SEAMLESS MIGRATION

Tips & tricks for moving your large web property to a new platform.

DURA DIGITAL

EXCECUTIVE SUMMARY

This white paper presents a detailed and strategic approach for the migration of a large web property from a legacy platform to a new platform, taking into account the challenges and complexities associated with a hybrid state, design systems migration, Content Delivery Network (CDN) management, decommissioning pages, collaboration among multiple teams, support for many geographies, and web assets reorganization.

Introduction

The migration of a large web property requires thorough planning, execution, and collaboration to minimize disruption to users and their experience and to ensure a seamless transition. This white paper provides an **in-depth phased approach**, addressing critical considerations and challenges that could arise during the migration process.

Phased approach to migration

A gradual migration strategy is the approach Dura Digital recommends. This strategy will reduce risks and increase the likelihood of a smooth transition. When following this strategy a migration is carried out in stages, allowing the web property to function in a hybrid state where both the legacy platform and the new platform coexist.



Pre-Migration Phase

In the pre-migration phase, the idea is to take all the actions needed to get ready, creating a comprehensive plan and timeline so that the migration runs as smoothly as possible.



Migration Phase

This phase is where the heavy lifting occurs, and is typically where most challenges are encountered.



Post-Migration Phase

The post-migration phase is all about cleaning up the legacy platform and ensuring the new platform meets technical expectations and that it provides the expected business value.

Pre-Migration Phase

In the pre-migration phase, the idea is to take all the actions needed to get ready for the migration. Following the steps below will help ensure the migration runs as smoothly as possible.

01_

Conduct a comprehensive audit of the existing web property, cataloging pages, experiences, and assets to be migrated or decommissioned. Determine dependencies between assets and prioritize migration tasks accordingly. This step is all about rationalization, and this is a perfect time to uplift, consolidate, and improve the metadata of your assets.

02_

Confirm any changes to Information Architecture (IA) so that asset changes can be properly mapped out during the migration. When planning changes to the site's IA it is critical to consider temporary redirects, which pages or site sections migrate first, and what impact that might have on SEO.

03_

Understand accessibility and privacy requirements. These standards change frequently, and depending on the size and age of your web property, it is likely that updates will be required to align with current standards and legal requirements.

04_

Assess the current design system, identify differences with the target design system, and create a migration plan that includes component mapping, styles adaptation, and testing.

05_

Identify required analytics and tooling required to support a migration. This step should consider analytics for page and site performance, user experience metrics, and alerting for site issues.

06_

Review required geographies and language requirements. This will help identify potential challenges with localization and traffic management in the new platform. This step should also include validating the architecture for traffic management, and the approach for localization.

07_

Design and implement a decision-making framework for the core platform migration team to make decisions and remove possible migration hurdles. This framework should be rigid enough to be well understood and flexible enough to facilitate all required decisions about pages, assets, experiences, and design components.

08_

Develop a detailed project plan that includes timelines, resources, dependencies, and risk mitigation strategies. Establish milestones to track progress and measure success.

