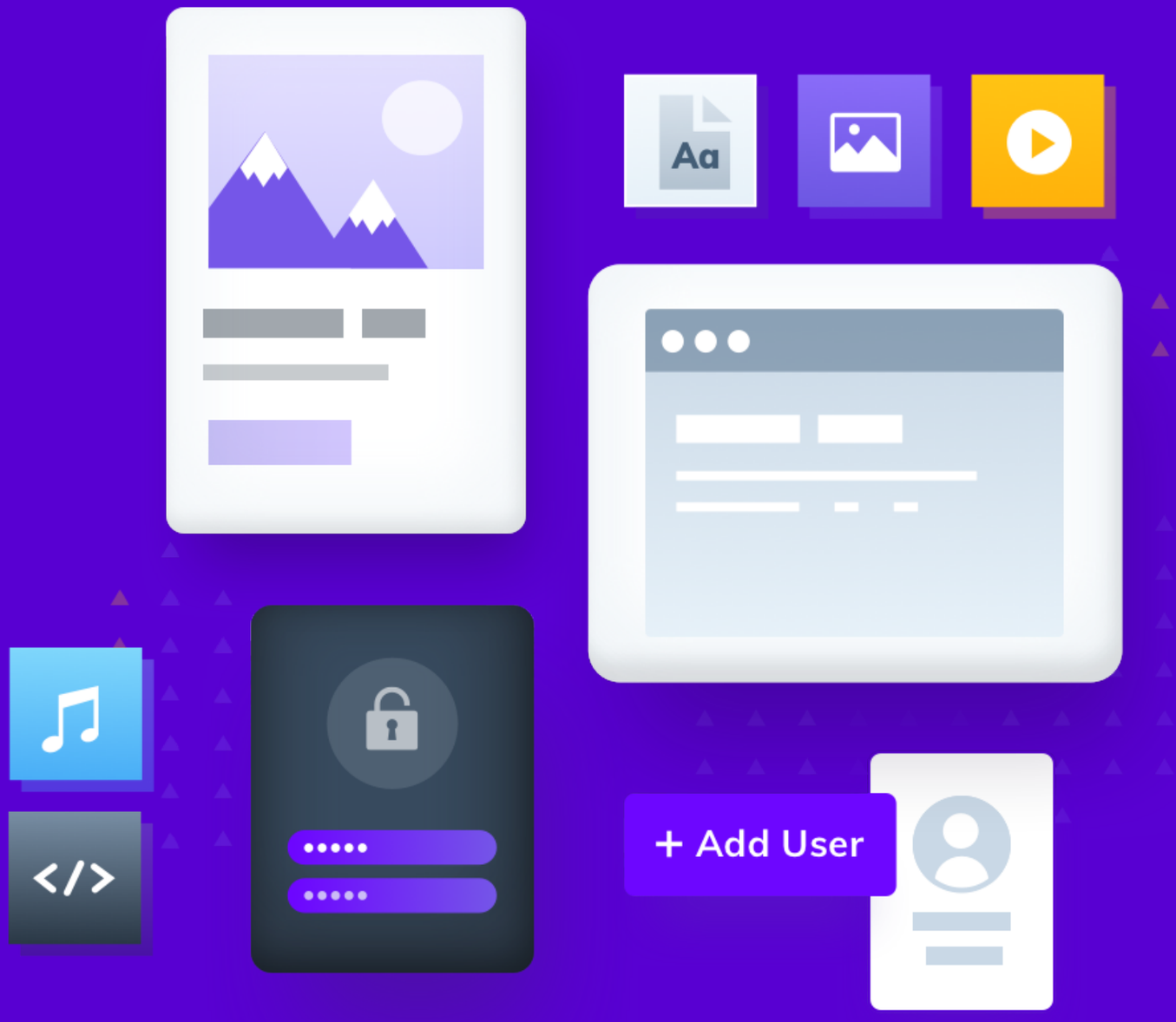

Make Usability Your Top Priority

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Welcome to "Make Usability Your Top Priority In Your Content Platform," the ultimate guide to creating an engaging and user-friendly experience for your audience. In today's fast-paced digital world, content is king, but how it is presented to users can make or break your platform's success.

