



# WordPress vs. Sitecore

Which CMS is right for you?



# WordPress now powers more than 40% of the top 1 million websites.

If you're currently looking for a content management system (CMS), you know how crowded the market has become. There are dozens of CMS options out there today and finding the right one for your specific business needs can often feel like a colossal task.

To help you narrow your search, this guide (and our series of guides like it) will help you evaluate different CMS solutions as they compare to [WordPress](#), the #1 CMS in the world. WordPress now powers more than 40% of the top 1 million websites by traffic, and this guide will explore why it's become so popular, as well as how it compares to other CMS choices.

Throughout the following sections, we'll take a closer look at WordPress vs. Sitecore, a popular, proprietary CMS that's typically used by businesses with a larger digital footprint. Read on to find out how Sitecore stacks up next to WordPress with a focus on the following areas:

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# WordPress vs. Sitecore: An overview

As noted above, WordPress is the world's most popular CMS, and it powers a huge—and growing—share of the Internet.

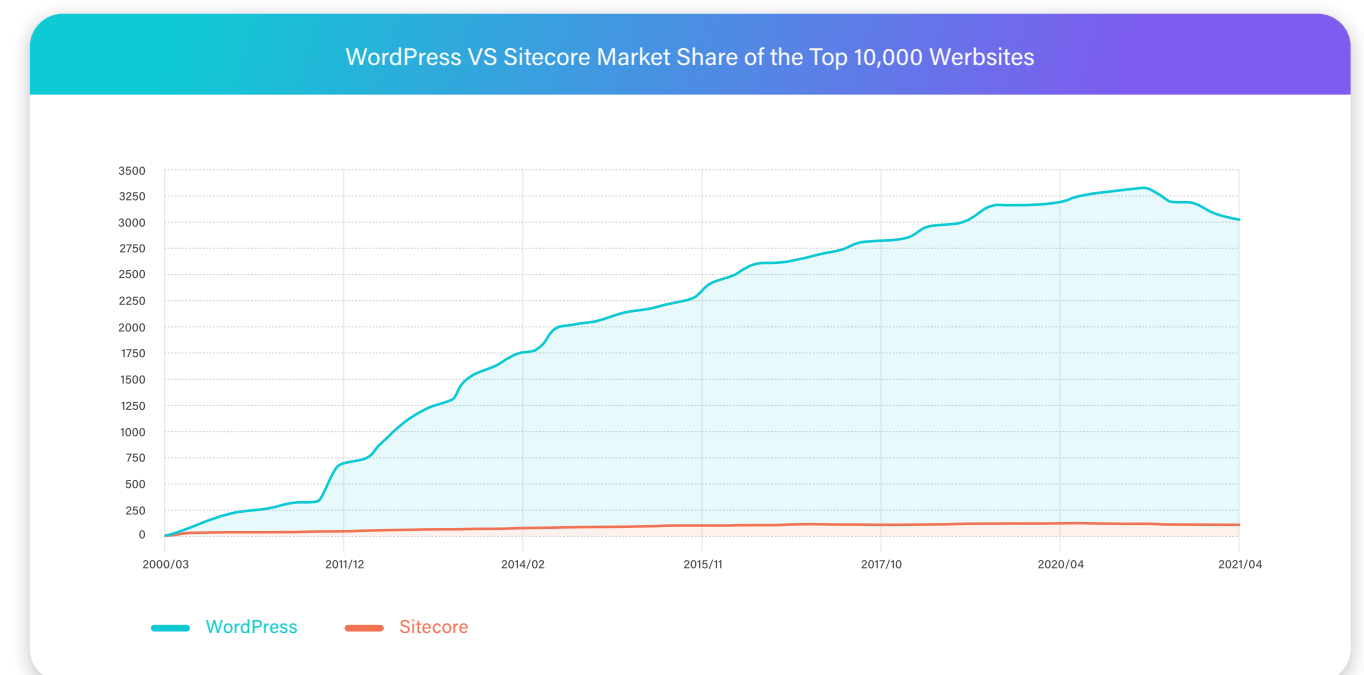


## WordPress vs. Sitecore: An Overview

[WordPress.org](#), the open source, license-free version of the popular CMS, offers a ton of cost-savings in addition to being highly flexible, and today, WordPress serves as the foundation for everything from blogs and brand websites to eCommerce stores and more.

Sitecore also enjoys mainstream popularity, although its market share is much smaller than that of WordPress. Looking at the world's top 10,000 websites by traffic, WordPress makes up **over 35%** of the market share while Sitecore accounts for less than 2%.

[Looking at the world's top 10,000 websites by traffic, WordPress makes up over 35% of the market share...](#)



Sitecore and WordPress are both highly customizable, but one of the biggest differences between the two goes back to the open vs. closed debate: Sitecore is a proprietary CMS with a restricted code base while WordPress is built with open source code.



## WordPress vs. Sitecore: An Overview

Initially launched in 2001, Sitecore was one of the earliest content management software products available, and it remains the legacy CMS for a number of large, enterprise organizations today.

Sitecore and WordPress are both highly customizable, but one of the biggest differences between the two goes back to the open vs. closed debate: Sitecore is a proprietary CMS with a restricted code base while WordPress is built with open source code.

Sitecore offers various levels of functionality for creating compelling digital content, but being proprietary means it comes at a higher cost—namely, expensive licensing fees that are required just to get up and running. And because Sitecore is a specific vendor with locked-down code, even license holders are unable to freely develop and adapt its core software.

WordPress, on the other hand, is free from upfront licensing fees and users can develop their WordPress sites any way they see fit, benefitting from a wide, open source ecosystem of integrations for added flexibility and customization.

Even more importantly, open source means WordPress is transferable—you're not locked-in with a particular provider as you grow and develop your site, and because there's a vibrant community of WordPress developers all around the world, WordPress experts are widely available for full-time or freelance hire.

You get to choose the features and functionality that are right for your digital requirements, as well as your web host.

While proprietary solutions offer various levels of out-of-the-box functionality—Sitecore, for example, offers different packages with tiered pricing—the nature of closed software is that it's restrictive to a single platform, and it makes adding custom functionality or moving to a new provider a potentially labor-intensive, high-cost endeavor.

For businesses considering migrating from Sitecore to WordPress, working with a specialist agency such as [Illustrate Digital](#) minimizes those high-cost, labor-intensive risks by focusing on business objectives from the beginning of the discovery process to understand the underlying reasons for a migration.

Migrating from any CMS will always require a well thought-out and properly planned migration strategy, and Sitecore is no exception, but with the right team guiding your website from one CMS to another, you can build a successful plan that includes the redesign and restructuring of any content.

