

Empowering the Content Process with AI Creative Tools



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Introduction

In the modern enterprise, from a small and medium-sized business (SMB) up to the very largest, creative content is what creates the connection between company and customer. In SMBs, though, the connection that is created through content is even more critical, as it defines who and what the company is for customers. And the core of that connection is creativity — creativity is core to content and marketing and the relationships that are created.

Creating engaging content is difficult, and in a world saturated with devices, channels, and content, modern creativity that builds relationships and makes connections requires a host of technologies to produce the broad range of content necessary to connect with customers anywhere and everywhere. It is more than just a picture on a billboard, an ad in a newspaper, or a 30-second short on TikTok. Modern content needs to be creatively differentiated in a way that connects with audiences while being integrated to be consistent and delivering the same message no matter what the platform or the channel.

Almost all organizations want to be at the cutting edge in this changing environment but don't know what the impact could be on their business or how to make those changes in such a way that they maintain a competitive advantage. That is what makes this such fertile ground for next-generation creative platforms and creative generative AI (GenAI) tools to come in and be a game changer.

Trends

In a chaotic world, how companies present themselves to the market and their customers through content is critical to building a stable relationship.

The seemingly ever-increasing speed of market shifts and changes, including the increase in the number of channels that customers engage on, along with the increasing number of surfaces from our phone to our computers to even our cars, has made it even more difficult for smaller companies and organizations to establish a connection with customers.

To remain relevant, there are four trends that companies need to be paying attention to.

Those trends are:

► **Democratization of content creation**

Creativity used to be the province of creatives such as graphic designers, interaction designers, brand designers, and illustrators. But advancement in tools and processes has opened creativity and design to others. IDC conducted a survey around creative platforms, and 56% of respondents indicated that teams other than creatives are producing content. Specifically, 52% said that marketing and sales teams need to be able to make creative assets (see **Figure 1**, page 6).

For example, a marketer can now modify a design to fit a specific piece of content they are creating. Or an advertiser can create an initial concept that can be fine-tuned by a design department and then later again modified by advertising to meet the needs of a specific campaign. Creativity and the tools to create are now available to almost anyone.

► **More intensive content requiring more time from creatives**

The democratization of the creative process also makes it necessary to improve creative workflows between different people and business units. In our survey, 57% of respondents said that there is too much time spent on doing repetitive tasks that could potentially be handled by others or by technology. Good creativity requires collaboration, and in a distributed world where some work at home, some in offices, and others in offices on a different continent and another time zone, collaboration is difficult.

At the same time, if a company can improve collaboration and workflows, the company can also increase production as more pieces are split across different roles. For example, 53% of respondents said that they needed a central repository of creative assets that are available to everyone. But with this also comes the challenge of standardizing content so it remains on brand and is consistent in its message to the customer.

► **Constrained budgets**

Though common across many businesses and departments, it is especially true when it comes to creative content that budgets are more constricted than ever. In the past, companies could have met these larger or more complex projects with external agencies or by hiring more people, but now, they can't do either of those because of limited budgets. For creative teams, that means doing more with the same resources, and for business teams, this means they have to find a way to create the content on their own without the use of internal or external creative resources.

