From Digital Assets to Digital Experience

Supercharge Your Media with the Right DAM

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FOREWORD

Understanding Your Choices

When did we start using the word "assets" to describe the photos, videos, music, stories and designs that connect an organization with its audiences? The word sounds so clinical for material that can be so emotional and beautiful, but assets is what we call them.

A digital asset management system (DAM) is the technical and management platform that not only helps us find and use media but also maximizes the business value we get out of it. There are many options, with many features, to help us manage our growing collections of files, which can include metadata and even social data.

This e-book helps to demystify the world of DAM so you can choose the right solution for your organization. Our four expert authors provide guidance on creating a DAM strategy, collecting business requirements, evaluating vendors, planning for innovation and working with a team.

We hope the information helps to empower your choices. As always, let us know what you think.

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ABOUT US

CMSWire

CMSWire, published by Simpler Media Group, Inc., provides news, advice and analysis for professionals driving digital content strategy, management, and marketing for leading organizations. More than 400 industry professionals and editors produce our authoritative and innovative analysis for a community of over 750,000 market influencers each quarter.

Coverage areas include digital and customer experience, digital marketing, social business and information management.

FROM OUR SPONSOR

Laying the Right DAM Path

Digital Asset Management (DAM) has become an indispensable component of the technology ecosystem for sales, marketing, e-commerce and publishing. The ever-increasing number of digital assets imposes risk and creates chaos if they are not carefully managed.

It takes research to find the right fit when selecting a DAM system. WoodWing works closely with its customers and system integrators, and we've found these issues important for making the right choice.

In addition to scalability, usability, interoperability —your required selection criteria should include integrations. It's also critical to evaluate total cost of ownership (TCO) and choose between on-premise or SaaS, a decision that has financial implications for how to classify the cost (CAPEX vs. OPEX).

Creating well-defined use cases will help you focus on the right criteria for your DAM users. For example, a mission-critical e-commerce team with full IT support and consistent budget cycles will have different requirements than a marketing team managing new content with no IT support and only a variable budget to spend.

WoodWing's Elvis DAM helps companies to archive, index (metadata), search, repurpose and distribute their digital content. Either on-premise or as a cloud service, Elvis breaks system silos and enhances workflow through integration with business systems such as CMS, CRM, PIM and Adobe Creative Cloud.

I hope that you enjoy this e-book and that it provides you with broad insights for choosing and implementing a DAM system.

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The Future of DAM: What Users Want

BY JEFF LAWRENCE

At the beginning of 2015, Digital Asset Management (DAM) vendors shared their 2015 roadmaps and visions of where the DAM industry was headed. The ensuing conversations made me want to hear the other side of the coin: what the DAM community wanted or needed.

I asked the community these questions: Did the industry get it right? Are vendors developing the features and functionality your organization needs? If you could get DAM vendors to build one thing just for your business, what would you ask for? What should the DAM Industry be working on? Here are some of their insights.

Interoperability

Interoperability between systems was a major theme. Most people expressed a strong need to easily connect the DAM with their CMS. A studio executive explained that,

"One of their big challenges is the need for Enterprise Application Integration (EAI). How do you actually get these systems to work together? I need a place where I can apply rules to govern the asset usage. Digital Rights Management Tools are not tightly integrated into the DAM solutions."

Several other people took this idea a step further and suggested DAM should also connect with other systems such as Dropbox, Flickr and enterprise asset management tools. While most DAM vendors are providing some APIs and the ability to customize connection between systems, the community was asking for out-of-the-box functionality that would allow users to add and remove common systems as needed without custom development. Many people who spoke about this need also asked for a "sleek" interface that is quick and easy to use and that anyone could set up with little to no technical knowledge.

Social Channels

I'd suggest this go one step further, and connect with the most common social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Google+, Tumblr, Instagram, VK, Flickr, Vine and others. This interoperability should provide two-way communication that sends back metrics between assets shared on social channels and the DAM.