Happy editors create better content.

This eBook is designed to provide you with the tools, techniques, and insights needed to enhance the usability of your content platform, ensuring that your editors have a great experience as they create engaging digital experiences for your audience.

This eBook will dive deep into various usability aspects, including choosing field types, enforcing validation, managing images, relating, organizing, finding content, embedding instructions, and naming things.

Making usability your top priority will maximize user engagement and satisfaction, setting you up for long-term success with your content platform investment.

A field type refers to the type of data that can be stored in a specific field or form element within a content entry or page.

Some common field types include:

- Text: used for storing text content such as headings, paragraphs, and descriptions
- Rich text: similar to a text field but with additional formatting options such as bold, italic, and hyperlinks
- Image: used for uploading and storing images
- File: used for uploading and storing files such as PDFs or Word documents
- Date/Time: used for setting a date and Time for content to be published or updated

The choice of field type depends on the type of content being managed and the requirements of the website or application.

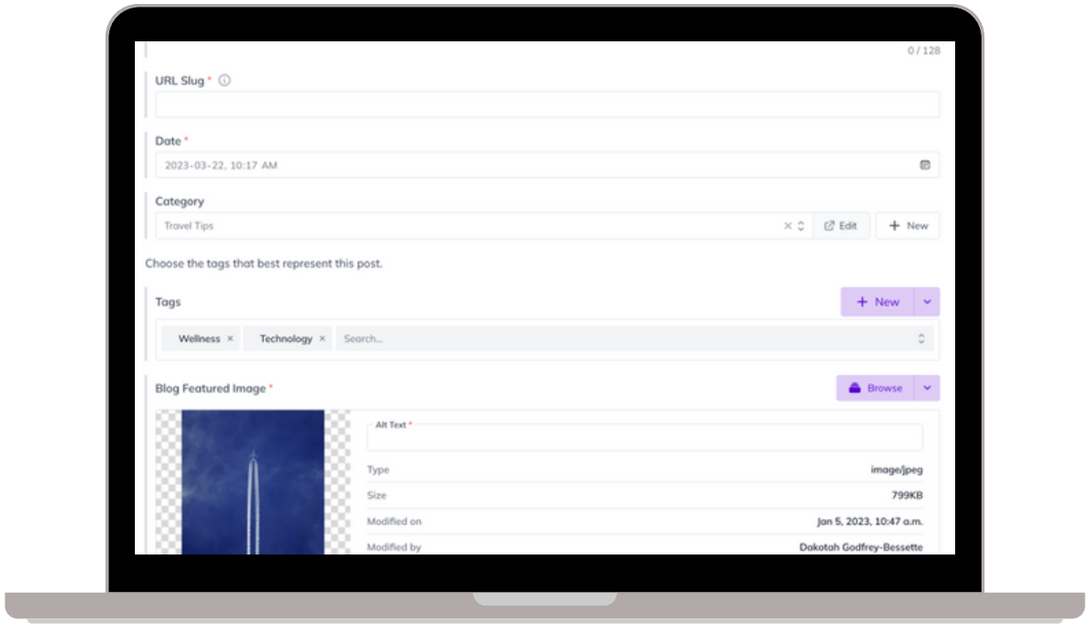
Properly defining field types can help ensure that content is stored and displayed correctly and make it easier for content editors to create and manage content.

How to Optimize Your Fields:

Simplify Your Fields:

Reducing the number of field types can make a content platform easier to understand and use for content creators; having fewer field types can reduce the cognitive load on users, making content creation and editing more efficient.

Simplifying field types can lead to greater consistency in data entry, as users have fewer options. This consistency makes it easier to manage, search, and filter content.



