THE ADVANTAGES OF AN OPEN SOURCE DXP EXPLAINED

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THE POWER OF AN OPEN SOURCE DXP:

A complete digital solution.

Today, technology decision makers are searching for digital experience management tools that can integrate across their entire organization—solutions that weave together content creation, sales data, CRM functionality, marketing campaigns, and a multitude of other martech touchpoints under a single roof.

Early iterations of these solutions may have been packaged as Web Content Management (WCM) tools or Content Management Systems (CMSs), although historically, they've lacked much of the functionality required for a complete digital solution.

More recently, combinations of these tools have begun to surface in a relatively new offering called a Digital Experience Platform (DXP), which aims to integrate a broad range of information and applications across the customer lifecycle. Unfortunately, many of the large, proprietary options in this space fall short—either due to a lack of functionality, too much functionality, or through added, hidden costs that at the enterprise level can be staggering.

While there are proprietary DXP solutions that cover a level of functionality required by the enterprise, users often find that additional work, in the form of customizations, add-ons, or complicated upgrades are needed to fulfill their ultimate goal of end-to-end business integration. Prohibitive costs, slow development cycles, and closed codebases slow this process even further, leaving businesses that rely on these tools in an incredibly uncomfortable position: stay the course with skyrocketing costs or make the leap to a new platform.

As this landscape evolves, a growing number of organizations are turning to an alternative option for building and managing websites that integrate well with the other parts of their business—open source technologies, and specifically, an open source DXP, which offers more flexibility and a lower total cost of ownership (TCO) than traditional or proprietary solutions.

What's inside.

Introduction.

This ebook will provide information about building an open source Digital Experience Platform (DXP)—a combination of open source tools and software that provides a faster and more cost-effective way to build, personalize, test, and optimize fully-integrated digital experiences.

A WordPress-based DXP built with WP Engine and Crowd Favorite includes additional tools for creative agility, enterprise performance, actionable intelligence, ecosystem integrations, and award-winning customer service and support.

Before we dive into the details of a truly open source DXP, the next few sections will cover some of the building blocks needed to create an effective, integrated platform.
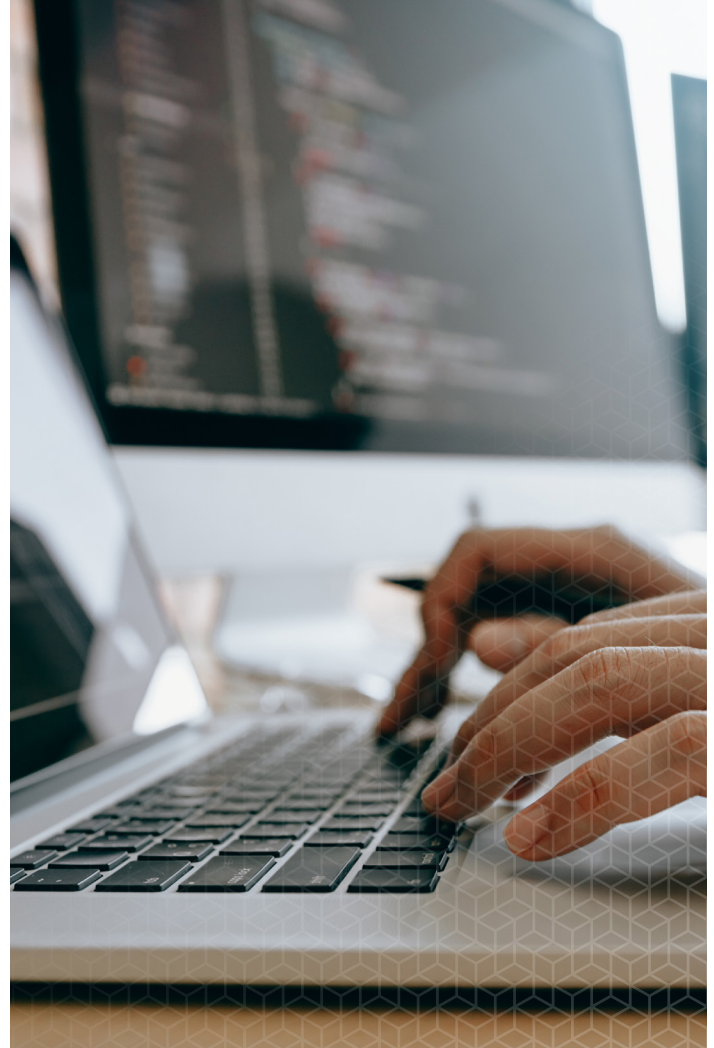
The evolution of content management.

For more than two decades, software providers have been creating platforms that allow us to build and maintain content on the Internet. While the early options were rudimentary, many of these content or customer experience management tools have become part of large, legacy systems that rely on data from multiple sources outside the CMS to truly deliver value. This has had a huge impact on organizations that depend on an integrated software footprint to keep their businesses up and running.

