Dataweavers

Sitecore Cloud Infrastructure Buyer's Guide

Discover the critical questions you need answered to avoid the
5 key hosting and cloud infrastructure mistakes that
all DX Platform owners' encounter.

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Foreword

If you're reading this, you're considering or have already chosen Sitecore as your Digital Experience Platform (DXP). You've likely got an ambitious plan to revolutionize your organizations customer experience to acquire, convert and/or retain customers to drive more lifetime value.

As a leader in Gartner's DXP Magic Quadrant, Sitecore provides one of the worlds most sophisticated, technically capable and flexible Digital Experience Platforms in the Market.

Like many organizations undergoing Digital Transformation of their Customer Experiences, things certainly don't happen overnight.

A crucial part of a DXP's initial and on-going success is when the Platform features that drive personalization have been enabled early on, your development partner(s) are delivering early and often, your platform is trusted by both technical and marketing teams for being secure, and always up to date.

Any Cloud Infrastructure approach should allow you to manage the multiple Digital Experiences your organization has the ambition to deliver in an efficient, secure, performance-oriented way. All with a predictable budget.

This guide was written to help you decide which approach to Cloud Infrastructure will best support your investment in Sitecore to provide the greatest long-term value for your organization.

See the Bigger Picture for Cloud Hosting

Cloud Hosting is the 'obvious conversation' when it comes to web technologies.

'Someone' needs to think about the hosting. Usually, it is just before go-live. Any Cloud will do. Cloud is Cloud, right?
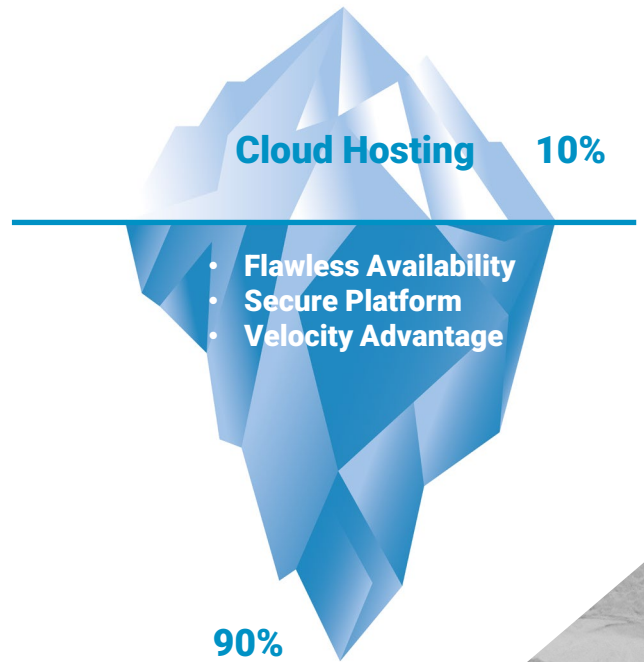
Choosing the right Cloud Hosting for your Digital Experience Platforms could make-or-break a career. Or your team.

Much like an iceberg, when it comes to Digital Experience Platforms there's much more to Cloud Hosting than what's visible on the surface.
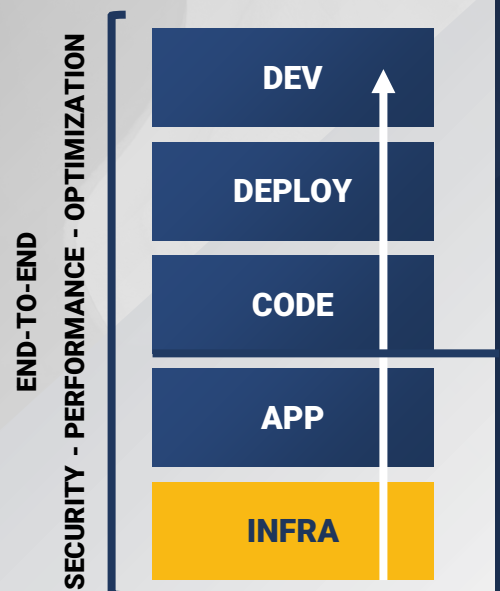
We know that to get the impact, results and return on investment (ROI) expected from investing in Digital Experience Platforms, the business needs 3 key things:

1. Flawless Availability
2. Trusted & Secure Platform
3. Velocity Advantage

Moving from people-based infrastructure hosting to an automated Web Operations Platform provides the opportunity to use DX platforms, like Sitecore as an asset that enables business change.

