WP engine™

The State of Headless 2024

Defining the future of digital engagement

Preface

In today's multi-device, omnichannel world, businesses need adaptable solutions to keep pace with rapidly growing digital demands.

In pursuit of this agility and flexibility, headless web architecture has become a leading choice, enabling businesses to stay competitive by delivering exceptional digital experiences across a wide range of customer touchpoints, including web, mobile, and emerging platforms.

The following study offers a comprehensive examination of headless adoption and use, highlighting its growing role in digital strategies. Drawing from extensive research across multiple industries and regions, it explores the rapid rise of headless architecture, its strategic benefits, as well as the challenges and opportunities organizations face in its implementation.

Through an analysis of these trends, the following chapters deliver valuable insights into how headless architecture is redefining the future of web development and digital engagement. The report's findings underscore the critical role of headless architecture in driving business success, alongside a deeper analysis of the specific data and trends uncovered in our research.

We hope this serves as an essential resource for understanding the present and future state of headless development, informing and inspiring your strategic thinking as you navigate the opportunities and challenges ahead.

Our international research highlights the expanding role and strategic benefits of headless architecture in delivering modern digital experiences.

Redefining digital success

The current tech landscape is marked by shifting complexities, from the rise of artificial intelligence (AI) and evolving security challenges to data privacy concerns and ever-growing customer expectations.

As these dynamics reshape core business operations and drive significant transformation across industries, businesses increasingly need modern web architectures that offer the agility, scalability, and security essential for success.

This is where headless architecture, which decouples a website's backend (data layer) from the frontend (user interface), stands out—not only as a powerful solution but now as a leading choice for seamlessly integrating emerging technologies, ensuring robust security and data privacy across platforms, and delivering consistent, high-quality content through multiple customer touchpoints.

As this report reveals, agile, scalable web architecture has become more than a competitive advantage—it's a survival strategy. Once considered an outlier, headless has risen to meet this need, evolving into a critical component of modern digital frameworks and empowering businesses to break free from the constraints of legacy systems.

By embracing headless architecture, these organizations aren't just responding to the current moment—they're redefining it.

> *"Headless is about leading the way; it's about making your own path in a digital landscape that is primed for innovation,"* says Tayo Onabule, co-founder and managing director at digital agency Drewl. *"Our use of headless has put us in a position to not only meet but exceed the expectations of our clients and the demands of the market."*

Headless 101: The evolution of content management

Businesses are constantly under pressure to meet the growing demands of online users, who expect seamless, relevant, and engaging digital experiences delivered instantly.

Traditionally, a content management system (CMS) served as the backbone of web development, offering robust functionality and a user-friendly interface that could meet these demands. However, as technology advances and user expectations evolve, some of these conventional systems have begun to fall short of delivering the agility and flexibility required for modern digital experiences.

Headless architecture represents a significant evolution in the way content is managed and delivered. Unlike traditional CMS platforms, which tightly couple the frontend with the backend, headless architecture decouples these components, allowing them to function independently.

This separation is achieved through application programming interfaces (APIs) that deliver content to any platform—mobile apps, smartwatches, voice assistants, or IoT devices.

The decoupled nature of headless enables developers to create highly customized end-user interfaces tailored to each specific platform and user without being constrained by the backend system.
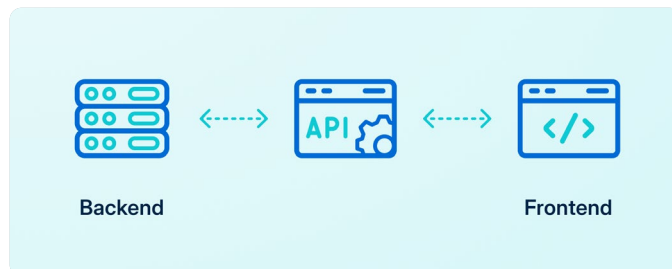
Headless architecture enables independent functionality between the frontend and backend, using APIs to deliver content across platforms and devices.

This approach comes with myriad benefits, among them an often dramatic increase in site performance. Pages load faster when the backend and frontend are decoupled, reducing unnecessary server requests and streamlining content delivery.

The omnichannel benefits of headless are also highly regarded. Headless configurations allow content to be seamlessly distributed across various platforms, ensuring a consistent user experience regardless of the channel. They also make omnichannel delivery more efficient and scalable, enabling businesses to reach their audiences wherever they are.

Last but not least, the separation of layers and systems makes security another one of headless' top benefits. By isolating the CMS from the presentation layer, a headless site reduces its attack surface, making it harder for malicious actors to exploit system vulnerabilities. This also allows for more granular security controls, ensuring sensitive data is protected across all platforms.

WordPress's rise as a headless CMS

WordPress, the world's most widely used CMS, has seen a sharp increase in popularity as a powerful headless CMS. In headless configurations, WordPress retains its familiar and user-friendly interface while offering the flexibility to deliver content across a wide range of platforms through APIs.

Diagram of a headless implementation using WordPress as the backend CMS

This not only makes it an attractive choice for companies seeking to innovate rapidly without being tied down by the limitations of a traditional, monolithic CMS, but it also offers a way out for users constrained by other CMS platforms—often locked into rigid systems that aren't innovating fast enough.

Perhaps most importantly, headless WordPress enables a well-balanced union between developers and marketers, preserving the editing experience content creators are comfortable with while providing developers the freedom to use the modern frameworks they prefer.

This is a benefit not always apparent in other headless configurations, and for both sets of users, WordPress' vast library of plugins and themes, its open-source codebase, and its thriving developer community all provide a rich ecosystem of tools, integrations, and support that can enhance the headless experience.

