

PART 1. A TEST DRIVE OF OPENTEXT MEDIA MANAGEMENT

CLASSIFYING DIGITAL ASSETS IN THREE DIMENSIONS FOR A MARKETING CAMPAIGN

By Geoffrey E. Bock, Principal, Bock & Company

ORGANIZING ASSETS AROUND SHARED WORK ACTIVITIES CAPTURING CRITICAL BUSINESS DIMENSIONS

Recently I have had the opportunity to test drive an early version of OpenText Media Management 7 and want to share my impressions about its capabilities and business benefits as a platform for digital asset management (DAM). This will be the first of a series of test drive reports. Over the coming weeks, I'll put the application through its paces by describing how it solves familiar media management problems.

This week I'm concerned about how I organize and keep track of things in my digital world. I want to focus on how my business works – not the other way around and having to adapt to the dictates of a predefined system. With Media Management, I now have the flexibility to organize digital assets around my business tasks, and how I collaborate with my colleagues and customers.

Specifically, Media Management provides three dimensions for classifying digital assets: folders, metadata, and categories. Each represents a unique lens for viewing and managing the photos, sounds, and video clips that I have stored within my organization's DAM system. For instance:

- The folders can represent my group's principle business activities.
- The metadata can describe the important things I need to know (and track) about my folders and assets.
- The categories can identify useful index terms for finding assets in a shared repository.

I can rely on these three dimensions to optimize different aspects of my business operations. When I file assets into a folder, the assets inherit the metadata of the folder. As a result, I can automatically track the important things about both the folder and the assets within it.

FOCUSING ON RESULTS

Let me focus on a familiar situation for DAM. Suppose I'm a photo editor in a branding agency, responsible for recommending photos for seasonal marketing campaigns. I need to quickly assemble a set of assets, and select the best ones for the spring and winter campaigns. Along the way, I want to keep track of the start date for the campaign and the photographer's name. It's useful to keep these business-related details together in a single place.

To begin with, my agency maintains an extensive library of digitized photos, video clips, and other items. All of the assets are carefully categorized by specific index terms (utilizing a controlled vocabulary) and also annotated with essential business-related metadata, such as the subject description and the photographer's name. Folders include metadata about the start dates for campaigns. I don't want to minimize the importance of the up-front investment required to define the categories and metadata; they are an essential part of what keeps our agency competitive.

With Media Management in place, I can now collect, find, organize, and manage photos in a seamless environment. I can easily assemble a collection of photos for each campaign, file them into separate folders, and inherit the relevant metadata. No longer do I need to worry about fixed categories or be limited to only one dimension for organizing assets.

ASSEMBLING COLLECTIONS FOR BUSINESS VALUE

FINDING THE BEST PHOTOGRAPHS

Let's turn to the test drive, which is available as a companion online video. Here's a summary of the steps that I go through.

First I need to find the best photos to recommend for each campaign. I simply enter search terms in the search box and query the entire library for relevant photos, indexed by such familiar categories as flowers or trees.

I can review the results of my queries in one place – a browser-based inspector displays the thumbnails of photos stored in the library, as shown in Illustration 1. With a point-and-click user interface, I have a lot of control for managing the views. I can also drill into an individual asset to discover asset-level metadata, such as the photographer's name.

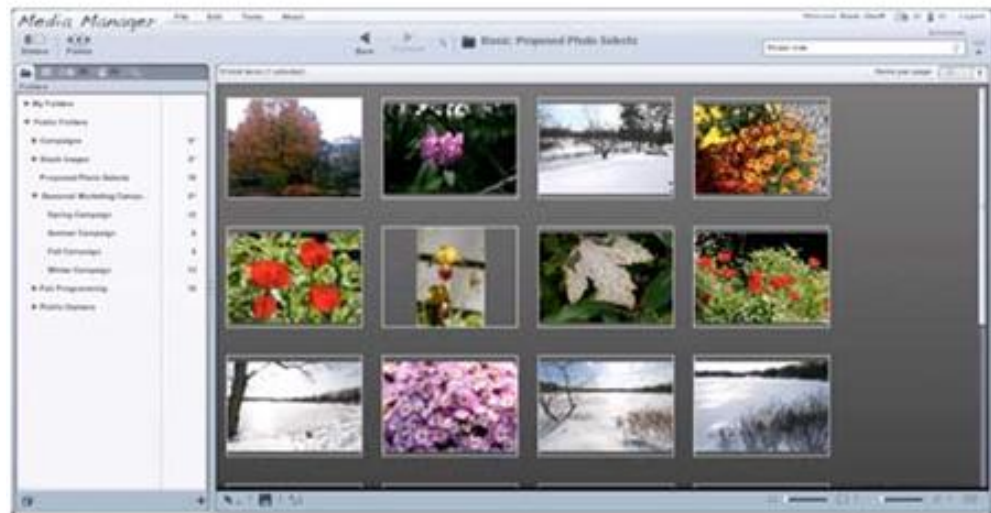


Illustration 1. The browser-based inspector displays the query results.

It's easy to select one or more photos within the inspector, and file them into the appropriate folders. Thus photos of tulips are good candidates for the spring campaign; assets featuring frozen lakes or rivers are going to be relevant for the winter event. I simply click on the thumbnails and use a drag-and-drop action to move as many photos as I want into the appropriate campaign folder.

Each folder stores the assets for the business activity. The metadata follows the assets. The folders for the seasonal marketing campaigns include metadata about the responsible marketing director and the start date for the campaign (see Illustration 2).

From a business perspective, I can avoid the laborious process of tracking various details about the photos I select for my marketing campaigns. The start date for a campaign (maintained as folder-level metadata) is automatically repeated for every photo filed within the folder. When I am pressed for time and need relevant information at-a-glance, I believe that this aggregated view of the metadata is a useful tool for tracking business-related tasks and activities. I can even use the metadata to power review and approval workflows. (In another test drive, I'll examine some workflows and see how Media Management stacks up.)



Illustration 2. The tulip photo, filed within the spring campaign folder, includes the asset-level metadata about the photographer's name as well as the metadata inherited from the folder, such as the campaign manager and the campaign start-date.

MAKING SMART BUSINESS DECISIONS

What are the end results for managing digital assets by three dimensions? No longer do I have to organize and distribute photo collections by a limited set of predefined criteria. I am able to manage assets within a business context, and aggregate the business-related metadata that's useful for decision-making. Folders provide one set of metadata, assets another, and I can view the two together.

I've seen various digital asset management systems over the years, and I am intrigued by the capabilities within Media Management to classify digital assets by folders, metadata, and categories. There's a lot of flexibility in this newly released product from OpenText. But there is also a challenge. Organizations are going to need to learn how best to exploit the three dimensions for managing their digital assets within an enterprise.