

The Top 10 Best New Features and Enhancements in Liferay DXP 7



BY

Vivek Agarwal

XTIVIA CTO

A Publication of

XTIVIA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	03
1. Liferay Forms	05
2. Geolocate Content & Documents	07
3. Image & Media Selector	08
4. Content Sharing Between Sites	09
5. Image Editor.....	10
6. Web Content Diffs	11
7. Lexicon.....	12
8. New Alloy Editor.....	13
9. Web Content Folder/Type Specific Workflow++ ...	14
10. Modularity.....	15
Conclusion.....	16

About the Author



Vivek Agarwal is our CTO and VP of the Digital Experience Solutions practice at XTIVIA. Vivek and his team have implemented hundreds of successful Portal and CMS technology solutions at enterprise and mid-sized clients since the year 2000, and he is considered a thought-leader in the digital experience space.

His team provides consulting, architecture, implementation, and support services around digital experience platforms, portals, content management, collaboration, integration, and other enterprise software.

Prior to his current responsibilities, Vivek served as a Systems Architect, delivering multiple global projects using Enterprise Java, Portal, and CMS technologies. He was also a member of the prestigious IBM Gold Consultant program.

Introduction

As many of you know we have been working for 10+ years on the Liferay platform, ever since the Liferay v3.6 days (circa 2006), and have seen the platform evolve and grow significantly over the years with each release. The recent release of Liferay Digital Experience Platform (DXP) 7.0 has seen a significant transformation of the Liferay platform from multiple perspectives - market positioning to begin with but more importantly being better aligned to affect change at all stages of the customer journey, while also enabling partners and employees to interact with customers to influence sentiment and support the relationship. The XTIVIA team and I will be writing more articles about what makes a Digital Experience Platform (DXP) different from a portal, why you should embrace DXP, why Liferay DXP is a great choice and more.

However, this article is not about the DXP features of Liferay 7 such as Campaign Manager and Single Customer View - some of these features will only be available later in the year and we will have an article that talks to them. Also Liferay DXP 7.0 has many developer-oriented changes and enhancements that introduce a seismic shift in the Liferay developer toolbox such as OSGi-based modularity, Elasticsearch replacing Lucene as the default search engine, SPA Enabler that magically transforms all portlets into Single Page Applications, new Liferay extension points like Portlet Filters, support for Bootstrap 3 and Java 8, [Blade CLI](#) to create new Liferay modules, and much more - however if you were hoping to read more about these then I am sorry to disappoint you - this article is not for the Liferay developer.

So what is this article about?

Well, well - Liferay DXP 7 incorporates a plethora of new features and improvements in the areas of Web Experience Management, Document Management and Collaboration, and Business Productivity, and this article is about my top 10 favorites among these. Some of these were easy to pick as they are big-bang features that affect most Liferay customers and many of XTIVIA's own customers have experienced the need for these - on the other hand given the vast number of features to pick from, determining what makes the cut and what features to leave out involved some tough choices and I am sure you can make a case for some that I left out. However, a top 10 list without some controversy (check out one of my previous articles [TOP 10 REASONS WHY LIFERAY IS THE BEST ENTERPRISE PORTAL PRODUCT](#) that provoked some controversy) is no fun!

Without further ado, let me dive into my top 10 list -

1. Liferay Forms

Top of the list are the seismic changes and improvements in Liferay forms which has undergone a huge overhaul starting with the UI of the Form Designer and adding various [advanced capabilities](#) including –

1. Splitting a form into multiple pages so that you can create wizard-like forms
2. Ability to control the layout of the form including organizing form fields into multiple columns on a given form page. This can also support complex layouts wherein each row can have a different number of columns.
3. Ability to populate a form dropdown (i.e. a Select field) with a REST Data Provider - this can be extremely useful when you need to let a user pick a value from a list, where the list of values come from some back-end system such as SAP, Salesforce, Oracle eBusiness Suite, and others.
4. Conditional display/hiding of a field - i.e. making a field appear based on the value entered into another field
5. Enabling workflow for the form
6. Providing a predefined value or a placeholder value for a given field
7. Validating fields using a number of different criteria
8. Incorporating captcha into a form
9. Redirecting users to a landing page (or a specific URL) after a form submission

