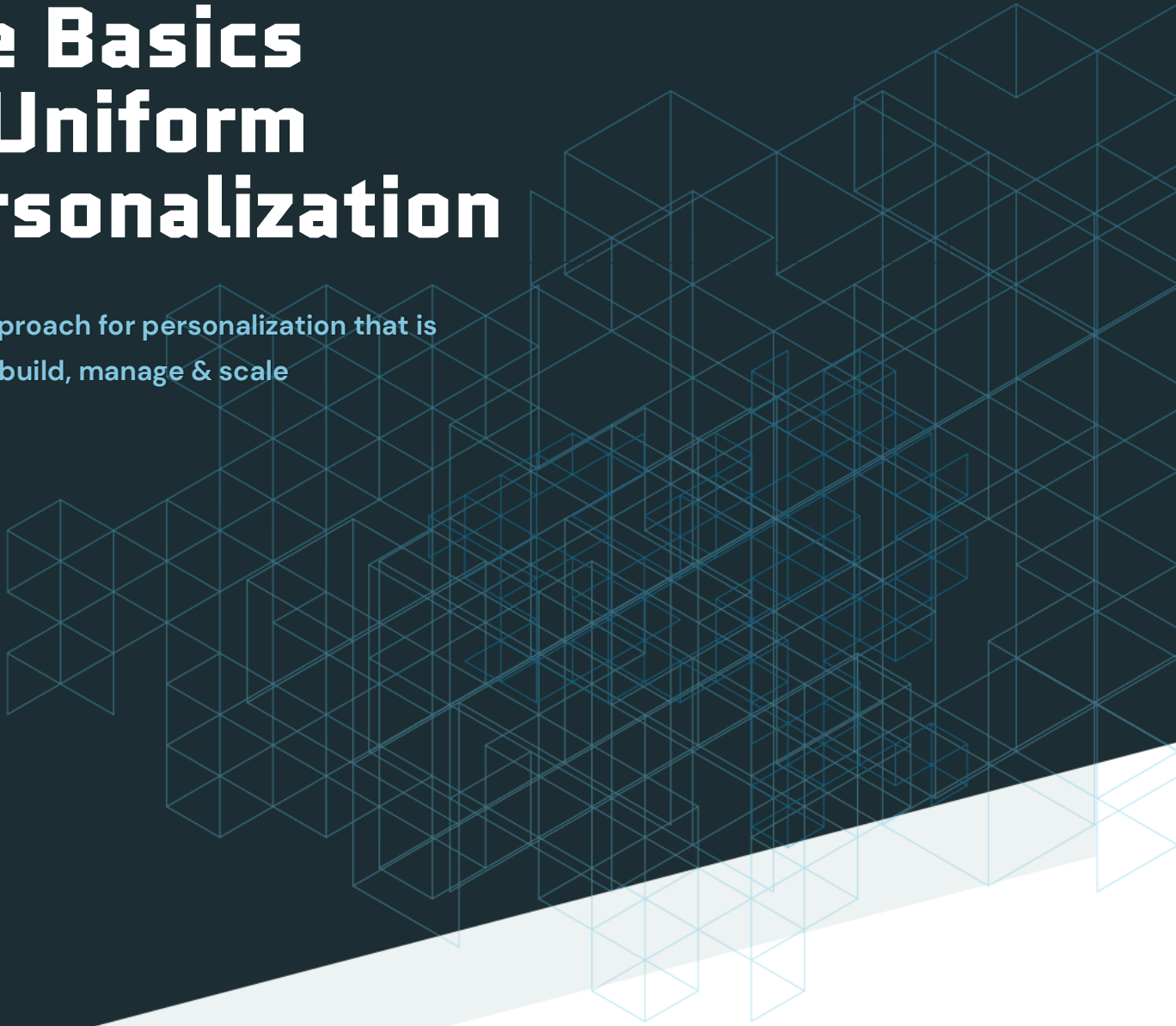# uniform

The Basics of Uniform Personalization

A new approach for personalization that is easier to build, manage & scale

I t all starts with a single, ambitious goal: making it possible for anyone using a content management system built on modern tools to take advantage of personalization. Unlike traditional personalization paradigms, which are slow, complex, and limited, Uniform offers a fast, elegant, and powerful approach that unifies the diverse components of your Digital Experience Platform (DXP) and greatly enhances the value that each piece provides.