Business Intelligence

Many people shared their need to collect better business intelligence (BI) data, specifically, on how and where assets are being used to help determine the ROI on the assets. Additionally, many people expressed a need to understand how assets move through the asset's life cycle and what DAM users search for in those assets. A studio executive said they needed a way to "track the effectiveness of the assets."

What if we took this idea one step further by making it possible to create business rules that allow the DAM to automatically respond to successful campaigns?

Let me explain: Say your social media team sent out a series of assets with a marketing message to their social networks. In doing so they are testing out what images / videos and metadata are the most effective. As the metrics flow back to the DAM in real-time, the system automatically sends out new assets with the most effective marketing messages, metadata and hashtags. This way more effective marketing messages could be sent out to reach the intended audience. This could also be true about time-of-day, day-of-week, etc.

Most companies receive this information from various analytics and BI tools, but it requires a person to manually update and resend the assets. Interoperability between the DAM, CMS, social channels and the BI tools would allow the social media teams to create more effective marketing campaigns by leveraging automation to immediately respond to the market.

Many vendors offer these types of tools and I anticipate that the DAM vendors will continue to improve the tools they offer. This is a clear win-win strategy for both the DAM vendors and their clients. Clients have a need to demonstrate asset ROI and DAM vendors have a need to demonstrate the value of their solution.

This kind of approach could also leverage semantic search and trending analysis to anticipate what assets would gain the most interest or company value.

Distribution and Sharing

Many companies also face the challenge of easily distributing and syndicating assets. One DAM user asked for sophisticated publishing tools. Another asked for "efficient distribution systems." Most DAM vendors offer tools for distribution and syndication, some are better than others. A few DAM vendors offer

WHAT DAM USERS WANT:

INTEROPERABILITY, MOBILE, CUSTOM UI, VOICE RECOGNITION, SOCIAL, FACIAL RECOGNITION

advanced options such as packet accelerators and automation to distribute using metadata to automatically route assets.

I challenge DAM vendors to completely rethink how assets are shared. Imagine if there were a new way of distributing assets that was as easy and familiar as email. I've found that when users need to share assets they often just email it. But consider the issues associated with this solution. Once an email is sent, it's no longer possible to track that asset. There is no governance, no way to control the digital rights, no way to know where the asset is being used, where it is being stored and … well, you get the idea.

But what if you could integrate the DAM with the email system in such a way that would allow users to "attach" an asset in the DAM to an email. The asset might remain in the DAM, allowing the recipient to access the asset. This would resolve many of the challenges discussed above.

This might also move one step closer to solving the issue of providing users with access to assets. In this scenario, business rules could be developed to allow temporary or limited access to just those assets. Access could be granted based on a collaboration team or a client list.

Metadata

Newer and better ways to help users easily add and enhance metadata on their assets will always be in demand. All good DAM vendors provide ways to add metadata and create metadata schemas. A few DAM vendors have started thinking outside the box and have created some very interesting tools.

Several DAM users asked for thesaurus capabilities to be offered by the DAM solutions. Some vendors may offer this functionality, but the idea was intriguing. Why not include the most common well-established metadata standards, such as the International Press Telecommunications Council (IPTC), Picture Licensing Universal System (PLUS) Coalition and others?

A good example of how this might be done is Microsoft Word's Dictionary. The user can pick from the standard dictionary or any number of dictionaries. Microsoft Word also makes it very easy to add custom words or import a new dictionary. Wouldn't it be great if a DAM administrator could select a well-established metadata standard from a provided list? Or the ability to add new metadata to meet the organization's specific needs? This same idea could be carried over to Thesaurus and Synonyms.

Too Much Data

One of the more interesting challenges was the sheer size and volume of assets being managed today. This might be the proverbial elephant in the room, but organizations are struggling with collecting, storing and retrieving assets. This is especially true when we factor in the need to gather and analyze big data.

Make MAMs and DAMs more intuitive with less need for programming

Even with proper asset governance and strong metadata policies, the volume is making it more difficult to find and retrieve assets. Storage, relevancy, speed all are being pushed to their limits, while at the same time companies feel the pressure to increase their time-to-market.

