

A Study of the Impact of Digital Asset Management (DAM) on the Business of General Entertainment Channels (GECs) from the Broadcaster's Perspective

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Abstract

Digital Asset Management (DAM) is a system that allows media companies to manage their media assets effectively. Media assets include audio, video, images, etc.

This exploratory research aims to understand broadcaster's preferences for using new media for viewing television content, through a survey method. The researcher interviewed five top notch professionals from leading media houses for the study. This paper will particularly interest broadcasters to understand consumer preferences for digitization of content and monetization of the same. The paper will also interest academicians to research further in this relatively less explored area.

Keywords

Digital Asset Management, General Entertainment Channels, Content Digitization, Content Repurposing, Content Monetization.

I. Introduction

Media penetration in India has seen enormous progress in recent years with advancements in technology and coverage, catering to a wide range of media audience in terms of language, region, religion and content. A robust economic growth, growing literate population and consumer spending power have contributed to an expanding consumer base of various forms of mass media – newspapers, radio and television. The new media such as the internet and mobile phones have also made significant inroads since the early 2000s. However the outreach is not uniformly distributed as this base is more urban based and large swathes of rural and remote segments across the country still have no adequate access to any form of media.

II. Scope of the Study

Today, media is broadly classified into

- Print
- Broadcast (television / radio)
- Entertainment (Events, Distribution of music CDs, etc.)
- New media (Internet, DTH, IPTV, etc.)

Television is further classified into multiple genres like Movies, News, Infotainment, Edutainment, General Entertainment, Regional and Music. This project will focus on the implications of DAM implemented for General Entertainment Channels (hereinafter referred to as GEC). This research will be based on the perspectives of GEC (IT, Operations and Marketing) and DAM Solution Providers.

III. Research Problem

Over the years, the technology and physical media to store media content has changed. Channels have a challenge to maintain tape-based storage for all the content they have, which eats up

valuable real-estate. Cataloging was a pain. Quickly searching and retrieving a particular clip / scene was virtually impossible and was labor-intensive and time taking process.

About a decade ago, with the advent of DAM, content can now be stored in a digital format. Channels can frame an archival policy for the content depending on business demands. Proper meta-tags can be used to identify content at a clip / scene level. Search and retrieval is hence a possibility. This research is intended to look at how DAM has impacted the business for GEC or is it yet another bubble without serious implications.

IV. Research Objectives

- To explore the demand for content repurposing & monetization for GEC
- To find out screen preferences of consumers for watching GEC content
- To investigate consumer demands for reusing GEC content on new media
- To identify if DAM helps GEC in exploiting the Internet for content monetization

V. Construct Clarity: What is Digital and Media Asset Management?

Digital and Media Asset Management (DAM / MAM) software is used when you need to manage large volumes of rich media, including digital forms of images, video, audio, graphics, animations, artwork, games, CAD documents, PowerPoint presentations, or combinations of any of these. DAM / MAM software provides the functionality to ingest, manage, and transform these files in powerful and sophisticated ways.

Digital Asset Management (DAM) is a collective term applied to the process of storing, cataloguing, searching and delivering computer files (or digital assets). These may take the form of video, audio, images, print marketing collateral, office documents, fonts or 3D models. Digital Asset Management (DAM) systems centralize assets and establish a systematic approach to ingesting assets so they can be located more easily and used appropriately. It is sometimes less commonly referred to as Digital Content Management (DCM). Read Digital Asset Management: Daydream's Focus OPEN Digital Asset Manager is an example of a DAM System.

Motivators for the broadcaster to implement a Digital Asset Management system

- Easier production / post production
- Lesser logistical issues (no physical tapes)
- Error-free transferring of content to the uplink facility (from where content is sent to satellite)
- Integration with various systems of DTH, MSO
- Integration with other enterprise-wide applications (like ERP)

- Easily transcode content into multiple formats to serve a wider audience
- Maintain multiple versions of content (E.g.: A 30 minute episode can be edited into smaller capsule of 15 or 20 minutes for specific requirements – like entertainment system on flights – and charge the airliner every-time the content is played)
- Provide content to mobile VAS operators and monetize accordingly
- Maintain rushes so that the production house or director can reuse the same. (Rushes are those “takes” that are not used, but could be used for another angle / flashback, etc.)
- Depending on profile of consumer, use targeted assets for unicasting where possible
- Searching of content is extremely critical. Hence content is broken down into several clips and certain meta tags (or keywords) are associated with the clip. This helps a user to search for the clip he seeks.

