

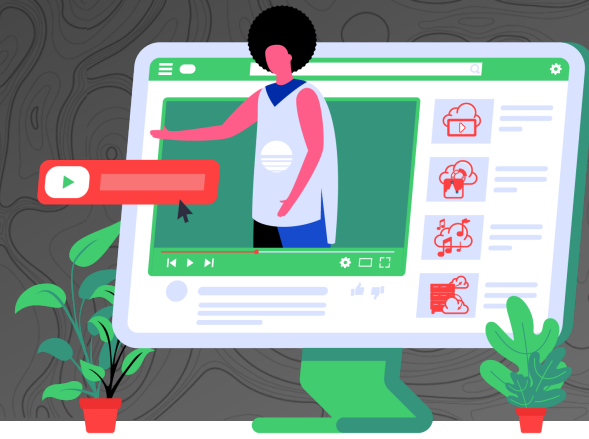


DAM & VIDEO

# *Why is it so damn hard?*

*& the differences between DAM, MAM, VAM & PAM?*

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## DAM & VIDEO

# *Why is it so damn hard?*

*& the differences between DAM, MAM, VAM & PAM?*

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## DAM & VIDEO

# *Why is it so damn hard?*

*And what's the difference between DAM, MAM, VAM & PAM?*

Industry jargon is generally developed to make communication easier. But it can just as easily cause confusion. Marketers like to “coin” terms to “differentiate” products, and product teams get sidetracked in minutiae that doesn’t impact outcomes. Both of these forces have impacted digital, video, and media asset management software.

In order to describe tools that centralize your control over video and digital content, you need to learn a whole host of acronyms, including DAM, VAM, MAM, PAM, VCM... just to name a few.

What’s more, this terminology is often used inconsistently, adding to the confusion. But that’s what this is for — we’re here to break down the meanings of each and explain why MAM is the best term to use (and probably the only term you need) when it comes to asset management tools for video and more.

There are a few acronyms that bounce around in the world of digital and media asset management and here we’ll take a nonsense-free look at what they mean.



## DAM & VIDEO

# *Getting to know those TLAs*

*Why is it so damn hard?*

### **DAM: Digital Asset Management**

Digital asset management can be considered an umbrella term that's used to describe any piece of software designed to store and organize digital assets in a central location, including videos, photos, music, text documents, etc. However, this isn't the most accurate definition as it has a legacy definition attached to it.

Probably the oldest term we'll discuss here, DAM is most accurately defined as a piece of software designed to keep track of finished brand assets. Because DAM is older, standard DAM tools have limited capacity to handle large assets (specifically videos, but photos as well) and do not come with production-focused capabilities. That's why DAM systems are good if your requirements are simple and your assets are small.

### **VAM: Video Asset Management**

VAM (also known as VDAM or Video Digital Asset Management) is, as the name suggests, primarily focused on the management of video assets. These tools bring dedicated features that are optimized for video management. Modern VAM platforms have a wide range of capabilities, such as the ability to ingest video, transcode files, locate assets using metadata and store files within the archive. However, the term isn't the most popular and doesn't actually tell you whether the system was designed for archive or production purposes. So if you want storage and searchability features as well as a variety of production functions, MAM might be better suited to your needs (which we'll get to).





## DAM & VIDEO

# *Getting to know those TLAs*

*Why is it so damn hard?*

## **MAM: Media Asset Management**

MAM is really the modern update to both DAM and VAM. The term was originally used in broadcast media to describe systems built to handle the strains of video production. As such, MAM platforms tend to provide generous accommodations for large file sizes.

With the ever-increasing amount of multimedia content online, MAM has expanded in its scope, becoming an umbrella term in its own right. Traditionally, MAM solutions don't have many production-oriented capabilities — focusing on archive management. However, this is changing, MAM is often archive and production focused, aiding in production workflow optimization.

For example, some MAM solutions can integrate directly with editors, allowing you to access archives and ingest automation features from software like Adobe Premiere Pro or Avid Media Composer.

