SDL*

Why Upgrade to
SDL Tridion Sites 9.5

Better Experiences, Operations and Technology
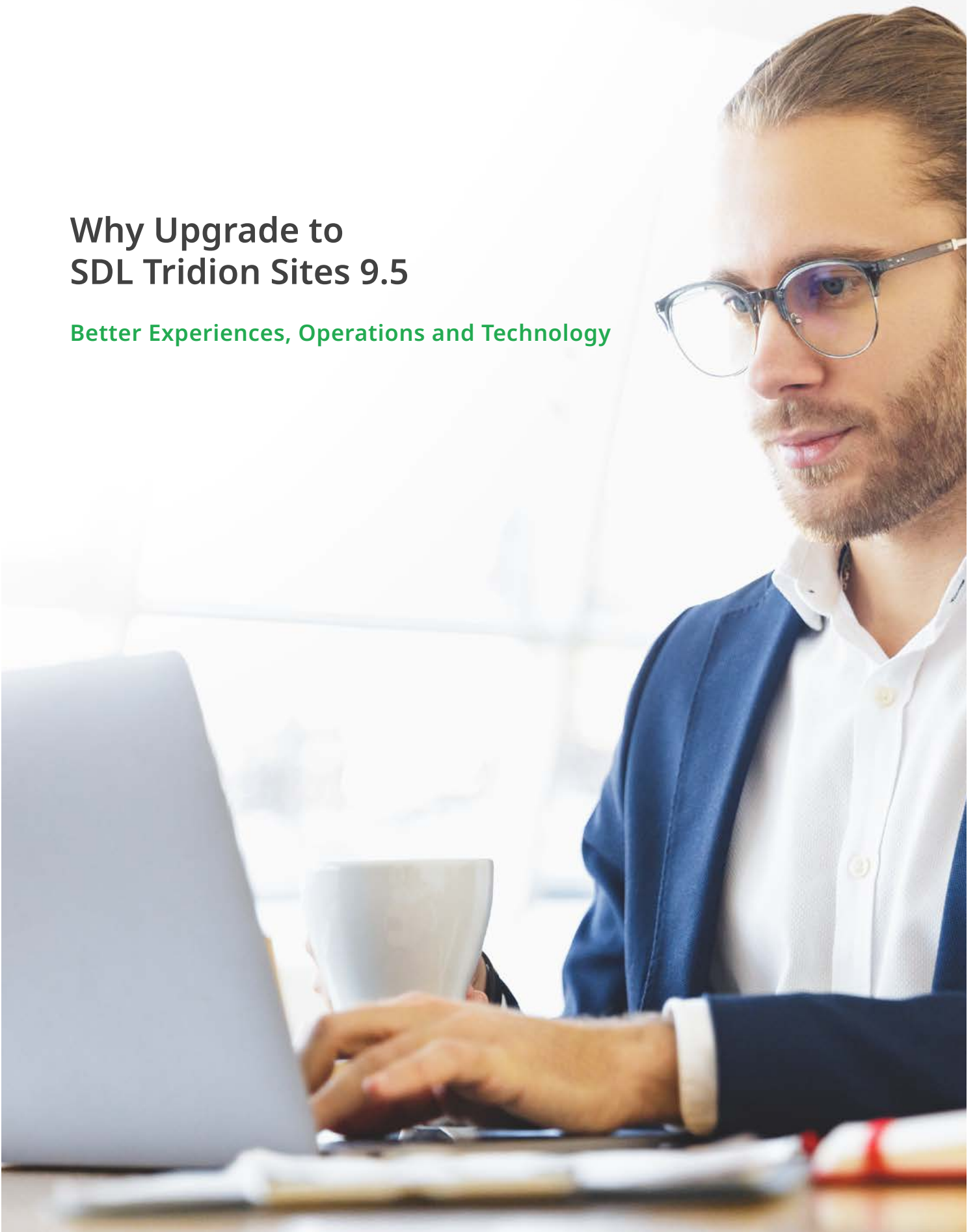
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Introduction

The digital world has changed significantly over the past twenty years. Today's always-on, digital-first customers and companies are a far cry from the early days of websites with flashing GIFs and brochure-ware web pages when everything was new and unknown.