Many DAM vendors will need to rethink their architecture and adopt newer search technologies to remain competitive. At the same time, companies will need to make decisions on how much data to store and develop ways to purge useless information that has little or no ROI value. Vendors that have not started thinking about ways to improve performance may struggle to provide value to their clients and may need to rethink how they do business.

A Few More Ideas

Here are a few more ideas that DAM users shared.

A few people would like to see better facial recognition technology. A few DAM vendors offer this type of technology, but in most cases it's through a third-party

add-on that's integrated with their DAM solution. Facebook and other social media companies are pushing facial recognition technologies to constantly improve. The push —or maybe it's a shove —by the social media companies will make facial recognition software more accessible to DAM solutions. These types of technology will carry over to objects, scene, landmarks etc.

Good work is happening with voice recognition and voice to text that allows metadata to be added along a timeline. Only the most expensive solutions currently offer these technologies, but it too will become more accessible to less expensive DAM solutions.

The community expressed a desire for more agility in customizing interfaces. They want the ability to modify the look, feel and functionality without technical knowledge. While vendors may be heading in the right direction, in this area, they still have a long way to go.

A popular request was for better mobile experiences that provide full range of DAM capabilities. Mobile usage is growing at an exponential pace and there is a need to fully support these users.

Everyone wanted a more intuitive user interface. One DAM user explained it best "Make MAMs and DAMs more intuitive with less need for programming and more need for having that (mobile capabilities) built in."

What Will Emerge?

There are hundreds of DAM vendors on the market and some of these features may be available today or may be on a vendor's technology roadmap. Transformational change is coming one way or another. As DAM professionals, you have an opportunity to help influence that change, so speak up and let the vendors know what you need! ◾

How to Choose the Right DAM System

BY JOHN HORODYSKI

"It's not hard to make decisions when you know what your values are." —Roy Disney

The decision to implement a Digital Asset Management (DAM) system is a vital step to gaining operational and intellectual control of digital assets. Any successful DAM implementation requires more than just new technology; it requires a foundation for digital strategy. The right DAM solution ensures that assets can generate revenue, increase efficiencies and meet new and emerging market opportunities.

Choosing the right vendor is about aligning goals, vision and requirements so the vendor can become a partner that will provide the technology and support to meet key business needs. While selecting a vendor can often be a complex process, focusing on key elements will guide you to the right DAM system for your business.

What DAM Needs to Do

Every strategy needs to start with a well-established foundation. There are many steps that merit attention well before any technology has been considered, let alone purchased.

It's common knowledge but bears repeating: Technology should never lead the decision-making process for DAM demands – business needs must set the foundation for strategy. Technology is important, and the vendor review and selection process is a critical step in all this, but that step must follow the business requirements and digital strategy.

Be sure to consider your foundation first, including:

1. Rich media collections

2. Metadata

3. Taxonomy

4. Workflow

5. Rights management

6. Data security (roles, permissions, access)

7. Assets –work-in-progress or final (digital preservation)

8. Governance

And never forget to consider the vendor intangibles, including customer support, professional services, and strategy and product roadmap.

The decision to go with a DAM system entails a chain of questions to be carefully considered before proceeding down that path

Vendor Considerations

Choosing a DAM vendor requires more than just kicking the tires —it's filling it with gas, running it down the highway, dismantling it, and ensuring all the required parts are there from the beginning to the end!

Play before you pay, and ensure you have tested for all the requirements that have been identified. And while you are at it, test-drive two DAMs instead of one, not only to determine which is the best match, but also to start the often-lengthy licensing negotiation as early as possible.

