The Omnichannel Gap: Why The Education Industry Needs Better Integration

INTRODUCTION

In the State of CMS 2024, Storyblok set out to understand CMS users at large. While this data provides invaluable revelations, the conclusions are broad – and there are some insights you just can't see in the big picture.

That's where this report comes in. We segmented our State of CMS data to focus only on those who work in the education industry (116 respondents). This analysis revealed a core theme among these users: **the demand for better omnichannel capabilities**.

> ✌️ **DEFINITION**
> **An omnichannel strategy is one that seamlessly integrates multiple different platforms (such as websites, mobile apps, AR/VR, smartwatches, etc) so that content is consistent, personalized, and polished regardless of where the user accesses it.**

This industry relies heavily on omnichannel features while also struggling with the limited abilities of their CMSs to support them. When you compare this paradox to the industry's plans to expand omnichannel strategies, it becomes clear that the workarounds required by a monolithic system simply can't keep up anymore.

Keep reading to explore the role omnichannel capabilities play in the education industry – and how today's users feel about its limitations, successes, and potential.

82% of the education industry uses more than 1 CMS – and 78% said they did so to achieve omnichannel capabilities.

HOW MANY CMSs DO YOU CURRENTLY USE?

More than 5
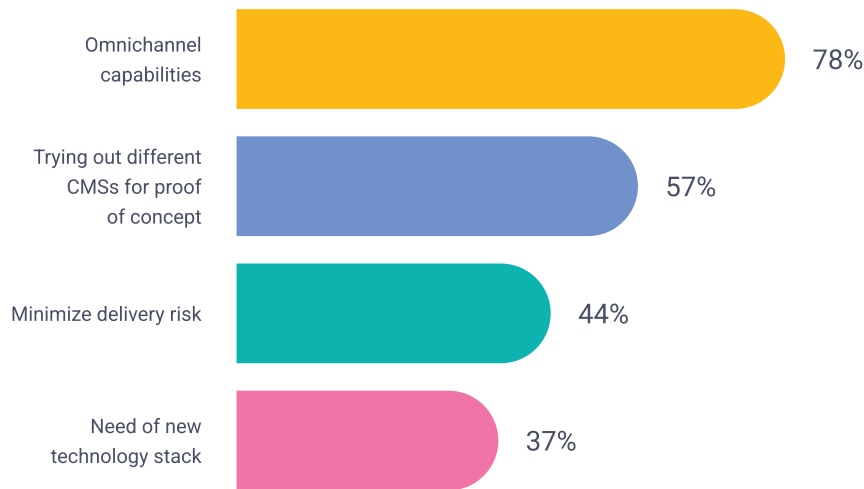7%

Only 1
18%

4 to 5
21%

2 to 3
54%
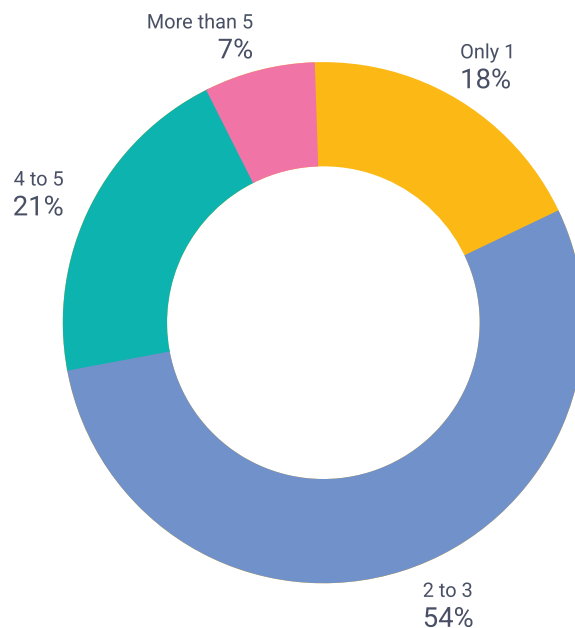
Building a cohesive online presence with multiple CMSs isn't easy. It requires the siloing of content, which itself leads to various downsides including:

- Disorganization
- Inefficient distribution
- Fragmented user data
- Inconsistent user experiences

All of this leads to a sub-par content experience for your frontend users, not to mention a content management experience marked by frustration and confusion on the backend.

What could be worth all of these challenges? According to 78% of the education industry, **omnichannel delivery**.

IF YOU USE 2 OR MORE CMSS, PLEASE SELECT THE REASON(S) WHY:

Reason	Percentage
Omnichannel capabilities	78%
Trying out different CMSs for proof of concept	57%
Minimize delivery risk	44%
Need of new technology stack	37%

The benefits of omnichannel for this industry are nearly as many as the drawbacks of a multi-CMS system: consistent experiences across devices, increased engagement, personalized learning paths, and unlocking all possible educational opportunities across connected devices.

