

View Point



Digital Asset Management (DAM) strategy

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The reality of a dramatically changing media landscape has created awareness within the Media and Entertainment industry of the need for an end-to-end Digital Asset Management (DAM) strategy. In order to play a leading role in the emerging on-demand media world, companies need to focus on digitizing their content with a digital archive, the repository for all content and collateral media materials, at the center. Creating this archive requires new processes, practices and new technologies, as the resulting changes affect every aspect of an organization

Contrary to conventional belief, Infosys does not see technology as the most complex challenge in this process. The ability of an organization to manage an implementation and its readiness to absorb the impact of change will eventually determine the success of its DAM strategy. A survey of the ERP trend in the 1990's bears this out as many manufacturing companies implementing ERP never saw the "promised land" due to their inability to absorb the magnitude of such a change. Companies with successful implementations were those that streamlined their business processes, set defined and achievable objectives, and progressed by following a manageable implementation plan. In the process, they carried the entire organization along with them.

The shift to a Digital Media Enterprise will deliver content on-demand, in any form and format required via the channel most appropriate to the end user or group of users. It will encompass every aspect of a Media and Entertainment company, including development, production, scheduling, management, distribution and storage of content. Digitization is central to the DNA of the Digital Media Enterprise and any re-engineering in this area will have deeply-felt repercussions to the core activities of the business.

Benefits of DAM

A review of DAM benefits will help determine the classes of assets or aspects of an end-to-end DAM strategy that yield the most benefit to an organization. Once these areas are identified, a prioritization exercise can lay the foundation of a DAM roadmap.

The business benefits of an end-to-end DAM strategy include:

Cost Savings

Increased efficiencies and better utilization of creative talent time are key contributors to cost savings. However, DAM also creates shorter editing cycles in post production reducing time to market, minimizes distribution costs, creates a vast repository of assets for reuse and minimizes re-inventing every process of the creation-production-distribution value chain. Additional cost saving include the lower shipping fees and other distribution related expenses.

Competitive Positioning and New Services

A digital repository of content enables new services including availability of news, sports and feature stories. These can be delivered via multiple channels and forms to both internal and external audiences, e.g., blogs, websites, broadcast, hard or softcopy, Podcasts and many other media.

New Revenue Streams

New revenue sources can emerge from increased reuse and syndication. Archives can be structured with intuitive tools that enable new product packaging and pricing options (i.e., bundling of streaming video with traditional pay per view, cross channel promotions, etc.). Enhanced advertising opportunities can be created with cross channel packages and more targeted distribution models.

Rights Management and Compliance

A centralized content repository provides seamless integration with the database of rights information and licensing details. An end-to-end digital strategy has to include parallel efforts for creating, managing and distributing content as well as maintaining important data that describes and defines that content at every stage of the value chain.

Data Mining and Analytics

Once content is stored and accessed through consistent interfaces and processes, the databases can capture information on usage patterns including the degree of reuse and repurposing. This information can be valuable for planning storage strategies and validating or enhancing business models.

An Enterprise View of DAM with Phased Implementation

It is important to articulate a blueprint of the future-state organization, post DAM implementation and prioritize the DAM roadmap.

However, given the benefits of DAM solutions, there may be pressure to implement changes quickly. An example is digitizing an organizations entire media asset base and simultaneously integrating all production and sales channels into a digital asset management system. It may take several years to develop and deploy such a system, impairing the ability to measure and demonstrate the results of the effort. This approach could lead to a situation where the transitional costs cause serious disruptions to the business and dampen an enterprise's confidence on the whole initiative.

It is important to move forward at a pace that is manageable, least disruptive and demonstrable to the entire organization. The entire implementation should be broken down into a set of initiatives. Prioritization should consider ROI, payback, risk, time to market and proficiency of user groups.

DAM Implementation Guidelines

Before organizations invest heavily in a digital strategy, Infosys recommends they consider the following:

The Business Case

Building the business case for DAM should include an analysis to identify opportunities, confirm the business benefits and clearly define short, medium and long term goals. Specifically, the longterm vision needs to be aligned with an organization's broader business goals and strategies such as mergers, acquisitions, divestments, centralization, decentralization and other such considerations.

The business case needs to consider software, hardware and infrastructure costs and implementation timelines. DAM implementations can start with smaller, less risky projects, however, the infrastructure should be planned for the long term to avoid scaling bottlenecks.

Defining the new processes, practices, roles and responsibilities need consideration including who will use, administer and manage the new tools. Governance is an often overlooked aspect of the planning process - assessing if the current management structure is sufficient to manage the new processes requires validation.

Change management initiatives need consideration as building consensus on strategy and implementation plans is required. Additionally, the organization will have to consider building competency which can include education, training and user groups meetings.

The Implementation Plan

DAM should be implemented in a phased approach. Each phase needs to incorporate detailed system definitions, including requirements analysis, process definitions and specific change management elements such as competency build-up. The implementation risks also need clear identification.

The Metadata Schema and Classification System (Taxonomy)

The ability to instantly retrieve assets and prevent deterioration of physical assets presents enormous business benefits. Considering the volume of data typically stored, using the right metadata model – including descriptive, administrative and legal data – is critical towards achieving planned productivity gains. Usually, no consensus on standards exists across an organization and reaching agreement around taxonomy and nomenclature for these assets is a significant challenge. Companies that do not have an existing comprehensive company-wide classification system, require 4 to 6 months on average to create a broad taxonomy. For companies that do have an exiting system, new usage and capabilities might require additional data or classification hierarchies.

Choosing Partners and Vendors

Choosing the right partners and vendors is an important element in a successful DAM implementation and an implementation plan needs to allocate resources and time for the product and vendor selection processes. Independent consultants, technology partners and vendors can support any stage of the process, from planning the strategy to the final implementation details. While indexing, searching, transforming, storing and distributing content is all part of a DAM system, these elements might or might not be delivered in one package. In most cases these DAM functions need to be integrated with digital production systems and tailored to existing distribution channels.

Summary

Large-scale, integrated DAM systems provide the foundation for the Digital Media Enterprise. If implemented in phases and aligned with a larger corporate vision, DAM is likely to provide cost savings and revenue generation.

Embedding a DAM strategy into the larger IT infrastructure of an organization and incorporating the initiative with financial and customer relationship management (CRM) systems is a complex process. Yet with the help of strong IT services partners, a winning strategy for the on-demand media future is achievable with predictability and manageable risks.

References and Resources

Infosys White Papers

<http://infosys.com/industries/media/whitepapers/whitepapers.asp>

- DVD Supply Chain-The emerging challenge to Media Profitability

Books

- Digital Asset Management, David Austerberry, Focal Press, Burlington, 2004
- Professional Content Management Systems, Anderas Mauthe, Peter Thomas, Wiley, & Sons Ltd, Chichester, 2004

Online Resources

- Broadcast Papers <http://www.broadcastpapers.com>

Magazines/Journals

- Journal of DAM http://www.henrystewart.com/digital_asset_management Online Resources
- Broadcast Papers <http://www.broadcastpapers.com>

Conferences

- Henry Stewart DAM Symposium <http://www.damusers.com/>
- NAB <http://www.nabshow.com/default.asp>

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