Looking back…

The very first iteration of Tridion was built to support international websites with complex content management requirements in multiple languages. Tridion focused on making global happen for companies who wanted more than just hard-coded HTML product pages.

Evolving through time…

To keep up with the pace of change has been no small task for our R&D, IT and Operations Teams. SDL Tridion Sites has continued to evolve to meet changing market requirements, benefiting from the expertise of its customer, partner and technology community across industries. This interaction provides ongoing insight into our customers' challenges and ambitions so that SDL can continue to develop the product in the right direction.

At its heart, Tridion always was, and still is, about scaling content operations to meet growing content needs globally across digital channels.

Strategy focus

Ongoing development has solidified Tridion's enterprise-class reputation. Our product development focuses on improving the product through:

- Better Experiences

- Better Operations

- Better Technology

This paper describes the areas where we have made the most significant advances.

Better Experiences

Digital strategies can only succeed through user experiences that differentiate and resonate.

Omnichannel delivery

SDL Tridion Sites is designed to provide content to any technology, device and channel. It uniquely combines traditional web content management capabilities with modern headless (API-first) delivery options.

This enables companies to manage content centrally and deliver it across the latest content platforms such as smart speakers, IoT devices, kiosks and in-car consoles, in addition to traditional digital web, mobile and app touchpoints.

- In-context device previews to validate rendering per device.
- BluePrinting® with advanced content management for content variations across channels.
- Dynamic Experience Delivery (DXD) with headless capabilities.
- GraphQL API to serve content to any digital touchpoint.
- Out-of-the-box support for Elasticsearch, providing powerful search for visitors.

Blended content experiences

Through SDL Tridion, organizations can deliver marketing and product content across channels for a single, unified customer experience, by uniting content managed in SDL Tridion Sites (web content management) and SDL Tridion Docs (product content management and technical content).

- Shared SDL Tridion Sites and SDL Tridion Docs taxonomies for consistent content classification, search and dynamic delivery.
- Dynamic content mashups of marketing and DITA-based product information through both the user interface (UI) and Tridion APIs.
- Application of personalization to product content.

Contextual personalized content

SDL Tridion provides tools to help marketers personalize content and provide contextually relevant variants of content across languages, regions and devices.

- Prescriptive targeting and personalization to target content to site visitors.
- Content experiments and native A/B testing.
- SDL Tridion Integration Framework and connectors allow easy integration with your larger digital ecosystem (DAM, CRM etc.).

SDL Tridion is designed to provide content to any technology, device and channel

Better Operations

Enhanced customer experiences are built on operational excellence – the way your teams work together and how you can best employ technology to serve your business needs.

Usability

Based on extensive research and user feedback, SDL Tridion includes a completely redesigned user interface to help content editors and marketers complete their work faster and get new employees up to speed in no time.

- Highly effective content management through WYSIWYG and form-based screens.
- Built-in capabilities for A/B testing and personalization testing.
- Content quality through contextual guidance, validation and constraints.
- Collaborative workflow and workflow bundles.
- Instant Site for fast launches of campaign sites and local sites.

Translation efficiency

Building on the existing SDL Tridion integration with SDL translation management technology, we have now made translation processes even simpler.

- Optimized translation workflows and improved integrations.
- Integrated translation review for approval processes providing in-context views.
- Multimedia metadata translations.
- Automated workflow triggers and notifications.

Cross-platform agility

Delivering a customer experience depends upon many different supporting technologies. Your ability to use enterprise knowledge, best practices and customer data across applications is key.

- Accelerators provide a mix of best practices, sample code, connectors and documentation to speed up deployment and increase the quality of your implementation.
- SDL Tridion Integration Framework and Add-Ons simplify integrations and future upgrades.

SDL Tridion Sites 9.5 includes a completely redesigned user interface

Better Technology

Improved security and compliance

SDL Tridion enables you to comply with required legislation and service levels regardless of deployment method. Its architecture and cloud certifications ensure smooth, uninterrupted and secure operations.