Modern MAM platforms should also be geared to enable cloud-based, collaborative editing. This means the ability to compress files, track changes and set permissions to control access. Advanced metadata capabilities also simplify searchability and storage. This is probably the best term to use when managing various multimedia deliverables.



## DAM & VIDEO

# *The alphabet soup continues*

*Why is it so damn hard?*

### **What, there's more!?**

As if the waters weren't muddy enough, there are also some other more esoteric terms which you might hear (albeit less frequently) in the world of asset management. These include:

### **PAM (Production Asset Management)**

These tend to be fairly simple tools used for version tracking and storage interfacing to help production houses keep up with revisions on frequently edited files. PAM tools are falling out of favour as more production focused capabilities are being integrated into modern MAM systems. Historically, they were a critical part of an asset manager's tool kit.

### **VCM (Video Content Management)**

A term most commonly used for creative and digital agencies, VCM is similar to VAM and MAM systems. These tools focus on cataloging video assets as well as providing production-focused capabilities, but it's better suited for organizations with limited content management needs. Find out more about VCM and how it benefits creative agencies by reading our free eBook: [A Creative Agency's Guide to Video Content Management](#).

### **CMS (Content Management Systems)**

Another catch-all term to describe any platform for storing, organizing and managing any form of digital content.



## DAM & VIDEO

# *What your organization needs from asset management*

*Why is it so damn hard?*

It's easy to see why these terms are so easily mixed up. Not only is there a great deal of overlap between them, but some are used to describe both generic and specific functions. This can confuse matters when choosing the right platform for your own specific needs.

The good news is that there are a wealth of options for every use case, and making the right choice is about understanding what your specific organization wants and needs.

### **What are your video and production requirements?**

When looking at a digital asset management tool, there are two big choices you need to make — do you need to manage video assets, and do you need production-focused tools?

If you have video asset management concerns, you need a tool that can handle large files. Based on our definition, that means MAM, VAM and VCM. If you need production capabilities (version tracking, cloud-sharing and permission settings), you need MAM or VAM.

The real point here is that looking at labels won't get you far. You need to think about capabilities and features, and look to match those with your needs.

# *What your organization needs from asset management*

*Why is it so damn hard?*

### **Do you need archive management?**

As your production house creates more and more video content, your archives can become increasingly unwieldy. Fortunately, the current crop of MAM platforms:

- Can incorporate sophisticated detection software (e.g. object recognition and voice recognition)
- Can capture more detailed metadata during ingest (and automate the process). This means that archives can be easily scanned for images, words, phrases or even faces. You can essentially search for what you need within a file like the 'Ctrl+F' function delivers to text documents.

Not only does this provide increased visibility over archives, but it also makes quick and simple repurposing of content more accessible — organizations can save money, time and resources by using content they already have in archive, rather than creating new content.

### **Will the software support remote working?**

The hefty file sizes of high-quality video files have long been prohibitive when it comes to sharing and remote working. Some MAM platforms, however, can mitigate this by creating proxies which are as little as 2% of the size of the original master file. These can be shared easily and edited in real-time and accessed by multiple users. You can even control who has access to these files and the level of access they have, ensuring security.

This also means remote collaboration is possible, without having to share multiple versions of files. Some MAM software offers checking in and out capabilities, which means assets and sequences don't have to be constantly downloaded. Instead, they're all contained in the project bin and editing can start straight away. By doing your research and finding the right technological investments, you can find a MAM system with features that benefit you and make your operations more efficient.



# *What your organization needs from asset management*

*Why is it so damn hard?*

### **Does the tool have integration capabilities?**

It always helps when a new tool is able to slot seamlessly into your existing toolkit. Switching between applications when searching through content and making edits can become tedious. After all, there's very little ROI if you need to invest in even more software to help your asset management function.

Look for a MAM platform which makes it easy to integrate with your existing video editing software, keeping everything in one place. Many of these can also provide automation features which will improve workflows. For example, our Curator for Adobe Panel, which emerged from a partnership between IPV and Adobe, is an easy way to simplify your workflow.

