

7 essential elements

of a good web application development platform

A good development platform will drastically reduce development time and deliver applications that easily integrate with other systems and software. How can you identify a good development platform before you buy? To help you, here are 7 essential elements of a good development platform:

1. Open architecture



Some development tools/platforms generate applications on proprietary architecture, while others use open architecture. What's the difference? Proprietary applications tie your company to one vendor. All consulting and customization must go through that vendor, which means they can charge exorbitant fees. Even worse, if that vendor ever goes under or just stops supporting their product, you're stuck with unmaintainable software. On the other hand, applications built on open architecture give you more freedom, and don't tie your company's success to another company.

2. Web-based interface



Web-based software frees you from the limitations and hassles of installed software. For instance, web-based software is accessible from any web-connected device, it automatically works across all platforms and operating systems, and is easily maintained (since it's only installed in one location).

3. Mobile capabilities



With the rising use of tablets and smartphones, any modern web application development platform will let you create mobile/tablet web apps. Ideally, look for a development platform that automatically generates tablet and smartphone versions of every web application it creates.

4. Use of custom code



Do you have old COBOL code that's crucial to your company's operation? Are you an expert in another programming language? Whatever the reason, a good web development platform will let you incorporate custom code into your applications, and program in the language(s) you already know.

5. Broad database support



Some development platforms only support one database, which can limit your future options. What happens if you add (or switch to) a new database down the road? To avoid future problems, look for a development platform that supports a wide variety of databases.

6. Point-and-click interface



Some development tools and platforms make you learn a proprietary language or syntax. As a result, they have a longer learning curve, limited usability, and force you to rely on the vendor for consulting projects. Look for a development platform with a point-and-click interface and a short learning curve.

7. Constant enhancements



A good development platform will never be old or out of date. It should be well maintained by the vendor, receiving a steady stream of enhancements to keep up with ever-changing technology trends. Before purchasing a development platform, ask to see a list of recent enhancements and updates.