

ADOBE EXPERIENCE MANAGER

MARKET REPORT
Q2 - 2015



COMMUNITY
Solution Partner



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**THE SPECIALISTS IN
IT RECRUITMENT SINCE 1986**

AEM MARKET OVERVIEW

After a slight dip in demand for AEM talent in Q1 we are now seeing the highest demand levels that we've ever seen in the market. As predicted, many companies waited until the announced release of AEM 6.1 at this year's Adobe Summit in March to move forward with their upgrade plans. We call this the "iPhone effect" and similarly to the way that nobody wants to upgrade their iPhone in summer because Apple generally releases their newest version in the fall most companies wait to upgrade their AEM platform until after the Adobe Summit. This is a trend we've seen for 3 years now and unless Adobe changes their release cycle we can expect to see it going forward. Version 6.1 was announced at this year's Summit and was released for general use on May 28th of 2015. Already several customers are jumping onboard with this latest update which has driven the biggest increase in demand over the quarter during the last 2 months.

Although demand is high, the market has changed significantly over the last 12 months. With the introduction of Sightly with AEM 6.0 the game has changed and although it hasn't been evident as to exactly why these changes are occurring as you begin to analyze some of the technology enhancements AEM 6 brought to the table things become crystal clear. The typical makeup of an AEM implementation, upgrade or maintenance team consists mostly of developers. This is the most common role and usually in the highest demand. Before AEM 6 came along most components and templates were developed using serverside Java/JSP. Sightly, is an easy to use secure templating language that makes the AEM component development process easier, allowing Web developers (who are typically not well versed in the serverside Java/JSP) to develop these components themselves. This means that unlike previous upgrades of AEM candidates need to have worked with version 6 to be able to work on 6.1 and future releases. Developers that mostly focused on serverside technologies are no longer the AEM developers of the future and likewise a door has been opened for Web Developers to add a valuable new skill to their skillset. This is creating a significant shift in the skills needed for AEM developers, and no longer can companies simply "train up" Java developers to do the development on their platform.

In the Architect world we're seeing a massive shortage of talent. I've actually regularly called this "The Great Architect Shortage of 2015" because in the last 4 years I've never quite seen anything like this. Don't get me wrong, there has always been a shortage of Architects in the AEM market but never so glaringly obvious as we're currently seeing. With so many new implementations, there is simply not enough talent out there to handle the demand. Unlike development, good Architecture is a tenured skill that only comes about through experience and longevity working in the Software Development Life Cycle. You can't just send people on a training and expect them to be able to architect an enterprise level CMS solution for a global company. As such we're predicting that this demand will stay high throughout the rest of 2015.

Overall the market is booming and AEM is continuing to gain traction as the CMS of choice for organizations both large and small.

**“ WITH THE INTRODUCTION OF SIGHTLY WITH
AEM 6.0 THE GAME HAS CHANGED ”**

WHAT'S NEW WITH AEM 6.1

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What's new?

Adobe Experience Manager 6.1 is an upgrade release to the Adobe Experience Manager 6.0 code base. It provides new and enhanced functionality, key customer fixes, high priority customer enhancements and general bug fixes oriented toward product stabilization. It also includes all Adobe Experience Manager 6.0 feature pack, hot fix, and service pack releases.

Experience Manager Platform

The platform of Adobe Experience Manager 6.1 build on top of updated versions of the OSGi-based framework (Apache Sling and Apache Felix) and the Java Content Repository: Apache Jackrabbit Oak 1.2.

The Quickstart uses the Eclipse Jetty 9.2.9 as servlet engine.

Security

6.1 includes a range a new and improved capabilities to maintain a secure deployment and run a secure web property. Most notable is a new Cross-Site Request Forgery (CSRF) protection, with that the server does extra checks on POST, PUT and DELETE HTTP requests from browser to avoid CSRF attacks.

Note: With previous releases, for deployments that leverage the Token/Cookie authentication, sticky session was required between multiple publish instances. AEM 6.1 no longer requires sticky session on the load balancer to keep a token/cookie based authentication. This is possible due to a new Crypto Token implementation.

Further, the 'nosamplecontent' server run mode was extended to also deploy a range of 'secure by default' best practices, that with previous releases had to be manually configured.

Repository

Since the introduction of Apache Jackrabbit Oak with AEM 6.0 in 2014, the successor of CRX2, Adobe and the community have improved and extended a wide range of aspects.

