



The Aragon Research Globe™ for Content Experience Platforms, 2021

Intelligent Customer Journeys Are the Way Forward

Author: Jim Lundy

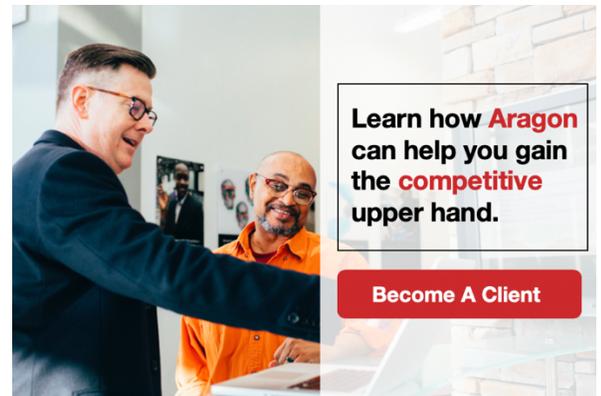
Video Producer: Adam Pease

Topic: Content Experience Platforms (CXP)

Issue: Who are the content experience platform providers and how will they evolve?

How will the intelligent content analytics market evolve?

September 2, 2021 | Research Note 2021-33v



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SUMMARY

Aragon Research releases its first Aragon Research Globe™ for content experience platforms. It examines 17 major providers in a market that is in transition from static single device web experiences, to dynamic delivery of personalized content.

Key Predictions

Prediction: By YE 2022, 50% of large enterprises will shift to a content experience platform (CXP) (70% probability).

Prediction: By YE 2022, a unified buyer profile will become a must-have part of a forward-looking customer experience initiative (65% probability).

Prediction: By YE 2025, virtual agents will replace the need for search in most customer experience-based platforms (50% Probability).

Prediction: By YE 2024, for website optimization, conversation intelligence between virtual agents and customers will be as important of a metric as page views are today (70% probability).

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Introduction

The old market of web content management is in transition. The new battle cry for the digitally-enabled enterprise is content experience. This new market for content management solutions is about focusing on buyer journeys that are interactive, individualized, connected, dynamic, and rich. The aim of this new approach is to drive customer loyalty and retention with a solution that supports speed and flexibility and is personalized to buyer demands and behaviors.

Leveraging artificial intelligence, rich content like video, and integrations across channels, the next generation of content management technology will deliver immersive, omnichannel content experiences, moving us beyond the static webpages of the past. This inaugural Aragon Research Globe for Content Experience Platforms examines 17 providers who are making an impact in the market.

Defining Content Experience Platforms

Content experience platforms (CXPs) are the next generation offering to address the age-old enterprise need for creating and delivering dynamic experiences to users on any device. Historically, this need has been met by web content management systems (WCM), which have undergone numerous transformations as they have evolved to address the shifting needs of the modern enterprise content pipeline, which needs to move beyond the static website model of the past.

Earlier this year, Aragon defined the category of content experience platforms. These new services are emerging to address enterprise content management needs in a more dynamic and agile manner.

New and upgraded offerings are harnessing content to provide integrated user experiences, moving beyond isolated content creation and delivery towards a comprehensive content development lifecycle that enables the construction of customized buyer journeys that meet the needs of users from their specific contextual perspective.

CXPs go beyond the limitations of a traditional publish model, due to the fact that modern technology makes content more impactful and enables organizations to reap superior returns on their investments through digital content experiences. Given COVID-19 and the rush to become a complete digital business, Aragon feels that CXPs are one of the key priorities for a digital enterprise.

Prediction: *By YE 2022, 50% of large enterprises will shift to a content experience platform (CXP) (70% probability).*

The Key Components of a Content Experience Platform

The key components that make up content experience platforms include (see Figure 1):

- Content Generation
- APIs and Integrations
- Content Management and Delivery
- Search and Predictive Analytics
- Cloud-Native

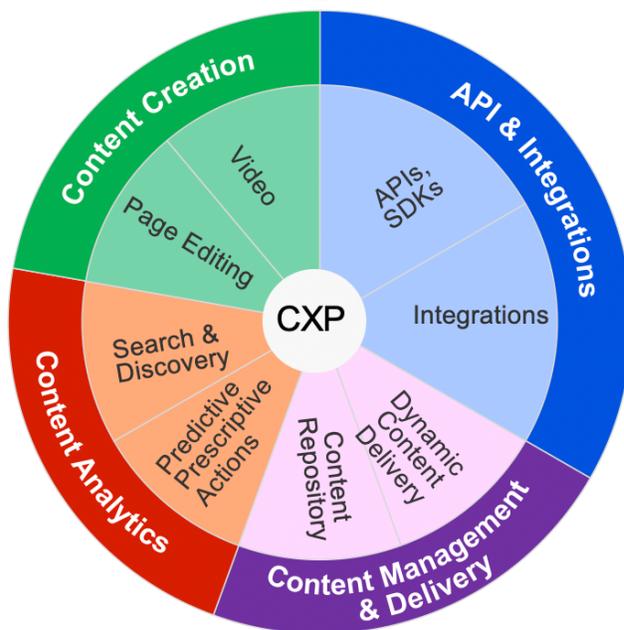


Figure 1: The architecture of a content experience platform (CXP).

Content Generation

Before content can be delivered, it has to be created. Today marketers use a variety of systems to generate content, including Word documents, Google documents, translation software, digital asset managers, SEO tools, etc. CXPs are increasingly becoming the center of gravity for content generation by providing single-pane visibility and control over diverse systems and tools essential for content creation.

Increasingly, CXPs are making it easier to generate content both in traditional text form as well as by integrating rich content, including video and many more rapidly growing content types like AR, VR, and voice. Many CXP providers still partner for a digital asset management offering but many are opening up their architectures, so video objects are part of the native content repository. For product-focused content, augmented reality is

here and while some providers support this content type, others partner to enable the rendering of the images.

