

ENGINESS

15 Must-Have Enterprise CMS Features

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There's no getting around it – we live in a content-driven world.

That means if you want to connect with your employees and customers, you have to regularly deliver fresh information. And your enterprise website is a key part of your content delivery efforts.

But your staff and customers expect reliability and consistency – and that's where an enterprise content management system (ECMS) can help.

Every organization is different, but at its core, there are features that are beneficial to every enterprise.

This guide covers some of the must-have ECMS features we recommend.

Questions? Let us know: info@enginess.io

About Us

Enginess is a Toronto-based digital consultancy. We shape strategies for business processes and deliver solutions that enhance customer experience, improve efficiencies, generate new market opportunities, and redefine value creation for industries.

We consult, analyze, and design user experiences that exemplify your business requirements, user needs, and industry demands. We also perform implementation, focusing on system and information architecture, usability and programming, all with an eye to achieving better business outcomes.

Over the past 17 years, we've built a strong reputation for consistently delivering high-quality customer service, and for our ability to handle complex digital strategy and development assignments.

Find more of our insights at the links below:



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1. Easy Administration

The admin dashboard is the heart of any ECMS and it should make it easy to manage all the tasks involved in content production. That means:

- Keeping track of scheduled content and related assets.
- Monitoring site and administrator activity
- Adding functionality through modules and plugins.
- Managing notifications for tasks
- Administering multiple sites and platforms, if necessary.

It's easier to handle the content workflow within a single piece of software that gives everyone the appropriate access for their level of responsibility. That streamlines content production and reduces complexity.

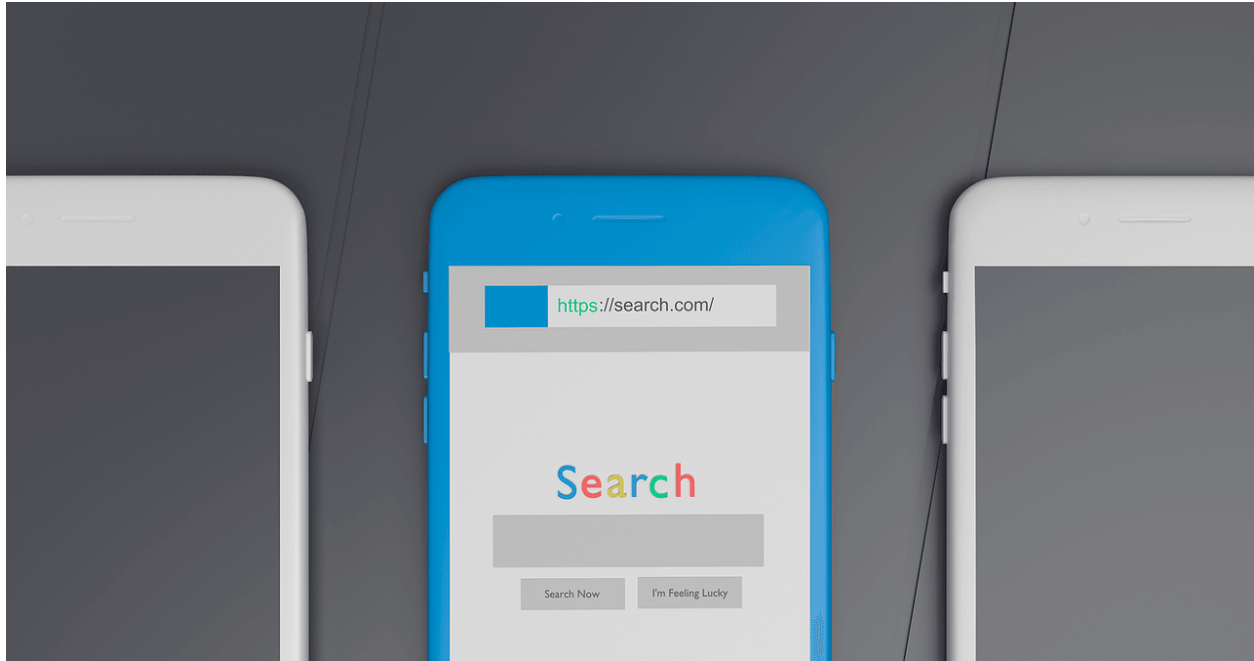
2. Powerful Publishing Tools

Just as the content you publish is the backbone of your interaction with your key audiences, publishing tools are the core of any ECMS. A good ECMS will adapt to the type of content you want to publish – everything from short news items to longer articles with custom layouts to landing pages with embedded documents – and integrate this into an overall publication workflow.

It will also handle SEO, content tagging, adding images, video and more from within the publishing interface.

And, of course, it needs to be intuitive and easy to understand, even for novice users. When working with content, it's also essential to be able to move articles around when needed. For example, you may need to unpublish a seasonal promotion, while keeping the content handy to be refreshed the following year. Any move should automatically update links to create a seamless experience for website users.

