The great DAM renaissance.

From storing assets to building experiences.

From outdoors enthusiasts to digital devotees

Founded in Vermont in 1856, Orvis is the oldest mail-order retailer in the United States. The company originally specialized in fly fishing tackle but now sells hunting and sporting goods, as well as clothing and accessories for outdoor enthusiasts and their dogs. Orvis still publishes print catalogs—as a nod to their heritage—but these days the business is mostly digital.

Like any retailer, Orvis has a large library of digital assets for their website and other digital marketing channels. But they didn't just want to store those assets in a static repository and retrieve them as needed for one-off campaigns. They wanted to deliver dynamic experiences across direct mail, web, and email. To do that, they invested in an integrated marketing technology stack, including a modern digital asset management (DAM) system that lets them quickly find, adapt, and deploy the right assets.

"We need to move faster and act with more intention and intelligence."

Paul Vaughan
Former Director of User Experience, Orvis

Modern asset management—
fast, agile, and getting smarter all the time

Customers expect brands to offer content that matters to them, and they want to receive it when and where they need it. And brands aren't just publishing content on websites anymore. They're delivering it to mobile phones, TVs, voice assistants, and even IoT devices like wearables and connected cars.

The good news is we're in the middle of a "DAM Renaissance"—a term coined by Nick Barber, senior analyst at Forrester. Modern asset management isn't just about storing your assets. It's about content velocity. To deliver compelling experiences across the whole customer journey, brands need to create, store, and manage a massive volume of content. Content velocity is about organizing your teams, tools, and processes around the goal of creating the right content and getting it to market fast.

A DAM used to be where creative assets went to die. Historically, it was a repository for photographs and other static images. Now, DAM systems are being used to store and manage rich media assets like video, 360-degree video, 3D, virtual reality (VR), and augmented reality (AR), as well as text and documents.

And it isn't just the types of assets that are changing. In organizations that have adopted the content velocity approach, the DAM plays a critical role in all stages of the content lifecycle, from ideation to production to delivery.

In a 2018 study, IDC found the business value of modern asset management included 20 percent shorter launch cycles for new campaigns, 27 percent faster delivery of content by digital marketing teams, and 21 percent higher productivity for creative teams. Other benefits included reduced compliance costs and increased revenue—driven by more engaging, targeted experiences. Since then, DAM technology has become even better.

According to the global *2020 Digital Trends* report by Econsultancy and Adobe, content management is a top-three digital priority for large organizations. And that focus on content is bringing DAMs out of the shadows. In the same study, 53 percent of large organizations said "outdated workflows that slow down our processes" was one of their

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said outdated workflows was one of their top-three barriers to successfully creating digital experiences.

top-three barriers to successfully creating digital experiences. The DAM Renaissance is helping to solve that problem.

A modern DAM is a real tool for collaboration. "One of the core tenets of being customer-obsessed is moving from being siloed to connected," said Barber. "DAM can act as that connective tissue across the organization. DAM is the hub."

Adding modern asset management to your toolkit lets you make the most of your existing capabilities while adding new ones—like AI-powered tools that drive scale and free creative professionals to do the work they love. And with the advent of cloud-native systems and a faster mobile infrastructure, many more opportunities lie ahead for brands that pursue content velocity.

Give your customers content they care about in every moment

Modern asset management is all about speed, flexibility, and scale. If you adopt the content velocity approach, here are three essential things you'll be able to do.

Rapidly deliver up-to-date content across channels

In a recent survey by Magnolia, U.S. and UK marketing professionals said their top content management priorities were speed of content creation and easy customization. The new cloud-native DAM platforms support both of these desires.

In the DAM world, there used to be a trade-off between cloud-hosted systems, which are fast, and on-premise systems that you can customize to fit your precise needs—if you're willing to invest the time and development resources to do so. But cloud-native DAM platforms, which have an agile microservices architecture, let you have the best of both.

For a quick look at the key differences among on-premise, cloud-based, and cloud-native solutions, check out the chart in the article *How a Cloud-Native CMS Makes Content Delivery Faster and Easier*.

AI is also accelerating the content creation process. The most advanced DAMs now have smart-tagging capabilities, which help creatives find precisely the right digital asset in a fraction of the time it used to take.

> *"The speed with which we're able to find assets, determine usage rights, and deploy them is probably 100 times faster."*

Paul Vaughn
Former Director of User Experience, Orvis

You can use built-in AI tools for generic tagging or—if you're a bit more ambitious—machine learning to develop and apply tags that are specific to your business.

"AI applied to a large library of content helps surface things that we as humans might not think of in terms of tagging content and surfacing metadata," said Barber. "What AI can do is it can start to surface some of those insights around object detection, scene detection, facial recognition."

When Orvis shifted to a dynamic experiences model, they put their assets in a modern DAM that's integrated with their design tools and has AI-fueled tagging and search features.

Fluidly adapt and transform content for multiple platforms

In a 2019 survey by the Content Marketing Institute, 64 percent of companies said they have a CMS in place, but only 31 percent said they can publish content in multiple channels without having to handcraft each piece.

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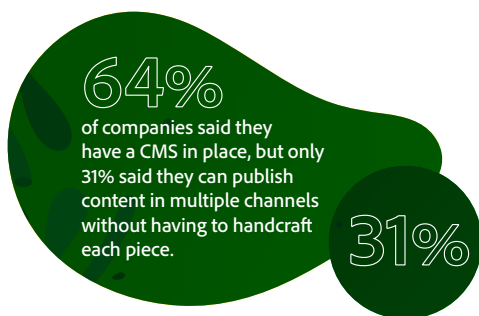
To deliver tailored, omnichannel experiences at scale, you have to break content down into its smallest pieces—a process Forrester calls "atomization"—and then recombine those pieces to create just the right experience for each customer. A modern DAM lets you do that using experience fragments. You can create a piece of content once and use it in lots of situations—across multiple web properties, for example, or in 100 versions of an email tailored to different audiences.