Templates are one of the holdovers from web content management. For CXPs, templates help to ensure for content producers that they include all of the elements that will be published. While content delivery can be dynamic, there is also a need for marketers to be able to do more, particularly when it comes to pages and stories. While CXPs were tied to developers just a few years ago, we have entered an age of low-code. Targeting rules and content development needs to be easy enough for a business person to learn and leverage.

Microservices, APIs, SDKs, and Integrations

CXPs must deliver flexibility due to the foundationally open nature of the platform. The need for flexibility in the experience means that integrations will be key. Decoupled, composable, API-enabled CXPs will be integral to delivering content experience. APIs will enable more integrations and more flexibility when it comes to delivery of the content. For management, API-driven CXPs that enable interoperability and integration with other systems ranging from governance systems, to CMS repositories can be a decisive gamechanger.

New microservices-based approaches, including Jamstack, allow flexibility to have content delivered via CDNs bypassing a traditional server-based approach. One of the significant benefits of API connectivity is the ability to have automatic connections to mission-critical applications that make a CXP more automated and more integrated with the business process. Examples include:

- Creative editing applications—images and documents can be updated
- IP and governance systems
- Other content management repositories
- More seamless digital commerce integration

Additionally, an API-based CXP is perfectly positioned to use microservices as a way to build and maintain different modules in a large application. It also implies the ability to connect with other services, such as communicating with a customer data platform (buyer profile), analytics tools that can inform content creation, or IoT devices that can provide real-time input, which allows for the experience to be dynamically changed.

This then means that content experiences can be tied to a larger digital business initiative. Not all CXP providers use microservices, but the idea is that services can be segmented into smaller chunks. In a cloud-based architecture, it is also easier to containerize apps based on this.

The other large benefit is platform independence. With an open approach, providers are not stuck with a Windows, Mac, JavaScript, .NET, or PHP framework limiting them. This has been a big issue in the past. Many legacy WCM providers have limitations on deployment based on the code architecture of their back-end service architecture.

Content Management and Delivery

All CXPs need to store and manage content—that is a given. However, the thing that is different in a CXP is that content is often assembled and adapted on the fly for the targeted delivery platform. This is a fundamental difference in how CXPs are designed, and marketers need to be keenly aware of this.

When evaluating CXP providers, one key element that will help to justify the investment in a particular CXP is the ability to deliver content experiences to a variety of devices—not just PCs, laptops, and mobile devices. Even today, many firms have had to race to make their websites mobile responsive. This is due to the fixed content delivery aspect of many web content management services.

With new delivery flexibility comes new use cases that not only support personal devices such as watches and cars, but also public viewable devices, such as kiosks in malls and airports and hotels, and other IoT-enabled devices. CXPs make it relatively easy to add new digital touchpoints to the platform. No major changes are needed to any of the existing content. Increasingly, a CXP can act as a hub and single source of truth for content across channels and devices, incorporating relevant content into the experiential context, i.e. in a physical store, purchase history, AI-deduced preferences, and location trigger custom, multi-sensory information on the show floor.

Predictive Content Analytics and the End of Search

Content analytics refers to the use of analytics to derive insights from content where the text or a higher-level abstraction of meaning—called a concept—has been organized in a model that can be mechanically processed. Content analytics generally includes but provides more value than simple text analytics because content analytics can help with predictions and analysis based on these higher-level concepts (see Figure 2).

In any experience, users will often have the desire to look for something they saw or were presented in the recent past. Today, search is still vital to content experience platforms but over time, as content analytics gets better and is combined with conversational AI—also referred to as virtual agents—the need for search will diminish. This is because the virtual agent will be able to speak with the customer, eliminating the need for search.

Prediction: By YE 2025, virtual agents will replace the need for search in most customer experience-based platforms (50% Probability).

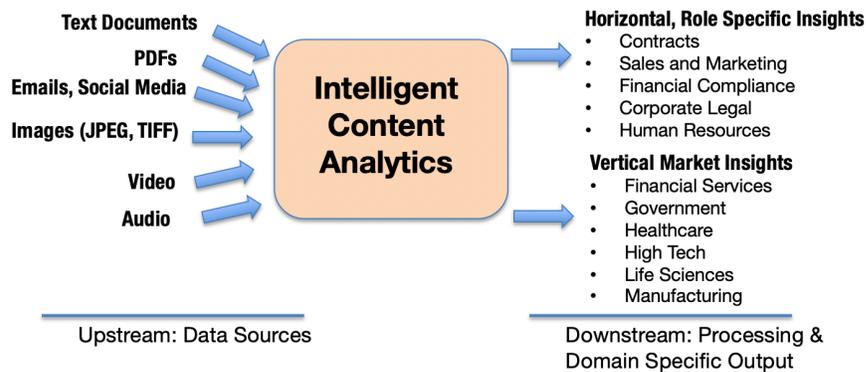


Figure 2: Intelligent search and predictive content analytics will be a game changer for enterprises.

In CXPs, being able to understand what the user is looking at can help to adjust or improve the experience dynamically. Today, this is already at work with basic concepts such as similar or related items. The market for content AI—text, image, voice, and video—is fractured and each segment is developing independently.

How Large Is the CXP Market?

The CXP market is a continuation of the original web content management market that incorporates aspects of related markets, such as app development, as well. Aragon has the CXP market growing from \$11 billion in 2019 to \$28.8 billion by 2025, with a cumulative average growth rate (CAGR) of 17.4% (see Figure 3).

The rationale tied to this growth is the extreme pressure enterprises will be under to remake online experiences, to drive a complete customer experience from awareness, education, and conversion to a sale via eCommerce and delivery of the experience. The need to remake websites into experiences is nontrivial. Many sites were just not designed to meet the needs of a digital world.

