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Fluid Topics

CONTENT DELIVERY PLATFORMS

# A BUYER'S GUIDE

Everything you need to know about  
Content Delivery Platforms for your technical  
documentation, customer support and  
field service teams.

 EDITION 2023

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# FOREWORD

## Who is this guide for?

This Buyer's Guide is designed for tech doc decision-makers who are assessing the suitability of a Content Delivery Platform (CDP) for their organization.

## What you'll learn in this guide?

In this guide, you will discover what a CDP is, how it is different to a Content Management System (CMS) or Component Content Management System (CCMS), which use cases are best served by a CDP, the must-have features your CDP should have, how a CDP should integrate with your existing IT stack, and read case studies from organizations that have successfully deployed a CDP.

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# INTRODUCTION

## WHY TECH DOC PUBLISHING IS HARD

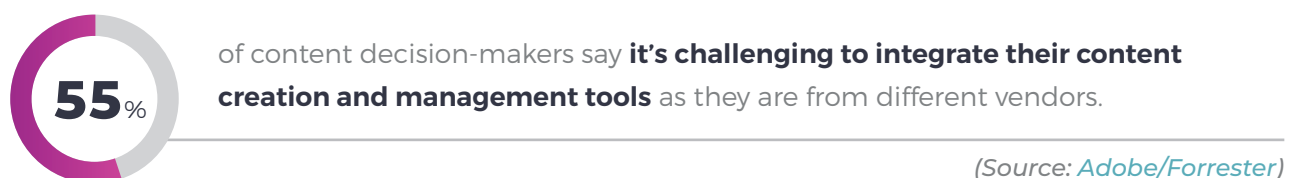
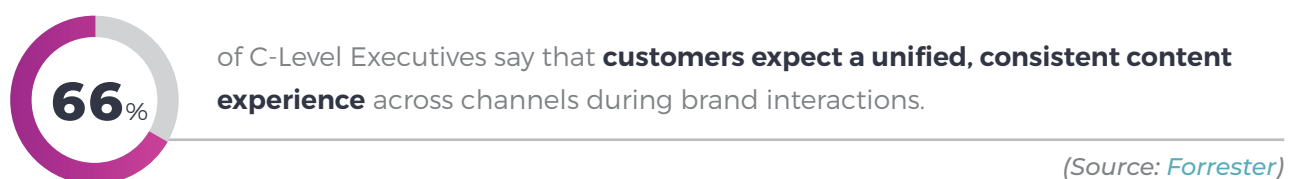
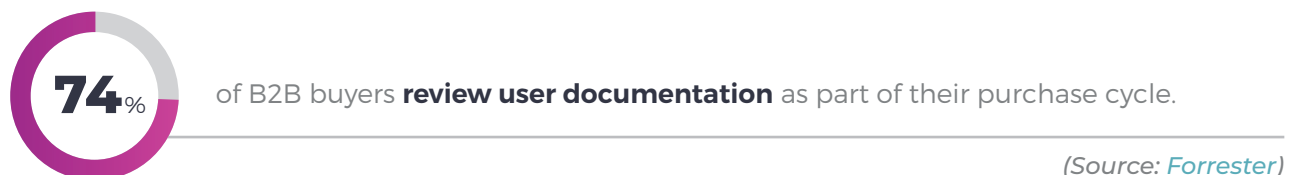
**Technical documentation has never been more important to the success of an organization.**

Research shows that a typical buyer consumes 13 different content pieces before committing to a purchase, with 67% of that content addressing technical specifications and functionalities.\* What's more, the availability of tech doc on digital channels increases customer satisfaction by between 15 and 20% and improves loyalty among clients.

**But at the same time, delivering technical documentation has never been more challenging.**

Whether it is maintaining pace with product and feature updates, aligning the outputs of different authoring tools and systems across different content creation teams, or serving the right information wherever the consumer expects it, all too often the end-user experience is incomplete or inconsistent.