- SOC 2 Type 2 compliance and ISO 27001:2013 certification for SDL Tridion in the cloud.

- A further decoupled architecture to optimize deployment and increase security.

- Extended role-based authentication and access rights through a 'Privileges' feature that simplifies rights management.

- Single sign-on with SAML 2.0 support (both IDP and SP initiated).

- Easy configuration of external identity providers such as Auth0, PingIdentity and Microsoft Azure AD.

Enterprise technology stack

SDL Tridion acts as a central, foundational content hub, by working with the many systems your organization uses.

Its technology-agnostic integration framework and microservices approach enable you to deploy extensions across SDL Tridion content management and content delivery environments.

- SDL Tridion Integration Framework to integrate with systems such as CRM, ERP, eCommerce, DAM and social platforms in a standardized way.

- Add-Ons to easily deploy integrations with any target infrastructure. In addition to custom Add-Ons, you can access community-built Add-Ons from the SDL AppStore.

- UI extensibility using externally-sourced features and capabilities, including a UI notification API.

- Rolling and staged upgrades, allowing zero downtime during the upgrade process.

Technology that scales as you grow

Higher customer expectations, new technologies and emerging channels require organizations to respond quickly to change. SDL Tridion's decoupled architecture and microservices-based design enables it to efficiently scale to any size, delivering high-performance digital experiences globally.

- Topology Manager enables you to configure publishing services (e.g. staging, live) across on-premises and cloud deployments.

- Further refinements to the decoupled architecture enable you to deploy and scale system elements independently.

- Flexible cloud, on-premises and hybrid deployment models.

- Docker containers for faster, easier and cheaper system deployment.

- Headless deployment.

Feature Spotlights

Feature Spotlight: Experience Space redefines day-to-day work with SDL Tridion Sites (v. 9.5)

Employees expect enterprise software to be intuitive to use – just like the technology they use in their personal lives. SDL Tridion Sites 9.5 delivers on this requirement through a brand new user interface that will replace Content Manager Explorer (CME) over time.

The challenge

Editing content on a daily basis often requires a lot of repetitive tasks. People develop routines to deal with this and find workarounds for inefficiencies in the system. Redesigning a user interface to remove bottlenecks in the process is a difficult but important step in establishing long-term adoption and user satisfaction.

The solution

With SDL Tridion Sites 9.5, SDL is taking a massive leap forward in usability by providing a new, fresh alternative to Content Manager Explorer, while ensuring backwards compatibility by supporting both user interfaces simultaneously.

Our UX team has designed a new user interface called Experience Space with the following principles in mind for the user:

- Task focused
- Progressive disclosure
- Contextual relevance
- Touchscreen enablement
- Good defaults
- Configurability

By applying these principles we have made content management with SDL Tridion Sites quicker, easier and more joyful.

Feature Spotlight: Building experiences across digital touchpoints with the GraphQL Content API (v. 9.0)

When used in conjunction with other headless services in SDL Tridion, developers can easily build experiences for any digital touchpoint – including websites, mobile apps, syndication channels and more – using the new GraphQL-based API.

The challenge

Many new websites and digital experiences are built on single-page application frameworks. Previously developers had to use specific application Software Development Kits (SDKs), which prescribed technology.

The solution

GraphQL is an open-standard data query and manipulation language for APIs, and a runtime for fulfilling queries with existing data. Providing a flexible and efficient way to develop web APIs, GraphQL supports reading and writing of data, and subscribing to real-time changes of data.

GraphQL improves query efficiency and enables faster data retrieval. Based on its capabilities, you can:

- Access the full capabilities of your data from a single endpoint.
- Ask for specific fields from SDL Tridion or any connected back-end system to be queried and returned.
- Perform batch queries in a single request.

Feature Spotlight: SDL Tridion Integration Framework and Add-Ons (v. 9.1)

It is often challenging to create custom integrations between a CMS and other enterprise applications – frequently it requires months of work.