As detailed in the following sections, Sitecore meets the digital marketing and website needs for many enterprise-level businesses, but it pales in comparison to WordPress when it comes to ease-of-use, flexibility, agility, and total cost of ownership.



# Overall user experience and ease of use.

At a macro-level, Sitecore is simply more complicated than WordPress, and configuring Sitecore can be an error-prone and frustrating process for even experienced developers.



## Overall user experience and ease of use.

The platform is so vast, with many different options for configuration, that it's not uncommon for Sitecore users themselves to be unaware of the extent of their own implementations.

For example, the caching model used by Sitecore is not widely understood by developers. In addition to legacy issues that build up over time, the complicated nature of Sitecore's infrastructure can slow down performance and make even small deployments a risky endeavor.

These inherent challenges often require resources from multiple teams within an organization—some even create a "Sitecore team," focused solely on keeping up with the intricacies of the platform—and overall, Sitecore is often viewed as highly functional but also highly developer-reliant.

WordPress, on the other hand, offers a far more straightforward user experience. To gain the full breadth of functionality that's available with WordPress, it mainly requires staying up-to-date with the most recent version (or relying on a managed provider to help test and update sites as new versions of WordPress become available).



**If you're using a recent version of WordPress, you're likely benefiting from its most recent features and upgrades, and there are no restrictions as to how you can expand on its use.**

## There is no “one Sitecore”...



...users must select from specific products and features... potentially requiring an upgrade...

With Sitecore, users gain access to different levels of functionality by purchasing a specific product suite (as well as add-ons) to accommodate their digital requirements.

Right off the bat, this tiered approach affects the overall user experience, as there is no “one Sitecore.” Instead, users must select from specific products and features while potentially requiring an upgrade once they surpass a certain threshold.

Beyond initial setup, the task of designing and building a front end still awaits users of both CMSs (even when using Sitecore’s highest package level), and this too is an area of differentiation between WordPress and Sitecore.

While there’s more detail below on specific content and site creation functionality (content management tools, adaptability/versatility), the major difference to keep in mind is that Sitecore simply requires more technical knowledge than WordPress does, even for relatively minor tasks and updates.

Overall user experience and ease of use.

Overall user experience and ease of use.

Content creators, who oftentimes sit in the marketing department and who are not proficient in code or technical workflows will likely be unable to self-serve when it comes to many Sitecore functions, potentially adding extra burden to a company’s developer or engineering team.

Conversely, WordPress is renowned for its ease-of-use—by both developers and marketers—and it’s a favorite tool of content creators based on tools and features that speed up web design and content management.

While “developer-heavy” CMSs like Sitecore can eat up valuable time and resources with complicated workflows that slow down content and design, WordPress offers an easier approach to content creation and management, making it easier to go to market and bring new ideas to life faster.

# Content management tools.

One of the most important things to assess when evaluating a CMS is, perhaps unsurprisingly, its tools and features for content management.

If creating relatively simple pieces of content such as blog posts or landing pages is too complicated or clunky of a process for a certain CMS, that's certainly a red flag, and it will likely hamper your larger digital footprint down the road.

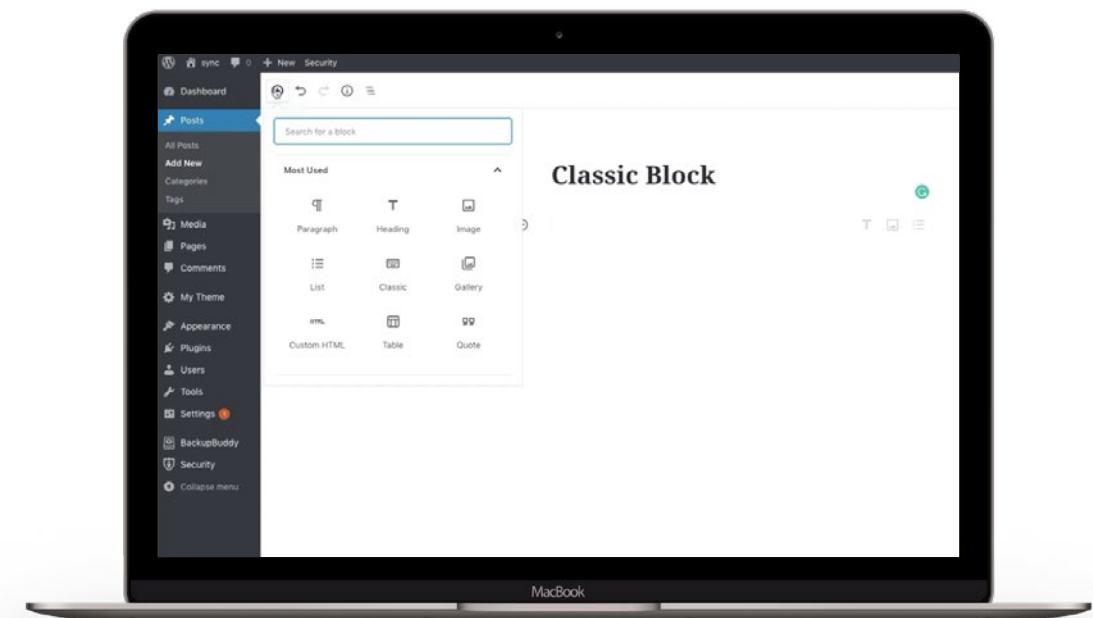


## Content management tools.

### WordPress content management features.

One of the reasons WordPress is the world's most popular CMS is because it offers a straightforward, intuitive approach to content management that's easy for a wide variety of users. That doesn't mean WordPress lacks depth when it comes to content management—far from it—but it is 100% more accessible out of the box than more technical options like Sitecore.

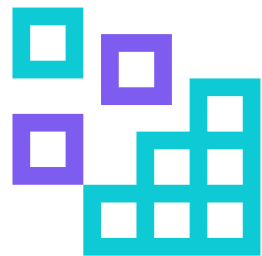
Editing content on a page-by-page or post-by-post basis is significantly easier with WordPress, based in no small part on the block-based, [Gutenberg editor](#) (shown below), which became the default editing experience in WordPress version 5.0.



Gutenberg frees users from a ton of manual code creation with a modular approach to design that's become the new standard for easy customization and management.

Content creation with Sitecore is less straightforward, and it doesn't offer the same level of per-page usability as WordPress (which will soon offer even wider usability with the introduction of [Full Site Editing](#)).

