Headless CMS Frontend Frameworks

Every option at a glance: how it's built, how much JavaScript it ships, and the pros and cons.

OPTION	CLIENT JS	PROS	CONS	BEST FOR
SPA & Hybrid Frameworks: state persists between pages, JavaScript router handles navigation				
Next.js React, hybrid SPA	`High`	+ Every CMS ships SDKs, previews and starters for it first + Largest hiring pool and component ecosystem + Server components, SSR and static in one framework	- Heavy bundles and hydration cost - Fast API churn, complicated caching - Nudges teams toward pricey Vercel hosting	App-heavy portals, authenticated dashboards, deep SaaS SDK reliance
Nuxt Vue, hybrid SPA	`Moderate to high`	+ Clean routing, strong Storyblok and Directus fit + Nitro deploys to Workers, Lambda or Node, no lock-in	- Still hydrates pure content pages - Fewer enterprise third-party wrappers in the US	Visual-first marketing websites, multi-cloud edge flexibility
SvelteKit Svelte, hybrid SPA or MPA	`Very low`	+ Compiler, no virtual DOM runtime + Built on web standards, lean on Workers + `csr = false` makes any route zero-JS	- Fewer plug-and-play vendor SDKs - Occasional hand-written integrations	Interactive journalism, data viz, fast custom apps
MPA Options: every URL is a real HTML document, JavaScript only where needed				
Astro MPA + islands	`Zero by default`	+ Modern components, official CMS SDKs + Islands: React, Vue or Svelte only where needed + Static or edge SSR, top Core Web Vitals	- Cross-page UI state needs islands or workarounds	Content and marketing platforms that want modern component DX
Hono + Workers Edge-rendered JSX	`Zero`	+ No build step, renders at the edge in under 15ms + Type-safe JSX, no React sent to the browser + Natural fit for push cache on KV or R2	- More custom code, fewer ready-made CMS SDKs - Tied to an edge runtime	High-volume publishers running Cloudflare push cache pipelines
HTMX / Alpine AJAX HTML over the wire	`About 14 KB`	+ Filtering, search and Load More without an SPA + No client JSON parsing or duplicated state	- Needs HTML fragment endpoints - Not suited to app-like persistent state	Content directories, dynamic filtering and search
Eleventy / Hugo Static site generators	`Zero`	+ Plain HTML files on any CDN or bucket + Hugo builds 50,000+ pages in seconds + Eleventy is simple, no client boilerplate	- Draft previews need separate edge routes - No per-request personalization	Documentation hubs, research archives
HTML, CSS & Vanilla JS Native web MPA	`Zero (custom only)`	+ Fastest possible, smallest attack surface + Never deprecates, no npm dependency rot + View transitions and speculation rules built in	- No framework conventions, you build the structure - Complex client state takes more work	Maximum speed and 10 years of low-churn maintenance

Choose SPA or hybrid when
it's a stateful application that happens to have content: customer portals, carts, continuous media players, logged-in tools.

Choose MPA when
the job is publishing, ranking in search and AI engines, converting visitors and handling traffic spikes on lean infrastructure.

Don't choose out of hiring fear
Strong engineers pick up a new framework in days, and Claude Code or Codex removes the syntax barrier.