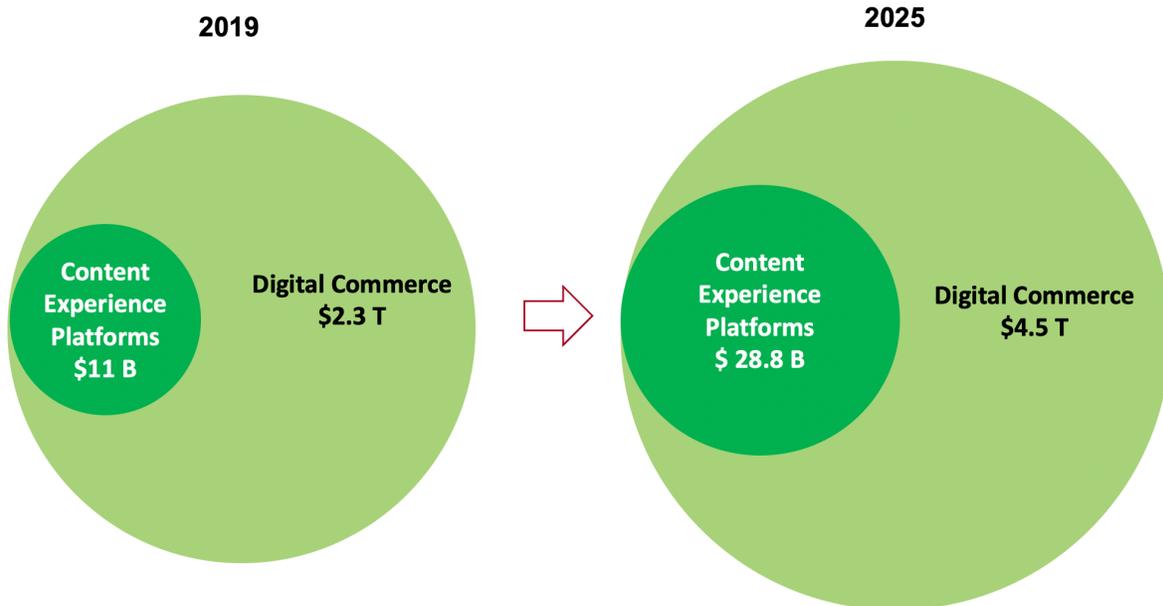


Figure 3: Content experience platform growth over six years as contrasted to the rise in digital commerce spending.

CXPs and the Shift to Video and Rich Media

The rich media era is here, and it encompasses video, images, including 3D and augmented reality that will drive interest, engagement, and eventual sales. Already, enterprises are looking for a 'TikTok-for-the-enterprise' product, and the popularity of Tik Tok along with Instagram Reels means marketers and CXP providers need to respond. This trend will only heighten as 5G infrastructure enables the lightweight delivery of video across networks and as new visual fidelity standards like 4K are generalized across devices.

While many providers partner for rich media management, also referred to as digital asset management (DAM), Aragon feels that next-generation CXPs will do this natively and be object agnostic. This is particularly true for content generation, delivery, and analytics. Careful analysis of how rich media is managed by a provider, including the speed of delivery and the ease of use of management, should be taken into account. Even if a provider has the capabilities in-house, it is often a separate module that is used to manage the rich media assets.

AI and the Age of Content Understanding Will Power New Customer Experiences

The age of understanding is here, and AI is enabling it. The need to understand buyer behavior increases as competitive pressures increase on enterprises. We are entering a new era when it comes to content. Document and text analytics capabilities can understand not only keywords for tagging but the intent of the content in a document. This can help users when creating content and also help marketing teams understand usage when it comes to viewing analytics.

The age of understanding is coming to video and image analytics as well. With computer vision, algorithms will be able to understand behaviors in a store and have that input render a different set of content for a particular user dynamically.

Across the board, enterprises are leaning on artificial intelligence to drive growth and augment existing business processes—content management is no different. Applications will be able to deliver content that is filtered through an AI layer, which performs on-the-fly analytics to enable a more precise and actionable understanding of the way that users are engaging with content and how that engagement might translate into conversions down the line. We expect more providers to turn on content understanding-based AI over the next two years. Currently Microsoft is doing a significant amount of work in this area.

Customer Profiles and the Rise of Customer Data Platforms

Customer data platforms (CDPs) will be a vital part of the shift towards intelligent customer retention. Because the buyer journey must be personalized and configured to user needs if it is to be a full-fledged content experience, enterprises must collect and organize identifying data about customers that can be stored in a unified and accessible fashion. CDPs can create a master index from multiple data sources that help establish a record of individual behaviors, buyer preferences, and patterns of action based on concrete metrics. As enterprises look to optimize their content experience for users, offerings that provide customer data support will be invaluable. CDPs leverage machine learning-based analytics systems and other data-driven insights to help provide a clear and instructive picture of customer activity.

Going forward, CXPs and the marketing platforms that connect to them will become intelligent with the ability to adjust campaigns and offers on the fly. A key outcome of a CDP is a unified profile. Aragon has written about user profiles for years, but it is only now that the unified customer profile is fully coming into its own.

Prediction: *By YE 2022, a unified buyer profile will become a must-have part of a forward-looking customer experience initiative (65% probability).*

Multi-Channel Delivery Is Now a Must-Have Feature

While a few years ago, the battle cry was for the modern enterprise to adapt to the rise of mobile by finding ways to harness its core value proposition in a responsive way that was easy to use across devices, this is no longer enough. Cloud and mobile enablement are now table-stakes, and tomorrow's leaders are looking beyond these core infrastructure concerns to assess how they can leverage content in a way that drives customer loyalty, engagement, and conversions.

A critical area of concern is multi-channel delivery of content. Increasingly, organizational assets are spread thin across a series of different social/advertising channels. Content experience platforms are meeting these needs by leveraging APIs and other integrations to make extensible, connectible content infrastructures.

CXM Is About Dynamic Customer Journeys

In recent years there has been considerable new emphasis placed on the idea of dynamic customer journeys. Customer experience management (CXM) is fundamentally about delivering on this promise of a personalized customer experience that is interactive and consistently engaging. Entertainment services were some of the early trailblazers in this approach. For years now, services like Hulu and Netflix have disrupted the television market by delivering customized consumer recommendations through user profiles. These large players often rely on artificial intelligence to anticipate the desires of users and keep them returning to the platform by consistently delivering new, valuable content that is suited to their specific needs.

