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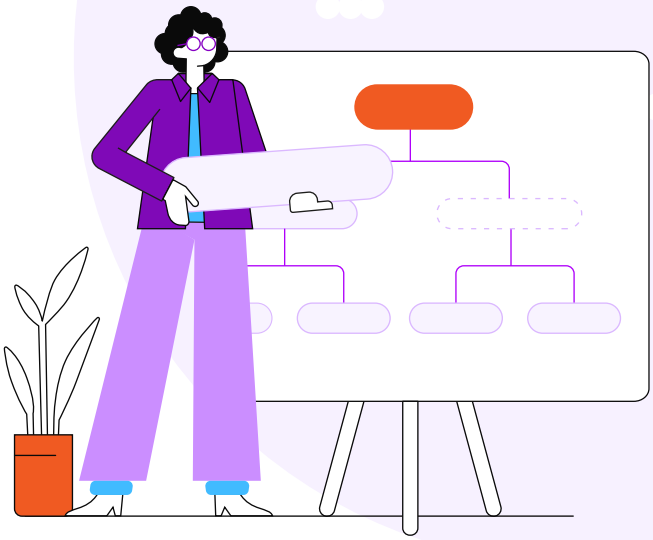

Ebook

Content modeling: The what, the why, and the how.

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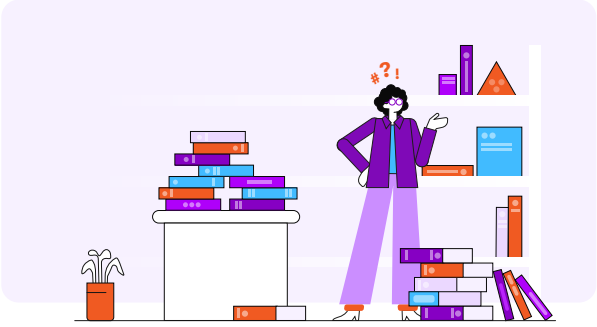
Table of contents.

Navigating the chaos of digital content.

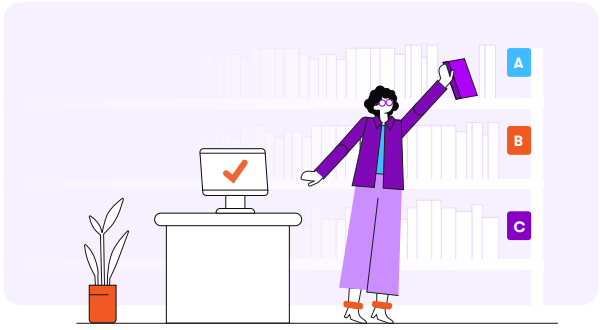
Imagine stepping into a library where books are piled haphazardly on shelves, magazines are mixed in with DVDs, and newspapers are scattered without any discernible order. Finding what you need is a frustrating and time-consuming task. There's no clear system to follow, and every new addition to the collection only adds to the confusion.



In today's digital world, managing content without a proper system can feel just as overwhelming. Websites, applications, and digital platforms are flooded with a vast array of content types—articles, images, videos, user-generated content, and more. Without a structured approach, it becomes a daunting task to keep everything organized, accessible, and relevant. This chaotic state leads to several challenges:

- Inefficiency in content management, leading to wasted time and resources.
- Inconsistency, which confuses the audience and dilutes the brand's message.
- Difficulty in scaling, risking disruptions, complexities, and inefficiencies.
- Poor user experience, leading to frustration and disengagement.
- Challenges in content reuse, slowing down content publishing across channels.
- Compromised governance, risking non-compliance and potential legal issues.

This is where content modeling comes into play. Just as organizing a library by genre, author, and type helps keep everything neat and accessible, content modeling offers a systematic approach to managing digital content. It involves defining how different types of content should be structured, stored, and connected within a digital environment.



With content modeling, each piece of content is placed within a well-defined framework, making it easier to manage, reuse, and scale. It transforms the chaotic landscape into an orderly, efficient system where everything has its place, and finding or adding new content is structured, straightforward, and stress-free.

In this ebook, we will dive deep into the world of content modeling. We'll explore how this approach can help you overcome the common challenges of digital content management, enhance your content strategy, and ultimately, provide a better experience for your users.

Welcome to the journey of transforming your digital content chaos into an organized content powerhouse.

Content modeling, the what.

