for the most efficient and effective development process. To ensure quality, up-to-date sites, DevMethods provides valuable business insights and continual site maintenance to all clients.



The challenge.

DevMethods started their business on their own proprietary CMS, because at the time, they were the dominant platforms. However, in 2015, that began to shift in a pronounced way. Clients started telling them that they wanted WordPress, since more and more of their competitors were utilizing it. Ben Howerton, Co-Founder and Agency Principal for DevMethods likes to say, "WordPress chose us." It was undeniable that DevMethods needed to dive headfirst into WordPress, but they needed a platform to ensure a fantastic experience for their many clients, including Cox Media.

DevMethods needed a robust, enterprise platform to support Cox Media's college football websites in particular. "We had lots of different types of data, a high volume of editorial output, unbelievably prolific writers about college football, and we had to support that," said Howerton. Not to mention, these sites have very high volume traffic with millions of visitors every month. During peak months, image view counts on site range in the 100 millions.



The solution.

DevMethods adopted WP Engine because, "WP Engine just makes WordPress run so beautifully. They provide incredible performance for us to do whatever we need to

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Ben Howerton,
Co-Founder and Agency Principal
for DevMethods

do. Very few limitations are put in place by WP Engine’s architecture team. We are a company full of developers who like to write and develop plugins, and WP Engine absolutely supports and facilitates this. We worked with a couple other hosting companies that were not as open to integrations.”

This freedom to develop custom solutions for their clients has been a game changer for DevMethods. One of the largest impacts on performance was seen in Cox Media’s sites. The agency was able to include real-time data, schedules, scoring, and more. Each of these required a custom plug-in that they had to develop, and it all ran on WP Engine’s platform perfectly. “We even worked with and met with WP Engine’s architects in person, which is not all that common, to design a caching mechanism that helps support all the various types of data,” said Howerton.

An additional invaluable solution the WP Engine platform provided was optimization for mobile web experiences, including Progressive Web Apps (PWAs). “We started working on building out the Cox Media college football mobile web presence. Then looked at building native apps. Right about the time we started to see the benefits from apps, PWAs came on the scene,” explained Howerton. PWAs are a blend between mobile web, responsive and native applications. The new technology allowed them to create a frictionless way for their users to install their apps without having to go to the app store.

“PWAs provide offline support like reading articles on a plane that have already been downloaded in the app, and can provide notifications - for example, a media publisher can now get back to you when there are new publications that might interest you,” said Howerton. “Not having to go through app store process and install something reduces friction and increases adoption,” he explained.

Taking that a step further, DevMethods is beginning to look at machine learning and AI throughout client websites. “This could be a segue into machine learning. We’ve started to do analysis of published content to create a model that can help us determine the sentiment of the article and viewers to better predict what they want to read next,” said Howerton.



The results.

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In terms of speed, the transition to WP Engine has taken performance to the next level. “We can actually bootstrap a PWA from the AMP page. For example, if you’re reading an article on a mobile device and see ‘click here to read similar/related articles,’ the user will find what was formerly a kludgy transition is now extremely fast and seamless. The AMP article has a certain tag mechanism on it that tells AMP where the PWA is - it’s a URL essentially - and it will actually notify as the user is reading the article and indicate that ‘this person may be transitioning, you may want to bootstrap to the PWA.’ This can occur all on the user’s mobile device. The better we can predict the content that user wants to read, the better we can pre-cache it, and provide that same instantaneous experience,” said Howerton.

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Another touchdown for DevMethods has been the WP Engine support team. “WP Engine’s support team is amazing. That’s obviously part of your core culture, and that’s one thing we recognized almost immediately. You have chat support and you have email support, but I can get a WordPress expert on the phone day or night. That type of customer service has been invaluable for us,” said Howerton.

“We have very high volume sites, and when something goes wrong, there’s an urgent need to talk to someone and get everything resolved fast. Last football season, on signing day, one of the busiest and high-traffic days of the year, a 3rd party mobile application plugin began causing a performance issue. There was way too many uncached requests occurring, and our site was slowing down. We called WP Engine, and they spun up new servers for us within an hour. WP Engine was an absolute lifesaver. Even while still running the 3rd party plugin, we went from apps that wouldn’t respond and websites that were running slowly to perfectly performing infrastructure in one hour. This amounted to a 90% performance boost within 60 minutes.” said Howerton.

About WP Engine.

WP Engine is the world’s leading WordPress digital experience platform that gives companies of all sizes the agility, performance, intelligence, and integrations they need to drive their business forward faster. Founded in 2010, WP Engine is headquartered in Austin, Texas, and has offices in San Francisco, California; San Antonio, Texas; London, England; Limerick, Ireland, and Brisbane, Australia.