
Original Article

DAM, YouTube is great for video, but it is NOT digital asset management

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ABSTRACT YouTube is an awesome destination site for videos, but it is not a digital asset management (DAM) tool. It is important to understand the distinction between video destination sites like YouTube and DAM systems as the central marketing hub. This article examines the key differences between YouTube and DAM and takes a deeper dive into how DAM solutions help marketing organizations best leverage digital assets to build brand equity and increase return on marketing investments.

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YouTube is an awesome destination site for videos, but it is not a digital asset management (DAM) tool. It is important to understand the distinction between video destination sites like YouTube and video asset management systems. Because marketers, B2B, B2C, small, big, tall and short, are all coming to the realization that video is an integral part of their marketing mix and should be used as one of the components to communicate with the marketplace.

If you have videos and are planning on producing more videos, you need to have a library system in place that can help you catalog, manage and distribute these incredibly large files. This is DAM.

YouTube is simply for asset distribution. It does this better than any other site, by far. For example, let us take the 'Will it Blend' series of videos, which have millions of YouTube views so far. If you have not seen them yet, you can check them out at <http://www.youtube.com/user/Blendtec>.

The campaign resulted in 65 million views on YouTube, 120 million views on WillItBlend.com, 200 000+ subscribers, increased sales 700 per cent, national TV coverage including the Today show, iVillage Live, the History Channel, the Discovery Channel, The Big Idea, Food Network, Tonight Show, Blogs such as Engadget, Forbes, AdAge, NYTimes, WSJ, BusinessWeek and even a mention in Congress – someone said something about taking a bill and putting it in a Blendtec blender.

Although YouTube has a huge part in facilitating the growth and viral nature of the video, it only does it by drawing viewers. It does not 'manage' your video 'asset' in any way. The 'asset' is the highest resolution version; probably straight off the camera or video editors desktop. That is an asset that you put into a DAM system. From there, that digital asset can be uploaded (and compressed) to a number of different distribution sites, like YouTube, Revver and Metacafe. As you know, distribution sites compress the video (which degrades quality) so that it is

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easier and faster for viewers to download/stream. The quality is good enough for viewing but it is not good enough for repurposing, which is a primary goal of a DAM system.

Obviously, YouTube is the largest online video community, so you will almost always want to be there, but there are others and more will be coming. To properly ‘viral’ the ‘Will it Blend’ videos, the owner had to send the high-resolution version to TV stations and other news organizations all over the world. The ‘Today Show’ does not pull the video off of YouTube. They want the high-definition (hi-def) version to rebroadcast over the air. DAM would easily facilitate sending them the large hi-def file. In the specific case of Blendtec, the company that produces the ‘Will It Blend’ series, they have over 70 episodes. DAM serves as an online, on-demand, portal for large media organizations to search, preview, deliver and download very large, complex video files.

As my example (Figure 1) shows, the DAM tool is the starting point and is independent of the destination and provides neutrality for the digital assets so when the destinations change, the digital assets can be easily repurposed in these new channels. Some organizational

requirements also demand a hierarchy of access where some people have permission to see and do things other people cannot. DAM handles that too through a mix of roles and permissions settings.

In fact, DAM embraces marketing’s need to distribute video to their target markets now and into the future. Proper DAM functionality for video includes automatic preview generation, transcoding on-the-fly to different formats and sharing over the web. There are distinct advantages to sharing from the central library of organizational digital assets. As an example, one component of sharing includes embed links – a feature for web distribution of video assets (Figure 2).

Embed links allow users to simply take an embed code that is preset to a specific size and then embed that video in another website or thousands of websites. When a video is expired or you want to change that video out to a more updated version, you change it in one place – the DAM system – and every other website using that embed link will automatically inherit the update. YouTube does this as well, but there are branding implications to doing that. YouTube brands their embeddable players