On the customer-facing side, these systems are responsible for providing fresh, relevant content to a growing web audience. Today, we rely on these systems to be incredibly dynamic and interactive, and as the web has grown into a hyperscale marketplace, legacy or proprietary WCM and CMS tools have become highly integrated with other parts of the MarTech stack.
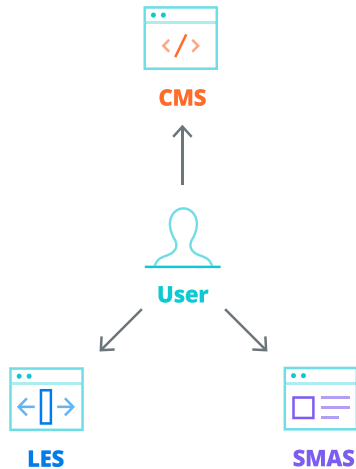
At the same time, open source technology has enjoyed its own decades-long arc, maturing into a highly-respected, widely-adopted software development model. The open source adoption curve grew sharply in 1999 with the IBM/ Redhat partnership. This laid the groundwork for today's model, in which more organizations are able to explore the benefits of open source with reliable partner support.

Today, WordPress is one of the most popular open source platforms ever created and powers more than 34% of the Internet. In addition to WordPress, a growing number of large, enterprise organizations now rely on many other open source technologies to power all or part of their digital strategies.

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Looking at today's enterprise experience.

ON PROPERTY

CMS

User

LES

SMAS

OFF PROPERTY

Social media & communities.

Ecommerce.

SASS services.

Content management system.
- Page building
- Technical SEO
- Light Personalization

SaaS marketing automation services.
- Campaign Marketing
- A/B Testing
- Light Personalization

Legacy enterprise services.
- Sales Management Software
- ERP Software
- Legacy Product Data

Today's enterprise challenge.

Enterprise businesses have been using systems that resemble today's DXPs longer than most other companies. Complicated, often cumbersome software used for building websites and integrating marketing automation from those sites is not a new phenomenon for the Fortune 500.

What's changed is that while those businesses were getting larger, and adding complexity to their internal, proprietary, or closed systems, the market was getting faster, leaner, and democratized through things like open source software as well as social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram.

With the advent of those social channels, small, scrappy businesses that wouldn't have previously registered as competitors suddenly gained the ability to get their creative ideas in front of the right audiences faster than many large, traditional powerhouses.

Speed to market has become a serious differentiator that many large organizations continue to struggle with. Often times, their marketing departments correctly identify a new trend or message to capitalize on and then watch it fizzle out in the internal bureaucracy they face while trying to get it to market.

One reason is that a sizable amount of corporate websites are built with closed architecture that requires a large investment of time and money to update. Further, there's a diminishing workforce with the skills and knowledge needed to work on these legacy systems. Going to market within a matter of weeks is usually not an option, and in the slowdown that

inevitably occurs during this process, the marketing campaign that should have been grows stale or is taken advantage of by another party.

This isn't a new problem, however, some enterprises are finding new ways to overcome it. Enter open source technologies and WordPress, specifically, which enjoys its position as the most widely-used CMS today because it's easy to use and fast to install. WordPress also integrates well with existing platforms, and it's seeing increased adoption among enterprise organizations that wish to go to market faster, with best-in-class, security, scalability, and power, and respond to market trends more rapidly than they could using closed, proprietary software.

Today, large organizations are also changing the way they use WordPress, and no longer rely on it as only a CMS, but incorporate it into a wider stack of open source technologies to create their own open source DXPs.

The benefits of open source explained.

The history of open source software dates back to at least the early 1980s and is rooted in the free software movement led by computer scientist Richard Stallman. At its core, open source is a type of software in which source code is released under a license that grants users the right to study, change, and distribute it freely, as they see fit.

While open source has long been a darling of startups and innovative, up and coming businesses looking for new, inexpensive features that help them compete with larger competitors, it's quickly gained a foothold in the enterprise. Gartner research shows that today, open source software is used within mission-critical workloads by more than 90% of IT organizations worldwide, whether they are aware of it or not.

Beyond the enterprise, open source software is found throughout the small business, education, and government sectors. The movement may have begun as a response to the savings it represents in software licensing, but today, factors leading to open source adoption also include total cost savings throughout the life of a project, rapid availability of software patches and releases, greater ownership of data, and a wider pool of development talent.

That doesn't discount the fact that open source software simply offers a lower entry cost when it comes to software purchasing and licensing. Because many open source software titles are free, at least for the core software product, there aren't per-seat licenses or annual renewal fees to factor in. When it comes to proprietary software, the opposite is true.

Forrester Consulting found a majority of enterprise CIOs cited "cost savings" as the reason for selecting open source software, and an even higher number report they fully realized these savings after adoption. Cost savings continue beyond the initial purchase of open source software as well. Regular updates and newly released versions of open source software generally come without a purchase cost, continuing the initial purchase savings throughout the lifecycle of a project.

90%

of IT organizations worldwide use open source software within mission-critical workloads.

Why choosing proprietary, partially open, or open source matters.

LICENSING ACROSS THE DXP LANDSCAPE:

Proprietary Software.

Licensed software with customization and external integration limits.

SAAS platform.

Expensive closed environment with workflow lock-in, high cost of customization and slow external integration.

Small vendor-based product.

Small specialized software evolved from a smaller vendor or agency's bespoke solution, not code compatible with, or supported by a larger community.