3. Built-In SEO Tools



Google is always tweaking its search algorithms and there are many factors that influence your ranking.

While it may be difficult to know every off-page factor that plays into your search rankings, you can be sure that on-page search engine optimization isn't going away. A great CMS will have built in SEO tools to help you automatically create URLs that work for both readers and search engines.

Your CMS will also help you add your meta descriptions, page titles, and authenticate with Google and Bing Webmaster Tools. You also need to be able to easily add alt tags for images, comply with accessibility guidelines, and avoid duplicate content.

It should also help your search engine results look better by supporting microdata and structured data (more on that shortly).

4. Social Media Integration

Social media platforms remain the go-to destination to reach and interact with your key audiences. That's why any modern CMS must take account of social tools.

This means making it easy to add social media sharing buttons for the most important sites to any page or piece of content, and ensuring your content is optimized for sharing on each platform, to encourage people to share your content with their audiences.

Think about whether your CMS automatically formats your articles in Twitter cards, or if it appends your Twitter username to any piece of shared content. Or if it uses Open Graph tags to optimize the display of shared content on Facebook.

These are just a few examples of important social features for an ECMS.

5. Detailed Analytics



Tracking engagement on your platforms is an essential part of carrying out your content strategy. Your ECMS should integrate with the most popular analytics tools – especially Google Analytics – so that you can track your KPIs right from your dashboard.

Specific admins should also understand where the key audiences are based, what technology they are using, how they are interacting with content on which platforms, and which pieces of content are most popular, in order to further refine the content strategy.

Any good ECMS should enable your team to gather and glean the business insights they need.

6. Simple Workflow and Publishing Controls

No matter how small your enterprise, it's unlikely a single person will be publishing all of the content themselves.

Even if you have a Marketing Director or CMO who's responsible for the strategic messaging of your company, you may be delegating content production and editing to a junior role or a freelancer.

Suddenly, publishing controls seem very important. Having various roles and levels of access within your ECMS allows you peace of mind, as well as final say on what's really the face of your company – your enterprise website.

WordPress, for example, has administrators, editors, authors, and contributors, each with their unique capabilities. But even that doesn't work particularly effectively because of what each role can and cannot do.

For example, an editor is the lowest tier that can effectively create entire articles, but they can also publish those posts. What you may want is a role that can create entire posts in the back end but not actually publish, giving senior staff final review before anything goes live.

You want your publishing controls to reflect what your organization needs. But you can be sure that, eventually, you're going to want robust control over what goes live on your site.

7. Security



Not a month goes by when a multinational organization isn't being impacted by a high-profile data breach.

Ensuring maximum security on your website doesn't just protect your data – it protects your customers and your business from a very public – and potentially devastating – exploitation.

So when you're considering different content management systems, keep a close eye on security:

- What the platform offers
- How much work it's going to be for your team to achieve your security standards
- Whether or not your customers and their data are going to be secure
- If your users will feel secure using the site (including transferring money with it)

8. Multi-Platform Capabilities

While running a single platform may feel like enough of a challenge, you want to give yourself room to grow.

Say, for example, you decide to run a seasonal campaign with a microsite. You'll want to track your content, analytics, and general web management from your existing system, right? That's obvious.

If your ECMS can only handle one site, or if the cost of additional sites is prohibitive, then it's not going to happen.

Another example is if you want to leverage your ECMS to deliver content to a second-screen experience, like a mobile app, kiosk, or AR/VR viewer.

If your ECMS is only equipped to handle one platform (i.e. a website), then that multi-platform management is either beyond reasonable capability or cumbersome to maintain with separate administrative platforms.

Multi-platform functionality gives your organization flexibility and room to grow.

9. Exemplary Support



If you happen to be an IT company and have exceptional in-house IT skills for when your CMS runs into problems (and there will always be a problem, no matter what you do) then kudos! You can pretty much ignore this.

But for the 99.99% of organizations who don't have exemplary in-house IT professionals with spare time, then a robust support system is going to be absolutely paramount.

Most open source software doesn't offer any support, but popular systems like WordPress or Drupal have engaged community users who run large-scale wikis and forums.

So if you've got some extra time on your hands and don't mind waiting for responses, then you can usually ask or find the answers. And some proprietary software has live help, but those are a little bit of a dying breed.

It really depends on your unique needs, what you're using the CMS for, and how much time you want to spend fixing it yourself.

Plus, you need to consider the opportunity cost of your site being broken.

For example, if you're a mom-and-pop local business and your site goes down for six hours while you tinker in the back-end, that's not such a big deal. The potential revenue lost during that time will likely be negligible.

But as a publicly traded company, if your enterprise website goes down on the day financial statements are being released, you're in trouble.

So when you're looking at support, look both for the day-to-day non-critical tweaks and changes as well as what sort of emergency 'I need this fixed instantly!' type of support is available.

