Why WordPress Makes More Sense For The Enterprise

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Digital channels have become the primary means of interaction for audiences worldwide, and businesses across every industry now face a growing need to engage these audiences with frictionless digital experiences that amaze and delight.

Navigating those expectations and responding accordingly can be difficult for any business, but enterprise organizations face specific challenges in this new era of digital acceleration, often due to their traditional reliance on cumbersome, legacy web architecture that prevents teams from moving with needed speed and agility.

This ebook, co-authored with Box UK, a specialist enterprise development consultancy and WP Engine Strategic Agency Partner, offers a closer look at the challenges today's enterprise businesses face, and the reasons why more of them are looking at WordPress as a nimble, high-ROI alternative to the proprietary systems of the past.

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Executive Summary

Enterprise organizations face a challenge vital to their continued success and survival: delivering the seamless, engaging, and valuable experiences their audiences demand, which increasingly take place across digital channels.

Large organizations are often hampered by their current technology stack, as complex legacy systems hinder responsiveness and negatively impact the customer experience. At the same time, there remains an entrenched perceived risk in exploring and adopting new solutions, with enduring concerns around delivering the scale, security, and performance the enterprise demands.

With all of these factors in mind, WP Engine and Box UK are pleased to present this ebook, which explores why WordPress is an ideal solution for evolving enterprise digital strategies.

WordPress has already been embraced by large sections of the enterprise—it's present in two-thirds of enterprise technology stacks and it's become the driving force behind 35% of the world's top 10,000 websites.

Offering the highest levels of flexibility, security, speed, and performance, WordPress helps overcome some of the most common barriers in the enterprise space, including speed to market, delivering a modern customer experience, and coordinating a disparate ecosystem. As an open source solution, WordPress also reduces total cost of ownership and enables a higher budget for improving and evolving digital projects, helping maximize return on investment.

For a closer look at real-world use cases, this ebook also provides detail on the different implementations of WordPress utilized by enterprises—from single and multi-CMS setups to emerging headless solutions, including Atlas, the complete platform for Headless WordPress.

As a powerful framework supported by hosting providers and development partners able to deliver at scale, WordPress presents limitless potential for the enterprise. See how other organizations such as Dexerto, Ogi, and the Pharmaceutical Journal are utilizing WordPress to power their businesses forward.

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Introduction:
The Rise of Enterprise WordPress

Have you been frustrated by long, expensive development cycles when making changes to your digital platform? We guarantee you're not alone, particularly if you're operating in the enterprise space. And there is a solution...

WordPress has become the world's favorite Content Management System (CMS) due to its flexibility, familiarity, and lower Total Cost of Ownership (TCO). But even as a growing number of large-scale organizations realize these benefits, WordPress is not lacking in enterprise detractors.

Some remain wary of bringing open source software into their technology stacks, while others continue to associate WordPress with independent blogging platforms and other small-scale sites.

But this is simply no longer the case.

Think about it this way: As part of a comprehensive digital solution, WordPress provides the equivalent, if not superior, capabilities of any other CMS to deliver the scalability, security, and performance an enterprise demands. The vast supporting ecosystem of WordPress technology and development partners is able to deliver far greater value and Return on Investment (ROI) from the platform than other proprietary alternatives.

To bring this into sharp focus from an enterprise perspective, if a digital project is scoped at $1 million (£750, 000), the WordPress portion of that, because it's open source (and free from licensing fees), will be 10-20% of the total cost.

Meanwhile, a proprietary CMS often sucks up 40-60% of the total project cost, sometimes in licensing fees alone. This means with WordPress, up to 90% of the budget can be spent on additional customizations and services that will help grow your business and speed time to market, versus the proprietary model, in which the best-case scenario provides for 60% (and it's oftentimes far less than that).

Because WordPress provides room for added value and increased opportunity for ROI, its financial benefits alone have become hard to ignore.

As a result, WP Engine Agency Partners like **Box UK** are seeing more and more enterprise organizations turn to WordPress, attracted by its cost-effectiveness, as well as the increased flexibility this open source platform delivers over more traditional proprietary, license-based solutions.