With the SDL Tridion Integration Framework and Connectors you can integrate with your existing tools to support better customer experiences, achieve operational efficiency across platforms and teams, and take full advantage of your company-wide corporate assets.

Benefits

- Create transparent access to data or functionality that resides outside of Tridion.

- Ensure an easy upgrade path for replacing elements of your technology landscape in the future.

- Support multiple types of technologies and use your existing development skillsets.

Add-Ons

SDL Tridion allows you to bundle connectors, templates and configuration files together into an 'Add-On'. As a result, the Add-On contains everything you need to integrate with another system. You can:

- Automate and standardize Add-On deployment across both content management and delivery environments.

- Use existing Add-Ons from the SDL AppStore.

- Create custom Add-Ons for specific business applications using the SDL Software Development Kit (SDK) (Java or .NET).

Example: CRM Add-On

Using a CRM Add-On, you can design a form in SDL Tridion Sites using the existing data fields of your CRM system and even use its customer segmentation data for personalization purposes. On the content delivery side, the website shows the form, stores captured customer data back into the CRM system, and personalizes the experience based on CRM segmentation information.

Example: Content Repository Add-On

Connect with any external system to act as a content repository, including SDL Tridion Docs, MRM, Commerce, PIM, OVP and DAM systems. You can browse the external repository, search, and access content as if it was natively managed in SDL Tridion Sites. All of this happens without copying any data, retaining the external system as the 'single source of truth'. Simply use the content in your web pages or other digital experiences and when required the external content is referenced or embedded in the delivered experience.

SDL Tridion Integration Framework and Connectors

- DAM

- CMS

- MS SharePoint

- Cloud file storage

- MRM

- Marketing automation

- Commerce

- PIM

- Portal

- Analytics

- Social media

And more…

Feature Spotlight: SDL Accelerators

To enable you to quickly adopt and implement SDL features and functionality you have access to SDL Accelerators.

An accelerator is a sample implementation that captures the most common use cases and best practice implementations of SDL technology – often in conjunction with other systems through the use of connectors.

SDL Tridion Sites offers the following accelerators:

- **Digital Experience Accelerator (DXA)** – a fully functional website implementation. Based on years of best practice, it provides a quick-start foundation for web projects – reducing your website implementation time dramatically.

- **DAM Accelerator** – get direct access to all the rich media assets stored in your Digital Asset Management system, and easily use them throughout your digital experiences – as if they were natively managed in SDL Tridion Sites.

- **Commerce Accelerator** – fast-track integrations between commerce systems and SDL Tridion Sites digital experiences. Build commerce capabilities on top of SDL Tridion Sites' content management, personalization, integrated translation capabilities and microservices-based delivery architecture.

- **DX Accelerator for China** – a managed service model to deploy websites inside the Chinese firewall, with hosting on the Alibaba cloud.

- **CRM Accelerator** – fast-track integrations between CRM systems and SDL Tridion Sites to rapidly create and deploy forms and personalization.

- **Dynamic Documentation Accelerator** – in conjunction with SDL Tridion Docs, you can deploy a fully-functioning documentation portal in no time.

Feature Spotlight: Business continuity and simplicity through rolling and staged upgrades

SDL Tridion Sites now features both rolling upgrade and staged upgrade options for on-premises installations. These approaches minimize or even entirely eliminate downtime and ensure business continuity during the upgrade process.

Rolling upgrades

SDL Tridion Sites supports rolling upgrades. You can now perform upgrades to your on-premises content management and content delivery databases and then each product cluster, one node at a time, without any system or database downtime.

Applying the rolling upgrade, a scaled-out setup allows you to gradually replace individual content manager servers with new ones, running old software alongside new software with no downtime. You upgrade your content manager before delivery and presentation environments.

This sequential deployment ensures no downtime and requires less hardware and resources.

Staged upgrades – CM-first (v. 8.5)

SDL Tridion Sites also supports staged upgrades. Upgrade your content management software components first and perform your content delivery environment upgrade next. Throughout this process, your website remains operational, and publishing is only blocked while the content management environment is upgraded.