Market research has delivered the same results over and over again: users love a personalized Web experience but hate a slow-responding site. Visitors will abandon slow sites before they have a chance to see any personalized content. And now that Google has increased its emphasis on performance by prioritizing fast pages in its search ranking, visitors may not even find brands with slow sites in the first place.

While personalization is not the only factor that affects site performance, it is often the hardest to improve. How can a brand deliver personalized experiences to their visitors without paying the high price of slow performance? The answer is out there, but you have to break the rules.

The trouble with playing by the rules

Traditional personalization paradigms rely on a series of instructions known as *rules* that usually take the form of if/then statements, such as "If the user clicks a link related to European travel, then change the list of suggested links she sees to travel destinations in Europe." Although this rules-based approach often starts out straightforward, it can quickly grow tangled and complex as your requirements inevitably expand.

This maze of ifs and thens is not just complicated and increasingly difficult to manage and debug. It also has the potential to slow your site down to a crawl. A web server somewhere must run each rule on a page. This is called origin-based personalization. The visitor does not see the page until all the rules have been run. The more rules the web server needs to run, the more work the web server needs to perform, the slower the site becomes. The more pages a visitor views, the slower the site becomes. The more visitors a site handles, the slower the site becomes. And so on.

## The old rules were made to be broken

The dilemma so many sites face – a personalized site or a fast site – is a false choice. It is possible to have both, but you need technology designed with both personalization and

performance in mind. The old tools that depend on rules-based and origin-based personalization were never designed to deliver fast performance.

Uniform is a new generation of digital experience technology that replaces the excessive complexity and slow performance of rules-based and origin-based personalization with an alternative that is more intuitive to configure, effortlessly scalable, and blindingly fast for your visitors.

The key to a simpler, more scalable personalization system is based on the twin concepts of **intents** and **signals**. Unlike rules-based personalization, which often starts out straightforward but quickly becomes complex and unmanageable, intents and signals remain both simple and scalable throughout the ever-changing personalization process.

"Simple" rule-based personalization
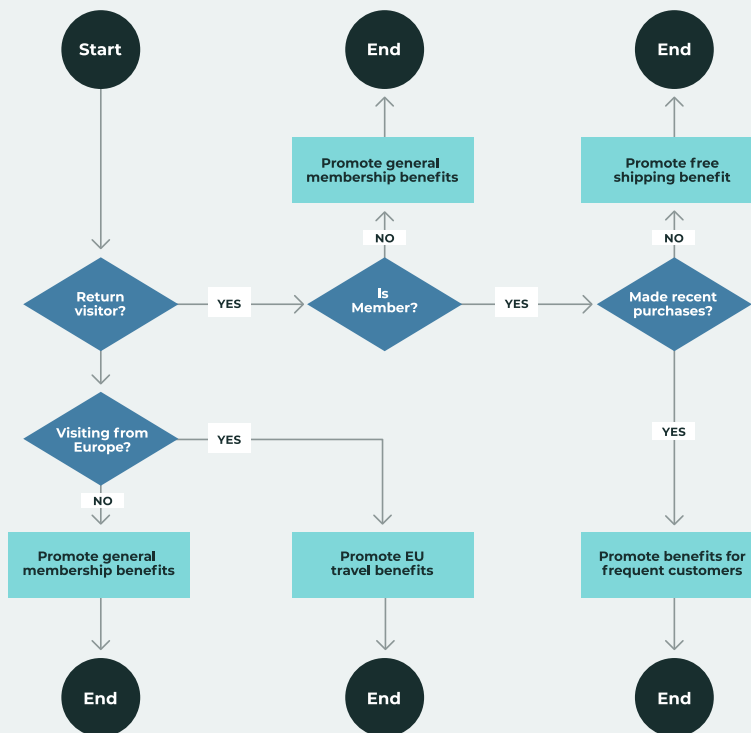
Getting answers to your site's most important questions

Why do visitors come to your site in the first place? What is their purpose? What is their goal? Intents are designed to answer all of these questions. They define the possible goals your visitors may have for coming to your site and consuming your content and provide a base for effectively meeting, refining, and anticipating each visitor's specific needs.

For example, if you are developing a site for an upcoming conference devoted to personalization, you can anticipate the potential members of your audience will have several different intents. For example:

- **Developers** are seeking to familiarize themselves with the technology behind the latest developments in personalization.

