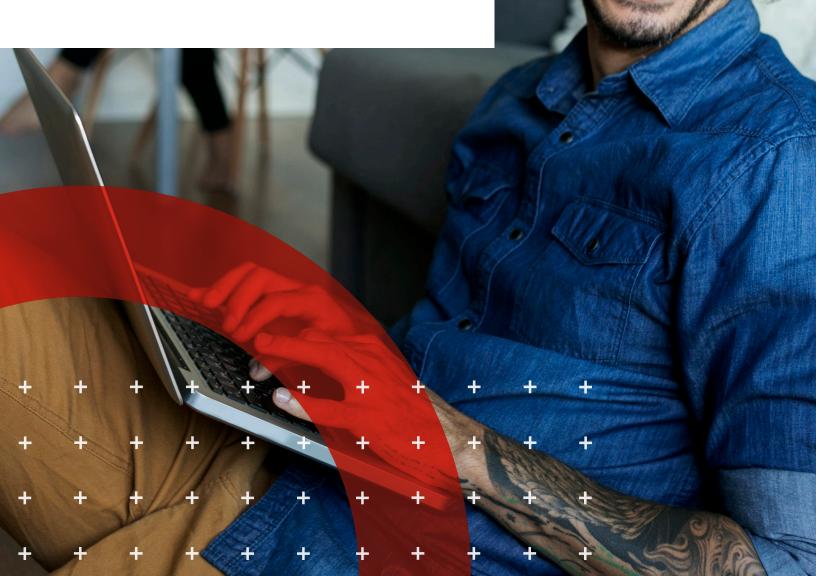# Sitecore TDS and Unicorn

A comparison

Sitecore TDS and Unicorn: A comparison

Take back control of your Sitecore development process with Sitecore TDS. A Visual Studio plug-in, TDS empowers you to safely automate deployments and standardize your development process. And it's customizable to any Sitecore project out of the box. Turn on the features you want, turn off those you don't — no painstaking custom configuration required.

Functionality

Both Sitecore TDS and Unicorn share a similar functionality — the ability to serialize Sitecore items to the file system and store them in source control. Unicorn's README summarizes the need for this well:

> (Unicorn writes) serialized copies of Sitecore items to disk along with the code — this way, a copy of the necessary database items for a given codebase accompanies it in source control.

Sitecore TDS does this by installing a web service into your local site. It then pushes and pulls content through it using a Visual Studio extension UI and through MSBuild.

Unicorn changes Sitecore's default Data Provider to use the serialized file on disk (.yml files) as the master copy. It has its own admin panel for pushing and pulling the item content between disk and Sitecore. The following control over serialization is also available in both tools:

- Automatic Pulling Changes to Disk (Sitecore TDS AutoSync , Unicorn Data Provider)
- Configuration for syncing item hierarchies
- External triggering of pushing/pulling items
- Item Content Merging (Sitecore TDS Item Merge Tool, Sitecore TDS's option for Sitecore's YAML format, Unicorn's Rainbow Format)
- Item Deployment for Continuous Integration/Continuous Delivery
- Item Sync Performance Improvements (Sitecore TDS Lightning Mode, Unicorn Dilithium)
- Post Deployment Publish
- Serialize/Sync Roles

In these areas, Sitecore TDS and Unicorn's functionality overlap. But Sitecore TDS excels in usability by making things checkbox easy. In contrast, Unicorn requires complex configurations that are challenging for non-expert users. And even when set up, it's often challenging to use for the non-experts on your dev team.

Features

As it states in the README, Unicorn is a serialization tool that,

" ... is free and open source, and does one thing well.

In addition to its core functionality, Unicorn has the following features:

- Push Serialized File Changes Automatically to Sitecore — Unicorn Transparent Sync (this is, however, arguably dangerous).
- Sync users (both can Sync Roles, but only Unicorn can sync users)

Introduced 10 years ago by Hedgehog as a serialization tool, TDS has expanded into a broader productivity tool. When Sitecore acquired Hedgehog in 2019, Sitecore TDS was rebranded and now includes many opt-in features to increase the efficiency of Sitecore development. With every release, we add new features.

The current features of Sitecore TDS 6.0 include (but are not limited to):

- Azure deployment integration
  - (Part 2)
  - (Part 3)
- Code Artifact Deployment
- Compatibility with all source control providers (including TFS)
- Container development compatibility
- Copying of extra files outside of the code project
- Config Transforms
- Delta Deployments (partial project deployment)
- Environment Validation (with Assembly version check upon deployment)
- Multi-level deployment granularity UI (Item, target, field)

- NuGet packaging of Item projects
- Post Deployment Steps
- Project Audit Reports
- Project validations (preventing bad properties/content in a deployment)
- Content File Sync (auto copying front-end files to your site)
- Sitecore Rocks integration
- UI for "latest updated items"
- UI for Serialized File/Sitecore Item difference comparison
- Update Package Creation for build artifact deployment
- Code Generation (including cross-solution code gen)

Support

Both tools have community support, usually through Slack and Stack Exchange. In addition, Sitecore TDS is backed by dedicated enterprise support that can be contacted at any time, DeveloperSupport@sitecore.com.

Licensing

Sitecore TDS is licensed per developer and is available as an annual subscription ($399 each). Once each team member owns their own TDS license, teams are permitted to install the tool in multiple environments (including personal machines, build servers, and VMs) at no extra charge. Sitecore TDS subscriptions include access to new releases, technical support, and guaranteed compatibility with the latest versions of Sitecore and Visual Studio.

Unicorn is an opensource tool.

Additional Sitecore TDS resources

www.teamdevelopmentforsitecore.com

Full Documentation

SDCsales@Sitecore.com

DeveloperSupport@Sitecore.com

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