09_

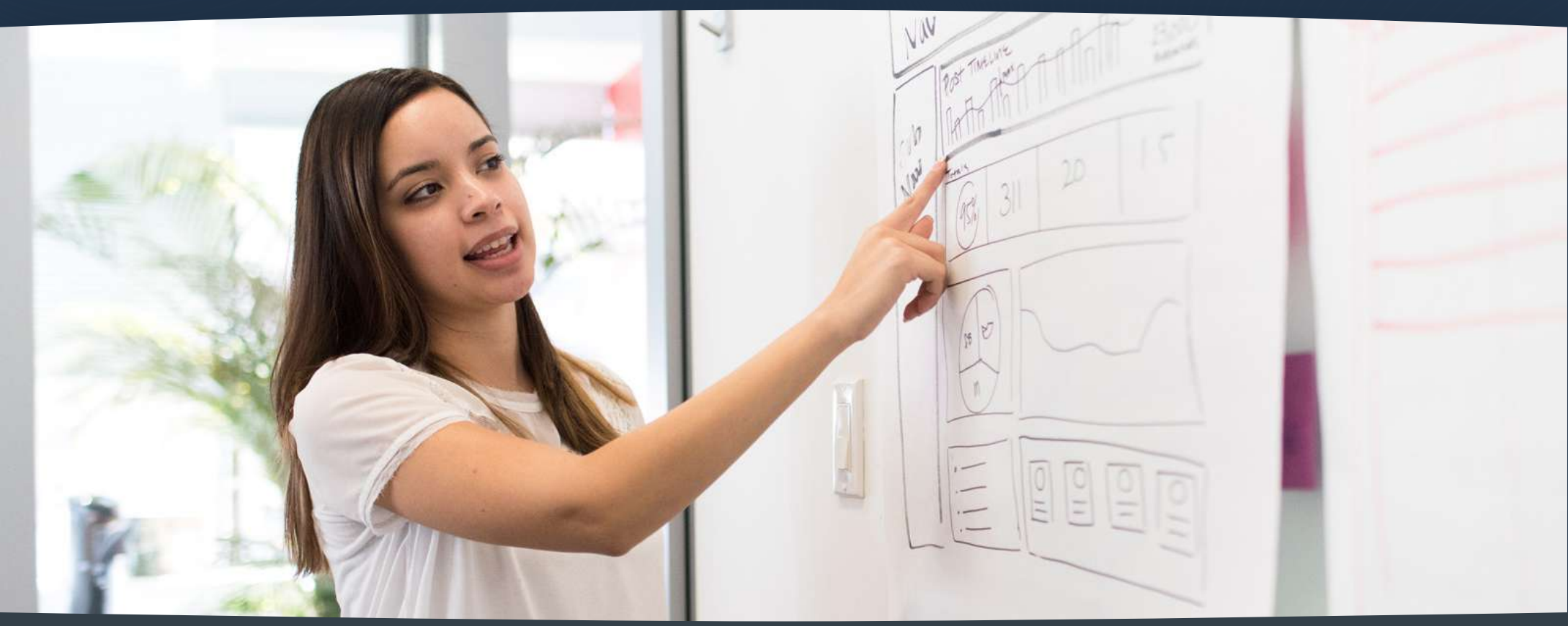
Create an effective Organizational Change Management (OCM) plan at the outset of this initiative. This should include communication across all channels and stakeholders about progress, decommissioning of site experiences, new processes, and new value propositions.

10_

Define clear processes for both during and after the migration process. These will change as the migration progresses, though getting an early start on these will allow templates and processes to evolve, provide greater opportunity for change management, and help ensure key processes are not missed.

11_

Identify processes for handling rhythm of business activities during the migration. This could include defining how change requests will be handled, establishing and enforcing change freezes, and planning for any known events. Depending on the planned length of the migration, it will also be important to have a clearly defined process to handle exceptions to the migration plan and change freezes.



Migration Phase

This phase is where the heavy lifting occurs, and is typically where most challenges are encountered. When the previous pre-migration phase is executed thoroughly, the migration effort becomes easier but challenges and surprises should still be expected. An iterative approach is what Dura Digital recommends for the migration phase. Below are the activities that need to be considered during the migration phase.

01_

Migrate web assets in a structured and organized manner, adhering to the new information architecture. Implement version control and establish a process for updating and maintaining assets during the migration.

02_

Migrate the design system incrementally, focusing on compatibility with the new design system, and use a modular approach to facilitate future updates and maintenance. Ensure thorough testing and validation of migrated components.

03_

Set up dual CDNs to accommodate the hybrid state, optimizing traffic distribution between the legacy platform and the new platform. Implement caching, load balancing, and failover strategies to maintain optimal performance and availability.

04_

Decommission obsolete pages and experiences, redirecting users to relevant content on the new platform. Establish a process to manage and retire legacy content.

05_

Migrate pages using the migrated web assets and design system components, to ensure consistency and alignment with the new platform standards. **Pages can be launched as they are ready or launched using a release-train approach where launches occur at a regular cadence** (ex. every week or every two weeks).