## Overall, WordPress provides key content management benefits with:



### **Content blocks.**

WordPress offer you the ability to [create custom blocks](#) or choose from a growing library of unique, pre-existing blocks for a faster content workflow that can be used multiple times on any page across your website with brand continuity.

### **Agile post management.**

Create custom post types and quickly publish new content that brings to life everything from new products, announcements, brand campaigns, and more.



### **Optimized content structure.**

The structure of content types and URLs in WordPress are specifically geared towards usability and SEO.

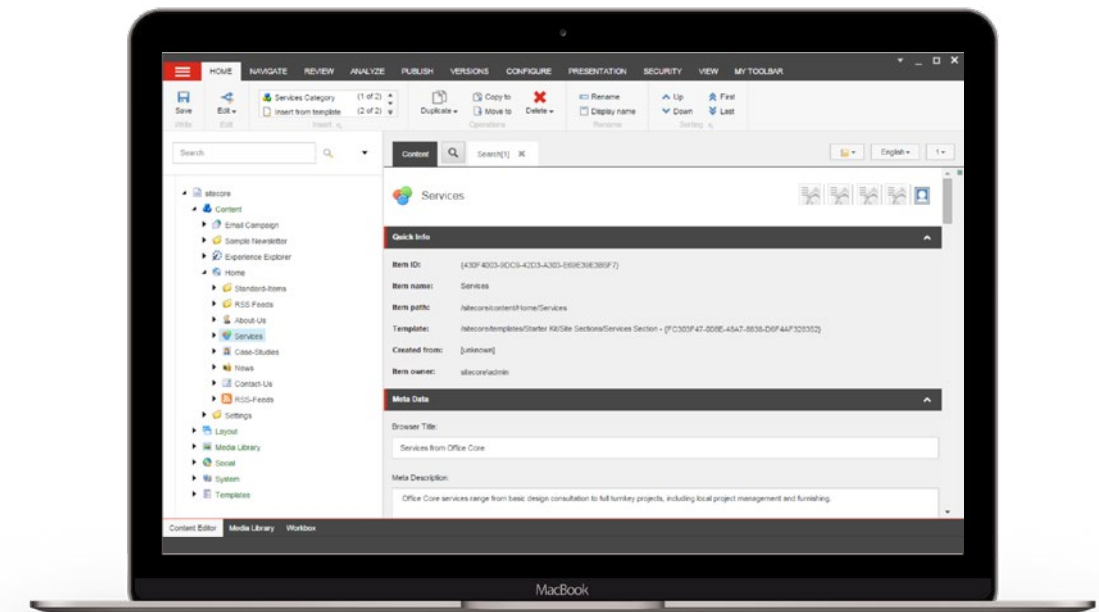
Content management tools.

Content management tools.

## **Sitecore Content Management Features.**

Sitecore remains a prevalent choice at the enterprise level where content management is often less about ease of setup and more about capabilities for deeper personalization and customization.

Indeed, Sitecore provides out-of-the-box benefits in this area (dependent on product package). With available features and capabilities tied to four different pricing levels, users are able to gain access to a range of pre-built features, including:



**Content reuse** — For duplication and quick editing of existing pages.

**Content archiving** — For back-ups and versioning.

**Sitecore experience accelerator (SXE)** — For the simultaneous reuse of templates, layouts, and components across teams and sites.



All that said, the above functionality is not as straightforward as some users might like. Creating simple posts using Sitecore requires managing a “content tree,” adding “siblings,” and ensuring that [associated content](#) remains relevant when changes occur.

This setup can feel both rudimentary and complicated at once, and users who are less proficient using Sitecore can cause a wide range of issues by overlooking even minor details.

Sitecore has a slightly better toolkit of “day-one features” for regularly managing and customizing content, as well as deeper personalization, which enterprise brands often value, nonetheless, it’s both costly and technically complex.

This isn’t to say that deeper personalization and customization isn’t possible with WordPress — it can in fact rival Sitecore when it’s put to effective use.

A WordPress specialist agency that is well-versed in UX, such as [Illustrate Digital](#), can elevate far beyond WordPress’ built-in functionality, and combined with [WP Engine’s enterprise digital experience platform](#), even the largest digital footprints can realize greater agility and cost savings by leveraging WordPress.

Overall, WordPress will almost always provide greater value and better Return on Investment (ROI) for small or medium-sized businesses. As it’s evolved over the years, WordPress is also now highly capable of accommodating enterprise-level sites, as well as the needed scale and functionality that comes with them. If you’re looking for an enterprise solution, WordPress or Sitecore can likely both meet your needs, the deciding factor will be cost, what’s installed from day-one, and what you’re willing to further develop to meet your digital requirements.

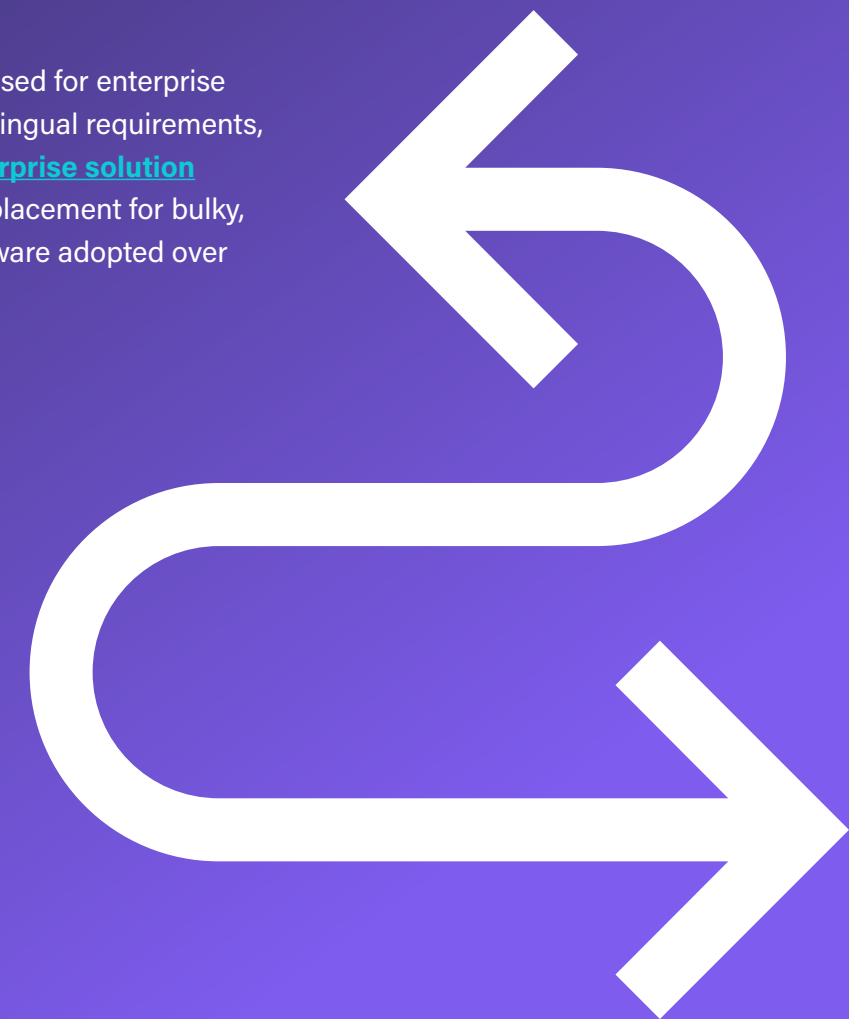
**WordPress will almost always provide greater value and better Return on Investment (ROI) for small or medium-sized businesses.**

