





RESEARCH REPORT


Unlocking the power of digital asset management in the DOD

 Generate





Promote cybersecurity across DOD




-  Web ☒
-  Social ☐
-  Mobile ☐



Safeguarding missions at every layer



 **Jacob Horne**
Visual aligned perfectly. Great job!

Introduction

In an era of evolving security challenges, the Department of Defense (DOD) must leverage cutting-edge technology to enhance operational efficiency, streamline collaboration, safeguard critical information and empower decision-makers at every level. From mission planning to intelligence sharing, the ability to securely manage and rapidly access content is now a core operational capability. How can the DOD manage these critical digital assets to ensure security and mission efficacy?

In December 2024, Market Connections, Carahsoft, and Adobe surveyed 200 DOD personnel responsible for digital content management to answer that question. While 65% of respondents said their organization uses a centralized digital asset management solution, many still face serious roadblocks: inefficient workflows, limited content discoverability, and difficulty collaborating across cross-functional teams. More than 70% of respondents said their workflows are too time-consuming, and over half cited sluggish processes and overwhelming content volume as key obstacles.

These findings underscore a vital opportunity: to modernize and secure digital content workflows using enterprise-grade solutions built specifically for the public sector. Adobe's digital asset management platform—delivered through the Joint Enterprise License Agreement (JELA)—provides a scalable, secure foundation for content governance, automation, and real-time collaboration, supported by Carahsoft's contract enablement and public sector expertise. The result: faster decisions, stronger coordination, and improved mission readiness across the defense enterprise.

- 65% of respondents report using centralized digital asset management systems.
- Over 70% find workflows overly time-consuming.
- 52% cite personnel limitations as a primary barrier.
- 40% lack consistent role-based access control.
- 53% are investing more time managing digital content.
- 31% say centralized repositories are their most urgent need.

Source: December 2024 Adobe/Carahsoft DoD Personnel Survey | Research by Market Connections

The rising burden of unstructured data

The proliferation of unstructured data in the DOD reflects broader global trends. Between 80% and 90% of all new data is unstructured, including videos, images, audio and social media. Managing this influx effectively can be a challenge for federal agencies, especially as the volume of data grows exponentially and the federal workforce shrinks. For the DOD, this unstructured data includes surveillance imagery, operational reports, multimedia briefings, and classified documentation—assets that demand secure and rapid access.

Nearly two-thirds (64%) of respondents rely on file management system search tools to locate assets, but 61% describe these tools as difficult to use. In a high-stakes environment, delays in locating the right asset can slow mission planning, hinder coordination, and impact national security. Solutions like Adobe's integration of AI-powered Smart Tags and automated metadata generation enhance search functionality, improve content accessibility, and reduce the time spent locating vital assets. Tools like Smart Tags can help respondents rapidly locate the audio or video file they're looking for, allowing them to focus their efforts on the mission. This time is valuable: even one hour of lost productivity for one employee can cost taxpayers up to \$13,260 a year¹. For an agency of 100,000, that's over \$1.3b in potential lost productivity.

Cross-functional collaboration

The transition to cross-functional work environments adds further complexity to content management. Twenty-eight percent of respondents describe cross-functional collaboration as very or extremely difficult. With teams distributed across command centers and field units, maintaining version control and secure access can be a frustrating challenge.

While many of these issues stem from outdated systems and fragmented practices, they also point to the need for more integrated, automated, and scalable solutions. Adobe's public sector digital asset management tools can help address these problems by providing a unified environment for content storage, search, sharing, and governance—without increasing the burden on already limited resources. Carahsoft enhances this support by offering deployment assistance and user enablement programs that promote cross-team adoption. This ensures continuity of operations, even when team members are separated by geography or time zones.

Human error and workforce constraints

Manual content handling remains one of the leading causes of inefficiencies and errors in digital asset workflows. In this survey, 52% of respondents identified staffing and time limitations as their top concern. The lack of sufficient personnel leads to outdated content, version confusion, and duplicate files, which collectively erode operational effectiveness.

¹ — Based on average 2024 federal salary of \$106,462 and typical 260 days worked p/year.

Multiple [surveys](#) have found that between 85% and 90% of security incidents stem from human error, and [three out of four](#) CISOs across industry say that human error is their top cybersecurity concern. Within the defense context, even minor content management mistakes can have disproportionate consequences. By automating content ingestion, version control, and approval workflows, Adobe Experience Manager reduces the reliance on manual processes, ensuring greater consistency and accuracy while freeing staff to focus on higher-value tasks. Tools like this can also improve collaboration – respondents without centralized systems report more difficulty in collaborating with external partners, maintaining up-to-date content, and auditing usage for compliance purposes. Carahsoft's enablement demonstrations ensure that these automation capabilities are showcased to defense agencies, helping them realize Adobe Experience Manager's value adds with improving security and alleviating workforce constraints.