**A Content Delivery Platform reconciles silos and delivers the unified content experience you need.** A CDP has the capacity to collect all your content in any format and from any source and centralize it all in a single knowledge hub. It can publish the relevant product and technical documentation to any digital channel, device, and application, in context with the users' needs and environment. It also removes the need for lengthy formatting for each endpoint.

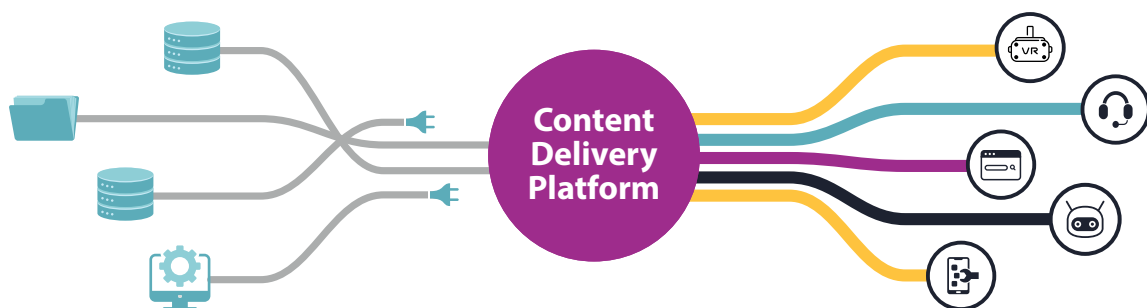


Tech doc publishing is challenging but a CDP is up to that challenge. In this Buyer's Guide, you'll learn what to look for in a CDP, how to integrate a CDP with your existing tech stack, and real-world experiences from those who have succeeded with CDPs in their organization.

# THE PROMISE OF A CDP

## WHAT IS A CONTENT DELIVERY PLATFORM?

A **Content Delivery Platform** is a software solution that collects all types of content sources and formats, unifies them into a central knowledge hub, and makes content available to multiple endpoints via Application Programming Interfaces, or APIs. CDPs are **agnostic of authoring tools** and offer different ranges of standard and custom connectors, from the most popular CCMSes and document processors to very specific in-house writing systems. As such, CDPs extend the collaborative process of content creation across the organization by integrating a wider range of content types, such as Microsoft Word documents or Markdown files provided by stakeholders external to the documentation team.



Advanced CDPs handle both structured and unstructured content, processing the latter to align metadata and provide the same granularity as natively structured content. By doing so, CDPs create unified user experiences across all content sources and for all digital endpoints, including modern devices such AR/VR.

Beyond omnichannel content publishing, **CDPs enable Content-as-a-Service**: they allow companies to provide a contextualized, personalized content experience to users on the device and at the touchpoint of their choice.

### When assessing a CDP, you need to make sure these 8 fundamental questions can be solved by your new technology:

- Can I easily publish to multiple channels without reformatting the content for each channel?
- Can it offer a unified view of my content, no matter which source it comes from?
- Does it improve my content visibility and findability?
- Can it make my content readable on any device?
- Will users be able to interact with my documentation (rate, add feedbacks...)?
- Can it provide a documentation portal in multiple languages?
- Can it deliver personalized and contextualized content to each user or group of users?
- Can it measure my content's performance to help me make informed decisions about the documentation?

# THE PROMISE OF A CDP

## CHEAT SHEET: CDP VS. CMS VS. CCMS

It's important not to confuse a CDP with a CMS or a CCMS. Here's how to tell them apart and be sure you've selected the right solution for your organization.

