

DAM Plus CMS: A 360-degree Approach to Content Management



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MARKETERS TYPICALLY FOCUS ON PRODUCING LOTS OF CREATIVE, PERSUASIVE CONTENT – BUT DON'T PAY AS MUCH ATTENTION TO KEEPING DIGITAL ASSETS WELL ORGANIZED AND EASY FOR THEMSELVES AND OTHERS TO FIND AND REPURPOSE.

The era of the isolated digital asset management system is a thing of the past. What is emerging today is a hybrid of digital asset management (DAM) and Content Management System (CMS) – a true marketing command center that manages the creation, organization, distribution and analysis of content and serves as the “single source of truth” for your organization’s marketing content.

Ideally, the tools organizations use to manage their content ought to support a true 360-degree approach that enables them to source and share content from internal as well as external sources. The latter may include user-generated content, co-branded and third-party branded content, social media content, media from stock photo sources and other sources outside of the internal marketing team and its agencies or contractors.

In this Widen whitepaper, we will explore the challenges marketers face in finding, managing and utilizing content today. We'll also cover the content management features missing from the typical CMS and the solution: A closely integrated CMS and DAM system that offers a wealth of benefits to content marketers. Finally, we'll take a closer look at what Widen Enterprises is doing to make this ideal approach to marketing content management a reality.

Challenges content marketers face

During the last several years, the effectiveness of traditional marketing strategies – advertising, direct mail and public relations – have steadily decreased. In place of these “interruption” approaches to marketing, a growing number of organizations have aggressively embraced content marketing as a strategy to build relationships and

influence their target audiences. This has created several growing challenges.

A tidal wave of content: The marketing departments and agencies of many firms are producing an accelerating stream of videos, presentations, whitepapers, e-books, brochures, slide decks, infographics, memes and more to build effective relationships with their target audiences. The marketing department is also frequently tasked with providing digital assets to channel partners, such as dealers and distributors, which must often be localized to meet their needs. Outside of marketing, other departments create large quantities of content to support their key functions, including training and development, customer support, sales and offices and operations around the globe.

This tidal wave of content, produced by multiple departments within the modern organization, has created a corresponding increase in the number of assets that must be managed.

Visual content is rapidly growing in importance:

A companion trend gaining momentum has been the emergence of visual content as a critical tool to break through the clutter, get attention and build customer relationships. Simply put, images, infographics, videos and other forms of visual content communicate more quickly with the brain, tend to be significantly more memorable and engage the hearts and minds of prospects, buyers and stakeholders more effectively than words alone.

Accordingly, a growing number of social media channels, such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, Instagram and Pinterest, have made images and rich media a key part of their content streams. For best results, image sizes

and formats need to be optimized for each channel; there is no “one size fits all” solution to standing out in the constantly-evolving world of social media.

Visuals have become an essential set of tools in the marketer’s toolkit to help the organization’s products and services stand out and command audience attention.

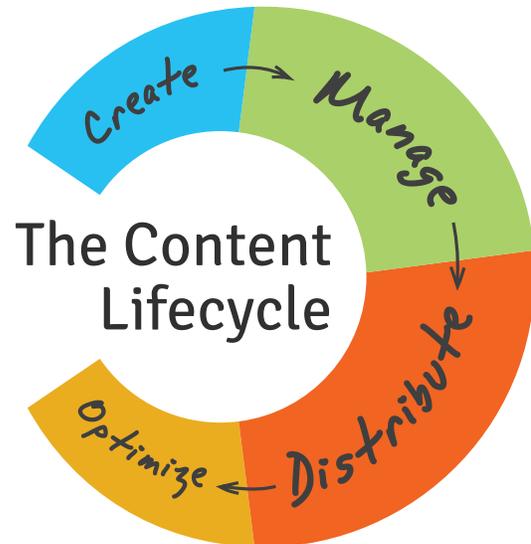
Poorly-organized, hard-to-find assets: Marketers typically focus on producing lots of creative, persuasive content – but don’t pay as much attention to keeping digital assets well organized and easy for themselves and others to find and repurpose. In the typical organization, assets are managed via simple methods, like shared network folders and file-sharing applications, like Dropbox and Box. Assets are often stored in multiple locations, and multiple versions of the same image are common – making it hard to determine which one(s) are best for current use. In addition, images are not organized or tagged consistently or effectively, making many of them hard to find.