WordPress' rise as a headless CMS exemplifies a broader need for systems that offer greater flexibility, scalability, and multi-platform content delivery while maintaining a rich editor experience. The expanding benefits and use cases of headless, as explored in the following sections, illustrate how these modern web solutions can drive innovation and meet the dynamic demands of today's digital landscape.
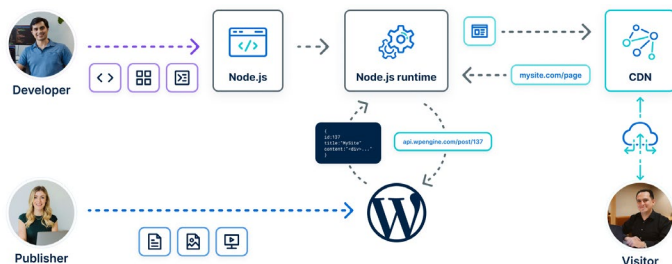
The State of Headless 2024: The future of digital engagement

This report explores the state of headless web architecture in 2024, offering an in-depth analysis of how this development approach is reshaping the digital landscape.

As headless adoption continues to rise, so too do the numerous choices available for those considering its use. The following chapters provide insight into the most common adoption drivers, use cases, and implementation practices for success with headless architecture in today's fast-paced digital environment.

Based on global research conducted by Censuswide in July 2024, the report examines the current state of headless adoption across different businesses and industries, with a particular focus on its growing role in business-critical integrations and innovation. The findings, distilled from survey results of 1,015 IT and marketing professionals across the UK, U.S., and Australia, offer valuable details that businesses and agencies can use in their decision-making and planning processes.

In many ways, headless is already enjoying widespread and even mainstream use, though significant opportunities remain for further adoption and deeper integration.

Nevertheless, as the gap widens between organizations that have embraced modern web architectures and those that have not, the following insights offer a detailed view of how headless is shaping the current and future state of digital engagement.

Survey demographics of 1,015 IT and marketing professionals

By Company Size

- 1 - 99 employees
- 100 - 249 employees
- 250 - 499 employees
- 500 – 999 employees
- 1,000 - 2,999 employees
- 3,000 or more employees

By Job Title

- IT
- Marketing
- Department Heads
- DevOps Leaders
- Web/App Developers
- Senior Marketing Leadership, etc.

By Country

- US
- UK
- AUS
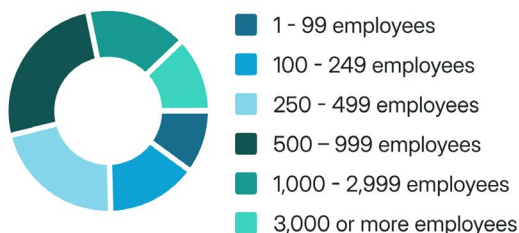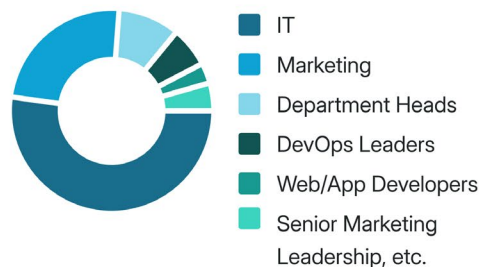
Key findings

The use of headless architecture has reached *critical mass* across different industries and company sizes

- ⊘ 73% of all businesses surveyed are currently using headless website architecture, representing a 14% increase from 2021 and a nearly 40% increase from 2019.

- ⊘ Among those not currently using headless, nearly 98% plan to evaluate headless solutions over the next 12 months—up more than 10% from 2021 and nearly 25% from 2019.

- ⊘ Respondents in the UK (85%) are significantly more likely to use headless architecture compared to those in Australia (72%) and the U.S. (68%).

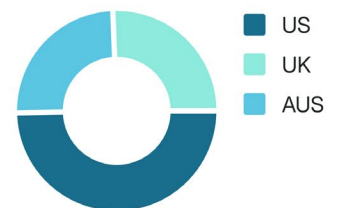## The vast majority of businesses using headless now view it as *integral* to their success

- ⊘ 82% of respondents[1] say headless architecture makes it easier to deliver a consistent content experience, while another 80% believe headless enables efficient content reuse across channels.

- ⊘ 80% of respondents feel their organization is ahead of competitors when delivering new digital experiences, while nearly 70% point to competitiveness[2] as the top benefit of using headless.

- ⊘ 79% of organizations already using headless rate their ability to scale as good[3], compared to 62% of organizations that have yet to adopt headless.

While headless is increasingly relied on for *strategic integrations* and *innovation*, barriers remain

- ⊘ More than 70% of respondents view enhanced technology and innovation as top benefits of using headless within their organizations, with 26% specifically citing omnichannel enablement as a key advantage.

- ⊘ 43% of respondents integrate analytics software with headless architecture, 42% integrate security software, and 41% integrate CRM tools.

- ⊘ Nearly 70% of respondents cite organizational hurdles, 65% cite budget constraints, and 47% point to technological challenges as barriers to adopting headless technology[4].

- ⊘ Respondents in Australia report the highest percentages of organizational (74%) and budget (73%) barriers to headless adoption, while in the UK, tech barriers (50%) are the most prevalent among all three countries surveyed. In the U.S., organizational barriers are the biggest challenge (66%), but budget constraints are the least common among all three (60.5%).

> # 73% of all businesses surveyed are currently using headless website architecture.

Despite hurdles, growing budgets and agency support signal *continued investment* in headless solutions

- ⊘ 80% of respondents are currently working with or have previously engaged an external agency to implement headless web architecture.

- ⊘ 60% of respondents believe their organization's website infrastructure budget will increase in the next 12 months, with 32% expecting a 1%-9% increase and 24% expecting a 10%-19% increase[5].

- ⊘ Respondents in the U.S. are the most optimistic, with 63% expecting a budget increase, followed by the UK (59%) and Australia (55%).

- ⊘ 16% of respondents expect a 26%- 35% impact on bottom-line financials following headless implementation.

Marketing leaders are *driving* headless integration

- ⊘ 75% of CMOs report using a headless technology approach for their websites, versus 65% of CTOs.

- ⊘ 81% of CMOs agree that headless technologies make it easier to deliver a consistent content experience, compared to 72% of CTOs.

