

Training Teams – Volunteer in Kind

Content Management Systems

Series 1

Francis Kahura
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ENTERPRISE CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

INTRODUCTION

These are software applications that provide business users ability to manage one or more websites easily. Each of the systems provide an easy to use user interface which abstract away the need for a business user to know html. In practice however, its software Architect and implementing developers' duty to ensure authoring experience remains easy to use. Having implemented 5 Sitecore sites and 2 Adobe AEM sites, I have learned content authors are my first customers. They will be the first to use the system once you deploy to user acceptance testing (UAT) environment and if they can't easily edit or publish new pages, then it doesn't matter how nice the public facing site looks; their bosses will be hearing how bad the implementation is and how much they miss the "old" system.

In this series I will compare Sitecore and Adobe AEM from a developer perspective. Opinion reflected here is that of my own and I am not endorsing one product over the other.

	Sitecore	Adobe AEM
Technology Stack	.NET	Java
Suitable for	Large enterprises looking to migrate from another CMS	Large enterprises looking to migrate from another CMS and have need to integrate with other Adobe marketing and analytics products.
License cost	At least \$200k - Based on casual conversations, I don't know real figure	At least \$400k - Based on casual conversations, I don't know real figure
Implementation Cost	Depends on project but could easily be at least \$250K	Depends on many factors but it could easily be more than 1M
Developer Learning Curve	Average - one week official Sitecore training and developers should be ready to start implementation assuming they are already C#.NET developers.	High - even for developers with java background. So far I have implemented two client projects and I still have much to learn. Official training is necessary to get the developers started. Adobe offers both online and onsite trainings – I found onsite training more helpful.

Developer set up	Low to average degree of difficulty. The Sitecore installer makes it a breeze, but the developer will need to set up a project in visual studio.	Average to high degree of difficulty. My first set up I found it very frustrating and if things go bad you can spend a week trying to get a developer machine set up.
Stability	Very Stable	Getting better, at the time or writing the Adobe recommended version is 6.2 though I have worked with versions 5.6 and version 6.0 service pack 3.
Databases	Microsoft SQL Server 2008 or later. Support for Mongo db is now available in latest versions primarily to be used to store analytic data generated on the site.	Various systems are supported such as FileSystem, Mongo DB but the default is FileSystem. MySQL has restricted support while in version 6.2 MS SQL Server 2012 can be used for forms. Most installations go with the default option – using FileSystem.
Typical Production Deployment	Straight forward, of course the architect and developers must follow performance tuning and security guidelines to ensure that site is secure and performing well.	You may need a dedicated administrator to manage the production environment. Some enterprises opt to sign up for Adobe Managed services – in which adobe manages the deployment environment for you and offer an SLA. There is lot of configuration required to prepare production environments. If for example you are using the default recommendations and have two AEM publish instances, then you will need a total of 5 servers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Author application server – Used by content authors • Two publish application servers – contains published content. • Two dispatch servers – each publish server is

		paired with a dispatcher – this can be apache or IIS webservers. The purpose is to offload traffic from publish servers and also set up rules to enhance security.
On Going Maintenance after deployment	Routine	Extensive – since most installations use the file system, every now and then the files need to be compacted, garbage collection, indexing among other tasks. Some of the tasks can be automated but some require the server to be offline and this is another reason you need at least 2 aem publish instances.