PBMA 2002

Digital Asset Management: What You Need to Know Now

Thanks for the opportunity to speak with you today.

My name is Alison White; I work in CPB's Television Operations Department, where I am a project officer for the Television Future Fund.

As some of you may know, Television Operations has a loosely-formed initiative around Asset Management, and we've been trying to take somewhat of a leadership role on the topic, because it's an expensive proposition, requires some coordination, and some of our licensees are already moving forward with it.

A question: how many of you came here today because you already know what Asset Management is, and just want to find out how to implement, and how many came because you've just started hearing the term?

Hopefully, this afternoon we'll be able to satisfy either of those approaches.

I have with me today some individuals who know more than I do about Asset Management, or at least have spent considerably more time in the trenches with it.

Those DAM Panelists!

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Marcia Brooks – WGBH
Dennis Haarsager – KWSU
Diane Kostecke – WPT
Jim Kutzner – PBS

They are, in alphabetical order:

Marcia Brooks, Project Director, Information Technology and Telecommunications, WGBH;

Dennis Haarsager, Associate Vice President and General Manager, Educational Telecommunications and Technology, Washington State University (or KWSU);

Diane Kostecke, Executive Manager, Digital Innovations, Wisconsin Public Television;

And Jim Kutzner, Senior Director, Interconnection Planning, PBS.

Now all these job titles sound pretty technical, but in truth, Asset Management, as a concept, is more about how humans work together than how machines work together.

A Useful Thought

"…technology is an accelerator of greatness already in place…"

I want to start off with a quote from an April 2002 Newsweek article – a quote that I found particularly inspirational if somewhat ungrammatical:

"…When we stand back to look at the rise and fall of great corporations over the long course of history, we find that technology is an accelerator of greatness already in place, never the principal cause of greatness or decline…."

A Useful Thought

"…what they can be best at…

…deep understanding of their economic engine…

…core values they hold with deep passion…"

Great companies…create business models that fit squarely at the intersection of three circles: what they can be best in the world at, a deep understanding of their economic engine and the core values they hold with deep passion. They then use technology to enhance these pre-existing variables, never as a replacement."

If we look at our own organizations, which are effectively, a "public benefit corporations," and draw those three circles of excellence, economics and core values, I think we would find that Asset Management is the technology that will be most useful in accelerating our success.

We'll come back to this idea throughout the session, because it's important to keep in mind why we would want or need to bring a new technology into our stations, and into the workflow of our already overburdened staffs.

What Is This DAM Thing?

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"...an approach
to organizing
rich media assets."

I'm going spend a few minutes reviewing important definitions and then we'll begin interrogating, er, rather questioning the panel.

The short definition of Digital Asset Management, or Media Asset Management is that it is an "approach to organizing rich media assets."

What Is This DAM Thing?

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RICH MEDIA =
Video
Audio
Stills
Graphics
Text

Let's take this one bit at a time. First, what do we mean by "rich media"?

Rich media is video, audio, still photos, electronic graphics, even text, like a script.

These units of rich media might be completed television or radio programs, or just useful parts and pieces of those programs. A unit can be any size; it can be an eight-hour session of the state legislature, or a single frame of video.

What Is This DAM Thing?

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ASSET =
Rich media with educational
or cultural value to one or more
constituency.

By "asset" we mean that there is an assumption that this piece of rich media has VALUE.

In our case, as public interest media providers, it presumably has educational or cultural significance, and enlightens and engages our audience in some way. They want to see it, hear it, interact with it or use it as a teaching aid.

So, rich media assets are obviously critical to our business model – they are at that intersection we mentioned earlier of what we do best, our revenue model and our core values.

Later in the session we'll talk about how changes in consumer technology are going to dramatically alter the revenue model, and therefore the ways in which we manage our content.

What Is This DAM Thing?

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ORGANIZING =
the manner in which you
describe, index, catalog
and store assets,
for streamlined search
and retrieval.

Finally, what do we mean by "organizing" assets?

Well, in this case, it means having a specified way to describe, index, catalogue and store your assets, so that they can be easily searched and retrieved.

What's Old?

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BEFORE:
National distributors,
human memory, notebooks,
index cards, tape libraries,
edit lists, databases.

So how we have kept track of all this stuff up to now?

Obviously, we've all been managing these precious assets with some degree of success, or we wouldn't be on the air.

Foremost, we've relied on our national content distributors, and our very redundant program information system.

We've also depended on our own anal retentive traffic and tape library staffs.

Occasionally, we've had to find something by asking the oldest member of our staff, often the cranky master control engineer.

Sometimes we've had to pry tapes and information from our local producers, who are loathe to separate from either.

Some of us have even moved into saving our edit lists, or have created fairly sophisticated databases.

What's New?

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NOW (ALMOST):
Integrated, streamlined flow
of assets and data throughout
our operations.

What we haven't done however, because the technology didn't exist until recently (and some would argue still doesn't exactly), is to employ a centralized, intelligent, digitally-enabled mechanism to label, organize, store and distribute all of our rich media assets.

