



Advantages of Open Source Commerce

Companies are breaking free of restrictive proprietary platforms for custom open source solutions

Table of Contents

Ownership of data & technology	3
Integration with virtually any business system	3
A custom user experience	4
The omnichannel experience & a single source of data	5
A flexible platform that aligns with your needs	6
No licensing fees, revenue sharing or mandatory support contracts.....	6
1000's of supporters and continued development	7
Are you ready to escape?	8

Ownership of data & technology

If you use an open source commerce platform, you own the code.

You need to look at your website the same way you would view a brick-and-mortar storefront. Paying a monthly licensing fee for a hosted platform is like having a leased property -- you're only adding to your overhead costs and you have no control over your future. Hosted solutions don't allow you to own the code, which business owners often don't think of as a problem until something bad happens. If a hosted solution goes under, they take you down with them. You lose your online presence and have to rebuild from the beginning. That's a long and expensive process.

If you use an open source commerce platform you own the code. If you work with an agency and choose to move to an in-house development team or a different agency, you can do so at no cost or risk to your business.

Integration with virtually any business system

The code is completely exposed for you to use.

If you judge ecommerce solutions solely on their feature set, hosted solutions like Magento, Shopify, and Volusion will always look good up front. But your ecommerce platform is more than just window dressing. Open source frameworks can have an impressive feature set, but the biggest advantage is the expansive list of back-end systems they can integrate with.

Proprietary platforms can offer standard integrations with customer relationship management (CRM) systems and fulfillment solutions, but if you're a big retailer, you may find you need a higher degree of integration for your sales process.



Open source platforms are exactly that. Open. The code is completely exposed for your use. Combine this with the modular architecture and you have a platform with the ability to integrate with virtually any business system that allows access, from CRMs and shipping vendors to payment gateways and accounting software. Your ecommerce site can become an automated business rather than just a storefront.

A custom user experience

A custom user experience gives more power to the marketer.

When it comes to user experience, hosted platforms give you a best-practice, industry-standard, cookie-cutter execution of a shopping cart. It's a templated design that is sold as a finished product, so you know you'll have a catalogue, a simple check-out, account pages, etc. Outside of choosing a theme, there is very little room for customization. Open source allows for all the same functionality plus a powerful theme system that allows you to add unique and advanced features very easily.

A custom user experience gives more power to the marketer, allowing them to create custom conversion paths for different user types and integrate those paths within the content experience. You can generate personalized content based on customer data and/or provide different content to users based on their geographic location.

Open source commerce is also ideal for omni-channel selling. The consumer path is seamless across all sales channels, devices, websites and retail tools throughout the entire customer experience. You can set up content, layout and functionality to respond to the device being used, such as smartphones and tablets.



The omnichannel experience & a single source of data

Open source platforms use a single data source which makes it optimal for creating omnichannel strategies.

Today's ecommerce landscape is rapidly evolving. It's no longer just about selling products online. Companies are expected to create immersive shopping experiences for users. The advances in mobile technology have given consumers constant and instant access to information. They expect their favourite brands to be able to deliver an integrated shopping experience across all channels and devices complete with personalized content, consistent product information, and simple conversion paths. This is not an easy task. For retailers that sell through both online and in-store channels, the challenge is even greater.

Open source platforms use a single data source which makes it optimal for creating omnichannel strategies. Rather than having to force together multiple platforms that pull data from various systems, open source allows for one centralized data centre that can be accessed by any of the systems you need.

What does this mean exactly?

Customer data, product details, promotions & sales information, inventory numbers and more can all be easily defined and streamlined across multiple channels. For example:

- ▶ Your customers can start a purchase online and then pick up where they left off in your store.
- ▶ Customer data can be accessed easily for automated marketing; loyalty programs, birthday "gifts", personalized recommendations.
- ▶ If your products are sold on your ecommerce store as well as third party marketplaces, your product info is always consistent without having to apply multiple updates on various backends.
- ▶ Easily define and promote location-based pricing and offers.
- ▶ Real-time inventory numbers can be shown online to ensure product availability and minimize the risk of back-orders.

- ▶ Tax & shipping rules can be defined per city, state, country to ensure all customers are shown the correct cost of items at checkout.

A flexible platform that aligns with your needs

Exceed the boundaries of a traditional sales platform.

Any ecommerce platform today needs the ability to adapt. If your platform is locked down, you risk losing to your competitors. Hosted ecommerce solutions are just shopping carts with conventional catalogue management and the ability to sell physical and/or digital products.

Open source commerce releases you from these industry-standard restraints. Organize your products using virtually any attribute. Display your products in any style, from lists, grids, or tables to a customized look that can make you stand out from your in-the-box competition. Integrate features that go beyond commerce, such as custom applications, web services, and customer portals. Exceed the boundaries of a traditional sales platform.

Don't be tied to someone else's development path. By leveraging an open source platform, you allow yourself to be the frontrunner in your market.

No licensing fees, revenue sharing or mandatory support contracts.

Open source commerce is free to use.

Anyone with the appropriate development skills can pick up an open source framework and begin working with it immediately at no charge. If you require development help you will need to pay a contractor or agency and depending on your needs these upfront costs can seem like a lofty investment. However, after the upfront development, there are no mandatory ongoing costs associated with open source.



If you are utilizing a SAAS or proprietary platform start-up costs are minimal but the majority of them have various ongoing costs.

- ▶ **Monthly contracts** – SAAS platforms will charge you a monthly fee to use their platform, in addition to this fee you may have to pay for additional functionality, integrations, and/or support.
- ▶ **Licensing fees** – The big enterprise platforms (Demandware, Hybris, Magento) charge a yearly license fee to use their software platforms. These fees can range from \$50,000 - \$700,000 per year.
- ▶ **Revenue sharing** – SAAS and proprietary platforms will often require a revenue share contract to supplement their low monthly fee. A typical revenue share agreement is a 2% transaction fee. Depending on your yearly gross revenue this can be a major blow.

1000's of supporters and continued development

Open source platforms are pushed forward by thousands of developers and supporters worldwide; agencies, contractors, & enthusiasts all have a shared goal of bettering their software and creating an accessible and stable platform. Proprietary systems simply can't compete with a workforce this large or this focused. Open source evolves at the pace of the web. By leveraging this type of platform, you can be a front-runner in your market. Often before a retailer even knows it needs a specific new integration or piece of functionality, someone is already building it.

Drupal Commerce & Acro Media

Drupal Commerce is the powerful ecommerce software that extends from the open source Drupal platform. Drupal Commerce was built onto the content management system using the same architecture, allowing for a true marriage of content and commerce. It is a truly unrestricted platform that provides both structure and flexibility.

Acro Media is the leading Drupal Commerce agency in North America. We work exclusively with Drupal and Drupal Commerce, and currently, develop and support one of the biggest Drupal Commerce websites in the world. Our Drupal services include:

- ▶ Drupal Commerce
- ▶ Drupal consultation and architecture

- ▶ Drupal visualizations and modelling
- ▶ Drupal integrations to replace or work with existing platforms
- ▶ Drupal website migrations (rescues) from other web platforms
- ▶ Custom Drupal modules



Are you ready to escape?

Break free from the proprietary platforms and legacy software you're handcuffed to and create the commerce experience you want. Open source commerce gives the power to the business owner to create a commerce experience that meets the ever-changing conditions of your marketplace as well as the complexities of your inner company workings.

Next steps

Want to learn more about open source, Drupal Commerce, or Acro Media? Book some time with one of our business developers for an open conversation to answer any questions and provide additional insight. Our team members are here to help provide you with the best possible solution, no sales tricks. We just want to help, if we can.

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