The screenshot displays the Liferay DXP 7 Form Designer interface for creating a new form. The top header is blue with a 'New Form' title and a back arrow. Below the header, the form is titled 'XTIVIA Contact Us Form' with a subtitle: 'A contact form that allows site visitors to contact XTIVIA about our various solution offerings'. A dropdown menu on the right offers options: 'Add New Page', 'Delete Current Page', and 'Switch Pagination Mode'.

The form structure is shown as a horizontal timeline with three steps: '1 Tell us about yourself', '2 Your interests', and '3 Your needs'. The first step is expanded, showing a form layout with the following elements:

- Title: 'Tell us about yourself' with a subtitle 'Add a short description for this page.' and a note 'All fields marked with * are required.'
- Fields: 'First Name *', 'Last Name *', and 'Company *' are arranged in a row. Below them, 'Phone Number *' and 'Email *' are arranged in a row.
- Buttons: A blue button with a plus icon and the text 'ADD FIELD' is located at the bottom of the form section.

At the bottom of the interface, there are 'Save' and 'Cancel' buttons.

Figure 1: Revamped Liferay DXP 7 Form Designer

2. Geolocate Content & Documents

Geolocation is a new feature in Liferay DXP 7 that enables you to add the geographic coordinates where an asset was created, as metadata to your assets. You can add geolocation metadata to your web content, data lists, and documents & media. This feature is provided for you out-of-the-box by Liferay Portal 7 including visualization via Asset Publisher.

Latest Liferay Events Pictures



Figure 2: Map Visualization of Liferay Assets

3. Image & Media Selector

Modern, compelling sites and content incorporate beautiful imagery and videos, and as a content author, you are often adding images in web content articles. Before Liferay 7, you had access to an image selector that left a lot to be desired as you could not preview pre-loaded images in Liferay's Documents and Media before adding them. Liferay 7 completely revamps the image and media selection experience making it easier to browse images visually, preview images, select image sources, and search for images.

This improved image and media selector is used wherever you have this need including blogs.



Figure 3: Image Selector - Browse Images



Figure 4: Image Selector - Preview Image

4. Content Sharing Between Sites

Before Liferay 7, when you wanted to share a web content structure or template between different sites you had to put this common item in the Global scope. Starting with Liferay 7, you can share these artifacts with your child sites. As the administrator of a child site, you will be able to use all the structures, templates, categories, application display templates, and data definitions (dynamic data lists) from any of your parent sites that allow for it (this can be disabled in Site Settings).

5. Image Editor

Liferay DXP 7 now comes with a built-in [image editor](#) that makes it easier for a content author to make small adjustments to images within Liferay itself instead of going to a separate tool to make edits and to re-upload the modified file to Liferay. The image editor was designed with quick editing in mind, and offers a minimal, user-friendly UI with 3 primary options –

1. Transform tools - crop, resize and rotate
2. Adjustment tools - saturation, contrast and brightness
3. Filters such as chroma, rouge, glimmer and others

