WHAT TO DO
AFTER M1?

About This Report

Magento 1 (M1) will be sunsetting June 2020. While the eCommerce platform will still be accessible and usable by both merchants and devs, it will no longer receive official support from either Magento or Adobe.

WIth over 180,000 M1 sites still live, this change will affect a large number of merchants across the Magento ecosystem. Already, we've begun to see the effects as merchants replatform to either Magento 2 (M2) or an alternate eCommerce CMS.

Are you unsure what to do once M1's life draws to a close? This guide aims to help merchants understand their options and build a clear plan for what to do after M1.

It will help you decide:

- What factors do you need to consider
- What your options are, and
- Which option is right for you

What You Need to Pay Attention To

Security

If moving to another application or M2, you'll be able to continue receiving official support and security updates. If you decide to stay on M1 you'll need to find where security patches after June 2020 will be coming from. There are developers who have stated that they will continue to offer this support.

Hosting

Not much will change in terms of hosting after M1. However, if you make the move to M2 or another CMS, you should let your hosting provider know so they can update the way your hosting environment is optimized.

Functionality

What functionality do you need? If you're moving to M2, you may find compatibility issues with your current extensions, meaning you'll need to find alternatives. If you're moving to another CMS, you'll need to find plugins that offer the same functionality, or a developer that can code that functionality for you.

Design

If you're moving off of M1, you are going to have to go through (at least a partial) site redesign. Depending on how complicated your M1 site is, this can be a lengthy and expensive process. It's important to think about how this redesign will work and who will be involved.

Cost

Making a move from M1 will cost both time and money. It's important to consider your budget and how much you can invest in each area before committing to any course of action.

Your Options After Magento 1

Upgrade to Magento 2.X

The most obvious option for those still on Magento 1 is to upgrade to 2.x. As the next version of the CMS, Magento 2 is faster, more secure, and more easily scaled. For merchants that want to continue working on a similar system while maintaining unique eCommerce functionality, moving to M2 is to one of their best options.

However, the associated cost and time demands for re-platforming make this a bad decision for some merchants. Moreover, for many M1 stores running customized extensions and code, there's a strong chance that upgrading will mean an entire store redesign.

Pros
- It's a similar system
- It maintains the great eCommerce functionality you find in Magento 1.x
- It will continue to have official support

Cons
- It is expensive and costly to replatform
- A number of your current extensions may not work
- Magento 2.x hasn't seen as high adoption as 1.x

Great for
Merchants loyal to Magento and developers that want to continue using an eCommerce platform that provides them with full functionality control.

Bad for
Merchants looking to keep costs to a minimum or move to a simpler solution.

WooCommerce

WooCommerce is an eCommerce plugin for WordPress. This means that it is both easy to use and a great platform for managing content. Moreover, with the huge, open source development community of WordPress behind it, creating a great eCommerce storefront isn't that hard.

Unfortunately, in terms of functionality, WooCommerce is the weakest platform on this list. And due to being a plugin for another CMS, it doesn't have the same official support you'll find with alternatives.

We recommend WooCommerce for smaller stores that don't need all of the scalability and functionality found in Magento and that are interested in managing their eCommerce platform themselves.

Pros
- It is very easy to use
- It is a great content management solution due to being a plugin for WordPress
- There is a large community of developers and plugins available to help increase functionality

Cons
- It's only a plugin so doesn't have the community of other dedicated eCommerce CMS
- It lacks a lot of out-of-the-box functionality you'll find with alternatives

Great for
Merchants that want an eCommerce platform that's easier to use than Magento.

Bad for
Merchants that run large, dedicated storefronts.

BigCommerce for WordPress

Much like WooCommerce, BigCommerce (in this case) is a WordPress plugin. However, where WooCommerce runs together with WordPress site, BigCommerce works as a headless solution, with BigCommerce managing the back-end, and WordPress managing this front-end.

This means that merchants are able to take advantage of the ease of use associated with WordPress, and the advanced eCommerce functionality afforded by the BigCommerce API.

This doesn't come for free. In addition to the costs associated with hosting, BigCommerce charges an additional fee depending on the size of your store. This does, however, mean that you gain access to support from BigCommerce themselves, as well as your hosting provider.

Pros
- It combines the content management tools of WordPress with the powerful eCommerce API of BigCommerce
- You gain access to both Nexcess and BigCommerce support teams
- It is an easy to implement decoupled solution

Cons
- It doesn't offer some of the functionality you'll find with Magento or Sylius
- It costs more than the alternatives
- It still requires development to create a truly unique site

Great for
Medium to large merchants that want a little more functionality than WooCommerce but don't need everything Magento has to offer.