- ⊘ CMOs are more likely than CTOs to integrate different tools with headless technology. However, CMOs find it more challenging to manage these tools and report results.
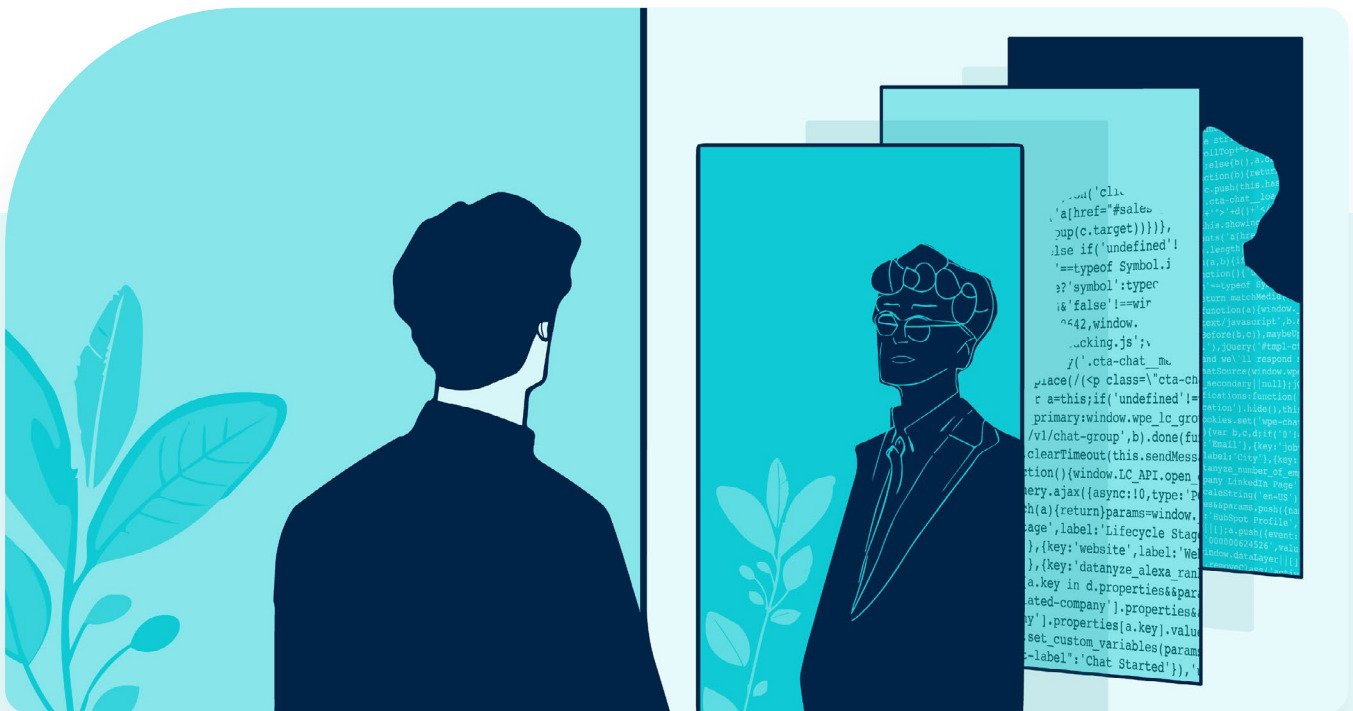
From outlier to omnipresent: Headless is the new industry standard

In a world driven by relentless digital innovation, headless has proven itself as a modern web architecture that enables rapid scalability and seamless integrations. Now, it's also emerged as a leading choice for driving innovation across different businesses and industries

This shift was already underway in 2019 when research commissioned by WP Engine revealed that 53% of businesses surveyed were leveraging headless architecture for their sites. By 2021, this figure had climbed to 64%, reflecting growing confidence in the headless approach.

Fast-forward to 2024, and headless has achieved widespread dominance. 73% of businesses now utilize headless architecture, a 14% increase from 2021 and a nearly 40% leap since 2019.

Headless adoption (2019 -2024)

Year	Percentage
2019	53%
2021	64%
2024	73%

This rise is a testament to the compelling advantages headless offers, including enhanced performance, faster time to innovation, and the ability to deliver seamless omnichannel experiences at scale. Additionally, growing adoption appears to be influencing those who have yet to embrace headless, leading more non-adopters to consider it than ever before.

Planning to evaluate headless in next 12 months

2024 adoption

- 73% adopted
- 27% not yet adopted
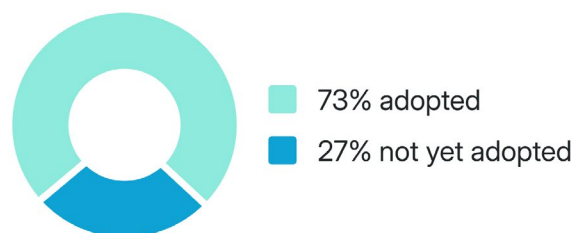
27% that have not yet adopted headless

- 73% currently evaluating
- 24% planning to evaluate
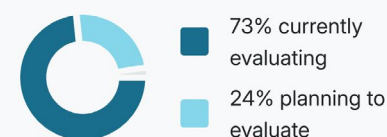
Nearly 98% of respondents who are not currently using headless are either evaluating or plan to evaluate headless solutions within the next 12 months. This marks a significant increase in interest and readiness—up more than 10% from 2021 and nearly 25% from 2019.

Geographically, the UK leads the headless charge with an 85% adoption rate, outpacing Australia (72%) and the U.S. (68%) by an average of 15%.

Regional adoption

UK	85%
AUS	72%
US	68%

By industry, Sales, Media, and Marketing are leading the charge, with an 82% adoption rate. This underscores the critical role headless architecture plays in delivering dynamic content across multiple platforms and channels.

