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

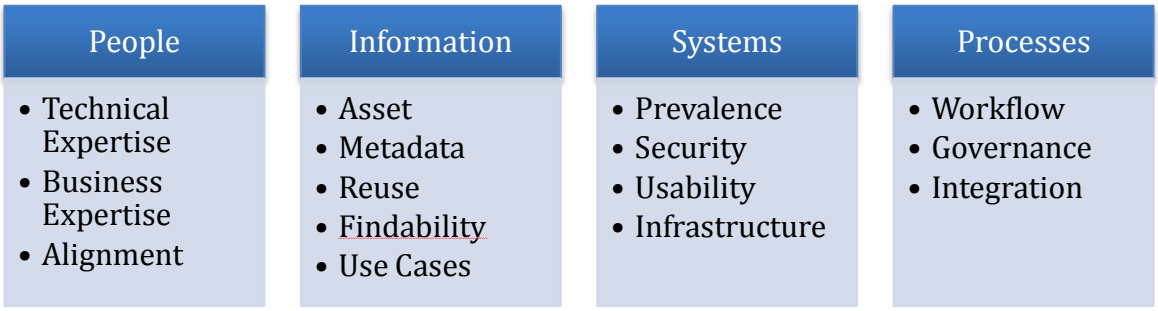

Figure 1 DAM-MM Focus Areas and Dimensions

Monitoring and Feedback Processes Competency Levels Dimension:	Ad Hoc (1)	Incipient (2)	Formative (3)	Operational (4)	Optimal (5)
PEOPLE					
Technical Expertise	Exposure to the application of DAM technologies, including managing repositories and workflow systems	Casual understanding of DAM technologies, often starting in the form of content management systems and centralised document repositories	3. Formative - Demonstrated experience with implementation of named DAM systems and core competencies, such as ingestion, cataloging, transformation, transcoding, distribution, etc.	Operational - Managing repositories and workflow systems is core to IT with organised knowledge transfer	Optimal - Understanding and participating in forecasting enterprise DAM needs in preparation of future business requirements
Business Expertise	1. Ad hoc - Exposure to the use of DAM technologies, including repositories and workflow systems	2. Incipient - Casual understanding of the value of DAM, often starting in the form of utilizing content management systems and centralised document repositories	- Demonstrated experience with implementation of named DAM systems and core competencies, such as ingestion, cataloging, transformation, transcoding, distribution, etc.	4. Operational - Assets managed through repositories and workflow systems; a core function with organised knowledge transfer	5. Optimal - Understanding enterprise DAM capabilities to uncover current and future asset value
Alignment	1. Ad hoc - 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 content management systems and centralised document repositories	- Demonstrated collaboration to extract value from named DAM systems with core competencies	- Active collaboration utilizing cross-functional teams to manage the improvement of asset repositories and workflow systems with organised knowledge transfer	5. Optimal - Proactive use and refinement of DAM capabilities to uncover current and future asset value
INFORMATION					
Asset	Unorganised, with no policy or organisation strategy	- Common repositories and policies	3. Formative - Centralised organisation and policy	- All new repositories and asset types registered with defined standards and practices for authoritative asset management	5. Optimal - 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	3. Formative - Conforming vocabularies for organisational use	- Enterprise taxonomies created; all new repositories and asset types registered and related	- Defined standards; defined job responsibilities; enterprise taxonomy in use; metadata is complete and travels with asset; metadata changes are tracked; ongoing refinement
Reuse	1. Ad hoc - No	2. Incipient - Inconsistent,	3. Formative - Development of a	4. Operational - Execution of a reuse	- Discovery of new uses of assets beyond original intention

