

Business Case for DAM

Why you need a DAM

MerlinOne helps marketing, creative and publishing departments become more efficient, save time and money, and get their content to market faster.

For over 25 years, we've been the mission-critical DAM for the most demanding content environments out there.

MERLIN DAM IS FOR



- Marketing Groups
- Creative Production
- Publishing
- Media Production

What is a DAM and why do I need one?

A DAM (digital asset management) solution is a central repository for managing all the different types of files that are the foundations of every integrated marketing campaign. These campaigns can run across a wide range of print/offline, web, mobile, social media and outdoor channels, and are produced by feeding your files to a wide variety of applications like your CMS, The Adobe Creative Suite, social channels, and more.

You need a DAM when it becomes difficult or impossible to manage all of the files, (each with a different size, format, and permission) across your content, publishing, advertising and marketing channels. A DAM simplifies your life, making files easy to find, organize, version, approve, use, and export quickly to a range of different destinations. Lost assets no longer happen, lost time is vastly reduced, and you get to be in control of your creative and production processes.

When do you need a DAM?

Everyone starts out using some form of folder structure, where the name of the folder is the only metadata. These folders are usually dispersed on the laptops of several people in your department, so typically the tipping point for considering a DAM is when assets grow in such quantity that users have a hard time remembering in what folder, on whose computer, a given file lives.

MerlinOne Customers



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON D.C.



The
New York
Times



Or, they have difficulty with retrieving files on deadline because they are dispersed on multiple laptops, servers or drives, some of which the user has no access to, and few of which have any backup in case they break. By the time you have a few thousand files, managing the folders becomes as hard as managing the files within the folders.

Folders are not powerful enough to let you do your job.

What benefit does a DAM have over simple storage?

Box and Dropbox are terrific repositories for simple structures of shared files. If you have objects that fall into clean categories, like “2017”, that you always share with the same group of people, or if you never need quick interfacing with Salesforce, Adobe Creative Suite, or your CMS, they may do the trick. But what happens when your photo shoot shows next season’s jacket and boots: do you put it in the “Boots” folder, or the “Jackets” folder, or just in the folder with the date of the shoot? A DAM goes much further than simple folders.

What can a DAM provide beyond just folder-based organization and storage?

Big Cost Savings and Efficiency Improvements

No more lost files. Find what you need in seconds instead of 15 minutes. Speed creative work to market with versioning, approval workflows, alert emails, integration with your other work platforms. No more re-shoots for lost photos.

Centralized Platform

Instead of having your files distributed across everyone’s laptop (“David is on vacation this week and that file I need is on his laptop!” is a typical lament), a DAM provides a centralized system where all your files live. Having them in one place means you can have an effective backup strategy, so losing important files when someone’s hard drive dies becomes a thing of the past.

DAM as a Database

The key improvement a DAM brings is an underlying database, one that “knows” everything there is to know about your files. It lets you find a file by any combination of criteria you can think of.

As each object is ingested into the DAM, a record is created with everything known about that object: who created it, when, what size, what does it show, when did we last use it, how was it cropped or clipped, did it just go to our website, or somewhere else?

And searching is very fast: sub-second searches across millions of objects is expected. If you can't remember the exact spelling of a fashion model's name, take a stab at it and a DAM will likely find it with its advanced search capabilities. We can even use deep learning engines to describe the scenes in a photo to make it easier to find. No more trying to remember which folder, just ask the question and the answer is at your fingertips.

Search and Metadata Features

Classify and organize assets so they are readily available, eliminating wasted time, effort and expense spent locating misplaced or lost assets. Add metadata to an entire batch of objects with one operation. As an admin, you can even mandate that fields of metadata are required for new objects.

Democratize your Data

A DAM solution provides an enterprise level, self-service portal to multiple stakeholders. This commonly includes marketing and creative teams, internal business units, legal, HR, agencies, and external partners. If desired, users no longer need to go through gatekeepers to get an object they need immediately.

Sharing and Permission Capabilities

Control what users can see, download/upload, share, and edit without the risk of accidentally sharing confidential information, or materials that are not yet approved for distribution outside of a team.

You can set up user groups with predefined permissions and access, like only showing certain objects to each group. Or, you might only allow certain groups access to output objects, for example. Easily set up the exact permissions and structure that you need across your enterprise.

Collaborative Workflow Tools

Streamline and centralize communications about content or processes within a DAM. A good DAM supports versioning as you evolve a concept, lets you easily check rights management for objects, and supports comments, so your workgroup can quickly distill content choices down to just the right look.

Approval workflows are built in, as are high speed interfaces to your production channels like your CMS, video editing system, print layout system, or whatever workflow you need. This speeds your content to market much more quickly.

End-to-end Lifecycle Monitoring

A DAM can report how assets were created, what campaigns they were used in, if they were shared or distributed.

Versioning lets you ensure that only the most recent version of a logo is available to your worldwide team, for example.

Asset Protection Features

An automated database mirroring/syncing procedure creates a backup of your content in real time. Having more than one physical instance of a collection safeguards assets. “Lifeboat” capabilities prevent accidental asset deletion from becoming permanent. A fault-tolerant system keeps working for you seamlessly, even if an individual server goes down.

Advanced Workflows

A robust DAM solution empowers you with advanced workflow tools to automatically convert files on input /output, create approval workflows, distribute or deliver files to media and advertising channels. It allows advanced admin functions that can provide or limit access to the DAM, based on detailed user permissions. And the best DAM solutions do this extremely quickly, even with millions of assets in the database.

Unlike folder-based storage, you grow into a DAM – you never outgrow one.

What kind of files do people typically put in a DAM?

A DAM can hold many different types of files. Examples of files that people generally place into their DAM solution include:

- Audio files
- Video
- Photos
- Microsoft Office files of all types
- PDFs
- Adobe Creative Suite files
- Text documents
- Fonts
- Artwork
- Logos
- Branded materials
- Product sheets
- Graphic standard guidelines
- Brand guidelines

Next Steps

Hopefully, we've been able to show you some additional ways to think about your digital files, and how a DAM can become the hub of your digital world. If you have any additional questions, please get in touch with us! We have over 25 years of experience serving many different industries and needs.