

The DAM Landscape



Michael Cowled, Associate, Graphic Designer for Tract Consultants, explains DAM use at the prominent Australian Landscape Architecture, Planning and Urban Design Company with approximately 120 staff across 6 offices.

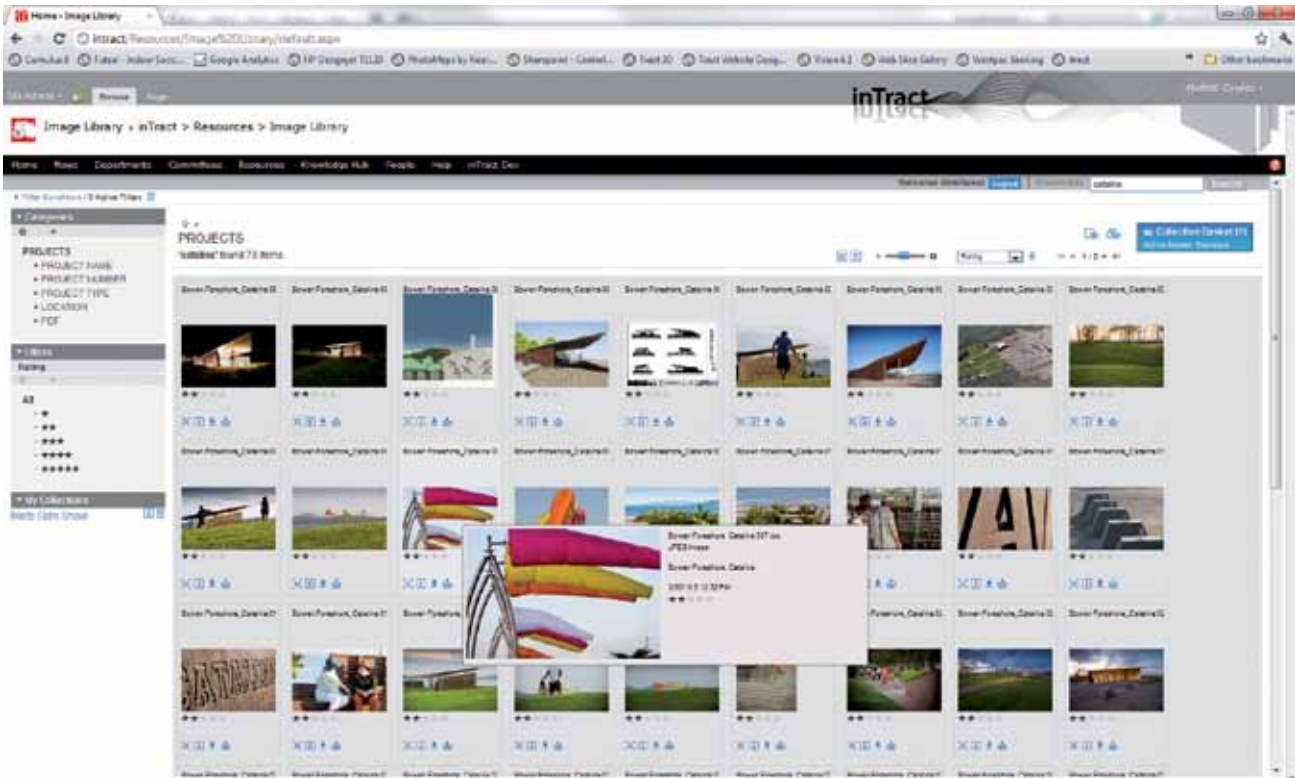
In our industry, we are known for our highly evolved, cutting-edge graphic outputs which rely heavily upon our digital asset libraries.

As our company expands, the need to consolidate and share our image libraries and other corporate assets for consistency and efficiency has become apparent to us.

We were initially introduced to Cumulus through industry peers SWA Group in California who had been utilising the software successfully for some time. They were also able to provide a standardised set of industry keywords which assisted in defining our image categorisation.

Over the past five years, we have utilised the Cumulus software to manage our extensive and continually expanding image library of 10,000+ images, and to store and access other digital assets across our company's secure internal network.

After an extensive review of other software options, we discovered that Canto's cumulus package pretty much stood alone in offering a simple yet highly functional multi-user web-based system to meet our DAM needs. We invested in the software in 2006 and began configuring it to our requirements, incorporating industry specific terminology for word searches etc.



The Tract image library in Cumulus..

The responsibility for managing image formatting, uploading and maintaining our various digital asset libraries' lies with the graphics department, but we also trained a staff member in each office to upload and categorise local assets as they are generated. The remainder of the company accesses the database through the web interface.

As part of our ongoing software maintenance contract we recently upgraded our web interface to Cumulus sites which we found to be a relatively simple installation and configuration.

We have found the need in recent times for more of our staff to use the full Cumulus workgroup client, as opposed to the browser interface. More and more people are using programs such as InDesign and Illustrator and need the ability to drag and drop images straight in.

We have 25 licenses of Creative Suite within the company which is building demand for use of Cumulus in tandem with it.

We have seamlessly integrated Cumulus in to our highly configured advanced SharePoint intranet system. Tract's nationwide offices utilise our Cumulus asset libraries on a daily basis, leveraging the company's extensive digital resources and providing instant access to a huge consolidated database of templates and resources to staff across all offices.

The ability to provide digital assets to the entire company via Cumulus and our intranet system means that our department has been able to support our increasingly graphics-savvy core discipline staff to utilise templates and resources to create their own graphic outputs. This has in turn freed up time for the graphics department to focus on developing skills in exciting new technology and maintaining our edge as leaders in our field.

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"Not only does our system increase the efficiency of image and other digital asset searches, it also encourages increased professional communication and interaction between our offices as well as promoting adherence to our branding through the consolidation of templates and guidelines." - Michael Cowled, Tract Consultants.



A design for Eureka Place, Southbank, Melbourne.