Several important things have happened during the last few years to make this dream of an integrated, streamlined Digital Asset Management system a possibility.

What Happened?

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- Efficiencies of convergence
- Advances in compression
- Media as DATA
- Lower storage and transports costs
- File exchange and other IP advances

- First, of course, is the convergence of broadcast and computer technology in general, and the efficiencies that have come with that shared use of the same operational "chassis." I'm sure that you've all noticed a remarkable similarity between the hardware you're buying for yourself and your administrative staff and the hardware you're buying for master control and your edit suites.

- Another, related factor is the tremendous advance in video and audio compression. This is not exactly broadcast engineering triumph, but is rather a breakthrough in algorithmic theory.

- The takeaway from the points above is that media is now simply data. A computer doesn't care whether it's processing a spreadsheet or a weather map or an interview with Marlon Brando; it's just ones and zeroes. This represents a profound change in our business.

- Meanwhile data storage and transport technologies have improved, and those costs have dropped considerably.

- And finally, the commercialization and increased popular use of the Internet have precipitated advances in file exchange and other Internet Protocol. Most Asset Management systems are constructed with a browser-like functionality.

What Is This DAM Thing?

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"A software/hardware system
that provides the business rules
and processes needed
to acquire, store, index,
secure, search, export and
transform rich media assets."

Over the next couple of years, if you haven't already, you're going to hear from Asset Management vendors. Or your webmaster or Chief Engineer is going to hear from them.

I thought it would be helpful to see a typical vendor's description of what a digital asset management system is. It's on the screen there.

I would say, in more simple language, that an asset management system is a brain that informs and transacts a process.

What Is This DAM Thing?

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- Ingest
- Select file format(s)
- Add information
- Store
- Search
- Preview
- Retrieve

Here's the digital asset management process; again, in simple terms:

•You digitally capture, or "ingest," some piece of rich media that you think has value. (Now, you're thinking, aren't we already ingesting rich media in our edit suites, or in our master control area? Yes, you are, and we're going talk later about how all these activities and technologies might be woven together.)

•Step two is that you select one or several file format(s) in which the rich media will be saved, depending on the quality you'll need later.

•You then add detailed information describing the asset and how you saved it. That's called "metadata."

•That detailed information and the asset itself are then stored on servers, separately, with the information populating a searchable database, and with pointers that keep the information and the media linked to each other.

What Is This DAM Thing?

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- Ingest
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•Later, you or someone else, maybe even an individual citizen using your website, uses a search function to find the asset, if you or they have been assigned permission by the system to do that.

•You may then be able to see a very low resolution preview copy, or proxy, to see if it's what you're looking for, and you're also able to view, based on your permission, the information about the asset, such as who owns the rights, when it was shot, where it has aired previously, etc.

•And then finally you can use the asset management system to request that the rich media be delivered to you in a particular file format, to a particular location...an edit suite, a tape machine, a desktop computer, a graphics department.

Those DAM Panelists Again

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Marcia Brooks – WGBH
Dennis Haarsager – KWSU
Diane Kostecke – WPT
Jim Kutzner – PBS

So, that's the Asset Management process. I hope that I've been able to, without too much jargon, get you to an understanding of the kind of technology and process we're talking about.

At this point, I'm finally going to get to our panelists, and ask a series of questions, that I hope anticipate the queries and concerns you might now have; such as why is this important to me? Now?

Do feel free, as we go into this portion of the session to raise your hand and ask a question of anyone. Let me reintroduce the panelists:

Marcia Brooks of WGBH;

Dennis Haarsager of KWSU,

Diane Kostecke of Wisconsin Public Television;

And Jim Kutzner of PBS.

Question #1

We've talked about technology advances, but why is DAM important to stations NOW?

(Jim, Dennis)

Answers:

Changes in the media marketplace (more consolidation of ownership) require us to maximize efficiencies to stay competitive in our own markets.

Changes in consumer behavior and technology will require that we help deliver content in a more personalized, on-demand fashion.

Question #2

What kind of DAM process will PBS have? Where is the line of demarcation between "national" and "local" asset management?

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(Jim)

Question #3

How does asset management relate to the Orion project, PBS Connect and the new Interconnection system?

(Jim)

Question #4

How would asset management
systems work within
a state network
or a technical collaboration
like ADDE?

(Dennis)

Question #5

What is public radio doing about
all this? Don't they have
the same considerations?
What about joint licensees?

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(Dennis)

NPR Content Depot
NPR Media Archive Project
MPR's Digital Archive Project
PRI's DAM Inititative.

Question #6

How important is it for ALL public broadcasters to be coordinated about asset management? When does that matter most?

(Jim, Marcia)

Answer:

Shared standards/protocols (including metadata).

Possibly, coordinated vendor relationships.

Shared AM information.

Shared AM prototypes.

Question #7

Does every station, no matter what size, have to think about this? Can't licensees just live with whatever PBS and PRSS do?

(Dennis, Jim)

Question #8

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How can a licensee determine the degree to which it requires an asset management solution?