Some capabilities of the DAM to start investigating early are:

1. Searching/browsing assets

2. User interface

3. Unique IDs for tracking and monitoring

4. Metadata management and cataloging

5. Digital asset ingestion, creation, processing

6. Reporting and analytics

7. Data security

8. Configuration opportunities

9. Documentation, training and user groups

10. Availability of professional integration consultants

Business Requirements

"It does not take much strength to do things, but it requires a great deal of strength to decide what to do."—Elbert Hubbard

The process of requirements gathering is critical to accomplishing a successful DAM Request for Proposal (RFP), to help truly identify whether a system can meet the goals of the project. Without clearly documented requirements, it is easy to get distracted by a sleek user interface or flashy functionality described during vendor demonstrations. The requirements gathering process should involve interviewing stakeholders across the organization, observing end-users conducting their day-to-day tasks and, most importantly, performing general discovery about the assets the system is expected to manage. The requirements gathered during interviews might include:

1. Workflows

2. Metadata

3. User role definitions

4. Business needs

5. IT/security requirements

6. Integration goals

7. SaaS vs. on-premises vs. private cloud

8. Total cost of ownership

The path to success with DAM means driving strategic decisions organizationally and technically, and ultimately working with a vendor on technical implementation to devise more innovative uses for your DAM. The goal in working together is to look forward and define a framework and build out the capabilities now that will allow your organization to mature over time and achieve sustainable success.

Get Your Digital House in Order

Selecting a DAM should be an educational and even enjoyable process if done well. You need to get your digital house in order, know what your internal business units and external partners need, and understand how you will need to deliver assets today – and tomorrow – across multiple channels and devices.

Creative professionals and all those working in marketing, communications and operations require content to remain competitive by delivering what the consumers want, when and where they want it. The ability to provide assets of high value and quality on a timely basis is no longer a wish, it is the expectation. And yet, the decision to go with a DAM system entails a chain of questions to be carefully considered before proceeding down that path. Using DAM effectively can deliver knowledge and measurable cost savings, time-to-market gains, and greater brand voice consistency —valuable and meaningful effects from your digital strategy foundation. ■

SaaS vs. In-House:
Which is Right For You?

BY JEFF LAWRENCE

The choice between cloud-based and in-house DAM used to be easy. Between the high cost of cloud storage and bandwidth, and the limited capabilities of SaaS (software as a service) solutions —the argument for in-house DAM was clear.

Cost is no longer the sole determining factor. Cloud computing and storage costs have lowered in the last few years, making SaaS a viable choice for many organizations. SaaS DAM vendors have responded to customer needs by offering new features and functionality that directly compete with the capabilities of in-house solutions —such as integration tools for social media —which places them squarely on the competitive playing field.

What's the Difference?

SaaS is not a panacea, in-house solutions are still the right fit for many organizations.

In general, in-house DAM solutions are limited only to the organization's hardware infrastructure, security governance, network and quality of IT support. The client is responsible for the purchase and support of the hardware, software, database,

storage, security and business continuity planning. In-house DAM solutions provide faster and better internal management for high volume, large files within your network. They typically offer extensive customization options with a wider range of features and functionality. These solutions also offer add-ons that can provide integration points with internal systems to allow for development of complex internal and external workflows. Finally, in-house DAM solutions are typically part of a capital project and are amortized over the life of the project following corporate amortization schedule.

In a SaaS DAM solution, the vendor manages the hardware, software, database, storage and security of your assets through a subscription model. It's a pay as you go model that allows the client to purchase as little or as much services as needed. The client has the ability to make limited configurations, set permission levels and access rights for users and assets. Additionally, the client can create workflows for managing and distributing assets. Finally, more and more SaaS vendors are offering more extensive customizations and are willing to work closely with their clients to develop new functionality and custom designed user interfaces. And then there's the emerging trend of hybrid solutions that offer a blend of both in-house and SaaS DAM solutions. This approach provides the benefits of an in-house DAM solution with the ability to share and manage assets with a broad audience.

Cloud computing and storage costs have lowered in the last few years, making SaaS a viable choice

In a hybrid solution, the vendor and client share some of the same responsibilities and costs. The vendor manages the hardware, software, database, storage and security for the assets sent to their cloud solution. The client supports the in-house hardware, software, database, storage and security for internal assets.

Why Use a Hybrid Model?

