

WEBFORLESS ACADEMY

# Choosing the Right CMS

Compare static HTML, WordPress, Shopify, Webflow, hosted builders, headless CMS and custom systems according to ownership, workflows and maintenance.

Practical workbook · Version 2.1.0 · July 2026

# How to use this workbook

Work through each section with the people who own the website, content and operations. Record evidence, decisions, owners and review dates. A documented decision is easier to maintain than an assumption.

## 1. Start with the operating model

The best platform is the one the organization can operate safely and efficiently. Before comparing brand names, define who publishes, how often content changes, which integrations are required, who maintains updates, and what ownership means. A platform that is easy during the sales demo can become difficult over several years.

| Question                  | Notes / evidence |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| What is true today?       |                  |
| What needs to change?     |                  |
| Who owns the next action? |                  |

## 2. Static HTML and generated sites

Static websites can be extremely fast, secure and inexpensive to host. They suit sites with controlled publishing and limited editor needs. Updates may require a developer unless a static generator or lightweight editing workflow is added. Their simplicity is a strength when the business does not need a large plugin ecosystem.

| Question                  | Notes / evidence |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| What is true today?       |                  |
| What needs to change?     |                  |
| Who owns the next action? |                  |

# Implementation checklist

|   |                                                                                                                                                 |
|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ■ | Start with the operating model: Choose for the full lifecycle, not only the initial build.                                                      |
| ■ | Static HTML and generated sites: Do not install a complex CMS merely to edit a phone number twice a year.                                       |
| ■ | WordPress and traditional CMS platforms: WordPress is neither automatically good nor bad; implementation and maintenance determine the outcome. |
| ■ | Hosted builders and ecommerce platforms: Understand export limits, recurring costs and feature constraints before committing.                   |
| ■ | Headless CMS and custom systems: Custom should solve a real operating problem, not serve as a status symbol.                                    |
| ■ | Build a weighted decision: The right CMS is a documented business decision, not a popularity contest.                                           |

# Review record

| Date | Reviewer | Decision or change |
|------|----------|--------------------|
|      |          |                    |
|      |          |                    |
|      |          |                    |
|      |          |                    |
|      |          |                    |
|      |          |                    |
|      |          |                    |