The DAM Maturity Model

Digital Asset Management (DAM) is the collection of systems and processes that enable the management of assets from creation through distribution and archive. The DAM Maturity Model (DAM-MM) uses 15 dimensions organised into four categories to define the digital asset management ecosystem:

People: The human roles, responsibilities, and interrelationships in an organisation's use and management of DAM
Information: The material and related descriptors that enable the use of an asset
Systems: The related components that work together to facilitate the lifecycle of assets
Processes: The repeatable set of procedures and operations designed to realise each stage of an asset's lifecycle

The DAM Maturity Model

People	Information	Systems	Processes
Technical Expertise	**Asset**	**Prevalence**	**Workflow**
Business Expertise	**Metadata**	**Security**	**Governance**
Alignment	**Reuse**	**Usability**	**Integration**
	Findability	**Infrastructure**	
	Use Cases		

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Dimension:	Ad Hoc	Incipient	Formative	Operational	Optimal
PEOPLE					
Technical Expertise	Little to no exposure to the application of DAM technologies, including managing repositories and workflow systems	Casual understanding of DAM technologies, often starting in the form of web or document management systems, and centralised document repositories or shared drives	Demonstrated experience with the implementation of functional DAM systems and specific DAM core competencies, such as ingestion, cataloging, transformation, transcoding, distribution, etc.	Managing DAM-specific repositories and creative workflow systems is core to IT with organised knowledge transfer	Understanding and participating in forecasting enterprise DAM technical needs, key technical integration points, and data schema design, in preparation of future business requirements
Business Expertise	Little to no exposure to the use of DAM technologies, including repositories and workflow systems	Casual understanding of the value of DAM, often starting in the form of utilizing web or document management systems and centralised document repositories	Demonstrated experience with implementation of functionally specific DAM systems and core competencies, such as ingestion, cataloging, transformation, transcoding, distribution, etc.	Assets managed through repositories and workflow systems; a core function with organised knowledge transfer	Understanding enterprise DAM capabilities to uncover current and future asset value , and create competitive advantage
Alignment	Little to no exposure to the use of DAM terminology, including ingestion, cataloging, transformation, transcoding, distribution, etc.	Casual understanding of the need for DAM, often starting with utilizing and creating web and document management systems and centralised document repositories	Demonstrated collaboration to extract value from functional DAM systems with DAM core competencies	Active collaboration utilizing cross-functional teams to manage the improvement of asset repositories and workflow systems with organised knowledge transfer	Proactive cross-departmental and global use and refinement of DAM capabilities to uncover current and future asset value, and create competitive advantage

INFORMATION

Dimension:	Ad Hoc	Incipient	Formative	Operational	Optimal
Asset	Unorganised, with no policy or organisation strategy	Common repositories and policies	Centralised organisation and policy	All new repositories and asset types registered with defined standards and practices for authoritative asset management	Assets prepared and authorised for use and reuse across multiple channels, with organisational understanding of authoring for different intentions
Metadata	No metadata (filename only); unorganised; no policy or organisational strategy	Inconsistent asset tagging; department-level common repositories and policies	Conforming vocabularies for organisational use	Enterprise taxonomies created; all new repositories and asset types registered and related; consistent application of taxonomies and metadata	Defined standards; defined job responsibilities; enterprise taxonomy in use; metadata is complete, embedded and travels with asset; metadata changes are tracked; ongoing refinement
Reuse	No Reuse	Inconsistent, unplanned or unsupported reuse	Development of a reuse strategy and planned reuse of specific assets	Execution of a reuse strategy across all assets	Discovery of new uses of assets beyond original intention, consistent application of reuse across departments and global group
Findability	Employees spend excessive time searching for assets without finding them — often resorting to the re-creation of assets	Search engine(s) both within and/or external to DAM systems adopted, and indexing started	Indexing completed; usage patterns reviewed, leveraging vocabulary terms for further refinement, relevance ranking by user and asset priority are explored	Implementation of specific enterprise and/or federated search mechanism that includes not only DAM system but other relevant related content from other systems	Search and classification become a central service with business-driven variants seamlessly delivering relevant assets and metadata by role; search mechanisms continuously improved
Use Cases	Unstructured meeting of organisational needs; no value applied to user scenarios	Project-level requirements gathered, but with no end-to-end context	Program-level requirements gathered; beginning to apply end-to-end context	Well-structured, organised and prioritised; all users identified with known input and output expectations; dependencies, prerequisites and interrelationships identified	Framework in place to define, measure and manage existing and new use cases; systems validate