Here a few highlights:

- Introduce cold standby topology with TarMK for simplified disaster recovery deployments
- Substantial search improvements, in default configuration at install/update and possibilities to tune the search performance.
- New UI that shows slow queries and explain query execution in details, and tool to manage search index.
- Simplified maintenance operations, adding support to purge audit logs and compaction to reclaim disk space.
- Added option to use a relational database as repository persistence.

Note

Adobe has removed support for CRX2 with 6.1. The release update routine converts the existing CRX2 repository to Oak during the update (CRX2Oak).

Component Framework

In Version 6.0, Adobe introduced Sightly and Sling Models, as new way to develop components, in an time efficient and secure way. AEM version 6.1 delivers incremental improvements to the new approach.

New in Sightly 1.1:

new <sly> element as alternative to data-sly-unwrap

URI manipulation options (e.g. `_${'http://foo.com/test.html'@ scheme='https', extension='json'}` outputs `https://foo.com/test.json`)

Allow `java.util.Locale` objects to be used in `i18n` locale option `data-sly-repeat` (alternative to `data-sly-list` that repeats the whole element, instead of just the content) improved performance (on par with JSP) and around 150 bug fixes since 6.0 the specification and implementation for Apache Sling of Sightly are open source (since end of 2014)



User Interface

Experience Manager 6.1 includes the Classic UI (same as in AEM 6.0) and Touch-optimized UI. The Touch-optimized UI in 6.1 is substantially extended to efficiently cover every-day use cases of marketing and content management practitioners. The user interface and interaction patterns aligns with the Adobe Marketing Cloud. Please refer to the individual areas of AEM on the detailed enhancements done to the Touch-optimized UI.

For Web Developers, 6.1 includes Plug-ins for Eclipse, Extension for Brackets and the web-based UI CRXDE Lite. Brackets, integrated with the Creative Cloud Extract service, allows efficient update of templates/ components based on designs created in Adobe Photoshop.

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Workflow

The focus for AEM 6.1 was to improve the throughput of workflow tasks that can be executed by the workflow engine, by optimizing various parts of the way workflow steps are run within AEM. Customers that update to 6.1 should see that workflows take less time to complete (in particular with lots of them running in parallel), and take less resources to run on the server.

Summary of improvements:

Introduction of transient workflows, that runs the workflow tasks in memory and don't persist them in the repository. This has to be enabled on the workflow level, and is useful for shot-lived workflow where no audit, or history is needed.

Internal changes, such as reducing JCR observation listeners, amount of Sling Jobs needed to run workflow tasks.

APIs

AEM 6.1 introduces a new simplified remote HTTP API based on JSON+Siren. This allows easier interaction with 3rd party tools to read and write content into/from the repository, compared to lower-level Sling HTTP API.

Supported Platforms

With 6.1, Adobe recommends to use Java 8 with a 64bit JVM as default. Exceptions are deployments on web application servers - such as IBM WebSphere that come recommended with their JVMs. Please consult the Supported Platform list for all details.



FOCUS ON PERMANENT

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The demand for Adobe Experience Manager talent is yet again on the rise. According to our data demand for AEM talent is up 223% from June 2014 and with this we have seen a huge increase in demand for full-time talent. Of the 500+ firms in the United States currently using AEM in some capacity, the biggest trend that we're seeing in the market is the desire for talent in-house. Most companies use Adobe Implementation Partners to install and setup their AEM environment but at some point realize that they need in-house talent for maintenance. We've spoken to several firms this quarter who are desperate to get some talent in house to make the implementation more cost effective and shift the focus to a more long term approach.

Hiring a full-time employee in the AEM space is not like hiring other types of candidates. This is a skill that is in extremely highly demanded and requires a focused and well mapped out recruiting approach if you want to get the right people in the door. To help ensure that your recruitment process goes as smoothly as possible. We've compiled the below list of mistakes that we most commonly see.

