

Is Spartacus really a good jumpstart?



Passionate About
Digital Commerce



What is Spartacus

Spartacus is an Angular based storefront designed for SAP Commerce Cloud to quickly create a fast and engaging PWA storefront. It interacts with SAP Commerce using REST API. It overcomes the two main problems: *Extensibility and Legacy JSP framework*.

Spartacus is a decoupled single page application (SPA) implemented in Angular. A single page app provides many usability advantages compared to a traditional setup where complete pages are retrieved from server when users navigate throughout the store.



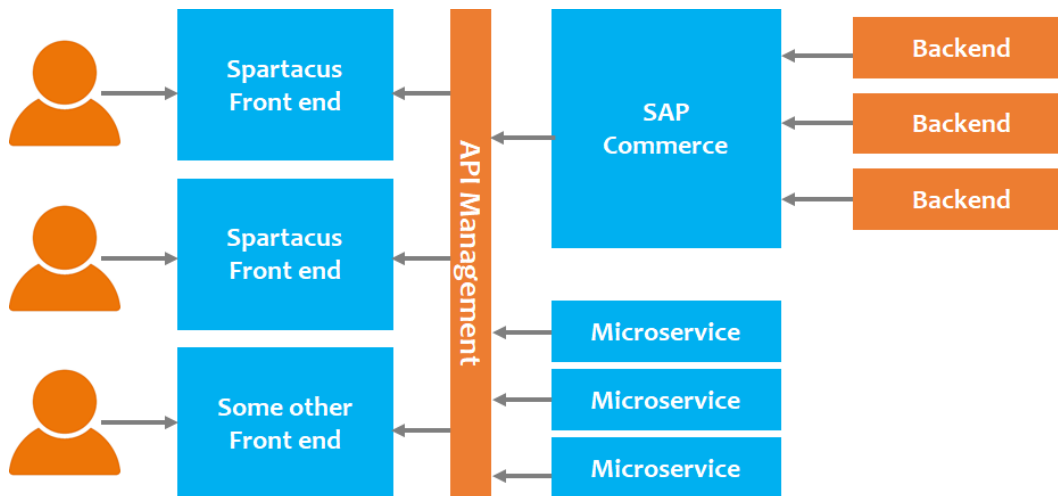
**Desktop applications like
user Experience**

Single page app is
faster

**Only required data is
transferred from Server**

Makes user experience
smoother

Decoupled Architecture



Spartacus user interface layer is completely decoupled from SAP Commerce. Code changes to user interface can be introduced independently of the changes to SAP Commerce and vice versa. Deploying a new software version of the front-end is a very light operation which takes just few minutes and the end-users may not experience any interruption in their operation.

Decoupling allows **easy utilization of existing or newly developed services outside SAP Commerce in the user interface.** It is recommended to implement any additional functionality not natively supported by SAP Commerce as separate microservices. The microservices can be hosted on any platform like Azure, AWS or SAP Cloud Extension Factory etc.

The backend user interfaces needed to manage the SAP Commerce instance (such as SAP CX Backoffice and SmartEdit) are provided by the SAP Commerce server itself.

Open Source

Spartacus is open source, so we are free to use and customize it in our own projects. This is important as one can safely start their project utilizing Spartacus even before all the features that we require are ready. One can use the new features once they are ready. Spartacus code is available not only as source code but also as libraries. This allows even the customized parts of own storefront to be upgraded with minor and patch releases easily.

When starting a new project with Spartacus instead of the accelerator, the storefront extensions are no longer needed in SAP Commerce. Instead we will have a separate Spartacus based front-end project.

CMS-Driven

Content for Spartacus pages is fetched from the SAP Commerce Content Management System (CMS) so Content Managers can modify page content through the SAP Commerce Cloud CMS tools, like SmartEdit. SmartEdit is fully supported and combined with Project Spartacus to provide relevant and personalized experiences, including a preview of the site as it will appear to customers later on.

Upgradable and Extensible

Spartacus is packaged as a set of Angular libraries, so when new feature or fixes are introduced, one can take advantage of them right away. SAP does not recommend to fork the Spartacus project or copy/paste the source code when one want to build a new storefront. Instead, one should create a new Angular App and add dependencies to the Spartacus libraries. New patch release doesn't break any functionalities

Is Spartacus really a good start?

Is it really decoupled? Spartacus is technically fully decoupled from SAP Commerce. However, the UX content in Spartacus is managed in SAP Commerce and is retrieved to Spartacus via REST calls. We can easily do the editing of the content using the SmartEdit tool that comes with SAP Commerce. We can also modify Spartacus to bypass this feature and use whatever content from any source.

