

AcQUiA®



DigitasLBI

“Speed to Real”: Building Digital Experiences in the Open Cloud



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Between the conception and the creation, between the emotion and the response, falls the shadow.

— T.S. Eliot - *The Hollow Men*

Speed. It is the key to winning with digital, the basis of any effective and compelling customer experience. The ability to create experiences and bring them to market quickly and easily is only part of the equation – having a hypothesis, testing, learning, and adapting on a continual basis across all CX touchpoints is now imperative. Working this way shifts the mindset from: “Did it work?” to one that’s focused on: “What did we learn?”

Introduction: What's the Rush?

Eliot may have painted a somber view of marketing without realizing it, but no one named a law after him. Moore's Law predicted a doubling of computing power and a halving of its cost every eighteen months, a rule that embodied the exponential impact of the Information Age. Metcalfe's Law states that the value of a network is proportional to the square of the number of users of that network. But for all the multiplier effects of this Digital Revolution we live in, the one thing that can never be compressed or multiplied is *time*.

Time is the cruelest tyrant but it is the one thing that brands, publishers, or any organization dependent on a strong digital delivery channel fights for from their audience of customers, citizens, donors, readers and listeners. The battle for customer engagement is a battle for their limited time and attention. While we all may convince ourselves that we can "multitask" and absorb multiple media simultaneously ... a tablet in one hand, a smartphone in the other, Netflix on the television, and a podcast in the headphones.... the battle today in digital experience delivery is over gaining the attention of a fickle world, one that is always a click away from the next piece of clickbait. Catching and holding a user's time and attention means adopting an approach to digital CX that upends the lessons of the two first decades of the consumer Internet.

This paper details DigitasLBI's approach to helping clients address the new challenges of delivering customer experiences that make a difference by moving at unparalleled speeds. We call this approach "Speed to Real" and it's how we help our clients turn a challenge into an opportunity and that opportunity into reality. This happens at near real-time speeds while embedding lessons and learnings into a cycle of continuous optimization.

Speed to Real

Speed To Real is an approach to the emerging art of Digital Experience Delivery, which offers a philosophical method to the discipline of getting ahead of digital transformation and anticipating the next shifts in the market as opposed to responding to them.

From Speed to Real

As the poet said — *“between the concept and the creation falls the shadow.”* So it goes for most digital experiences — easy to conceive but a struggle to execute.

The concept is easy to imagine, but putting it into action and actually executing it is very hard. Even with petabytes of customer data collected, scrubbed, and crunched by the best data scientists, the effort to move qualitative and quantitative insights from research to actual impact on “the glass” causes many digital experience teams to freeze with a classic case of analysis paralysis.

At DigitasLBi we follow Eric Ries’ principles of “build-measure-learn”, a simple three-sided framework that we’ve modified from his approach for launching the Minimum Viable Product and providing customer experience through Discover-Develop-Deliver. Our mission is to help our clients understand that the process of Digital Experience Delivery is never-ending and each phase depends on the other to continuously iterate and deliver.

Discovery is where data is collected and analyzed. This is not just the quantitative data generated by web servers and cash registers, but quantitative data gained from going into the field and surveying the market for emotional insights.

Development is the creation of the content, messages, and media used to support the goals of the brand. This phase is all about creative thinking and the development of the programs, offers, content, and services driven by the insights uncovered during Discovery.

Delivery is the launch and promotion of the messages and services created in Development, as well as the structured measurement of their impact. Delivery is where you learn what works and what doesn’t, a measurement process to embed within the Discovery phase to inform the development of future messages and media.

Three Prime Drivers

Three drivers are changing how brands and agencies look at the challenge of digital development. They are **Big Data** — the collection and analysis of customer generated data; **Cloud Computing** — using scalable cloud-hosted services to reduce capital expenditures on infrastructure and expand and contract capacity as demand ebbs and flows; and **Open Source** — technology that stacks developed with the proverbial wisdom of the crowd. These drivers are upsetting the established order of the software industry and the IT departments that bought their proprietary software. They also are the drivers of what is sometimes referred to as “business digitalization.” This is the strategy of creating value through digital technologies by converting and improving outdated, inefficient processes with the power of new technologies and agile approaches to building applications.