Similarly, HR shows an equally high adoption rate of 81%, which can be attributed to the increasing need for personalized and streamlined digital experiences in managing diverse and often global workforces.
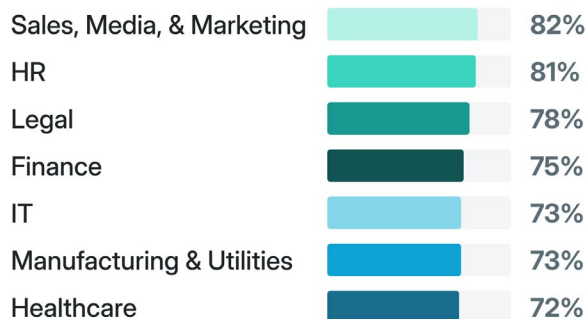
Other top industries include Legal (78%), Finance (75%), IT (73%), Manufacturing and Utilities (73%), and Healthcare (72%), providing a more nuanced picture of headless adoption, where traditionally tech-forward sectors are being joined by others in recognizing its strategic value.

This rapid pace of adoption across all regions and industries isn't just about keeping up with the latest tech—it's about implementing a modern web architecture that redefines the possibilities of digital engagement.

As the following chapters reveal, headless allows businesses to innovate quickly, integrate with critical technologies, and deliver superior digital experiences across multiple channels. As such, its shift from outlier to industry standard underscores a wider trend in the digital ecosystem, where adaptability and innovation have become essential for maintaining a competitive edge.

Industry adoption

Sales, Media, & Marketing	82%
HR	81%
Legal	78%
Finance	75%
IT	73%
Manufacturing & Utilities	73%
Healthcare	72%

A competitive edge in the experience economy

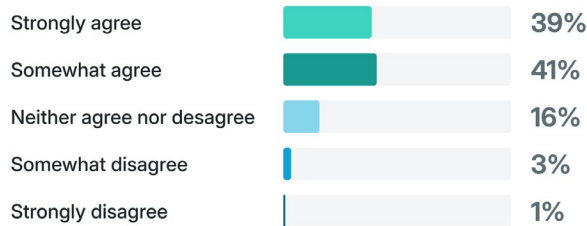In today's [experience-driven marketplace](#), businesses that have embraced headless architecture aren't just keeping pace—they're gaining a decisive edge over their competitors.

The vast majority of these companies now view headless as integral to their success, with 80% of those surveyed stating their organization is ahead of competitors in delivering new digital experiences.

"My organization is ahead of our competition when delivering new digital experiences"

Strongly agree	39%
Somewhat agree	41%
Neither agree nor desagree	16%
Somewhat disagree	3%
Strongly disagree	1%

This competitive advantage goes beyond raw speed and performance, focusing on the delivery of consistent, high-quality experiences that [meet the demands](#) of today's consumers.

Eighty-two percent of respondents believe headless architecture makes it easier to maintain a consistent content experience across all channels. This capability is critical as customers increasingly expect seamless interactions across different platforms and devices.

Easier to deliver a consistent experience
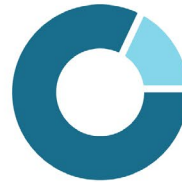
Over 4 in 5 (82%) respondents agree

"Implementing headless technologies makes it easier for organizations to deliver a consistent content experience."

Effectively reuse content across multiple digital channels

Over 4 in 5 (82%) respondents agree

"Headless technology implementation within organizations means that marketers and/or non-technical users can edit/publish content on digital channels without developer assistance."

Easier to edit/publish content on digital channels without developer assistance

4 in 5 (80%) respondents agree

"Organizations that implement headless technologies can effectively reuse content across multiple digital channels more efficiently than organizations without it."

Provides a competitive advantage

4 in 5 (80%)

respondents agree

"My organization is ahead of our competition when delivering new digital experiences."

Important to company's success

Over 4 in 5 (83%)

respondents agree

"Digital experiences are important to my organization's success."

Additionally, 80% emphasize that headless enables effective content reuse across channels, streamlining processes and ensuring that content delivery is both timely and resource-efficient.

This efficiency is largely driven by headless' decoupled approach and use of APIs, which allow businesses to deliver content dynamically across multiple platforms without the need for extensive reconfiguration. As a result, content delivery is accelerated, and end-users can receive the most current and relevant information across all touchpoints.

In tandem with this, fewer server requests—due to the separation of the data and presentation layers in headless configurations—often leads to faster load times and improved site performance, which are both crucial for maintaining a competitive edge in today's market.

Moreover, headless architecture significantly enhances scalability. Seventy-nine percent of organizations using headless rate their ability to scale as good, compared to just 62% of those that have yet to adopt headless.

Greater ability to scale

With headless		79%
Without headless		62%

These performance gains, while powerful in their own right, also translate into broader organizational agility. Ninety percent of businesses that have adopted headless say their company is effective at managing organizational change, compared to 76% of businesses that have not made the switch.

Enabling this ability to adapt quickly is essential in a landscape where over 83% of respondents agree that digital experiences are crucial to their organization's success. Headless has become pivotal for so many businesses because it can unlock the rapid adaptability needed to respond to market trends and meet today's consumer expectations head-on.

In a world driven by digital innovation, the adoption of headless architecture is more than just a technological upgrade; it's a strategic imperative. Organizations leveraging headless are setting the stage for the next generation of cohesive, omnichannel experiences and the seamless integration of emerging technologies.

Harnessing headless for strategic gains

Part of the competitive advantage headless offers is its ability to enable strategic integrations and foster innovation. As headless adoption continues to rise, more businesses are leveraging it for these critical capabilities.