Content modeling is a method of organizing and structuring digital content in a clear, consistent, and manageable way. It defines the different types of content you'll have (like articles, images, or products), how each type is organized, and how they relate to each other. Think of it as creating a blueprint that ensures all your content fits together smoothly, making it easier to manage, reuse, and scale across various platforms.

Let's break down the key terms you'll encounter as we explore the world of content modeling.

Content hub

A content hub is a centralized platform where all digital content—such as text, images, videos, and documents—is stored, managed, and organized. It serves as a single source of truth for content, enabling efficient creation, updating, and distribution across multiple platforms and channels.

By consolidating content in one place, a content hub ensures consistency, simplifies content management, and enhances the ability to repurpose content for various uses and audiences.

Content types

Content types are like categories for your digital content. These might include product pages, articles, videos, podcasts, testimonials, event pages, etc. Each content type has its own specific format and components. It serves as a starting point for the creation of any piece of content, offering a structure that ensures all the right elements are included in a consistent way.

Just like in our library example, where you have sections for different types of media (books, magazines, etc.), content types help you organize digital content by defining what each piece of content is and what it should include.

Content fields

Each content type is made up of several attributes or fields. These are the detailed parts of the content:

- **Articles:** Have a title, body text, author name, publication date, and tags.
- **Product Pages:** Include a product name, description, price, image, and reviews.
- **Author:** Contain author name, company, photo, bio, and contact information.

Having predefined fields ensures consistency across each type of content.

Fields that are frequently used together (like name, company, and photo from Author, above) can be grouped in a content schema and easily added as a group to various content types (like articles or testimonials they've authored).

Fields and schemas aren't the only possible components of a content type; content types can also include other content types (e.g. an image content type can be used on a Product Page content type).

Content reusability

We've seen that fields help standardize content in different content types, ensuring consistency (all articles look and behave the same). However, they have an even greater power, and that is reusability.

Once a field or schema (depending on how the model is set up) has been populated with content (e.g. Author name, company name, bio), it is then stored in your centralized content hub as an individual piece of content ready to be reused in multiple contexts and across multiple channels.

- Accompanying articles they have written
- Alongside quotes they have provided
- Under videos they are features in
- On event pages where they are speaking
- In emails promoting any of the above.

Content reuse reduces the need to recreate content for different contexts, saving time and effort. It maintains uniformity in how content is presented across various platforms and channels. And it simplifies content management, making it easier to update and maintain content across the system. ensuring consistent and efficient use of the same content across multiple channels.

Content items

If content types are the labels on each drawer of a cabinet (Blog Posts, Product Pages, Events), then content items are the individual files within each drawer (each blog post, product page, or event).

Content items, therefore, are the individual pieces of content created within your content type. They are the actual instances of content that you see on a website or in an application.

For example, the content type would be Blog Post, while the content item would be e.g. “10 tips for gardening”, “The best destinations of 2024”, “How to improve your coding skills”. Each of these titles represents a unique blog post, each adhering to the template defined by the Blog Post content type (e.g., title, author, publication date, body text).

Since all content items of a particular type follow the same template, it ensures consistency across the website. Every blog post will look and behave similarly, making the site more professional and easier to navigate.

Furthermore, content items can be created, edited, or removed without changing the overall content type. For example, adding a new blog post or updating an existing one doesn’t require altering the Blog Post content type (template).

Content relationships

Content relationships define how pieces of content relate to each other, making it easier to find, manage, and display content in meaningful ways.

There are three types of relationship:

One-to-one relationship: Each piece of content is connected to one and only one other piece of content. (In our library analogy, it’s like how each library card is uniquely assigned to a single borrower.)

One-to-many relationship: One piece of content is connected to multiple pieces of content. (One book might fit into multiple genres [Science Fiction, Kids, Adventure] while each genre category contains many books.)