10. Tiered Permissions That Suit Your Organization

One of the most common problems we hear from customers about their current CMS is that it doesn't offer permissions that can be tailored for them.

Most ECMS platforms have some form of tiered access. But that's not the whole story. In order to have a CMS truly optimized for your organization, you need permissions that work for you.

For example, some organizations have many content writers but only one or two content publishers.

Other organizations might need their content writers to be able to upload only certain types of content (e.g. copy but not images), while others might be able to publish – but only on certain parts of the site (e.g. non-static pages).

When you're looking for an ECMS, make sure that the tiered publishing options will work for you – what each level can do, if users can be designated with multiple roles, and in how many users there are for each permission level.

11. Robust Content Templates

We speak often about business process automation and finding better ways of working to save time and make processes work better.

Another way your ECMS can help achieve efficiency for your business is with templates.

Templates can help streamline processes by completing the necessary publishing grunt work upfront instead of every time a new article or document is published.

For example, imagine you were publishing a new product to an e-commerce site.

A useful template might:

- Create a drop-down list of categories
- Generate a meta description from your product description
- Add a recommended products widget based on tags
- Resize your image to the right specs on the page
- Prompt you to add relevant tags and categories

Each of these tasks is small, but over time (and many products), these small tasks add up and eat into how long it takes to make updates to your catalog – time that is valuable to your business.

12. Microdata Support for Voice Search



Microdata is a specific type of information published on a website that allows Google to read and interpret it. If Google understands the content, it will potentially include it as rich snippets in search results or as answers to questions – from text and voice.

For example, if you Google ‘Budweiser Stage’, you get a list of the upcoming events at this venue that Google pulls from a website – in this case, Ticketmaster.

Budweiser Stage - Toronto | Tickets, Schedule, Seating ... - Ticketmaster

<https://m.ticketmaster.ca/venue/131073> ▼

Buy **Budweiser Stage** tickets at Ticketmaster.com. Find **Budweiser Stage** venue concert and event schedules, venue information, directions, and seating charts.

Thu., May 24 **Opening Night: Broken Social Scene + Portugal. The Man**

Tue., May 29 **Slayer**

Fri., Jun. 1 **KIDZ BOP LIVE 2018**

That's what microdata does.

Historically, this has been a nice-to-have rather than a need-to-have. But with voice search eating up more of the search volume, microdata-driven answers are moving front and centre as people use their phones to look not for information but for specific, clear answers.

The metaphor that's usually used is that of a library.

Traditional search is like asking a librarian for help and getting them to point you to the right section (a list of URLs). Finding the actual answer is up to you.

Voice search is like asking the librarian for help and expecting them to give you the specific answer, straight away.

As this type of answer-driven rather than information-driven search increases in volume with the likes of Siri and Google Assistant, we can expect to see metadata results rise in priority.

As such, your ECMS should be working to optimize microdata for your content, and ensure answers relevant to your business are being offered by your company.

13. Comprehensive Search

Your website needs to be searchable. Often, customers will be looking for a specific solution to a specific problem – and if you can provide that, you can drive a high conversion rate.

Sure, some of your visitors will come to browse. But others are more likely to come looking for a specific product, article or piece of information, and might not want to trawl through your entire navigation to locate it.

Search makes your customers' lives easier. It needs to be in-depth, easy to use, and fast.

14. Versioning for Quick Rollback

Nobody's perfect – including your content managers. It's inevitable that something will be posted by accident, which is why your CMS needs to be able to quickly solve that problem.

Versioning ensures you always have a copy you can revert back to if something is published by accident.

After all, it's much better to plan for the worst and catch problems quickly than to assume everything is going to go perfectly.

This is also a valuable feature if you plan to update a page or section of your site for a seasonal event or promotion, and want to roll back to the previous version when it's over.

15. Business Alignment

And lastly, but most importantly, you need to assess whether the CMS is going to actually fulfill your unique business requirements.

Broad strokes might be the same. For example, if you run an entertainment platform your goal is probably going to be ‘increase viewers.’

But when you’re shopping for a CMS, you need to first carefully consider what it is going to need to do for you.

Because the dirty little secret of the CMS world is that there is no perfect CMS. There is only the CMS that’s perfect for you.

So think about what you need it to do, write it down in a list, and use that as your guiding star.

Because at the end of the day, you’re the one who has to use it – not the sales guy offering you free upgrades to an e-commerce storefront, and not the huge community of support and plugin creators and not even the end user who loves the design. You.

In Closing

As content management systems continue to evolve, we see continuing development of the features customers are demanding, and what you should be expecting out of your CMS.

From new microdata requirements to robust, easy to use templates, your next CMS should take advantage of these cutting-edge features to make your website and administration faster.

We hope you've enjoyed this guide, and that it equips you with valuable information you as you embark on your CMS selection.

If you want to speak about your project, we would be glad to help in any way we can.

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