Benefits of headless architecture

Time benefits / creating efficiency

30%

Customer experience benefits

49%

Competitiveness benefits

70%

Enhanced tech / innovation benefits

71%

Omnichannel enablement	**26%**
AI integrations	**23%**
Ease of front-end integration	**22%**
Better security	**22%**
Greater extensibility or API support	**18%**
DevOps velocity	**17%**
Demand for high content velocity	**17%**
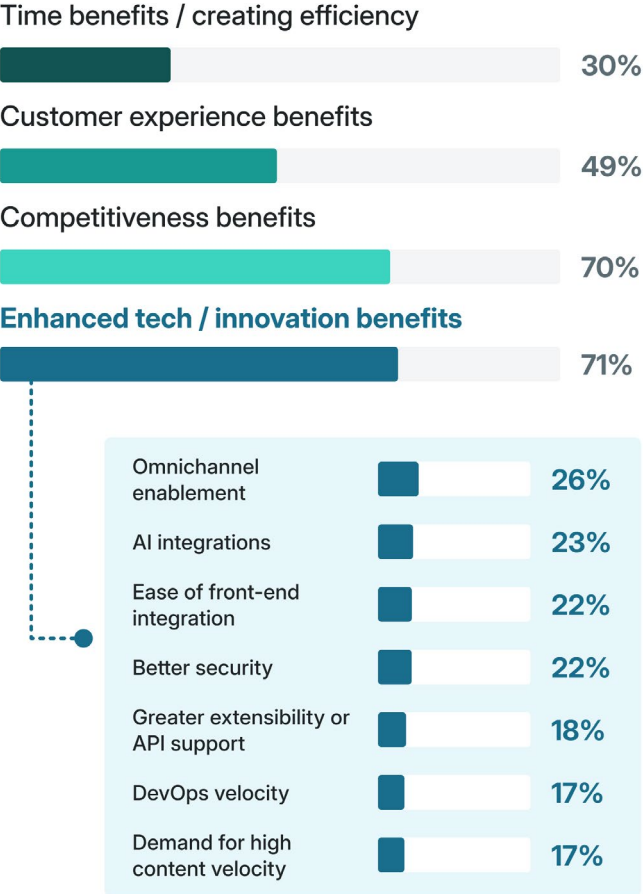
More than 70% of respondents view enhanced technology and innovation as top benefits of headless architecture within their organizations, with 26% specifically highlighting omnichannel enablement as a key advantage.

Additionally, more than 20% cite AI integrations as a top benefit, reflecting the growing importance of advanced technologies in headless implementations.

Together, these findings underscore headless architecture's critical role in delivering seamless, integrated experiences across multiple platforms—a crucial capability as businesses strive to meet the rising expectations of digitally savvy consumers.

Other significant benefits associated with headless architecture further demonstrate its strategic value. Nearly half (49%) of respondents see headless as a pathway to improving customer experience, from consistent content delivery to elevated performance and scalability.

Additionally, 30% emphasize time-saving benefits and increased efficiency, enabling teams to work more effectively and focus on innovation.

The [integration of various technologies](#) with headless architecture also highlights its strategic importance. Forty-three percent of respondents integrate analytics software with their headless setups to leverage data for informed decision-making and performance optimization.

Technology integrations with headless technology architecture

Analytics software	43%
Security software	42%
eCommerce software	39%
CRM software	41%
Monitoring/Reporting software	43%
Mobile software	42%
Payments processing software	39%
ERP software	39%
CI/CD software	42%
A/B testing software	41%
Regulatory/compliance software	42%
Third-party CDN/Proxy software	41%
Other software	29%
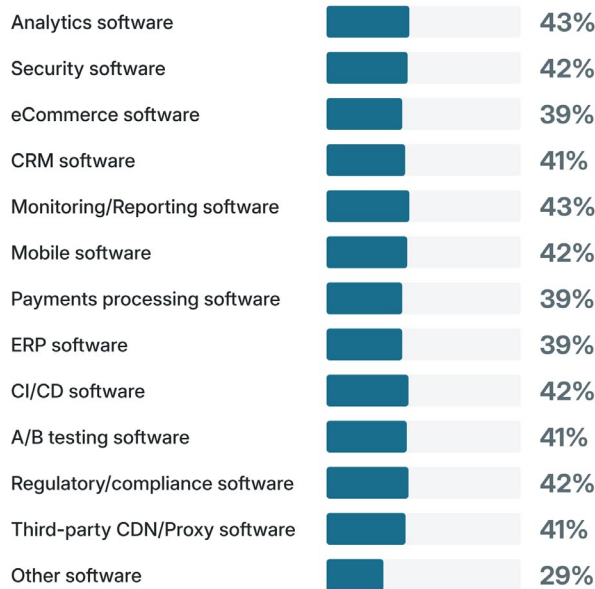
Similarly, 42% incorporate security software to ensure robust protection against cyber threats, while 41% integrate CRM tools to enhance customer relationship management and personalization efforts.

Despite these advantages, barriers to headless adoption remain. Nearly 70% of respondents cite organizational hurdles, 65% point to budget constraints, and 47% identify technological challenges as obstacles to adopting headless technology.

Barriers to headless adoption: Overall

Organizational barriers	69%
Budget barriers	65%
Tech barriers	47%

Barriers to headless adoption: By region

UK

Organizational barriers	69%
Budget barriers	67%
Tech barriers	50%

US

Organizational barriers	66%
Budget barriers	61%
Tech barriers	47%

AUS

Organizational barriers	74%
Budget barriers	73%
Tech barriers	43%

These challenges vary by region. Respondents in Australia are most likely to face budget (73%) and organizational (74%) barriers, while respondents in the UK, are most likely to cite tech barriers (50%) among all three countries surveyed.

In the U.S., organizational barriers are the biggest challenge (66%), but budget constraints are the least common among all three countries (60.5%).

As organizations continue to navigate an evolving digital landscape, the strategic importance of headless architecture will become increasingtly clear.

Agency collaboration as a catalyst for success

With more businesses navigating the complexities of digital transformation, one trend is strikingly clear: 80% of respondents are currently working with or have previously engaged an external agency to implement headless web architecture.

Working with an external agency to implement headless solutions

Currently working with an external agency	80%
Planning to work with an external agency	17%
Neither working or planning to work with an external agency	2%
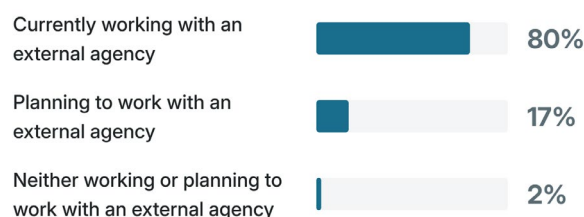
This highlights the vital role agencies can play in driving headless adoption and success. With specialized expertise and strategic insights into best practices, agencies are already providing invaluable guidance for headless innovation— and they are uniquely positioned to expand this influence as demand for headless solutions grows.

