



Multi-Platform CMS Support - WordPress, Drupal, Wagtail, Umbraco

Purpose:

A document designed to help you learn more about Multi-Platform CMS Support - WordPress, Drupal, Wagtail, Umbraco and Affinity's experience and capability in its implementation, hosting, support and continual improvement.

Service Description

Wagtail is an enterprise level, easy-to-use, visually attractive and functionally rich Content Management System (CMS), which has come a long way from its beginnings as a blogging platform.

Its core strengths are:

Customisation: Wagtail is very easy to customise to meet the specific needs of a project, Both from the data structures and the frontend,

Flexibility: Wagtail scales extremely well and can be expanded easily to incorporate any custom features a service requires.

Enterprise features: Wagtail includes permissions, workflows, reports, history tracking, and other features that large teams need.

Security: Wagtail included Django's security features, which protects against many common digital threats.

Wagtail combines simplicity for users and publishers with under-the-hood complexity for developers. This makes it flexible while still being easy-to-use.

Wagtail is also license Free Software. Open-source, GPL software, means that code can be copied and modified and that there are no ongoing license fees.

The Wagtail core is strong in terms of user management, publishing tools, media management, installation and upgrade processes, security, theming, search engine optimisation and performance.

This functionality can then be extended with the installation of plugins from the wealth of actively developed plugins made available by the Wagtail community, both free and paid for. The huge number of Wagtail sites means that there are strong commercial incentives for developers to develop powerful extensions which can be sold at very competitive prices and where the large user base encourages constant enhancement.

Wagtail installations can be customised further with custom development and Wagtail offers good documentation, through its codex, to support this, backed by a large, active and knowledgeable developer community.

Wagtail's background as a blogging platform has resulted in it having excellent publishing facilities. You can create drafts, schedule publication and look at your post revisions. Content can be made public or private, and posts and pages can be secured with passwords.

This core functionality can be further extended with the usage of plugins such as WP Document Revisions, which allows teams of any size to collaboratively edit files and manage their workflow.

Wagtail lends itself well to being hosted in the cloud. Taking the cloud approach can offer benefits such as responsiveness, scalability, continuous monitoring, availability of testing environments, security robustness, etc.

As an alternative to having the whole installation in the cloud, there are options to store just the site's data in the cloud, for example its images and page content, which gives some of the benefits of full cloud storage. This approach can be supported by the installation of modules such as WP2Cloud.

When the head of Google's web spam team says that Wagtail is a great choice, taking care of 80-90% of the mechanics of search engine optimisation. You know you're on to a good thing. For more fine-grained SEO control, there are plenty of SEO plugins to take care of that for you.

Not everyone requires the same access to your website. Administrators manage the site, editors work with content, authors and contributors write that content and subscribers have a profile that they can manage. This lets you have a variety of contributors to your website, and let others simply be part of your community.

A multisite network is a collection of sites that all share the same Wagtail installation. They can also share plugins and themes. The individual sites in the network are virtual sites in the sense that they do not have their own directories on your server, although they do have separate directories for media uploads within the shared installation, and they do have separate tables in the database.

The usage of a multisite network can reduce development costs, as compared to having to develop separate sites, as well as significantly reduce ongoing hosting and maintenance costs. It can also help to give a consistency across a network of sites which would be harder to create outside of multisite.

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A key benefit of using Affinity is our experience in the specification and development of customised plug-ins and bespoke development. Our dedicated team of experienced Wagtail developers have specifically created unique plug-ins that we have implemented a number of times across a large section of our Wagtail based solutions. Indeed our Wagtail developers have never come across a requirement that cannot be met by existing module customisation or bespoke Wagtail plug-in development.

Affinity

Affinity has been successfully operating since it was founded in January 2004 (winning best new business of the year at the 2005 CBAs and numerous awards since). It has recently achieved significant organic growth with sales revenue increasing year-on-year and into the current financial year - cementing its strong financial standing. The company remains independently owned with a strong balance sheet and order book.

Putting the customer first is at the core of what we do. Only if the customer is satisfied will we have achieved the right result. And it is only through creativity and innovation that customer satisfaction can be ensured. Meeting the needs and demands of the customer always, in our experience, involves going the extra mile – finding often unexpected solutions to emerging requirements and challenges.