Cloud Hosting **10%**

- **Flawless Availability**
- **Secure Platform**
- **Velocity Advantage**

90%

Web Operations Stack

END-TO-END

SECURITY - PERFORMANCE - OPTIMIZATION

DEV

DEPLOY

CODE

APP

INFRA

Mistake #1 – Cost of Infrastructure

It is understandable that cloud infrastructure could be confused for 'all that is needed' when hosting web applications. However, when it comes to digital customer experience the inter-dependencies between the infrastructure-application-solution layers and fluctuating demands on resources need a different approach.

Too often, 'cheap' infrastructure hosting is considered initially. However, this is quickly offset by the dramatic escalation of cost due to a non-standardized, one-off, people-driven approach to system administration, managing deployments, security issues, performance issues and the often-unbudgeted cost of annual application upgrades.

Moving to Cloud is more than just shifting infrastructure.

Do you find yourself saying …

Our Cloud infrastructure costs are too hard to manage and seem out of control.

We've got an existing investment in on-premise hardware or Virtual Machines.

Cloud is just more complicated, expensive and not predictable so we're not ready.

Key Questions

❑ **Do you know how much you're spending?**

❑ **How do you know if you're spending the right amount?**

❑ **Are you using VM's instead of PaaS or Containers?**

❑ **What are the other costs are needed to consider outside of Infrastructure?**

Mistake #2 – Security of Application

Did you know that four out of five Sitecore websites scanned don't meet the Open Web Application Security Project (OWASP) Top 10 web application security risks?

Great digital experiences rely on the use of private, personally identifiable information (PII) and sensitive data to deliver meaningful 1:1 interactions. Often this information comes from other integrated sources like CRM, ERP and Call Center Solutions to provide the best customer experiences possible.

In the world of digital customer experience, security needs to occur at multiple layers of the code, application and infrastructure stack, especially where customer data is collected, routed and stored.

Do you find yourself saying ...

The common attack vectors for digital experience platforms aren't well known or considered.

Alerting of issues is after the fact but needs to be moved to proactive.

Our governance of people and process interactions is not considered or easily inspectable.

Key Questions

❑ **Do you know if your code is secure or has a baseline?**

❑ **Do you know if you have exposure?**

❑ **Is your data encrypted at rest, is your data encrypted in transit?**

❑ **Do you know if your website is under attack?**

Mistake #3 – Performance of Stack

Performance. It's the way your code, application and infrastructure are working together to give you a fast, responsive website.

It is also heavily influenced by the engineering approach taken. The finer the control, the better the performance, availability and cost surety will be possible.

In the world of digital customer experience, performance can also be measured as web page speed-load which is also influenced by vendors like Google. The time it takes for a web page to load information to interact with a service, portal or buy a product is now table-stakes.

Without a focus on stack performance, a rollercoaster of massive over-and-under use of Cloud resources occurs.

Do you find yourself saying ...

Our site speed is negatively affecting our end-user customer experience.

Any type of code change or update takes the site down and causes problems.

One off events cause our site to be unresponsive or completely unavailable.

Key Questions

❑ **Does your site load fast to avoid any search engine issues?**

❑ **What's the contingency plan if the site goes down?**

❑ **Do you have key performance metrics you're tracking?**

❑ **Do you have a right-sized, autoscaling capacity plan?**

Mistake #4 – Upgrade Not Possible

The capabilities of enterprise digital experience platforms are cumulative. Simply put, if you're not on the latest version - you're already on the back-foot.

Agility is a part of business, especially when embarking on a customer experience transformation journey. Being on the latest version of digital experience platforms, like Sitecore should always be possible, and never be blocked.

Just like what you'd expect from a SaaS platform, your digital experience platform, like Sitecore should also allow you to constantly and easily move to the latest version.

Do you find yourself saying ...

I'm stuck on a version that's been so customized that we can't upgrade.

I can't turn on personalization features because it breaks something.

It's easier to start again because the cost to upgrade compromises time and budgets.

Key Questions

❑ **Are you using the power of personalization features to drive engagement?**

❑ **Does your digital asset help convert, acquire and nurture your revenue?**

❑ **Has your customer code modified the underlying application?**

Mistake #5 – Velocity of Decisions

There should be a 'one best way' for your cross-functional team to work together and be governed. From the way developers release code, to the way marketers deliver agile changes and applications upgrades are performed.