Disguised vendor lock-in.

Customized framework, originally built on top of Open Source, but added Code and SaaS features create Lock-in.

Open source software.

Projects like WordPress, with wide adoption and deep support from top-tier vendors.

PROPRIETARY

Building on proprietary software was, in the past, lauded as more secure, better supported, and the only choice for the enterprise. However, the "closed source" nature of proprietary software often means the choices of integrations and limitations of functionality are determined by the software itself. In some cases, extensibility, customizations, and new feature development are completely left up to the software provider.

Customers do not have access to develop these areas and often must wait for the software provider to deliver requested new features or integrations. Additionally, these new features cannot deploy to production until they have been regression tested to avoid creating new bugs in the software. In other cases, proprietary systems tout having APIs for extending their platforms, yet once researched, these options often also end up being highly limited.

PARTIALLY OPEN SOURCE

With the rising popularity of open source projects, a growing number of software packages and niche service agencies are also trying to expand their sales channels by declaring a software package to be "open source." These offerings do technically contain open source code, yet when you research beyond the marketing material you will likely find that the vendor or creator has made certain key elements reliant on Software as a Service (SaaS) or another mechanism to lock in a customer or at least make the cost of switching away very high. These types of packages are called **partially open source** and these solutions are mired by many issues including:

- The software is only supported by a very small community, often one service agency or a small group.

- Complete areas of functionality or important dependencies are actually solved outside of the platform, on a SaaS solution.

- Without additional customization, SaaS components create a lock-in to that vendor.

- No control or visibility into the data ownership, privacy, and/or security of the SaaS functions.

- Ever-increasing technical debt and deprecations in the code base that lead to higher infrastructure cost and an ever-decreasing pool of development talent.

- Risk of feature sets being more marketing hype than reality, as a vendor's development cycles continually run long and are not aligned with emerging technologies.

With either proprietary or partially open software, your project eventually becomes so complex or so closely integrated with the software or services, you're "locked" into continuing to use it. This results in higher costs, problematic development, and limited choices when changes are made or needed.

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OPEN SOURCE SOFTWARE

These risks can be avoided through the well-planned use of open source software, which benefits from open APIs and global adoption. PHP, MySQL, Linux, and WordPress are examples of globally adopted software with wide pools of developers, open architecture, and APIs. Software projects built on these platforms have inherent flexibility, which allows project owners to adapt the software to their own needs, even creating new in-house versions ("forks") of the software if necessary. This flexibility is simply not available with closed, proprietary solutions.

Successful open source projects are measured by numbers of contributors (measured by the hundreds to thousands), and wide end-user adoption of the software outside one industry or subject. With this in mind, choosing to use a scalable WordPress platform as a foundation for a DXP achieves:

- Enterprise-proven reliability.
- Access to a large community of professional engineering talent.
- Limited vendor lock-in.
- Lower total cost of ownership in both development and support costs.

As referenced above, WordPress is an open source CMS that has grown immensely in popularity since its launch in 2003.

Today, WordPress is the web's most popular CMS—it powers more than 34% of the Internet and more than 60% of CMS users choose WordPress over other CMS platforms. Within the WordPress ecosystem, there are more than 50,000 plugins available, and thousands of contributors that constantly add to its core software and provide security patches, designs, maintenance, resources, and support.

Finally, the exploration of WordPress as a creative alternative for quickly building high-performing, scalable application platforms has also greatly expanded over the years, and the CMS has become the go-to solution for many businesses looking to build out mixed content hubs, explore eCommerce, and a wide range of other digital experiences that help differentiate their businesses online.

60%

of CMS users choose WordPress over other CMS platforms.

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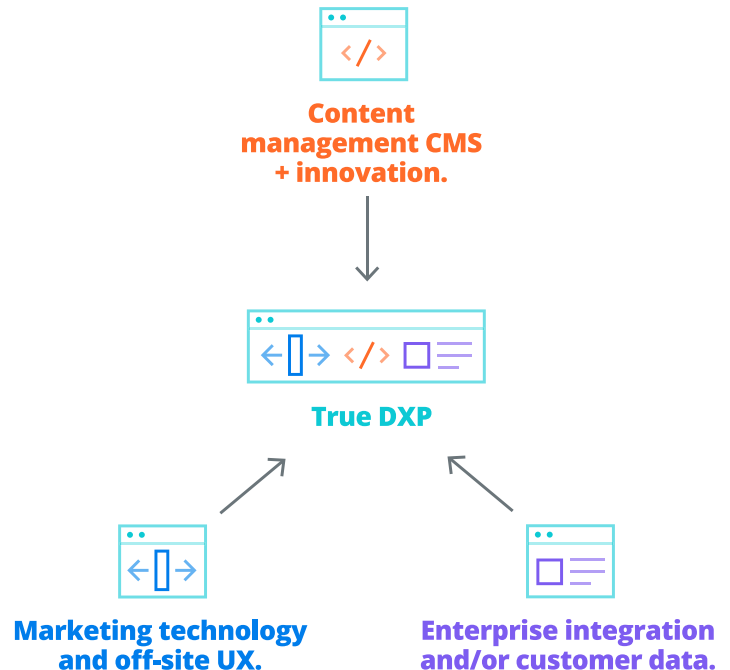# DXP 101: Building a fully integrated platform.