This CXM-based approach has been shown to drive revenue by cultivating a unique connection between users and platforms, which feel less like indifferent storefronts, and more like carefully curated selections. With this kind of UX, a little can go a long way—when customers feel like their needs are being anticipated, they will come to understand their relationship to their services as an ongoing part of their life, rather than a one-and-done purchase. This is the model that has proven so successful in the entertainment and social media contexts, and there is no reason it cannot be extended across enterprise use cases.

It is essential to make the entire customer journey feel unified and integrated. Enterprise services must be clearly communicated as components of a holistic experience, not as disparate features. It will be critical for enterprises to find ways to unify their commerce, service, and customer engagement into a single unbroken journey for the potential buyer.

Key Benefits of CXPs

This new approach is a sea-change in the sense that it prioritizes the totality of enterprise content as an interconnected experience, rather than a set of isolated assets. To this end, new approaches to content management do not merely provide enterprises with tools to produce, sort, and deliver their business-critical digital assets. They strive to provide a framework that draws these assets together into a dynamic, immersive, and rich journey that touches the user in a deeper way.

Content experience platforms don't just solve the same problems as yesterday's CMS, instead they do so in a way that is designed to drive return on investments by prioritizing user experience. Content experience platforms achieve this goal by streamlined content authoring and publishing workflows, emphasizing omnichannel content delivery, integrations driven by APIs, scalability, and quick deployment through low-code solutions. New platforms are built to accelerate enterprise go-to-market viability by cutting out the content management busywork that holds back product deployment.

Content Delivery and Personalization—The Need for Both

The ability to author and structure content for publishing to any device is part of what makes CXPs unique. Likewise, with the need to deliver a personalized experience. Multiple devices should be considered as an out-of-the box set of capabilities. This has been discussed above, but this along with dynamic personalization should be considered as one of the critical needs of a modern website. It needs to act natively no matter what the viewing device is.

The ability of a CXP to recognize user profiles and behaviors will allow for a customized dynamic experience. Aragon expects more enterprises to adapt customer data platforms and enable direct connections to the CDP to leverage the enhanced user profile.

CXPs, when leveraging CDP-based profiles, will enable the enterprise to shift from a one-size-fits-all approach to a more personalized experience based on the above.

Speed of Deployments and Updates

While CXPs may have deployment times based on site migration and content development, the new normal is very fast deployments once the core design is done. The long-term play is that CXPs are much easier to update and adapt to changing business conditions. This has become more apparent than ever during COVID, when enterprises that had a CXP were able to offer new services in a very short amount of time. Previously, upgrades used to take months and cost 5-6 figures; multi-tenant CXPs are upgraded hundreds of times a year without the time, cost, and disruption inherent to the legacy suites.

On top of that, CXP providers that use a modern software architecture, which includes microservices, can also innovate faster. This new model of content experience has been enabled by highly responsive front-end frameworks like React and Vue, which utilize asynchronous threading to support numerous parallel scripts that produce a dynamic and reactive application. With the bar constantly being raised by dynamic personalized consumer experiences (such as Airbnb), even enterprise customers have come to a seamless interface and a contextual experience.

Putting Third-Party Integrations to Work

The need for integrations goes without saying. APIs help to power the integrations and, with them, open up new possibilities for an even more contextual experience. Enterprises need to look carefully at this area and look at the possibilities of third-party integrations.

Some of the key integrations that should not be overlooked:

- Digital Asset Management (DAM)
- Blogging and Community tools
- Conversational AI (Chatbots)
- Digital Commerce
- eCDN
- Customer Data Platform (CDP)
- Customer Relationship Management (CRM)
- Marketing Automation Platform
- Web Analytics, such as Google Analytics

Enterprises should look for signs of integration with real app stores and the ease of integration being the watchwords.

Digital Applications Powered by Content Platforms

In 2016, Aragon Research defined a critical architecture called digital business platforms. While many enterprise applications focus on data, there are just as many that are content-based, and the providers in this report are well-positioned to help automate content-centric processes (Figure 4). Today, automation and intelligence are the new critical areas of focus.

By leveraging APIs and simple interface approaches, such as mobile apps, enterprises can automate a content-based process faster than many thought possible. Digital transaction management, which helps to automate the process of approving and signing contracts, is an example of how content processes can be sped up.

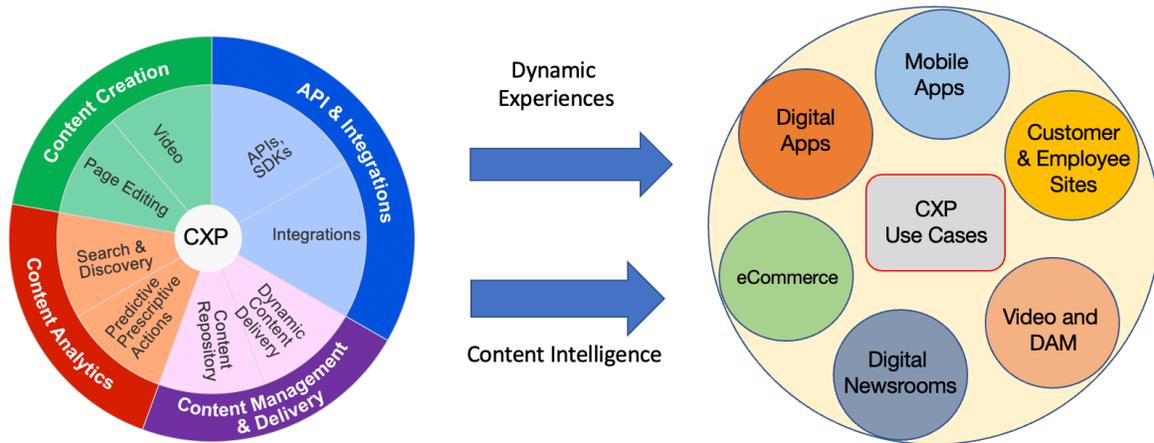


Figure 4: The CXP architecture and the growing number of use cases.