We are a security and process led business and are proud of our ISO 27001, 9001 and Cyber Essentials Plus accreditations not to mention our Investors In People and Living Wage accreditations.

Affinity's Processes

Affinity Project Management

Affinity is in an excellent position with its multiple methodology offerings. We recognise that there is not a “one size fits all” approach to delivering successful projects and have developed and matured our own processes to match the differing needs of our diverse client base.

Our mainstay method utilises a core iterative development team following tried and tested Scrum agile principles. We have tailored the entry points to this core competency to enable us to support everything from formal “waterfall” engagements to “full agile” projects and most things in between.

Ultimately we have modelled our approach to suit the needs

of our clients rather than dictating one specific engagement process; we can fit in where you need us and deliver in a way that gives you the most benefit. As a key to this, early in any engagement we help our customers understand their own strengths and competencies in project processes and produce an offering that dovetails into a customer's organisation rather than being at odds with it.

Affinity Waterfall



Many of our clients are seeking a traditional waterfall engagement and we equally welcome that approach. If there are no significant uncertainties in your own requirements, we will work with you in an elaboration phase to formally detail them together. Once defined, we will happily deliver against a set budget and specification. We add some further value to this approach by vertically or functionally dividing up your requirement in-house and iteratively developing it within our core team. This means that change control can be managed better (and minimised) should your documented vision change or something unexpected happens.

Affinity Agile Hybrid

We are realists – we know that a full Agile engagement across company boundaries is hard to achieve and also in an uncertain world that Waterfall requirements can and do change. Unless an organisation has reached a reasonable level of Agile maturity it may actually be culturally or organisationally impossible for them to work in a fully Agile way. We can solve this and we will do this in two ways:

1. An 'out of the box' approach to technology

We will select and propose suitable open source packages, modules and templates that we believe can cleanly offer the solution that you are seeking 'out of the box' without the need for fundamental code writes at a low level. We promote taking this more straightforward approach to technology choice so that we can deliver you business value as soon as possible rather than building something from scratch.

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Any package solution will require levels of configuration and customisation, however if the underlying business processes that they offer do indeed deliver your needs, then there is no need to re-specify those processes in agile story cards, and carry out a detailed business process mapping before we can start delivery.

2. A lightweight Agile backlog

Tied neatly to the above, we will embed our own agile expertise into your project and guide some of the Analyst and Product Owner activities particularly in the early iterations. Most importantly as we will have proposed technologies that minimise the need for the detailed requirements work that consumes a lot of time, you will be able to step back a little from the daily refinement and story breakdown work that would be present in a typical Full Agile engagement and predominantly focus on acceptance of the project deliverables at the end of each iteration.

Affinity Agile

Our full Agile project process works on an iterative backlog



definition and refinement cycle that feeds into our core development scrum process. This is an industry standard approach and as well as operating perfectly on its own, can also plug into large-scale Agile programme methods such as the Scaled Agile Framework (SAFe).

This highly collaborative approach puts your project at the heart of our company and delivers a cohesive end to end process from your Project Roadmap, Product Owners and Analysts downwards. We will justifiably have high expectations of your consistent daily engagement with us in stand-ups, refinement sessions and story-card workshops to make your project a success.

For more information please go to: www.affinity-digital.com/services

Who we do it for

We work with a range of clients using the Wagtail platform ranging from Large Educational institutes and Blue Chip Contracts to Sales and Marketing websites for SME's. This is one of the key benefits of the Wagtail Platform – its scalability.

We like it so much we use it on our own site... Why

We decided to land our Python developers with the challenge of building our new website using Wagtail and a host of Python packages.

We really like the way Wagtail leverages a framework called Django, and comes with free built-in enterprise-level features such as workflows, reports, language translations, audit logging, and permissions. As a very digitally literate organisation we like the way Wagtail wants to manage the content. not the entire website.

Wagtail exists between a website and a web app with a preferred database that can handle I/O very well.

Wagtail's easy to use drag and drop page builder. Utilising StreamField means we can update the content on our existing pages, create new pages and more, extremely easily. Helping keep training time on the new CMS to a minimum empowering more of our colleagues to use it regardless of technical background.