As CMSs have continued to grow and mature, one of the key areas users look to these systems for is integration with other technology platforms throughout their business. A DXP is a relatively recent construct, born in part from the CMS and WCM tools of previous years. Today's DXP is a set of integrated technologies, based on a common platform, that provide audiences with consistent, secure, and personalized digital experiences by streamlining the various touchpoints that occur across the customer journey.

Leveraging a DXP means linking the ways you reach customers through multiple communication channels in authentic, relevant ways. A DXP goes beyond the website and into the day-to-day life of a customer, from interchangeable data sources and personalization to things like IoT-connected devices. A DXP also includes customer-facing access as well as back-end digital processes that help internal teams create a better overall experience for end users. At its core, a DXP should be able to help businesses identify their customers' needs and optimize digital experiences for them, regardless of channel or device, while incorporating content marketing, SEO, API data, and other martech tools as needed.

A DXP will also differ depending on a business' objectives and the type of audience it's trying to reach. That said, most DXPs are focused first on a company's website. A well-designed DXP can retrieve information from site visitors (i.e. physical location identified by IP address, or if the visitor is returning) and provide content specifically tailored for that visitor. With a more advanced DXP, visitors can sign into a user platform and enjoy a personal, customized experience, based on the information they've already supplied. That previously-collected customer data can also be included in a mobile app, and filtered to other parts of the customer journey, providing consistency across a company's different access points.

Content management CMS + innovation.

True DXP

Marketing technology and off-site UX.

Enterprise integration and/or customer data.

OPEN SOURCE DXP CHOICES IN FEATURES AND APPROACH

While the DXP ecosystem is still nascent, the open source community has been able to exponentially leverage lessons learned from its predecessors in the CMS and WCM categories, particularly with regard to the wide variety of WordPress modular code that adds functionality, commonly referred to as plugins. These modules are wide-ranging, and when used effectively, open the door to choices and direction that are unparalleled when working with a closed or partially open system.

These options also allow you to choose the way your organization will approach its desired rate of innovation versus the total cost of ownership. Taking advantage of the extensive WordPress plugin ecosystem means you're not tied to a single path— you can spend more and achieve a proof of concept quickly with less complexity than licensed alternatives, or change course without deep sunken costs. The flexibility afforded by using open source technology means plans can change, and direction can be shifted.

If your organization's development focus is on TCO and maintaining critical application stability, a well-balanced system based on interchangeable, established modules that are enterprise-ready, may be well suited. These are plugins that have been proven at scale, and are no longer in major

development cycles (but still regularly updated), reducing the need for refactoring sections of your DXP.

Inversely, for an organization that aims to lead the innovation charge, taking advantage of the extensive WordPress plugin ecosystem to quickly create low-cost proof of concepts, means using available low-cost code to iterate quickly and invest in a scalable version only when working concepts are agreed upon by stakeholders. This allows savings early on, and the ability to focus those resources and budget on creating the final custom concept once that proof is verified. The use of an open source DXP means having the ability to scale with diverse options and iterate new proofs of concept with much more flexibility than proprietary or SaaS-based systems.

Innovation can be a high cost endeavor, but being able to focus resources on the heavy lifting of production rather than sinking costs upfront into research, development, and even licensing, presents cost savings in the open source DXP model that are simply not found when using proprietary or partially closed systems.

Extensive WordPress plugin ecosystem

means you're not tied to a single path.

BUILDING AN OPEN SOURCE DXP FOR THE ENTERPRISE

When it comes to building a DXP that can meet the needs of large enterprise organizations, the open source model is now mature enough to directly compete with the largest proprietary vendors in the market. Migrations away from the likes of Adobe and Sitecore to open source alternatives are on the rise, and WordPress, because of its powerful CMS capabilities, easy extensibility through the use of API libraries, and its deep ecosystem of customizations, has emerged as a powerful starting point for replacing the large-scale, proprietary DXPs most commonly found in the enterprise.

Nonetheless, the concept of how deeply a DXP can surpass the way marketing organizations have engaged their customers with traditional systems is only now being truly realized. Today, businesses that are winning are innovating in leaps and bounds to take advantage of emerging technologies and tie them into their brand story as laid out across their digital properties.

The key to building a successful open source DXP for the enterprise is to focus on integrating these new opportunities in a fast and cost-effective manner.

To match those specific business needs with the right DXP capabilities, WP Engine works in close partnership with Crowd Favorite, a world-class technology agency that specializes in enterprise WordPress and open source development. Founded by one of the original contributors to the first WordPress release, Crowd Favorite has worked closely with WP Engine since its founding, and the two companies have a proven history of sharing some of the most challenging and rewarding client engagements.

The key to building a successful open source DXP for the enterprise is to focus on integrating these new opportunities in a fast and cost-effective manner.

CORE DXP

Publishing functions.

- Advanced Page Building
- Technical SEO
- Multilingual-ready
- Complex User Profiles
- Advanced Marketing Form Creation
- Advanced Editorial Workflow
- Advanced AMP/Mobile Tools

CORE DXP

MarTech functions.