Content Applications and Low-Code

Enterprises need to look at simplifying their content processes. In many cases, these processes can be turned into an application—what Aragon refers to as content-enabled business applications. More business users are feeling the pressure to automate and revamp their document processes, and often, the simplest way to do that is by leveraging a mobile front-end.

Often, enterprises want to do a complete digital transformation and re-platform, but with legacy content repositories, it becomes difficult and time-consuming. A mobile application can be a great way to simplify the customer journey; many enterprises today have overlooked mobile apps as a simple way to go digital.

Virtual Agents and CXP—Going Beyond Greetings and Scheduling

Virtual Agents—also referred to as chatbots—are becoming more of the norm. Today, major providers are adding either their own native bot development tools or partnering with other conversational AI providers to provide a growing marketplace for bots.

Many early attempts with chatbots were rudimentary and often poorly received. By contrast, more modern approaches, which incorporated better planning and superior technology, are being received very well. AI chatbots will be able to accomplish more tasks for people in the quest to make the customer experience more seamless.

Today, more and more website providers desire an integrated chatbot or virtual assistant to enhance the customer experience. We are leaving the initial first-generation offerings and shifting to virtual agents that help customers find the information they need.

Aragon feels that customers are not waiting and that for providers, it is an opportunity to partner with a few strategic providers to expand the overall offering. While page clicks and viewing behavior are the metrics of today, by 2024, it will be the conversations that will be measured and acted on in real-time.

Adding conversational AI is simpler, quicker, and more economical than many enterprises realize. Aragon feels that pilots should be done for CXP sites to gauge the receptivity. Realize that a chatbot is a project in itself.

Prediction: By YE 2024, for website optimization, conversation intelligence between virtual agents and customers will be as important of a metric as page views are today (70% probability).

The Aragon Research Globe™ for Content Experience Platforms, 2021
 (As of September 2, 2021)



Figure 5: The Aragon Research Globe™ for Content Experience Platforms, 2021.

Leaders

Adobe

Adobe has become one of the dominant platforms for content experience due to its continued focus on both CXP as well as marketing. Adobe Experience Manager (AEM) has several components that are natively integrated, including AEM Sites for omnichannel experience creation and delivery, AEM Assets for digital asset management (DAM), AEM Screens for digital signage, and AEM Forms for responsive forms and customer communication. Adobe rearchitected AEM to be cloud-native in 2020, with updated usage-based pricing.

In March 2021 Adobe announced that it will enable more automated content creation leveraging Creative Cloud within Adobe Experience Manager Assets as a Cloud Service. Adobe also announced that Adobe Sensei will now enable auto-tagging of media assets, such as colors and smart tags for text. Other significant recent announcements include expanded headless CMS capabilities including support for GraphQL and SPA SDKs, Quick Site Creation capabilities that allow best practices driven low-code based experience creation, and AEM Assets Essentials, a lightweight DAM solution.

The Adobe Experience Manager platform offers an automated forms conversion feature that supports batch conversion of PDF or XDP forms into mobile-friendly adaptive forms at scale. Its strengths in increasing efficiency and digital experiences in paper-intensive industries, including financial services, government, and healthcare continue to allow Adobe to do well.

Strengths

- Brand and financial stability
- Install base
- Marketing automation
- AI tagging of media assets
- Partner network
- Broad set of digitization components

Challenges

- Customers report high prices

Acquia

Acquia, based in Boston and led by CEO Michael Sullivan offers a full CXP platform that offers the flexibility of its core Drupal-based CMS with more enterprise-grade features. The company's Drupal Cloud platform offers the core Acquia CMS, Acquia Site Studio, its low code development offering, and Acquia Cloud IDE for development within Drupal. In March 2021 Acquia introduced Acquia Migrate, which allows Drupal 7 to be upgraded to Drupal 9.

Acquia also offers its Marketing Cloud, which includes analytics, updated machine learning models with new reporting capabilities, digital asset management, and a customer data platform. With its CDP, Acquia can enable customers to discover the predictive variables that are important for current and future campaigns. It also offers new compliance capabilities to assist with CCPA and GDPR regulations. Acquia focuses on consumer brands, retail, and media and entertainment, and is expanding its B2B market presence.

Strengths

- Install base
- Open-source heritage
- Marketing cloud
- Customer data platform
- APIs

Challenges

- Market awareness outside of North America

Brightspot

Brightspot, based in Reston, Virginia, and led by David Gang, is a content experience platform provider that provides a suite of solutions that enable the construction of dynamic digital experiences. The core of its solution is the Brightspot CMS, which provides a platform for developing front-end enterprise applications. With a flexible architecture that gives organizations the freedom to go headless, use the front-end framework or do both, the Brightspot CMS solution utilizes APIs to serve content to all necessary endpoints in a speedy and scalable way and equips enterprises with the tools to push quick updates to their digital experiences without requiring complex data modeling. Its Brightspot GO offerings contain a series of prepackaged digital experiences for specific out-of-the-box use cases ranging from enterprise Intranets to eCommerce storefronts.

Brightspot supports enterprises with an intuitive collaboration environment that allows users to define workflows to establish a custom publishing process for content, enabling a permission structure that allows users to track and reject editorial decisions. This workflow tracking is augmented by Brightspot Media Desk, which enables contextual search of digital assets, automatic tagging of metadata, and other utilities that make the process of locating critical digital assets more streamlined and unified. Brightspot targets use cases including developers, modular content, brand storytelling, digital newsrooms, digital to print publishing, global deployments, and video management.

Strengths

- Brand recognition
- Install base
- Content management and scheduling
- Integrations
- Preconfigured experiences

Challenges

- Awareness outside of North America

Contentful

Contentful, based in Berlin, Denver, and San Francisco and led by CEO Steve Sloan, offers a full CXP that focuses on ease-of-use to support content creators. It offers this along with a modern microservices-based content platform. In July 2021, Contentful announced its Series F funding of \$175M led by Tiger Global.

Contentful offers an API-led content platform for managing, integrating, and delivering content to any device. Via a central content hub, Contentful makes it relatively easy for content editors to model their content for dynamic delivery.