► **Rise of GenAI tools**

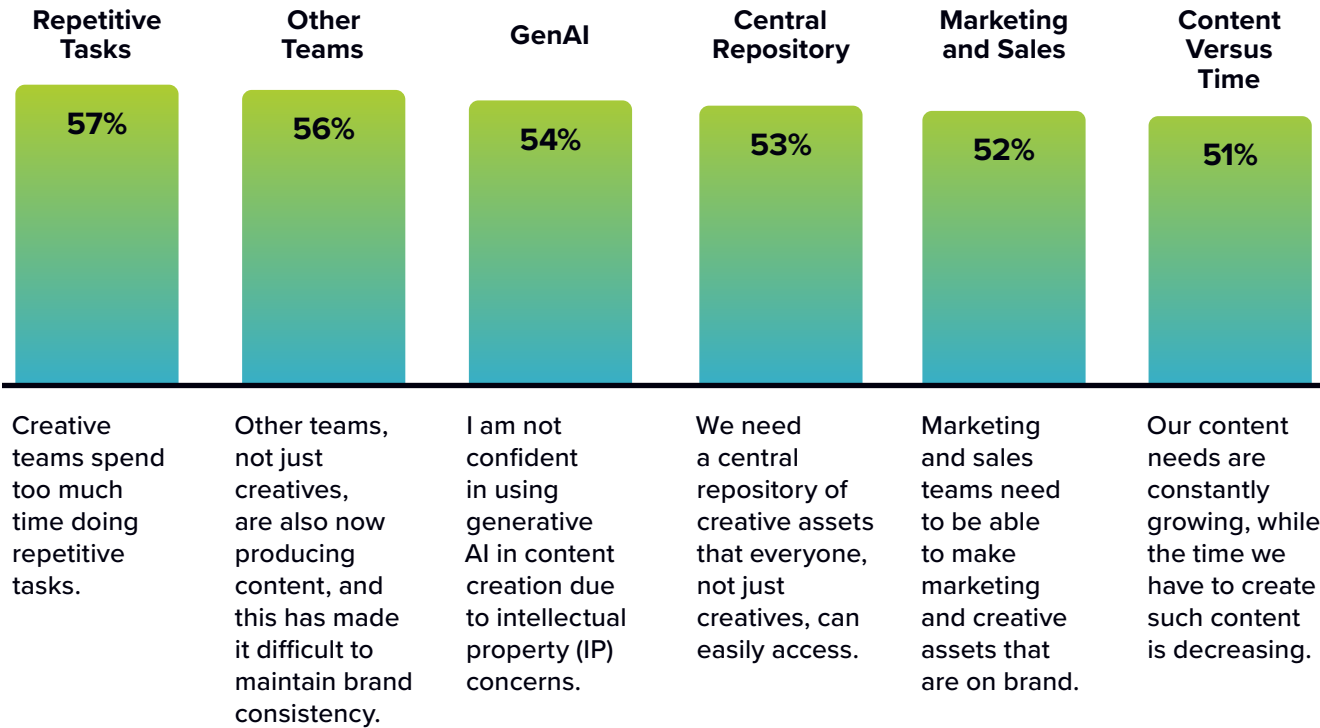
Last, we would be remiss in not including the impact of the changes in technology, including the proliferation of GenAI. Generative AI has the potential to be a multiplier in the creative process by increasing creative capabilities, automating common and mundane repetitive tasks, and enabling rapid iteration of ideas.

The Achilles' heel, though, of any type of AI is the sources of the data and the foundational content that supports creatives in the process and how good they are. In our survey, 54% of respondents said that they are not confident in using GenAI to create content. If the data isn't high quality and the content that the model

is trained on is not approved for use, companies can expose themselves to a significant amount of liability, and therein lies the importance of knowing the actual source of the training data and indemnification by the data provider, which will only become more important as more AI-generated content is used. There will be additional shifts and changes from GenAI, but these are the beginning impacts.

FIGURE 1
Key Trends Around Creative Efforts

(Percentage of respondents)
Please rate how much you agree/disagree with the following statements.



n = 2,011; Source: IDC's CCT Research Survey, July 2024

The core underlying theme to these trends is that more and more people, departments, and processes are becoming a part of the content creation process — a more and more collaborative process. In smaller businesses that lack the diversity of resources a larger enterprise would have and instead rely on in-house staff that are more jack-of-all-creative-trades and contract expertise, collaboration is a key aspect of how these businesses are successful.

Benefits of Employing a Platform of Creative Tools

Given the nature of the quickly changing world and some of the trends that are impacting creative processes and content, it is important for organizations to understand the benefits of using a collaborative set of creative tools. It is possible to duplicate most of the components of a collaborative set of creative tools using one-off applications and potentially at a lower cost, but the synergistic and integrated nature brings a set of additional benefits beyond the applications.

In our analysis, we have found three categories of benefits that organizations that adopt a collaborative creative toolset can expect.

The benefits are:

► Improving the quality of content

The quality of content is critical to engaging audiences, and by employing a single set of creative tools, companies can create higher-quality content. For example, creating a 60-second animated video clip set to music with a voice-over requires multiple pieces of content — the animation piece, the video piece, the music, and the voice-over. Using disparate pieces of technology for the creation of each of these pieces of content means that it is going to require effort and time to integrate all of these types of content along with the potential issues that may arise. But using a collaborative set of creative tools that are designed to function together reduces the issues with integration and allows companies to produce higher-quality content.