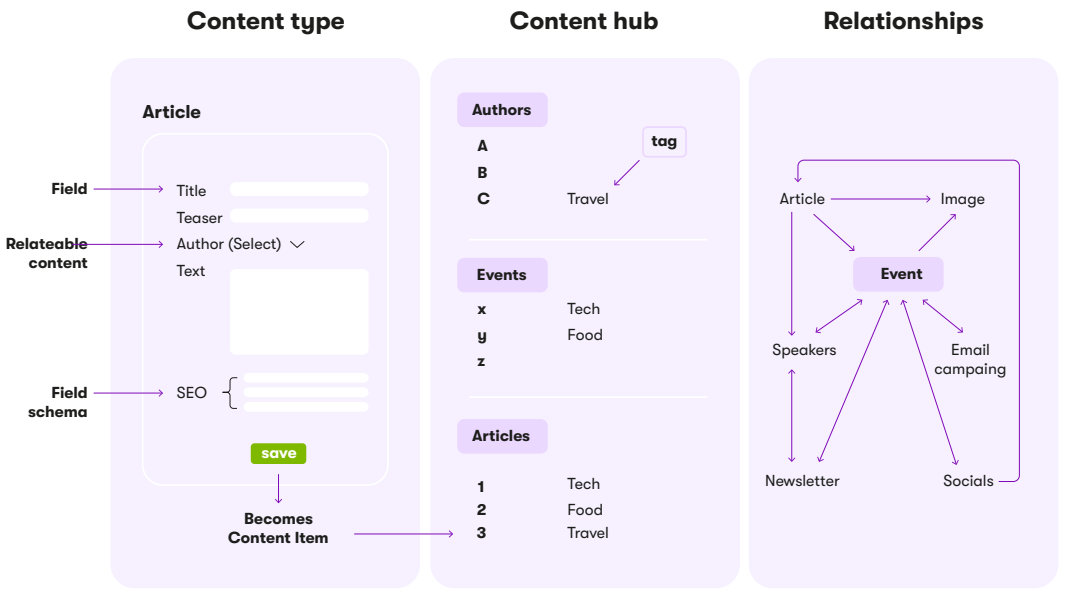
Many-to-many relationship: Multiple pieces of content are linked to multiple other pieces of content. (Multiple books can be written by multiple authors. And several authors can contribute to different chapters of various books.)

Content relationships are the backbone of organized and interconnected digital content. By defining how different pieces of content relate, you create a robust structure that enhances both content management and user experience.

For example:

- An article might link to author profile, related articles, explainer videos.
- An author profile might link to their bio, testimonials, and articles.
- A product page might link to product reviews, videos, and delivery options.

Applying content relationships allows for more efficient content management and better user experience through improved navigation, accessibility, and dynamic contextual content display (dynamically showing related articles, recommended products, etc.)



Taxonomy

Taxonomy in content modeling refers to the classification system used to organize content into categories, tags, or hierarchies. It provides a structured way to label and group content based on shared characteristics.

For example:

- In a blog, posts can be categorized under broad topics like "Travel," "Food," or "Technology."
- In an ecommerce site, a "Shoes" category might link various products together, while tags like "Men's" or "Women's" further refine these connections.
- In a digital library, books can be categorized by subject (Science, Fiction, History) but can break down further (Biology, American Literature, The Cold War).

Content structure

This is the overall layout of how your content is organized. It includes the hierarchy and arrangement of content types and fields, ensuring everything fits together in a logical and consistent way.

Whereas the content model will define the specifics of each content type, detailing attributes and fields, and specifying the relationships between different content types, the content structure defines the overall layout and hierarchy of content, how different types of content are arranged and interrelated on a website or digital platform. It's like a blueprint that outlines where and how content will appear to users.

Content modeling a paradigm shift.

Transitioning to a content model approach represents a significant shift in how organizations create, manage, and deliver content. This transformation fundamentally changes the way content is thought of, structured, and utilized, impacting every aspect of content strategy and operations.

With traditional content management:

- Content is managed in a document-centric manner where each piece of content is treated as a separate entity. This often leads to silos of information and a lack of consistency across different platforms.
- Updating content involves manual processes where changes must be made individually across all instances, leading to inefficiencies and a high risk of errors.
- Content is often stored in various formats and locations, making it challenging to maintain consistency and coherence across channels.
- Content management is typically reactive, with teams responding to issues as they arise, rather than proactively planning and structuring content for future needs.

With a content model approach:

- Content is broken down into structured, reusable components, or pieces of data, that can be managed and presented consistently across various platforms.
- Content updates are streamlined through a centralized system where changes made in one place automatically propagate across all relevant instances, ensuring accuracy and consistency.
- Content is stored and managed in a standardized format, making it easier to maintain and adapt for different uses and channels.
- Content modeling involves careful planning and design, focusing on future-proofing content to be easily adaptable for new platforms, technologies, and audience needs.