Contentful recently released Compose and Launch, which allow creators to create a channel-specific content creation experience for the web and to organize large campaigns or launches. Contentful offers an app marketplace that enables third party apps to be pre-integrated with the platform. It also has a growing partner network for deployment and implementation.

Strengths

- CXP
- APIs
- Advanced caching
- Growing partner apps
- Mobile optimized

Challenges

- Balancing multiple product SKUs

Contentstack

Contentstack, based in San Francisco and led by CEO Neha Sampat, offers a CXP that has seen strong growth due to the native modern architecture and ease of use. In June 2021, Contentstack announced a B Round of \$57.5M led by Insight Ventures, with participation from Georgian, Illuminate Ventures, and GingerBread Capital. With its pioneering work in headless, Contentstack allows content to be published anywhere including websites, apps, kiosks, and more. Contentstack has a heritage in mobile apps, it offers SDKs for iOS, Android, JavaScript, Ruby, PHP Node.js and React Native. In the case of iOS and Android, its SDK allows apps, such as news apps to be created quickly.

While many leverage Contentstack for a modern website, the ability to create content in a collaborative way and control where it gets published is one of the reasons Contentstack is seeing increased customer adoption. It makes it easy for marketing teams to manage the customer experience. Its new release in February 2021 features a low code interface that makes it easy for marketing and web teams to inject content from multiple parts of the enterprise. Given its focus and its growth, Contentstack is one to watch in the CXP market.

Strengths

- Content-neutral publishing approach
- Ease-of-use
- Low-code approach
- iOS and Android SDKs
- Growing partner ecosystem

Challenges

- Awareness outside of North America and Europe

Optimizely

Optimizely was acquired by Episerver in October 2020, which then renamed itself Optimizely. The firm is based in New York City and led by CEO Alex Atzberger. Optimizely offers a full CXP platform that is segmented into three offerings: Content Cloud, Commerce Cloud, and the Intelligence Cloud.

The Content Cloud is its heritage from the Episerver days. It is modern, headless and is offered as a Cloud offering. Content Cloud also offers AI powered personalization and recommendations. The Commerce Cloud was the result of its 2019 acquisition of Insite Software.

Intelligence Cloud focuses on many of the personalization capabilities that marketers need. It enables both web and app experimentation and includes a customer data platform. In March 2021, Optimizely acquired CDP provider Zaius, which provides a number of pre-built data connectors. Intelligence Cloud also includes marketing automation that enables omnichannel delivery over multiple channels. It is clear that Optimizely has evolved via its acquisitions, and it has a range of choices for buyers.

Strengths

- CXP Platform
- eCommerce
- AI capabilities
- Customer Data Platform
- Marketing automation

Challenges

- Balancing the old and new offerings from Episerver and Optimizely

Sitecore

Sitecore has continued its market expansion with a new CEO Steve Tzikakis, a new management team, and a new round of investment. In January 2021, Sitecore announced it had received a \$1.2 Billion investment led by unnamed private investors. While Sitecore leads with its CXP, Experience Manager, it also offers Marketing Automation, DAM, and Commerce. Sitecore offers a number of services including Sitecore Experience Platform, Sitecore Experience Commerce, and Sitecore Content Hub.

To support its market and product expansion, in 2021 Sitecore has acquired over 3 different firms, including Boxever, Four51, and Moosen. Boxever gives Sitecore a customer data platform (CDP). Four51 provides it with a solid eCommerce platform and Stylelabs and Moosen is all about email marketing. Sitecore's acquisition spending spree provides it with valuable capabilities that can start to be integrated into its core platform.

Strengths

- CXP Platform
- Multisite experience
- Analytics
- Marketing automation
- AI based personalization
- JavaScript services

Challenges

- Managing core product and integrating growing number of acquisitions

Contenders

Automattic

Automattic, based in San Francisco and led by CEO Matt Mullenweg offers the popular WordPress platform, both as Open Source and as a managed service, wordpress.com and as a premium enterprise service WordPress VIP. WordPress is currently the number one provider of websites in the world. In March of 2019, Automattic announced a \$300M investment from Salesforce Ventures.

WordPress VIP offers its robust CMS, built-in eCommerce, content analytics, and the ability to leverage the entire WordPress ecosystem of partner plug-ins. For many enterprises that started with WordPress, the migration to WordPress VIP may feel like a different but welcome experience. Part of the WordPress 5.8 release included enhancements to the Gutenberg block editor that allows for more comprehensive site editing than in the past.

Strengths

- Brand recognition
- Install base
- Ease of use
- Content analytics
- WordPress ecosystem

Challenges

- Reconciling number of product offerings

Bloomreach

Bloomreach, based in London and Mountain View, and led by CEO Raj Datta offers a CXP with built-in eCommerce. In January 2021, Bloomreach announced a funding round of \$150M from Sixth Street Capital. At the same time, it also announced the acquisition of Exponea, a customer data platform provider.

The Bloomreach headless CXP makes it easy to design page and product layouts as well as to schedule campaigns. Bloomreach can automatically offer dynamic content experiences based on behavior. In July 2021, Bloomreach announced that its Platform would be available on the Google Cloud Marketplace. The added eCommerce functionality makes it easy for firms that want to deliver content and sell products at the same time to do so. The Bloomreach eCommerce platform enables a more customized product discovery experience. With its combination of acquisitions and partnerships Bloomreach is well positioned for the shift to more personalized experiences.

Strengths

- Ease-of-use
- Install base
- Personalization
- Content analytics
- CDP

Challenges

- Balancing focus on CXP and eCommerce

CoreMedia

CoreMedia, based in Hamburg Germany and led by Managing Director Soren Stamer, offers the CoreMedia Content Cloud which features a flexible CXP with an omnichannel digital asset management solution. In July 2021, CoreMedia named Jeroen Blaas as the new Chief Revenue Officer and Scott McFadin as the new US General Manager.