Let's say your organization manages high volume, large files within your network, such as raw camera files or raw video files. In this case, a SaaS solution may not make sense, since you would need to rapidly move the large files around your internal systems. If your business has a need to share the final edited versions of these files broadly or globally, then uploading the files to cloud based SaaS DAM

makes sense. In this scenario a hybrid approach might cost less and provide a better overall experience for your external clients.

How Do They Compare?

The chart below looks at a high-level comparison between SaaS and in-house DAM solutions. Keep in mind there is a wide range of features and capabilities and costs from vendor to vendor.

High-Level Comparison Areas	SaaS	In-House
Initial Cost	Less Expensive	More Expensive
Implementation Time	Short	Long
Rapid Scalability	Has ability to rapidly (automatically) scale up and scale back down	Usually requires additional hardware and configuration
Staffing	Limited need for staff	Requires in-house expertise
Features and Functionality	Less	More
Release Management (Updates and Security Patches)	Handled by vendor	Requires in-house IT expertise
Database Management (Performance Tuning)	Handled by vendor	Requires in-house IT expertise
Training	Minimal	High
Customization	Limited	Expansive (high cost)
Business Continuity/ Disaster Recovery	Handled by vendor with multi-server multi-geographic redundancy (based on SLA)	Handled by client
Service Level / Uptime	Available, also includes penalties, response and fix time	Most in-house IT maintenance support do not offer SLA to the departments they support

*The hybrid approach is a complex blending of these comparison areas.

What is the Right DAM Solution For Your Company?

Finding the answer may take some work. Do your homework, spend the time gathering requirements and fully understanding your needs. Consider these questions:

1. Do you have IT resources to support an in-house DAM?

2. What is your current and projected monthly bandwidth usage (number of files and size)?

3. Are the files used / managed locally (same building or campus)?

4. Do you need to share assets broadly / globally?

5. Are you able to provide geographic and internal redundancy for a DAM?

6. Do you require a highly customized solution with complex workflows?

7. Do you need to integrate with existing internal systems?

8. What is your total cost of ownership (TCO)?

Understanding your organization's resources, TCO and business requirements will help steer you to either a SaaS, in-house or hybrid model. Go make the right DAM decision for your project. ■

The Importance of Integration

BY JOHN HORODYSKI

"We have stood here alone in what is called isolation our splendid isolation -as one of our colonial friends was good enough to call it." —Viscount George Goschen, First Lord of the Admiralty, February 26, 1896

There is no victory in a content strategy founded in isolation. Digital Asset Management (DAM) initiatives cannot be established as an island, or an enterprise silo waiting to be filled. Instead integrate them socially into various areas of the enterprise and link them technologically to other systems.

A DAM system that is part of a larger fabric brings operational and intellectual control of digital assets, but requires taking on the great responsibility of efficiently and effectively managing assets, daily workflows and forward-thinking growth strategy. Any successful DAM implementation requires not just new technology but a holistic digital strategy that integrates with the enterprise's ecosystem to generate revenue and increase efficiencies and emerging market opportunities.

What Is DAM? What Isn't DAM?

A successful DAM program consists of the management tasks and technological functionality to inventory, control and distribute rich media such as photographs, videos, key art, audio and marketing collateral. Tasks may include ingestion, descriptive tagging, storage, retrieval and distribution of digital assets for use and reuse in marketing or business operations.

The advantage of DAM is that many tasks, formerly performed manually, can now be automated using software. However, strategic stewardship and long-term process implementation still need to be established with careful planning and oversight of a team.

DAM can be a digital playground for co-creation and collaboration, bringing process and technology together as agents of change. A unique and distinguishing aspect of DAM is that it can serve as the single source of truth for rich media assets across file formats, publications or broadcast channels, but it requires an integrated strategy.

DAM strategy is the true foundation for controlling assets.

This is particularly true when DAM must interact with other systems like web content management, document management, content management and records management systems. Cooperative governance, processes and workflows across platforms allow these other systems to leverage the organizational capabilities of DAM for their own purposes.

Positioning the DAM as the single source of truth with a view toward integration takes foresight and a keen understanding of the relationships between internal departments or external suppliers or clients.