The three prime movers — Data, Cloud, and Open — allow brands to shed utility infrastructure costs from their own datacenters. It also allows brands to free themselves from depending on vendor roadmaps for new features and functionality in proprietary content management and marketing automation software. Now brands and agencies can focus on where they can add value by analyzing their customers’ desires and actions and deliver truly personalized digital experiences, in real time, based on the most precious asset a brand can own: insight into how its customers behave and how they might behave in the future.

Digital Experience Delivery (DCX)

The World Wide Web began as a commercial, consumer phenomenon in 1994 and has since evolved from the publish-surf-consumer modality of personal computers into a two-way communications medium, which gave birth to the so-called Web 2.0 wave and launched social networks, consumer reviews, and user-generated content. As the first decade of the new Millennium came to a close, the upheaval of the smartphone led to a mobile-first posture for many site builders, who relied on a variety of techniques such as Responsive Design to ensure their sites could be used on iPhones, Android phones and beginning in 2010, tablets. These devices now influence how customers search, share and shop.

In the past few years industry analysts have questioned the conventional categories of Web Content Management and have instead broadened the category of the simple “website” to a more expansive omni or multi channel perspective. This evolution acknowledges that the challenge for brands and agencies goes beyond building websites, online stores, and microsites to then attract an audience through search engine optimization and digital advertising. Instead, as digital has become the priority -- not an experimental sideline to traditional media -- its role in defining a brand’s relationship to its customers and prospects has shifted from the desktop computer to the phone. Today, this shift continues to shift to conversational-speech driven devices like the Amazon Echo, in-store kiosks, digital billboards, wearables, and the objects and devices that function under the umbrella of the Internet of Things. Digital now permeates the physical world, expanding the infrastructure of the digital experience.

In 2012, a report from Forrester Research titled “Unify the Digital Experience Across Touchpoints,” by Stephen Powers and John R. Rymer coined the new category of Digital Experience Delivery (DCX), defining it as all the digital touchpoints between an organization and its audience.

The Big Reverse

To make things even more interesting for marketers, IT teams, and their agencies, the Internet has flipped from an “inbound” model, where the corporate website and brand sites are the target, to a reality in which a brand has to get its message distributed off of its own properties and onto the places where users spend their time. The ubiquity of always-on/always-connected mobile devices means the entire user experience is about convenience on the go. The very primacy of the website model that defined the consumer Internet for the last two decades is now being called into question.

The idea of laboriously punching web addresses into a phone in order to read the day’s news, impulsively look up a fact, or order a new supply of cosmetics is laughable to most modern users. They look for convenience on their personal devices and that means far more time on their “lock screens” looking at notifications before consuming media through their favorite app or social network. In fact, in a recent survey of Indonesian consumers — currently one of the fastest growing markets in terms of Internet adoption — most respondents defined the “Internet” as Facebook.

This shift from a website centric world to one where brands and publishers must distribute and syndicate their content outbound to Apple, Google, Facebook, Flipboard, and other aggregators is causing angst for many vendors of Web Content Management solutions, advertisers, and marketing technology providers. Brands and agencies that are prepared for this shift recognize that in order to retain their customer’s attention, they must capitalize on delivering digital experiences at the right **time**.

Agile

“Agile” is a concept for how to rapidly develop software in a nimble fashion. While the concept is predicated on the “Lean” methodology used by Japanese automakers, the term entered the lexicon ten years ago when entrepreneur Eric Ries wrote his manifesto for launching software: [The Lean Startup](#). Ries challenged decades of wisdom about how to develop software and manage digital projects by advocating for a “build-measure-learn” feedback loop that quickly launches a “minimum viable product”. This cycle then applies user feedback to debug, learn and refine that product with incremental new features. “Agile” has left the exclusive realm of coders and is now a term applied to any speed function. Agile principles have transformed the way agencies such as DigitasLBI work with clients to create digital media and applications in real time.