Is it really modern? Spartacus is based on Angular 8. Many front end developers seem to fancy other JS frameworks such as React or Vue over Angular. The fact is that Angular 8 is a modern JS framework and migrating Spartacus to Angular 9 is on the roadmap by the end of March 2020.

Is it really feature rich? Spartacus is still in an early phase of development. Many features that we used to like on the accelerator are still missing from Spartacus. However, Spartacus is developing very rapidly, and we are expecting to see feature parity with the accelerator soon.

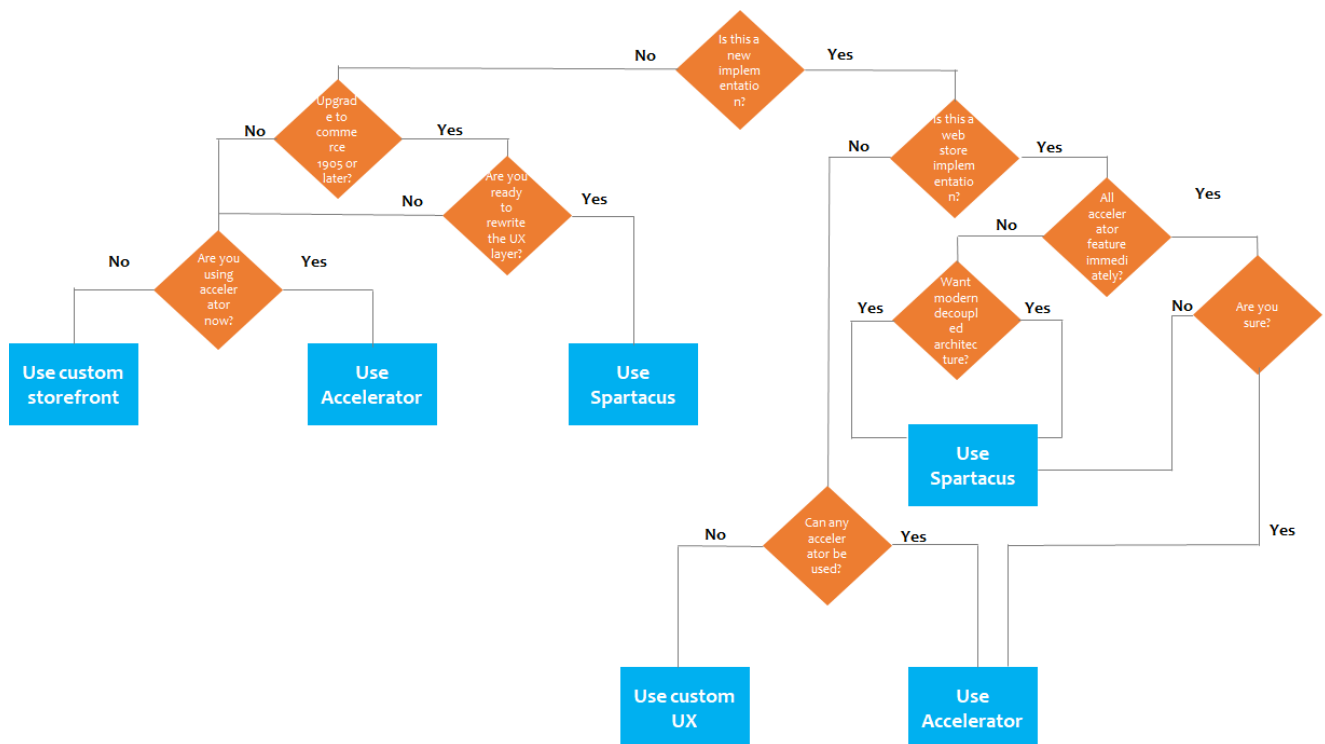
Future

I'd list some highlights from the Spartacus roadmap:



Recommendations

To help decide which storefront technology to use I have created this quick decision graph:



While starting a **new SAP Commerce implementation** project the decision is very simple: **one should go with Spartacus**, unless there are very specific reasons to implement a fully custom user interface. If going down the full custom road, one will need to implement the whole user interface from scratch, including very basic commerce functionality like product browsing and shopping cart handling. On specific implementations outside the core commerce domain using one of the accelerators is still a viable option for getting a jump start to the project.

When renewing an existing SAP Commerce implementation, the decision on the storefront technology is a bit more complex. If one is able to upgrade their existing system to SAP Commerce 1905 (or later) and at the same time one should be willing to invest in improving the UX anyway, recommendation would be taking Spartacus as well.

Overall conclusion is that Spartacus is the recommended UX framework for SAP Commerce and one should take it on if one is starting a new SAP Commerce project.



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