	CDP	Web CMS	CCMS
What is it?	A software solution that collects, unifies and distributes digital content to multiple endpoints, dynamically adapting to the user, channel, and device	A software application used to create, store, and manage web content	A CMS that manages content at a component level rather than at the document level
Is it a content creation/authoring tool?	No, it collects existing content from any type of sources, in any format including CCMS, document processors and more	Yes	Yes
What content type does it handle?	Structured and unstructured content	Unstructured content	Structured content
Main usage and benefits	Streamlines content publishing, provides consistent user experiences, enables self-service support	Helps create and manage websites	Facilitates collaborative content creation, enables content reuse, and lowers translation costs
Delivery mode	APIs and default web portal	Static web pages	Mostly files (PDF, HTML,...)
Sample Vendors	Fluid Topics	WordPress, Drupal, Wix, Squarespace	Ixiasoft, RWS (Tridion), Paligo, BlueStream, Componize, Intuillion

# THE PROMISE OF A CDP

## 10 ESSENTIAL FEATURES FOR A CDP

As with any technology, choosing the right Content Delivery solution can be overwhelming. Expectations are higher than ever – companies want a tool that is cost-effective, and seamlessly integrated into their existing IT landscape, with enterprise-grade security and scalability.

Finding a Content Delivery Platform that meets all these criteria is a challenge. We've unraveled the 10 must-have features you need to look into for your next tool.



### 1. OUT-OF-THE-BOX PORTAL

CDPs are designed to feed content to any digital touchpoint. By default, they should provide a turnkey portal with key features such as permission-based content accessibility, advanced search capabilities, responsive reader, multilingual user interfaces and content analytics, that deploys in minutes, not months.



### 2. AUTONOMOUS PORTAL CONFIGURATION

The CDP portal should be simple to configure through settings without requiring interventions from IT, vendor services, or system integrators. The portal should be customizable to your organization's branding, reflect your product lines and the nature of your audience for a better user experience that meets your current and future business needs.



### 3. INTEGRATION WITH ANY CONTENT SOURCES AND TOOLS

Leading CDPs don't force you to adopt a specific authoring tool. Instead, they should provide ready-to-use integrations for all your content sources and tools, such as a tech doc team's CCMS or a marketer's Word document, and help overcome your content silos.



### 4. RELEVANT AND PERSONALIZED SEARCH

Search engines like Google have set high standards for search performance and an intuitive search experience. Best-in-class CDPs should offer the most relevant search results in a flash, with advanced features like faceted search, keyword highlighting, synonyms, misspellings, search result clustering, and more.



### 5. OFFLINE MODE

Even if the internet seems ubiquitous today, customers and teams can still find themselves in situations and locations without a reliable network connection. Mobile and offline accessibility to your content with a sync capacity for when connectivity is reestablished is crucial to serve your customers.

# THE PROMISE OF A CDP

## 10 ESSENTIAL FEATURES FOR A CDP



### 6. INTERACTIVITY

Bookmarking, adding comments and notes, delivering feedback, and building personal books are just some of the interactive functionalities that leading platforms offer. While all should be offered as standard, you should have the chance to turn-off those not relevant to your organization.



### 7. NATIVE MOBILE EXPERIENCE

Users in the field need to be supported on the device they prefer, no matter what that device is. A laptop, a tablet, a smartphone, or AR/VR goggles – your CDP should render text, graphics, 2D and 3D models, and multimedia content consistently and seamlessly.



### 8. SEO CAPABILITIES

Online documentation portals can generate organic traffic for your organization if it's optimized for search engines like Google and Bing. Your CDP should offer an option to activate and customize the way that content is exposed to search engines.



### 9. DEEP ANALYTICS AND REPORTING

The best CDPs provide rich and valuable insights into how your technical documentation and product content is performing. It should capture every user interaction with high levels of detail and deep context to drive your content activity with meaningful information and offer better customer service.



### 10. LANGUAGES

Next-generation CDPs should ensure full support for your global operations with the same speed, relevance, and cutting-edge Natural Language Processing capabilities for all your languages. Make sure that your CDP both supports multi-lingual content and provides user interfaces in the languages that you need.

# WHO WINS WITH A CDP?

## WHO IS A CDP FOR?

While users and customers may be the ultimate beneficiaries of your adoption of a CDP within your organization, there are clearly staff and teams which will experience the benefits of the solution internally. Three broad stakeholders are set to create value with a CDP: technical documentation experts, customer support teams, and field service departments.

