

13 Questions to
answer before you
choose a **Digital Asset
Management Solution**



Digital Asset Management isn't easy. But it's worth it.

You want your organisation to be better than average. Much better! And a digital asset management system can help – but only if it's done right!

Consider these statistics¹:

Companies spend an average of **\$8,200 per person per year on file management activities**. These include searching, verification, organisation, backup, and security.

Creative professionals spend an average of **one out of every 10 hours** of their time on file management. Their prime activity: searching.

The average creative person **looks for a media file 83 times week and fails to find it 35% of the time.**

¹Source, GISTICS Research



You have to make some key decisions:

- Do you want to buy and implement software yourselves or do you want a managed service where someone else deals with the technical issues?
- What functionality do you need?
- How will you know your DAM project is successful?

If not, you'll end up with problems:

- Usability issues.
- Lack of user adoption (often caused by usability issues).
- Poor taxonomy and metadata.
- No return on investment.

This guide is designed to help you get your digital asset management, planning & strategy right.

So you can:

- Understand what issues you face with digital asset management right now.
- Define what you want from your new digital asset management solution.
- Identify capability and process gaps within your organisation

What is your biggest Digital Asset Management challenge?

Building the business case or defining ROI



19.71%
94 votes

User adoptions of the system



19.29%
92 votes

Taxonomy / Metadata development



21.38%
102 votes

Selecting a vendor or product



13.42%
64 votes

The usability of the system



22.01%
105 votes

Other



4.19%
20 votes

Total votes: 477

Source: Widen



SECTION ONE:

Your Current Situation



SECTION ONE: Your Current Situation

Q1. Which of these challenges to managing digital content assets are relevant to you?

Choose as many as apply:

- No one has the time.
- We don't have a place to store them, or we're running out of space.
- We don't have a good process for getting content organised into one place.
- We have everything stored but it's hard to find it when we need it.
- No one knows when or how they are meant to store and secure digital content assets.
- We don't even know what digital content we have, let alone what we want to keep.
- It's hard to get a balance between keeping content secure and making sure everyone who needs to can access it.

Why this matters

Use your answers to understand what kind of issues you need to look at when implementing a DAM.

Are your biggest challenges about **getting content in one place**? If so, you'll need to look at processes, workflow and training. Never forget training – it doesn't matter how good your process is if no-one knows about it.

Do you have difficulties **finding content**? This is usually due to poor use of metadata and naming conventions. You'll need to define policies as well as processes to fix these issues.

Do you know what needs to be done, but you simply don't have the **time**? The bad news is, you can't improve your media asset management without investing some time. The good news is, you don't have to commit lots of time to DAM forever. Consider an end-to-end solution where you work with a partner to set up processes and policies, then outsource all ongoing management to them.

SECTION ONE: Your Current Situation

Q2. Where are your digital content assets stored?

Choose as many as apply:

- We have them all stored with a single partner.
- They're looked after by different partners (PR and ad agencies, production houses etc)
- We have an internal storage solution and everything is in it.
- We store some, our partners store some.

Why this matters

Use your answer to determine the difficulty of getting all your existing content into one system.

The more places your content is stored currently, the more complex migration will be, and the more likely it is that you will have some content missing.



SECTION ONE: Your Current Situation

Q3. Who in your organisation is responsible for digital content asset management?

- Senior management
- IT management
- Individual project / production managers
- Individual project / production coordinators
- Everyone
- Not sure

Why this matters

If you answered 'everyone' or 'not sure', you have a big issue!

Whether you implement a DAM in-house or as a managed service, you'll need policies and processes. The fewer people you need to engage with to set those up, the easier and quicker it will be!

Your best option is to identify a member of the senior management team who will take responsibility for driving your DAM project. This makes the project important across the entire organisation.

SECTION ONE: Your Current Situation

Q4. How well developed is your digital asset management process?

- We have a robust process, which everyone understands and follows.
- We have an agreed process, but people don't follow it.
- We have a process, people follow it, but it's time-consuming and inefficient.
- We don't have a process, but we could set one up fairly easily.
- We don't have a process and we could use some help developing a best-practice one which works for us.

Why this matters

This question puts the spotlight on your organisational culture.

Ideally, you want efficient processes which everyone follows. If you have poor processes, you may want help from someone with expertise in media asset processes. If you have good processes but nobody complies, we recommend you invest in cultural change – not just for your DAM but for your whole business!



SECTION ONE: Your Current Situation

Q5. Who has access to your digital content assets?

- A handful of people have access to everything and you need to go to them if you want something.
- Everyone in the team has access to everything.
- There are levels of access so people can only get the stuff which is relevant to them and their job.
- The issue isn't security of access. The issue is being able to find what you want!

Why this matters

Most DAMs allow multiple users, so you can configure access to only those who need it. It's a great idea to work out who needs what before you choose a software solution.

If you're struggling with setting rules for access to content, ask some providers. They have experience with many organisations which they can draw on to help you.

SECTION ONE: Your Current Situation

Q6. How secure are your digital assets? (Risk of loss)

- They're on hard drives with no backup copies.
- They're on hard drives with built-in redundancy or a backup somewhere.
- They're stored online - with a service which backs up responsibly.
- They're fully backed up onto LTOs.

Why this matters

Some insurance policies stipulate levels of redundancy – how many copies you should have, how many locations you should store in. You may wish to check that your current and future solutions comply.

