Going Beyond Media Asset Management: The Value Proposition of Production Asset Management

A Frost & Sullivan White Paper

By Mukul Krishna,
Global Director, Digital Media

www.frost.com
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary .................................................................................................................. 3
Understanding Production Asset Management ................................................................. 3
The Value Proposition ......................................................................................................... 4
  Cost Reduction ....................................................................................................................... 4
  Workflow Optimization ....................................................................................................... 5
  Revenue Generation ........................................................................................................... 6
PAM in Action: Golf Channel ............................................................................................... 7
  Choosing a Solution .............................................................................................................. 7
  The Results ............................................................................................................................ 8
Solution Brief: Avid Interplay Production ......................................................................... 8
The Final Word ....................................................................................................................... 9
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With the rapid pace of digitization across vertical markets, especially within the media and entertainment industry, the need to manage digital content is no longer “nice to have” but a “must have” for any organization seeking to bring order to its ever-increasing digital content repository. Though this idea is now becoming firmly entrenched in media organizations, the true value still escapes many companies since the focus is usually on the finished asset and not the production workflow.

This paper will look at some of the key challenges faced by media companies as they try to reduce costs while exploring more revenue-generating opportunities. The paper will highlight the value proposition of production asset management (PAM) using Golf Channel as an example of how a media company can benefit from technology and get higher and faster return on investment.

UNDERSTANDING PRODUCTION ASSET MANAGEMENT

Production Asset Management (PAM) enables the management of content throughout the lifecycle from creation and acquisition to delivery. At the heart of a PAM platform resides the media asset management married to the storage system and integrated with other critical workflow elements, such as nonlinear editing systems, graphics systems and video encoding and transcoding solutions. This becomes the nerve center of any workflow. PAM is a context-aware collaborative platform that enables asset management and repurposing of content in a secure and easily integrated environment. Version control, creative collaboration, and role-based access ensure proper handling of content through the production cycle.

As seen in the chart, PAM systems have become arguably the most crucial piece within the content workflow. They provide a platform for traditionally siloed systems to integrate with and provide a collaborative workflow environment for creative teams to seamlessly work on content creation, management, repurposing and delivery.

“PAM systems have become arguably the most crucial piece within the content workflow. They provide a platform for traditionally siloed systems to integrate with and provide a collaborative workflow environment for creative teams to seamlessly work on content creation, management, repurposing and delivery.”

Frost & Sullivan
THE VALUE PROPOSITION

Catalyzed by changing economic conditions and fluctuations in ad spending, the media and entertainment market is now more interested than ever in solutions to streamline and raise workflow productivity in the content lifecycle that spans creation to delivery. Media workflows have long been plagued with bottlenecks and inefficient workflows created from siloed groups and disparate processes.

Fuelled by government mandates and the value proposition that digitization brings to the table, content creators now realize that digitization and managing the media production workflow is no longer a nice-to-have proposition. Reams of tangible proof are now available, ranging from the elimination of costs associated with lost or misplaced content, cycle time acceleration and increased collaboration, to increased revenue through content and resource repurposing. In a complex content value chain, where everyone demands tailored on-demand content anytime, anywhere and on any device, it is imperative that media companies are able to provide relevant content as demanded.

We can look at the value proposition from three broad perspectives: cost reduction, workflow optimization and revenue generation.

Cost Reduction

- Cost savings on real estate
- Cost savings on maintenance of physical repositories
- Elimination of the cost of lost or misplaced work
- Cost savings on delivery

By putting a PAM system to work, an organization migrates from physical storage to disk-based storage, eliminating the cost of expensive real estate and maintenance to house
physical repositories for online and near-line content. With a good metadata schema, companies can keep a well-indexed repository of all content for role-based access, enabling anyone requiring access to search and retrieve relevant content, which bypasses organizational silos and reduces the cost of search time and of lost or misplaced work. Digital delivery through managed file transfers or CDNs allows companies to save on the cost of terrestrial delivery and insurance.

