



Ultimate Guide

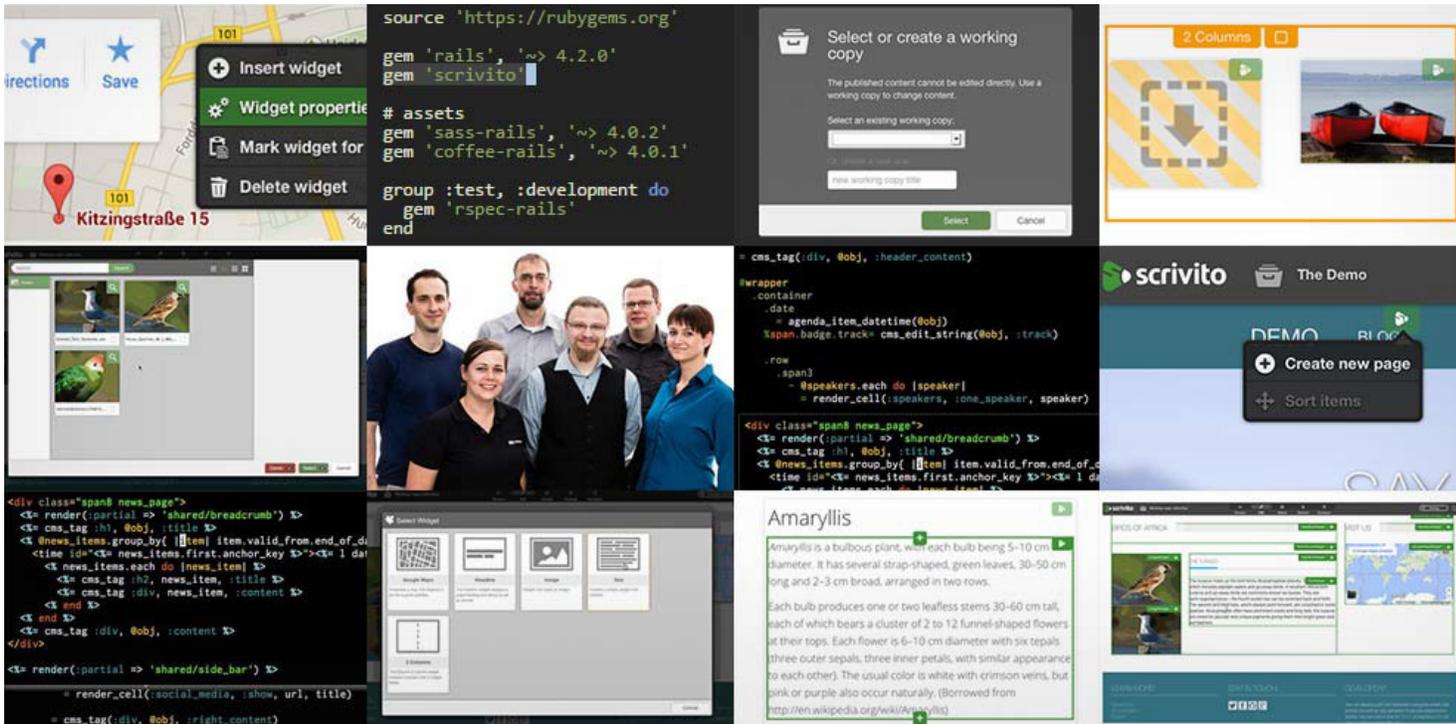
to Choosing a Cloud-Based CMS for Your Business

scrivito.com

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TECHNOLOGY PARTNER



This document serves as a one-stop destination for all the pointers business owners and developers need, in order to take the best technical and financial decisions regarding content management solutions.

Ever since cloud computing pierced through into mainstream, the fundamentals of how we conduct business in IT, Digital and all MarComm industry branches have transformed and keep evolving from one quarter to the next. Content Marketing has taken off spectacularly and Digital Marketing has surpassed, in terms of ROI, most traditional marketing and advertising initiatives.

In this brave new era, web design and development will stay tied to the evolution of content management systems (CMS), so choosing the best long-term content management solution has become an extraordinarily pressing matter, now more than ever.