Regardless of insurance, what level of risk is your company comfortable with?

SECTION ONE: Your Current Situation

Q7. How easily can you find digital content assets when you want them?

- Our system has searchable metadata fields and image thumbnails so it's easy to search.
- It's OK if you know the project name and date, but hard if you're not so sure.
- The first challenge is finding out which system to look in or which partner to ask.

Q8. How well do you manage metadata?

- We have identified the top metadata fields we want to store and search by. Everyone records these against projects and files.
- We have identified the top metadata fields we want to store and search by, but the data is not always added to projects and files.
- We are not sure which metadata fields will be most important for us and our business.
- We have rules for file names, folder structure etc to help us identify projects and files, but we don't use any other metadata.
- What's metadata?

Why this matters

These two questions look at searchability. There's no point in storing your media assets if you can't find them when you need them!

Unless you have strong metadata policies and file naming conventions, you'll need to make searchability a priority in your project.

Once again, providers have a wealth of expertise and can help you here. Check our file naming recommendations [here](#).

SECTION TWO:

Your Vision of the Future



SECTION TWO: Your Vision of the Future

Q9. How do you want to use your digital content assets?

- Post clips online - websites, social media etc.
- Repurpose original hi-res material – rolling out campaigns to more markets, history reels, anniversaries, news footage for documentaries etc.
- Not sure. I just want to know it's safe, secure and there if I need it.

Q10. How often do you want to access your digital content assets?

- Every day or two.
- A few times a month.
- A few times a year.
- Occasionally.

Why this matters

Be very clear why you're even looking at a DAM in the first place – and how much usage you expect.

This will give you some direction in terms of budget as well as some way of measuring success once your DAM solution is in place.

Additionally, a clear understanding of your reasons for investing in a DAM will help you assess the fit between yourself and the various solution and service options available.



SECTION TWO: Your Vision of the Future

Q11. How accessible should your digital content assets be?

- I need everything instantly available for download in original quality.
- I need everything instantly available for download at web-quality, but can wait a few days to get original quality.
- I need to be able to see everything online but I don't need to download. I can wait a few days to get my content back in my hands.

Why this matters

Think about what you want. Then think about what you really need to satisfy the requirements identified in Question 9.

In particular, think about the time it might take to download original high resolution files. Do you have the internal network capacity to handle this? If you're using an outsourced provider, do you have the external network connections?

There's a handy [download estimate calculator here](#).

SECTION TWO: Your Vision of the Future

Q12. How willing are you as a company to invest in digital asset management?

- It's a necessary evil. We want to spend as little time and money as possible - we want to be sure our content is safe so we can concentrate on new projects and growing the business.
- We want to re-use content and get more value out of it. If we have to invest money to do that, we will. But it needs to be easy, not time-consuming.
- Our content is central to our business. We're prepared to invest money and resources to look after our content and have full control.

Why this matters

Question 9 looked at what you want to do. This question explores how committed you really are to those objectives.

Is your organisation willing to invest money in DAM? What about staff time? That's just as important, and far harder to estimate correctly!



SECTION TWO: Your Vision of the Future

Q13. How much capability do you have to run a digital asset management system in-house?

- We have someone who will champion the project, who has the authority and expertise to implement an IT system as well as a workflow process, plus ensure compliance.
- We have someone who will champion the project and who has the authority to ensure compliance, but our IT expertise and resources are limited.
- We have the IT expertise to implement digital asset management, but it's unlikely people will comply with the workflow and processes.
- We don't know where to start. We need help with everything about getting DAM up and running, including technology, processes and training our team.

Why this matters

This question comes last for a good reason! By now, you should have a good feel for the issues and challenges you will face implementing a DAM for your business.

Are you confident to face those challenges alone?
Or do you need help? With technology? With processes?
With culture change?

Do you have the resources not just for implementation, but for ongoing management and development of a DAM?
Or would an outsourced or managed service suit your business better?

About Preferred Media

Preferred Media has 30 years of experience helping the media industry archive, manage and retrieve media assets for re-use.

Our services include:

- Secure, climate-controlled storage of heritage media assets on traditional media formats.
- Digitisation of legacy media formats. Magnetic media are degrading. The technology and skills to access them are dying out. Digitisation means media owners can, access, re-use and re-purpose existing assets to extract maximum value.
- End-to-end digital asset management via Preferred Connection. Enterprise level DAM at a fraction of the enterprise price.

Our clients include businesses of all kinds who use media:

- TV and film producers
- Production houses
- Ad agencies
- Entertainment companies
- Major brand advertisers

In Conclusion

We hope these questions have delivered value and insights which make your DAM more successful. We'd love to hear from you, and to help if we can.

You can reach us in any of the following ways:



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What Our Clients Say

“Our team used to spend hours sorting and searching for files. Now we have more time to focus on production and it really shows.”

Corey Esse, Managing Director and Executive Producer
The FINCH Company

“It is a simple, scalable solution that will save us in the long term. It’s fully managed, so no more hardware headaches for us.”

Tom Judd, Director
SharkEatsBear

“At UMA we are very impressed with the level of service we receive from Preferred Media. The staff are easy to deal with and happy to help with any queries. The website is intuitive, fast and easy to use, and the response to our order requests is immediate. Good systems, great service!”

Melissa Carroll, Operations Director
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Thank you