Building the House of DAM

DAM systems are technology solutions, but DAM strategy is the true foundation for controlling assets. The key variables that make up the strategy include business requirements, staffing considerations, stakeholder preference, preservation and rights requirements. Understanding these variables before choosing

and implementing DAM requires multiple conversations across the enterprise, which if undertaken positively and with enthusiasm, can have the additional benefits of creating a foundation of support within the organization and platform for future growth.

Integrate

A successful DAM that is integrated with other systems or workflows will provide:

> **Better Service** A single interface that integrates DAM with other systems is efficient for users. Standardized processes decrease the likelihood of errors or duplicated effort

> **Lower Costs** More modular architectures result in code that is easier to write and easier to modify, lowering implementation costs. And streamlined processes make for more productive staff, lowering operating costs and making a more positive environment

> **Increased Flexibility** The modular nature of integrated systems make their parts more manageable and often reusable as use cases change or new ones are added

Preparing for the Future

DAM can shift the perspective of how all layers of the organization can use assets to speed time to market or respond to competition. Content is king, but a holistic digital strategy brings content together in more meaningful relationships that strengthen the brand or message.

Working across the enterprise to get the digital house in order allows for delivery of assets to multiple channels and partners with diverse requirements. The diversity of input also increases the ability to be prepared for the future. ∎

The Impact of Mobile, Social, Cloud and Analytics

BY HYOUN PARK

Social. Mobile. Analytics. Cloud. Big Data. These are the buzzwords that have been used to describe the transformation of all technologies over the past decade. With the evolution of these technologies, we have fundamentally moved from a basic client-server model of computing to a highly distributed, scalable, contextualized and scrutinized computing environment. But how does this concretely affect the future of Digital Asset Management?

DAM was initially created to handle the flood of digital media created in enterprise and business environments. As the tools for digital creation became increasingly democratized and easier to use, media creation flourished. Digital media became increasingly important not only for outbound media, but also for inbound marketing efforts to the point where digital media is now considered a de rigeur marketing component for any large campaign.

As the volume of and demand for digital media has grown over time, the DAM market has been caught up in feature and function battles where each company tries to one-up each other for decision management, analytics, metadata support, workflow management and other contextual business capabilities. But in fighting these battles, the players in the DAM market needs to look at the big picture and

start figuring out where they fit into the Social, Mobile, Analytic and Cloud (SMAC) world that now represents the new world of technology.

Looking Into the Future

It is easy enough to talk about these new functionalities in terms of having a "Social DAM" or "Mobile DAM" and to think that these functions will provide differentiation. But simply adding comments, sharing capabilities and basic collaboration is common sense in a world where Facebook is now over a decade old.

Instead, we need to look at these trends in conjunction and see how these larger forces are creating a splintering of DAM functionality. Since DAM lacks a true market leader, this means that vendors need to start picking and choosing their path to the future as no one company will be able to go into all of these directions at the same time without investing time and resources that will most likely be unprofitable.

To better understand how these trends will affect DAM in the future, it makes sense to group multiple trends together and to look at the potential outcomes for DAM in these amalgamated contexts. Rather than look at each part of SMAC in a vacuum, start looking at these parts in conjunction. For instance, by grouping categories together, amalgamated trends start to become clearer. In doing this exercise, three sets of categories stand out in the way that they will transform DAM going forward:

> Social, Mobile, Cloud

> Social, Mobile, Analytics

> Big Data, Analytics, Cloud

Each of these trends means something different in the DAM world and will require specific new functionalities and support capabilities.

Social Mobile Cloud DAM

When applications are assumed to be shared and social, multiple people can interact with each other, annotate, comment and work on a shared problem. Mobility allows this collaboration to happen ubiquitously and at any time. And the cloud provides infinite scalability from a volume and processing perspective. The end result is a world where every asset can potentially have the best human-guided context, be launched in a timely manner, and be provided as many times as needed in whatever format is needed.