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Agile Tip: Choose the simplest kind of fields possible. For example, instead of having a big HTML blob that you give to your editors, use a text field for a title, a description, or an image field for an attachment that clarifies what you might expect to have in each field.

Reconsider Rich Text:

Rich text fields are a great way to provide your editors with tons of flexibility, but it can also have some drawbacks.

- Rich text works great when your team knows HTML and CSS, but your future team might not have those skills.
- Maintaining a strict design system can be difficult when your editors are responsible for creating complex, rich text fields.
- Rich text might not work well on non-website screens, such as mobile apps, digital signage, or messaging platforms. If you need your content reusable across channels, this should be considered when choosing field types.
- Take a look at the Block Editor field - this gives your editors lots of flexibility but stays within your design system.

Linking

Linking field types can enhance the user experience by providing easy navigation between related content. This can result in a more engaging and intuitive browsing experience for visitors to your site.

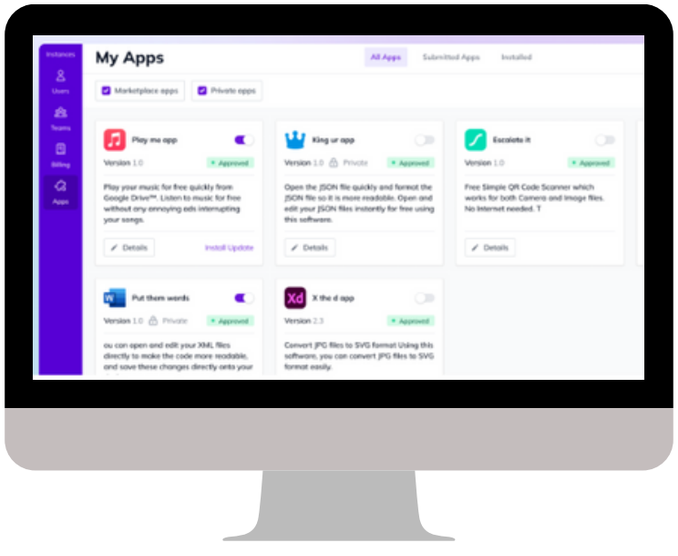
Establishing links between field types helps define contextual relationships between different content pieces, making it easier for content creators and users to understand how different pieces of content are related.

Customize

Custom field types can provide a bespoke editing experience throughout your content platform. They can connect to external systems and enforce specific data formats and structures, making it easier for content editors to maintain a consistent system.

When connecting to external systems, such as commerce or digital asset management platforms, you can provide a richly branded experience to your editors, making it easy to connect your content with external data.

Agile Tip: Find a platform that prioritizes their marketplace. In Agility, we built an App Marketplace that allows users to build their fields as custom as they want and offer them to other Agility users.



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Enforcing validation in content management refers to setting rules or constraints on the input data to ensure that it meets certain criteria or standards. Validation ensures the data is accurate, consistent, and conforms to the desired format or structure.