It takes a cross functional team of developers, designers, marketers and delivery managers to build great customer experiences.

The ability for all team members to work together in a collaborative workflow is a lead indicator of being able to achieve return, result, or business impact from investments. Especially if they are associated with Customer Revenue.

Do you find that …

The lack of decision making is stifling innovation and agility of the business.

Deployments take weeks or months to materialize and shouldn't be the norm.

The competing priorities from business units become 'backed-up' and stop progress.

Key Questions

❑ **How easily and confidently can you change to respond to market opportunities?**

❑ **How do you manage competing requests?**

❑ **How do you manage multiple vendors delivering together?**

❑ **Is your cross-functional team working together seamlessly?**

The State of DX Platform Hosting

When we look at the overall Digital Experience (DX) Platform Hosting Market and reflect on the 5 mistakes, we can map the adopter groups on a bell-curve into four clear categories:

Deliberate DIY'ers – don't realise that there's more to running a DX Platform than just a website. As a result, they believe that the infrastructure they have already invested in will do just fine.

Cloud Converts – realise the power of Cloud computing in terms of scale and flexibility because they also realise the DX Platform is more than just hosting websites. It's a behavioural analytics platform that's a business asset. However, they are still focused on infrastructure knowledge and skills of people as their main playbook.

Stack Savvy – realise that there is more to a DX Platform than the infrastructure. They understand that the application needs just as much, if not more attention because of the additional security risks it presents, along with line-of-business executives that rely on the availability of it.

Business Enablers – realise that the 'Stack Savvy' group have the technical infrastructure and application stack under control. But the amount of change that is required to be operationally managed is too much for the knowledge and skills to be changed manually. They look for an overall platform which drives the automation that the business is looking for, and provides the SLA's that the CIO and business can rely on.

Where do you find yourself on the bell-curve?
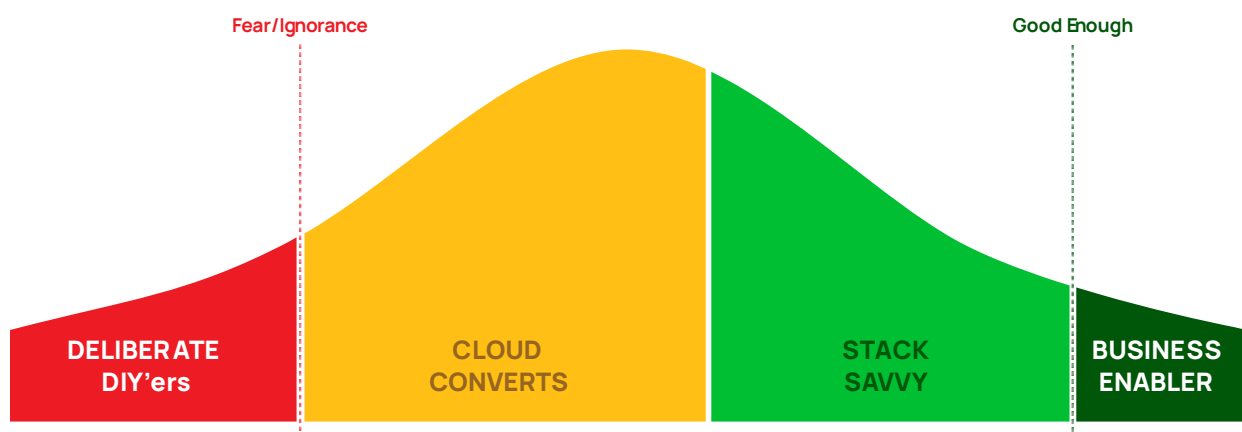

Source: Dataweavers Research

Web Operations Platform

Moving from people-based infrastructure hosting to an automated end-to-end operations platform, helps get the tech out of the way to do more marketing. Allowing an uninterrupted focus on customer experience.

A Web Operations Platform enables a drastically reduced time-to-market and the ability to manage conflicting requests from internal teams. It also allows rapid, real-time updates and decisions from DX Platforms like Sitecore by:

- Moving from 'Unreliable Infrastructure' to 'Predictable Cost, Speed, Availability & Latest Application Version' by having an **Optimized Full Stack** approach that works like SaaS.

- Moving from 'Unaware of Stack Risks' to 'Active Monitoring and Alerting' by having a **Secure Operations** stance that's secure by default.