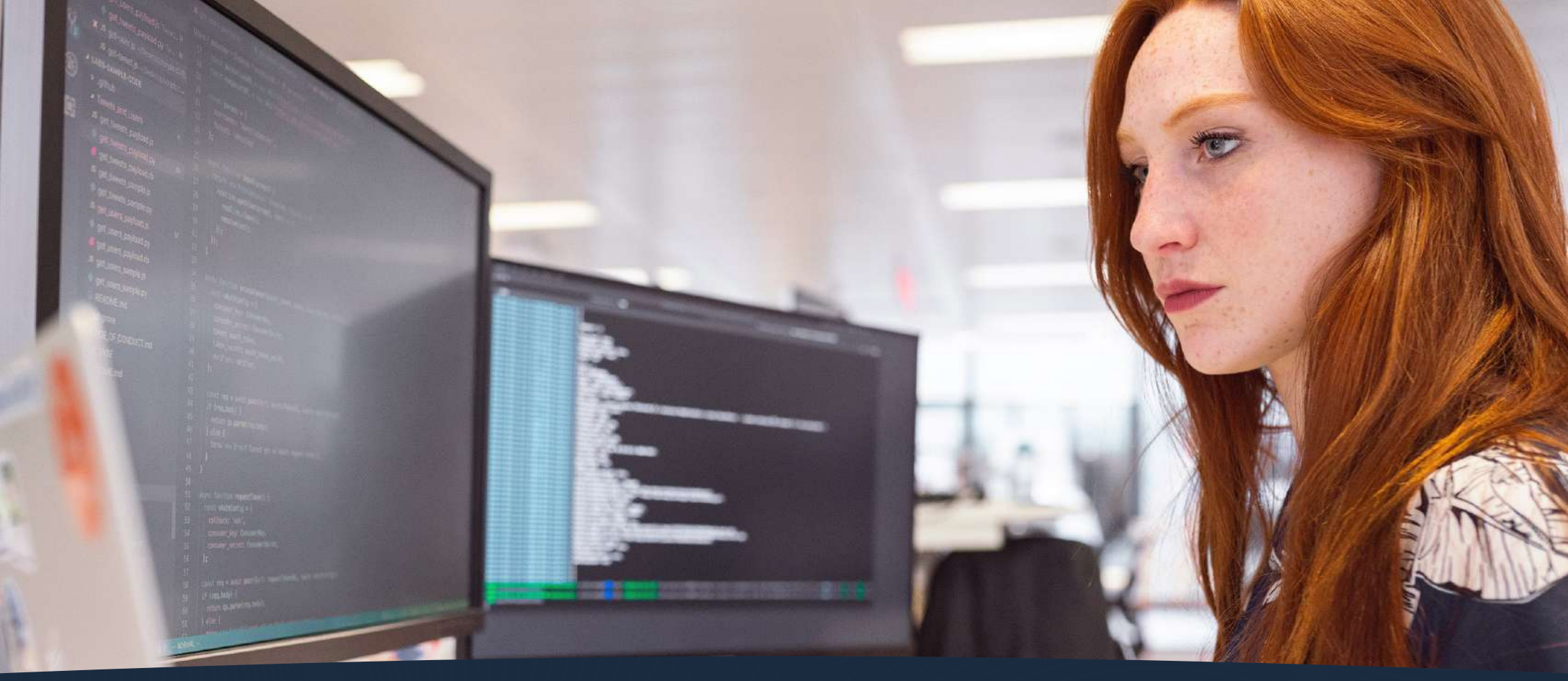
06_

Monitor site, page, and platform performance. Performance, in this case, should not only take into account technical performance (page load times, rendering time, etc.), but should also include user experience, SEO, and protection against DDOS attacks and web crawlers.

07_

Execute the OCM strategy, providing **effective and concise communications to ensure all directly impacted stakeholders and stakeholders on the periphery receive the information they need**, in multiple communication channels.





Post-Migration Phase

The post-migration phase is all about cleaning up the legacy platform and ensuring the new platform meets technical expectations and that it provides the expected business value. In this phase, the below activities should be considered:

01_

Continue to monitor performance, user experience, and SEO metrics to measure the success of the migration and identify areas for improvement. Implement continuous monitoring and reporting processes to ensure long-term success.