- Advanced Visitor Personalization
- Conversion Optimization Tools
- Progressive Profiling
- Internal Ad Management
- Lead Management
- Advanced Campaign Tools
- Landing Page Process with integrated A/B Testing
- Campaign URL Mgmt
- Complex Social Media Integrations
- Complex Email Marketing Integrations

CORE DXP

Advanced integrations.

- Property Creation and Management
- Independent Content Promotion
- Sarbanes-Oxley compliance workflow approvals
- Custom Team Based Workflows
- API extensions
- Legacy Application integrations

Crowd Favorite's core expertise is rooted in architecting and building optimal software solutions, utilizing the most appropriate open source technologies to fit specific enterprise DXP requirements. With the right strategic mix of enterprise expertise, combined with the needed technological flexibility for a business' future needs, Crowd Favorite and WP Engine are able to bring forth powerful, dynamic, and cost-effective technology solutions.

Crowd Favorite is currently delivering proven open source DXP solutions with WP Engine as an integrated platform to support global, multilingual content at scale while providing the flexibility demanded by the enterprise.

With DXP solutions already customized and delivered by Crowd Favorite on the WP Engine platform, there are patterns emerging for a base set of expectations:

OFF-THE-SHELF BASED COMPONENTS VS. BESPOKE SOFTWARE

As alluded to above, a WordPress-based DXP presents a unique opportunity for maximizing ROI due to the sheer size of the WordPress plugin ecosystem, which is unmatched in any other software landscape. This can be seen, for example, in the way Crowd Favorite approaches the creation of an open source DXP on the WP Engine platform.

In the requirements phase, Crowd Favorite surveys clients' existing and needed business processes for future use of the DXP, before exploring and then mapping as much core functionality as possible to a proven and scalable subset of plugins.

Once that functionality is mapped out, the process focuses on bespoke features the organization needs to create an effective, integrated platform that delivers real value.

As part of the architecture phase, there are two funnels that DXP features fall into in order to balance ROI with innovation and an organization's goals and KPIs:

DXP Core: While all DXPs are unique in their final delivery, due to an organization's needs, the term "off-the-self" is relative to the integration of each project's goals. The goal is to minimize complex adaptations and customization of open source modules and libraries.

DXP core.

Core features delivered within a Crowd Favorite/ WP Engine combined DXP Platform are based on the following foundation:

- The WordPress open source core project as delivered by the WP Engine platform for scalability, security, and enterprise level support.

- The adaptation of open source modules/plugins and libraries either as-is or with low levels of additional code or customization for performance and functional needs that have proven reliable at scale.

- Available enhancements to open source modules being continually refined with each project delivery by Crowd Favorite and WP Engine.

- Security best practices and processes for ongoing enterprise needs as developed by Crowd Favorite and WP Engine's dedicated security teams.

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Specialized Customizations: When business requirements create more complex needs or a new innovative feature, extension to an external API, or a custom integration to a legacy system that might not have an API, architecture or infrastructure requirements will require more extensive adaptations or custom code to deliver the custom feature. Even in this area, investments are explored in a cost-effective manner with off-the-shelf code for a fast/minimal proof of concept before committing to the creation of a final, scaled solution.

Special customizations.

Features from customized business requirements not part of the DXP core system due to the extensive adaptations needed per installation or that currently do not have scalable or performant open source software available for adaptation. This level of unique customization is always "right sized" per client to balance time to market and enterprise level reliance.

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The foundation
of a DXP matters.

When built with WP Engine as its foundation, an open source DXP will also include the following advantages:
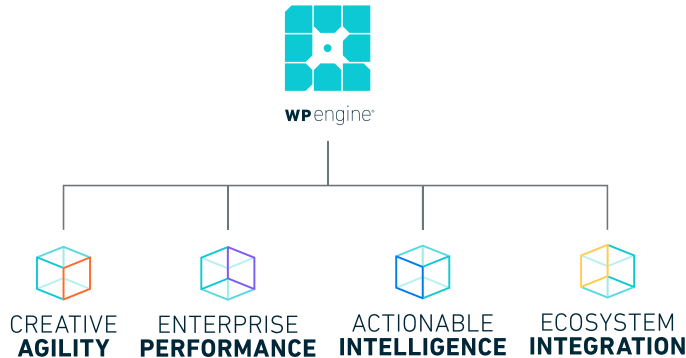
Creative Agility: Increase speed-to-market with developer tools and a flexible environment that helps you realize your vision using WordPress. With WP Engine, brands can build dynamic digital experiences quickly and easily, with custom tools and WordPress support at the ready.

Enterprise Performance: Deliver digital experiences with speed, scale, security, and high availability. More than 120,000 customers trust WP Engine to power their digital experiences at the speed and scale required to meet the needs of today's online audiences, as well as auto-scaling options for rapidly growing sites or digital experiences with spiky traffic.