Example:

(1). Search for songs with following attributes:

Actor	:	Amitabh Bachhan
Singer	:	Kishore Kumar
Composer	:	R.D. Burman
Scene	:	Party
Genre	:	Pop

Thus, if appropriate meta tagging is done, retrieval of content can be quick. There are numerous business scenarios where this function would prove precious.

VI. Primary concerns of the Broadcasters

The broadcasting industry is at a crossroads. The business model has been stable for decades, but digital technology breakthroughs, increased competition from non-traditional sources, and government regulation is forcing the broadcasters of the World to look for alternatives to maintain profitable, growing businesses. The challenges facing the broadcasters fall into several categories:

From a strategic context, broadcasters need to re-build their operational and cost structures to be able to adapt to the new business environment. There is a critical requirement to differentiate their “products” (typically news, sports, and entertainment content) so that they can increase their advertising and other revenue and be ahead than their competitors (some of which are no longer just other broadcasters, as the Internet and broadband are allowing other players to compete for the audience’s “eye balls”).

Audiences are also diversifying and non-traditional customers of broadcasters are looking for new business models, with sound ROI’s. Traditional suppliers of the industry are also falling out of the market, making it very difficult for broadcasters to commit to any given technology for fear of being left “orphaned”.

The urgency factor comes from negative cash flows that are becoming common among slow-to-react broadcasters. Companies who have already adopted new digital technologies for broadcast production are hopeful that the rewards will be substantial for those who make the move.

VII. Research Methodology

1. Research Design

This is an exploratory research design

- The researcher has used an interviewing technique for gathering Qualitative data from the GEC & DAM solution representatives

2. Analysis was done using charts and graphs on excel

3. Data collection tools

- Secondary Data – Internet

4. Primary Data – Interviews (for GEC & DAM Solution representatives)

5. Sampling Design

A convenience sampling (non-probability) technique was used to collect primary data from five top notch professionals from top five GEC companies

Drawing of inferences through Qualitative Analysis of Broadcasters

RESULTS OF THE STUDY: Views on DAM

01. Would you look at DAM implementation as a strategic or operations initiative?

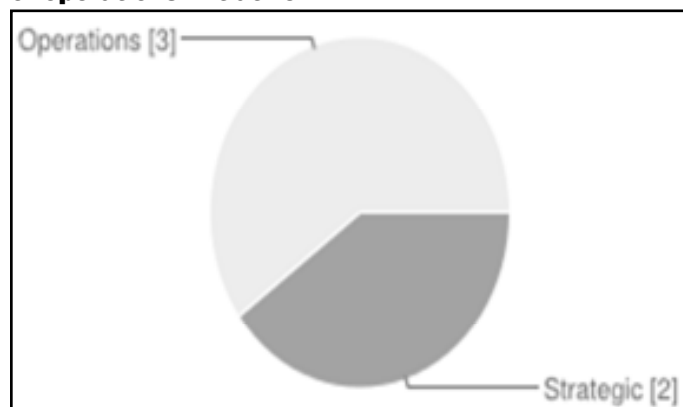


Fig. 1:

Most of the respondents believe that DAM will add value to the operations in the organization; moving from tape-based to tapeless working and leading to better management of assets.

02. Would implementing a DAM solution be a differentiator for your organization vis-a-vis competition?

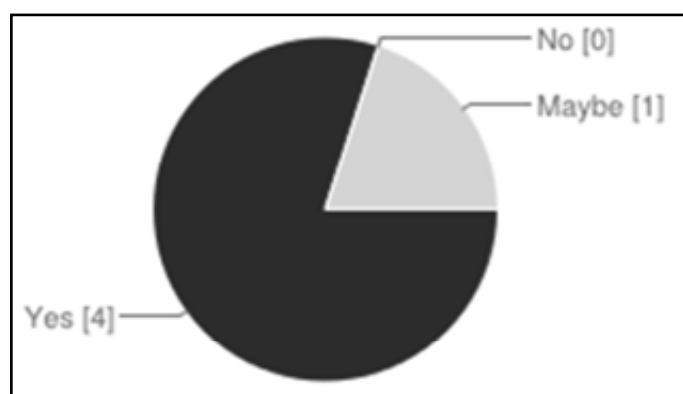


Fig. 2:

While DAM is expected to be a differentiator today, most broadcasters are realizing the criticality of have a DAM system. Hence in near future, this will cease to be a differentiator.