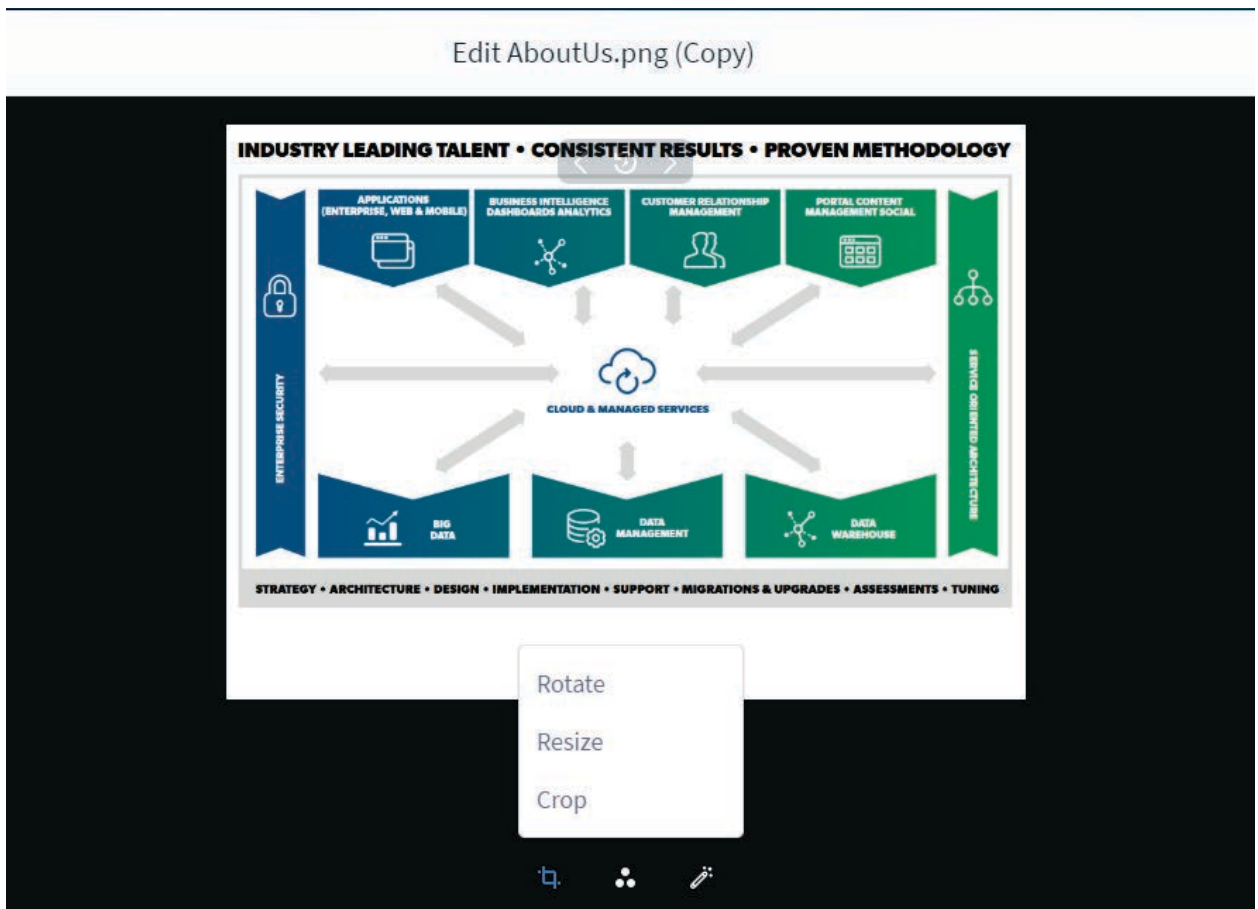


Figure 5: Image Editor - Transform Tools

6. Web Content Diffs

While Liferay has always allowed content managers to view the complete change history of a given web content article and to view a specific version of the article, it has lacked a visual diff tool that lets you compare two versions of an article. With Liferay DXP 7, this shortcoming has been addressed - the new web content Diff tool lets you compare versions of the article and highlight the differences between the two. The tool provides color coded highlighting to emphasize additions and deletions between the two articles.