Actionable Intelligence: Gain insights to improve your digital experiences and make a business impact. Application Performance, for example, provides code-level visibility to help teams troubleshoot faster, optimize their WordPress experiences and increase development agility. Content Performance empowers marketers to unlock Google Analytics insights directly in the WordPress admin dashboard to strengthen their content strategy with relevant data, maintain a content production workflow, and engage audiences and drive ROI with custom content. Page Performance provides real-time front-end site performance data and expert recommendations to make it even faster.

Ecosystem Integration: Extend your digital marketing hub with open integrations using best-of-breed solutions. WP Engine combines open source technology and expert service with integrated partner technology to extend innovation. The WP Engine Technology Partner Ecosystem includes industry-leading infrastructure providers such as Amazon Web Services and Google Cloud Platform, unlimited free SSL certificates with Let's Encrypt, eCommerce partnerships, analytics services from companies like New Relic, Google, and more.

Renowned Security: Keep your WordPress sites safe with proactive security measures, blocking more than 3.6 billion malicious attacks each month. While that standard security is world-class, WP Engine also provides Global Edge Security, in partnership with Internet security leader Cloudflare, to provide customers with DDoS protection and a Web Application Firewall (WAF), designed to keep sites secure while delivering a faster experience for customers.

Award-Winning Customer Service and Support: WP Engine customers have peace of mind knowing the industry's largest customer support organization is available 24/7/365 to ensure their success. The company's WordPress experts recently surpassed one million live chats since launching in 2013, with a world-class relationship Net Promoter Score (NPS) of 86. WP Engine also continues to receive recognition for its customer support, winning three awards in the last two years from the world's premier business award, the "Stevies," for Customer Service.

There are also more challenging aspects to creating and launching an open source DXP. When businesses leverage providers like Crowd Favorite and WP Engine, they also receive white glove consultancy based on both companies' shared expertise, specifically in the following areas:

COST

Sales material for proprietary software often warns of the high costs associated with custom development in open source. While business needs and goals will be different for each organization, there are many scenarios in which an open source DXP is simply a more cost-effective, flexible option than a closed, proprietary system.

One of the most attractive qualities of an open source DXP is the cost associated with this type of platform, especially when compared to the costs generally encountered with a proprietary vendor or with partially open software. As touched on above, when viewing costs specifically around a WordPress-based DXP built on WP Engine's platform, with Crowd Favorite's unique approach to enterprise open source support, there are specific benefits created by this combination that present unrivaled cost-savings:

WordPress/Open Source Technologies
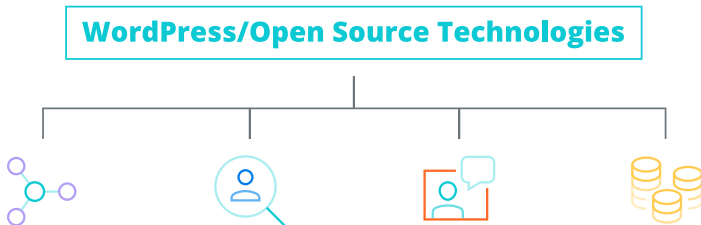
- **Vast plugin ecosystem.** WordPress has more than 50,000 plugins in its open source ecosystem whereas other systems, such as Drupal, don't have formal product ecosystems. By offering a wide and growing suite of products in the form of plugins, WordPress saves its users time and money.

- **Massive install base.** Given WordPress' widespread adoption, emergent technologies roll out their first integrations with WordPress core as a target to be able to reach the largest customer segment with a single effort. Users of other platforms have to spend time and money on customizations that bring new technologies to them. With WordPress, new technologies come to you.

- **Unparalleled support through collaboration.** WP Engine and Crowd Favorite have honed a collaborative account management and support process, resulting in a seamless support experience for enterprise clients.This proven and interwoven joint support for the enterprise allows both teams to integrate shared best practices and develop proven processes that work at scale.

- **Defused update and patching costs.** By basing some of the most important DXP functions on best-in-breed, open source modules with combined active installs in the tens of millions, enterprise clients gain a security and update advantage over proprietary systems through access to continuous updates and patching at a fraction of the cost presented by proprietary software maintenance subscriptions.

Because truly open source software does not come with upfront application software licensing or subscription fees, there is also no introductory or annual cost associated with this line item. Right away, that represents a huge advantage over the bulk of proprietary systems, where one-time or annual licensing fees (or both) can easily reach into the hundreds of thousands of dollars. And that's before any other work, such as customizations or add-ons, have even been considered.

The combination of utilizing off-the-shelf components and the manner in which those components are architected to be easily customizable, creates compounded value for clients. By taking advantage of significant cost reduction as it pertains to licencing, lower initial development and/or system migration costs, customers have seen overall savings of 30-50% at the time of launch when compared to competitive, proprietary systems. This has helped marketing and IT departments within enterprise organizations shorten their timeframes for realizing ROI, and validate their digital marketing budgets.

While there are many cost-saving benefits visible at the onset of an open source DXP project, the cost divergence between open source and proprietary DXPs becomes increasingly apparent post-launch, when deeper customizations and additional application software are considered. These optional applications, which many organizations end up utilizing post-launch, can quickly skyrocket in the proprietary model. Because users are locked into that particular software vertical, there is far less flexibility and fewer choices that can be leveraged to mitigate those costs. Unfortunately, this is where many organizations get stuck.