Mistake #1

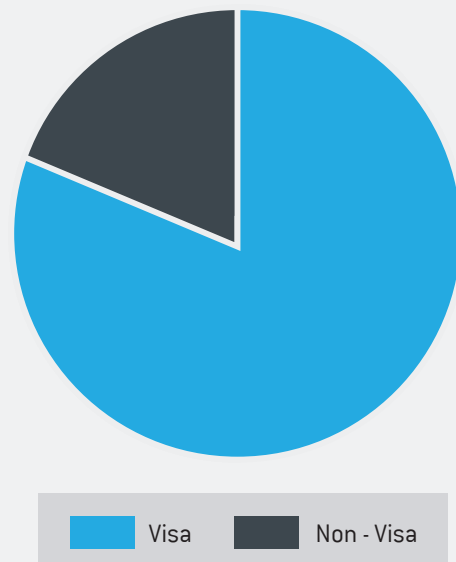
Not Transferring Visa's

According to our data 85% of the AEM candidate market is made up of H1B Visa holders, therefore clients who cannot transfer an H1B will loose out on 85% of an already extremely small candidate pool. It's already very difficult to acquire talent when dealing with such a niche talent pool and to cut your talent options by 85% is a very dangerous move. Typically there are 10 – 15 candidates available at any given time in the market and this lowers your candidate pool to 1-2. With so much competition for the same talent this is definitely not shifting the odds in your favor to get your role filled.

Solution

We recommend finding a way to offer a visa transfer with Greencard sponsorship to make your role as attractive as possible or else look at hiring a long-term contractor instead. In the end this will save a ton of time that will be wasted hoping the right candidate will come through when in reality waiting will be the only thing being done.

AEM Candidate Pool



“ CLIENTS WHO CANNOT TRANSFER AN H1B WILL LOSE OUT ON 85% OF AN ALREADY SMALL CANDIDATE POOL ”



Mistake #2

Too Lengthy of a hiring process

Although it may make sense to make sure that 3 intensive rounds of interviews happen and that everyone in your team meets a potential candidate at the end of the day it's more than likely going to be a waste of time. Right now there are 19 jobs available for every AEM developer on the market and 32 jobs for every Architect. Some candidates are getting upwards of 20 emails a week about jobs. So while you're taking your time making sure the candidate is "the right" fit someone else is offering and on boarding that candidate you want.

Solution

We recommend mapping out an efficient hiring process. This doesn't mean not doing your due diligence, what it does mean is making sure that you have everything lined up to make the time between first interview to written offer as short as possible. If you want to be competitive leave the long process to the amateurs. In a niche market like AEM your hiring should take no longer than 2 weeks, and if you want to ensure that you beat your competition to the best candidates shorten it to 1 week. This will save time, money and ultimately show everyone that you know what you're doing and are serious about building your internal team.

“ RIGHT NOW THERE ARE 19 JOBS AVAILABLE FOR EVERY AEM DEVELOPER ON THE MARKET AND 32 JOBS FOR EVERY ARCHITECT ”

Mistake #3

Being Afraid to Offer Remote Work

Right now as you're reading this report there are hundreds of AEM implementations and upgrades happening around the world and the majority of them are utilizing remote resources in some form or fashion. The fact of the matter is that AEM work can be done remotely and if you're not willing to consider this in some form or fashion some other company hiring is and will have your people in a heartbeat. Combined with the H1B issue mentioned above this mistake can absolutely destroy your chances of finding someone. 85% of the AEM market is not willing to relocate if you combine this with only looking for a non visa candidate you've now reduced your candidate pool to 2.25% and with an average of 10-14 candidates available at any given time this comes out to 0.25-0.35 of a candidate to work on your project and since we all know that 25% of a person means they're dead you're role is probably going to stay open for the foreseeable future.

AEM Cities & Jobs: Candidate Statistics

- New York
15: 1 with the average compensation ranging from \$114K to \$145K
- Chicago
15:1 with the average salary ranging from \$118K
- San Francisco
18:1 with the average salary ranging from \$120K to \$183K
- Atlanta
10: 1 with the average salary ranging from \$78K to \$114K
- San Jose
18:1 with the average salary ranging from \$118K to \$183K

FOCUS ON CONTRACT

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In the Contracting world the AEM market is evolving and expanding very quickly. It seems like just yesterday developers were creating custom components on CQ5.3. Now the market has transitioned from 5.4, to 5.5, to 5.6, to 5.6.1 to momentarily settling on a content management system that we now know as AEM 6.1 (ADOBE Experience Manager).

Being a specialists in this market has allowed us to see all the ups and downs of this very niche product. And over the years it has also granted us the privilege of being able to study the trends of what makes a client or consultant the most appealing in this market. If there is one thing that I know about this market, it is that the only consistent thing in it is change. We are all familiar with the term "survival of the fittest", and there is nothing more true with this rapidly growing technology. Being the fittest candidate in this industry means having exposure and possible hands on experience with the latest versions and certifications of AEM. This makes the difference between those who just survive and those that actually thrive in this world. The candidates that have even a couple months of AEM6 experience are the first ones being looked at for newly open roles, and they are being offered more money as well.