**Feature Spotlight: Docker container support
for flexible deployment (v. 9.0)**

A Docker container is a lightweight, stand-alone
executable package, containing software code and
a description of dependencies. As a result, a Docker
container runs quickly and reliably on any computing
environment – it can be easily started and stopped
and it can be transferred from one system to another.
For example, Docker containers enable you to support
peak periods for your website, scaling up and down as
required.

The SDL Tridion delivery architecture fully supports
Docker containers for its various microservices.
It facilitates fast deployment, elastic scaling, and
simpler upgrades across on-premises, hybrid
and (private) cloud deployments because Docker
containers can be upgraded independently.

Learn more

If you want more information about your
specific upgrade options, please contact
your support representative or visit
sdl.com/tridion

Appendix: Summary of features launched per release

Functional features per release

Features	8	8.5	9	9.1	9.5
Experience Space	✕	✕	✕	✕	✔
Experience Manager	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Prescriptive personalization	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Contextual footprint preview	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Content experiments	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
User favorites	—	✔	✔	✔	✔
Adaptive BluePrinting®	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Ability to browse to page from Content Management Explorer	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Instant Site	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Content Bundles/Multi-item workflow	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Collaborative workflow	—	✔	✔	✔	✔
Translation for multimedia item metadata	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
In-context translation review	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Metadata support for translations	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Extendable and built-in privileges	✕	✔	✔	✔	✔
English, French, Spanish, German, Dutch, Japanese UI	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Simplified Chinese UI	✕	✔	✔	✔	✔
Single Sign on	—	✔	✔	✔	✔
Pre-defined Regions support	✕	✕	✔	✔	✔
Usability improvements for Component Presentations	✕	✕	✔	✔	✔
Blended marketing and product information from SDL Tridion Docs	✕	✕	✔	✔	✔
Image editing	✕	✕	—	—	—
Access DAM managed content	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
eCommerce enabled web pages	—	—	—	✔	✔
CRM driven personalization and lead capturing	✕	—	—	✔	✔

Legend	✔ Full support	— Partial support	✕ No support

Appendix: Summary of Features Launched Per Release

Technical features added per release

Features	8	8.5	9	9.1	9.5
Future ease of upgrade	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
PowerShell scripts for database updates	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ambient Data Framework	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Scalable multi-threaded content deployer	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cloud DB Support: Microsoft, Amazon	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Site Topology Management	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Site Topology Manager UI	—	✓	✓	✓	✓
Headless content delivery architecture	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Centralized configuration for microservices	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Public artifact repository	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Digital Experience Accelerator	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Translation Manager event system	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
External Content Library (API)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bulk load of items via API	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
UI notification API	✕	✓	✓	✓	✓
ETW tracing	—	✓	✓	✓	✓
Elasticsearch Engine	✕	✕	—	—	✓
Shared delivery platform (DXD)	✕	✕	✓	✓	✓
Shared taxonomies with SDL Tridion Docs	✕	✕	✓	✓	✓
GraphQL Content API	✕	✕	✓	✓	✓
Semantic Content Models	✕	✕	✕	✕	✓
Rolling Upgrade Support	✕	✓	✓	✓	✓
Docker container Support for DXD	✕	✕	✓	✓	✓
SAML 2.0 support	✕	✕	—	—	—
OpenID Connect	✕	✕	✕	✕	—
Technology agnostic integration framework	✕	✕	✕	✓	✓
Add-On Management	✕	✕	✕	✓	✓
Access Management UI	✕	✕	✕	✕	✓

Legend	✓ Full support	— Partial support	✕ No support

Why Upgrade to SDL Tridion Sites 9.5

Find out more
sdl.com/tridion

SDL*

SDL (LSE: SDL) is the intelligent language and content company. Our purpose is to enable global understanding, allowing organizations to communicate with their audiences worldwide, whatever the language, channel or touchpoint. We work with over 4,500 enterprise customers including 90 of the world's top brands and the majority of the largest companies in our target sectors. We help our customers overcome their content challenges of volume, velocity, quality, fragmentation, compliance and understanding through our unique combination of language services, language technologies and content technologies.

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