(Marcia, Diane)

Answer:

Number and condition of assets.

Potential service/financial value of assets.

Question #9

How can a licensee determine the number and condition of its assets?

(Marcia, Diane)

Answer:

Make it a priority to answer the question.

Establish a cross-disciplinary task force within your organization, and legitimize its work and leadership.

Review all traffic and library records.

Ask producers to report on the tapes they have in their offices!

Ask the old timers for help in identifying shows.

Ask older station volunteers to help review your records.

Partner with a local library or university with library/archiving department.

Participate in AMIA's Local Television Project.

Gather and review any material you have regarding how/why your local constituents value your local content.

Once you know what you have, and it's condition, there are professional video appraisers who can review the contents of your archive and value it.

Question #10

What are the chief benefits of a DAM system to an individual licensee? What are the desired outcomes of implementation?

(Marcia, Diane)

Answer:

Enhanced service to constituents;

Streamlined, efficient flow of programs, program elements and information between departments;

For some stations, realization of revenue from the licensing of assets.

Question #11

Is it possible that there will be ways for stations to outsource DAM work? Does every licensee have to install DAM hardware and software?

(Dennis, Jim, Diane, Marcia)

Answer:

Some have suggested that "service bureaus" or "utilities" could handle this work on behalf of stations, either based on flat monthly/yearly rates or perhaps based on volume of asset storage and processing. CPB continues to explore these possibilities.

Licensees with a significant volume of assets have already begun to work on AM solutions; for them, customized, local solutions may be best.

There may be a middle ground, in which PB works with vendors to create semi-customized solutions that work better for PB than others.

Question #12

What kind of financial ROI
can individual licensees expect
from the acquisition
or use of a DAM system?

(Diane, Marcia)

Answer:

- cost savings, based on increased efficiency, for tasks now performed manually?
- cost avoidance for tasks that will be new in the digital operations era?
- increased value to constituents, reflected in financial support?
- increased revenue from licensing?

Question #13

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What about the service ROI?
What kinds of news services
will be enabled by DAM?

(Diane, Marcia)

Answers/examples:

•Customized program information accessed constituents/members based on web searching;

•Program "clips" or "elements" accessed by constituents based on web searching (e.g. candidate indexing, American Field Guide);

•Facilitation of "video on demand" either in home (PVR) or at cable headend;

•Customized program information/guides/flags e-mailed to members, based on info in membership software;

•Customized program info/guides/flags e-mailed to other constituents: teachers, legislators, corporate sponsors, community partners;

•Improved (in quality and timeliness) multiplatform productions, based on better, earlier, more cooperative access to production assets;

•Opportunity to intelligently connect PB editorial assets to those of other partners, e.g. university extensions, libraries, schools, museums, newspapers.

Question #14

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How can stations determine whether they have the capacity to implement this new technology? What are the considerations?

(Diane, Marcia)

Answers:

- Staff readiness for technological changes in general;
- Management readiness to retrain and re-hire;
- Degree of technological expertise in IT and Production departments;
- The degree of collaboration/integration between station departments;
- Degree of successful information flow now.

Question #15

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Do organizations usually
have to change their workflows
when they implement asset
management systems?

(Diane, Marcia)

Does implementation of
an asset management system
usually require staff restructuring
(hires, fires, retraining)?

(Diane, Marcia, Dennis)

Question #17

Are there any incremental steps a licensee can take? Does it have to be all or nothing?

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(Diane, Marcia)

Question #18

Overall, what is the timeline
for incorporating asset
management into our local
and national production
and operations?

(Jim, Dennis)

Question #19

How can a station calculate the total cost of ownership for a DAM system?

(Marcia, Diane, Dennis)

Answers (considerations):

Software
Hardware
Training
Technical support
Software updates
Hardware updates
Depreciation.

Question #20

What resources are available
for individual licensees?
How can they find out
what others are doing?

(Marcia, Dennis)

Answers:

AM website, listserv.

Papers, presentations, links.

Announcements via PubRadio and PBS Express.

Question #21

What questions should licensees ask of DAM vendors?

(Marcia, Diane, Dennis)

•Is this AM product built on open standards?

•How complicated will it be to export and import data from other software systems, such as traffic/automation/membership/underwriting? Do we have to hire a systems integrator to do that, or can our own IT person handle it?

•Is the product <u>modular</u> enough for us to scale both horizontally (in terms of the kinds of assets) and vertically (in terms of the work we wish to do with them) later, as our needs grow?

•Who are the vendor's strategic and/or technology partners? (E.g. database, server, editing systems, standards groups, etc.)

•Who are the vendor's current customers (especially PBers)? May we have contact info so that we can speak to them directly?

•Is the workflow in our organization typical? Will we have to change the workflow to use this product?

•Is most of the functionality we need available "out of the box" or will this require extensive customization? How much customization can our own IT department handle?

•Will there be different interfaces for different users in our station? Can our IT person design the interfaces? How much flexibility is there?

•When will we have to update or replace this software?