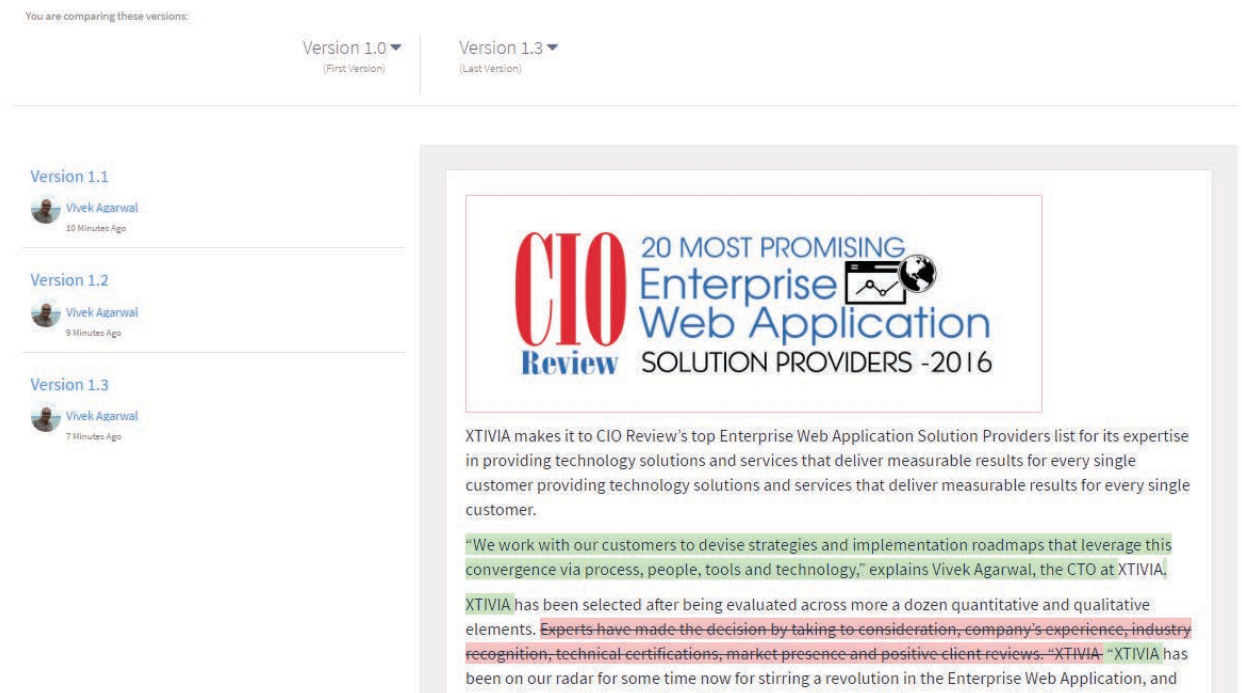


Figure 6: Compare Web Content Versions

7. Lexicon

Liferay DXP 7 introduces [Lexicon](#) which is Liferay's Experience Language, providing styling guidelines and best practices for designing your web applications inside and outside of Liferay. Lexicon is an extension of Bootstrap's existing framework, and designed to be fluid and extensible for the user. Lexicon defines styles for various UI elements including alerts, badges, dropdowns, pagination, progress bars, and much more - for a complete list refer to [Lexicon's github site](#). Liferay DXP 7 leverages Lexicon to completely revamp the UI of various out-of-the-box applications to be modern and consistent - additionally, you can use Lexicon for your custom applications to ensure consistency with the out-of-the-box components.