	reuse	unplanned or unsupported reuse	reuse strategy and planned reuse of specific assets	strategy across all assets	
Findability	Ad hoc - Employees spend excessive time searching for material without finding it — often resorting to the re-creation of assets	2. Incipient - Search engine(s) adopted and indexing started	3. Formative - Indexing completed; usage patterns reviewed, leveraging vocabulary terms for further refinement	4. Operational - Implementation of specific enterprise and/or federated search mechanism	- Search and classification becomes a central service with business-driven variants seamlessly delivering relevant assets and metadata by role; search mechanisms continuously improved
Use Cases	Ad hoc - Unstructured meeting of organisational needs; no value applied to user scenarios	Project-level requirements gathered, but with no end-to-end context	3. Formative - Program-level requirements gathered; beginning to apply end-to-end context	4. Operational - Use cases well structured, organised and prioritised; all users identified with known input and output expectations; dependencies, prerequisites and interrelationships identified	5. Optimal - Framework in place to define, measure and manage existing and new use cases; systems validated against use cases
SYSTEMS					
Prevalence	Individual	Scattered siloed efforts	Initial attempts to combine or adopt DAM across the enterprise by executive champions	4. Operational - Successful enterprise initiatives completed and in use	5. Optimal - Enterprise integration aligned with company culture prior to implementation; DAM has become commonplace
Security	No asset-specific security regime in place	2. Incipient - System-specific security security	3. Formative - Defined, centralised security controls and system standardization	- Security controls clearly defined and enforced throughout the organisation at an asset level	Optimal - Security is an organisation-level, shared service with processes to address new threats in a timely manner; automated
Usability	Ad hoc - Usability is disjointed with no cohesion or commonality; employee frustration rates are high	t - Single platform with use of raw (out-of-the-box) tools	- Some multi-platform support; creation of user-/persona-specific tool interfaces	- Remote multi-platform enabled; user-centered design with formal user-feedback collection	- Driven by dynamic business needs; effort meets expectations; multilingual; multi-platform; consistent UI; intuitive; instructional; integration with SAP or other business intelligence system; integration with SAP or other business intelligence system
Infrastructure	Planning is reactive between business and IT	- Project-specific implementations as directed	- Proactive, but informal business and IT coordination beyond project specificity	- Joint change management / governance leading to proactive implementations	- Formal coordination and mutual accountability with agreed timelines, roles and goals
PROCESSES					
Workflow	Few or no standardised procedures for asset lifecycle	Basic process analysis leads to some informal workflows	- Formal workflows with limited automation	- Automated processes span systems and departments; command and control of standards	Continual refinement and managed experimentation; workflows are standard practice; measurable performance indicators established established

Governance	Ad hoc - Employees self-govern	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
Integration	No intentional integration	Brute-force integration between systems and processes	- Integration vision is complete, including people, process and technology; understanding of common paradigms	- Integration vision is in practice, utilizing well-defined, documented paradigms	- Real-time and seamless integration enables common user experience

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 offer a helpful guide for defining technical roles and responsibilities.

Levels-

1. Ad hoc - Exposure to the application of DAM technologies, including managing repositories and workflow systems
2. Incipient - Casual understanding of DAM technologies, often starting in the form of content management systems and centralised document repositories
3. Formative - Demonstrated experience with implementation of named DAM systems and core competencies, such as ingestion, cataloging, transformation, transcoding, distribution, etc.
4. Operational - Managing repositories and workflow systems is core to IT with organised knowledge transfer
5. Optimal - Understanding and participating in forecasting enterprise DAM needs in preparation of future business requirements

Business Expertise

This refers to the understanding of fundamental DAM concepts between employees and management in support of the organisation's core mission. To promote an organisation's DAM

expertise, clearly related and defined roles should be used as a starting point. Examples include:

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

Levels-

1. Ad hoc - Exposure to the use of DAM technologies, including repositories and workflow systems
2. Incipient - Casual understanding of the value of DAM, often starting in the form of utilizing content management systems and centralised document repositories
3. Formative - Demonstrated experience with implementation of named DAM systems and core competencies, such as ingestion, cataloging, transformation, transcoding, distribution, etc. 4. Operational - Assets managed through repositories and workflow systems; a core function with organised knowledge transfer
5. Optimal - Understanding enterprise DAM capabilities to uncover current and future asset value

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.

Levels-

1. Ad hoc - Exposure to the use of DAM terminology, including ingestion, cataloging, transformation, transcoding, distribution, etc.
2. Incipient - Casual understanding of the need for DAM, often starting with utilizing and creating content management systems and centralised document repositories

3. Formative - Demonstrated collaboration to extract value from named DAM systems with core competencies
4. Operational - Active collaboration utilizing cross-functional teams to manage the improvement of asset repositories and workflow systems with organised knowledge transfer
5. Optimal - Proactive use and refinement of DAM capabilities to uncover current and future asset value

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

Levels-

1. Ad hoc - Unorganised, with no policy or organisation strategy
2. Incipient - Common repositories and policies
3. Formative - Centralised organisation and policy
4. Operational - All new repositories and asset types registered with defined standards and practices for authoritative asset management
5. Optimal - Assets prepared and authorised for use and reuse across multiple channels, with organisational understanding of authoring for different intentions

Metadata

Metadata is specific information describing the nature of assets. This provides methods to support categorisation and classification by defining taxonomy models and vocabularies including “Folksonomies.”