> *WordPress affords businesses of all sizes greater freedom and control over their digital experiences, allowing them to adopt new technologies and experiment with new campaigns and business models at the pace and level of commitment that suits their needs and the needs of their audiences, all while positively impacting the bottom-line of their business."*
>
> **Pete Withers-Jones**
> HEAD OF DEVELOPMENT, BOX UK

Indeed, **research conducted by WP Engine** shows two-thirds of enterprise organizations now feature WordPress as part of their tech stack, up from 50% in 2016. WordPress is also the driving force behind 35% of the top 10,000 most popular sites in the world by traffic—including National Geographic, Thomson Reuters, and Dropbox—proving its ability to deliver at scale.

The benefits of WordPress have also been amplified by an accelerating technology landscape, in which enterprise organizations are seeking ways to react more quickly to changing demands and opportunities, especially as digital channels become the primary means of interaction **for the majority of audiences.**

The Current State of Tech Acceleration

The shift away from traditional channels and towards digital experiences is not a new phenomenon, stories of digital innovators disrupting established market incumbents have emerged regularly over the years. However, more recently digital adoption has grown exponentially, driven in large part by the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated impacts.

Today, businesses are interacting digitally with their customers in a way that is three to four years ahead of where

it was pre-COVID, and the move towards digitized product and service offerings has sped up even further, by between six and 10 years (depending on location), according to research from McKinsey.

Enterprise organizations have typically been slow to respond to such changes, constrained by the effort required to "turn the oil tanker," as well as a reluctance to upset established ways of working and risk compromising the success they've built up over time.

The current speed and strength of change, however, makes this a pivotal time to invest in, develop, and launch robust digital plans, underpinned by powerful technology platforms capable of delivering exceptional customer experiences that will drive value back into the business. In most sectors of the global economy, businesses are already competing based on clear differentiation in their digital capabilities.

It's no longer enough for digital to be a single, siloed strand in your wider strategy, it must reach across every function and line of business, and will play a crucial role in campaigns, product launches, and ongoing iterative improvement activities in both the near and long-term.

This is a lesson that's been taken to heart in the enterprise, with a recent WP Engine survey finding 92% of enterprise respondents agree that the digital experiences they build are directly tied to their organization's success.

But even though the need for improved digital capabilities is becoming more widely understood, significant barriers remain when it comes to achieving this vision.

Challenges Facing the Enterprise

Through its work supporting the digital evolution of enterprise organizations including RS Components, Sodexo and Dexerto, Box UK has faced a number of common challenges that can be grouped into a few high-level themes.

Difficulty moving quickly

Large, complex enterprise organizations often lack the flexibility and speed needed to react quickly to new trends, demands, opportunities, and innovations, leaving them behind the curve and making it difficult to realize efficient ROI.

This is frequently compounded by sprawling legacy systems that have grown organically over time, which can result in suffocating levels of technical debt and make implementing improvements a challenging and risky process. Attempts to address these challenges can also be problematic, as the downtime required to overhaul a legacy system makes it a high-risk and potentially ineffective endeavor.

In the interim, enterprise teams are left immobilized, unable to achieve creative agility and faster time to market as demands intensify and brand assets go stale.

This is where enterprise-specific applications of WordPress, including headless approaches, can prove incredibly valuable, as can a strangler pattern approach to development. In all of these models, new elements can be developed around or on top of the existing legacy system, allowing both to be run in parallel before the old elements are eventually migrated/swapped out.

And just as software that's evolved over time can prove challenging, so too can embedded legacy processes that are no longer fit-for-purpose. If your ways of working aren't geared towards flexibility and responsiveness (principles championed in Agile frameworks), you won't be able to drive maximum value from your technology.

Lacking a modern customer experience

These days, consumers don't only compare the digital experience you provide against others in your industry or the enterprise space. Instead, they take their cues from leaders across the digital landscape, requiring a greater focus on experience and interface design that's intuitive, engaging, and dynamic.

Supporting the creation of optimized themes and templates, and able to serve critical functionality as well as enhanced value-add tools and capabilities, modern technology solutions such as WordPress have user experience considerations baked into their foundations. Businesses of all sizes are also increasingly realizing the benefits of a user-centric approach to design, based around in-depth user research, collaborative and iterative processes, and ongoing test-and-learn programs.

