

**Marji McClure**

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# DAM Good: Making the Most of Your Assets in a Multimedia World

**C**hances are, you watch almost as much video content on your computer screen as you do on the television set in your family room.

When you head to the beach for this summer's family vacation, you could likely be one of a growing number of consumers forgoing the comfortable paperback novel in your bag for the equally portable Amazon Kindle or Sony Reader.

As increasingly rich digital media becomes a regular part of consumers' information diet, it also becomes a more important aspect of business operations for companies in practically every industry. According to a 2008 survey of 800 end-user organizations by research firm Gartner, Inc., digital software that manages images and video was being used by 44% of those respondents; 22% planned to install such solutions this year.

In the recently released AIIM report, "Content Creation and Delivery: The

On-Ramps and Off-Ramps of ECM," it is noted that 34% of companies are archiving digital video, a practice that is expected to reach 47% in 5 years. Digital audio archiving is expected to increase from 30% to 37%.

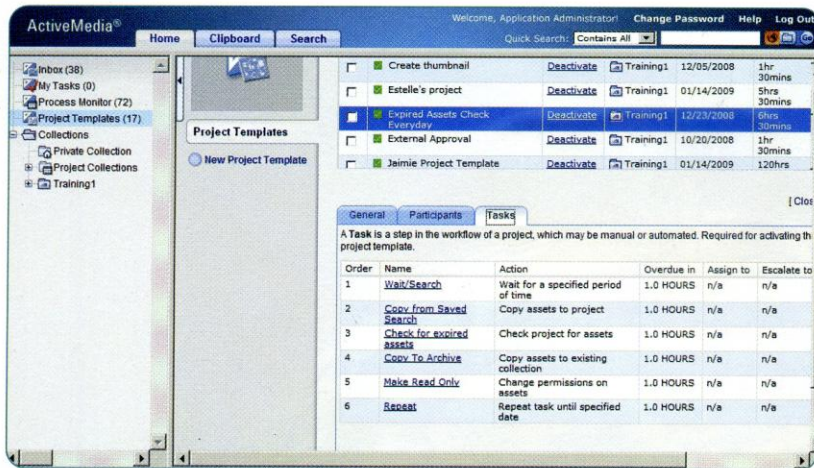
"The market is moving so fast," says Scott Bowen, president of Open Text Corp.'s digital media group, which offers the Artesia digital asset management solution to customers. "The experiences people are having in their homes at night as consumers ... those experiences are beginning to set the bar for the kind of tools they expect to be able to use at the office."

Digital asset management (DAM) providers have responded with tools and functionality that can enable their clients to more effectively store and manage digital assets that run the gamut from PDFs to audio and video clips and can impact practically every business unit

within an organization. According to Mukul Krishna, global director, digital media practice at Frost & Sullivan, the digital assets possessed by an organization can include materials from marketing and product development departments to engineering units. Those assets can range from marketing to training collateral and can be in the form of simple text, animation, spreadsheets, PDFs, and videos—"anything you can think of," says Krishna.

Companies using these latest tools range from Hollywood studios and video production houses—organizations at which video content is their only business—to consumer packaged goods companies and retailers, which use digital content to power things such as marketing campaigns. Other regular customers of DAM solutions are publishers that began their digital management initiatives with PDF files

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and are moving forward with digital files that support ebooks, as well as using video for their promotional activities.

### FROM BOOK TO VIDEO

Tyler Ruse, VP and GM of content solutions for Ingram Digital Group, says that Ingram has noticed that more and more of the company's publishing clients are building multimedia content strategies that expand beyond their traditional print assets into video—they're creating their own videos to complement that print content and are even using YouTube as a new channel.

Ruse says that Ingram's DAM and distribution platform, CoreSource, helps publishers manage the different file and metadata requirements necessary to manage digital assets. "It helps the publisher focus on content generation," says Ruse. "Once they've generated their product, we help them get it out to the market in the various formats that are required by the marketplace."

Another facet of publishers' new multimedia strategies includes the creation of digital file formats that are compatible with the latest ebook platforms. "One of the other catalysts is using digital content

*North Plains Systems' TeleScope product enables users to easily view and manage their digital assets from one single portal.*

to drive sales. Publishers are starting to see value out of full-text search results driving print sales," says Ruse, noting how publishers can take advantage of online retailers' "inside the book" functionality that enables customers to review sample pages of a book before making a purchase. But publishers are certainly not the only businesses using digital asset management functions to bolster their marketing efforts.