► Standardization of tools across the organization

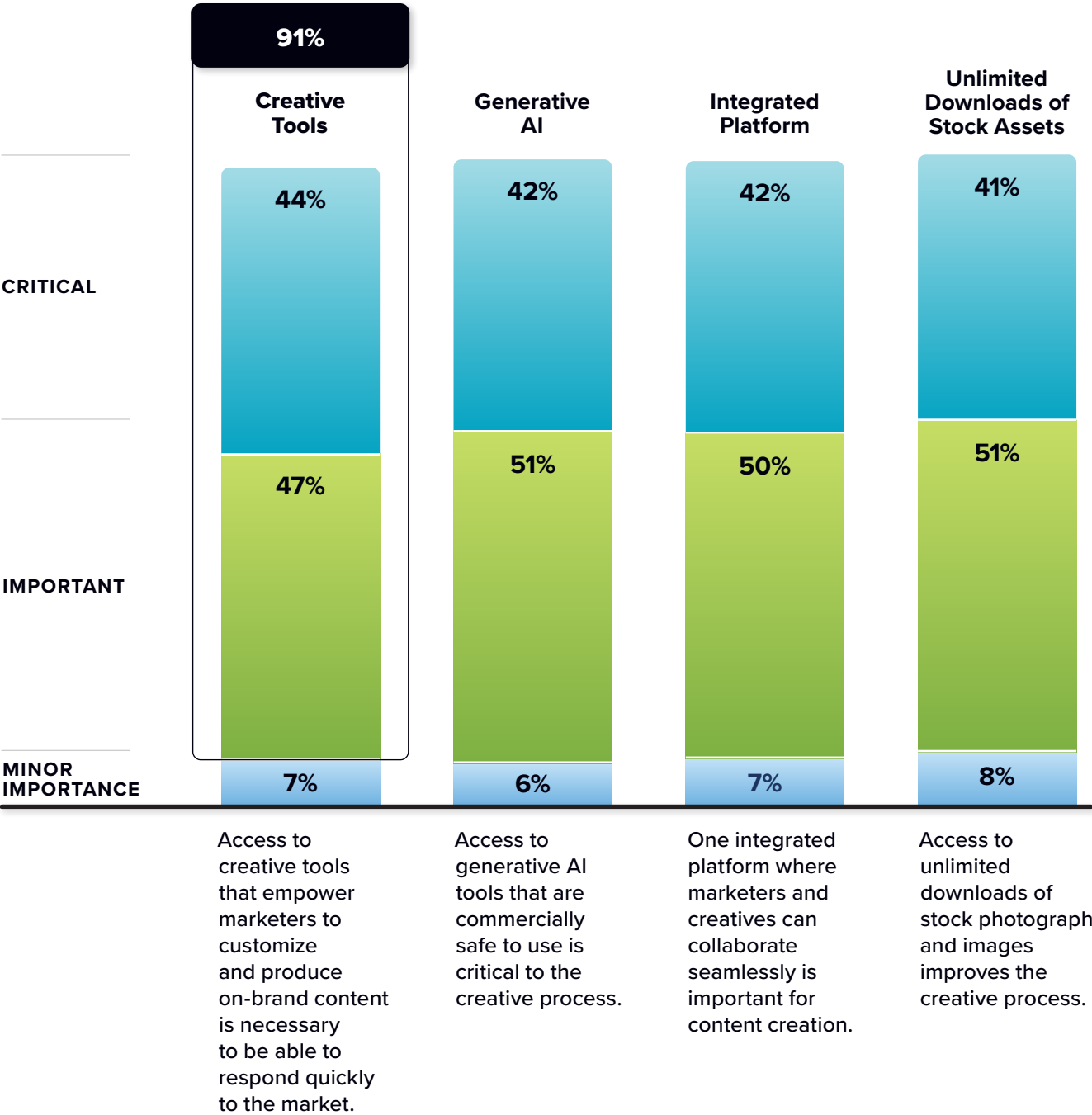
Though it might seem like a small benefit, standardization of tools has significant impact on efficiency, processes, and outcomes. Often, there are tools for professionals and a different set of tools for everyone else. By focusing on a toolset that is interoperable and has both professional and other-level applications, organizations can eliminate ambiguity over the format of content while also providing a level of quality control to the output, making the creation of content more efficient. In our survey, 91% of respondents said that giving access to non-creatives such as marketers to creative tools to work with content was important or critical (see **Figure 2**, next page). Second, standardization makes processes like training and workflow consistent, so everyone understands the expectations and can meet them.