03. What as per you is the most important driver to implement DAM?

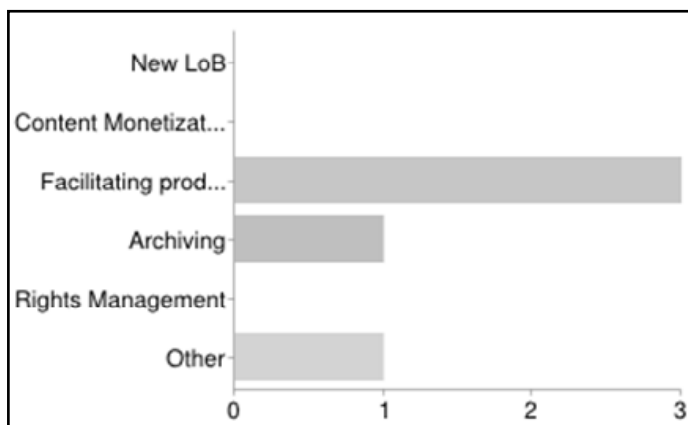


Fig. 3:

Majority of the respondents have indicated that it is essential to digitize and automate production / post production facilities in the broadcasting house. There is also a need for archiving, in conjunction with the country's regulatory norms.

04. On which of the following areas do you believe DAM help will help save costs?

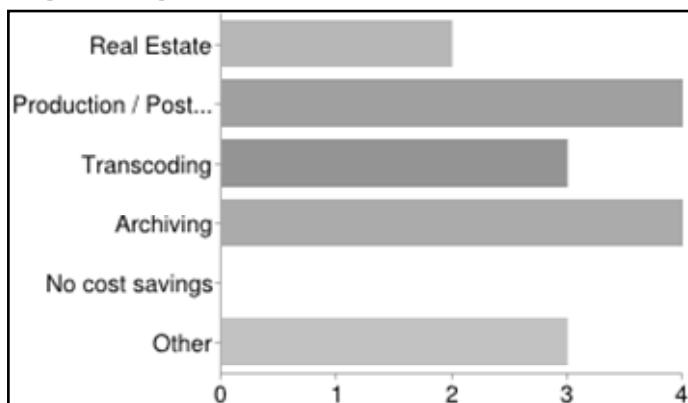


Fig. 4:

Moving from tape to tapeless will help curb real-estate costs, especially in metros in India where the rates are steep. Once DAM is implemented, it will immediately help reduce costs in production (People costs and logistics is a large portion)

05. Will implementing DAM help curb piracy?

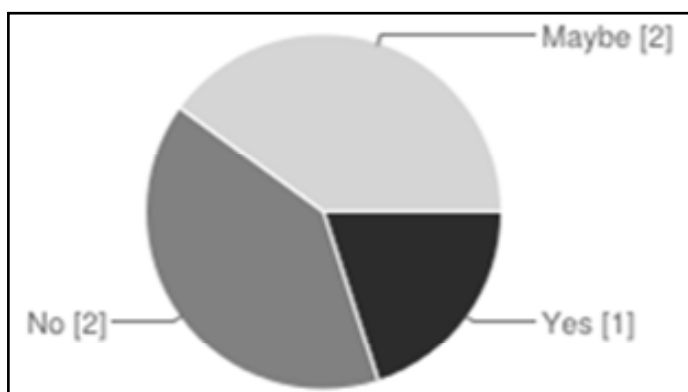


Fig. 5:

DAM implemented without DRM (Digital Rights Management) will not help curb piracy. Implementation of DRM is essential to tackle the evil of piracy.