SYSTEMS

Dimension:	Ad Hoc	Incipient	Formative	Operational	Optimal
Prevalence	Individual, disconnected systems, or complete lack of purpose-built systems	Scattered siloed system efforts, with some built for purpose	Initial attempts to combine or adopt DAM across the enterprise by executive champions, plan in place for key system integration with DAM (such as Product Information Management, Marketing Automation, Mobile Middleware, and Web Content Management.)	Successful DAM enterprise system deployed and in use, key initial metadata and workflow integrations are in place and operational	Enterprise DAM integration aligned with company culture prior to implementation; DAM has become core operational layer in enterprise system architecture, with needs-based integrations to key systems such as PIM, ERP, WCM, Marketing Automation
Security	No asset-specific security plan in place	Specific security strategy and rudimentary plan in place	Defined, centralised security controls and system standardization	Security controls clearly defined and enforced throughout the organisation at an asset level	Security is SSO-driven, enterprise-level, shared service with processes to address new threats in a timely manner; automated
Usability	Usability levels are low, disjointed interfaces with no cohesion or commonality, employee frustration rates are high	Single platform with use of raw (out-of-the-box) user experience	Some multi-platform support, cross-system access, creation of user-/persona-specific tool interfaces	Remote multi-platform enabled; user-centered design with formal user-feedback collection	User experience is driven by dynamic business needs; effort meets expectations; multilingual; multi-platform; consistent UX; intuitive; instructional; visual and functional integration with ERP, PIM, WCM, and BI systems
Infrastructure	Planning is reactive between business and IT, inadequate infrastructure in place	Project-specific infrastructure implementations as directed	Proactive, but informal business and IT coordination beyond project specificity	Joint change management / governance leading to proactive infrastructure planning, investment and changes	Formal coordination and mutual accountability with agreed timelines, roles and goals

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PROCESSES

Dimension:	Ad Hoc	Incipient	Formative	Operational	Optimal
Workflow & Collaboration	Few or no standardised procedures for asset lifecycle. no facility for digital and remote system-aided collaboration, primary mode of collaboration is email	Basic process analysis leads to some informal workflows, markup-oriented technologies are explored	Formal workflows with limited automation, centralized collaboration and markup tools are explored	Automated processes & joint collaboration span systems and departments; command and control of standards	Continual refinement and managed experimentation; workflows and collaboration are standard practice; measurable performance indicators established
Governance	Employees self-govern, common disconnects cause asset mis-use	Scattered policies and few formal procedures	Centralised development of structure and codification of procedures; management support	Policies and procedures widely disseminated and enforced; ownership and responsibility in place; communication and training on policies throughout organisation	Active refinement; utilization of end-user feedback; an established means to measure and motivate employees to adopt standards across the enterprise
Integration	No intentional process or system integration	Brute-force point-to-point integration between systems and processes	Integration vision is holistic, enterprise-wide and complete, including people, process and technology; understanding of common paradigms	Integration vision is in practice, utilizing well-defined, documented paradigms and interconnected systems	Real-time and seamless integration enables common user experience

Further explanations of each dimension, to aid you in your self-assessment

People

Technical Expertise
There are key technical capabilities that the organisation needs to have, either in-house or via an external partner. Models such as the ITIL v3 and ISO/IEC 20000 also offer a helpful guide for defining technical roles and responsibilities.