**Here's how a CDP supports each stakeholder and the typical outcomes that its adoption delivers.**

Stakeholders	Challenges	Solution/Use Cases	Value Created for the User
Technical Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A complex ecosystem with various information silos resulting in manual and lengthy content integration and rework</li><li>• Variety of digital channels to feed simultaneously</li><li>• Keeping up with the fast pace of product delivery</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Unify all content into a central knowledge hub that acts as a single access point</li><li>• Feed all channels automatically and consistently with appropriate content without any reformatting</li><li>• Deliver documentation in sync with the product launches and updates</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>30-100% reduction in publishing costs</b></li><li>• <b>From weeks to hours in the delivery process</b></li><li>• <b>100% content accuracy and consistency across touchpoints</b></li></ul>
Customer Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pressure to reduce support costs</li><li>• Product and support information disseminated across different silos</li><li>• Repetitive questions</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide a self-service portal</li><li>• Create a centralized knowledge hub accessible from helpdesk tools</li><li>• Deliver context-sensitive help right within your product</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>30-75% case deflection</b></li><li>• <b>Decrease search time by 60%</b></li></ul>
Field Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Difficulty in accessing documentation in the field</li><li>• Onboarding and continuous enablement needs</li><li>• Variety of products, configurations, and procedures to handle increased frequency of new product releases</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide fully mobile product documentation available offline</li><li>• Access to personalized training courses based on your profile</li><li>• Access to current in-context technical information</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Reduced time-to-fix</b></li><li>• <b>Increased uptime</b></li><li>• <b>Faster employee and partner enablement</b></li></ul>

# YOUR PATH TO PURCHASE

## TECHNICAL QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

### The Six Things Your IT Manager Needs to Know About Your CDP

	Fluid Topics	Vendor 1	Vendor 2
<p><b>Does the solution have off-the-shelf integrations to our existing systems and tools?</b></p> <p>Any new solution needs to integrate seamlessly with existing corporate solutions. Off-the-shelf integrations that are ready-to-use ease deployment and maintenance for IT teams. Check what connectors and plugins are natively provided by your CDP and the API capabilities.</p>	✓		
<p><b>Is the solution certified ISO 27001 or SOC 2?</b></p> <p>The security of corporate and customer data, and the integrity of the systems and services they use is a paramount concern for every business. Organizations that are certified ISO 27001 or SOC 2 deliver software that meets the highest standards for security and data protection.</p>	✓		
<p><b>Will the solution scale as we grow?</b></p> <p>You need a CDP that can deliver for the organization you have today and the organization you'll grow to be tomorrow. A solution that won't need to be replaced just when your teams have begun to rely on it is always an advantage. Make sure that the solution can handle a sharp growth in users and content volume.</p>	✓		
<p><b>Does the solution support Single Sign-On (SSO)?</b></p> <p>Not only does SSO improve employee productivity and identity protection, it also makes for more secure systems. IT teams and users alike prefer the streamlined login process that SSO offers and there's proof it lifts adoption rates.</p>	✓		
<p><b>Is the solution regularly updated with new features and bug fixes?</b></p> <p>Regular updates to software mean security holes get plugged, flaws are patched, the user experience improves, and new features are deployed faster. Your CDP should not be a buy-and-forget system but one that grows and improves over time. CDPs offered in SaaS mode should provide at least monthly releases.</p>	✓		
<p><b>Is the vendor's infrastructure reliable?</b></p> <p>Your technical content must be accessible at all times. Make sure the CDP you're evaluating provides information about their service uptime on their infrastructure, and on how and where the data is hosted.</p>	✓		

# YOUR PATH TO PURCHASE

## WARNING SIGNS OF A BAD CDP

Choosing the right CDP also means avoiding the wrong CDP. However, with all the options on the market, it can be difficult to know just what to look for to avoid a costly poor choice. Here are some warning signs to look for before making your final CDP decision.