Speed is another crucial user experience consideration, with users increasingly unwilling to put up with slow-loading and under-performing sites. As Google has now rolled out its algorithm update prioritizing Core Web Vitals, platforms that are unable to deliver the levels of speed and performance demanded by their audiences will likely face issues in other areas too.

The message is clear: the worse the experience for your users, the higher the negative impact on organic rankings and traffic, user trust and satisfaction, and subsequent business performance.

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Disparate channels to coordinate

Long gone are the days when a company's website was the sole source of information about a business. Today a user may interact with your brand across a wide range of touchpoints, both online and offline, in the course of their journey. With each additional touchpoint, the challenge of ensuring a consistent experience—vital to maintaining consumer engagement and trust— intensifies, as does the need to streamline content delivery and reduce the burden on your administrative teams.

Once again, enterprise organizations may find themselves hindered by disparate legacy systems that don't support integrations needed for a seamless customer journey and instead present data silos that prevent a personalized and relevant experience.

With a powerful supporting ecosystem, WordPress provides near limitless flexibility when it comes to adding functionality and joining up systems, with a wide range of implementation options to support multiple delivery channels and data sources.

Whatever approach you choose, it's crucial that you also first define, understand, and document your current ecosystem. With the help of skilled technical analysts and business consultants, you'll then be able to make informed decisions about what you bring into your new solution, what can be removed altogether, and how you'll handle any legacy elements that need to be maintained.

Adapting to New Trends, Adopting New Tech: Why WordPress is Ideal for the Enterprise

As can be seen, many of the challenges preventing enterprise organizations from accelerating their digital adoption are closely tied up with the impact of complex, entrenched, and often outdated systems. To address these issues, many in the enterprise are exploring new technologies and approaches, with WordPress a frontrunner in this space.

WordPress is additionally supported by a significant pool of development talent, further shortening time to market and supporting greater innovation as knowledge and experience are shared among the community.

Not only this, but the popularity of WordPress means that it's typically more familiar and usable for content creators and other back-end administrators. In turn, WordPress typically requires less time for onboarding and training, making it even easier to roll out.

All of these factors result in increased speed, improved agility, and greater value delivered, leading to faster and higher ROI for enterprise organizations.

The Value of Open Source

As an open source solution, WordPress offers a clear cost-benefit over many established enterprise providers, reducing Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) by minimizing the percentage of budget invested into licensing, and allowing this to be pumped back into other areas of the project or wider strategy.
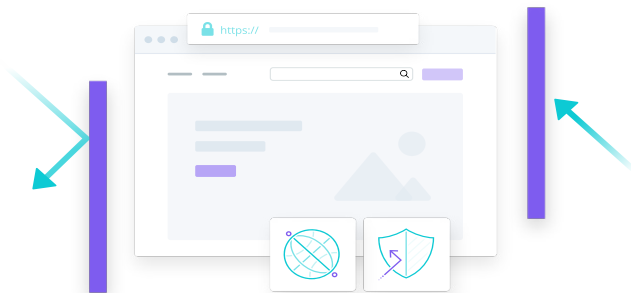
The open source nature of WordPress also means that it can be easily integrated with other solutions, allowing enterprise organizations to spin up full ecosystems in much shorter timescales and bring their offerings to market more quickly, as well as pivot in response to changing requirements.

Choosing a managed WordPress hosting partner to take care of your platform further safeguards security, and is a recommended approach for organizations operating at an enterprise scale. Your managed provider should take a proactive approach to monitoring for security issues and vulnerabilities, as well as implementing updates and patches in order to maintain the availability and stability of your platform.

Airtight Security Requirements

For enterprise organizations dealing with exceptionally high levels of traffic and extremely sensitive data, ensuring the security of the technology solutions they choose is understandably a priority.

While WordPress itself is highly secure when it's properly managed and correctly maintained, an enterprise hosting provider can augment that security posture, meeting the highest standards for security and compliance.

WP Engine has invested significantly in building its security capabilities to effectively meet the needs of enterprise customers with **SOC 2 compliance** across its platform, as well **DDoS protection**, **WAF setup**, and more.

