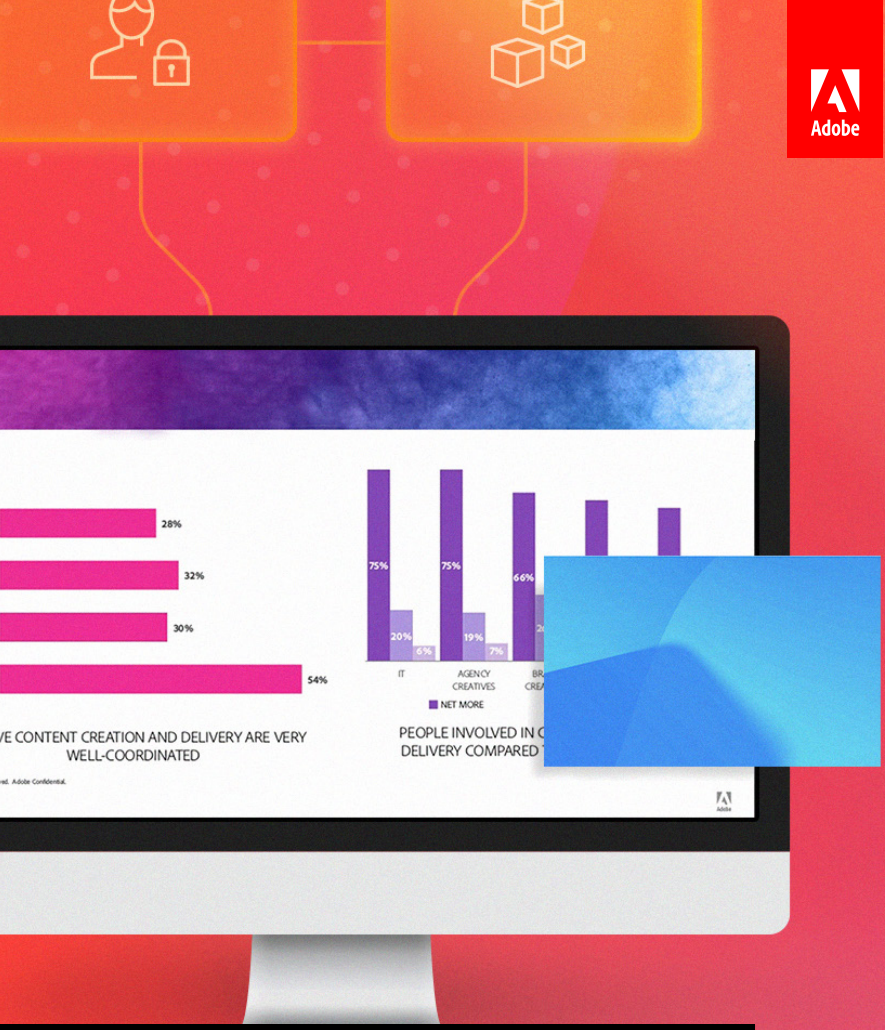


Feeding the *content-data loop.*

A virtuous cycle is defined as a beneficial chain of events, each having a positive effect on the next. It's a fitting concept for the evolution of content and data in the experience era. Businesses rely on customer and content-related data to create personalized customer experiences. They measure the performance of that content—along with any new customer behaviors—to deliver even more relevant experiences the next time around. And the cycle goes on.

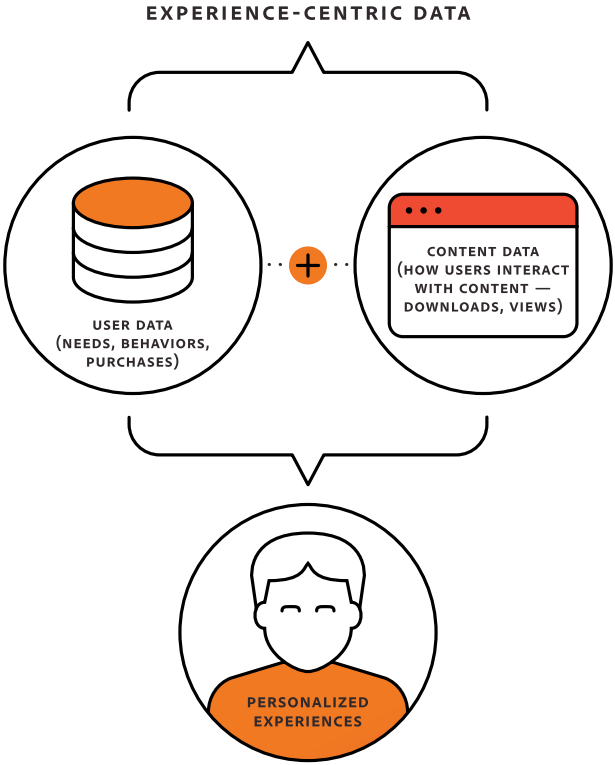
We call this new way of looking at data "experience-centric data." It's based on the premise that content and data are created equal in the eyes of the customer experience.