A great decision today will make the difference between failure and success later down the line, since your digital projects will have to adapt to a plethora of emerging innovations. In order to help you take this decision, we have compiled a list of questions you need to address and the answers you should expect before choosing your new cloud based CMS.

Organizational Requirements



Scalability

How scalable, and scalable how?

Start by analyzing the various means by which you can make your website (or app) scalable. From different cache systems, to services that allow video streaming without resource allocation problems, system architectures need to be designed to meet a wide range of possible functionality evolutions.

Most importantly, devise a scalable strategy for content management. This strategy will allow you to truly assess what web CMS best fits your needs, in terms of scalability. Leave no aspect unaddressed: publishing frequency, number of (future) users and visitors, accessibility, capacity, ease of use, number of documents, file types, geographical footprint, number of applications encompassed, functionality!

Number of editors

How many content contributors need to use the system?

Not only must a cloud based CMS be able to accommodate as many editors as you need, but it should also allow for the assignment of different access levels – from administrative to various editor roles. Moreover, a powerful CMS must allow you to define the particular relationships between these roles as easy as possible. As the business grows and projects unwind, you will need to keep track of every editor's contribution, in order to assess performance and optimize the deployment of current content assets.

Organizational Requirements

Multiple working copies

Will the editors' updates require concurrency control?

Concurrency control is required in order to coordinate simultaneous access to the database. Basically, a CMS must function like a multiuser database management system. A great CMS prevents the updates made by one user from interfering with retrieval requests and updates performed by other users.

Pay as you go

Is your company able to start small and keep growing?

Instead of holding on to the physical servers and constantly tweaking and upgrading them to better serve your evolving computing requirements, you outsource everything to the cloud provider. This way, rather than having to continuously invest time, human and financial resources into perfecting your on-premises infrastructure, you just swipe your card and you're good to go.

Undoubtedly, a true cloud based CMS will save you time and money. First of all, capital expenditure costs (capex) will be shifted to operational expenditure (opex) costs, without any financial long-term commitments. Furthermore, fixed payments at set intervals will allow you to easily factor in costs and focus on planning development and perfecting business logic. Since you are entrusting part of your infrastructure to an outside party, reliable assistance from the cloud CMS provider should be a major focus point when choosing a cloud based CMS for your business.

Availability

Can editors access the CMS anytime, from any location, by any device?

With the globalization of the workforce and the proliferation of recent IT trends – such as BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) and Telecommuting – a CMS that facilitates round-the-clock multi-device remote access has swiftly turned from a competitive edge to a full-on necessity. The most easiest way is to access the CMS with any web browser and no plug-ins or no applets required from anywhere in the world.