► Increasing scale and speed

Traditionally, creating content has been a singular and linear process — one person creates the narrative, then a second person adds pictures and so forth, and then, when changes need to be made, it goes back to that step in the process. Fifty-one percent of respondents said that their content needs were constantly growing yet the time they have to create is decreasing. One of the benefits of employing a collaborative set of tools is that the creative process can become more multidimensional among creators in such a way that it increases the speed of creating content and the scale of content that can be created.

FIGURE 2
What Differentiates a Creative Platform

(Percentage of respondents)
How important are the following features and capabilities of a creative platform for your organization?



n = 2,011; Source: IDC's CCT Research Survey, July 2024

Considering Adobe CC Pro as the Core Creative Platform

Though there are a number of potential tools and combinations of tools, businesses that want a best-in-class integrated creative platform and suite of applications should consider Adobe Creative Cloud Pro (Adobe CC Pro).

Adobe CC Pro offers the following advantages to companies that are interested in a truly integrated creative platform:

► **Cloud-based platform that allows for quick deployment**

Adobe CC Pro, as an integrated cloud-based platform and set of applications that are designed to work together to create incredible creative content and are channel agnostic, offers quick deployment. In fact, 44% of respondents in our survey said that the ease of implementation was the primary reason for adopting Adobe CC Pro, and 43% said fast time to value (see **Figure 3**, next page). This enables teams to start creating high-quality content immediately. There is also the availability of training both on the Adobe platform and externally, which can be used to bring new users up to speed on any aspect of Adobe CC Pro quickly.

► **Availability of easily incorporated stock assets**

A key component of Adobe CC Pro is the availability of over 400 million stock assets that can be used in any part of the creative process, from ideation to creation to contextualization, making the overall process more efficient and

more effective. In addition, CC Pro users have access to unlimited downloads of Adobe Stock standard assets within the same creative platform.

When we asked companies in our survey that use stock assets, 82% agreed that access to unlimited downloads of stock assets would reduce the cost of creation, and 81% said it would save them time. Adobe stock assets include photographs, drawing, video, animation, sounds, and music.

- **Content creation tools that are safe for businesses**
Creating content that is safe for business from an IP perspective is critical and one of the things that creatives and businesses worry about. With CC Pro, there is an inherent safety in the data that the GenAI model is training on because it all comes from Adobe Stock, where the ownership of the creative IP has already been addressed. Second, Adobe provides up to \$10,000 in indemnification if there are any issues.
- **The potential for collaboration from the beginning**
Along with being an integrated creative platform, CC Pro offers two additional unique capabilities — Share for Review and CC Libraries. The Share for Review capability allows for roles that are not directly tied to the creative process to collaborate on ideas, review creative content, make suggestions, and even make minor modifications or edits — all through a web link. CC Libraries is another unique component, as they allow teams to gather different design elements of projects, clients, teams, or brands for use within any of the applications in Creative Cloud, bringing consistency across multiple applications and pieces of creative content.

FIGURE 3
Adobe Allows Quick Deployment and Time to Value

(Percentage of respondents)
What were the primary reasons during the sales process for selecting an Adobe Creative Cloud product?



n = 2,011; Source: IDC's CCT Research Survey, July 2024

Challenges and Opportunities

Employing any creative platform and application also comes with its own set of challenges and opportunities, including staying relevant to the newest technologies or protecting intellectual property in an era of GenAI.

We have identified the following areas that present both challenges and opportunities for companies employing creative platforms and specifically Adobe CC Pro:

► **Staying on brand across a breadth of channels**

The seemingly ever-increasing breadth of channels and formats for content means that the content supply chain needs to be broader and deeper while remaining on message and on brand. For example, any modern marketing campaign could include both long-form and short-form written content, videos optimized for TikTok, shorter videos for Instagram, and web pages. And it is important that all of the content has a consistent look and feel and, that it incorporates the same elements, the same branding, and the same messaging.

In our research, 53% of respondents said that they needed a central repository of creative assets that everyone can easily access. Beyond that, it is important to remember that all the content created will likely not be created by a single designer or a design department but creators spread across the company, partners, contractors, and others. That is why the use of libraries of design elements, such as Adobe's Creative Cloud Libraries, is important to overcome the breadth challenge.