"IT should think about content as it thinks about data: Content is an information asset. Like data, content must be well managed, trustworthy, and secure."

Melissa Webster
IDC

The elements of experience-centric data.

Experience-centric data is a combination of user data—such as customer needs and behaviors—and content data, which includes how customers interact with your content. This combination of data provides the fuel for personalized experiences.



How to turn experience-centric data into *unforgettable experiences.*

Your business relies on content and data to provide customers with the real-time, relevant experiences they expect. Here are five ways you can add value to your content and enable business users to provide the experiences that keep your brand ahead.

1. Let data be your guide.

Content doesn't have much value unless it reaches the right person in the exact moment and place they need it. But with data as your guide, you can make sure your content hits the mark every time.

Get started by understanding the customer journey and how people have interacted with your content in the past. For example, if it's a visitor's first time on your site, serving up a 20-page technical document probably isn't the best choice. Instead, that visitor would be more likely to read a high-level overview about the products you offer. Presenting the right experience means understanding how data and content work together to improve the content process.

"Data really is the power driver. It can help with personalization and with driving content effectiveness."

Larry Casey
Senior Director of Enterprise Solution Services, Adobe

At Adobe, data and content come together every day. For instance, when someone visits our site and enters an email address, we can trace the areas of the site in which that person interacted, use that data to serve up additional content like a white paper or a webinar, and then measure for success based on KPIs.

Measures might include whether or not the visitor downloaded a paper, opened a PDF, or watched a webinar. Then we turn around and use that data to surface up even more relevant content. It's a great example of a virtuous cycle of content informed by data.

Because understanding the customer journey means talking to external functions to get the details right, Casey says IT teams need to become more "outwardly focused" so they can understand the usage of the content, and how the value they get from their data can affect the success of that content.

2. Mind your KPIs.

To find out if your content is truly delivering value, you'll need to have an idea of what you want to measure. Design your metrics into the journey from the start, and then build the code where you have placed the appropriate hooks. That way, you can measure as you go along.

Because your KPIs will likely change as you learn more and refine what you want to measure, your initial measurements don't have to be exact. For instance, if you have a new business and aren't sure what to measure, you'll need to make assumptions about the types of data you should collect to determine content effectiveness.

One way to go about determining which KPIs work best for your business is to start with end-of-funnel business metrics. Then work backwards to find out which content-related metrics are most important to helping you achieve your larger goals. Here's an example: Let's say you choose conversions as one of your metrics. Using multi-touch attribution, you can find out which content touches led to conversions, and then take a deeper dive into less direct measures like brand awareness and perception of brand that can also be affected by content.

"It's a lot of anticipating what's going to be needed as opposed to having all the answers from the get-go. So you do need to iterate, but you need to engineer in a lot of those hooks from the beginning."

Larry Casey
Senior Director of Enterprise Solution Services, Adobe

3. Centralize and standardize.

Data architects are masters at centralizing data into a single repository with a common language and way for users to access that data. Although methods vary, centralizing and standardizing content also makes it more valuable for everyone in the organization who needs it, including IT.

For example, rather than spending hours manually tagging digital assets and having different content silos across the organization, you can use AI and machine learning to auto-tag digital assets as they're imported and stored in a central repository. You can even train the model to understand brand-specific taxonomy. With this automation, business users can quickly search for existing assets by keyword and configure as needed, saving the resources required to create new assets from scratch every time.

Along with providing a standardized language for your content, tags allow you to better understand which content drives people to take the actions you want them to take. By integrating your CMS with targeting and analytics solutions, you can ensure you're using both customer and content-related data to deliver the most relevant experiences to your site visitors.

Silicon Labs was looking for ways to get more value from their content—including their product information—with a limited amount of resources. Rather than using a separate product information management system, they made the decision to manage all their product content and assets in one CMS, using tags and customer behavior data to better understand which products and features customers view on their site.

Through an integration with their analytics and targeting platforms, they began using customer segmentation and content interaction data—including tag-based views—to determine which experiences resonated most with their visitors.

For example, they discovered that 87 percent of their top accounts were downloading technical documents before they purchased. However, they realized those documents were in PDF form without a Buy button, hampering the purchase process. With that additional insight, they made the decision to convert their PDF docs to HTML to facilitate more purchases by their highest-value customers.