Content management tools.

## Versatility and adaptability

**The different use cases and wide applications of both WordPress and Sitecore provide some parity when it comes to versatility and the types of sites you can build with either CMS.**

While Sitecore has traditionally been used for enterprise sites with high-traffic, or global/multi-lingual requirements, the maturity of [WordPress as an enterprise solution](#) has made it an attractive, high-ROI replacement for bulky, proprietary content management software adopted over the past decade or more.



## WordPress versatility.

Today, sites built with WordPress are used for just about everything from brand websites and eCommerce stores to learning portals and companywide intranets.

Because it's easy to set up and again, free from licensing, WordPress is a better option for creative projects in general as it allows for more agility and flexibility without the looming pressure of an annual fee.

When combined with enterprise-level expertise and a highly scalable, secure platform, WordPress can also meet the requirements of even the largest enterprise organizations, providing immediate cost-savings upfront, and increased flexibility and creative agility across internal teams.

Beyond specific use cases, where both CMSs offer specific benefits, the ability to adapt quickly with WordPress far outshines that of Sitecore, particularly when it comes to the increasingly-important area of UX design.

As mobile use [has already outpaced](#) that of desktop, and [omnichannel strategies](#) are fueling content delivery across an even wider ecosystem of devices and touchpoints, UX is (and will increasingly become) a massively important aspect of content creation and content management.

This means any CMS must be highly adaptable to allow designers to test, learn from users, and implement changes to user journeys and designed user interfaces—quickly—or you risk losing audiences to businesses that provide better digital experiences.

Through its approach to iterative design, [Illustrate Digital](#), one of the leading WordPress agencies in the UK, provides an excellent snapshot of the way WordPress and the block-based Gutenberg editor can play a powerful role in building dynamic digital experiences and optimizing them quickly.

## “The absolute beauty of blocks in WordPress from a UX perspective is two-fold,”

Explains Scott Jones, Managing Director at Illustrate Digital.

## “The ability to change blocks on a page quickly, or create a new page with blocks in a different order, is amazingly powerful for A/B testing to change the importance of particular items.”

Even more powerful, he explains, is that WordPress blocks provide users with the ability to keep content exactly as-is within the CMS and to overlay a brand-new block design (or whole site design) on top of existing blocks, post types, or the entire infrastructure of a site.

“This is a real win for iterative design,” Jones says. “It means we’re no longer rebuilding an entire site from the ground up, but instead we can build on already solid foundations and save marketing teams a load of time replacing or re-entering perfectly good content.”

Updates and optimizations with the block editor are easier too. By analyzing and learning from user behavior, the Illustrate team is able to start small, adjusting simple things like the size and color of buttons, which they can update without uprooting an entire page or site. From there, the sky's the limit, and changes can be made to single posts or pages, as needed, in response to consumer demand.

## Sitecore versatility.

Sitecore is indeed a flexible and highly extendable CMS, however, when it comes to being truly versatile for non-technical users, it is without a doubt overly complicated. Even software developers need (costly) training to get the most value out of Sitecore and business users do not find it intuitive to use.

Concepts such as Sitecore's content tree can be difficult for users to grasp, and despite offering a wide list of options and possibilities (hence the perception of Sitecore as versatile) it's important to remember that virtually nothing actually comes out-of-the-box. You need to develop every individual component within Sitecore, and do so within a defined process and framework, which can be a fairly large development lift.

Sitecore users often report frustrations with even simple everyday tasks when using the object-based platform, especially when using the forms editor. Because Sitecore doesn't offer an agile, block-based approach in any of its four pricing tiers, users instead need to wade through complicated configurations and a litany of permissions and tasks for even small changes. This makes A/B testing, for example, a much more complicated process.

While Sitecore provides templates and the re-use of archived content for a similar foundational approach when building a net-new asset, WordPress and the block editor have the clear upper hand here by providing a faster, more straightforward process for creating and updating powerful digital experiences.

[WordPress has the clear upper hand by providing a faster, more straightforward process for creating and updating powerful digital experiences.](#)

Versatility and adaptability.

# Security

## Security should be top of mind for any business evaluating a CMS.

While WordPress has historically (and somewhat unfairly) been labeled as unsecure, [this misconception](#) is mainly due to the wide use and popularity of WordPress, and the fact that it's well known to hackers and other nefarious actors online.

The truth is, like any software, security for a CMS relies on its users. With WordPress, keeping things like plugins and themes up-to-date is one of the best ways to significantly reduce security vulnerabilities.

In a similar vein, Sitecore also requires regular updates and maintenance, and keeping it secure also requires a long list of "security tasks," which range from relatively simple (changing admin passwords and user roles) to more complex (API authentication, SQL configurations).



## WordPress Security.

While WordPress does indeed remain a target for many hackers, ensuring good processes for consistent maintenance is the key to keeping bad actors at bay.

Plugin vulnerabilities alone represent more than half of the known entry points for attacks on WordPress sites, and keeping plugins up-to-date can effectively nullify those vulnerabilities. If regular updates to WordPress Core are performed in tandem with ongoing plugin and theme maintenance, WordPress is just as secure as any other CMS.

Furthermore, the WordPress developer community is incredibly active, and in addition to providing ongoing support and feature updates to WordPress Core, community developers serve as an invaluable front line against security threats and vulnerabilities. This includes everything from monitoring unfolding security issues to patching bugs!

