



# Your Guide to a Web Content Management RFP: 11 Must-Have Features



A Web Content Management (WCM) solution is mandatory for any organization aiming to stay competitive in today's digital, omnichannel reality.

It's important to understand, in light of that reality, that a modern WCM must have broader shoulders than the older systems a marketer might have used (or still be using) to keep a modest smattering of websites or other digital touchpoints updated. Many look to their WCM as part of a Digital Experience Platform (DXP) to address burdens as complex and varied as the dynamic digital ecosystem it helps you govern and leverage.

With that in mind, here are 11 vital got-to-have features you should include in your RFP when looking for a WCM to support and accelerate your digital experiences.

## 1. Built-in personalization

Multiple studies in the past few years found that marketers providing personalized digital experiences have seen double-digit ROI in terms of marketing performance and response rates. The sheer demand for personalized, customized UX is compelling organizations to find efficient and seamless means of delivering them, and a WCM with built-in personalization is a huge step in the right direction.

More marketers are using personalization on their websites and mobile sites, and getting a measurable lift from personalization. Not surprisingly, these same companies are seeing conversion rates increase as a result of website personalization.

To deliver highly personalized, content-rich experiences across every touchpoint, a WCM should include native functionality that powers personalization. By using the same platform for the creation

and distribution of that content to your target personas, you'll find you're more efficient than you would be with a third-party integration.

There are other nuances required for personalization that a WCM should address. For instance, it should integrate easily with your other systems so you can leverage data from tools like Demandbase, Salesforce, and Marketo to determine who is visiting your site and the type of content they're most interested in seeing.

## 2. Privacy and consent tools

What's quickly becoming a prerequisite to personalization? Getting permission from your users to have their behavior tracked for purposes such as serving them relevant content. While in the past companies have freely captured, used, and shared personal data about their site visitors, with the GDPR, CCPA, and heightened concerns around privacy, that era is coming to an end. Which means you need a WCM that automates the user consent process, giving your audience a chance to elect whether they're okay with being monitored while visiting your website.

The GDPR exists for good reason, not because of mania to meddle among Brussels bureaucrats, but because the sanctity of personal data is a paramount concern among citizens of the new digital landscape. That's particularly the case in an era bookended by events like the Cambridge Analytica and Equifax data breach scandals. So, GDPR and other measures are answering a blaring call to protect consumers.

Thus, the WCM an enterprise chooses needs to already include privacy and monitoring tools. The result? You're able to use your WCM to personalize content while ensuring compliance with a multiplying set of data regulations without putting your organization at risk.





### 3. Multisite management

Managing tens or hundreds of websites and digital experiences spread across different markets, countries, and regions, while also maintaining compliance with corporate guidelines and local regulations? That's a Gordian knot only the best WCM systems can help you untangle. If that's the environment you're dealing with, don't forget to include the need to manage multiple websites in your RFP.

A WCM should empower both top-rung corporate control of your entire digital footprint worldwide and provide local teams the ability to customize and localize content and campaigns to meet their own needs, with workflow approval processes. Without a sophisticated WCM capable of balancing both these extremes, the undertaking becomes resource-intensive, error-prone, and a threat to the consistency of how your brand is represented.

The right WCM will provide a single-platform solution where sites and applications are managed centrally and content can be generated once but deployed to multiple touchpoints, and when necessary customized for specific channels, or particular markets. It should also be technology-agnostic so multiple agencies skilled in different languages can contribute to individual sites while maintaining a unified whole.

### 4. Streamlined content tools

Publishing content fast enough to satisfy your demanding audience is essential. They increasingly want the latest information, practically in real-time, and maintaining their interest and engagement – and your own competitive advantage – requires content creation and publication tools that expedite the process.

The right WCM solution will give your content teams total control over the publishing process, without reliance on another department. From updating content to standing up microsites, to building forms and landing pages, you need a solution that makes it easy for the most junior level employees (with no technical skill set) to update your websites.

