

Should You Migrate From Ektron CMS Now?

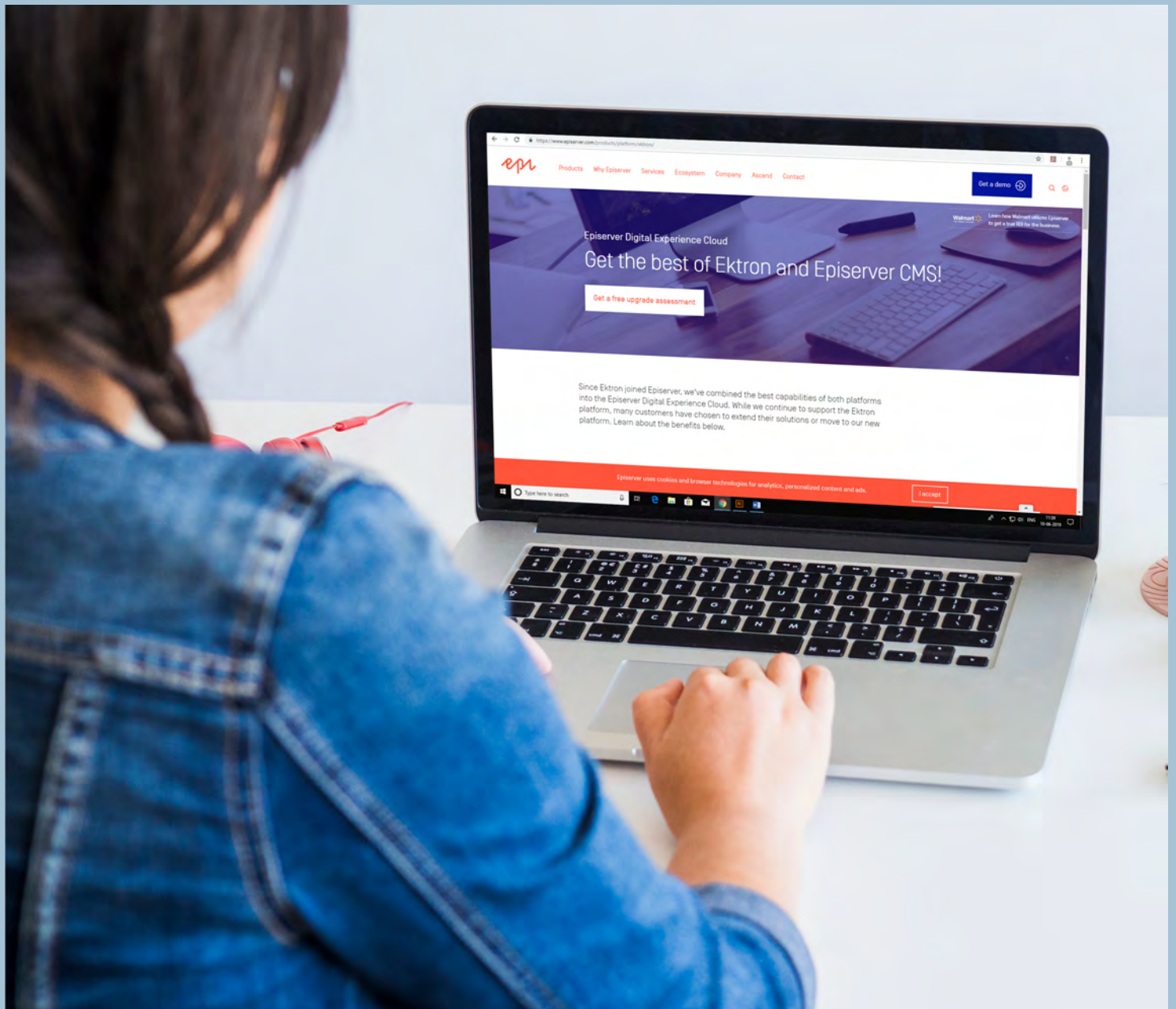


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INTRODUCTION

WHAT SHOULD I DO WITH MY EKTRON SITE?