While a [managed WordPress hosting provider](#) should equip its customers with things like a secure environment and active threat detection in order to fend off potential attacks, others go beyond that with additional security features and precautions. WP Engine, for example, automatic WordPress updates and backups with every plan, as well as available features like [Global Edge Security](#) and [Smart Plugin Manager](#), both of which help ensure your WordPress sites stay incredibly secure. While service providers such as Illustrate Digital offer an additional level of reassurance with comprehensive, hands-on protection via [dedicated support and maintenance](#) services.

**...with ongoing plugin and theme maintenance, WordPress is just as secure as any other CMS.**

## Sitecore Security.

Sitecore too requires frequent updates, but overall the CMS is quite secure. Sitecore's security benefits from its built-in features and the fact that it doesn't utilize third-party software or plugins (meaning, there's no chance for them to compromise security).

Sitecore is built using the Microsoft-designed [.NET framework](#), and as such, it relies on Code Access Security (CAS) to prevent unauthorized access. CAS helps manage code operations using a set of permissions, and it can be complicated depending on the version used and to what extent.

Overall, security should be viewed as an ongoing solution for either CMS—updates and maintenance are part of this equation, but working with a web host that prioritizes security and stays on top of evolving threats is also key here.

When it comes to the CMS itself, Sitecore offers plenty of available functionality, albeit at a cost, but users won't have to do much beyond setup (and regular maintenance) to keep their sites relatively secure.

With WordPress, security is firmly in the hands of the user and their hosting provider. With the right features in place, WordPress is just as secure as Sitecore or any other CMS, developers and users just need to be sure they're doing all they can to mitigate risk regardless of platform choice.

**When it comes to the CMS itself, Sitecore offers plenty of available functionality, albeit at a cost...**



# Scalability.

## Sitecore and WordPress both offer a lot of options for building scalable sites.

While Sitecore has traditionally been relied on for large-scale web deployments (and for good reason, its infrastructure is built specifically for wide-scale use) WordPress is also relied on for highly scalable sites, including [whitehouse.gov](https://www.whitehouse.gov), the [UK's National Archives](https://www.uk.gov), [Sony Music](https://www.sonymusic.com), and [The Walt Disney Company](https://www.waltdisney.com).

If configured properly, WordPress sites can and do serve millions of views without issue. Just like any high-traffic site, serving visitors with a fast, seamless digital experience requires greater server resources/higher pricing tiers.

### Scalability.

#### WordPress scalability.

With the right server configurations, or the right managed host that can provide WordPress-specific server configurations, WordPress can indeed scale to meet any level of user traffic.

What makes WordPress an especially attractive option for scalability, is that it offers such a high ceiling while providing beginners with an easy entry point and the ability to grow. Small or midsize businesses can build out their websites as needs and requirements change, without the high cost and developer resources needed for proprietary solutions like Sitecore.

Enterprise-level businesses benefit here too, particularly in today's rapidly-moving digital landscape, where micro-campaigns and brand launches have to go to market faster than ever. Complicated, slow content management processes hinder large-scale organizations, and WordPress offers a level of agility alongside scalability that other solutions do not.

### WordPress can indeed scale to meet any level of user traffic.

#### Sitecore scalability.

Sites built with Sitecore are able to scale exceedingly well without the need for further integrations (but also dependent on pricing tier). While that offers a lot of flexibility upfront, it can also mean users are paying for more than they need, with little option to "build as they grow."

Because of its licensing structure, Sitecore is all-in from the start, and scaling means upgrading to a higher product tier for increased functionality or, upgrading your plan with the handful of Sitecore managed hosts out there (or both).

# Time to market.

Speed to market has become a major differentiator for businesses of all sizes, yet, it remains an area where many large organizations continue to struggle.



## Time to market.

One of the key reasons behind this challenge is the continued use of complex, closed web architecture that requires a large investment of time and money to update. As enterprise organizations are faced with faster demands in market, and slower development cycles among their own teams, the problem is only exacerbated.

While this isn't a new phenomenon, a growing number of enterprise businesses are finding new ways to address it.

Enter open source technologies and WordPress specifically, which is seeing increased adoption among enterprise organizations that wish to go to market faster and respond to market trends more rapidly than they could using closed, proprietary software.

This scenario is clearly visible in the Sitecore vs. WordPress conversation, where WordPress simply allows for greater agility and faster time to market than proprietary, closed options like Sitecore.

## Time to market with WordPress

Because it is flexible and integrates well with such a large ecosystem of plugins and themes for added functionality, WordPress has become the first choice for large organizations looking for an inexpensive, low-commitment method for testing new ideas and campaigns.

Time to market.

While many larger businesses often retain the use of their legacy web systems [alongside a WordPress deployment](#), they are able to use WordPress as the front line for their marketing strategy, and build digital experiences quickly to reach new audiences with fresh ideas.

By allowing content creators to continue using the systems and workflows they prefer, while providing developers the ability to use their front-end frameworks of choice "Headless WordPress" is yet another way enterprise organizations are finding faster ways of going to market with incredible digital experiences.

Headless approaches to WordPress, including [WP Engine's Atlas platform](#), have taken this focus on speed and agility to an entirely new level.

### Time to market with Sitecore.

Because of its complex, proprietary code, changes take longer and can unintentionally break other parts of the website, just as that new marketing campaign should have been taking off.

Time to market.

Alternatively, Sitecore is usually not the platform of choice when it comes to pushing new sites live quickly, or making adjustments to existing pages based on new messaging or campaigns.

Because of its complex, proprietary code, changes take longer and can unintentionally break other parts of the website, just as that new marketing campaign should have been taking off.