They should be able to build and edit content in-line or leverage form editing with fully configurable WYSIWYG controls, and configure A/B testing and targeting rules directly from a page editor.

Approvals and gatekeeping need to be embedded in the content development process, furthering best practices and content governance even at global scale. Intuitive version control should be standard, so it's simple to recover earlier versions of content and audit changes that were made in the past.

## 5. Decoupled or headless architecture

A WCM should be able to accommodate multiple agencies and external partners, making it possible for project development to run in parallel for efficiency. Different teams in multiple markets must produce and publish without interfering with each other, one of many benefits offered by a WCM built on decoupled architecture.

Making digital experiences quick and responsive means your delivery must be quick and responsive, too. Prior WCM platforms were built around the monolithic, coupled model, which curtailed where content could be distributed, and the speed you could get it out the door.

By decoupling the content publishing and management side from content presentation, content teams are freed from developer requirements and timing. So, content creation and deployment becomes much faster and more flexible, and that's increasingly urgent now that your digital footprint is actually a multiplicity of them, ranging from websites to social feeds, apps, IoT devices, and more.

Since display logic is now shifted to the client side, delivered via in-browser apps, user experiences are faster and more seamless than ever with a decoupled or headless content management system. This opens the door to new levels of interactivity.

Another sizable benefit? Thanks to the separation of frontend and backend, decoupled architectures are more secure. A firewall can be set between the two environments, better protecting content, network, and databases.





## 6. Governance and oversight

Gaining governance and oversight across an enterprise's entire digital footprint should be one of the primary items on a corporate CMO's "ask" list. A WCM that ensures corporate oversight of branding checkpoints, accessibility requirements, SEO best practices, and martech monitoring is rapidly becoming a necessity as digital interactions begin to make up most of the customer experience. The most advanced WCM solutions provide dashboards that give a top-down purview over every issue potentially afflicting their organization's digital presence.

Another facet of digital governance to include in your RFP permissions? Global companies need tools to enforce a strict permissions structure, with a clearly-defined access control hierarchy dictating who has access to what types of content assets, or to specific parts of the publication process. For example, in-market teams should be able to leverage assets they need to succeed on the local level, but within limits set by brand stewards and senior managers at the global level.

## 7. Automatic updates

If you're currently using an on-premises or cloud or what we call a "fake-cloud" WCM, chances are you're not on the latest version that the vendor has released. That's probably because upgrading was costly, required too many IT resources, or there was a concern that it would wreak havoc on your websites. In many cases, it's all these reasons that cause companies to get stuck on an old, sometimes unsupported version of their WCM software.

If you are on the latest version of your platform, then it likely cost you downtime, significant financial resources, and took a toll on your IT department. That's because the upgrade hassle fell on your organization's shoulders and your vendor wasn't involved. Your team had to make sure that when you upgraded to the latest version that none of your APIs, third-party plug-ins, or customizations were broken or compromised.

With a true cloud SaaS solution, upgrades are transparent and automatic. There's no website downtime or

burden for the customer. The vendor adds new features, fixes prior bugs, provides security patches, makes improvements to the authoring interface, etc. and you immediately get access to the new version as soon as it's released, with zero risk. So, you always have access to the latest features and tools available, keeping you competitive in an ever-changing complex marketing landscape.

## 8. Speed-to-launch

A best-of-breed WCM will accelerate the speed with which you're able to drive a website or other digital touchpoint from conception to deployment. That on-the-fly agility to act swiftly to take advantage of market opportunities or respond to competitive threats is an absolute cornerstone of global digital marketing.

This is another benefit of choosing a true cloud SaaS solution, mentioned in #7. A SaaS WCM enables companies to more quickly launch new digital experiences, because there's no equipment procurement process or decisions that need to be made upfront about scalability or traffic projections. With a SaaS solution, you can log-in and get started developing your website right away.