Performance at Scale

A common argument in the enterprise space is that WordPress isn't able to power the large-scale digital footprints demanded by the enterprise. This is a concern that's been proven to be unfounded time and again, with WordPress powering content-heavy sites serving millions of users each month.

The right hosting partner again delivers crucial value here, providing access to highly scalable infrastructure built specifically for the enterprise, with networks of dozens of data centers around the world and ultra-fast content delivery over a global edge network (Content Delivery Network or CDN) that ensure the highest levels of performance no matter where or how your users are accessing your services.

Your hosting partner should also work with you to ensure your installation scales as needed to support long-term growth, and responds to predicted activity spikes, for example, in response to product launches, marketing campaigns, or industry events and announcements.
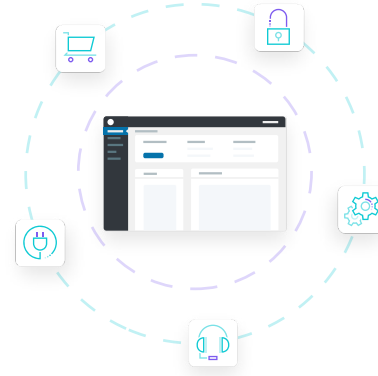
Expand and Evolve at Pace

WordPress benefits from an extensive library of third-party plugins, themes, and patterns, supported by an active and engaged global community. This means that whatever the aims are for your digital platform, there's likely a solution out there that can deliver the functionality you need, reducing development effort and allowing your team to focus on adding further value and driving innovation.

It's important to remember that not all plugins are created equal, and a strict vetting process is recommended to validate the quality and security of your third-party integrations. Working with an experienced WordPress development partner can help here, as they'll be able

to help design a solution architecture that covers your requirements, and ensures all elements of your ecosystem work together in harmony.
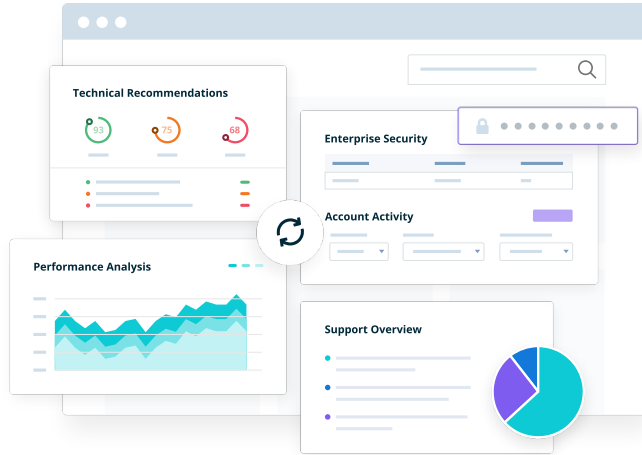
to understand how users are interacting with content as they journey through the site, identify potential improvements, and—crucially—measure the impact of these improvements.

Optimize with Analytics

Enterprise organizations of course need access to robust analytics to uncover and respond to emerging trends and patterns and drive greater engagement and conversions.

As an open source solution, WordPress effortlessly integrates with leading tools such as Google Analytics and Analytics 360, HubSpot, and Adobe Analytics, allowing organizations

How the Enterprise is Using WordPress

As the enterprise increasingly embraces WordPress, the diversity of implementation choices has grown to serve the specific needs of this market. Each is a valid and powerful option for a large-scale business, depending on their exact requirements, setup, and ambitions.

Traditional WordPress for the Enterprise

As the most popular CMS in the enterprise space across primary and secondary CMS markets, WordPress has proven itself capable of delivering exceptional digital experiences and the highest levels of performance at scale.

Enterprise organizations benefit from the speed, flexibility, and ease-of-use of the world's number one content management system while taking advantage of a wide range of tools, platforms, and hosting providers geared towards large-scale installations—and delivering scalable, high-availability server architecture, one-click deployments, and security protocols that can stand up to the strictest infosec reviews.

There are also a growing number of development partner organizations focused specifically on the enterprise, enabling organizations to unlock the full technical and creative power of WordPress.