### MANAGING A NEW MARKETING STRATEGY

Overall, more companies are beginning to use DAM systems to control the marketing communications side of their businesses. Mike Lam, GM of the

*The FeedRoom's ActiveMedia solution features automated system actions, such as asset expiration and embargo, that ensure that files cannot be downloaded. This template shows a saved search for assets expiring on a certain date.*

ActiveMedia Group at The FeedRoom, says that the company's client base has shifted over the years to marketing communications. "Companies are starting to realize the value of these assets," says Lam. "They need to make them usable and use them efficiently and effectively. It's becoming more apparent that they need to be able to manage these assets and turn things around very quickly and take advantage of the opportunity. We have clients who use our products for distribution, and it's key for them to bring things to market as soon as possible. Today, they can do it within a week."

Lam notes that The FeedRoom's acquisition of Clearstory Systems in late 2008 enables the combined companies to take advantage of an increased interest by organizations to include video assets within their digital asset management systems. The deal integrates Clearstory's ActiveMedia 7.5 platform with The FeedRoom's 4.0 Enterprise Video Platform into one system.

"Video, images, audio, and downloadable assets such as PowerPoint presentations and PDFs all make their way into our system, where they get



turned into a story,” says The FeedRoom’s David Pearce, VP of product strategy and development. “That story goes through various stages of being created, when it can go live, where it can go live, if it is approved or not. There are a number of steps it goes through before it goes live to the world.”

Reality Digital, Inc. provides a platform for its clients’ social media campaigns. “It enables a company, whether it’s the Travel Channel or the NFL, to take that professionally produced content and user-generated content or consumer-generated content and create an environment where that content can be interacted with, commented on, rated, and distributed,” explains Cynthia Francis, CEO and co-founder of Reality Digital.

Francis says that clients have content with varying levels of value geared toward different audiences; and those clients have concerns about protecting as well as managing these particular digital assets. “Our Opus platform allows our clients to establish permissions so they can have different levels of access for different content,” says Francis. “They may have a show focused on a youth market and they want to invite people to upload the content. But they have to have a way to control them uploading content they have rights to. They need to have a straightforward way to moderate that content.”

Reality Digital launched a new product, Harmony, geared toward smaller companies that want to explore video and DAM but don’t have the traffic of a large organization’s website. “It has a homepage with a drag-and-drop interface, so someone can go in and, in minutes, build a unique site and a very robust media management environment and social media environment,” says Francis.



This is a gallery view of Open Text’s Artesia DAM product after a user performed a search for “surf.”

Steve Sauder, CTO of North Plains Systems, Inc., says that the company has strong roots in print publishing but has expanded into the video space over the past few years. “With video production companies, entertainment companies, reality TV companies—we’re seeing a lot of traction with the TeleScope DAM system in those workspaces,” says Sauder.

#### INTEGRATION INTO WORKFLOW

Regardless of what organizations use their DAM solutions for these days, technology providers say they are doing all

they can to make these solutions more user-friendly. “We’re getting more users, from the corporate CEO to the distributor of a mom-and-pop store selling pet supplies, and we need to make [the technology] more intuitive for them,” says Lam. “From ActiveMedia to the FeedRoom studio side, that becomes one product, and we have to make it intuitive enough so anyone can go in and understand and use it.”

Integrating DAM solutions into the workflow is the main way in which DAM technology providers have been able to make managing digital content an easier, more user-friendly experience.

“Workflow is another critical component,” says Bowen. “It’s not just about cold storage. It’s about management; what’s identified and found and putting those assets in motion and having a workflow engine that will allow you to do that in a controlled or collaborative fashion is important.”

Sauder agrees that workflow integration is the key to DAM success. Organizations should “start using the DAM early in the process and put it into the creative

workflow rather than use it as an archive product,” according to Sauder. “By doing that, you get many more touch points for both the users and the assets themselves.” For instance, FeedRoom’s Lam notes how a company’s workflow automation tools help facilitate an asset’s routings, reviews, and notifications to the userbase.