### **VENDOR-DEPENDENT CUSTOMIZATION**

An out-of-the-box solution is great, but you need to be able to customize that solution to your company's internal processes, branding, and user experience. Ensure you have control over the settings you need to make customizations and that you don't need to return to the vendor to make simple changes or 'open a ticket' to get things done. Settings and solution configuration options should be accessible, settings files should be in established formats (for example, CSS), and you should be sure before buying that the CDP vendor's 'self-service' promises stack up.



### **NO CASE STUDIES OR ROI METRICS**

CDP technology is new, but it is not so new that there aren't already organizations benefiting from its adoption. Your CDP vendor should be able to support their claims of effectiveness and efficiency gains with customer case studies that speak to the impact that the technology has had. Be wary of case studies or customer testimonials that remain vague about those impacts, too: look for hard metrics that prove the promised customer service efficiency gain and the financial return on investment.



### **A SOLUTION WITHOUT SCALE**

Your business is growing, and your CDP should grow effortlessly with you. Beware of vendors that will put artificial or arbitrary limits on the effectiveness of your solution by limiting the extent or types of content the CDP can connect to, the volume of queries that it can handle, or the number of users. Ensure that you can scale your business without worrying about whether your CDP can keep up with the growth you've achieved.

# SUCCESS STORIES

## TESTIMONIALS

From software to electronics, hardware to manufacturers, Fluid Topics' Content Delivery Platform powers tech doc, customer support, and field service teams worldwide. With this **market-leading technology**, technical documentation is transformed into a personalized content experience that engages and adds value at every point in a customer and product journey. Break the shackles of static publishing, **leave pre-generated documents and rigid formats** behind, and embrace Content-as-a-Service with Fluid Topics.



HEXAGON

**Lonnye Yancey-Smith**  
Executive Manager  
User Assistance

*"If you're considering moving to dynamic content delivery, I would suggest that you consider the problem you're trying to solve. For us, it was **ease of updates, quick delivery**, removing static documentation from product builds, and **frequent releases**, and we're able to handle all those things with Fluid Topics."*

[Read the case study >](#)



teradata.

**Elizabeth McFadden**  
Technical Project Manager  
Content Operations

*"In today's digital-first environment, Fluid Topics' mobile-friendly interface helps our company deliver improved content services to our users. Teradata's technical documentation website is now the company's most visited website with **over 5 million visits** in the last year alone."*

[Read the case study >](#)



LIEBHERR

**Aurélien Unfer**  
Project Manager New  
Information and  
Communication Technologies

*"Fluid Topics provided us with a fully featured solution that required limited configuration to match our needs. Providing users and technicians with **easy access** to an interactive documentation, **in their preferred format**, is an important factor for the smooth installation of a new machine and for customer satisfaction."*

[Read the case study >](#)

# CONCLUSION

## THANK YOU FOR READING THIS GUIDE

A CDP is a **game-changing solution for tech doc publishing teams**, and it can prove revolutionary for customer support and field service teams, too. The right CDP can help overcome the challenges that can otherwise swamp tech doc teams, while improving the end user experience for a clear business win.

This Buyer's Guide has outlined what to look for in your CDP and what to avoid, while also offering examples of successful CDP implementations, the immediate impact that the solution consistently delivers, and answers to the questions that IT and integration teams will have.

### WHAT IS FLUID TOPICS?

Fluid Topics is the trusted Dynamic Content Delivery solution chosen by worldwide industry champions to turn their technical content into engaging user experiences. Our platform uses AI-powered technology to make information easier to find and use, using NLP and advanced semantic search.

### LOOKING FOR A CUSTOM DEMO?

If your tech doc team and organization is ready to level up with a CDP, reach out to the Fluid Topics team for a custom demo and a hands-on experience with our market-leading CDP solution.

GET IN TOUCH



[www.fluidtopics.com](http://www.fluidtopics.com)



[contact@fluidtopics.com](mailto:contact@fluidtopics.com)



Fluid Topics