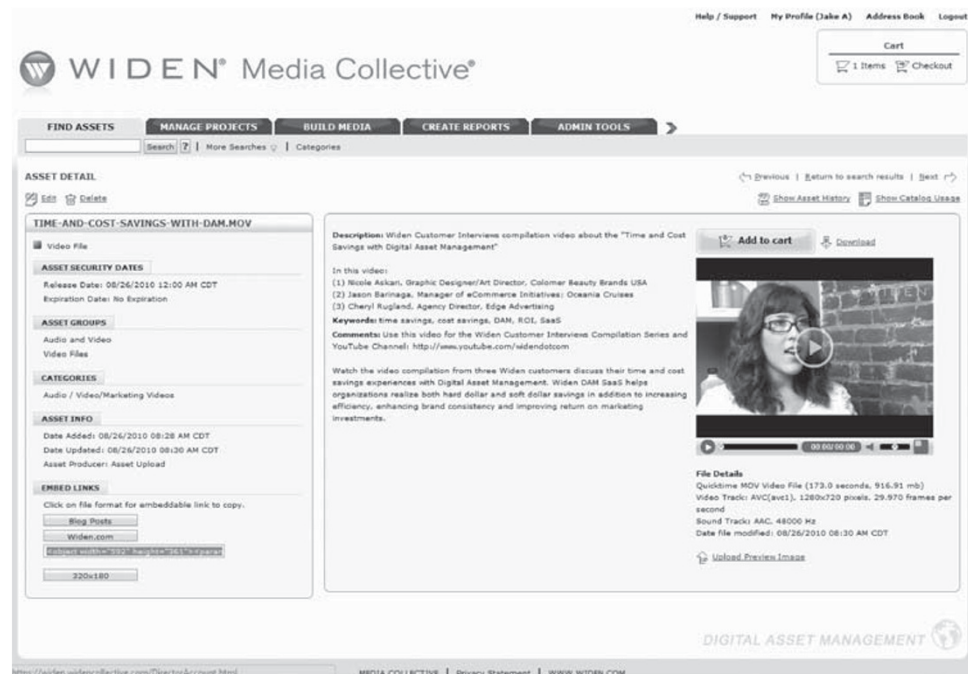


Figure 1: Widen Media Collective web-based DAM system. A look at the asset details of a video asset with a full-file preview, transcoding to other formats and embed links for web publishing.

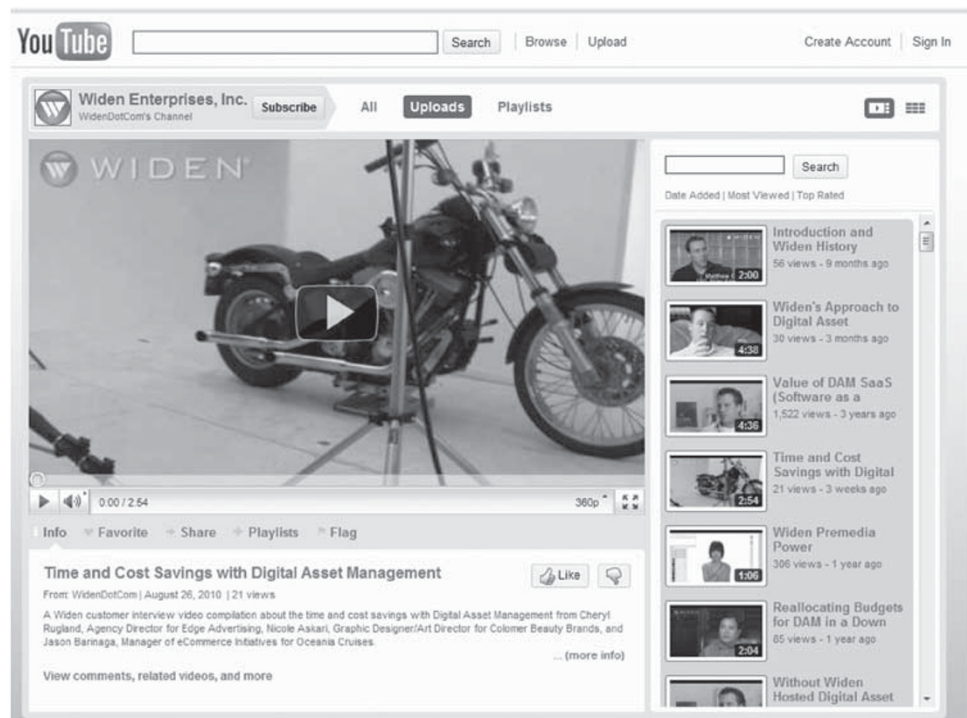


Figure 2: Widen YouTube channel showing one final destination of a Widen video asset managed and maintained in the Widen web-based DAM system.

so for those interested in controlling their brand, they will need to seek the power of the DAM system for the embeddable player that is exclusively branded for the customer.