This means creating DAM that is focused on immediacy and context. It needs to be intelligent enough to take in the metadata and context provided by every stakeholder and to take the next step and understand which metadata is most relevant to specific users in specific circumstances. And this exercise needs to happen on demand rather than on a scheduled basis. The Social Mobile Cloud DAM is about supporting end users at the speed of thought and ideation and will require enterprise and mass media scale of asset delivery along with commercial search and artificial intelligence. And it has to be easy to use, with a user experience that is at least roughly comparable to popular commercial applications. The 128-button interface with 13 different tabs isn't going to cut it in this world.

But imagine a DAM that actually collects social and mobile metadata as it is created. For instance, as a picture is shared on Facebook and Twitter or a video is shared on YouTube, who is collecting the comments associated with that asset and bringing it back into DAM to guide iterative improvement and potential alerts? Mobile observations could be used to actually view the observers of digital signage and read the body language and behavior for new metadata. And, of course, all of this would be stored and analyzed in the cloud. Although there is a backend need for analytics here, the goal is not to provide immediate reporting but to immediately respond to employee and client requests on an ad-hoc basis.

SaaS-based vendors are best suited to execute on this vision, as they have started to develop both the functionality to support this on-demand world and have the internal corporate culture to adapt quickly to customer demands. However, this future also requires a level of search and pattern-based cognitive analysis that is still

The Social Mobile Cloud DAM supports end users at the speed of thought

not commonly available. Companies moving in this direction can provide a more responsive and human DAM for their clients.

Social Mobile Analytic DAM

How is this different from Social Mobile Cloud? Analytics is fundamentally about discovering new and insightful findings within data. This means that DAM not only needs to collect the data and metadata associated with an asset, but also needs to provide the visualizations, social graphs, mobile traffic and demand, and business metric associated with the use of the asset. Currently, these analytics are scattered throughout the organization or not collected at all.

For instance, where in your company can you find out the collection of employees who have either viewed or edited a digital asset? Would it be useful to see this analysis and understand which employee community is associated with that specific asset, especially as your company needs to update the asset or the underlying product or service?

Or how much mobile traffic does each digital asset consume and which aspects of the digital asset are providing the greatest interest? Currently, there are ways to look at web traffic or server traffic and determine this information, but this is really an asset management and asset performance question. The server itself is a commodity; it is the value of the digital asset that drives traffic. In addition, with phones such as the Amazon Fire, companies can start to track eyeballs the same way that they track web behavior and clicks. Even if the Fire does not end up being a market changer, this functionality will eventually make its way into other mainstream phones such as the iPhone and Samsung devices.

Even with the coupling of DAM and Web Content Management, there is still room for improvement and advancement in asset-based analytics that can lead to greater strategic and tactical insights. The DAM companies willing to create data standards that can be better analyzed will be able to take advantage of this Social Mobile

The Social Mobile Analytic DAM can lead to greater strategic and tactical insights about the assets

Analytics world to a greater extent.

We have already seen adjacent spaces that have seen the value of focusing on analytics, such as Ooyala, a video analytics company recently purchased by Telstra. There is latent demand for understanding the explosion of digital media being created and used. By thinking social-first and mobile-first, data-driven DAM companies can move in this direction and provide a smarter and more quantitative DAM.

Big Data Analytics Cloud DAM

Big Data is different from analytics in that Big Data focuses on the challenges of storing and organizing semi-structured and unstructured data that exist in large volumes and must be rendered and delivered quickly. For instance, a standard database can grow to enormous sizes, but the technology to scale is typically provided by an Oracle or Microsoft without too much of a challenge. But with digital assets, a standard database approach is less useful. For instance, how do you compare pictures on a pixel by pixel basis or with facial recognition through a standard database?

As we start to truly treat digital assets as data that can be analyzed on a bit by bit basis, DAM will start to truly support Big Data. And, contrary to some beliefs, Big Data is not just about handling the petabytes of data that Facebook and Google handle. Some Big Data efforts are at the terabyte level and some are even in the hundreds of gigabytes due to the complexity of dealing with the management of video and pictures and the need to stream these assets at high velocity.