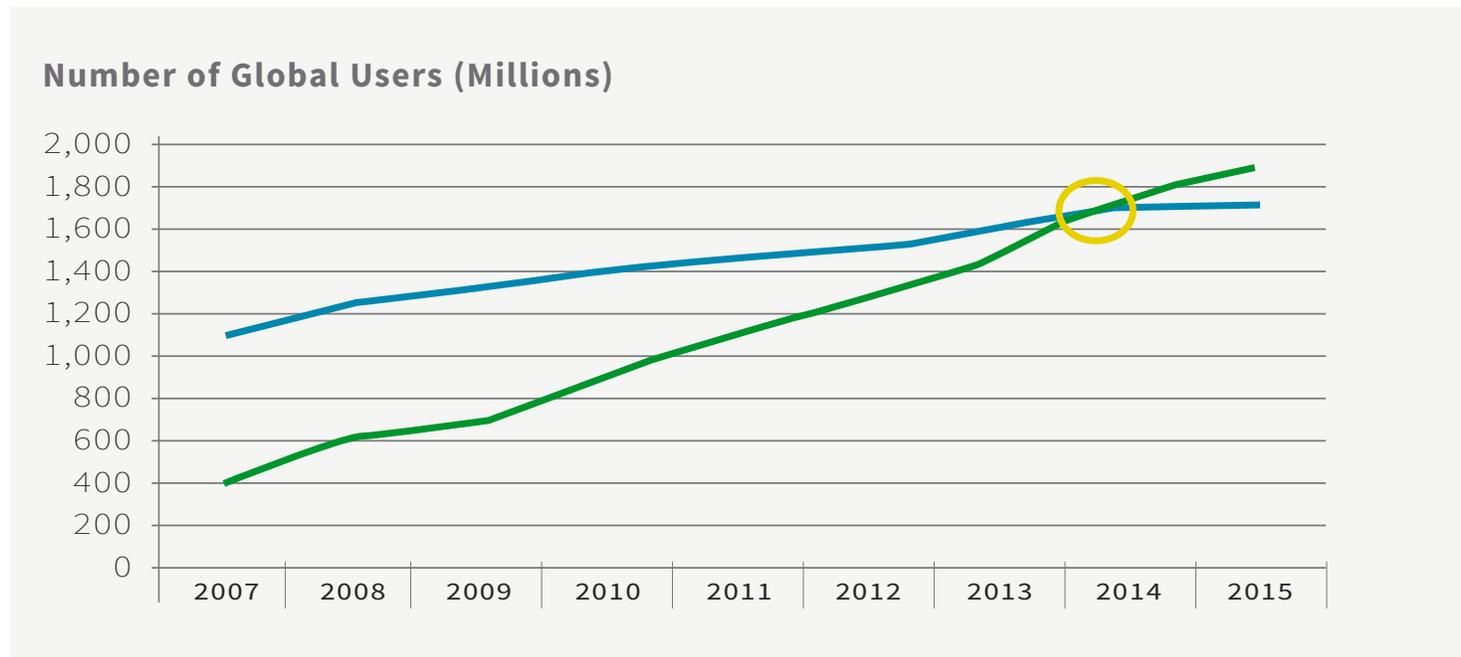
Website Requirements

Responsive design

Does the website need a design for mobile use, too?

Frameworks such as Bootstrap efficiently scale websites and applications with a single code base, from smartphones to tablets to desktops. Since Google’s “mobile-friendly” algorithm update (April 2015), responsive design has become an essential requirement, in order to optimize websites for mobile searches. Make sure that the web CMS you choose for your business includes responsive design solutions. That also includes features like adapting images on the fly to match the right size for the device in order to save bandwidth and speed up the loading of the page.

If you believe that your only concern should be ranking high in desktop searches, please glance over the data showcased below.



Source: Morgan Stanley Research

— Desktop — Mobile

Website Requirements

Easy to use

To what extent should the existing site support alteration?

A great CMS should offer total templating freedom to editors. The CMS you choose must support any type of alteration made to its front-end components. Modular component-based approaches to web design have already proven far superior to page-oriented templating concepts, so, in order to increase adaptability and make the editors' lives much easier, choose a CMS that facilitates in-place WYSIWYG editing and modular, widget-based front-end components.

Furthermore, if you are considering to switch to a new CMS, but do not want to lose any of the content you have accumulated so far, don't hesitate to contact your new web CMS provider and ask for support in the migration phase. Most importantly, ask yourself what opportunities and benefits you should expect from the switch and what challenges – either technical or business related – you expect to overcome with the new CMS.

Web services

Can the web CMS be integrated with other applications?

Incompatibility is a major concern in development projects. Check if the web CMS of your choice is compatible with major web development frameworks and that all the web services you need to integrate with your CMS are supported. Your expected results must not be delayed by any compatibility issues, no matter how obscure the application you want to integrate. Also, the CMS itself should provide all functions as lightweight web services such as a well-documented RESTful API to be easily integrated in your web applications.

Multi-site capability

Is the number of websites limited?

Long gone are the times when having one website was more than enough for any and all businesses. When you'll find yourself in the situation of rolling out a new website, your cloud CMS should better be ready to accommodate it, regardless of the number of existing websites, country pages, languages, micro sites, event pages, intranets, extranets, campaign pages, landing pages, etc.

Internationalization

Is the website ready for localization?

Your web CMS should facilitate the creation and management of sites supporting multiple languages. Most importantly, your website should load instantly, regardless of the user's location. A powerful web CMS uses content delivery networks (CDNs) and delivers pages with something close to lightning speed, anywhere on the planet.