Speed and Responsiveness

McKinsey & Company’s Digital Marketing practice recently wrote an obituary for the quaint notion of a “marketing calendar.” Long gone are the days when a CMO could plan a year’s worth of carefully crafted messages and offers, lock in an upfront media buy, and then execute waves of content and offers. Now Digital Marketing (some even say it is time to drop “digital” and just admit that today all marketing is pretty much digital) has to be responsive, agile, and listen to the market and signals given off by consumers to determine the precise moment to engage them with the right offer. Responsive marketing means interacting from a two-way communications model and returning to audiences of consumers with messages, offers, and content that is highly personalized and relevant. Relevant not only to the intended recipient's history of interests and interactions, but also aware and respectful of their context in time and space. The mobility of the always-on world means we expect the intelligent interactions with brands and organizations in our lives to deliver value. Customers expect digital to expose the intelligent empathy of the sender, not their ignorance.

Moving from the old brief-driven, project, and campaign models of the past to a responsive and agile posture is a grueling adaptation for most brands and agencies. Sure, real-time marketing activities such as social media demand a deft touch, an open ear, and the courage to respond to an angry customer almost instantaneously. But implementing flexible agility and the mindset of “perpetual beta” in the development of a brand’s digital media can be very hard to execute. Many teams are aware of the promise of digital but are skeptical of putting it into practice, and overwhelmed by the prospect of delivering it at scale for millions of individual users and not the mass audiences of the past.

The challenge today for brands and their agencies is to move at a pace that keeps up with (and eventually anticipates) the constant shifts in the digital realm. This challenge can consist of being nimble enough to move from a reactive, defensive posture to an enterprise that not only anticipates shifts but embraces them. Clients who move from reacting to anticipating, embracing a model of constant improvement and iteration, stand a far better chance of finding success than those who launch simply with the hope that their efforts will work.

Technology and Compromising the Creative Vision

DigitasLBI earns the trust of clients such as American Express, Taco Bell and Aetna by sharing our unbiased, vendor-neutral perspective on the technologies, which remain tried and true, current and exciting, and the best suited to support the client’s strategy. At DigitasLBI we don’t take a hard, inflexible position about the tools or platforms a client should use to achieve their goals. Yet we know that at some point in the relationship we will be called on to advise them regarding the solutions that set the best foundation for a true speed-to-real approach to digital customer experience development and delivery.

DigitasLBI has developed an expert point of view on tools and technologies that lay the best foundation for rapid development and delivery of customer experiences, without painting our clients into the figurative corner of proprietary software, imprisoned content, or orphaned media formats. These are the forces of creative destruction that corrode the heart of digital transformation.

In partnership with Boston-based Acquia, we have found an open source, cloud-first platform. This platform is well suited for clients who need future flexibility and the freedom to integrate their own legacy systems into a secure API-centric platform that can be modified and customized, while also withstanding unforeseen spikes in traffic. The Acquia Platform, built on the popular Drupal content management framework, gives us the confidence of a system used by some of the world’s most powerful institutions and brands.

Our partnership with Acquia was forged by the shared belief that technology should never force a creative compromise nor stand in the way of a client's need for speed to market. Acquia's managed cloud relieves our clients from the agonies of managing servers and bandwidth, security patches, and customer privacy compliance. Acquia's open source software solutions come imbued with the passion and power of the communities that back them. Finally, Acquia's approach to supporting "open marketing" means that our clients have the option to choose their own best-of-breed solutions from the wide panorama of marketing automation and ad tech vendors available. Clients can then create their own open marketing cloud and dissolve their dependency on the strategic product roadmap of a proprietary vendor.

At DigitasLBI we rely on Acquia to provide us with a platform predicated on open source and the flexibility of the cloud to be the engine for fast innovation in Digital Experience Delivery, all through the following:

Speed

- Leverage the open cloud to accelerate innovation
- Launch sites and digital experiences faster with tested Drupal distributions and modules
- Use templates and Acquia Cloud Site Factory to quickly launch and localize sites globally, across many products and campaigns, at a low cost with high brand governance

Flexibility

- Innovate in real time on a flexible content management framework that gives developers the tools to build customized authoring tools and workflows for their content teams.
- Use decoupled Drupal to utilize preferred development frameworks such as angular.js and node.js, as well as Drupal 8's standardized approach to Php.