Looking at industry data, there's no shortage of potential clients, although some sectors stand out more than others. Somewhat surprisingly, Legal is the top industry for agency engagement, with 88% of respondents already working with an external agency.

Agency engagement by industry

Industry	%
Legal	88%
Sales, Media & Marketing	87%
IT	85%
Public Sector	84%
Education	84%
Travel & Transport	83%
Manufacturing & Utilities	81%
Retail, Distribution, eCommerce	79%
Publishing/Media	78%
HR	77%
Finance	77%
Digital Agency	75%
Arts & Culture	73%
Architecture, Engineering & Building	71%
Healthcare	68%

This unexpected trend is likely driven by the increasing digital complexity of legal work, including the need for specialized assistance in managing compliance, data security, and the integration of new technologies.

On the other hand, the high level of engagement in Sales, Media, and Marketing is less surprising. With 87% of these respondents working with agencies, it's yet another indication of the crucial role headless plays in maintaining consistent content across multiple touchpoints.

"In industries where brand consistency and omnichannel experiences are vital, the seamless integration of platforms through headless architecture is invaluable," says David DiCamillo, chief technology officer at [Code & Theory](#)

Agency engagement by company size

Currently working ◼ **Planning to work** ◼

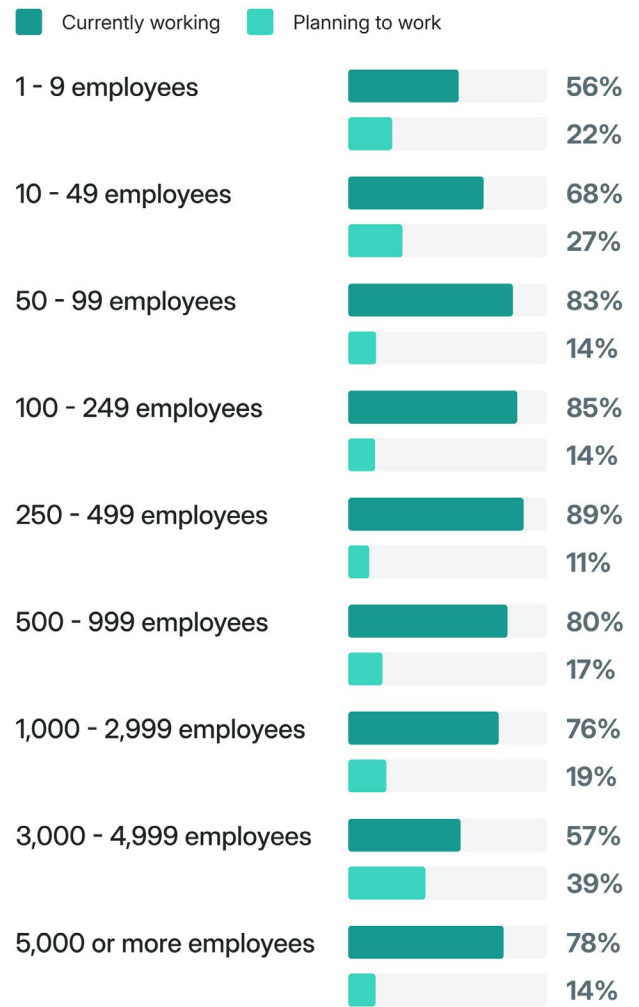| Company size	Currently working	Planning to work
1 - 9 employees	56%	22%
10 - 49 employees	68%	27%
50 - 99 employees	83%	14%
100 - 249 employees	85%	14%
250 - 499 employees	89%	11%
500 - 999 employees	80%	17%
1,000 - 2,999 employees	76%	19%
3,000 - 4,999 employees	57%	39%
5,000 or more employees	78%	14%

"For agencies, this presents a significant opportunity to lead the charge in digital transformation. By mastering headless architecture—especially with user-friendly platforms like WordPress, which clients already love and marketers are familiar with—we can offer our clients unmatched agility and consistency, becoming indispensable partners in their long-term success."

Company size also impacts the extent of agency collaboration. Larger organizations, often with more complex digital needs, rely heavily on external agencies—76% of these companies (201+ employees) work with agencies

Meanwhile, 62% of small companies (1-50 employees) are currently partnered with agencies, and 25% plan to collaborate on headless solutions soon, signaling growing agency influence and opportunity as these businesses expand.

With the growing demand for headless solutions, agencies have a unique role to fill as strategic partners, essential to the successful implementation of headless architecture.

For many businesses, the question is no longer whether to engage an external agency but how to best leverage these partnerships to drive digital success. In this evolving landscape, agencies have transcended the role of mere service providers, serving as strategic differentiators integral to the successful implementation and scaling of headless architecture.

Financial confidence bodes well for headless growth

Despite the challenges that come with adopting new technologies, businesses are signaling their confidence in headless architecture through growing budgets and expectations of significant financial returns.
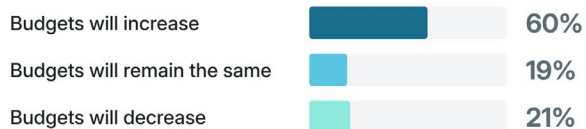
Sixty percent of respondents believe their organization's website infrastructure budget will increase in the next 12 months, reflecting a strong commitment to continued investment in web solutions.