User experience

Does the CMS support personalization?

Some web designers fear that, when giving users the power to tweak the layout designs, inexperienced editors will wreak havoc with the website, by tampering with its responsive capability, its search engine optimizations and so on. A modular approach to web design bypasses all such issues, since the WYSIWYG editor interface of the web CMS should allow editors to modify the appearance of the website, whilst ensuring responsiveness and SEO consistency across all types of devices.

Digital marketing

Can online marketing tools be integrated with the CMS?

All digital endeavors rely on gathering data to perform optimizations and sustain an ascendant business logic. From the indispensable Google Analytics to effective Conversion Rate Optimization tools, compatibility with the marketing tools of your choice is capital when choosing a web CMS.

Website Requirements

Media asset management

How reliable is your browsing and editing of rich content?

CMS users are often confronted with the problem of having to dig up media assets, such as videos, slides and images, from the CMS, in order to reuse or edit them. For this reason, a web CMS must allow users to easily upload, categorize, access, and edit all types of content. A full text search and predefined categorizations also help the editors to save time when looking for a media asset.

A frequent problem that arises from a disorganized asset library is the occurrence of duplicates. It doesn't sound like a huge problem, but envision a scenario in which the user needs to edit an image that is duplicated several times across the websites. A decent web CMS should allow them to perform that change only once, and have the revised version appear on multiple pages.

Last but not least, not all users are photoshop-savvy, which means the CMS should support image manipulations like cropping, color adjustment, filters and text captions within the browser.



Staff Requirements

External and internal editors

Who are the content contributors?

One of the huge benefits of using a cloud based CMS should be the fact that the same security protocols are deployed regardless of the user's location. Whether the CMS is accessed by an employee working from the office, or by a courageous contributor writing from Mount Everest's base camp, all you should be concerned about is that the roles and access levels of the contributors have been previously assigned in the CMS.

WYSIWYG

How much staff training time and expense can be afforded?

Offering an intuitive, straight-forward editing experience to the cloud CMS users is going to increase productivity and positively impact the bottom line, not only because of the pleasing – thus motivational – user experience, but also thanks to the inherent simplicity of in-place editing. Less steps are required to complete tasks and, additionally, your CMS users will not have to spend time learning any dashboard or “back office” particularities. Moreover, opting for a modular, WYSIWYG editing interface will significantly reduce staff training requirements and expenses.

Easy to learn

Does the existing staff have the expertise and the time available to implement and maintain the solution?

A great cloud based CMS should offer a user experience so intuitive that almost every single modification needed can be operated by the editors, without the interference of programmers. However, as a general tip, it would be advised to hire content contributors that have the expertise needed to keep content formatting in check and in accordance with basic search engine optimization practices. Maintaining a cloud CMS should be sweat-free, but, by pulling a lot of functionality out of it, you need to get your team on board and keep coherence throughout editorial calendars. A great CMS should also help you with that. A rule of thumb is: If an editor needs a training course in order to use the CMS, it is too complicated.

Support

How much support is provided by the CMS vendor to help the existing staff?

You are running a business online. Your websites should be running smoothly 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. One of the obvious benefits you should expect from a cloud based CMS provider is that it offers qualified technical support by a dedicated support team - and of course a well written, comprehensible up-to-date documentation..



Tech Requirements

Software as a service

Is the CMS available on demand without time lag?

Aside from offering instant visitor access to the website all around the world, by using multiple data centers, a cloud CMS should also offer instantaneous response to the editors. Having seconds of lag between operations would basically defeat the purpose of having a WYSIWIG interface.

Content delivery network

Will the solution service multiple edge-locations?

A content delivery network (CDN) is a system of distributed servers. A CDN delivers assets of web pages like images, videos and PDF files to users based on their geographic location. By making use of this large distributed system of dozens of servers deployed in multiple data centers around the world, you can serve content to end-users with high availability and high performance.