Workflow inefficiencies and fragmentation

Disconnected platforms, siloed teams, and outdated approval chains lead to sluggish workflows across the defense enterprise. Over 70% of respondents indicate their workflows are too time-consuming, and 48% say that time constraints for content creation are a major challenge.

Such inefficiencies delay operational readiness and inhibit inter-agency collaboration. Adobe's ability to integrate digital asset management tools with content creation platforms like Creative Cloud enables seamless transitions from asset development to distribution, eliminating approval bottlenecks and reducing delays. This is crucial in dynamic defense scenarios where timely access to finalized content can mean the difference between mission success and failure.

Gaps in access control and security

A significant portion of respondents (40%) do not consistently use role-based access control, and 45% find the process of revoking access overly complex. These issues compromise the security of sensitive content and complicate compliance with federal cybersecurity mandates. With Adobe's integration of dynamic role-based permissions, complete with audit trails and real-time access management, agencies can align more easily with Zero Trust principles. Secure frameworks built into Adobe's DAM platform help agencies safeguard both classified and unclassified information while maintaining operational agility.

Operational impacts of digital asset management challenges

The consequences of inefficient digital asset management can be significant, costing agencies valuable time and potentially unveiling security risks such as unauthorized data loss through external drives and phishing vulnerabilities through email, among others. Digital asset management enables the DOD to eliminate excessive layers of administration as well as manual processes to empower

every level. Streamlining these processes is crucial. Over half of respondents (53%) say their organization is spending more time creating, managing, and distributing digital content, and 52% are seeing slower response times in decision-making and operational planning. Another 40% experience increased security risks due to these difficulties. The lack of centralized systems also makes it harder to maintain control when sharing content externally, and 31% of respondents say that a centralized repository for their content would be the one of the most important steps their agency could take. These operational changes are not just more efficient – they can make a life-changing difference.

Strategic recommendations.

To meet evolving mission demands, digital asset management in the DOD must become smarter, faster, and more secure. To meet immediate demands, defense organizations should consider the following strategic priorities:

1. Eliminate manual workflows: Minimize human error and increase productivity by automating tasks like metadata tagging, content routing, and version control.
2. Strengthen access control and security compliance. Adopt flexible, role-based access permissions that align with Zero Trust principles and federal compliance standards.
3. Enable seamless cross-functional collaboration: Real-time access to digital assets enables seamless coordination across CONUS and OCONUS.
4. Leverage AI for intelligent search and metadata: Leverage AI to enhance content search, categorization, and relevance, ensuring that the right content is always at hand.
5. Ensure scalability, interoperable deployment: Choose interoperable solutions that evolve with growing content demands and integrate with existing content ecosystems.

Conclusion

As information dominance becomes as critical as battlefield superiority, managing digital content efficiently and securely is a strategic necessity for the DOD. Adobe and Carahsoft deliver proven, enterprise-ready solutions tailored to the unique demands of public sector agencies.

Delivered through the JELA, Adobe and Carahsoft provide an enterprise-wide platform for content control, collaboration, and compliance. By investing in modern digital asset management tools, the DOD positions itself to move faster, act smarter, and respond more effectively in today's dynamic defense landscape.

About Adobe

For over 40 years, Adobe has delivered secure, intelligent technology that helps defense and security agencies operate efficiently and effectively. Our purpose-built strategy supports the Department of Defense in extending digital capabilities, maximizing investments, and delivering seamless services—online and offline. With real-time analytics, automated workflows, and enterprise-wide visibility, Adobe enhances decision-making, streamlines operations, and accelerates mission outcomes. From FedRAMP-authorized training platforms to integrated content management, our solutions enable secure collaboration across all environments. Backed by decades of innovation, Adobe keeps the DOD agile, responsive, and mission-ready.

For more information, visit business.adobe.com/industries/government.html.

About Carahsoft

Carahsoft Technology Corp. is The Trusted Government IT Solutions Provider®, supporting Federal, State and Local Government, Education, and Healthcare. As the Master Government Aggregator® for Adobe, Carahsoft provides the Department of Defense (DoD) with enterprise software solutions via the Adobe Joint Enterprise License Agreement (JELA), through our reseller partner Dell.

Carahsoft ensures agencies maximize the benefits of the JELA, offering Adobe's full suite of digital transformation products, services, and training – including Digital Asset Management tools. By optimizing digital workflows, Carahsoft helps DOD agencies achieve mission success with innovative and secure technology solutions.

About Market Connections

Market Connections delivers actionable intelligence and insights that enable improved business performance and positioning for leading businesses, trade associations, and the public sector. The custom market research firm is a sought-after authority on preferences, perceptions, and trends among the public sector and the contractors who serve them, offering deep domain expertise in information technology and telecommunications; healthcare; and education.

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