



A **portal** is a web-based platform that collects information from different sources into a single user interface and presents users with information in their context. Over time, simple web portals have evolved into portal platforms that support digital customer experience initiatives.

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## Web Portals Are About Personalized Access

The problem portals tried to solve in the early days of the internet was content discovery. In the face of the vast amount of information available online, it was difficult for the average user to discover information through a human-curated content hub, known as a portal. Portals could display information in a way that was relevant to the user's needs.

The three distinguishing strengths of portals — integration, consistency and personalization — are essential components of an increasingly important part of business today: digital customer experience.

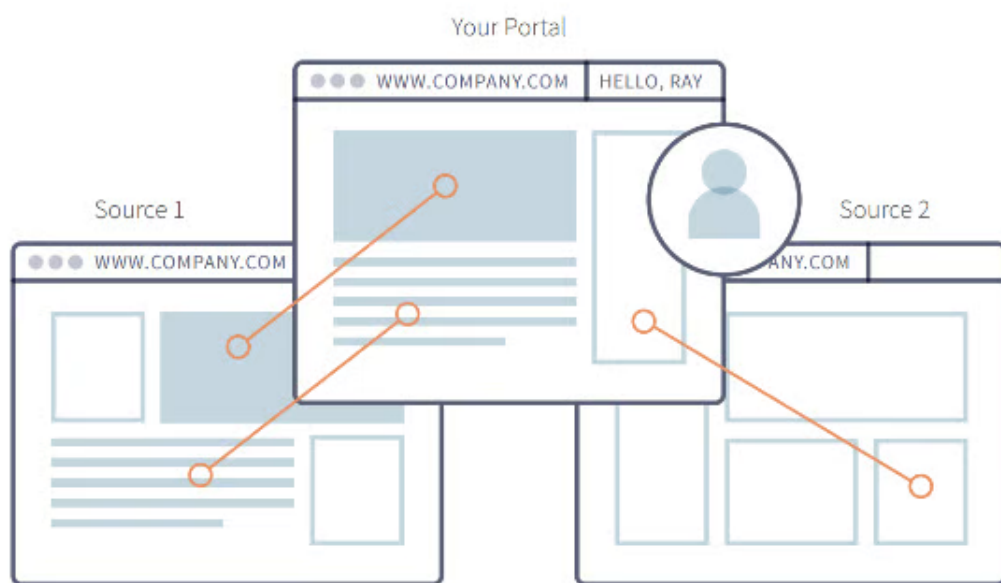
## From Web Portals to Portal Platforms

Today, the average user can address the problem of content discovery with search engines, which have become more adept at information sharing capabilities offered by social media, means that human-curated lists of information are not a necessary strength. The three distinguishing strengths of portals — integration, consistency and personalization — are essential components of an increasingly important part of business today: [digital customer experience](#).

These three strengths support digital customer experience in the following ways:

1. **Integration** capabilities allow organizations to unite systems and customer data on the back end.
2. An emphasis on **consistency** across digital touchpoints gives these united systems a shared look and feel on the front end.
3. **Personalization** through a combination of biographical data (who they are) and behavioral data (what they did on the site) contextualize experiences, usually facilitated by a login process.

Modern portal platforms can play an important role in customer engagement, especially when they have been extended with content management systems or marketing automation. In order to realize the competitive advantages of portal platforms, companies must leverage their strengths in today's multi-touchpoint context of digital customer experience.



DXPs have a strong story around integration and provide the focus on personalization necessary to deliver consistent, connected experiences in the user's context.

There are other flavors of digital experience platforms, including those that have grown out of commerce servers and web content management systems. If you choose not to use a portal-heritage DXP, you will likely need to incorporate portal technology into your strategy in order to meet your customers' needs across experiences across different touchpoints.

## When to Use a Portal Platform

Aside from broad digital transformation applications, portal platforms are still uniquely useful for several business scenarios, including:

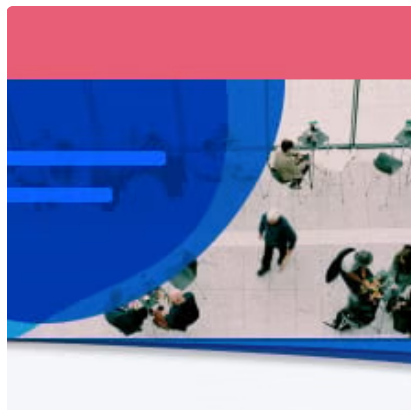
- Customer self service. Portals are well-suited to gathering information relevant to customers in the post-purchase phase, increasing customer loyalty while decreasing the burden to customer service call centers.
- Business agility. Portal platforms that support mobile experiences and use modular architecture are now well-equipped to support a wide range of use cases while still carrying the user authentication and integrated back-end data necessary to connect experiences.

[According to Gartner](#), "organizations have typically looked toward these software categories — horizontal portal platforms or content management systems — as the foundations for their websites." Modern portals continue to be useful platforms for organizations that rely on extensive integration with other systems and digital business strategies.

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