Traditional content management	Content model approach
Each piece of content is separate	Content is broken into reusable components
Inconsistencies in structure and message	Standardized for consistency
Updates are manual across all channels	Updates are centralized, applied everywhere
Content management is reactive	Management is proactive and future proof

Top benefits of a content model approach, the why.

Content modeling not only simplifies how you organize content but also makes it more adaptable, scalable, and efficient. It allows businesses to easily update and manage content across different platforms while ensuring a consistent and smooth user experience.

Let's explore how content modeling can improve your operations and enhance your brand's impact.

Optimized content management:

- Simplified processes: Predefined content structures streamline the curation, updating, and management of content.
- Efficient volume handling: Easily manage large volumes of content with structured frameworks.

Improved content reuse:

- Cross-platform utilization: Enables content reuse across different platforms and channels without manual duplication.
- Versatile application: For instance, a product description can be utilized on websites, in marketing emails, and on social media.

Enhanced consistency and quality:

- Uniformity across content: All content adheres to the same structure and standards, promoting consistency.
- Error reduction: Minimizes errors, especially in large organizations with multiple teams producing content.

Streamlined workflow and automation:

- Automated workflows: Implement automated processes, reducing manual intervention.
- Speedy updates: Speeds up tasks like content publishing and updates.

Scalability:

- Efficient scaling: Supports the seamless addition of new content types without disrupting existing frameworks.
- Future expansion: Facilitates growth in content creation and management processes.

Multichannel distribution:

- Create once, distribute anywhere: Supports multi-channel publishing by allowing content to be created once and distributed across various platforms (websites, social media, email) without extra modifications.
- Consistent Messaging: Ensures consistent content presentation across all channels.

Improved customer experience:

- Personalized journeys: Facilitates the delivery of contextually relevant content, creating personalized customer journeys.
- Enhanced navigation: Improves user navigation and accessibility across different marketing channels.

Flexibility and agility:

- Quick adaptation: Simplifies adjusting to changes in strategy or market demands.
- Easy content creation: Allows teams to quickly create or modify content types without overhauling the entire system.

Compliance and governance:

- Regulatory adherence: Clearly defined content types ensure compliance with industry regulations and internal policies.
- Standard maintenance: Maintains adherence to necessary standards across all content.

Better SEO:

- Logical structuring: Ensures content is logically and semantically structured, improving its indexability and understanding by search engines.
- Target audience reach: Boosts the likelihood of content reaching the intended audience.

Enhanced analytics and insights:

- Track performance: Consistent content attributes make it easier to monitor and analyze content performance.
- Actionable insights: Helps derive actionable insights to understand the effectiveness of content strategies.

Future-proofing:

- Prepared for advancements: A well-defined content model prepares systems for future technological advancements.
- Evolving needs: Ensures content systems remain relevant and adaptable to changing user needs and business goals.

Shifting to a content model approach is a transformative change that redefines how content is created, managed, and delivered. It moves away from traditional, document-centric methods to a more dynamic, structured, and strategic way of handling content.

This paradigm shift offers substantial benefits, from operational efficiency and consistency to enhanced user experiences and strategic advantages. Embracing content modeling empowers organizations to navigate the complexities of modern content management and position themselves for success in an increasingly digital and multi-channel world.

The benefits of content modeling

Centralized management	**Personalized journeys**
Simplified processes	**Flexibility**
Larger volumes	**Agility**
Better consistency	**Regulatory adherence**
Cross-platform reuse	**Better SEO**
Enhanced navigation	**Efficient scaling**
Actionable insights	**Future proof**

The best technology for content modeling.

A hybrid headless DXP like Xperience by Kentico combines traditional CMS features with the flexibility of a headless CMS. It allows for both headless operations (content delivered via APIs to various channels) and traditional, coupled approaches (where content is managed and rendered within the CMS itself).

Content modeling used in conjunction with a hybrid headless CMS allows organizations to manage all their content centrally while providing the flexibility to choose how and where it gets delivered. This makes it easier to maintain consistency and quality across diverse channels.

If the content model has been designed to support both API-based delivery and traditional templating systems, hybrid platforms can facilitate easy reuse and adaptation of content across different contexts and delivery methods. Whether content is pushed through APIs or rendered directly by the CMS, a robust content model ensures it is structured and ready for both scenarios.

Key benefits of content modeling in a hybrid headless DXP include:

- **Flexibility:** Hybrid headless solutions allow for adaptable content delivery, whether through traditional web or headless channels, accommodating a variety of formats and platforms.