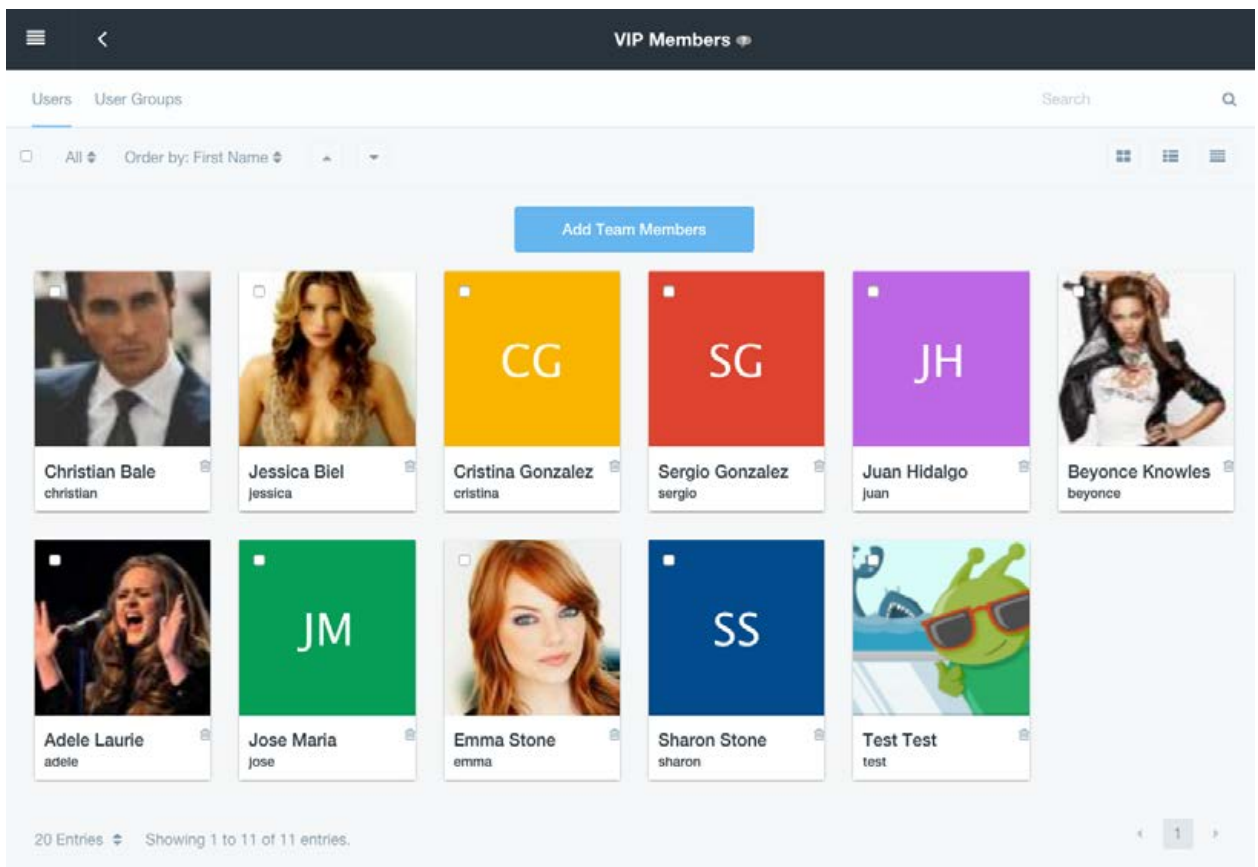


Figure 7: Lexicon Sample - Site Members Application

8. New Alloy Editor

Liferay 7 introduce the new AlloyEditor - a modern editor with an intelligent UI that provides multiple, context-based toolbars, which change their appearance depending on the selected element - image or text. A UI, which allows a developer to add or remove buttons to these toolbars from a simple configuration or even on the fly. AlloyEditor is built on top of CKEditor and like any modern editor, places the toolbar just next to the selection.

On top of that, AlloyEditor also offers some plugins. One of them is a plugin, which allows Drag&Drop of images directly in the editor. Another one is the placeholder plugin, which works just as the standard placeholder HTML5 attribute, but it also allows specifying a class to be added when there is no value in the editor's area.

All in all, the AlloyEditor takes the rich content editing UI to another level!