Employing multidisciplinary teams, these partners offer support at every stage of the journey, from defining the requirements of your WordPress platform and putting a clear plan of action in place, to delivering engaging user journeys and page designs, and working with you post-implementation to implement further improvements and enhancements.

As always, when working with WordPress you have access to a vast solution ecosystem to provide the functionality you need to keep your business running. Plugins are available to deliver sophisticated personalization capabilities, introduce Digital Asset Management (DAM) functionality, integrate Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tools, and more. And because WordPress is an open source solution, this functionality can be easily added, removed, or swapped out as requirements evolve.

WordPress also provides a clear path for aligning larger digital ecosystems in a single CMS. WordPress Multisite, for example, allows enterprise businesses to create centralized content and assets with the ability to build different experiences and user journeys as required.
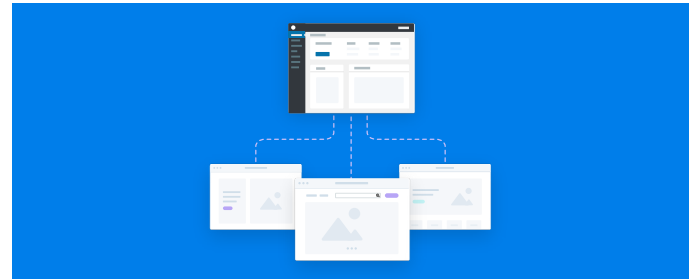
WordPress Multisite allows enterprise businesses to create centralized content and assets with the ability to build different experiences and user journeys as required.

This is particularly useful in industries such as Financial Services, Healthcare, or Higher Education, where it's crucial

to maintain security across a large number of smaller websites with numerous users managing content

Multisite capabilities are also useful when you have different versions of a website running in different geographic locations, allowing your .com site and .co.uk site (as an example) to shape different experiences with the same content.

WordPress is also an ideal choice for **eCommerce**, powering multi-lingual, multi-currency online stores serving thousands of products to millions of customers.

WordPress offers optionality for the entire eCommerce consumer journey. This includes integrating with **WooCommerce**, the eCommerce plugin built specifically for WordPress that now powers **more than a quarter** of all eCommerce sites, or any other eCommerce platform for that matter—along with payment mechanisms, tax and compliance solutions, customer communications, Third-Party Logistics (3PL) services, and Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems.


Accelerating Change: The Rise of Multi-CMS

The use of more than one CMS is an approach that has grown in popularity, particularly among the enterprise, as organizations seek to innovate and respond to new digital demands and opportunities while working around the large, complex legacy systems discussed above.

WordPress is the leading choice of secondary CMS in the enterprise, enabling organizations to work at a greater speed when required without jeopardizing core operations. For example, when testing new business lines and product offerings, entering additional markets, and launching time-sensitive campaigns.

These solutions can remain independent from the core platform, or enterprise organizations may choose to migrate everything across from previous legacy systems to increase speed and flexibility across their operations. Adopting a strangler pattern approach to development mitigates risk here, and also allows value to be demonstrated (and ROI delivered) at an early stage, to secure senior buy-in for further investment.
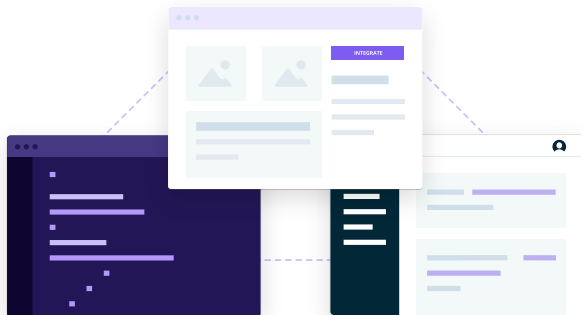
Headless WordPress for the Enterprise

Today there is a seemingly endless variety of ways for users to consume content online. Not only is there every conceivable size of screen across wearable, mobile, and desktop devices, but also smart TVs, voice-controlled home assistants,

Augmented and Virtual Reality (AR/VR) applications, out-of-home experiences, and more.

And this trend is only set to continue, with estimates from MarTech Advisor suggesting that each person will own 15 connected devices by 2030.