Web objects (graphics and scripts), downloadable objects (media files, software and documents), applications (e-commerce, portals), on-demand streaming media, and social network... literally everything can be served nearly instantaneously through a CDN. When end users request a cloud CMS object using a web address, they should be automatically routed to the nearest edge location for the highest available performance. The cloud based CMS of your choice should most certainly make use of a powerful content delivery network without any configuration hassle for you.

Search

Is a full text and structured search engine available out of the box, with no installation and maintenance efforts?

Having a cloud based CMS without fully functional search capabilities is like sailing across the Atlantic without a GPS. Sure, you have the stars (the menu) to guide you through your journey, but you might hit land in Dakar (Senegal), instead of Ireland. Needless to say, having a full text and structured search engine available out of the box is crucial when choosing a cloud based CMS. Your website visitors must be able to find precisely what they need, when they need it, or they will look for it elsewhere. S queries can also be used to create user-friendly dynamic navigations ("The latest 10 articles regarding sailing").

Ruby on Rails

Can the website be developed on a non-proprietary and open framework?

Open frameworks such as Ruby on Rails have been gaining momentum and popularity in the web development community, and for good reason. Ruby is designed for programmer productivity and fun, following the principles of good user interface design. Having the possibility to develop websites on a non-proprietary and open framework is a huge asset and a real deal-closer when choosing a cloud based CMS.

Lightweight platform

What system requirements for the editor does the solution need in order to function properly?

Practically, a cloud based CMS should function and be fully accessible through any web browser. No plugins or add-ons should be required. If your system can support web browsing, you should be good to go.

Open for integration

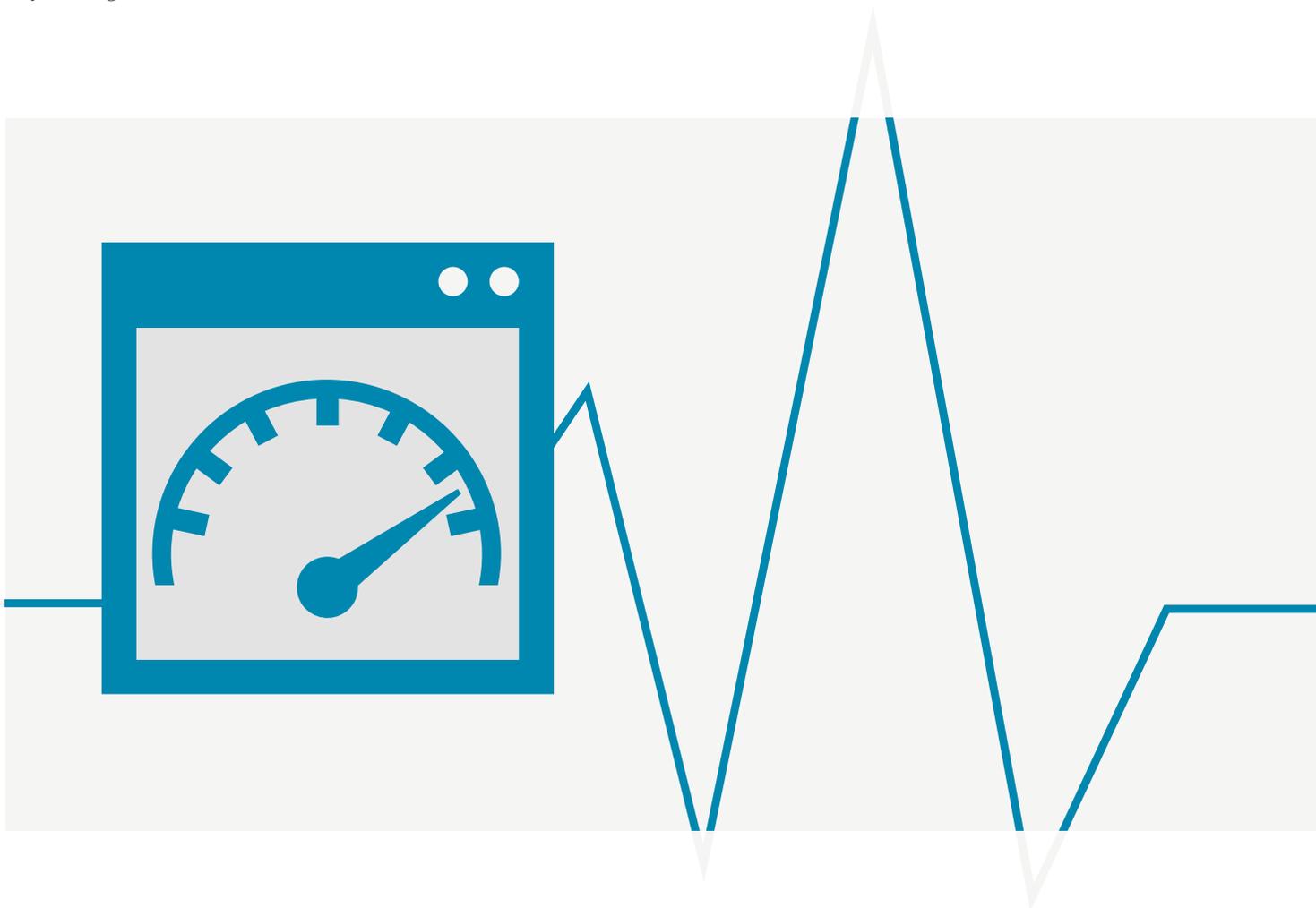
Is a comprehensive, well documented API available?