In the present, we handle outdated or obsolete digital assets simply making sure that outdated assets are identified and appropriately tagged to meet any compliance or licensing issues. While a legal officer or procurement officer may need proof that these assets still exist, a marketing or sales executive may just see outdated assets as useless or even harmful.

The big data DAM will treat digital assets as data that can be analyzed on a bit by bit basis

But in the future, the development of Big Data means that the technology to automate searches for similar documents can now be started. If your organization has a number of duplicates that need to be consolidated or removed from the active DAM repository, future Big Data DAM providers will actually start to recognize these assets and find similar assets based not just on metadata but based on the actual content itself.

Of course, the outputs of this approach will require both social collaboration and the ease of mobile use to access these results from a delivery and interaction perspective, but the key here is the evolution of Big Data, which will provide a more accurate and compliant DAM for environments where digital assets have become unwieldy even in the context of a DAM system.

The Future is Happening Now

It is easy to get buried in the buzzwords of social, mobile, analytics, cloud, Big Data, scalability, leverage, etc., etc., etc. But behind the hype is a new world of capabilities that we have yet to fully see in digital asset management. As DAM companies prepare for the next feature and function skirmish, they also need to remember that we live in a new world of application functionality and expectations. DAM will need to fundamentally change to meet our expectations or be left behind as users look for peripheral solutions that are easier, faster and smarter to use. ■

Getting Your Organization Excited to Implement

BY BERTRAND GILLET

At last, your company heard you. After many meetings where you presented the business case for a new or upgraded DAM, your CMO has given you the go-ahead to get started. Congratulations, you've successfully cleared your first hurdle, but you have many more ahead. Aside from the technical challenges, you face internal politics, budget constraints, internal IT skepticism and management's high expectations.

If this situation resonates with you, then you're probably not working in a small shop where you can adopt a cloud-based solution in a matter of hours. You're working at a bigger place, where organizational dynamics can make or break your project. Here's a little advice to get support, and even enthusiasm, from key stakeholders.

The Initiation Phase

First, do not underestimate the power of the initiate phase of your project. Identify some positive-minded key users and nominate them early adopters. They will be your best advocates, and having them on board from day one will be a great help when you go through tough times. They will help you —and they must understand this —select the product. This is key.

Transforming a human workflow into a software workflow is a complex process

Get some support in the selection process, and make sure early adopters share your arguments in favor of the awarded vendor. This will be one road block less – product choice won't be revisited every week. This is the first step in setting the tempo of your project. Make it weak or disputable, and the whole project will be built on sand.

Once the initiate phase is over and you have a proper and realistic project plan in hand, it's time for execution. On kick-off day you'll probably face two, five, maybe eight friendly colleagues from the development, infrastructure and security teams. If they're not friendly, then the only goal you should have at this point is to make sure they'll support your choice. They will make the integration within your enterprise technical landscape a success, whether you go for an on-premises installation or a cloud solution.

Common issues that will arise include:

1. Security and integration with enterprise Single Sign On (SSO) and Active Directory

2. The processing power required for asset transformation

3. The amount of storage required at both the file and database levels

The Implementation Phase

A few weeks later, your development and integration teams will start to implement your solution. But what solution?

On top of the out-of-the-box setup, you'll have some business processes to map into the DAM. These will probably be around asset distribution —and transformation. This exercise is very touchy as transforming a human workflow into a software workflow is a complex process that requires changes to the workflow. Computers cannot call each other on the phone to discuss the size of the image to transform or to check if the blue is not too green or red on a picture.

The advice here is to keep it simple. Start with basic workflow that won't disrupt the current human workflow and will ease people's life and work. Over-engineering is your enemy at this stage of the project, and it can be a deadly one. Once the first few workflows are complete, you can go for another iteration and dig into some deeper processes to implement.

While there's a lot more work to do, it's important to take the time to find advocates and show them the value of what a DAM can do. These steps will ensure that your colleagues will adopt, and even applaud, the move to the new DAM. ■

END NOTE

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