Data from ongoing Widen audience surveys paints the picture of a significant, growing challenge that is resulting in a significant number of wasted resources:

- 84% of businesses report that finding digital assets is the biggest challenge they face
- The average person looks for digital media file 83 times per week, but only finds it 35% of the time (an effective DAM system drops that figure to around 5%)
- 10% of an average creative person’s time is spent looking for files
- 71% of organizations have problems providing staff with access to digital assets

For marketers who seek to get the attention of their target audiences, influence their emotions and motivate them to buy, this is a major problem. For C-level executives keenly interested in reducing waste, streamlining business processes and increasing revenue per employee, this data points to an unacceptable amount of wasted effort and missed opportunities for revenue generation.

CMS-based asset management is truly not enough



What about the asset management tools in popular content management systems? The native media management features of web-based tools like WordPress and Drupal enable only rudimentary, filename-based searches – nowhere near enough to manage content throughout its lifecycle:

1. Create and capture new content
2. Manage and organize existing content
3. Share and distribute relevant content
4. Analyze and track successful content

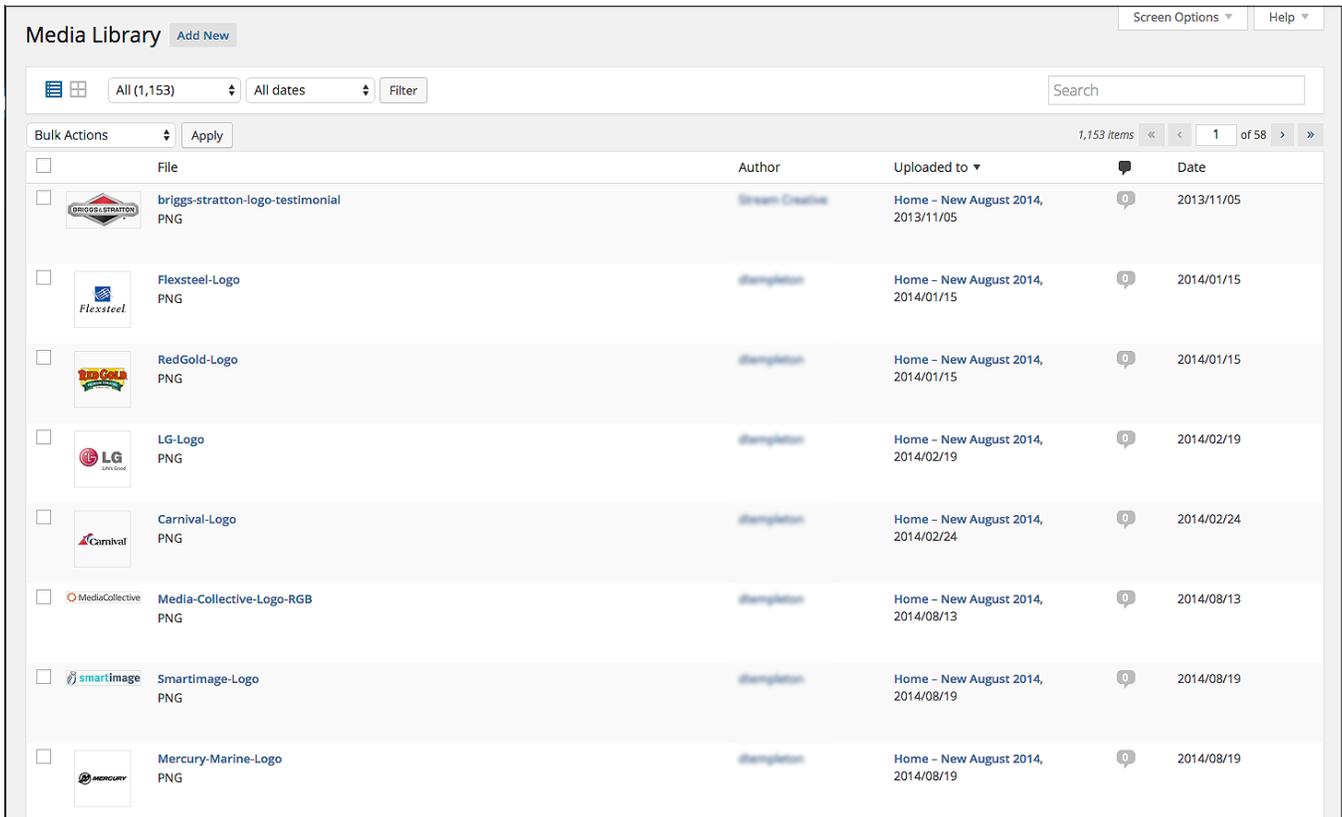
Specifically, web-based CMS platforms lack the multiple and powerful search tools that are common to most modern DAM systems, including:

- Rich metadata
- Content taxonomies
- Integration with creative tools
- Discussion/collaboration around individual assets
- Automated, customizable workflows

- Transcoding assets from one image format to another
- Asset analytics
- Little or no governance control of digital assets

A look at the Media Library of WordPress, for example, shows a tabular list of image thumbnails, image names

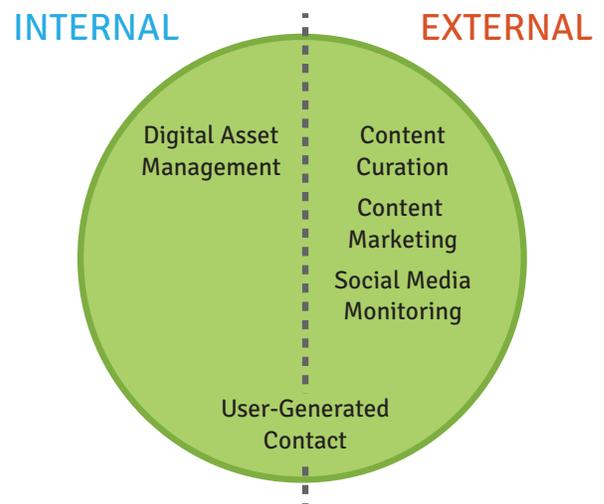
and the blog post or page where it was used. Images cannot be tagged with metadata, nor can they be organized into folders. File management is set up only to facilitate the assets used with the CMS. That means the typical content or brand marketer only utilizes each asset once; the interface isn't set up to encourage re-use or repurposing of digital assets.



The solution: Integrate your web-based CMS with a DAM system

The solution to this growing set of challenges is to integrate your web-based CMS with a DAM system, which can streamline workflow and help organizations to better optimize their use of content. In this scenario, the DAM system becomes the “master command center” for the management and use of visual assets.

In effect, the DAM system enables a 360-degree approach to managing digital assets – from sourcing images, videos and other visuals created internally to user-generated



content that the brand team has captured and stored in its database as well as media that have been purchased or curated from other sources to track their effectiveness.

Marketers creating content within a web-based CMS like WordPress or Drupal can access the DAM system directly from the CMS, making it easy to locate and use relevant

visual assets in ways that aren't possible with their native media management tools. Images can be pulled into blog posts in a single click, or can be embedded into them – which makes it possible to track the performance and popularity of individual assets.

The screenshot displays the Widen DAM search interface. The search bar contains the term 'Webinar', and the results show 166 assets found. The interface is divided into two columns: 'File' and 'Embed Links'. The 'File' column lists assets such as 'Admin Playbook.pdf', 'Introduction to Widen's integration with InDesign Webinar2.mov', and 'Silicon Publishing Webinar.pdf'. The 'Embed Links' column provides code snippets for embedding these assets into a CMS, including options for 'DocumentViewandDownload', 'VideoWithPlayer', 'Video(NoPlayer)', and 'Thumbnail'.

Advantages of CMS/DAM integration

In addition to the obvious benefit of time savings to content marketers, tight integration of CMS and DAM systems offers a number of less obvious but very important advantages.

It saves time by automating repetitive tasks: Common, repetitive tasks can be automated within the DAM system by creating customized workflows, which save marketers many hours of time. Examples include batch editing and tagging of assets, the ability to automatically assign metadata during the import process and the ability for DAM systems to read/write embedded metadata (e.g., IPTC or XMP data) from image files.

It minimizes time wasted searching for assets and recreating them when they can't be found: As the central repository of all of the organization's assets, the DAM system serves as a "central source of truth" – the place to obtain marketing and brand assets that are approved for use and are current. A DAM system also significantly reduces file versioning problems. Images and rich media are stored in a single, high-resolution format and can be transcoded to other formats as needed.

It helps marketers maintain brand integrity across the organization by centralizing approved content assets in a single location, with granular control over access rights. So, no matter if your training department in the headquarters needs access to the company logo or

AS THE CENTRAL REPOSITORY OF ALL ORGANIZATION ASSETS, THE DAM SYSTEM SERVES AS A “CENTRAL SOURCE OF TRUTH” – THE PLACE TO OBTAIN MARKETING AND BRAND ASSETS THAT ARE APPROVED FOR USE AND ARE CURRENT.

a dealer halfway around the world needs a product photo, each person will have access to approved images, videos and other files that meet their needs and maintain brand integrity. In addition, an effective DAM system manages one high-quality master of an asset then enables users to convert true-to-form derivatives from it. This helps marketers maintain a high level of asset quality and quality control throughout the asset database.

