

Six Reasons Why Building With an Open Source CMS May Not Be Right in the Long Run

If you develop websites with any regularity, you probably gravitate towards a small group of content management systems. You know the technologies you like (.NET, PHP, Java, etc.) and seek out a CMS that suits your preference. You very likely have some open source favorites as well. They may have some headaches, but at least you know your way around them. The devil you know, so to speak... So here's a question: where in the CMS evaluation process do you factor the website post-launch? Remember, the website will be used, upgraded, and expanded to meet the organization's growing demands. While a free CMS may be great for you when you're developing a site, here are six reasons why choosing an open source CMS creates a continuous resource drain. This applies to end users getting impeded—work that later ends-up on a developer's plate—but also to developers themselves hamstrung from a lack of tooling, documentation, and support, etc.

1 Lack of Productivity Tools

Even if you're completely comfortable working with an open source CMS, you'd probably concede they're a bit time consuming. It's akin to shoveling snow vs. using a snow blower: both move snow, but one's a hell of a lot faster. The productivity tools included in Sitefinity CMS let you keep the control, but skip the boring boilerplate. From RadControls' UI elements, to Sitefinity Thunder's Visual Studio interface (no more "alt tab" to toggle back and forth), to the rich HTML5 UI elements and mobile controls in Kendo UI, Sitefinity helps you work smarter, faster, and achieve fantastic results. In fact, Sitefinity's module builder is unlike anything else on the market: it creates the UI, database schema, and code documentation for you. You won't get these time-savers in open source.

2 Poor Usability

Open source by their very nature, primarily cater to those contributing code. Lost in this; however, are the end users left to manage content via cumbersome UI's that slow wide adoption and decrease productivity. Even if they're determined, many open source CMS require increased—and potentially expensive—custom coding to get the desired functionality. In contrast, Sitefinity offers an unmatched user experience. If our developer community appreciates the usability, think how your clients will feel. Our UI is intuitive, powerful, and easy to learn which empowers a wide array of content contributors. Think MS-DOS to Windows: the Sitefinity usability advantage is that different.

3 No Cohesive Vision

The communal aspect of open source has strengths, but it's also one of its biggest weaknesses. An army of uncoordinated contributors deliver an end result resembling an old pair of jeans plastered with mismatched patches. Many critical pieces of functionality are simply considered outside the scope of the open source project, and are left to the community to create. Results are mixed since the quality of code and basic UI elements vary wildly. This creates multiple problems that inevitably end up on your plate, ranging from end-user confusion to troubleshooting someone else's code. Plus, there are frequently problems after combining two random strings of code from different contributors. By contrast, Sitefinity CMS benefits from a clear central vision and consistent execution that includes scheduled updates each quarter.

4 Lack of Technical Support

While your coding skills might be top-notch, very likely you'll encounter a question or challenge while working on your web project. After combing through all your personal contacts, you post a question to a forum...then wait... You might get an answer, then again, you might not. When working on time sensitive projects, the forum abyss is not an efficient way to go. With Sitefinity CMS, all technical support questions are answered within a guaranteed response time. Answers come from the product team, or the support officers that sit next to them, so your projects get back on track quickly.

5 Lost Upgrade Path

You build a killer site with all the customized bells and whistles you ever wanted. Now you have to update it. But wait, you can't without losing all your time-intensive customizations you made to the core. Now what? You're either forced to recreate your site, or stay mired in old versions that will eventually get riddled with bugs and malfunctions as it gets out of date. Both are lousy options. With Sitefinity, you interface your code through our fully open API to make customizations to the core system that actually work as expected following upgrades. We know that website development is an ever changing, fluid process and built our CMS with extensibility in mind.

6 Missing or Incomplete Documentation

Open source documentation is a hodge-podge of information from a wide array of sources. Often times it's incomplete, or even missing altogether, leaving you stranded without a clear path to completion or example. You lose time trying to parse workarounds and sub-optimal solutions. By contrast, Sitefinity has both written and video documentation to guide you throughout. Our documentation is complete and up to date, enabling you to work with maximum efficiency and productivity. With Sitefinity, you can successfully access the latest features and tools by taking advantage of our extensive documentation.

In the age-old debate about open-source vs. commercial, the answer is clear for the long haul. The lack of tools, consistency, support, documentation, and accessible UI make it difficult to manage evolving business needs with an open source CMS.

If you want powerful tools, responsive technical support, updates without losing customized data, full documentation, a road map forward—all with an unmatched UI: go with Sitefinity.

About Sitefinity

Sitefinity is a modern online business platform which adapts to any business requirement and works equally well for online marketers, developers, and IT managers. Sitefinity is used for all kinds of online applications from commercial websites to community portals and intranets, and scales effortlessly no matter the size of your project. Best of all, Sitefinity offers a simple, easy-to-use interface with a virtually flat learning curve that makes it a delight to use.

Sitefinity powers more than 10,000 websites worldwide with a particularly strong presence in financial services, government and education. Global brands such as Kraft Foods, Dannon, Magna, BASF, Toyota, Chevron and Yale School of Management rely on Sitefinity every day.