When customers engage with your brand through an app on their smartphone, they're getting a slightly different experience from what they'd get using a desktop web browser. But the creative team doesn't have to manually assemble each individual experience because the fragments can be repackaged using automation. And the look, feel, and quality of the experience is consistent, no matter what channel or device the customer is using. Orvis saves marketing copy as experience fragments so that marketers can easily access it as they're launching campaigns across various channels.

Use data and AI to efficiently tailor the content experiences

The *2020 Digital Trends* report found 38 percent of large organizations are now delivering personalized experiences in real time. Data is the foundation of those experiences.

In the planning part of the content creation process, content analytics should help you decide what content to make and who to make it for. You also need downstream data to tell you which content assets are being consumed, how they're being consumed, and by which audiences. And then all that data needs to be easily accessible so everyone involved in creating and using content can see which assets are resonating.

In B2B settings, where the buyer journey is more complex, you need insights into both individual prospects and the companies they represent. In a December 2018 survey by PathFactory and Heinz Marketing, almost half of B2B decision-makers said the marketing content they receive isn't relevant to their pain points, challenges, or responsibilities, 42 percent said it isn't relevant to their company, and 35 percent said it isn't personalized to where they are in the buying process.

When you have a modern DAM that's powered by AI and integrated with a robust analytics solution, you can deliver tailored content experiences at scale. AI can quickly sort through large amounts of data to help you figure out which piece of content might be a good match for a specific customer or segment. Currently, 64 percent of large organizations are using AI for data analysis and 21 percent are using AI for asset management, according to the *2020 Digital Trends* report.

"Their context is always changing in terms of the content they're looking for, their intent, what they're trying to do, and the devices they're on."

Elliot Sedegah
Group Manager, Strategy and Product Marketing, Adobe

Today's customers are a moving target. "And the static library DAM isn't really built to support that," says Sedegah. "It doesn't help you create content on the fly, it doesn't help you to adapt those different experiences, and it certainly doesn't help you match the right piece of content to the right channel using data."

But the new DAM can do all of those things—by tapping the power of automation and artificial intelligence to detect the customer's context and serve the right content in an appealing way, across various channels.

Prepare for a future that's almost here

Two exciting trends are driving the need for content velocity. First, the best mobile experiences are getting better, partly because of 5G. Second, AI and machine learning are becoming increasingly useful, in lots of different ways, to brands that want to create great customer experiences.

The mobile internet is getting faster

The trend toward great mobile experiences is getting a big boost in 2020 with the advent of 5G, the fifth-generation technical infrastructure of the mobile internet. With increased bandwidth, 5G is expected to improve average download speeds by about 20 times compared to 4G networks, according to the BBC.

That kind of speed will let brands deliver more rich media content. It also gives brands an opportunity to provide richer experiences through a wide range of connected devices—including things like cars and vending machines that most people aren't thinking about yet as digital consumer interaction points. That means your DAM needs to be able to manage a wide variety of media formats.

The companies that move quickly to capitalize on 5G by creating compelling, rich media experiences will be in the best position to differentiate their brands. IDC has predicted that, by 2021, 20 percent of event marketers will implement AR into their major event experiences, and, by 2023, 65 percent of consumers will be using voice, images, and AR for interacting with brands on their mobile devices.

Asset management tools are getting smarter

In the next few years, AI will be used to improve the customer experience in areas like technology and process development, context-based customer engagement—enabling brands to tailor experiences in truly meaningful ways—and translation and localization, to name just a few examples.

In modern DAM platforms, AI is already being used for search and tagging, as noted above, and those capabilities will get even better. Modern asset management is moving away from a file folder system of asset retrieval. AI-powered search tools—including visual search—will make it easier for both content creators and consumers to find content assets that perfectly suit their needs.

> *"We're going to be able to get the right asset, the right piece of content, not just for people inside the organization who are creating the content, but for those people who are consuming the content as well, so it's the age of discovery."*
>
> **Barbara**
> Group Manager, Strategy and Product Marketing, Adobe

AI-powered search will help content creators to quickly explore, develop, and execute creative concepts—especially when the DAM is tightly integrated with design and production tools. "My goal eventually is that searching for the perfect image starts to merge with creating the perfect

When your DAM is fast and smart, your customers get content that matters

Modern asset management is becoming a differentiator that separates customer experience leaders from the rest of the pack. And with the trend toward better, faster mobile experiences, early adopters of the content velocity approach are positioned to move even further ahead.

Now is a great time to start experimenting with emerging formats like 3D and VR, as well as ramping up your video production. Then when 5G fully arrives, you'll understand the key workflows and have some of the kinks worked out. Organizations set up to create high-impact content quickly will reap the benefits of customer engagement and loyalty for years to come.
Speaking of the changes Orvis made to deliver dynamic content experiences, Vaughn said, "The transformation we've gone through…is going to pay us back for years and years."

Adobe can help

Adobe Experience Manager Assets is the first digital asset management solution that offers cloud-native agility and scalability, combined with the power of AI and automation. It works with Adobe Target, Adobe Experience Manager Sites, and Adobe Analytics—all backed by the Adobe Sensei AI engine—to help you build better experiences and get them to market faster. And native integration with Adobe Creative Cloud helps your marketing and creative teams work together seamlessly.

Learn more about how content velocity can help your organization create and deploy content more efficiently while delivering better experiences to your customers.

Get details

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