02_

Decommission the legacy platform and remove the secondary CDN once the migration is complete. Conduct a thorough post-mortem analysis to identify lessons learned and inform future migrations.

03_

Complete the OCM strategy, ensuring **final communications are updated and legacy documentation is archived.** Leaving legacy documentation active can result in confusion and uncertainty. If possible, all previous wikis and content repositories should temporarily redirect to the updated content.

Cross-Functional - Team Collaboration

Migrations of large web properties almost always require collaboration across multiple teams and skill sets. Below are the steps that need to be considered to ensure a healthy and productive collaboration:

01_

Establish clear communication channels, a governance model for decision-making, and a centralized knowledge repository for documentation and resources.

02_

Coordinate efforts among engineering, marketing, and other teams involved in the migration, **fostering a culture of collaboration, accountability, and shared responsibility.**

03_

Conduct regular **progress updates, checkpoints, and retrospectives** to ensure alignment, address challenges, and celebrate successes. In many cases, leaning on Agile ceremonies such as daily standups, sprint planning, and retrospectives at this stage will provide significant benefits.

04_

Ensure good project management practices and disciplines are in place. This will include placing attention on scheduling, risk management, escalation processes, and defining roles and responsibilities. If an operational team is responsible for the migration, engaging a partner organization to provide guidance and establish best practices will be important.

Enabling a Hybrid state

From the time the first page is migrated to the launch of the last page on the new platform, the site should be considered in a hybrid state. To enable this and ensure a smooth user experience, the following considerations should be taken into account:

01_

Design and document how traffic will flow from pages hosted on the new platform and those hosted on the legacy platform. This will include handling of error pages and “dial-tone” scenarios.

02_

Prioritize the user experience. As the design system, assets, and the Information Architecture of the site shift, it is essential to understand how this will impact the user experience in the hybrid state.
The site should still look and feel as consistent as possible to avoid negative experiences.

03_

Enable seamless navigation. When the entire site is hosted on a single platform, the site's header, footer, and navigation are much simpler. In a hybrid state, the end goal is to have a consistent feel across pages hosted on each platform. One method of enabling this will be to publish a shared service for the site’s header/footer.

Support for global geographies

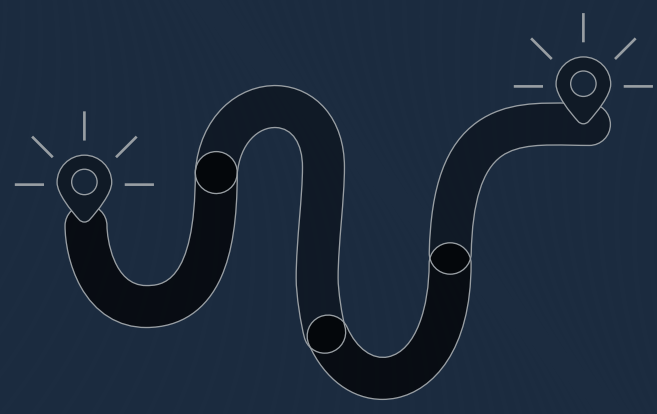
As mentioned above, when supporting global geographies, there are additional considerations that need to be considered. Below are some activities that will help ensure support across geographies:

01_

Plan for a global roll-out, considering localization requirements, language support, and regional legal and regulatory compliance.
Develop a localization strategy that includes content translation, cultural adaptation, and regional customization.

02_

Implement a scalable infrastructure that can accommodate growth and expansion into new markets, considering factors such as latency, data residency, and network connectivity.



No matter the state of the platform or the location of the user, each person should have a seamless and consistent experience accessing the site.

Conclusion

Migrating a large web property is a complex process that requires meticulous planning, collaboration, and execution. By following the in-depth phased approach outlined in this white paper and addressing the considerations mentioned above, organizations can successfully achieve a smooth transition to a new platform, enhance user experiences and streamline content management.

Though challenging, migrating to a new platform provides a tremendous opportunity to simplify and enhance the content, design, assets, and processes that empower the web property. Additionally, the insights gained from a migration process can be applied to upcoming projects, further optimizing efficiency and effectiveness in future transformative endeavors.

PREPARING FOR A MIGRATION?

Contact our experts today at
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