Bad for
Merchants that are looking to keep costs down and developers that want to stay on an open source platform.

Sylius

If you're not comfortable moving to M2, but still want an eCommerce platform that offers complete control of functionality, then Sylius may be for you.

The first stable release of Sylius went live in late 2017. It's community has since grown at an incredible rate. While still not as large as Magento, its dedication to open source, the ability to easily implement decoupled solutions, and the extent of control it affords developers has helped it to become a serious contender in the eCommerce space.

We recommend Sylius for merchants that are interested in exploring new opportunities and solutions. Remember though, you'll still need a developer to get your site off the ground.

Pros
- It offers complete control of functionality
- It's open source
- It's easy to implement decoupled solutions

Cons
- It still requires a developer to create your site
- It's not as popular as Magento, so has a smaller developer community

Great for
Merchants looking to move away from Magento but that want to maintain complete control over their store.

Bad for
Merchants looking for a more entrenched platform or a simpler eCommerce solution.

Stay on M1

Great for
Merchants loyal to Magento and that want to keep costs down or think that replatforming isn't worth the associated costs.

Bad for
Merchants that definitely want official platform support and the latest technology available.

Despite the warning messages that may be appearing on your M1 store, staying is still a valid option. Don't feel that you need to change if you're happy with the level of functionality and performance you currently have access to.

That being said, Magento 1 is still an older CMS and in most cases does not perform as well or as securely as Magento 2. Additionally, since Magento 1 will no longer receive official support (including security updates) after June 2020, you'll need to find an alternate source to keep your site secure.

Luckily, multiple members of the community have stated that they will continue to provide support to merchants. If you decide to stay on M1, check in with your developer to see if they are one of them.

Pros
- It avoids any costs associated with developing a new site or replatforming
- Magento 1.x still offers a lot of great eCommerce functionality compared with alternatives
- Some of the community will still support the platform after M1's End of Life

Cons
- It will no longer receive official support from Magento or Adobe
- It is isn't as performant as Magento 2
- Some of the software that the platform runs on will be deprecated in the near future (PHP, MySQL, etc.)

Recommendations

Functionality
If you need complete control over your storefront, we recommend moving to either Magento 2 or Sylius as both offer more control.

Time to Deployment
If time to deployment is your highest priority, then either staying on M1 or moving to WooCommerce, with its relatively easy development practices, are your best choices.

Security
If security is your biggest concern, then Sylius (with its relatively small community) or BigCommerce (as a closed source project) are your best options.

Implementing a Content-First Strategy
If you're thinking of using the M1 End of Life as an excuse to revamp your marketing strategy, then either WooCommerce or BigCommerce are your best options due to leveraging the content management features of WordPress.

Cost
If you're looking to reduce cost, we recommend either moving to WooCommerce or staying on Magento 1.

If You're Going to Stay on M1

If you've decided that staying on M1 sounds like the right choice, it's still important for you to take steps to future proof your store.

Firstly, update as much as you can. That means bring your PHP version up to 7.2, bring your Magento version up to 1.9, and ensure that any extensions you have are also running the latest version.

It's also important to figure out where you're going to get security updates from after June 2020. With official support disappearing, you'll need access to a developer or agency that can help you to address security vulnerabilities as they are discovered.

In many cases, running a secure hosting environment with a well-configured Web Application Firewall (WAF) can help to protect against threats by stopping dangerous traffic in its tracks. This means it's important to host with a provider that keeps up to date with the latest threats to Magento sites.

If You're Going to Move

If you've decided that you want to move away from M1, the first thing you should do is outline what you need moving forward. This includes site design, functionality, security, hosting, and cost.

Once you have a clear idea of these things, it's time to reach out to developers and see how much it will cost in terms of time and money.

This is better done sooner rather than later as, depending on the platform you settle on, development times can vary drastically.

Finally, once you've made the move, remember that Nexcess apply unique optimizations to the different platforms we offer. It's a good idea to check in with your hosting company to see how they optimize for the CMS you will be moving to and if this requires any changes.

Conclusion

At first glance, the Magento 1 End of Life presents a challenge of choice. With a lot of different options and no clear direction, deciding what to do after M1 can be a daunting task. However, by clearly defining your own requirements in terms of design, functionality, security, hosting, and cost, making the right decision is relatively simple.

At Nexcess, we pride ourselves on providing merchants with a range of options and helping them to decide which is best for their unique requirements. If you're still unsure about what you should do as Magento 1 reached the end of its life, contact us to talk through your options and see what is best for you and your store.