We love the built in SEO from Wagtail. It does a fantastic job of building a great SEO foundation. This means that our new site built with Wagtail was ready for search as soon as

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it was built without further work needing to be done. From there our administrators monitor traffic and can easily make changes to the site for further optimisation.

Security is a very significant part of our business and our clients' solutions. Wagtail has built in security features to ensure protection against a range of vulnerabilities, and has a lower Hacker profile than other CMS's like WordPress

We are Integration and migration specialists and to that end need to find best of breed enterprise open source CMS's to help us meet the needs of these mission critical services. Nearly all our solutions have significant third-party systems that need to work seamlessly with their website, intranet or bespoke application. The Wagtail CMS is very compatible with third-party integrations. Whether it be a custom database, a payment system, or something more complicated, Wagtail integrates quickly and easily with other systems. What's more, developers can create unique integrations quickly and efficiently thanks to Wagtail being based on the Django Web Framework.

See Wagtail in action: Please go to www.affinity-digital.com

Affinity's Associated Services

Business Analysis

One of the most critical components of the Affinity team are the web business analysts. Without this crucial role, our Developers and Project managers will be unable to effectively complete their tasks. A web business analyst identifies the needs within an organisation that correspond to the sphere of the online world. They are also charged with determining an appropriate course of action or solution depending on needs of the company. "Web Business Analysts are essential to linking the business objectives and the technical capabilities," Our clients want to achieve their goals, but they may not understand the technical limitations in what can be done, in terms of resources, technology, and the time available. Our web business analysts are the link that gives better understanding to both sides.

Creative Design Services

We believe that good design is fundamental to any successful project. Making good use of graphic design

principles allows us to:

- Create attractive and engaging solutions for our clients;
- Maximise ease of use and facilitate the users' journey through any website or application;
- Enhance and drive forward the client's digital brand in support of their wider marketing strategies.

We focus on the usability of your website, making sure that your customers' interactions with it is enjoyable and without confusing or superfluous obstacles that may cause them to disengage or abandon their journey.

By applying these principles to your website, we will be able to deliver against your requirements in a way which will not just enhance your visitors' experience but will also strengthen your brand in support of your wider marketing strategies.

Our design team are fully conversant with the implications of developing a truly fully responsive in design, meaning that whatever platform (screen size and resolution) the website is viewed on. The web page is optimised to deliver the best and most appropriate view of that page. The beauty of 'open source' software and Drupal in particular is that we can demonstrate this technological approach and many of its other features on a 'play before you pay' basis).

Use Cases

Well-written use case narratives (or simply "use cases") offer Affinity's analysis, development, and testing teams an invaluable guidebook. A use case is a formalised story that describes how someone procedurally interacts with an existing or proposed system and they should be part of every project managers' permanent tool set.

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User Journeys

At Affinity we ensure we understand the underlying problem before attempting to solve it and then make things simple and intuitive. Acknowledging that the user is not like you and having empathy is the key to a great User Journey. When we really get what makes people tick and why they do what they do, we'll have a much easier time making their visit better.

User Experience Design

When someone is trying to get something done, they're on a mission. Don't interrupt them unnecessarily, don't set up obstacles for them to overcome, just pave the road for an easy ride. Affinity's UX team will create designs that have intentional and obvious paths that will allow people to complete tasks quickly and freely. We will create a visual hierarchy that matches the user's needs, Provide signposts and cues and of course make actions reversible. Our mantra is - Less is more. It is important to make sure that everything in the design has a purpose. Some things are purely functional; other things are purely aesthetic. But if they aren't adding to the overall positivity of the experience, then we'll take it out. Finally, be consistent: navigational mechanisms, organisational structure and metaphors used throughout the design must be predictable and reliable. When things don't match up between multiple areas, the experience can feel disjointed, confusing and uncomfortable. People will start to question whether they're misunderstanding the intended meaning or if they missed a key cue. Consistency implies stability, and people always want to feel like they're in good hands.

Other Affinity service offerings

Full Discovery Service

Open Source solutions Consultancy

Open Source Website, intranet & Development

Drupal Experts

Magento Experts

WordPress Experts

Wagtail Experts

Java Script Headless CMS Experts

Data Integration Specialists

Data Migration Specialists

Open Source Flexible Assessment Systems (FAS)

Cloud Hosting, Support & Continual Improvement

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