I believe there is an advantage using a mix of technologies to help with the creation, management, and distribution of video files. The creation of these files may require an internal or hybrid DAM system so the video production team can work in an environment that supports speed and flexibility. In the second stage, the management of these files encompasses two elements; active and archive. Active is likely managed by the marketing team and archive is, well, who cares, it is not active. The distribution component of video files is also a marketing function because it involves propagating the brand to the marketplace. Distribution may include social networks, embedding on third party websites and/or blog posts, sharing a link or downloading in various formats that are created on-the-fly.

We also cannot forget that there is also a service element to managing videos. The service component is helping merchants get organized

and get their internal users ramped up with the complex, scalable DAM technology. The technologies are great but the users still need active service and support – the organizations need coaching and mentoring. YouTube is not built for that purpose; but a software-as-a-service (SaaS) DAM provider with a service infrastructure already in place is equipped to handle that demand.

We have seen the use of video rising from both B2B and B2C organizations. Digital assets cost money to create and DAM can help get the most value from these investments. DAM helps to create, manage, distribute and repurpose assets many times, lowering the total cost per use. DAM can facilitate not just video either – the entire collection of digital assets which includes images, logos, audio files, presentations and marketing collateral.

DIGITAL ASSETS AND BRAND EQUITY

As you know, digital assets take on many forms consisting of marketing brochures, video

footage, audio files, product images, lifestyle photography and other branded material. Each of these digital assets is expensive to create but worth the investment because it generates enough impact to drive revenue. Another reason why video should be managed in a DAM system is so these assets are in the same place as the other assets used in a marketer's arsenal of digital media. Video frequently includes still images and logos in producing the final assets and should be in the same place as the complete library of digital assets.

Marketing organizations create digital assets because consumers need to be compelled to make a purchasing decision. According to Dr BJ Fogg of Stanford University's Persuasive Technology Lab, a 'behavior change' must compel a consumer to make a purchasing decision. His behavior model talks about the convergence of three things that need to happen.

There needs to be a 'trigger' (cue, prompt or call to action), the consumer must have the 'ability' (financially and accessibility) and they have to have 'motivation.' One of his key concepts within motivation is 'sensation.' Video, by default, combines the use of more human senses than other tools used in traditional sales and marketing scenarios. The more senses you, as a marketer, can stimulate in your audience, the more emotion and sensation you can evoke, aiding in motivating your customers.

Higher investments in digital asset creation are part of marketing and creative initiatives to continuously build brand equity and drive revenues. The need for digital asset creation is increasing significantly, hence the reason the amount of data that needs to be managed and distributed is rising exponentially. With the importance of digital assets influencing revenue and the exponential rise in the quantity of files being created, how can an organization receive maximum value from each digital asset created? Keep those assets in a DAM system that allows easy access by approved individuals and maximum 'repurpose-ability.'

RETURN ON MARKETING INVESTMENTS: COST PER USE

The rate of repurposing could be analyzed by evaluating cost per use and number of overall asset or brand impressions. In a cost per use evaluation, we want to understand the average cost for the digital asset creation process. This may be segmented by file type to provide additional insight as in the following example: if the average digital asset creation cost is \$2600.00 for lifestyle photography and the repurposing rate is 10.00, the cost per use is \$260.00. Cost per use assessments may vary by file type and with video becoming increasingly popular the amount of downloads may represent a higher number or as they are more expensive to produce the quantity available is much less causing the cost per use to fluctuate versus lifestyle images.

To put a few numbers to this, and using the aforementioned creation cost example:

LIFESTYLE PHOTOGRAPHY

Active digital assets: 1000
 Digital asset downloads: 10 000
 Digital asset creation per file: \$2600
 Digital asset repurposing ratio: 10.00
 Digital asset cost per use: \$260.00

VIDEO FILES

Active digital assets: 200
 Digital asset downloads: 10 000
 Digital asset creation per file: \$10 400
 Digital asset repurposing ratio: 50.00
 Digital asset cost per use: \$208.00

In this example you may say the value received from video files is much greater because I am able to repurpose them more frequently than lifestyle photography driving the cost per use below the lifestyle photography cost per use. The point is that through the use of DAM services you are capable of understanding the value you are receiving from a cost per use perspective.

By all means use YouTube, a great destination for video assets. Just use the DAM thing to manage those files so you can better realize the value they provide in your overall marketing mix.