► **Available training and education**

Though most designers are trained on various creative applications, including Adobe creative applications, while in school, technology is changing quickly, such as the introduction of GenAI to the suite of creative tools and the near-future employment of autonomous agents to automate certain aspects of the creative process and the content supply chain. That requires the availability of near-real-time education tools from both Adobe and others that creative professionals can use to maintain their proficiency while learning about new and emerging technologies. It also allows noncore creatives to learn how to employ the same suite of tools collaboratively and drive additional value.

► **Protecting data and indemnifying users**

Protection of IP and appropriate use has long been an issue with creative content. From copying some melodies or structures from a previous song to taking and using a picture from the web, either in another piece of creative content or the underlying source, creation builds upon other creations. But that previous creation requires attribution. As we see more uses of GenAI and other technologies in the creative process, protecting and correctly attributing for use of another's creative asset along with indemnifying the user is going to be critical for creatives and companies to trust the tools and the data.

Our research found that 54% of respondents said they weren't confident in using GenAI in content creation because of IP concerns. But when asked about indemnification, 53% of respondents said that it increases their confidence in using GenAI, and 62% said it increases the likelihood that they would use GenAI. Protecting data in the creative process starts with understanding the source of any creative content back to its original creation and then tracking that content through processes including changes or modifications to that content. Following that process and understanding that chain of creation then allows for indemnification of the creator to use that content because the source is attributable and can be appropriately compensated.

Essential Guidance

Creating content in a world driven by rapidly changing technology can be a fraught effort. But it is an effort that must be undertaken because it is the content that defines the company and its products to the market and to its customers, and that requires choosing a creative platform from which to ideate, create, collaborate, and share those creative assets.

Companies considering taking on their first creative platform or moving to a professional-level set of tools should consider the following:

Think beyond the immediate.

The world is in a constant state of change — your company, the markets, products, and technology are all constantly changing. Given the constant state of change, when selecting a creative platform, it is important to think about not only the immediate needs but also the needs of tomorrow and the day after tomorrow — changes in types of content, how content is created, channels and modes of consumption for that content, and more. Do the platforms under consideration have a history of creative innovation that supports the evolution of creative assets? Do they have a history of supporting the creators and the creative process no matter the size or type of organization? Think beyond the immediate, and look at this as a long-term investment.

Clarify organizational impact.

It is important that companies identify what the core creative processes are and what it takes to make those processes work. Some processes may become more and more digital, whereas other processes may remain more manual and almost Luddite if that is part of the brand and part of the product. It is important to clearly identify and define those creative processes. From there, what is the impact of shifting tools? Change requires time and effort; is the expected outcome enough to justify the change?

Adapt to modern tools and processes safely.

Significant change is happening to creative tools with the incorporation of GenAI and its availability in so many parts of the creative process. Yet some creatives and companies stick to their inefficient and outdated technologies because “that is how we have always done it” or expect to adopt modern technologies without changing their processes. The justification for change is rooted in benefits such as efficiency in the creative process, broader ranges of creative content, and being able to create wholly new forms of content. However, all of those benefits need to be supported by a safe and trusted ecosystem, such as indemnification, traceable stock assets, and verifiable algorithms to adapt safely.

About the IDC Analyst



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Alan Webber is the program vice president for National Security, Defense, and Intelligence (D&I) in IDC's Government Insights practice. In this role, Alan leads IDC's research efforts around the information and other technologies being employed in national security, defense, and intelligence applications. Specific current areas of research interest for Alan are leveraging intelligent automation and AI/ML augmentation in D&I; GenAI applications and defenses; data as a strategic asset; cognitive security; zero-trust architectures; building resilient supply chains; modernizing the D&I workforce; vendor and industry support for the D&I mission; and adopting to emerging technologies, such as robotics, quantum computing, synthetic data, and the space domain.

[More about Alan Webber](#)

Message from the Sponsor



Adobe Creative Cloud for business with Firefly and Adobe Express solves your content production needs by bringing together best-in-class creative solutions on an integrated platform for all creative work.

As Adobe Stock is integrated into the platform, you can find the high-quality content you need to accelerate your projects. Plus with Adobe Express, drive brand and design consistency across the business by creating locked templates for all your business' content needs, and enable the whole team to create. With groundbreaking generative AI capabilities, designed to be safe for commercial use, integrated into over 20 creative apps and powerful add-ons, Creative Cloud offers an unprecedented opportunity to reimagine creativity and stay competitive in this content-hungry market. Every new idea, every project, every step of the workflow, covered.

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