By treating their content as assets, Silicon Labs saw incredible results:

47%

47% increase in traffic

88%

88% improvement in organic search

15%

15% higher conversions

4. Reuse, don't recreate.

You shouldn't have to move mountains to roll out new experiences, microsites, or cross-channel campaigns. But having to code channel-specific variations, and undergoing compliance reviews every time a new experience is built can really slow down the process. In fact, it takes most organizations an average of 12 days to get one piece of content to market, according to Adobe research.

That's the challenge one leading financial services company faced when trying to reach their goal of running thousands of campaigns in a year. Because they operate in a highly regulated environment, they were required to include regulatory text in each piece of creative copy. And, since they had to develop new creative copy every time they ran a campaign, as well as go through multiple compliance and creative approvals, it sometimes took more than three months to get new campaigns to market.

But that scenario changed once their IT team invested in a CMS that gave business users the ability to reuse their content. With a central repository to hold all of their pre-approved regulatory content blocks—including channel-specific variations—they were able to reduce the amount of manual steps needed to create new experiences. Now, instead of producing the same regulatory content every time new creative is developed, content authors can simply drag and drop preapproved content blocks, eliminating manual checks reviews for each piece of campaign copy, and saving IT valuable time from having to manually code different variations.

5. Meet the need in every channel.

IT not only enables business users to store, discover, and create content for new experiences, but to scale those experiences across channels, as well. From mobile apps and third-party marketplaces to social media and single page applications, customers are interacting with your brand in more ways than ever before. To meet the needs of these different digital touchpoints, you need a CMS that's flexible enough to deliver content in a variety of ways. This means not only traditional HTML experiences, but also content-as-a-service via APIs to JavaScript-based front-end applications, or non-owned front-ends like extranets and marketplaces.

You also need a CMS that empowers business users to edit and preview content in-context for popular channels like single page applications. That way, your team can move from maintenance mode to innovative powerhouse. And, by having a CMS that natively connects with content measurement and personalization tools, you no longer have to build and maintain custom integrations between these components.

"This matters because it impacts the end-user experience," said Aditya Ghule, senior product marketing manager for Adobe Experience Manager Sites. "For example, serving up the same personalized offer across a brand's website, social media, and mobile app provides customers with a consistent experience regardless of channel, and could influence brand perception and loyalty."

From static-driven content sites to personalized shopping experiences, Albertson's had a variety of content needs for their diverse audience. In addition, they had a list of content requirements they had to meet, including easy-to-use tools for authoring and previewing across devices, content and code reuse, and data accuracy for personalized interactions.

To help them meet these content demands, the company's IT team adopted a hybrid content architecture. This allowed them to publish rich, dynamic, personalized content to custom front ends as easily as they could publish traditional web pages. They were able to do this with the help of content service APIs that pull content out of their content management system in JSON format to deliver dynamically to any endpoint—owned or unowned. The team also published components backed by API-driven data like carts, products, and coupons using single-page application (SPA) components authored in their content management system.

"We've been able to support these many needs and requirements in our content ecosystem by using Adobe Experience Manager's different capabilities for creating, managing, serving, and presenting content. That's what we refer to as our hybrid content architecture, which supports each application in a tailored way."

Veronica Bykin
IT Director, Digital CX, Albertson's

Reinforcing the *content-data loop.*

As customer preferences and behaviors change, content and data will continuously adapt to deliver experiences that meet their expectations. Essentially, this is digital transformation in action. But to get those wheels turning, you need to acknowledge that content and data are now partners in the customer experience. This means treating content like data so the virtuous cycle of data, content, and personalized experiences lives on.

The next phase of your digital transformation has arrived. Let experience-centric data move you forward.

Adobe can help.

Start your own virtuous cycle of experiences with Adobe Experience Manager Sites, a content management system that meets all your content needs, from traditional to headless. With the help of Adobe Analytics and Adobe Target, pull in customer behavior and segmentation data to ensure your content fits customer preferences, no matter how often they change. And since it's powered by the machine learning and AI capabilities of Adobe Sensei, you can deliver experiences at scale while keeping the focus on your most important work.

Learn more about how Experience Manager Sites can help you use experience-centric data to connect with your customers in the most relevant way.

Learn more

Aditya Ghule, Adobe, personal interview, April 25, 2019.

"Adobe State of Creative and Marketing Survey," Adobe, 2018.

"Building Your Digital Foundation with Adobe Experience Manager Sites," Adobe Summit, March 2019.

"Hybrid Architecture Powers Omnichannel Content," Adobe Summit, March 2019.

Larry Casey, Adobe, personal interview, April 29, 2019.

Melissa Webster, "Why IT should care about data and content equally," IDC, December 2018.

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