### **Is the software secure?**

As well as offering state-of-the-art encryption, good quality MAM platforms also allow for greater automation and centralization to reduce the risk of human error (which is by far the most common cause of leaks and breaches).

### **With integrated security features, some MAM platforms can:**

- Encrypt your assets, especially those being shared in the cloud.
- Easily set permission levels for different users, so the people who have access to certain content will be completely controlled.
- Set who has edit permissions and even see who has edited what (complete transparency and tracking).
- Assign watermarks to editors, which ensures traceability in case of a leak.

Security isn't just essential to ensure your projects aren't leaked. You also need to think about retaining your clients' trust and maintaining your reputation, so any software you use needs to reduce any internal or external risks.



Data has a better idea

DAM & VIDEO

## *The importance of metadata in digital and media asset management*

*Why is it so damn hard?*

Working in media management, and with DAM, you know that metadata is great and it's even more important for video management than any other type of digital asset.

Metadata brings visibility allowing you to create workflows and archives that are traceable and transparent. Without metadata, searching your archives for just the right image, or just the right clip, is basically impossible. The more metadata you have attached to an asset, the easier and more stress-free your searches are likely to be. But there lies the trouble!

Right now, we have more metadata than ever and more ways to create it. Yet, while this can be liberating when we need to trawl our archives, it can create problems in its own right. Metadata takes time to create, and the more metadata you add, historically the longer and more involved the ingestion process has been. The price of more searchable archives has been slower ingestion.

However, metadata best practices are changing! Your DAM, MAM, PAM or VAM should improve the metadata you create and the way it can be accessed. This is an exciting time in digital and media asset management, and metadata sits at the heart of that transformation.



## DAM & VIDEO

# *Metadata 101*

*Why is it so damn hard?*

Just so we're all on the same page, let's briefly recap what we mean by metadata. A good analogy is to think about your cat or dog. When you got them, you likely got them microchipped so that your pet is traceable if they run away or get lost.

Within that microchip is a registry number from which anyone who finds your dog can glean your contact information like your name, address or telephone number. Think of your pet as data and everything the microchip tells them as metadata.

So, every video you create is the data and everything you need to know about the video such as the date it was created, the date it was created and ingested, filename, length and description is the metadata.

We live in an era where video content is more in demand than ever and in order to keep up with that demand, media managers are producing more and more content meaning that archives are growing at an exponential rate. Metadata is absolutely integral to keeping those archives manageable.





## DAM & VIDEO

# *Creating advanced metadata for video*

*Why is it so damn hard?*

As metadata has become more widely used, it has (by necessity) grown more sophisticated and descriptive, going way beyond the date and time of creation and ingestion. Today's metadata is designed to make large archives easier to parse and specific files easier to find. Recent years have seen greater use of descriptive metadata which tells anyone searching exactly what the file contains.

The easiest, and most commonly used way to do this is through the use of tags. Creating tags can help media managers find video files based on their content. However, this is something of a double-edged sword. Inconsistencies in how tags are used and formatted can undermine the efficacy of the whole system.

For example, let's say you have several pieces of footage and each contains an image of a lion cub walking through the savanna. A media manager might label one "Lion cub savanna", another might label the next "Lion cub walking" and a third "Baby lion walking". Or another might come up with something totally different like "cute animals". Now let's say a new media manager takes over at the same house. They have access to all four of these files. But will their search yield all of these? This lack of consistency can make it very hard to compare and group similar images together.

The use of presets can mitigate inconsistencies to a degree. But a lack of tags can still make interrogating archives a painstaking and time consuming process. All too often, media managers end up using a media player to find out exactly what's contained in a video file.



# *Automating metadata creation for productive workflows*

*Why is it so damn hard?*

The good news is that the latest generation of MAM platforms use sophisticated automation to make even huge archives easier to understand. These platforms deploy object recognition and speech detection tools to automatically identify images and sounds during ingestion and create and add tags accordingly that media managers can then approve.