My advice to consultants is to do their best to change with the times. Developers and architects alike have to change because the clients are changing. The clients are changing because the product is evolving. What many consultants fail to understand is that every time a new version of AEM is released it is almost like the market gets reset. That means that the clients that have this product are most likely going to want the newest version with all the latest, special features. If you are in between projects and you have the option of choosing between a project that is upgrading to CQ5.6.1 or a project that is upgrading to AEM6.0 wisdom would say to go for the project with AEM6. If you have the opportunity to be on a project that is working on AEM6 leap at it, because there are already several companies that are upgrading to AEM6.1. If you did not know that there was already an AEM6.1 then you are already behind the curve. If you are interested in finding a new AEM6.0 project to make a transition to then feel free to reach out to our specialist team.



“ WE ARE ALL FAMILIAR WITH THE TERM “SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST & THERE IS NOTHING MORE TRUE WITH THIS RAPIDLY GROWING TECHNOLOGY ”

Current Nationwide Average Rates (per hr.)

Skill	Hourly Rate
Testing	\$70-95
Developer	\$90-125
Lead Developer	\$110-\$150
Project Manager/Business Analyst	\$95-\$150
Technical Architect	\$145-\$200
Solution Architect	\$145-\$200

*Please note these rates are charge rates to end clients. If you are looking at pay rates you'll need to reduce by at least 20%.

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Through the Eyes of a Candidate

We speak with a wide array of candidates across the country, from developers to senior architects. We've discussed important factors in choosing an AEM position and how they currently see the market.

When deciding whether or not to take a job, rate is an incredibly important factor. The AEM skill set is already a rare talent in the market, and the candidates know their skills are highly sought after. Especially with the new certifications of AEM 6.0, many candidates desire a higher rate for their skill set. With remote roles becoming more popular, candidates desire a premium for on-site positions. This can actually be a negotiating factor for many clients we've dealt with.

The company brand is also a deciding factor for the candidates. Candidates want to have well-known, established brand names on their resumes. Many candidates are starting to request end-client positions only, rather than working through a digital marketing agency or consulting firm. Company culture is incredibly important as well: candidates want to work in a supportive, exciting environment where they actually want to be at work. Many candidates think companies should sell why their company is a great place to work in addition to selling the actual position.

There has also been a slight increase in candidates who are more hesitant to relocate for a position. They have grown roots, started families, and do not want to leave all of that behind. Other candidates travel for their own leisure, so they want to be able to work from anywhere rather than being stuck in one place. Many candidates only have interest in positions with remote options, so they can be closer to their families or have more freedom to travel.

For candidates, the market provides constant opportunity. Many candidates are signing off on their next contract while they are still finishing up the last project: there is hardly any down time in between. However, since the release of AEM 6, some candidates are experiencing lulls in between projects due to their lack of 6.0 experience. They see companies only wanting developers and architects with months of 6.0 practice, and a majority of candidates find this incredibly limiting in their contract search.

“ MANY CANDIDATES ARE SIGNING OFF ON THEIR NEXT CONTRACT WHILE THEY ARE STILL FINISHING UP THE LAST PROJECT ”



ATTENTION: Managers

There are developers out there that have already written the code you need.

(see below for details)



AEM OUTFITTERS
Curated Solutions.
Unrivaled Support.

A marketplace for developers and customers to exchange solutions, protected by our money-back guarantee.

aemoutfitters.com

(We make it this easy on our site, too.)

ATTENTION: Architects

There are managers out there scoping a project that needs the code you've already written.


(see above for details)


MORE RESOURCES

If you're currently looking at implementing AEM, upgrading to the most recent version or expanding your team Computer Futures' AEM consulting team can assist you in finding top level talent for your project. Led by Dave Fox (Associate Director of Computer Futures), who started his team in 2012, Computer Futures is an Adobe Solution Partner and has provided top level talent to firms throughout the country. Where as most IT recruiters will work on a variety of IT roles our specialist consultants spend 100% of their time working just AEM roles. We further breakup their specialization by contract and permanent so each role will get the unique attention it needs.

To discuss the market in more detail, get plugged into the Adobe Community at a higher level or discuss your project, please contact us;

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 For additional support join the LinkedIn group - Adobe Experience Manager Users



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