APIs should specify precisely how software components will interact. Being able to offer coders comprehensive APIs is crucial for programming the graphical user interface (GUI) components of your websites or applications. Hence, make sure that the CMS of your choice provides both the API and the support needed to develop stunning websites and apps.

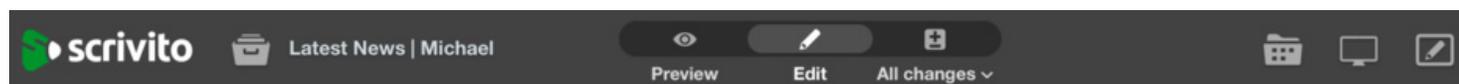
Support for constant high traffic and traffic peaks

Does the CMS provide built-in cloud scalability?

Scalability is one of the main benefits you should be looking for in a powerful cloud based CMS. An in-house hosting server has its limitations, but, by using a reliable web CMS you should not ever worry about such things. Limitations are the cloud CMS provider's concern, not yours. From the cache system, to the number of applications encompassed and the oscillations in traffic, NOTHING should catch a software-as-a-service (SaaS) off-guard. To put in a nutshell, your web CMS should run flawlessly throughout the creation, deployment and evolution of your digital endeavors.



Project Requirements



Shared media assets and widgets

Is the solution ready for a shared corporate-wide implementation?

Aside from reliable concurrency control, being able to efficiently share media assets and previously developed widgets within your organization is tremendously beneficial, since these features will greatly increase productivity. All assets and widgets of your CMS, once developed, should be easy to reuse in future projects.

On demand

How quickly can the CMS be deployed?

The scope of the initial deployment of your cloud based CMS must be thought out so that it delivers concrete business benefits, beyond just replacing the underlying content management technology. A fast deployment is great, but a fast deployment with as little migration glitches as possible is even better.

Agile project management

Does the CMS support an incremental project progress?

Incremental methods of managing are vastly popular in IT, design, engineering and virtually any new product/service development projects. Having the ability to organize and submit deliverables in stages is an increasingly sought after feature in cloud management systems.

Final Consideration

There's only one cloud based CMS that can perform entirely as described in this document: Scrivito. It was developed to fit the rigors of three professional fields and it is designed to withstand the scrutiny of three distinct types of professionals: software developers, digital marketers and entrepreneurs.

In short, Scrivito is a web CMS based on the Ruby on Rails (RoR) web development framework. Along with our Widget technology, the RoR framework brings rapid development of the business logic, through the monumental array of functionalities it entails. Scrivito is designed to help developers working in companies and in digital agencies build award winning websites and applications with the best possible experience for editors. It runs on Amazon Web Services (AWS) and it is distributed over three data centers, so your data is secure and highly available anywhere on the planet.

Sign up for a free trial for Scrivito at <https://scrivito.com>