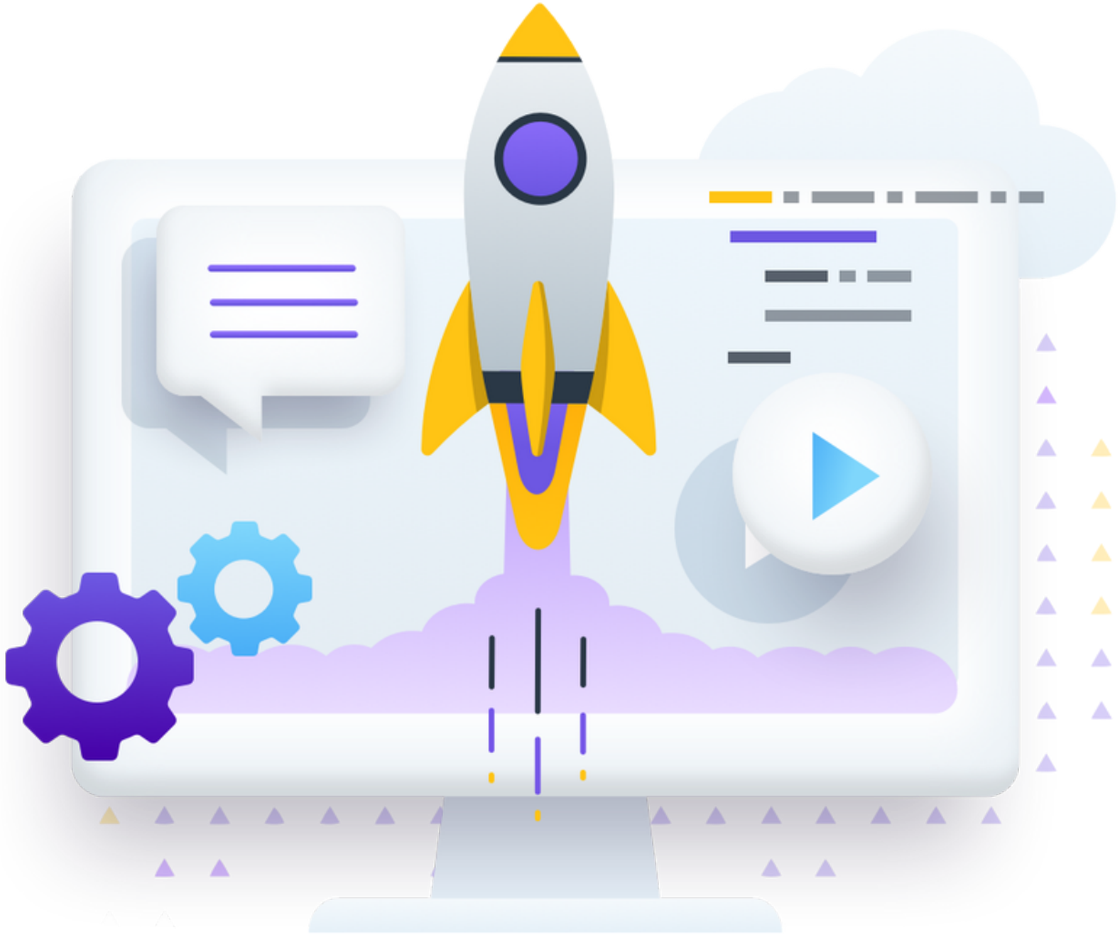
How to Enforce Validation

Establish Required Fields

Required fields help content editors understand which information is crucial for each entry, reducing the likelihood of missing important data. This simplifies the content management process and minimizes the need for manual reviews or follow-up actions to collect missing information.

Complete and consistent content allows users to find the information they need more efficiently, leading to a better overall experience on your site or application. Required fields also help ensure critical details are not overlooked, reducing user frustration or confusion.

Agile Tip: The most crucial validation step is adding required fields and handling blank values. So these go hand in hand. When building your content, you decide what is needed, and you really should understand that from a content perspective rather than from where it's going.



Determine Minimum and maximum length

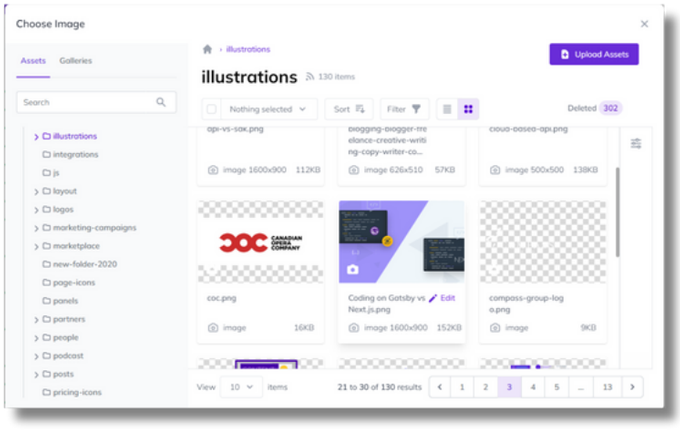
Minimum and maximum length are validation constraints used in content platforms, web forms, and various applications to ensure that user inputs, such as text or numbers, fall within a specified range.