Yet some users don’t want so much direct contact with a DAM solution but still need to leverage its capabilities. Bowen says that Open Text recognizes that some users just don’t want to have an active role in the digital asset management process. He notes

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### Companies Featured in This Article

The FeedRoom  
www.feedroom.com

Open Text Corp.  
www.opentext.com

Frost & Sullivan  
www.frostandsullivan.com

Reality Digital, Inc.  
www.realitydigital.com

Ingram Digital Group  
www.ingramdigital.com

U.S. Government Printing Office  
www.gpo.gov

North Plains Systems, Inc.  
www.northplains.com

how some creative professionals don't want to leave their workspace, such as Photoshop or Adobe InDesign, to enter the DAM. So Open Text offers a Creative Desktop tool that has plug-ins to various creative tools so the user can remain in the creative application while utilizing the DAM. "It creates a few new menu items in the [design] application, so someone can search the DAM and literally drag and drop a photograph from the DAM into a layout."

Offering functionality that works the way a user needs it and that fits into each user's day-to-day business activities can only help increase companywide buy-in for DAM solutions and yield success that can be seen in the bottom line.

"When you are deploying technology, especially during tough economic times, you have to prove ROI," says Sauder. "Let's face it; a library doesn't generate very good ROI. You may be able to find assets later, instead of having to retake a photograph, but that's not really where your chief gains are. The real money, the real savings and real benefit of using digital asset management, comes from the workflow streamlining, decreasing time to market, and increasing collaboration."

At the same time, a successful DAM initiative also ensures that organizations maintain a consistent brand with materials they use for both internal and external purposes. "We manage the whole process to a point where it can be packaged and distributed to [a client's] internal branding groups," says Lam. "By going through this process, they maintain a level of consistency with what's going to the [end consumer]. They're managing their brand. They're managing their channel."

Expanding the channels in which those assets are available is another area in which DAM technology providers are working to further guide their clients. "We will continue to be very aggressive in the distribution networks to work with companies like Amazon, Sony, and others to figure out the most effective way to get publishers' content into their platform," says Ruse. "We will actively discuss new technology, including formats, metadata requirements, and distribution requirements to help publishers get into those channels more effectively and more efficiently." **EG**

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### DAM and GPO: Protecting Digital Assets

Regardless of the industry in which they operate, organizations need to fully understand the objectives they are trying to meet with their digital assets and how they can best serve those who create those assets as well as the individuals who will view them.

For marketing professionals, that can mean making sure that all digital assets are effectively created, stored, and distributed so they accurately and effectively illustrate and protect an organization's brand. For the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO), the need for protection goes a bit further.

The main goal of the GPO is to disseminate government documents from a variety of agencies to an audience that includes U.S. citizens. However, along with the tasks of collecting and disseminating this content, the GPO has to ensure that the published documents are authentic and that they can't be tampered with and altered.

The GPO was able to integrate such functionality with two Adobe solutions (LiveCycle Digital Signatures ES and Acrobat Professional). Individuals can now obtain documents via a PDF that features an electronic seal that signifies the authenticity of the documents.

One of those documents was the U.S. Budget for fiscal year 2009, which was accessible via PDF and authenticated. This particular initiative is expected to save almost \$1 million as well as 20 tons of paper over 5 years. Still, the efficiencies the system affords have been an equally strong selling point.

"That ability to have a signature from the GPO as a disseminator or publisher of the information gives

us an extra ability to service the citizens that are our customers," says John Hannan, chief information security officer at the GPO. "It also allows us to speed up and make more confident the process of obtaining our content in the process with our agency submitters so we can apply the digital signature technology to speed up that submission process and make it more electronic where it hadn't been in the past."

Hannan says that the GPO is researching how to extend the authentication process to include smaller pieces of content. "We would like to have the ability to take a subset of a very large document based on a search and have the authentication for that very small subset, such as a paragraph or a page pulled out of a 500-page document," says Hannan. He notes that finding a technology solution to accomplish this has been challenging thus far. But as organizations' needs to manage their digital assets continue to build in complexity, such a goal may not be too far out of reach of the GPO.



*The Seal of Authenticity informs viewers that the content they have received is authentic.*