Business Expertise

This refers to the understanding of fundamental DAM concepts among employees and management in support of the organisation's core mission. To promote an organisation's DAM practice, clearly related and defined roles should be used as a starting point. Examples include:

- Asset Owners
- DAM Managers
- Rights Managers
- Reporting Analysts
- Product Managers/Channel Managers
- Metadata Managers / Librarians
- Archivists
- Asset Creators
- Sales/Marketing Managers

Alignment
Alignment is the collaboration between technical and business areas utilizing the value of DAM to achieve the organisation's mission. This collaboration provides the capability for the groups to anticipate the needs of one another with complementary strategies.

Information

Asset
This refers to managing the hierarchy of authoritative digital assets, their creation, classification, usage and distribution. It defines the following key lifecycle stages:

- *Ingestion:* How an asset is created or imported into the DAM system
- *Versioning:* The management of different iterations of an asset

- *Derivatives:* Works in progress during the creation of new assets or sub-assets
- *Media Processing and Transformation:* The capability to convert an asset from one format to another and create different renditions by way of transcoding and transformation
- *Distribution:* The delivery of a final asset

Metadata
Metadata is specific information describing the nature or "about-ness" (categorization) of assets. This provides methods to support categorisation and classification by defining taxonomy models and vocabularies including ontologies, folksonomies, and schemas.

Reuse
Reuse refers to an organisation's repurposing of assets across multiple channels, and an organisation's appreciation of single asset authoring for different intentions.

Findability
Findability is how users navigate services to search for and retrieve assets. In DAM, search mechanisms work hand-in-hand with the organisation's services and information models.

Use Cases
Use cases — from simple to very complex — describe the functional capabilities of DAM systems. Every organisation's needs are different and these differential requirements or use cases are defined as scenarios. They also include generic capabilities like personalisation, collaboration, and multichannel delivery. Use cases are a method for planning an implementation that will clearly address end-user and organisational needs.

Systems

Prevalence
This defines how broadly the DAM efforts are permeated throughout the organisation.

Security
Security is the extent to which the actual asset access reflects enterprise entitlements — including capabilities for single sign-on authorisation, authentication, policy enforcement, users, roles, internal/external access controls, rights management and authenticity.

Usability
Usability refers to the ease-of-use of various user and configuration interfaces.

Infrastructure
Infrastructure is a set of interconnected systems and organizational elements that provide a framework to support the entire structure of enterprise DAM.

Processes

Workflow
DAM systems apply and in some cases automate business processes to manage digital assets. These processes are comprised of workflows to maximise resources and minimise latency, which in turn increases asset availability.

Governance
Governance ensures that the DAM strategy and policies are actually implemented and the required processes are correctly followed.

Integration
Integration facilitates efficient data transference within and between systems and processes.

ASSESSING YOUR OWN DAM MATURITY LEVEL

The first step is to inventory all of the stakeholders and identify internal champions, i.e., people who could advocate the need for DAM. Internal champions should be from around the organisation and not necessarily just technical staff. They should represent those who are in the most pain under the current practices or workflows, or who have the most to gain from new ones. In a DAM

scenario case, the users with the most at stake are usually marketing managers, creatives, editors, brand managers, agency representatives, sales people, product marketers, licensing staff and other external communicators.

The next step is to create and administer a detailed set of questionnaires for each of the above stakeholders. For each question, an organisation should find answers with respect to the current and future state.

Remember that at the end of the exercise, the level itself is not important. What is important is that the organisation identifies the weaknesses (or immaturities) and makes solid and agreed upon plans to address them. Also, the organisation does not need to be proficient at a given level across *all* categories and dimensions in order to move from one level to the next. The idea is *to understand where your organization fits generally, document imbalances, and set priorities from there.*

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You can use an online form to record your own self-assessment:

https://digitalassetman.wufoo.eu/forms/dam-maturity-model-questionnaire/

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