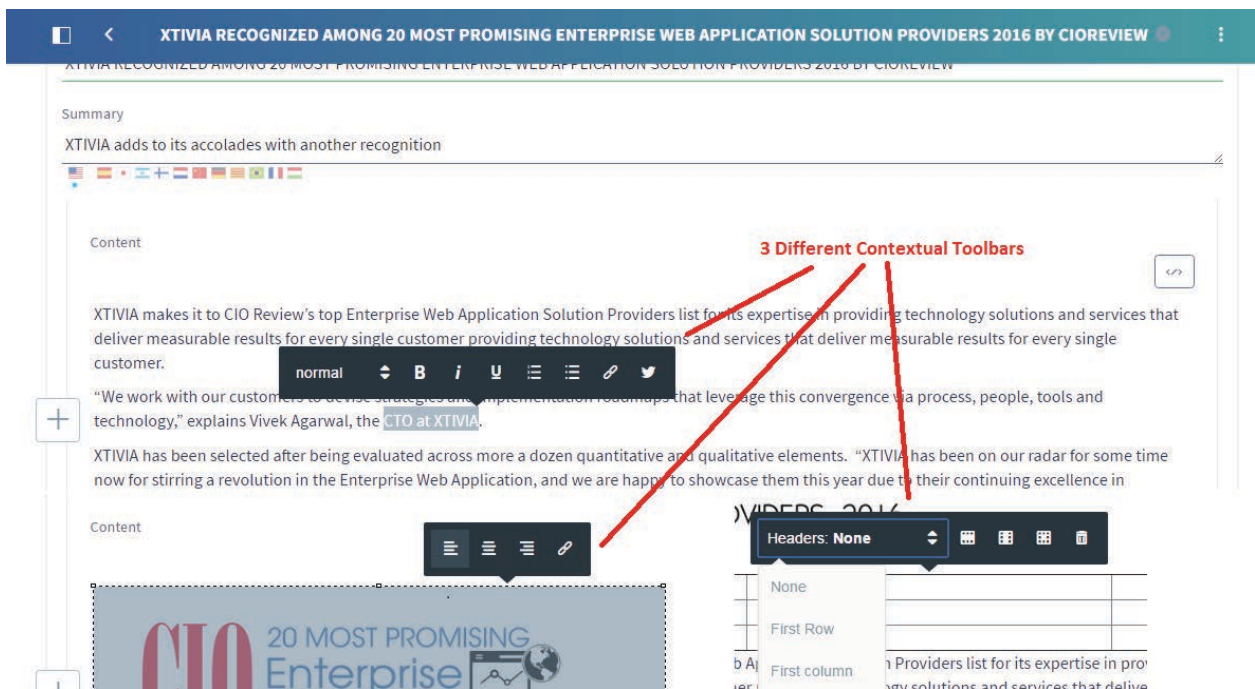


Figure 8: AlloyEditor - Contextual Toolbars

9. Web Content Folder/Type Specific Workflows++

Liferay 7 now allows you to configure different workflows for different web content folders as well as different web content structures - as an example, this makes it easier to put press releases and HR announcements through their own specific workflows. Additionally (and this is where the ++ comes in), you can now restrict a given web content folder to only allow web content of a specific type (i.e. structure).

And from an end user perspective, they can now subscribe to specific web content folders. Users should be able to filter notifications per web content type as well. Users that are subscribed will receive an email every time a web content article is added within the scope of the subscription. And in case you are wondering, the emails will be configurable using a template, in a way consistent with all other email notifications in Liferay.

10. Modularity

The developer in me could not resist including this one - while on the surface OSGi-based modularity smells like an architect / developer oriented feature, you will care about modularity even if you are a business stakeholder. Modularity results in a more agile platform that shortens develop-deploy-test cycles, and allows for more frequent releases of both custom and Liferay DXP platform features. This reduces the time it takes to get new functionality in the hands of end-users and benefits you - both the business stakeholder of the Liferay-based system and the end-user.

Conclusion

So that was my top 10 list of new features and key enhancements in Liferay DXP 7 core - feel free to join the discussion by commenting on this post or contacting info@xtivia.com.

And before I wrap up this article, I do want to remind you that there are a number of other improvements that I deem relevant and useful but they did not make to my top 10 list - ordering web content by priority in asset publisher, versioning of web content structures and templates, embed a portlet in a theme and make it configurable, add cc and bcc email recipients for workflow notifications, accessibility features like new keyboard navigation to any place in a page, and much more. Be sure to check out Liferay DXP 7, or contact me to discuss my favorite features, to learn more about the other new features or see a demo.



Got questions?

We have the answers!



AVAYA



BOSCH

Schneider
Electric



Our deep knowledge and know-how have been honed with each project we build for our customers. We know how to deliver successful projects and look forward to helping you make your business better.

Contact us today:
info@xtivia.com
Call 1-888-685-3101 ext. 2