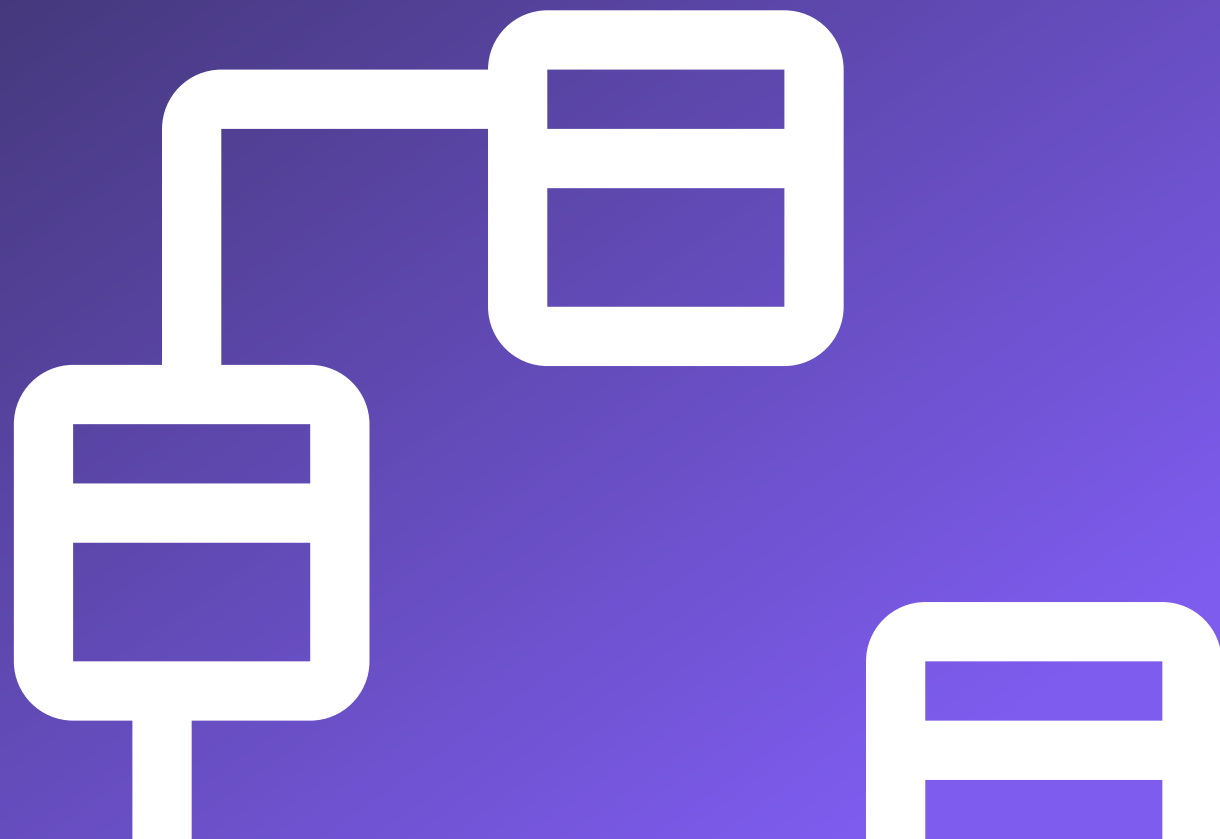
While added personalization and other customizations may be an argument for Sitecore, the development cycles typically associated with this CMS are not conducive to market agility, and often represent slower time to market, not the other way around.

Speed to market is of course not the only consideration when evaluating Sitecore or WordPress, but it is an area in which WordPress has established a stellar reputation for enabling marketing agility and faster time to market.

# Integrations.

**The ability to integrate well with third-party services and software is another key area of consideration when evaluating a CMS.**

While out-of-the-box functionality is certainly beneficial as you start building your digital presence, making sure you have clear options for adding new functionality, extending features across your site(s), and connecting with a [growing ecosystem of sales and marketing tools](#) will be an important factor as your digital footprint grows.



## Integrations.

### Sitecore integrations.

As noted above, Sitecore offers a good deal of functionality upfront (dependent on pricing package), especially in areas such as tracking or conversion optimization. That said, adding to the features and functions you have access to generally means relying on Sitecore's available add-ons.

These add-ons are either included as part of a particular licence or can be purchased separately, through a subscription. From there, integrating with third party software is a bit more limited. For example, Sitecore offers specific integrations with Salesforce and Microsoft CRM, but to expand on the CMS from there, users must work with Sitecore's listed technology partners.

### WordPress integrations.

Although fewer integrations might make sense for some users, WordPress offers far more flexibility here as its open source code base means users can integrate with a wide list of solutions found in today's [growing martech landscape](#).

From integrating with external, third-party platforms like [Salesforce](#) or [Microsoft Dynamics](#), to bringing functionality into your WordPress environment via the massive [ecosystem of plugins](#), WordPress is renowned for its ability to integrate with just about any platform or software you could imagine.

The growing focus on [headless solutions](#) and the increasingly prominent role WordPress plays as the back end

in headless deployments, is yet another reason WordPress comes out on top with regards to integrations.

Using a JavaScript application for the front end, a headless solution pulls specific WordPress data via APIs such as the [WordPress REST API](#) or the [WPGraphQL plugin](#) for highly personalized, omnichannel experiences with speeds as fast as static sites.

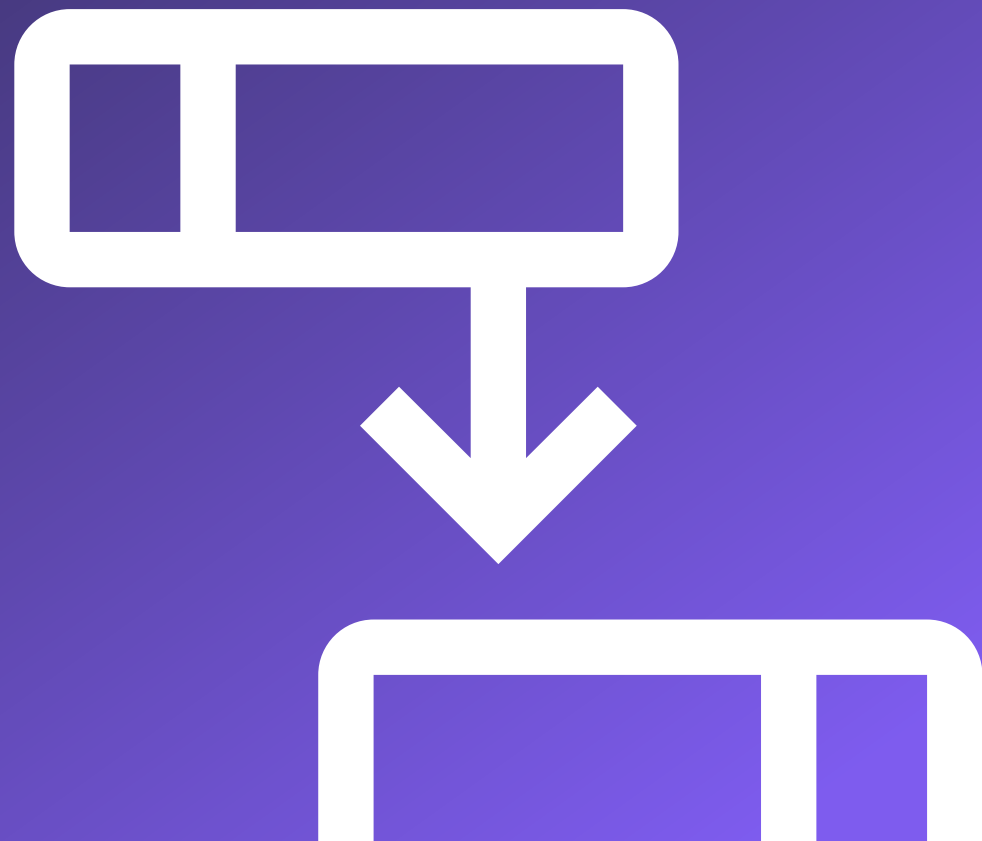
Headless provides developers with the "right tech for the right job," including easy integrations with other software, additional layers of security, and the ability to future-proof WordPress with a new level of flexibility and control over content.