This optimism is particularly pronounced in the U.S., where 63% of respondents anticipate a budget increase, followed closely by the UK at 59% and Australia at 55%.
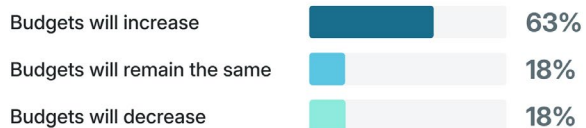
The anticipated budget increases are not marginal. Thirty-two percent of respondents expect their budgets to grow by 1%- 9%, while 24% foresee a more substantial rise of 10%- 19%. These figures indicate that organizations aren't just maintaining their current investments but are actively planning to scale their digital infrastructure, recognizing its critical role in driving future growth.
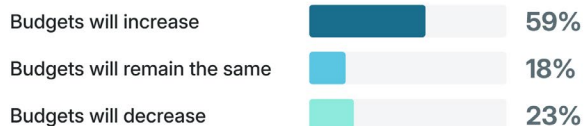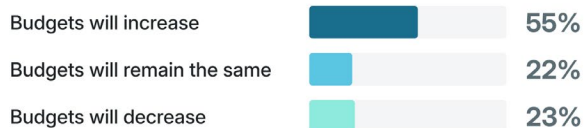
Web infrastructure budget outlook

Overall
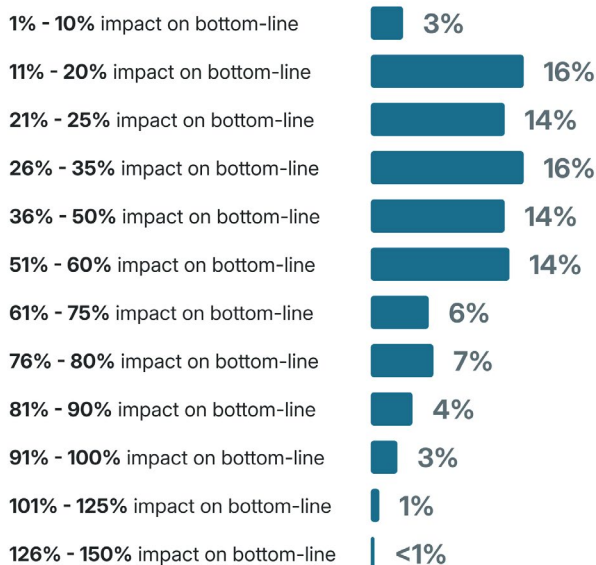
Budgets will increase	60%
Budgets will remain the same	19%
Budgets will decrease	21%

US

Budgets will increase	63%
Budgets will remain the same	18%
Budgets will decrease	18%

UK

Budgets will increase	59%
Budgets will remain the same	18%
Budgets will decrease	23%

AUS

Budgets will increase	55%
Budgets will remain the same	22%
Budgets will decrease	23%

"What financial impact has your organization seen or would expect to see following the implementation of a headless technology approach?"

1% - 10% impact on bottom-line	3%
11% - 20% impact on bottom-line	16%
21% - 25% impact on bottom-line	14%
26% - 35% impact on bottom-line	16%
36% - 50% impact on bottom-line	14%
51% - 60% impact on bottom-line	14%
61% - 75% impact on bottom-line	6%
76% - 80% impact on bottom-line	7%
81% - 90% impact on bottom-line	4%
91% - 100% impact on bottom-line	3%
101% - 125% impact on bottom-line	1%
126% - 150% impact on bottom-line	<1%

This financial commitment is also backed by expectations of a tangible impact on the bottom line. Sixteen percent of respondents expect a 26%- 35% improvement in their financials following the implementation of headless architecture, while another 16% predict an 11%- 20% impact.

> *"The optimism we're seeing in the market is a clear signal that businesses understand the transformative power of headless architecture and see it as vital to future innovations,"* says WP Engine Chief Technology Officer [Ramadass Prabhakar]

"This goes beyond a response to the current digital landscape and represents a shift towards proactively leading with modern frameworks and approaches. As companies commit more of their budgets to headless solutions, they're betting on a future where digital agility directly translates to competitive advantage and financial success."

While the journey to headless adoption and integration may present hurdles, the associated financial returns are expected to be well worth the effort, solidifying headless as a cornerstone of modern web strategy.

Leading the charge: Marketing's role in headless integration

More than ever before, marketing leaders are emerging as key drivers of headless technology adoption and integration.

Using a headless technology approach

■ Currently using   ■ Currently assessing

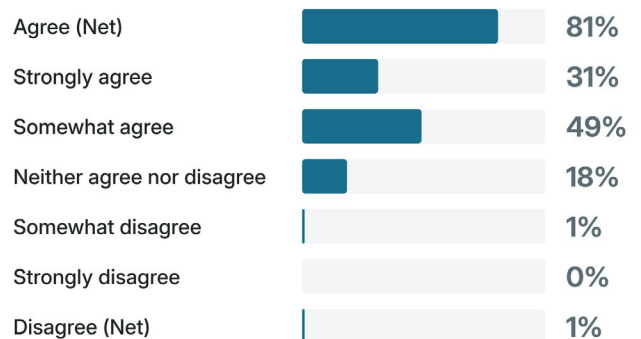|	
CMO	75%
	24%
CTO	65%
	34%
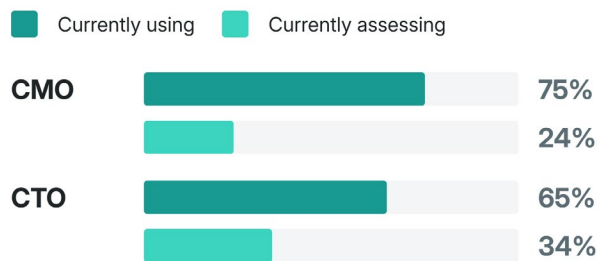
Seventy-five percent of CMOs report using a headless technology approach for their websites, outpacing their counterparts in technology leadership, with only 65% of CTOs reporting the same.
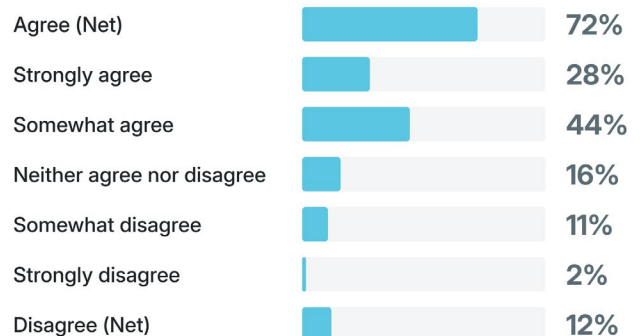
This trend underscores the growing influence of marketing leaders in shaping the digital strategies that define their organizations' success. CMOs aren't just adopting headless architecture; they're also leveraging it to create more consistent and engaging content experiences.