## 9. Scalability and availability

Every digital marketer would love their site to be accessible 100% of the time. A good WCM will get you as close as is realistically possible, in the 99.9%-plus neighborhood, so your digital touchpoints are always available and ready for engagement. The best you can get is what's known as four nines, or 99.99%, and that's what you should ask for in your RFP.

Scalability is crucial, too. As an enterprise grows, diversifies, or faces exceptional or unanticipated digital demand, the need to meet those demands without significant additional cost becomes important in both the short and long term.

Other facets of scalability you should look for in a WCM? A single implementation should be easily expandable across multiple domains, and plug-ins, integrations and expansion modules ought to be easy to add to expand your functionality.





## 10. Security management

There's a rising tide in terms of cybercrime, thanks to a "perfect storm" of factors: more companies with more digital touchpoints, the use of heterogeneous platforms with inconsistent levels of security, and a mistaken reliance on hosting providers to safeguard them against attacks and exploits.

Assuming you're getting bulletproof protection for your cloud-based sites from a hosting provider is a slip-up that can have devastating results. When WannaCry ransomware struck<sup>1</sup> many of its victims had solid hosting service security, but Windows vulnerabilities were what really opened the back door to devily.

In picking the right digital experience platform provider, you need to make certain they provide stringent security protection, starting with their own hosting configuration (or how they operate with your own host) and bolting on extra levels of ironclad digital defense. Your WCM should offer aggregate multi-layered protections, extending all the way into the application layer, with real-time analytics and intelligence to detect and act on perceived threats including DDoS attacks.

## 11. Cost containment

An outdated WCM platform, or whatever prior solution a company may be using to manage its websites and touchpoints, isn't going to be as efficient as an up-to-date, true cloud SaaS solution. Companies adopting newer systems realize this, and find a range of cost reductions or cost eliminations in making the move.

Those include reducing deployment costs, since SaaS platforms allow economical deployment to offices and teams near and far, and some subscriptions allow you to add dozens or even hundreds of sites without any incremental costs. Training costs are slashed, because the best WCMs are inherently intuitive and easy to use,

<sup>1</sup><https://techcrunch.com/2019/05/12/wannacry-two-years-on/>Techcrunch, "Two years after WannaCry, a million computers remain at risk," 5/12/19

which also cuts down on IT costs for support or development.

Quality assurance is another area where a good digital experience platform pays dividends. Previous systems weren't designed to automatically provide quality and compliance monitoring of sites and content, or flag errors. QA became a costly manual process, and when it's escalated across a global network of localized sites, it becomes logistically impossible. With automated Digital Quality Management as part of a WCM package, those costs are trimmed, and consistency and compliance are ensured.

## Are you ready for your WCM decision?

If you're on the hunt for a new enterprise WCM, adding the right questions about platform features to your RFP can make the difference between a good decision and a poor one.

### **WCM RFP Checklist**

Does the WCM Solution offer:

- Built-in personalization?
- Privacy and consent tools?
- Multi-site management?
- Streamlined content tools?
- Decoupled or headless architecture?
- Governance and oversight?
- Automatic updates or no upgrades?
- Speed-to-launch?
- Scalability and availability?
- Security management?
- Cost containment?

**Learn how Crownpeak has the right answer to all  
of these RFP questions and more.**

**[Request a demo today!](#)**



## About Crownpeak

Crownpeak provides the leading, enterprise-grade, cloud-first Digital Experience Management (DXM) platform. The Crownpeak DXM platform empowers Fortune 2000 companies to quickly and easily create, deploy, and optimize customer experiences across global digital touchpoints at scale. Besides featuring content management, personalization, search, and delivery, it is the only digital experience platform that includes built-in Digital Quality Management (DQM) to ensure brand integrity, best practices, and web accessibility compliance. In 2017, Crownpeak acquired Evidon, the leading provider of simple technical solutions to complex Digital Governance, Risk & Compliance (GRC) challenges. These solutions, including the Universal Consent Platform and TagControl, are designed to help companies comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA), and other privacy regulations.

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