Episerver took over Ektron in 2015. The combined product offers a complete and comprehensive cloud-based digital experience platform for customers. However, customers using Ektron CMS before Episever's take over face the pressing question of whether to migrate to Episerver or another CMS.

THE SUPERIOR FEATURES AND FUNCTIONALITY OF EPISERVER

Ektron is a simple CMS, and users may create, manage and publish web content easily. However, this CMS is inherently limited in cloud and mobile capabilities. It is also severely limited in personalization. The superior features and functionality offered by Episerver make migration the preferred option for most users.

Here is a run-down of how Episerver scores vis-à-vis Ektron.

❖ Cloud -first strategy :

- The Episerver Digital Experience Cloud service offers a cloud-first strategy, with elastic scale, super high speed, and robust security. Ektron is severely limited in cloud capabilities.

❖ Advanced e-commerce capabilities :

- Ektron was traditionally weak in e-commerce. Ektron Commerce offers limited extensibility and minimal control over the UX. In contrast, Episerver offers advanced e-commerce capabilities.
- Episerver Digital Experience Cloud offers better product catalogues and catalogue management, improved content and commerce UX, and better options for coupons, pricing, inventory. There is increased support for multiple markets as well.

❖ Advanced Personalization :

- Episerver offers several out-of-the-box capabilities, allowing marketers and web admins to personalise the engagement with individual users. It combines structured content schemas with page layout management, offering easy page personalization. Moreover, the CMS applies machine learning, artificial intelligence and statistical analysis to identify audience segment and target relevant content, including product recommendations, automatically.
- In contrast, Ektron offers limited rules-based personalization.

❖ On-page editing and preview :

- Episerver makes editing and maintaining web pages easy. With Episerver, authors work on atomized content elements such as blocks and media, with easy drag-and-drop capabilities, to edit all content



in-context. Every property of the content has WYSIWYG capability, offering an easy preview.

❖ Better Security :

- One often-raised point against Ektron is the relatively weak security of its ASP.NET Web Forms. Episerver's Digital Experience Cloud Service overcomes the shortcoming by offering an inherently more secure ASP.NET MVC technology.
- Episerver adopts a security-by-design model, where security, rather than an added layer, is an integral component of the architecture. These enhanced security features, capable of accommodating the rigors of EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), suit companies with a global footprint as well.
- Moreover, unlike Ektron, which no longer feature new releases, the Episerver CMS offers a continuous release cycle, with all unearthed bugs and vulnerabilities resolved quickly.

❖ Superior Support :

- At the time of Episerver taking over Ektron, Episerver had promised support to Ektron. However, support for Ektron is only for versions Ektron 9.0 or higher, and even here support for any version below the latest version is limited. Websites running with versions below Ektron 9.0 are now unsupported. Episerver users get live, continuous support.

WHEN IS MIGRATION FROM EKTRON TO EPISERVER OR OTHER CMS PREFERABLE?

The superior functionalities of Episerver notwithstanding, migration may not be the best option for all users of Ektron.

Enterprises running Ektron CMS is v9.0 or above need not migrate just because their CMS is Ektron. Episerver continues to support Ektron CMS 9.x. The enterprise need not take up the disruption pangs the migration inevitably causes, unless they really need to migrate their CMS due to changed business situations.

The right time to migrate out from Ektron is when :

- ❖ The enterprise is running on Ektron 8.0x version or below, and it is no longer feasible to continue with such CMS. It is more cost effective to migrate to Episerver rather than upgrade to the latest version of Ektron. If any issues occur with older Ektron sites, Ektron support asks to update to the latest version first.
- ❖ The enterprise requires advance e-commerce and cloud capabilities, not available in Ektron

Upgrading from an older version of Ektron to the latest 9.x version is not easy, for it will most likely break the functionality of the website, and would require rebuilding the website.