# Migrations.

## Moving away from an existing CMS and transferring legacy sites to a new solution is hardly a minor undertaking.

While selecting your new CMS is simply step one in the process, the overall migration experience that awaits Sitecore users is similar to that of WordPress, however, the complexity of Sitecore does present added challenges.



### Migrations.

Certain aspects of a site migration are necessary and will remain when moving to either platform. Pre-planning is an obvious need, as is the ultimate process of extracting and reloading content.

While the latter is most often covered by the Extract Transform Load (ETL) process, there's a lot of room for error in the Transform part of that equation, and it's a particular area of difference between Sitecore and WordPress. While migrating existing content can be a challenge with any CMS, Sitecore's data architecture can make migrations more challenging, depending on which version of the CMS you're moving over from.

In a perfect world, your old CMS and your new CMS would use the exact same data architecture. Even if both solutions are similar, there will invariably be differences.

By mapping the data from the source to the target CMS, you can proactively make adjustments to aspects such as formatting and field attributes. You should also conduct a trial migration with a large sample of data to reveal incompatibility issues. As a result of this analysis, you may want to remove data or content that would otherwise slow down the CMS migration.

**While migrating existing content can be a challenge with any CMS, Sitecore's data architecture can make migrations more challenging...**

## Migrating to Sitecore and WordPress.

Similar to any CMS migration, migrating to both Sitecore and WordPress begins with a pre-migration checklist that includes building a migration team, conducting a content audit, data assessment, security audit, as well as overall project planning.

Once the pre-migration tasks are completed, the most important—and most challenging—aspect of a CMS migration can take place: the data transfer.

**In order to successfully navigate this critical migration phase, the following checklist is recommended:**

- Analyze variances in data architecture
- Create a series of contingency plans
- Back up your content
- Carry out the migration

**Post-migration, the following is also recommended:**

- Testing for data accuracy and integrity
- Monitoring and optimization
- Decommissioning your old CMS
- Training end users

Migrations.

## Maintenance and support.

**The need for regular CMS maintenance is an often-overlooked variable, unfortunately, even after users select and begin using a solution for their sites**

How much regular maintenance does a CMS need to keep sites up and running smoothly, and how labor-intensive is that maintenance?



## WordPress maintenance.

The freedom and flexibility that comes with WordPress also means you're in charge of keeping it up-to-date. Ensuring that you're using the most recent version of WordPress, and that your themes and plugins are secure, are all areas WordPress site owners must stay on top of in order to prevent performance and security issues down the road.

Keeping WordPress well-maintained is one of the reasons businesses choose a managed WordPress provider when moving over to WordPress. With the right WordPress host, site maintenance is not only manageable, it's out of sight, allowing you to focus on your business while taking advantage of all the benefits WordPress has to offer.

## Sitecore security.

While Sitecore provides some built-in maintenance through automatic updates, sites built with Sitecore will still require some level of managed support, be it in-house or through a third party provider.

That said, managed providers are less prevalent when it comes to Sitecore—there's much heavier reliance on in-

At the enterprise level, WP Engine's dedicated support teams add that white glove expertise for everything from migration and onboarding to security and performance.

Meanwhile, a specialist agency like Illustrate Digital can bring additional, custom approaches for UX design, quality assurance and added site optimization.

A managed WordPress host should be able to take care of everything from automatic plugin updates to backups to security—things that matter to both you and your clients, and which deserve white glove expertise.

house teams as third-party services can make ROI difficult to attain when combined with licensing costs.

As with WordPress, Sitecore users are still responsible for security, scalability, as well as keeping third-party integration up-to-date and free from vulnerabilities.

[...a specialist agency like Illustrate Digital can bring additional, custom approaches for UX design, quality assurance and added site optimization.](#)

## WordPress support.

While WordPress itself as an open-source platform does not have "dedicated support" in the form of a phone number or 24/7 live chat, the [WordPress community](#) is an incredible, open resource for any and all users of the CMS. Bugs and support issues are answered constantly across WordPress forums, and if you encounter an issue with your site, there's likely existing documentation for whatever the culprit may be.

Beyond the wide open source world of WordPress developers and others who freely give of their time in ongoing support of the CMS, a managed provider here too can make all the difference in the world.

WP Engine, for example, provides 24/7 access to an award-winning support

organization made up of WordPress experts. From live chat to email to phone, support at this level means you can resolve any and all issues you may encounter with WordPress, with a live agent, at any time of day or night.

For teams looking to take the burden off of their developers and IT department, a managed WordPress host can unlock the promise of a more agile, easy-to-use CMS, while providing the invaluable peace of mind that comes with knowing someone is always there to help should a problem arise. Adding the services of a specialist agency like Illustrate Digital can provide even deeper and more direct support on the front end, allowing businesses to maximize their digital footprint with beautiful, engaging websites that provide a seamless user experience.

## Sitecore support.

Like most things with Sitecore, support comes at a cost. While Sitecore does make its Knowledge Base available to all users (and non-users alike), wading through pages of documentation when you have a specific, business-critical problem is not ideal.

From there, Sitecore users can purchase "standard" support, which includes access to the free Sitecore Support

Portal and promises response times of 1-3 business days, depending on the severity of an issue.

24x7 Premium Support is the next and highest tier available to Sitecore customers and in addition to support portal access, it offers response times in "as little as one hour" 24/7/365, for "critical issues."

[Like most things with Sitecore, support comes at a cost.](#)

Maintenance and support.

## Cost.

**While the overall cost of using either Sitecore or WordPress will vary depending on factors such as web host, needed functionality, and other additional/bespoke requirements, looking at the initial price of each platform is a good place to start the comparison.**





## Sitecore.

**As of 2020, licenses for Sitecore begin at close to \$70,000/£50,000, with an additional recurring license fee each year.**

But a license is just the beginning. Realizing the full extent of what's available in an individual Sitecore licence can be a project in and of itself, and in addition to license fees, add-ons may also be a cost-component of initial Sitecore setup, depending on each use case. From there, ongoing technical support for regular maintenance will be required.