Levels-

1. Ad hoc - No metadata (filename only); unorganised; no policy or organisational strategy
2. Incipient - Inconsistent asset tagging; department-level common repositories and policies
3. Formative - Conforming vocabularies for organisational use
4. Operational - Enterprise taxonomies created; all new repositories and asset types registered and related
5. Optimal - Defined standards; defined job responsibilities; enterprise taxonomy in use; metadata is complete and travels with asset; metadata changes are tracked; ongoing refinement

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.

Levels-

1. Ad hoc - No reuse
2. Incipient - Inconsistent, unplanned or unsupported reuse
3. Formative - Development of a reuse strategy and planned reuse of specific assets
4. Operational - Execution of a reuse strategy across all assets
5. Optimal - Discovery of new uses of assets beyond original intention

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.

Levels-

1. Ad hoc - Employees spend excessive time searching for material without finding it — often resorting to the re-creation of assets
2. Incipient - Search engine(s) adopted and indexing started
3. Formative - Indexing completed; usage patterns reviewed, leveraging vocabulary terms for further refinement
4. Operational - Implementation of specific enterprise and/or federated search mechanism
5. Optimal - Search and classification becomes a central service with business-driven variants seamlessly delivering relevant assets and metadata by role; search mechanisms continuously improved

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.

Levels-

1. Ad hoc - Unstructured meeting of organisational needs; no value applied to user scenarios
2. Incipient - Project-level requirements gathered, but with no end-to-end context
3. Formative - Program-level requirements gathered; beginning to apply end-to-end context
4. Operational - Use cases well structured, organised and prioritised; all users identified with known input and output expectations; dependencies, prerequisites and interrelationships identified
5. Optimal - Framework in place to define, measure and manage existing and new use cases; systems validated against use cases

Systems

Prevalence

This defines how broadly the DAM efforts are spread within the organisation. This is the ratio of DAM activity to the potential DAM utilization.

Levels-

1. Ad hoc - Individual
2. Incipient - Scattered siloed efforts
3. Formative - Initial attempts to combine or adopt DAM across the enterprise by executive champions
4. Operational - Successful enterprise initiatives completed and in use
5. Optimal - Enterprise integration aligned with company culture prior to implementation; DAM has become commonplace

Security

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

Levels-

1. Ad hoc - No asset-specific security regime in place
2. Incipient - System-specific security
3. Formative - Defined, centralised security controls and system standardization
4. Operational - Security controls clearly defined and enforced throughout the organisation at an asset level
5. Optimal - Security is an organisation-level, shared service with processes to address new threats in a timely manner; automated

Usability

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

Levels-

1. Ad hoc - Usability is disjointed with no cohesion or commonality; employee frustration rates are high
2. Incipient - Single platform with use of raw (out-of-the-box) tools
3. Formative - Some multi-platform support; creation of user-/persona-specific tool interfaces
4. Operational - Remote multi-platform enabled; user-centered design with formal user-feedback collection
5. Optimal - Driven by dynamic business needs; effort meets expectations; multilingual; multi-platform; consistent UI; intuitive; instructional; integration with SAP or other business intelligence system

Infrastructure

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

1. Ad hoc - Planning is reactive between business and IT
2. Incipient - Project-specific implementations as directed
3. Formative - Proactive, but informal business and IT coordination beyond project specificity
4. Operational - Joint change management / governance leading to proactive implementations
5. Optimal - Formal coordination and mutual accountability with agreed timelines, roles and goals

Processes

Workflow

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

Levels-

1. Ad hoc - Few or no standardised procedures for asset lifecycle
2. Incipient - Basic process analysis leads to some informal workflows
3. Formative - Formal workflows with limited automation
4. Operational - Automated processes span systems and departments; command and control of standards
5. Optimal - Continual refinement and managed experimentation; workflows are standard practice; measurable performance indicators established

Governance

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

Levels-

1. Ad hoc - Employees self-govern
2. Incipient - Scattered policies and few formal procedures
3. Formative - Centralised development of structure and codification of procedures; management support
4. Operational - Policies and procedures widely disseminated and enforced; ownership and responsibility in place; communication and training on policies throughout organisation

5. Optimal - Active refinement; utilization of end-user feedback; an established means to measure and motivate

Integration

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

Levels-

1. Ad hoc - No intentional integration
2. Incipient - Brute-force integration between systems and processes
3. Formative - Integration vision is complete, including people, process and technology; understanding of common paradigms
4. Operational - Integration vision is in practice, utilizing well-defined, documented paradigms
5. Optimal - Real-time and seamless integration enables common user experience

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 plans to address them. Also, it 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 (as with ECM3) is “*to understand where it fits generally, document imbalances, and set priorities from there.”*

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