Migrating from an older 8.x version of Ektron to Ektron 9.0 requires, among other things, changes to the underlying APIs, replacing the deprecated calendar system with the new one, and a new search technology requiring code rewrites.



HOW TO MIGRATE

Migrating from Ektron invariably requires rebuilding the website. The best approach is a methodical step-by-step approach.

- ❖ **Make Estimates :**
 - Make a timeline estimate for the migration process, factoring in a realistic timeframe and a realistic cost estimate. Factor in the practical considerations rather than limit estimates on a theoretical basis.
- ❖ **Account for all the assets :**
 - As a prelude to the migration, establish a content inventory populated with the content to be migrated, leaving out to-be-discarded content.
 - Do not merely list out the content, but also list out content relationships and integrations, to ensure the website is not broken post-migration. Ensure link preservation for SEO as well.



Also, identify databases, search applications, logins, and other existing or new applications integrated into the website.

- Create a new template design, if required.

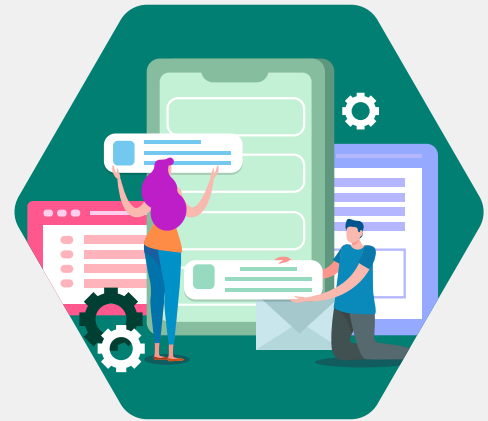
✦ **Provision for resources :**

- The success of the migration exercise depends largely on the provision of adequate and timely resources. Draw out the system architecture and the changes, which would serve as a blueprint for the migration process.
- Make the necessary provision for hosting. Evaluate the present hosting set-up, consider whether it is adequate for existing requirements. Review new features against system resources, and provision for any additional resources, if required.
- Provision the necessary tools to carry out the migration. This may include necessary tools to move the content and metadata to the new CMS, new databases, and more.
- Replace the Find and Search technology with the technology recommended by the new CMS.
- Review the product licenses. Take the necessary Episerver product license upfront, to avoid blocks at the time of the actual migration. Episerver offers good deals for migration from Ektron.

✦ **Execute the Migration :**

The actual migration involves a series of steps, such as:

- Moving content and metadata to the new website, using appropriate tools already deployed for the purpose.
- Manually transferring files related to custom implementations, features, functions, and software.
- Re-integrating databases, search applications, logins, and other existing or new applications integrated into the website with all third-party products.
- Restoring the workflows, visitor groups and system integration in the new CMS.
- Re-training authors and website administrators in the new CMS
- It is a good practice to keep the incumbent Ektron version running until the new website is ready to go live in all aspects.



SOME BIG NAMES THAT HAVE MIGRATED FROM EKTRON TO EPISERVER

Ektron, in its heyday, had several notable clients such as Shangri-La Hotels, American Society for Reproductive Medicine (ASRM), and Houston Grand Opera. All of them have undergone a seamless and successful migration to Episerver, and enhanced the capabilities of their website as a result.

- ❖ Shangri-La Hotels, for instance, now supports 11 million plus page views per month post-migration, increasing traffic by 10% year-on-year.
- ❖ The Houston Grand Opera achieved a 100% increase in page views and a 7% increase in web orders in the first month since the launch of its new upgraded website powered by Episerver.
- ❖ The American Society for Reproductive Medicine (ASRM) and several other websites have reported better ROI and ability to personalize their content better, post migration from Ektron to Episerver.



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CONCLUSION

The implications of CMS migrations affect the entire enterprise. CMS migration is equivalent to transformational change, and the enterprise needs to approach it likewise. Apart from being committed to the transformation, provisioning adequate resources, support from all stakeholders, and a proactive vision are essential for a smooth and seamless migration.

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