Open Source Heritage

- Acquia's standing in the Drupal community make them the experts in harnessing Drupal at scale for ambitious sites that can't fail
- The Acquia Platform is designed to integrate with other marketing automation tools and distribute a brand's content to any device, anytime, anywhere.

Security

- Acquia's focus on security means our clients will be compliant with the standards that apply to their industry, ranging from HIPAA in Healthcare to PCI-DSS in eCommerce.
- The Acquia Platform is designed, built, and monitored 24/7 to protect clients against DDOS attacks and any other unforeseen attacks. The Acquia security team ensures all sites on the Acquia Cloud are patched and kept current with the latest versions of all Drupal core distributions, as well as any additional modules and themes.

Speed to Real: Accelerating CX Value

At DigitasLBi we believe our clients don't need more ideas, they just need to know which ideas are right. Right now.

Our Digital Products and Services group creates experiences that dynamically differentiate our clients from their competition. The group extends a brand's value with solutions that are data-driven, designed for cross-device consumption and created at Speed to Real. This is our process for developing branded software experiences. This high-velocity approach is designed to move internal teams and clients forward quickly. We move fast – from sketches to prototypes in 10 days or less – with lean, nimble, interdisciplinary teams that complement yours. On average we produce 10 prototypes a month, and deliver technology to complete over 250 ecommerce and CMS installs, all the while creating beautifully designed experiences



We develop interconnected services and utilities that do more than present content, and when backed by well-defined consumer insights, they inspire loyalty. Through the Speed to Real process we can:

- Create a digital business model, defining the digital ecosystem and developing a tailored roadmap that takes a client from strategy to development to execution.
- Execute across platforms, from software (mobile and tablet apps) to website development to connected commerce.
- Leverage conversion/optimization for idea generation, testing and refining a client's existing assets.
- Use **Startup Connect** to match our clients with emerging companies like Acquia to help connect client business with new technologies that deliver solutions in real-time.

Speed to Real Approach:

A typical Speed to Real engagement consists of four phases:

Discover

- Reframe business problem
- Review existing research
- Review existing wireframes and documentation
- Conduct content audit
- Conduct client interviews/workshop
- Develop hypothesis
- Define barriers

Envision

- Sketch initial user flows and customer journey
- Design and code prototype
- Conduct technical stakeholder interviews
- Begin new platform architecture documentation

Plan

- Define release 1 product and sprint roadmap
- Create list of page templates/deliverables
- Conduct sprint planning; write user stories; prioritize user stories
- Bring detailed technical design including technical requirements and content and data architecture
- Develop quality assurance plan
- Complete infrastructure setup

Sprints

- Complete detailed design including client reviews and legal approvals
- Develop learning agenda
- Code and test product incrementals
- Research synthesis
- Opportunity model/case for change (insight, behavior model, and vision statement)
- Blueprint (re-imagined ecosystem, roadmap for transformation)
- Technical landscape
- Conceptual design (e.g. North Star, sketches, etc.)
- Customer journeys
- Features matrix
- Technical architecture
- Sprint roadmap
- Product backlog
- Deliverables matrix
- Technical design plan
- Quality assurance plan
- Develop environment
- Automated comps and copy decks
- Test plans
- Coded product
- Ongoing product releases and including supplemental testing (performance, security, test automation, etc.)
- Conduct post-launch smoke tests
- Optimize and scale site
- Perform content entry and publishing

Conclusion

DigitasLBI and Acquia understand that your brand cannot afford to hesitate when it comes to delivering the best digital experiences to your customers. Our partnership will provide the top solutions for digital excellence so that you can execute with confidence.

Our commitment to Speed to Real accelerates growth defined by behavior driven data, and delivers on industry-leading technology platforms. Different and better than proprietary vendors, traditional agencies, and system integrators, DigitasLBI has deep experience and expertise in technology, commerce and strategy, media and analytics experiences. DigitasLBI will enable your brand and agency to anticipate the evolving needs of your customers and transform the challenges of a shifting digital landscape into opportunity.

DigitasLBI's promise for flexibility and fast innovation in Digital Experience Delivery is not hollow, and our partnership with Acquia will insure that your brand's digital evolution does not fall into the shadows.