For a broadcaster trying to insert file footage into a breaking news event, time is critical. At such times, the newsroom cannot afford to scratch heads wondering where a certain piece of content resides and how to edit and insert it into the live broadcast. Professionals working in post-production are juggling multiple projects under tight deadlines. By eliminating guesswork to find content, PAM helps broadcasters and post-production to be more productive.

A case analyzed by Frost & Sullivan focused on a broadcast affiliate where the implementation of a DCM solution resulted in close to a 5:1 reduction in time spent on management of media assets. What took an employee 20 hours a week was reduced to 4.3 hours per week after MAM deployment. Because the solution enables employees to create intelligent queries that can be run across the entire organization’s central repository of digital assets, time spent manually shuffling through video content was all but eliminated. Previously, assets may have resided in different file systems, in different locations, with different metadata models applied to each. Now, with a properly implemented system where there is one repository and all of these parameters are consistent, the result for just one of the regional broadcast affiliates was a total cost of $1,509,300 per annum and an annual cost savings of $5,510,700. This represents a saving of 78.5 percent on the cost of man-hours and does not account for the increased productivity through the time-savings, which leads us to the next part of the value proposition—workflow optimization.

**Workflow Optimization**

- Content discovery
- Cycle time acceleration
- Increased workflow collaboration

Media companies can achieve time reduction in the business process through accelerated search and retrieval, and increased real-time collaboration of assets. Often, content is created from scratch or bought from stock not knowing it already existed in-house. An integrated PAM facilitates content discovery by eliminating silos and fostering collaboration through a well-indexed and integrated content repository. Version control enables a non-destructive workflow, ensuring the source video stays intact and creative collaborative processes keep everyone on the production informed about various versions. Coupled with role-based access, PAM enables an intelligent workflow process that minimizes expense and waste caused by lack of information about assets or their status.

Further, PAM integrated through Web services with critical workflow elements, such as nonlinear editing systems and video encoding/transcoding tools to name a few, foster...
increased collaboration among contributors and teams, while significantly reducing the
time-to-market through every phase of the content lifecycle from creation to delivery.
Broadcast professionals and post-production units need to be agile and respond to a
dynamic production environment. Contributors know what version needs to edited, where
graphics have to be inserted and all without ever leaving their NLE or graphics program
interface through built-in APIs. Such productivity gains are essential for broadcasters and
post-production to meet a 24/7 demand for content creation and repurposing with minimal
errors. All of the above stated benefits help toward what is arguably the most examined
part of the value proposition—revenue generation.

**Revenue Generation**

- Repurposing of content
- Repurposing of resources

Using an integrated PAM platform within the workflow, companies can now easily repurpose
content for numerous use-cases, such as: a broadcaster or television network re-rendering
content for over-the-top or mobile delivery, a post-production unit editing episodic
content, a newsroom splicing and inserting various video feeds, or updating a feature for
network syndication. This not only opens new avenues to reach customers and earn
revenue, but the time saved in searching and repurposing content can be used toward more
productive tasks that increase the potential for companies to earn revenue.

Even on the most micro level, Frost & Sullivan has seen the tremendous appeal that a
well-integrated workflow powered by PAM has on even the most mundane tasks. For
example, an experienced and fully burdened editor in Burbank, California, who costs about
$200 an hour performing tasks that could easily be automated, or at the very least be
digitized, provides an example for potential time-savings that translate into cost-savings as
well as the potential to generate revenue.

If we look at that editor and add an integrated asset management system that reduces by
one hour per day time spent in search and retrieval, it saves the company $52,000 a year,
assuming a work year consists of 260 days. That also gives the editor 260 hours that he/she
can use toward more productive tasks.