**WordPress is free from upfront licensing costs and entirely open source...**

Cost.

Cost.

## WordPress.

As noted above, WordPress is free from upfront licensing costs and entirely open source, meaning anyone can start using with no initial setup fee (hosting and domain purchase excluded).

While WordPress offers nearly 60,000 free plugins, other "premium" plugins do require a fee to use, and adding other customizations may require additional developer or technical assistance, likely at some cost. Ongoing maintenance, as with Sitecore, will also be required.

Nevertheless, the above numbers aren't all-inclusive. Users of both CMS options need to factor in build costs, usually with a development agency, as well as support fees and hosting costs. You can find more about WP Engine's hosting costs [here](#). Even with the significant difference in upfront cost, Sitecore can still work for medium or large businesses, just as WordPress can now be considered competitive at the enterprise level.

**What's important to remember, is that Sitecore's available functionality comes with a hefty price tag, whereas WordPress offers a lower barrier to entry (but potentially the need for added, in-house development).**

**Enterprise total cost of ownership comparison:  
Sitecore vs. WordPress.**

Cost	Sitecore	WordPress
<b>License fee</b>	\$75,000 / year £55,000 / year	\$0 £0
<b>Example build cost</b>	\$165,000 - \$250,000 £120,000 - £180,000	\$100,000 - \$200,000 £80,000 - £150,000
<b>Example maintenance cost</b>	\$15,000 / year £11,000 / year	\$11,500 / year £8,400 / year
<b>Example hosting cost</b>	\$5,000-\$10,000 / month £3,500 - £7,000 / month	\$5,000-\$7,000 / month £3,500 - £5,000 / month
<b>Example ongoing development cost</b>	\$1,500 - \$2,000+ / month £1,000 - £1,500+ / month	\$1,500 - \$2,000+ / month £1,000 - £1,500+ / month

**Return on investment (ROI)**

Tracking the return on your investment is clearly a strategic priority, and when it comes to evaluating Sitecore and WordPress, WordPress stands out as an attractive investment option for a number of reasons.

As noted above, Sitecore’s licensing fees alone create an upfront cost you won’t encounter with an open source platform like WordPress. But other costs, from site build to ongoing site maintenance are also areas where WordPress tends to offer lower cost, and in many cases, higher reward.

Cost.

Cost.

**WordPress ROI**

**With no upfront licensing fees, getting started with WordPress is simply less expensive than Sitecore.**

When it comes to the larger return on investment users see when using one platform over the other, consider this: If you were to invest the licensing fees you didn’t spend on Sitecore into a WordPress project, you’d be well on your way to a highly-customized site that, while not inexpensive, requires a far lower upfront investment than Sitecore does. This alone is an important distinction to make when comparing potential ROI for the two platforms.

But the open source advantages don’t end there. From building a great website to ongoing maintenance, security, and backups, WordPress simply offers lower cost for outcomes that rival, and in some cases out-perform those built on Sitecore.

This is due in no small part to the massive WordPress Economy and the large pool of talent businesses can leverage for development, design, maintenance, and hosting, as well as the vibrant ecosystem of plugins and themes that make WordPress such a flexible CMS option.

When all of these factors are combined into the final price tag of any given WordPress project, it will typically be far lower than that of a similar project built with Sitecore. Add to that the ease with which you can continue growing and integrating your digital footprint with WordPress, and the long-term investment is clearly advantageous to that of more complex, proprietary solutions like Sitecore.

## Sitecore ROI

While it presents challenges, achieving positive ROI with Sitecore is certainly attainable. Large businesses have deployed highly successful sites using this CMS and those sites have undoubtedly provided an impact to top-level metrics including conversions and revenue.

But the three areas outlined above: licensing fees, site build, and ongoing maintenance, all represent areas of high cost for a proprietary solution like Sitecore. With enterprise organizations routinely spending \$75,000 and up just for their Sitecore license, upfront cost isn't always a restraining factor, although it can be hefty nonetheless.

Where larger budgets really begin to experience the difference, is with the price of building a new Sitecore deployment, and keeping up with the regular maintenance these complex sites require.

Finding suitable talent for your Sitecore needs is less straightforward than when working with WordPress, which means paying a premium when that talent is identified and needs to be retained. Additionally, the complexities of a system like Sitecore means those developers and engineers are spending more time on both the initial build and ongoing maintenance or additional customizations.

All in, the website you build may indeed require proprietary capabilities that Sitecore offers out-of-the-box. But even if that's the case, the long-term value of your site compared to the ongoing costs you'll incur with Sitecore may also be a limiting factor in your ability to realize positive ROI.

Cost.

Cost.

**If you're currently using Sitecore and considering a migration to open source, consider that within the next nine months, you could be fully migrated to a WordPress deployment and no longer incurring the high annual and monthly costs that directly affect ROI.**

# Summary.

**Overall, Sitecore can offer a lot of upfront functionality (if you know how to use it) but it comes with significant upfront cost.**

Because it's a closed, proprietary platform, Sitecore users are reliant on one vendor—Sitecore—for their digital presence, which leaves them without a lot of options if they ever want to add customizations or other functionality not included in the suite of Sitecore products.

Realizing the benefits of Sitecore can also become complicated quickly, and without the help of developers who are familiar with Sitecore's codebase, users can have a hard time using the platform efficiently, ultimately making ROI hard to achieve.

**WordPress represents the other side of this coin.**

As an open source CMS beloved by a massive community of users all around the world, getting started with WordPress and using it to build amazing digital experiences is easy by comparison, and there are a ton of resources readily available to make WordPress adoption even smoother.

Open source also means WordPress is extremely flexible and free from the licensing fees that can hinder Sitecore users. At the same time, WordPress doesn't come with the included

functionality that comes with Sitecore and users generally need to build out their WordPress sites with plugins and other integrations to bring in the full breadth of functionality they desire.

Nonetheless, the open, flexible nature of WordPress means businesses have a ton of options for their sites, they can build them as their business grows, and they can differentiate their sites from the templated approach found with many proprietary solutions.





# All-in-all,

**WordPress offers far more upside, ease-of-use, and a lower total cost of ownership than Sitecore, and given its maturity as a CMS, there are few use cases where WordPress can't do what Sitecore does.**

**Want to find out more?**

Visit [WP Engine](#) to learn about industry-leading managed WordPress hosting relied upon by more than 150K global websites. And visit [Illustrate Digital](#) to find out more about the services and support a specialist digital agency can add when combined with the hosting power of WP Engine.



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