- **Scalability:** Content models designed for hybrid CMSs are inherently scalable, capable of growing and adapting as new channels or devices are added.

- **Efficiency:** Centralizing content creation and management while enabling flexible delivery reduces the need for duplicated content efforts and streamlines workflows.

- **Consistent user experience:** Regardless of the delivery channel, well-modeled content ensures a consistent and coherent user experience, aligning with the brand's voice and messaging.

10 steps to building a successful content model, the how.

Building a content model is a strategic and methodical process that involves understanding the types of content your organization uses, defining how that content is structured, and determining the relationships between different types of content.

It is a comprehensive process that requires careful planning and collaboration. By following these steps, you can create a robust framework that supports efficient content management, enhances user experience, and aligns with your organization's strategic goals.

Step 1: Understand your goals and audience

- Define what you want to achieve with your content and who will be using it.
- Plan where your content will be used across various platforms and devices (e.g., websites, mobile apps, email, social media).
- Determine the primary goals of your content, such as informing users, driving sales, or engaging readers.
- Understand the needs, preferences, and behaviors of your target audience. This will help in creating relevant and engaging content.

Step 2: Inventory your content

- Gather and categorize all existing content to understand what you have and identify gaps.
- List all the content types you currently have, such as articles, products, videos, and images.
- Group similar content together and note the different fields or attributes each type has (e.g., a product page might have fields for name, price, and description).

Step 3: Define your content types

- Establish the main categories of content that you will manage.
- Identify the key content types your project will need, such as blog posts, events, products, or user profiles.
- Write a brief description of each content type, explaining its purpose and how it fits into your overall content strategy (remember to consider all your channels).

Step 4: Identify content fields

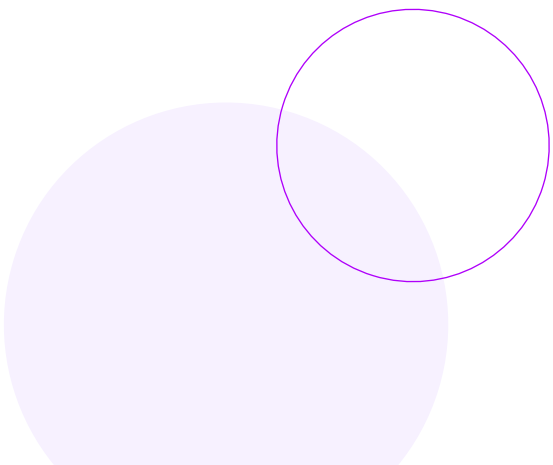
- Determine the specific pieces of information (fields) each content type will contain.
- For each content type, identify the fields that describe it (e.g., a blog post might include title, author, publication date, body text, and tags).
- Decide on the type of data for each field (text, number, date, image, etc.) and any specific requirements (e.g., mandatory, optional, unique).
- Ensure your content is flexible and adaptable to meet the demands of each channel.

Step 5: Map out content relationships

- Establish how different content types are connected or related to each other.
- Determine how content types link to each other (e.g., products to categories, authors to articles).
- Specify the nature of these connections, such as one-to-many (one author can have many articles) or many-to-many (products can belong to multiple categories).

Step 6: Create content templates

- Develop standardized templates for creating and displaying content.
- Create templates for each content type that outline how fields are arranged and presented. For example, a product page template might include sections for images, descriptions, and reviews.
- Ensure that each template clearly shows where each field will appear, aiding in both content creation and display.



Step 7: Implement your content model

- Select a system that supports content modeling, like Xperience by Kentico.
- Build your content model into your chosen DXP or CMS platform.
- Using your CMS, create the content types and fields as defined in your model.
- Implement the relationships between content types within your CMS, ensuring they are configured as planned.

Step 8: Test and refine

- Ensure your content model works as expected and make adjustments as necessary.
- Populate your system with sample content to see how well your model works in practice.
- Check for any issues with navigation, relationships, or content presentation and refine your model based on this feedback.

Step 9: Document your model

- Provide clear documentation that outlines your content model for future reference and training.
- Document each content type, its fields, and relationships, including any rules or guidelines for use.
- Develop instructions on how to create, manage, and update content using your model, helping team members understand and follow the model consistently.

Step 10: Maintain and evolve your model

- Keep your content model up to date and aligned with your evolving needs.
- Periodically review your content model to ensure it continues to meet your goals and address any new requirements.
- Update your model as your content strategy evolves, adding new content types or fields as needed and removing obsolete ones.