Add to this equation the time this editor might also be spending doing other tasks, such as:

- Adding effects/animation
- Adding graphics or cutting versions for different distribution channels
- Security coding prior to distribution

The $52,000 figure climbs into the hundreds of thousands as these tasks, personnel
assigned to these tasks, the time taken to complete them, and the amount of media in
production scales up.
The unfortunate reality is that many companies still do it the old way and rob themselves of higher profits and growth as these costs cut into their ability to be more competitive. All this can be avoided by a simple investment into the integration of automation into the digital workflow powered by Production Asset Management.

**PAM IN ACTION: GOLF CHANNEL**

**Choosing a Solution**

Golf Channel is an American television network focused on the game of golf and available in more than 100 million households worldwide. Golf Channel generates a large volume of digital video, animation, graphics and audio files. This creates the need to track countless project files, metadata files, and a large assortment of related content and metadata. These are the critical production assets of Golf Channel’s business. All of Golf Channel’s creative departments access these files to produce finished shows and all associated marketing collateral, and also enable editing and repurposing content for all shows shown on the channel, including the creation of all supporting features, teases and promotional video for the network.

The biggest challenge facing Golf Channel has been getting different production systems to work in a collaborative, interoperable and seamless production environment. Golf Channel found that interoperability and system integration were the biggest issues in the technology selection process, as the technologies and processes within a production environment at that scale are extremely complex.

Golf Channel did exhaustive research to determine what solutions could best meet its present and future needs for production asset management. Having used other systems in the past, including the MediaManager and Media Browse based on Avid Unity shared storage systems, Golf Channel also investigated other options, but no other solution was able to offer Golf Channel the interoperability and flexibility necessary to achieve its goals. Golf Channel finally chose Avid Interplay to share media across its operations, tied into 15 Avid editing systems attached to an ISIS 7000 storage server.

According to Golf Channel, Avid provided a best-in-class editor, and it also found Avid’s media management solution to be fairly elegant, robust and scalable to a degree not seen with other systems they investigated. Avid was also willing to work with Golf Channel to integrate with third-party systems it wanted to use and provide support to make the system function as Golf Channel intended. Additionally, the edit staff at Golf Channel knew Avid, and Avid’s media sharing was considered the best by the network. Golf Channel produces only golf-related content, and the ability to share video under severe real-time constraints was a critical factor. Further, Golf Channel felt that Avid was also the best solution available to support its long-term goal of migrating to a completely tapeless operation.

“**The biggest challenge facing Golf Channel has been getting different production systems to work in a collaborative, interoperable and seamless production environment. Golf Channel found that interoperability and system integration were the biggest issues in the technology selection process, as the technologies and processes within a production environment at that scale are extremely complex.**”

“The Avid solution has made Golf Channel’s editing cutting-edge and enabled the network to use HD technology more effectively to enhance its visual appeal. Golf Channel hopes to see increased benefits over time as the solution scales to include even more professionals across departments.”
The Result

Golf Channel found that the cycle time for production workflows has accelerated since deployment of the Avid PAM solution, as all content stakeholders, creative contributors, and management are now able to view and browse the same system for search and retrieval or approval instead of spending time and resources on hunting for production assets in silos.

Golf Channel also found that its media assets are now getting repurposed more often. Further, since media assets are not languishing in silos anymore, increased asset discovery has led to more Golf Channel assets being recycled rather than procuring footage from other sources. The system also enables deep collaboration between various departments, especially between the producer and the editor. They can now access the same system, annotate assets, edit, and collaborate and work toward the shared goal of creating a better product to increase the revenue potential for the network.

Golf Channel found the Avid system to be fairly intuitive for its edit and production staff, which cut down training time and sped the entire system and resources deployment, further adding to the productivity gains.

System maintenance is also much easier now, as a large number of disparate systems have been consolidated into a single system. Production time is now significantly accelerated because the Avid system reduced the work hours necessary for completion of projects due to its ability to scale, its collaborative tools, and support for parallel workflows. The system is now available to a greater number of people, enabling simultaneous distribution of work between departments.