Faced with such a high volume and variety of digital touchpoints, headless is emerging as a highly attractive option for enterprise organizations looking to manage multichannel and omnichannel experiences while continuing to benefit from all that WordPress has to offer.

Using headless architecture, the front and back-end components of a website are decoupled and connected via a robust API layer, providing limitless flexibility over how content and data are delivered and ultimately consumed by users.

WordPress is at the forefront of the headless revolution, offering a REST API that works together with Node.js to hook into a wide range of JavaScript frameworks, supporting the development of creative and dynamic digital experiences.

The flexibility of the REST API also makes it easy to integrate with third-party applications, enabling organizations to make use of innovative technologies such as Progressive Web Apps (PWAs), Internet of Things (IoT), voice assistants, Augmented and Virtual Reality (AR/VR) and more.

Additional APIs, including **WPGraphQL** have extended the headless landscape even further, offering a free, open-source WordPress plugin that provides an extendable GraphQL schema and API for any WordPress site.

And the trend towards headless in the enterprise is poised upwards, with 64% of enterprise organizations currently using a headless approach and more than 90% of those not already using headless planning to evaluate these solutions over the next 12 months, according to **recent research conducted by WP Engine**.

This same study revealed that enterprise organizations are drawn to headless for a number of reasons, with key benefits including:

- **Better overall performance/faster load times**

- **Faster speed to market**

- **Delivery of omnichannel experiences**

- **Shorter time to innovation**

- **Faster time to value**

- **Delivery of consistent, seamlessly connected experiences across digital touchpoints**
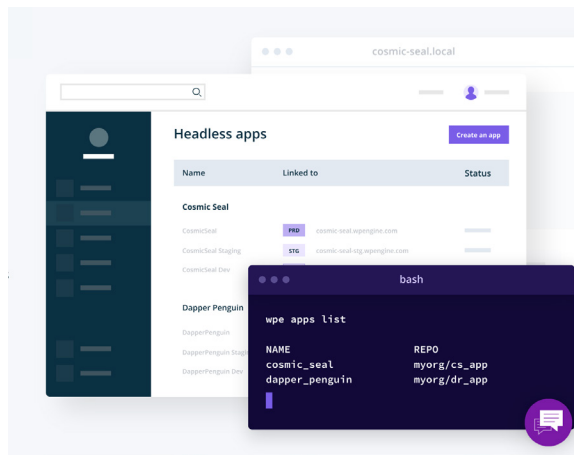
Atlas: The Complete Platform for Headless WordPress

Atlas brings together your choice of modern development framework with powerful front-end Node.js hosting and Headless WordPress all in one complete package—one trusted partner, one price, one responsible party for troubleshooting.

Developers can build personalized, omnichannel experiences integrated with backends at the speed normally reserved for static brochure sites. Marketers maintain critical publishing functionality lacking in other headless CMSs like post previews, end-to-end SEO, and pages they can control.

With Atlas, you aren't forced to choose between incredible site performance and dynamic experiences. And if you're already using WordPress, you can keep the CMS platform that drives more than 40% of the web, now upgraded to support developers' modern architecture. It's the best of all worlds.

In many ways, headless is a silver bullet for performance delivering absurdly fast performance even for the most complex and media rich sites. It is a game changer for those enterprises looking to excel in their Core Web Vitals scores. Of course, what this really means is their customers are getting the absolute best user experience on the web today.

Intrigued? Try Atlas for free to see just how fast it really is, or speak with a specialist to find out more.

The Future of WordPress is in the Enterprise

WordPress has fully established itself in the enterprise, delivering the high levels of security, scalability, availability, and analytical insight large-scale organizations require, alongside the established benefits of the platform that provide the flexibility and speed required to drive improved and faster ROI, unleash developer and designer creativity, and reduce Total Cost of Ownership.

WordPress has also evolved to serve the specific needs of the enterprise as a secondary CMS, or as part of a headless model. These innovative approaches increasingly represent the future of the platform, driving further agility, performance, and value.

Perhaps that's why the WordPress Economy drives more than half a trillion in revenue, according to a **first of its kind, global study** involving more than 100 companies, including WP Engine and Box UK, that are helping to drive the WordPress ecosystem forward.