These constraints help maintain content quality, improve user experience, and serve various functional purposes.

Identify the Ideal Image ratios

Image ratios, or aspect ratios, are the proportional relationship between an image's width and height. They are typically represented by two numbers separated by a colon (e.g., 16:9, 4:3, 1:1).

Using images with consistent aspect ratios can contribute to a visually appealing and harmonious layout. This can enhance the user experience by creating a sense of balance and professionalism in your design.



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Linked Content Validation

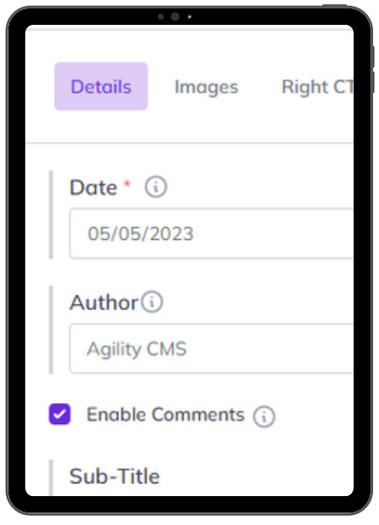
Linked content validation refers to the verification of the integrity, accuracy, and relevance of content elements linked within a website or application. These elements can include hyperlinks, embedded media (such as videos, images, or documents), and references to other content items within the same content platform.

Also, in some industries or cases, websites and applications may be required to adhere to specific content standards or legal regulations. Validating linked content can ensure compliance with these requirements.

Format and Data Type Validation

Format and data type validation are essential aspects of data validation processes in content management systems, web forms, and various applications. They ensure user inputs or content adheres to the expected format and data type, contributing to a website or application's overall quality, consistency, and functionality.

For example, verifying that a date is entered in the correct format (e.g., MM/DD/YYYY).



Use Custom Fields for Complex Validation

Using custom fields for complex validation can be a powerful way to enforce specific requirements, ensure data quality, and create a more tailored user experience.

Custom fields can incorporate advanced validation rules and logic beyond built-in fields' standard validation capabilities.

Managing Images

Ask Your Editors To Upload High-Quality Images

Asking your editors to upload high-quality images is essential for several reasons, including enhancing the visual appeal of your website, improving user experience, and boosting search engine optimization (SEO).

High-quality images with appropriate alt text and other accessibility features can make your website more inclusive for users with disabilities. This can improve compliance with accessibility regulations and enhance your website, app, and usability.

Output Multiple Images from The Same Source

Generating multiple versions of each image that are optimized for different screen sizes, resolutions, and file formats, ensures that users can access and view the images in the best possible quality on any device. It can help create a seamless and integrated customer experience across all channels and touchpoints, including online and offline channels such as websites, social media, email, mobile apps, and physical stores.

This approach can improve user experience, enhance website performance, and conserve bandwidth.

Any content platform offers plugins or built-in features that facilitate responsive image handling. These tools can automatically generate multiple image sizes, optimize images, and include the necessary HTML markup for responsive images.

Agile Tip: Agility leverages WebP to reduce your image response size by up to 30% without reformating your images. You can take any image Asset URL and append the ?format=auto to the image URL, which will instruct our CDN to deliver the image as a WebP format (if your browser supports it).

Relating, Organizing, and Finding Content

Group Types of Content

One of the ways to manage content effectively is by grouping various types of content together, as this helps with relating, organizing, and locating content. Categorizing content enables easier management and retrieval of specific types of content as needed. This can increase engagement, longer site visits, and higher conversion rates.

You can streamline content creation, editing, and updating processes by grouping content types, making it easier for content teams to manage and maintain consistency.

Agile Tip: Create a categorization system, such as categories, tags, or metadata, to help group and classify content types. This can help users and search engines identify and explore related content.