Flagging potential future needs of a project early in the process can help avoid some of the pitfalls teams that aren't considering the long-term viability of a project may fall into, while providing a more realistic total cost of ownership. In partnering with Crowd Favorite and WP Engine throughout this process, open source DXP builders are able to keep their interests front-and-center while leveraging expert resources they can lean on as needs change and their organization grows, which in turn provides more consistent ROI.

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EXTENSIBILITY

Extensibility is another key differentiator in the open source vs. proprietary DXP comparison.

Having the ability to add features or services, extending the reach of the DXP, increases the ROI after a migration or an initial launch has been completed.

Once the platform is up and running, users have more clarity regarding the way they want it to work, the features they want it to include, etc.

This is highly applicable to the enterprise challenge highlighted above. Whereas a large organization may want to roll out a new personalization feature to cater to a newly identified market segment, doing so in the proprietary model often means navigating through a lot of red tape—how many add-ons are allowed, what category must they fall in, and so on.

Today, consumer audiences are increasingly demanding highly personalized digital experiences. AI-based tools have emerged as powerful solutions for fueling the push for personalization because they can harness data faster and intuit outcomes better than ever before. But integrating those AI tools into your DXP is another extensibility challenge made even more difficult when proprietary or partially open software is at play. Code bases that won't talk to one another or custom workarounds that require massive amounts of time and money continue to set organizations back in this space. Meanwhile, those leveraging a truly open source DXP have greater flexibility and more options at their disposal when experimenting with these new, high-demand technologies.

There's also a technical disadvantage in that large, proprietary systems tend to suffer from editorial interface performance issues due to software bloat. Testing new releases and regression testing based on those systems and end users will take multiple quarters, if not longer.

By comparison, the base architecture of an open source DXP is one that is made to be bolted on to. When designed correctly, extending the functionality of an open source DXP happens faster and easier, at scale, than with proprietary software, which is another immediate advantage for users of open source DXPs.

INTEGRATIONS

Another powerful advantage of using open source solutions is how flexible they are in terms of integrating with third-party systems such as external platforms, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tools, and other systems. A well-designed DXP should enable content creators to add campaigns that take advantage of the functionality third-party systems have to offer, such as adding custom notifications or automatic feeds into their CRM.

Marketing and analytics services can be integrated across a website or on a per-page basis. These include services such as Adobe DTM, Hubspot, Google Analytics, Intercom, and others. Site administrators should also have the ability to add these scripts without editing code. GeoIP services that should be enabled in the DXP platform can be used in page content through shortcodes that allow content teams to target content for specific regions.

With regard to open source DXPs specifically, the introduction of the REST API and GraphQL have made integration with hundreds of martech tools even easier. This API allows for smoother integration between technologies and has been instrumental in the development of open source DXPs.

MIGRATIONS

For many decision makers at enterprise organizations, the thought of migrating their company websites to a new platform is unnerving. There's certainly a lot at stake, but once an open source DXP has been identified as a better way forward, migrating to it is simply the first step towards cost savings and increased functionality.

Because integrated, open source DXPs are fairly new, migrating over from a legacy/proprietary system is actually less of a traditional one-to-one migration process and more of a new beginning. To perform these types of migrations from one platform to another, Crowd Favorite follows a process that has repeatedly proven successful.

High-level assessment.

Assessments are the backbone of any migration, and without them, a business is taking some of their most valuable assets into uncharted territory.

Programatic import.

Exported static HTML content from existing sites in order to import page content, including linked media, into the new system.

Site review & adjustment.

Review and adjust as needed so the content is more than just imported text and images. Crafting and reworking content and layout as needed page by page.

The guides created during the design process are used in this step to ensure the migrated site(s) has the right theme and design elements, dynamic menus are added, scripts for analytics and tracking are included, new visual page builder elements are incorporated, and lead forms for the site are put into place. The exact approach for migration can take one of several directions depending on initial discussions. By leaning on Crowd Favorite's expertise in performing migrations of all sizes and complexities, WP Engine and Crowd Favorite, together, can solidify the required effort and approach.

ENTERPRISE-GRADE SERVICE AND SUPPORT IN OPEN SOURCE

Enterprise-grade operational support is crucial to the success of an open source DXP project, from its inception all the way through ongoing, day-to-day maintenance and/or troubleshooting that may be necessary.

This level of support is the trademark of first-class customer service and is an invaluable asset, particularly when downtime or other issues affecting DXP performance can mean serious damage to a brand or lost revenue.

Assistance during the initial project build is obviously crucial to eventual deployment of a fully-integrated solution, and as new challenges arise, everything from questions about extensibility to best practices for technology integrations should be close at hand. WP Engine and Crowd Favorite follow the proven customer service model made popular by the IBM/Redhat partnership, which exemplifies the way two partners can create a client-friendly, successful support model for complex systems.

WP Engine has built a team of experts focused on providing mission-critical support that enterprise level organizations need. While 24/7 support is always available through the traditional telephone, email, online chat, and social media channels, enterprise clients are able to take advantage of a deeper, premium-level of white glove support specific to their accounts. Each client benefits from dedicated Customer Success and Technical Success Managers, who are deeply familiar with their specific needs, and available in the Americas, western Europe and Australian time zones.

