
Digital Asset Management (DAM) Image Library Requirements Guideline

Introduction

This Guideline provides potential DAM implementers of an Image Library with the essential business questions that need to be answered for effective deployment. A brief overview at the end summarises the key features of the Canto Cumulus software with links to related information.

Digital Asset Management (DAM) is integral to good information management in any organisation - for the creative business user it has its own challenges. Workflow management and asset control are the key to achieving efficiency gains as well as consistency across an organisation or company, especially where rich media and large files from an array of digital formats form the content.

DAM and Business Processes: 3 key areas

1. Management processes - governance and strategic management.
2. Operational processes - core business in particular Purchasing, Manufacturing, Marketing, and Sales.
3. Support - usage and technical support.

Knowledge in these three areas is fundamental to the success in setting up an Image Library - the following questions need to be answered during the initial planning phase:

- * Who has governance of the project and what is their role? ie Image Manager; System Administration
- * Identify the key activities that impact on the business in relation to an image library eg marketing including branding, sales, inventory, etc
- * What are the steps designed to produce a product or service? How much is image re-use or conversion a factor in the output?
- * Who are the key stakeholders? What are the user permissions required for access to the image library in terms of search & display, editing, re-use/conversion, archiving etc?

Gather information such as a detailed inventory of current hardware, software and networking capabilities; a description of long-range plans and priorities for future purchases, and develop a plan for upgrading and/or replacing dated equipment and software.

Workflows

A workflow specification is about capturing processes at a level of detail that is sufficient
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to enable their execution - identifying how Cumulus would impact and improve on these processes is key to getting users' acceptance and providing the expected benefits.

- * What existing systems manage tasks such as automatic routing, automated or partially automated processing and integration between different functional software applications, hardware systems that contribute to the value-addition process underlying the workflow?
- * Which applications, components and people must be involved in the processing of data to complete an instance of a process?
- * What document types are required for different stages in the image lifecycle?
- * Is a central asset repository required for archiving, backup & management purposes?

Classification

Image classification can be undertaken in a number of ways according to workflow, usage and search requirements. Cumulus has the capability of using a category classification structure such that images can be arranged according to pre-defined criteria eg Subject, Project, Department, Date, Filetype and so on. Keywords can be added, or extracted from the image for better identification.

- * What metadata needs to be extracted for identification? eg thumbnail, filename, type, size etc
- * What standards have been identified for company legal compliance requirements and successful searching? eg IPTC
- * What additional metadata is required to be added eg captions, dates, etc
- * Is a formal taxonomy required to ensure correct grouping and classification?
- * Is there a style guide for production of images that includes preferred file types, size, quality etc.

Ownership, intellectual property and copyright issues need to be identified at the outset when user permissions are set up.

Summary of Key Questions

- * Which areas of DAM are most important to your company?
 - collaboration and workflow
 - search and retrieval
 - metadata tagging
 - content packaging and assembly
 - archiving and storage
 - asset creation and modification
 - multichannel formatting
 - digital rights management.
- * What key business challenges are you trying to solve with your DAM initiatives?
 - repurpose content
 - lower content creation costs
 - cross-departmental collaboration

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- generate revenue
- faster content updates
- improve content quality
- multichannel distribution
- better usability for consumers
- better advertising sales
- rights management.

* In what stage are each of the following DAM projects?

- digitising all media assets
- identification of assets for multichannel delivery
- implementing a DRM (Digital Rights Management) system.

Canto Cumulus System Overview

Cumulus organises your assets into catalogs. You can have as many catalogs as you want, and you can customise the look of those catalogs to suit your needs. Each catalog includes one record for each asset that you have. This record keeps track of the metadata associated with the asset. Cumulus has an enormous collection of metadata fields ready for use, plus menus, scrolling lists, buttons, windows, drag-and-drop and advanced search features.

Users can label and rate asset records with visual tags that make it easy to see which assets have been approved, rejected, put on hold and which are new. Other enhancements in the latest version include innovative "Actions" to automate workflow steps, new image conversion and processing features, creation of PPT presentations and printing improvements. PDF proof sheets can be created, even if you don't have Adobe Acrobat installed on your computer. Print Templates allow users to define output layouts to re-use and share with others.

The ability to identify and manage the relationships between assets is a feature of all Cumulus solutions. This means the images referenced in QuarkXPress or InDesign layouts, MS Word documents, and even PowerPoint presentations can be virtually "connected" to the assets that reference them. The graphical interface allows the user to easily find Alternates or Variants, or trace other relationships between assets.

With Shared Collections, Cumulus reduces search times and eliminates the risk of co-workers and clients using the wrong assets, as they immediately only see the asset records related to their current projects, without any searching. For more information online:

* General Information about Cumulus solutions:

<http://www.databasics.com.au/canto/> (html)

* Canto Cumulus Client Stories and Case studies:

http://www.databasics.com.au/canto/client_stories.html (html)

* Metadata information and related links:

http://www.databasics.com.au/canto/dam_meta.html (html)

* Canto's online Movie tour of Cumulus:

http://www.canto.com/main_menu/products/cumulus/product_tour/cumulustour.html

* Canto's online Demo of Cumulus Web Publisher Pro Standard Image Library:

<http://partner-epoint.canto.com/Web1/Standard/>