Headless effectively delivers consistent content experience

CMO's

Agree (Net)	81%
Strongly agree	31%
Somewhat agree	49%
Neither agree nor disagree	18%
Somewhat disagree	1%
Strongly disagree	0%
Disagree (Net)	1%

CTO's

Agree (Net)	72%
Strongly agree	28%
Somewhat agree	44%
Neither agree nor disagree	16%
Somewhat disagree	11%
Strongly disagree	2%
Disagree (Net)	12%

Eighty-one percent of CMOs agree that headless technologies make it easier to deliver a consistent content experience across channels, compared to 72% of CTOs. This emphasis on content consistency is crucial as brands strive to meet the expectations of a digitally savvy audience that demands seamless interactions across platforms.

Additionally, CMOs are more proactive in integrating various tools with headless technology, recognizing the potential for these integrations to enhance digital engagement and customer experiences.

Challenge areas

	CMO's surveyed	CTO's surveyed
Customer personalization	87%	68%
Prospect personalization	81%	67%
Release website updates/web productions quickly	88%	66%
Quickly adapt to customer change and demand	81%	67%
Website security	78%	63%
Omnichannel delivery	86%	64%

However, this ambition comes with its own set of challenges. CMOs find it more difficult than CTOs to manage these tools and report the results effectively. This challenge highlights the complexity of the marketing technology landscape and the need for robust strategies to navigate it.

As CMOs continue to champion headless integration, their role in driving digital innovation becomes increasingly vital. By pushing the boundaries of what headless technologies can achieve, marketing leaders are enhancing their organizations' digital presence while also setting the stage for future growth in a rapidly changing digital economy.

Conclusion:
The future of digital is headless

The findings of this report underscore the critical role headless architecture plays in modern digital strategies. Its rapid adoption highlights the undeniable advantages headless can offer in scalability, flexibility, and the delivery of consistent, high-quality digital experiences, making it an indispensable tool for businesses looking to stay competitive in an increasingly digital-first world.

However, the journey toward fully harnessing headless's potential is still unfolding. Significant opportunities remain, particularly in expanding its application across more projects and overcoming existing barriers.

Nonetheless, the financial confidence reflected in increasing budgets signals ongoing investment and the expectation of substantial returns. Marketing leaders, particularly CMOs, are at the forefront of this transformation,

driving headless integration and pushing the boundaries of what digital experiences can achieve. Their efforts, coupled with the broader organizational shifts towards headless adoption, will continue to shape the digital landscape in the years to come.

For businesses still considering headless technology, the evidence is clear: embracing this approach is not just a competitive advantage—it's becoming a necessity in a rapidly evolving digital ecosystem.

The future of digital strategy lies in headless, and those who harness its full potential will be well-positioned to lead in the next era of digital innovation.

Footnotes

1. The 82% figure includes respondents who selected "Strongly agree" and "Agree" in response to the survey question: "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Implementing headless technologies makes it easier for organizations to deliver a consistent content experience?" Page 7

2. The 70% figure is derived by combining responses to the question: "What are the top benefits you're seeing or expect to see from using headless technology architecture within your organization?" The responses considered include Easier scaling/localization, Faster time to value, More modern development methodology/future-proofing, Quicker time to innovation, Increased technical talent pool, Quicker time to market with sites or digital experiences, and Future-proofing the business by proactively eliminating/reducing tech debt. Page 7

3. The 79% figure represents respondents who rated their ability to scale as "Very good" or "Somewhat good" in response to the question: "How would you rate your organization's performance in the following area - Ability to scale websites?" Page 7

4. The figures for organizational, budget, and technology barriers are calculated by grouping the following responses into broader categories:

   ■ **Budget barriers:** Transition costs are too high, Lack of budget, Inability to prove return on investment (ROI), Technology costs are too high.

   ■ **Organizational barriers:** Lack of stakeholder buy-in, Lack of internal resources (e.g., employee time and bandwidth), Lack of required talent (e.g., skill set), Reluctance to handle additional change management tasks, Lack of understanding of the differences between headless and monolithic architecture

   ■ **Technology barriers:** Current tech stack meets all needs, No suitable projects for headless implementation, Reluctance to manage migration issues.

   Page 7

5. The percentage of respondents expecting a budget increase combines answers from each region to the question: "To what extent do you believe your organization's website infrastructure budget will change, if at all, in the next 12 months?" The responses included are "Will increase by 1%-9%," "Will increase by 10%-19%," "Will increase by 20%-29%," and "Will increase by 30% or more." Page 8

Methodology

This report, based on global research conducted by **Censuswide** from July 11 to 16, 2024, explores the current state of headless adoption across various businesses and industries, highlighting its growing use for business-critical integrations and innovation. The research was distilled from survey results of 1,015 IT and marketing professionals across the UK, U.S., and Australia. Censuswide abides by and employs members of the **Market Research Society** and follows the MRS code of conduct and **ESOMAR principles**. Censuswide is also a member of the **British Polling Council**.

About WP Engine

WP Engine empowers companies and agencies of all sizes to build, power, manage, and optimize their WordPress websites and applications with confidence. Serving 1.5 million customers across 150+ countries, the global technology company provides premium, enterprise-grade solutions, tools, and services, including specialized platforms for WordPress, industry-tailored **eCommerce** and **agency** solution suites, and developer-centric tools like **Local**, **Advanced Custom Fields**, and more. WP Engine's innovative technology and industry-leading expertise are why 8% of the web visits a WP Engine-powered site daily. Learn more at **wpengine.com**.

About Censuswide

Censuswide is an international research consultancy that specializes in quantitative and qualitative market research for PR, marketing, and insight purposes. Its dedicated and passionate teams are experts across various areas, including healthcare, corporate, international, and consumer research. Over the years, Cencuswide has partnered with insights, communication, and marketing teams in some of the world's most respected companies, delivering quick and robust data with an emphasis on quality and accuracy.