Founded in 2007 specifically to scale open source content management systems, today Crowd Favorite architects valuable, scalable solutions by understanding what's coming tomorrow. The enterprise support model provided by Crowd Favorite is unique. Rooted in the company's foundation as a consulting group, rather than a standard engineering company, it is focused on clients' organizational, operational, and financial goals and challenges to provide optimal technology solutions, rather than fitting client requests into a cookie-cutter solution based on "core competencies."

This partnership also means Crowd Favorite and WP Engine are continually iterating together, both in support functions as well as combined expertise, to create better methods and best practices that are relayed to customers through the lifecycle of their open source DXPs.

Through this partnership, which combines WP Engine's automation tools and Crowd Favorite's planning processes, the two companies are able to assign the right talent to the right task at the right time, providing clients with the ongoing support needed to minimize staffing costs and maximize project success. Crowd Favorite and WP Engine are able to offer a high level of white glove support, which presents a strategic advantage, and helps organizations maintain a reduced TCO over time.

A WordPress-based open source DXP is more complex than a basic WordPress installation, which would require a straightforward update and maintenance package. For WP Engine and Crowd Favorite DXP customers, advanced support from WordPress and DXP experts becomes a mission-critical differentiator.

The combined approach is twofold, applying focuses on background maintenance to optimize your current system, as well as adaptation to plan for and maximize future success. To keep your site running smoothly at all times, we test for updates thoroughly and, once vetted, take the steps necessary to push them into production.

This maintenance includes reviewing and updating documentation for the core code with plugins, and installing and testing updates in a local environment in order to ensure the integrated open source software codebase continues to work in a performant and optimized way with custom developed code and third-party integrations.

With a dedicated security engineering team, organizations are able to leave code reviews and security audits of their internal environments and processes to the combined WP Engine and Crowd Favorite in-house teams.

Advanced support and DXP experts

becomes a mission-critical differentiator.

TRUE ENTERPRISE LEVEL APPLICATION AND PLATFORM SUPPORT WITH ALL THE BENEFITS OF OPEN SOURCE

Responsibility guide.

	WPengine®	Crowd Favorite
Strategy, Requirements and Planning		
Requirements Gathering		Primary
Digital Project Scoping		Primary
Ideation		Primary
Digital Strategy Consulting		Primary
Business goals and Site Assessment		Primary
Installation, Development, and Configuration		
Hosting Server Management	Primary	
Configuration & Deployment	Primary	
Infrastructure Implementation	Primary	
Security	Primary	
Tech/Dev Ops	Primary	
WordPress Enterprise Integration		Primary
Web Design Integration		Primary
Custom Feature Development		Primary
...More to come...		Primary
Maintenance and Training Support		
Ongoing Infrastructure Support	Primary	
Hosting Server Management	Primary	
Disaster Recovery	Primary	
Comprehensive Digital Maintenance Services		Primary
Managed Services		Primary
Performance Monitoring and Optimization		Primary
Continuous Iterative Code Refractoring		Primary
Training Support		Primary

Conclusion.

After more than 20 years of advancement in ease of use and accessibility across the CMS and WCM software categories, the entrance of a fully integrated DXP has turbocharged this space and created a framework for organizations of all sizes to connect their business processes like never before.

While large, proprietary vendors continue to create offerings that address a level of functionality required by the enterprise, the risk of lock-in and unmitigated hidden costs has driven demand for new tools and new software that can solve businesses' most crucial pain points at a lower cost of entry and with a lower total cost of ownership.

The open source community has responded to this demand with determination, and the building blocks now exist for open source DXPs that can compete directly with the largest proprietary vendors in the market.

Organizations that are taking full advantage of this emerging ecosystem are partnering with expert DXP providers in this space such as WP Engine and Crowd Favorite, to map out DXP requirements that match their specific business needs and then execute on building the correct platform for them.

As digital audiences continue to demand faster, more dynamic, and personalized digital experiences, leveraging open source technologies, and an open source DXP will be a business' best bet for continued success.

WP engine® | **Crowd Favorite**

Crowd Favorite

About Crowd Favorite.

Founded in 2007 by Alex King, one of the first contributors to the original WordPress release, Crowd Favorite was the first digital agency focused primarily on the WordPress platform. Over a decade later, Crowd Favorite is a client services firm specializing in enterprise-grade digital strategy and elite open source development, empowering organizations to achieve their fullest potential. Crowd Favorite focuses on learning our clients' businesses first and the unique challenges they face, allowing for the optimal technology solution to be put in play. That means connecting financial and operational obstacles to world-class digital strategy, web development, and digital support services, all with an eye focused on the future and "what's next." For more information visit CrowdFavorite.com.

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. WP Engine's combination of tech innovation and an award-winning team of WordPress experts is trusted by more than 85,000 companies across 135 countries to provide counsel and support, helping brands create world-class digital experiences. Founded in 2010, WP Engine is headquartered in Austin, Texas, and has offices in San Francisco, California; Omaha, Nebraska; San Antonio, Texas; London, England; Limerick, Ireland; and Brisbane, Australia. For more information, visit **WPEngine.com**.