Recognition tools hold the promise of delivering true archive transparency — able to retrospectively find archived and in-production material based on flexible search criteria. To a degree, current capabilities allow for this, but with significant room for error. It's still an evolving technology.

With that said, when used with oversight during ingest, recognition tools create such detailed metadata tags that true searchability is delivered to material put through this process. Finding a particular image, face or line of dialogue becomes as easy as performing a “CTRL+F” search on an MS Word document.

### **Making it easy for Media Managers**

It's easy to see why so many media managers are excited by the practical applications of object recognition and speech detection when creating and interrogating metadata. And the good news is that these are only growing more sophisticated. Being able to find a clip of an actor playing a certain line or even being able to group footage of an actor or performer using face recognition are on the cusp of becoming a common industry practice. For media managers working in forward-thinking environments, it already is.

So, if you desperately need to find a few seconds of a lion cub walking through a savanna when you're up against a testing deadline, VAM platforms have your back!

The cutting edge detection software in modern MAM platforms goes a long way towards accelerating the metadata process through the use of sophisticated automation techniques. Because metadata is an integral part of the ingestion process, production houses and media managers don't need to take the time to create and manage it. However, having this rich and advanced metadata can have a knock-on effect upon other workflow aspects.

# *Automating metadata creation for productive workflows*

*Why is it so damn hard?*

### **Monetizing media archives**

When you have a clearer idea of what you have, it's much easier to use it. With transparent archives, you can call on those clips for current projects. That might be as simple as re-using an old clip rather than purchasing new stock footage.

However, you can look to your archive for inspiration and create content based on what you already have.

### **Faster access during production**

Of course, better metadata doesn't just help you to make better use of your archives post-production. It can also allow faster access to the right footage during production to ensure that directors and their video editors have fast and easy access to all the right shots, making for more compelling video copy.

What's more, MAM platforms can open up new opportunities for remote and collaborative video editing.

### **Automated captions**

Closed captions are an important accessibility requirement and, in an age where more and more people view online video content through their phones, can make your videos easier to enjoy on the go and in public places. Because search engines rely on text to assess relevance, captions also help with SEO.

The trouble is that creating these captions can be a painstaking and time consuming process. The speech recognition capabilities of VAM platforms allow for fast and accurate automated caption creation.



## DAM & VIDEO

# *Industry use cases*

*Why is it so damn hard?*

The integration of object recognition into metadata best practices has a wealth of practical applications. With such unparalleled access to their archive footage, any of the following becomes a breeze:

- Filtering out profanity or other taboo language
- Rectifying errors and uploading amended content directly to OTT platforms
- Repurposing archival footage and integrating it seamlessly into new videos
- Tracking brand logos and branded images to ensure that sponsors get their paid allocation of screen time.

Because this technology is evolving at an exponential rate, media managers are on the cusp of a new age of richer, more immediate and more useful metadata with a wealth of useful applications and positive outcomes for workflow. Investing in the right tools is the key to turning these trends into outcomes.

### **Regardless of the acronym, find a solution that fits**

Now that the world of digital and media asset management has (hopefully) been demystified, you're in the perfect position to choose the right platform for you.

However, when it comes down to it, the different terms don't really matter and there's a lot of crossover between many of them. To figure out what software will work best for your organization, you need to do in-depth research to get the platform that suits your workflow, collaboration and security needs.

When you've found one that offers as many of the above functionalities as possible, you'll know that you've found the perfect fit for your operation. And we may be biased, but Curator does everything we described — and more! If you want to find out more about what MAM can do, request a free trial [here](#).



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# *Serious About Video*

*Curator: Manage and Edit Video at Scale*

At IPV, we're serious about video; and we're serious about creating innovative ways to help you move, manage and monetize your media. Curator, our world-leading Video Asset Management Platform has been built to help brands like yours create, collaborate and automate more, smarter and faster.

We work with some of the biggest names in broadcasting, sports and retail, simplifying complex digital media production so teams can focus on creating inspiring content – no matter where they're located.