Building a content model involves a systematic approach to defining, organizing, and managing content. These steps will help you create a robust content model that simplifies content management, enhances consistency, and improves the overall user experience.

Tips and best practices for a content model that works.

1. Involve stakeholders early to ensure that your content model meets the needs of all users and reduces the risk of rework later. Align the content model with business objectives and strategies. Consider how each content type and its fields support overall goals like customer engagement, brand consistency, or operational efficiency.

2. Begin with a simplified version of your content model and test it with actual content. Use this as a prototype to gather feedback and make improvements. Gradually expand and refine your model. This iterative approach helps manage complexity and ensures that changes are informed by real-world usage and feedback.

3. Design content types and fields with reusability in mind. Create modular content that can be repurposed across different parts of your site or across channels to save time and ensure consistency. Use clear and consistent naming conventions for content types, fields, and relationships to avoid confusion and make it easier to manage and reference content elements.

4. Keep your content model flexible enough to accommodate future changes and expansions. Avoid overly rigid structures that might limit your ability to add new content types or fields as your needs evolve. Consider how your content model will handle growth, such as an increase in the volume of content or the addition of new content types, to ensure it remains efficient and manageable.

5. Avoid unnecessary fields that don't add value and focus on those that enhance the user experience. Fragments lose intended context and meaning and you'll end up managing numerous tiny pieces, which complicates workflows. Small pieces may not stand alone or be easily reusable and updating and managing many small pieces is labor-intensive.

6. Always keep the end-user experience in mind. Your content model should facilitate a seamless and intuitive experience for customers, making it easy for them to find, navigate, and interact with content. Ensure that the fields you define in your content model promote high-quality, meaningful content.

7. Implement automated workflows where possible to streamline content creation, updates, and publishing. This can reduce manual effort and minimize the risk of errors. Use CDNs to efficiently deliver content to users around the globe, improving load times and user experience.

8. Provide regular training for your team to ensure they understand and can effectively use the content model. Keep them informed about any updates or changes. Maintain up-to-date and detailed documentation for your content model. This should include guides on how to create and manage content, the purpose of each content type, and the relationships between them.

9. Track the performance of your content using analytics tools. Monitor metrics such as engagement, conversion rates, and user feedback to understand how well your content model is supporting your goals. Use insights from performance data to continuously improve your content model. Adjust and refine your content types, fields, and relationships based on what works best in practice.

10. Ensure your content model supports compliance with relevant regulations (e.g., GDPR for data protection, ADA for accessibility). This includes considering how content is stored, managed, and presented. Design your content model to support accessibility standards (e.g., WCAG), making content usable for all users, including those with disabilities.

Involve stakeholders early	**Align model with business goals**	**Start small, expand and refine**	**Avoid unnecessary fields**
Keep naming consistent	**Stay flexible, consider future**	**Put user experience first**	**Keep reusability in mind**
Provide training	**Track performance**	**Ensure compliance**	**Use automated workflows**

Your next steps on your content modeling journey.

Throughout this ebook, we've explored the fundamentals and advantages of content modeling, delving into essential terminology, how it works, and step-by-step guidance on creating effective content models. We've also shared valuable tips to ensure your content models are successful and adaptable to your needs.

Now that you have a solid understanding of content modeling, it's time to see how these principles can transform your content strategy.

To experience these benefits firsthand, we invite you to arrange a demo with one of our experts. Discover how **Xperience by Kentico**, our hybrid headless DXP, integrates content modeling at its core to empower your digital initiatives and streamline content delivery.

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H.Q
Kentico software s.r.o.
Nové sady 996/25
602 00 Brno
Czech Republic

CZ
Kentico software s.r.o.
FLEKSI BETA
Beta Building
Vyskocilova 1481/4
140 00 Praha 4-Michle

US
Kentico Software, LLC
15 Constitution Drive,
Suite 2C
Bedford, NH 03110
United States

UK
Kentico Software Ltd
One London Square
Cross Lanes
Guildford, Surrey,
GU1 1UN
United Kingdom

APAC
Kentico Software Pty Ltd.
83 Mount St, Level 4
North Sydney, NSW 2060
Australia

Germany
Kentico Software GmbH
c/o Schnorbus Helmhold
Wardemann PartGmbB
Kanalstraße 2
41460 Neuss

kentico.com