- **Marketers** are anxious to make the most of these technologies but have neither the skills nor the desire to get into the weeds to find out how these technologies work.

- **Marketing technologists**, technically skilled people who design and operate technology solutions in the service of marketing, are concerned with understanding how all the different marketing systems they are responsible for can support personalization.

- **Experts** are interested not only in checking out the conference curriculum but in possibly submitting a paper.

How can personalization determine whether a visitor is a developer, a marketer, a marketing technologist, or a potential presenter? The answer lies in a simple but powerful concept known as signals.

Each new signal sharpens a personalization profile

Each action your site's visitors take – including how they reached the site in the first place – provides another clue as to their motivations or interests. Each clue is a signal, a way in which Uniform identifies in real-time the intent of visitors to your site or users of your app.

Using signals provides a level of detail and granularity that the traditional rules-based approach would find difficult to rival. Each new signal sharpens the picture of an ongoing visitor's profile,enabling you to better accommodate their specific interests and needs.

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Signal categories

Although signals can take a variety of forms, they typically fall into three basic categories:

Request signals include cookies, query strings, page routes, and anything else that is triggered by a browser's request. For example, if a visitor navigates to the site from a QR code at a bus stop in a part of town with a high concentration of creative agencies, this may signal the visitor has a developer intent.

Behavior signals are activated when the user views any content that has been associated with a specific intent. For example, if a visitor reserves a seat in a session in the "social media" track at the conference, that may signal the visitor has a marketer intent.

Programmatic signals are be added by developers, usually to correspond with a physical action performed by the visitor, such as clicks, scrolls, and mouseovers. For example, if your site has an animated architecture diagram that the visitor is interacting with, that may signal the visitor has a marketing technologist intent.

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Client-side data storage provides privacy & security

Because the intents and signals are stored locally on the visitor's browser instead of on some distant server, Uniform provides more privacy and security for your visitors. The stricter standards for privacy required by regulations such as Europe's GDPR can be met without diminishing the visitor's personalization experience. The visitor has total control over their data and can inspect or delete that data at any time.

In addition, Uniform does not depend on any third-party Javascript tags to collect data. This is important in the face of privacy-driven changes being rolled out to browsers, such as the death of third-party cookies. Although these changes may send some companies back to the drawing board to reconsider their personalization approach, customers using Uniform will be unaffected by this disruption. When it comes to strengthened privacy requirements, Uniform is already way ahead of the curve, because Uniform was designed with privacy in mind.

Finally, because Uniform does not have a central location where visitor behavior is stored, the risk of a security breach where customer data is stolen is nonexistent.

Uniform excels because it plays well with others

Another key advantage to being built using a decoupled and integration-friendly Jamstack architecture is that Uniform orchestrates a clean composable design that enables you to readily harmonize with the features from each of the systems that make up your digital experience platform. DAMs, CMSs, analytics systems, e-commerce systems, and more all adapt readily, without all of the time, risk, and expense of custom integration, to better serve the visitor's personal preferences and needs. With

Defining new signals

Defining a new signal is simple and straightforward. Each signal has the following properties:

Name is a label that describes the signal.

Type describes the how the signal is triggered. Examples of signal types include "page view" and "visitor country code". Signals are often grouped into categories to help understand them.

Strength is a relative measure of interest. Lots of actions can trigger signals, but they aren't always going to be of equal strength. For example, a visitor who is idly browsing your site and stumbles upon a product page isn't sending as strong a signal as someone who used the search capabilities on your site to find the product.

Scope describes how long the signal is relevant. For example, some signals are only significant for the current visit, while other signals stay with the visitor for all time.

no complex rules to keep track of or convoluted code to untangle, you can typically tap into the power and flexibility of Uniform's speedy, semi-automated personalization just by clicking a few boxes and selecting a handful of menu items.

The net result is powerful and impressive. Personalization that once took months to plan and integrate can often be implemented in days and updated and expanded in a matter of minutes. Rather than getting hopelessly bogged down in an elaborate and fragile set of rules that increase your site's complexity, you can devote your time to making each visitor's journey easier, more enjoyable, more rewarding, and ultimately more profitable, both for them and for you.

uniform

www.uniform.dev   hi@uniform.dev