CoreMedia supports both single page applications (SPA) or progressive web apps (PWA). With a strong focus on integration, CoreMedia's Hub architecture supports over 150 integrations. In 2021, CoreMedia announced new integrations with personalization platforms including Salesforce Interaction Studio, Dynamic Yield, and Monetate. CoreMedia also supports integrations with major eCommerce providers, including Salesforce Commerce Cloud, Sap Commerce Cloud, HCL Commerce Cloud, commercetools, elasticpath, and Spryker Commerce OS.

Strengths

- Cloud native
- DAM capabilities
- eCommerce integrations
- Content analytics

Challenges

- Market awareness in North America

Crownpeak

Crownpeak, based in Denver and London, and lead by CEO Ravi Kumaraswami, offers a cloud-based content experience platform with headless features. The core Crownpeak capabilities include quality and accessibility, tag monitoring and management and privacy, and consent management. In March 2021, Crownpeak announced the acquisition of CXP provider e-Spirit from Germany based adesso SE. e-Spirit enables both developers to create progressive web apps or marketing teams to create and edit content using omnichannel manager.

Crownpeak also can now deliver AI based personalization via the FirstSpirit Intelligent Content Engine. Personalization can be based on clicks, subscriptions, or purchases. This enables AI based product recommendations. Crownpeak and eSpirit focus on industry solutions for Retail, Financial Services, Manufacturing, and Public Sector.

Strengths

- Cloud native
- Multisite management
- eCommerce integrations
- AI based personalization and recommendations

Challenges

- Balancing overlap with e-Spirit capabilities

Kentico

Kentico based in Brno CZ and Bedford New Hampshire and led by CEO Petr Palas offers Kentico Kontent as well as Kentico Xperience for digital experience. Kentico Kontent is its headless offering, and in the fall of 2020, it announced several enhancements. These include a web spotlight that allows technical staff and marketers to manage their websites. Kollections allows for full content management in a single repository.

Kentico Kontent also has a new user interface that is simplified. It also allows for simultaneous editing of documents. Kentico Xperience is more focused on the marketer with built-in marketing automation and features like dynamic routing and reusable content. Kentico partners with Microsoft and leverages Azure Text Sentiment analysis and offers content personalization via its partnership with Recombee AI.

Strengths

- Pivot to headless
- DXP capabilities
- Workflow and integration with business applications
- Content analytics

Challenges

- Reconciling number of product offerings

OpenText

OpenText, led by CEO Mark Barrenechea, has continued to serve its customers with the large number of content management brands it has acquired over the years. In addition, OpenText has added a number of new senior executives to its staff, including Lou Blatt. OpenText positions itself as the information company, and while its core focus is enterprise content, it continues to buy additional companies, such as its March 2020 acquisition of XMedius for \$75 million. OpenText offers its Web Experience Management suite, which it positions as a product extension for its Customer Experience Management.

OpenText Web Experience Management is cloud-ready and offers adaptive content that can be designed by marketing teams for personalization. OpenText offers robust analytics via its new Audience Manager which can also leverage Optimost A/B/N testing capabilities. OpenText also features a new responsive template designer, which is low-code and requires minimal to no programming. OpenText WEM can be integrated with OpenText Media Management and it features auto-sync. Finally, OpenText WEM integrates with Livefyre for social media interactions.

OpenText has been investing in cloud, and it offers a growing portfolio of “Core” branded applications and services as part of the OpenText OT2, its new information management as a service platform. The total number of brands is now over 32, and due to the growth of its brands, it now has a senior executive to manage its brand portfolio. Enterprises can now select between the Core OT2 cloud offerings as well as all of the other enterprise content platforms that OpenText needs to maintain.

Strengths

- Brand recognition
- Install base
- Social Media integration
- Content analytics
- Overall focus on Content management

Challenges

- Reconciling number of product offerings

Innovators

Amplience

Amplience, headquartered in London, operating globally, and led by CEO James Brooke, is a dynamic experience management provider with focus on retail, branded manufacturers, and B2B commerce. It has excelled in providing top global brands and retailers with a complete dynamic experience-enabled full digital customer journey. To support this vision, in May 2021, Amplience announced a partnership with Personify XP to enable real-time analytics and personalization. The company also partners with, and OEM's, Algolia for search and searchandising use-cases.

Its Content Hub and Dynamic Media capability supplement the 'Dynamic Content' headless CMS with full support for image and video management and delivery as part of the architecture, eliminating the need for a separate DAM. In the past Amplience has partnered with SAP Hybris and Salesforce Commerce Cloud, and in 2021 has announced partnerships with commercetools, Fabric and with BigCommerce to expand their reach in overall eCommerce. Amplience can deliver a complete digital customer journey, from discovery to purchase. The company is a founding member of the MACH Alliance, and its products are MACH certified.

Amplience is set apart by the combination of its market focus, DXM offering, and its ability to deliver any form of content, including video. 'Dynamic Content' enables agile content planning, production, and delivery. These workflows support the full commerce-enabled buying experience, which is driving exceptional growth.

Strengths

- Cloud offering
- DAM capabilities
- eCommerce
- Microservices and APIs
- Growing partnerships

Challenges

- Market awareness

Magnolia CMS

Magnolia, based in Basel Switzerland and led by CEO Tim Brown, offers both a headless CMS as well as a digital experience platform. The Magnolia platform offers the ability to integrate with other services and has an easy-to-use interface for marketers to develop content. It announced a partnership with Ayata Commerce in August 2020. In March 2021, Magnolia announced that it was expanding into the APAC region with new offices in Shenzhen, China and Bangkok, Thailand.

Magnolia CMS offers a complete set of creation and editing capabilities for text and images. It also offers automatic translation. For workflow it leverages JBPM workflow engine. On types of content, it can manage 3D content for models, textures, and game levels. Magnolia supports both short and stories (long form content). Magnolia also offers an app marketplace that has a number of partner integrations with over 200 content partners, Magnolia can ensure that clients can get deployment support around the world.

Strengths

- Ease-of-use
- API based approach
- Short and long form content
- eCommerce partnership
- Strength in financial services

Challenges

- Market awareness in the Americas

Strapi

Strapi, based in Paris and led by Pierre Burgy, offers both an enterprise-grade CXP and an open-source version with a focus on APIs and modern tech stack integration. In May 2020, Strapi secured \$10M in funding led by Index Ventures. This brings its total funding to \$14M.