The Avid PAM solution has enabled Golf Channel to start the migration process of its footage library to digital, which has further accelerated cycle time since digital files are retrieved on-demand, rather than tapes, which must be individually mounted and linearly searched. This has also made the edit process much more robust and spontaneous, and allows the producer and editor to be more creative in selecting content. Additionally, the Avid deployment enables a high degree of collaboration among various stakeholders and empowers them with the ability to provide much more input on the content. Various associated departments, such as graphics, now have an opportunity to craft content that is more closely aligned with the flow of the shows being produced. The Avid solution has made Golf Channel’s editing cutting-edge and enabled the network to use HD technology more effectively to enhance its visual appeal. Golf Channel hopes to see increased benefits over time as the solution scales to include even more professionals across departments.

SOLUTION BRIEF: AVID INTERPLAY PRODUCTION

Interplay Production manages and accelerates digital media production processes and is a pioneer production asset management (PAM) system. With an installed base of more than 750 installations worldwide, Interplay customers reflect the diversity of the media and entertainment industry, and include the world’s leading broadcast and content creation facilities. Users accessing the Interplay system gain immediate access to the right media and
to descriptive metadata through tuned desktop applications geared to their roles. For media file-based workflows such as news, sports or production, and any rapid-turnaround or multi-project simultaneous content creation, Interplay provides essential real-time, process-aware management that enables smoother and more efficient production.

- On a user level, Interplay saves creative time, reduces errors, and allows more contributors to add value, even remotely.
- Administrators gain the ability to optimize process and access, and a dashboard view of moment-to-moment production and asset status.
- Managers and business owners see lower production cost, faster throughput, and flexibility to pursue new revenue and cost-saving opportunities.

Avid Interplay Production is an ideal example of how technology companies are helping media and entertainment companies get a much higher and faster return on investment on their technology spending for mission-critical applications. This is all now possible while making the production workflows more seamless, efficient, scalable and robust.

THE FINAL WORD

This paper has discussed some of the key challenges faced by the media and entertainment industry as it learns to thrive in a digital environment. With digital media becoming ubiquitous, and consumers demanding anytime, anywhere, any device, on-demand content, it is imperative for media companies to invest in technology that enables them to discover, manage, repurpose and monetize on content across multiple platforms.

The digital age has breathed new life into content, especially video. With an increasing array of distribution and business models cropping up, the ability to manage, repurpose and re-render video has become critical for media companies. We now have technology that enables the effective management of digital assets at all stages within the production cycle and not just for the finished asset, helping open new monetization possibilities while reducing time, costs and resources through the production process.

Production Asset Management (PAM), as pioneered by Avid through Avid Interplay Production, is a testimony to how the vendor community is stepping up to the plate to meet the challenges of a very dynamic digital media market spanning the production workflow. The return on investment is no longer a “leap of faith” and is well-demonstrated through deployments at marquee media companies like Golf Channel. Well-deployed PAM solutions empower media companies to reduce costs across the production cycle and help optimize the production workflow by enabling production asset discovery, fostering collaboration, and accelerating cycle time. As seen in this paper, PAM is instrumental in helping broadcasters and media companies improve content, expand capacity, monetize media and explore new revenue-generating opportunities while minimizing costs.
ABOUT FROST & SULLIVAN

Based in Mountain View, California, Frost & Sullivan is a global leader in strategic growth consulting. This white paper is part of Frost & Sullivan’s ongoing strategic research into the Information Technology industries. Frost & Sullivan regularly publishes strategic analyses of the major markets for products that encompass storage, management, and security of data. Frost & Sullivan also provides custom growth consulting to a variety of national and international companies.

The information presented in this publication is based on research and interviews conducted solely by Frost & Sullivan and, therefore, is subject to fluctuation. Frost & Sullivan takes no responsibility for any incorrect information supplied to us by manufacturers or end-users. All copyright and other proprietary notices must be retained. No license to publish, communicate, modify, commercialize or alter this document is granted.

For information regarding permission, write:
Frost & Sullivan
331 E. Evelyn Ave. Suite 100
Mountain View, CA 94041