In order to realize the value of WordPress, you need to work with partners that specialize in the enterprise space. WP Engine, the #1 platform for WordPress, partners with leading technology vendors to offer highly scalable hosting solutions, with a suite of supporting tools and services that provide a best-in-class environment to manage and optimize enterprise WordPress sites.

WP Engine's enterprise platform combines the power of open source with performance analytics, creative agility and enterprise-grade, SOC-2 compliant security. It also includes enterprise infrastructure with burst capacity, high availability and developer flexibility solutions, along with a world-renowned customer success team to drive faster time to market and ongoing optimization.

Together with Atlas, the complete headless solution for WordPress, WP Engine is well-positioned to support enterprise organizations with multiple approaches to their digital evolution.

Box UK is highly experienced in working with WordPress at scale, delivering websites that serve millions of users a month alongside sophisticated eCommerce platforms featuring tens of thousands of products.

The Box UK team of developers, solution architects, user experience consultants, system engineers, and product owners is perfectly positioned to harness the power of WordPress for the enterprise, delivering complex and richly-featured implementations that effortlessly serve user needs and drive business growth.

See how other enterprise organizations are utilizing WordPress

DEXERTO

To maintain their market position and guarantee the future growth of the business, Dexerto required support with a critically important re-platforming project that would not only provide a stable foundation for the future, but would significantly improve site performance.

Box UK quickly delivered a robust, adaptable and scalable WP Engine solution for the client— with improved AMP support customized for Dexerto's key advertising infrastructure—that enables them to deliver a wealth of esports content and multimedia to millions of site visitors every month.

> *We have started to see growth within our traffic that's taking us to new peaks, and we are at all-time bests on some of our core performance-driven KPIs."*
>
> **Elliot McDonagh**
> HEAD OF PRODUCT, DEXERTO

PHARMACEUTICAL JOURNAL

As an industry-leading publication, it's important that the experience delivered through the Pharmaceutical Journal is informative and engaging, in keeping with its brand position and the expectations of its audiences.

With a powerful new WP Engine solution, the PJ can effortlessly deliver clear, comprehensive value-add content to its diverse readership – and with full control over their future development roadmap, they're well-placed to continue to evolve their digital strategy to deliver further value through the platform.

> *Our new digital platform built with Box UK gives us the tools we need to manage and deliver complex sets of editorial content in a simple and intuitive way."*
>
> **Tony Scully**
> PUBLISHER, THE PHARMACEUTICAL JOURNAL

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Box UK: An Enterprise WordPress Development Agency

Box UK is a specialist enterprise WordPress and WooCommerce development consultancy, building large-scale digital platforms used by millions. With a track record of success spanning more than two decades and hundreds of high-profile and mission-critical projects, Box UK is proud to be a Strategic Partner agency for WP Engine.

Box UK has deep experience in creating scalable, resilient, and high-transaction systems for clients across the globe, and has delivered numerous complex multilingual and multisite installations. Additionally, the Box UK team has extensive expertise in integrating WordPress and WooCommerce with back-office components such as ERP, tax engines, trade compliance, and third-party logistics.

Working with international organizations across a broad range of industries, Box UK's team of WordPress developers, solution architects, UX consultants, system engineers, and product owners has built up an impressive portfolio of successful and award-winning projects and is perfectly positioned to unlock the full potential of this powerful platform.

Click here to learn more about Box UK, or get in touch by calling +44 (0) 20 7439 1900 or emailing info@boxuk.com.

WP engine ®

Fuel the freedom to create with WP Engine

WP Engine powers the freedom to create on WordPress. The company's products, the fastest among all WordPress providers, power 1.5 million digital experiences. More of the top 200,000 sites in the world use WP Engine to power their digital experiences than anyone else in WordPress.

About WP Engine

WP Engine, the WordPress technology company, provides the most relied upon and trusted brands and developer-centric WordPress products for companies and agencies of all sizes, including managed WordPress hosting, enterprise WordPress, headless WordPress, Flywheel, Local and Genesis. WP Engine's tech innovation and award-winning WordPress experts help to power more than 1.5 million sites across 150 countries.