However, just because organizations sacrifice so much for these benefits doesn't mean they have to. Those who choose a composable (also known as headless) CMS don't have to jury-rig a complex and costly ecosystem just to embrace omnichannel. Thanks to the power of APIs, this is an innate function of composable systems and is easy to implement from the start.
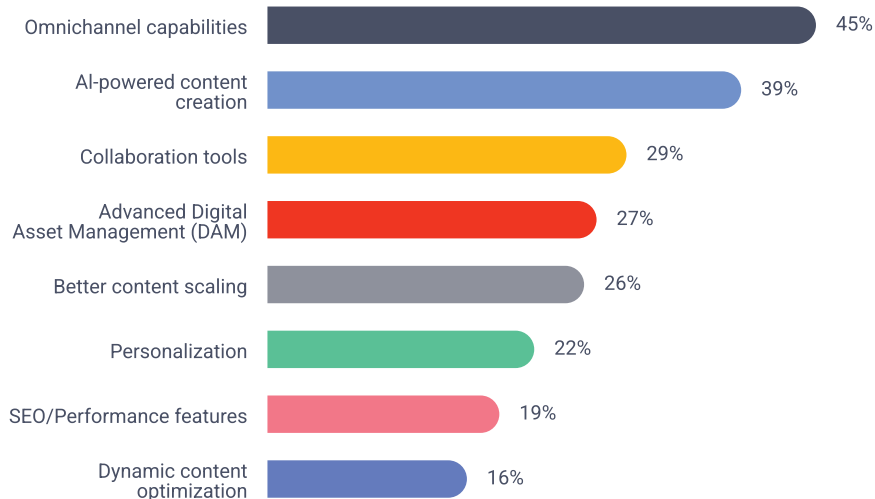
GOOD TO KNOW

The fact that there's a better approach available seems to be something that users know, too: The second most popular reason for using multiple CMSs is trying out different CMSs for proof of concept (57%).

45% say omnichannel capabilities are missing from their current CMS

WHAT FEATURES ARE MISSING IN YOUR CURRENT CMS THAT YOU'D LIKE TO SEE?

Feature	Percentage
Omnichannel capabilities	45%
AI-powered content creation	39%
Collaboration tools	29%
Advanced Digital Asset Management (DAM)	27%
Better content scaling	26%
Personalization	22%
SEO/Performance features	19%
Dynamic content optimization	16%

When presented with the multiple choice question above, 45% of the education industry felt that omnichannel features were missing in their current CMS. This not only supports the dire need for such capabilities, but its comparison to the other options also shows something surprising.

The second most desired feature was AI-powered content creation. AI is a relatively new, still-developing technology, so it makes sense that users aren't seeing them in the systems yet.

But omnichannel capabilities have been around for a long time – and users in the education industry are still struggling to find a CMS that can fully meet these needs.

GOOD TO KNOW

A composable CMS can solve both concerns: the API-first construction means it can easily connect with any external program, whether it's a new content channel or an AI platform. This approach is also future-proof, so a composable CMS will be able to seamlessly integrate even as technology continues to evolve.

Education First: 9000+ Pages in 60+ Languages Published in 1 Hour

486k+
Total Pages

1 Hour
To QA

5 Minutes
To Production
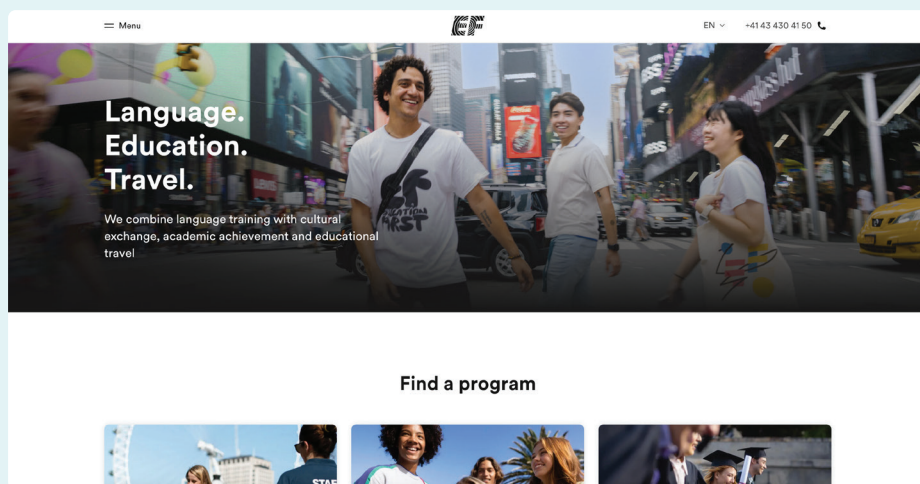
After struggling with a slow and restrictive system, Education First (EF) made the switch to Storyblok's headless CMS. The result? A better experience of their global, multilingual site. With the help of Storyblok, EF was able to significantly reduce development time. Their team can now manage their content easier and faster, making it possible to create 9,000+ pages in 60+ languages in a fraction of the original time.

Thanks to the flexibility of Storyblok's API-first architecture, everyone wins: EF can continue to enhance the user experience on the frontend while also streamlining collaboration on the backend.