It helps marketers ensure that visual assets are used appropriately: Model releases, image licenses and other legal documents can be stored along with the digital asset, which helps to minimize the potential for expensive legal mistakes.

Improved collaboration: Many enterprise-level CMS’ are designed with collaboration in mind – but only for web content. In other words, one person can post an article to the CMS, while another person can proof and edit it and then publish it to the organization’s website. But CMS’ don’t usually address typical workflows for creation, approval and publishing of visual content. A DAM integrated with a CMS enables multiple people inside and outside the organization to collaborate on visual asset creation and approvals.

Here’s an example to illustrate: A content creator in the marketing department is writing a blog post about your company’s latest product and needs a cut-away drawing that illustrates a specific capability. From within the CMS, the content creator can initiate a threaded discussion with a technical designer at the organization’s ad agency to have this drawing created, manage internal approvals and then publish it to the organization’s blog.

It enables marketers to tell more engaging brand stories:

Effective integration of CMS and DAM systems provides a dashboard of visual asset performance across all online channels, including the website, blog, social media and mobile. It enables marketers to measure the popularity of individual content assets and understand what audiences are responding to and which audience segments are consuming them, all from within the CMS.

In much the same way that A/B testing of landing pages and copy helps marketers zero in on wording that resonates with the needs of their target audiences, DAM-based analytics for digital assets provide valuable insights into visuals that do the best job of capturing attention, appealing to readers emotions and moving them to take desirable action. Over time, this enables content marketers to create and publish more of what’s effective and less of what isn’t. That can help organizations do a better job of engaging with their target audiences, act as advocates to them and deliver better customer experiences.

Widen’s approach to CMS/DAM integration

The Widen Media Collective DAM solution includes plug-ins that enable integration with two of the world’s most popular content management systems: WordPress and Drupal. By integrating your CMS with Media Collective, your use of DAM will increase and your digital files will become more valuable. Examples of how you can use this type of tight integration include:

- Searching for images in the DAM system from within your CMS
- Using embed codes to display images or video on a web page

If your organization doesn't use WordPress or Drupal for content management, the digital files stored in the Media Collective can be repurposed into many other web applications and software programs through an application programming interface (API). An API enables two software systems to exchange data easily. Use of the Widen Web Services API isn't limited to integrating DAM and CMS applications either. Other use cases include connecting the DAM system to a mobile application and enabling visitors to upload and download files from a public website.

Configurable workflows in the Media Collective help content and brand marketers speed repetitive tasks, enabling them to focus on more value-added tasks. Some examples include:

- Routing and reviewing with simple commenting in collaborative scenarios
- Sharing asset collections externally with stylized collections
- Converting a large volume of images or videos to different formats
- Fulfilling requests simply for assets by empowering controlled, self-serve access
- Notifying users when assets change or have been edited
- Updating images, audio and video files on different websites automatically with embed codes

Discussion threads can be attached to individual assets in the Media Collective, enabling efficient collaboration, approval processes and other workflows. Comments may be public or private, which means only certain users can see them. How can comments be used? Here are

some ideas:

- Marketing: Gather feedback and route assets for approval
- Sales: Share asset performance with peers, which can elevate everyone's effectiveness
- Legal: Notes on legal documents about specific assets

Conclusion

A well-integrated CMS/ DAM system can not only make the content marketer's life easier and drive measurable results, it can also help to make them feel more in control of the organization's growing mountain of content.

Organizations that viewed DAM systems as a place to store assets can now see that it has evolved into a content command center – one that helps achieve better results and greater ROI from their digital asset investments.

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About Widen

Widen is a marketing technology company that powers the content that builds your brand. Leveraging cloud-based resources, Widen delivers configurable, scalable software services that help marketing and creative teams easily capture, organize, share, and analyze marketing content. Organizations of all sizes use the Widen Media Collective to streamline their workflows and make their content work harder. Widen is trusted across various industries by hundreds of thousands of users worldwide like LG, Roche, Trek, Cornell University, New Orleans Tourism Marketing, The Atlanta Falcons, Red Gold Tomatoes, Electrolux, and Yankee Candle. To learn more about Widen, go to www.widen.com.