- Moving from 'Competing Individual Priorities' to 'Multiple Vendors, Delivering Daily at the Same Time' by enabling **Frictionless Change** in the environment.

A Web Operations Platform helps deliver the best lifetime value from DX Platforms, like Sitecore.
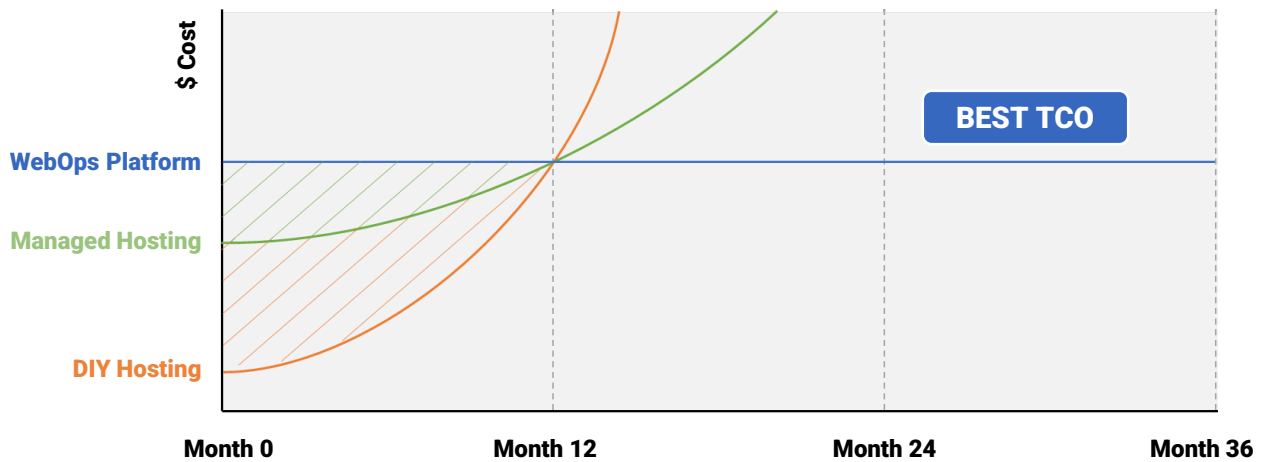
DIY Hosting

Cost escalates quickly and will continue to escalate due to non-standardized, one-off, people-driven approach to administration, architecture, deployments, security and performance issues. Features that are 'too complex' get skipped or are not enabled. Hidden cost of application upgrades are every 12 months.

Managed Hosting

Cost escalates moderately and will continue to escalate due to non-standardized, one-off, people-driven approach to administration, architecture, deployments, security and performance issues. Hidden cost of application upgrades are every 12 months.

Dataweavers WebOps

Web Operations Platforms provide predicable costs while supporting optimum feature use and performance over a subscription term of 36 months. No more upgrade 'surprises' that are not budgeted for when it's included in the cost of operations.

Next Steps

When you're ready to learn more about Dataweavers, here are four ways we can help provide peace of mind that your Sitecore environment is flawlessly available, is a trusted and secure platform and increases the velocity of your teams and decisions.

Get a 90-minute Sitecore Health Audit

In 90 minutes, we will provide you an exact understanding of how healthy your Sitecore stack is, and a fixed price to get you onto the latest version of Sitecore, regardless of the complexity of your environment.
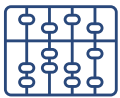
BOOK HERE

Attend our Webinar

We'll show you how we help organizations get the most out of their Sitecore environments for both marketing teams and developers.

REGISTER

Book a Strategy Call

If you ever want some 1:1 help, we can jump on a call to brainstorm the best way to work through the complexities of your environment.

BOOK HERE

Assess your Total Cost of Web Operations

Use our Total Cost of Web Operations assessment to understand what is acceptable when it comes to Web Operations Platforms and Cloud Hosting costs.

START NOW

About Dataweavers

Founded in 2018, Dataweavers enables technology and marketing teams to elevate from the details to 'win every day' using their Web Operations Platform on Azure PaaS.

Backed by a cost, performance availability, and security guarantee that helps organizations take control of their Digital Experiences and consistently deliver results.

Dataweavers' customers and partners are seen as business enablers. They ensure flawless availability from an end-to-end optimized full-stack, and operate a secure and trusted platform for growth. They increase the velocity of their teams to build iterative, quick results to win the dynamic world customer experience transformation.

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