Simplify Managing Common Structures

Managing common structures like forms, content models, and modal screens in a website or application can be simplified using consistent design patterns, reusable components, and leveraging a content platform. This streamlines the development and maintenance process and contributes to a more cohesive and user-friendly experience.

Agile Tip: Don't poison your content. Instead, develop modular and reusable components for frequently used elements like buttons, forms, or content blocks.

Ensure global and content-type-specific searches work

Ensuring global and content-type-specific searches effectively is crucial for providing users with an efficient and satisfying search experience. It lets users quickly find relevant content, enhancing their overall experience on your website or app.

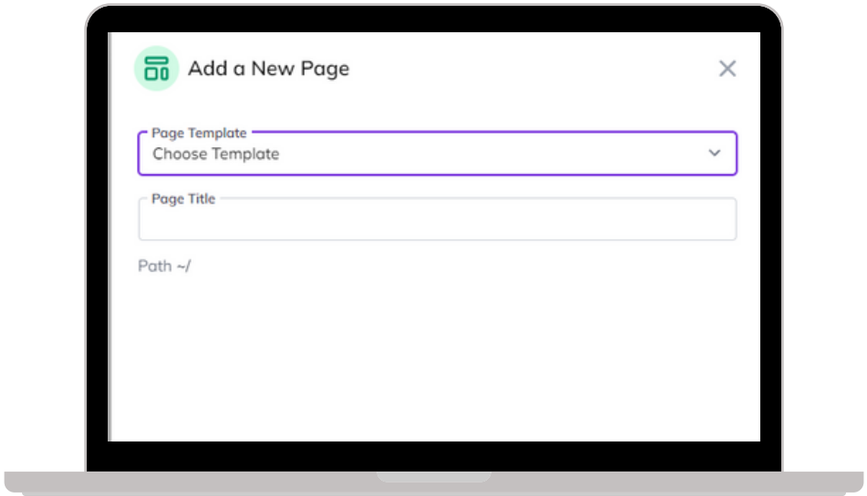
Tag and categorize your content with relevant keywords and metadata to be easily discovered through global and content-type-specific searches.

Agile Tip: Offer users the ability to filter and sort search results based on criteria such as content type, date, popularity, or relevance. This can help users quickly find the information they need and enhance their search experience.

Embed Instructions

Embedding instructions within a content platform can effectively guide content creators and editors, ensuring consistent content entry and usage of various features.

If your content platform allows it, create custom instructional fields displayed alongside or near the fields, they are meant to guide. These fields should be read-only and clearly marked as instructions.



Agile Tip: Develop content templates with embedded instructions, guiding content creators to structure and format their content. This will maintain consistency across your website or application and make it easier for content creators to follow best practices.

Tooltips

Tooltips are small, informative text boxes appearing when users hover their cursor over an element on a website or application, such as a button, icon, or form field.

They provide contextual guidance or additional information without cluttering the interface. Tooltips can enhance the user experience by offering helpful hints, clarifying an element's purpose, or explaining an action's potential consequences.

Agile Tip: Tooltips are more subtle. They can be really useful if you have instructions for that question that you weren't sure is going to be asked, and you don't want it to be too in their face.

Custom sections

Custom sections, also known as content blocks or modular content, are flexible, reusable components that can be used to build and organize content on a website or application.

These sections can accommodate various content types, such as text, images, videos, or other media, allowing content creators to arrange and display content visually appealing and coherently. Custom sections can enhance both the content creation process and the user experience.

Agile Tip: Custom sections can tailor content and layouts for specific user segments or needs, enhancing the user experience.

Naming Things

As your website or application evolves, correctly named custom fields can simplify maintenance tasks. Easily identifiable custom fields make updating, modifying, or deleting fields more straightforward, reducing the risk of errors or inconsistencies.

Correctly named custom fields can also be essential when integrating your content platform with other systems or tools, such as analytics platforms, CRMs, or marketing automation software.