> ❝ Development time for a new, global multilingual site went from 4-6 months to around 8 weeks
>
> **Jon Simpson**
> Chief Architect at Education First

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The education industry plans on using more non-traditional channels than other industries

Channel	Education Industry	Full sample
Website	55.77%	60%
Mobile application	**63.46%**	60%
Digital screens (in-store)	**55.77%**	48%
AR/VR	**53.85%**	44%

When asked "Which platforms and channels do you plan to serve in the future with your CMS?", those in the education industry showed a higher likelihood of embracing digital screens (+8%), AR/VR (+10%), and mobile apps (3%) than the main sample. They also demonstrated a lower anticipated use of the traditional website approach. This points to an industry-specific need to break from traditional content restrictions and reach users no matter where they may be.
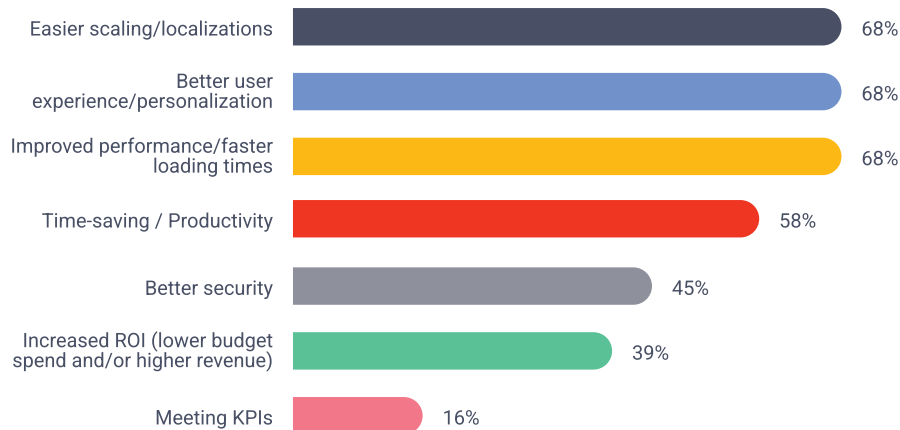
Speaking of the future, those in the education industry are also considering the broader implications of their CMSs' limitations: 49% said that future-proof technology was an essential trait, yet 48% reported that they still struggle to add new technology. An inflexible, stagnant system is simply not compatible with the multi-channel approach that is so crucial to this industry.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
> Omnichannel struggles can expand to other areas of CMS satisfaction, too. 60% of education users complained about having to work across multiple independent platforms and migrate final content to the CMS. This is a common workaround to enable omnichannel capabilities in otherwise incapable monolithic systems.

68% of education users who switched to headless experienced better localization and scaling

Category	Percentage
Easier scaling/localizations	68%
Better user experience/personalization	68%
Improved performance/faster loading times	68%
Time-saving / Productivity	58%
Better security	45%
Increased ROI (lower budget spend and/or higher revenue)	39%
Meeting KPIs	16%

When looking for a CMS with omnichannel features, you can't forget the support systems needed to maintain them. Managing content only gets more complicated as a company grows – especially for the 82% of users who need to coordinate between multiple CMSs. Choosing a system that can make scaling and localization as easy as adding new channels is essential.

In this sample, 68% confirmed that a headless CMS provided this crucial support. With an API-first architecture that supports integrating any channel or technology, users are better equipped to provide a stellar user experience to their audience no matter how they access content.

GOOD TO KNOW

The benefits don't stop there, either: in addition to being able to fully embrace omnichannel, the same percentage of users cited better user experience/personalization and better loading times. Productivity, security, and increased ROIs were also reported.

Conclusion

Our data shows that the education industry relies heavily on omnichannel features. More importantly, it shows that they're resilient. Despite using systems that don't support these capabilities, users have found a way to make it work for the sake of omnichannel's benefits, going above and beyond to make monolithic CMSs work for them.

But as the future comes faster and faster and omnichannel remains a priority, it begs the question: why should these users have to be resilient? They've shown they can be resourceful – but why waste all the work and ingenuity on getting a system to do what it should be able to do in the first place when that effort could go towards better serving users with more spectacular content?

The education industry has been remarkably inventive in finding ways to support omnichannel strategy. Imagine what they could do with a modern CMS that removes the need for those workarounds and lets them soar.

ABOUT STORYBLOK

Storyblok is an API-first content management system (CMS) that helps businesses across industries maximize value from their content faster by speeding up workflows across the content life cycle. Businesses choose Storyblok to improve digital performance, reduce costs, and deliver powerful customer experiences faster and more efficiently.

As a cloud-native CMS, Storyblok enables developers and marketers to build standout content experiences faster by working off their preferred technology, developing faster with our powerful APIs, and easily extending their CMS with any third-party solution. Storyblok's intuitive visual editing experience, robust content management solutions, and omnichannel publishing capabilities empower marketers and creatives to drive global, personalized marketing strategies across all channels.

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TALK TO ONE OF OUR SPECIALISTS

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