Strapi is a headless architecture with a heavy emphasis on APIs and integration. Strapi offers over forty-six different integrations that vary from frameworks to hosting and video integration. Use cases that Strapi excels at include corporate websites, editorial sites, and mobile applications. Strapi offers three different self-hosting options and indicated its cloud offering is coming soon.

Strengths

- Content management
- Mobile app support
- CCM/doc generation
- BPM
- Strength in financial services

Challenges

- Balancing focus on developers vs. marketers

Specialists

Kaon

Kaon Interactive, led by Gavin Finn and based in Maynard, Massachusetts, is a provider of rich, dynamic 3D customer content experiences. Kaon offers a platform that enterprises can use to develop interactive, high-definition experiences that highlight their product capabilities. It aims to promote product knowledge retention by creating a sales and marketing experience that engages the potential buyer through interactivity. Its solution is scalable and can be deployed across devices to help enterprises tell product stories.

The Kaon platform focuses on creating digital experiences that incorporate interactive, 3D content into assets that support sales and marketing teams. Kaon aims to improve the customer journey by smoothly integrating interactive storytelling into enterprise sales and marketing content. Its interactive storytelling support is bolstered by the inclusion of a variety of content ranging from calculators to configurators, to videos, to presentations, and more. In particular, Kaon excels with its 3D interactive product tours.

Kaon content experiences enable customers to freely rotate and explore photo-realistic product replicas, which can include animations that demonstrate how the product works. These interactive tours are device-agnostic and designed to support marketing campaigns.

Strengths

- Immersive 3D experiences
- Mobile app customization
- Ease-of-use
- Device flexibility

Challenges

- Market awareness

Aragon Advisory

- Enterprises with legacy websites should look to modernize.
- Enterprises looking to do more eCommerce need to evaluate integrations with eCommerce providers and CXP providers. This also makes the integration of a customer data platform more strategic.
- Given the need for fast migration, enterprises should evaluate new designs vs. just porting an aging site and the associated content.
- Integration providers who partner with CXP vendors become a critical element of a migration project.

Bottom Line

The rise of content experience platforms is the next evolutionary step to move beyond legacy web experiences. Enterprises need to evaluate providers, including the ones mentioned in this globe, carefully. Investments in AI, rich media, dynamic delivery, and personalization are key things to understand. Finally, virtual agents will play a larger role in customer journey automation over the next five years.

Aragon Research Globe Overview

The Aragon Research Globe graphically represents our analysis of a specific market and its component vendors. We provide a rigorous analysis of each vendor using three dimensions that enable comparative evaluation of the participants in a given market.

The Aragon Research Globe looks beyond size and market share, which often dominate this type of analysis, and instead uses those as comparative factors in evaluating providers' product-oriented capabilities. Positioning in the Aragon Research Globe will reflect how complete a provider's future strategy is, relative to their performance in fulfilling that strategy in the market.

A further differentiating factor is the global market reach of each vendor. This allows all vendors with similar strategy and performance to be compared regardless of their size and market share. It will improve recognition of providers with a comprehensive strategy and strong performance but limited or targeted global penetration, which will be compared more directly to others with similar perspectives.

Dimensions of Analysis

The following parameters are tracked in this analysis:

Strategy reflects the degree to which a vendor has the market understanding and strategic intent that are at the forefront of market direction. That includes providing the capabilities that customers want in the current offering and recognizing where the market is headed. The strategy evaluation includes:

- Product
- Product strategy
- Market understanding and how well product roadmaps reflect that understanding
- Marketing
- Management team, including time in the job and understanding of the market

Performance represents a vendor's effectiveness in executing its defined strategy. This includes selling and supporting the defined product offering or service. The performance evaluation includes:

- **Awareness:** Market awareness of the firm and its product
- **Customer experience:** Feedback on the product, installs, upgrades, and overall satisfaction
- **Viability:** Financial viability of the provider as measured by financial statements

- **Pricing and Packaging:** Is the offering priced and packaged competitively?
- **Product:** The mix of features tied to the frequency and quality of releases and updates
- **R&D:** Investment in research and development as evidenced by overall architecture

Reach is a measure of the global capability that a vendor can deliver. Reach can have one of three values: *national*, *international*, or *global*. Being able to offer products and services in one of the following three regions is the third dimension of the Globe analysis:

- **Americas** (North America and Latin America)
- **EMEA** (Europe, Middle East, and Africa)
- **APAC** (Asia Pacific: including but not limited to Australia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Russia, Singapore, etc.)

The market reach evaluation includes:

- Sales and support offices worldwide
- Time zone and location of support centers
- Support for languages
- References in respective hemispheres
- Data center locations

The Four Corners of the Globe

The Aragon Research Globe is segmented into four sectors, representing high and low on both the strategy and performance dimensions. When the analysis is complete, each vendor will be in one of four groups: *leaders*, *contenders*, *innovators*, or *specialists*. We define these as follows:

- **Leaders** have comprehensive strategies that align with industry direction and market demand and perform effectively against those strategies.
- **Contenders** have strong performance, but with more limited or less complete strategies. Their performance positions them well to challenge for leadership by expanding their strategic focus.
- **Innovators** have strong strategic understanding and objectives but have yet to perform effectively across all elements of their strategy.
- **Specialists** fulfill their strategy well but have a narrower or more targeted emphasis with regard to overall industry and user expectations. Specialists may excel in a certain market or vertical application.

Inclusion Criteria

The inclusion criteria for this Aragon Research Globe are:

- *Revenue:* A minimum of \$4 million in primary revenue for enterprise content platform software, or \$8 million in a related market (ECM, cloud content management, portal, or collaboration).
- *Shipping product:* Product must be announced and available.
- *Customer references:* Vendor must produce a minimum of three customer references in each region that the vendor is a participant.

Vendors Excluded:

Notable vendors who excluded are listed here:

- Liferay
- Oracle
- SAP
- Squiz