Your Path to Better Usability

In conclusion, implementing effective content management practices and focusing on usability are essential to creating a successful user experience. Customizing field types, enforcing validation, and managing images can enhance the content creation process and ensure consistency across your platform.

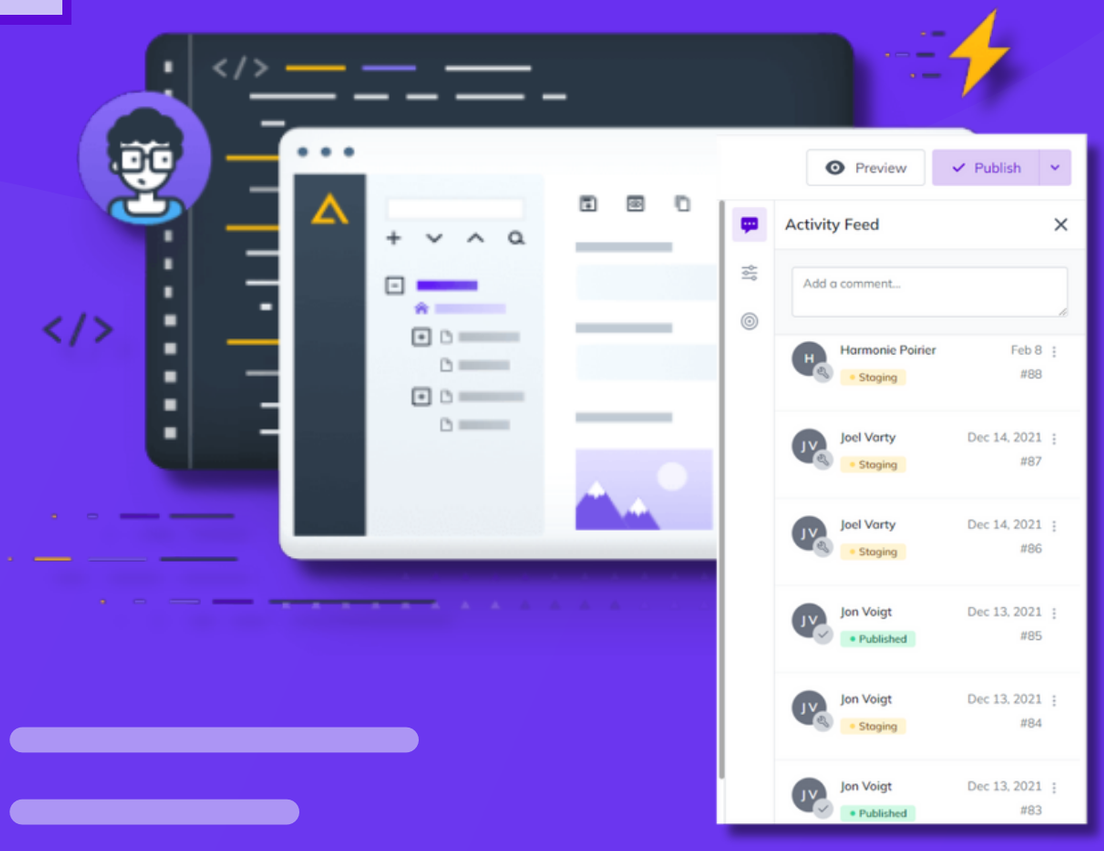
Also, you can provide a more intuitive and enjoyable user experience by efficiently relating, organizing, and finding content.

Custom fields, sections, tooltips, and embedding instructions allow you to tailor a platform to your specific needs, offering greater flexibility and control over your content. In addition, understanding usability and its key factors—efficiency, learnability, memorability, error prevention and recovery, and user satisfaction—enables you to create user-friendly interfaces that cater to your target audience's needs and preferences.

Thank you for joining us on this journey into the world of content architecture. We hope the insights and strategies presented in this whitepaper will serve as a valuable resource for future projects and inspire you to build exceptional digital experiences that captivate your audience and drive results.

Supercharge Your Content Architecture With Agility

Get in Touch >



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