06. What would make a better business case, outsourcing DAM or building it in-house?

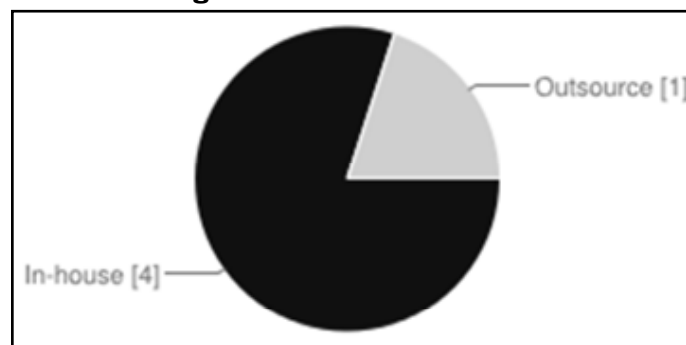


Fig. 6:

Most of the respondents believe that as of now, the mindset of the broadcaster is inclined towards in-sourcing. But this has the potential to change in the near future.

07. Would you be comfortable to host your content on a third-party data-center?

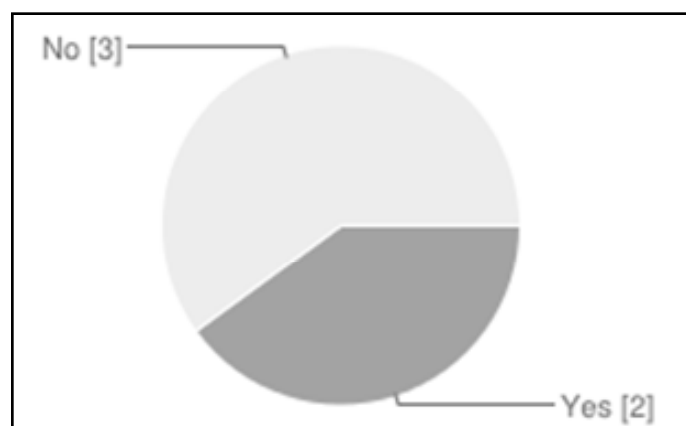


Fig. 7:

This finding is interesting. Although this question was intended to be in conjunction with the earlier question, the inference can be drawn that some broadcasters would look at a hybrid model when they would in-source the DAM but outsource the datacenter.

08. What attributes would you consider in selecting the right partner?

Footprint in media

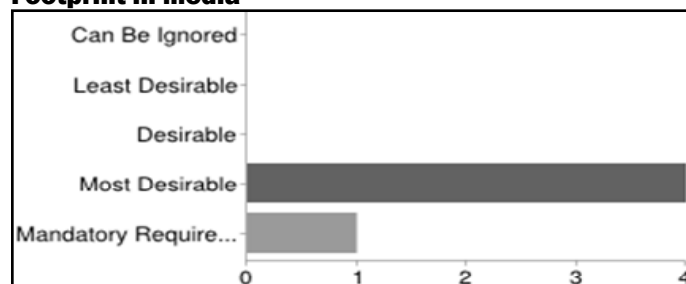


Fig. 8:

As seen from the chart, 4 out of 5 responses feel the chosen partner should have prior media experience, and 1 respondent has mandated this requirement. This indicates that no broadcaster is willing to experiment with a partner having no exposure to media

Proposed Solution Stack

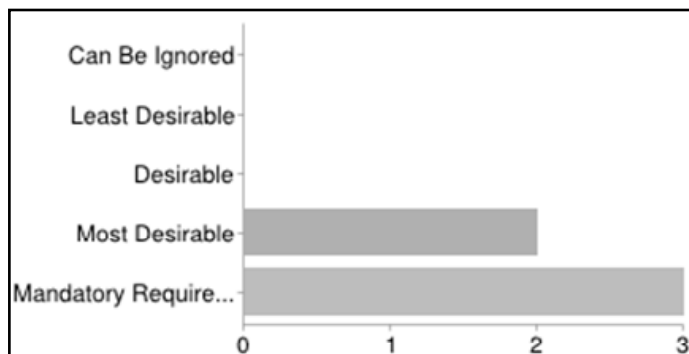


Fig. 9:

3 respondents have mandated that solution stack should be strong. However, It is interesting to note that a few broadcasters acknowledge lack of depth in today's solution providers and are willing to work with them for evolving a perfect fitment

Global Experience on DAM

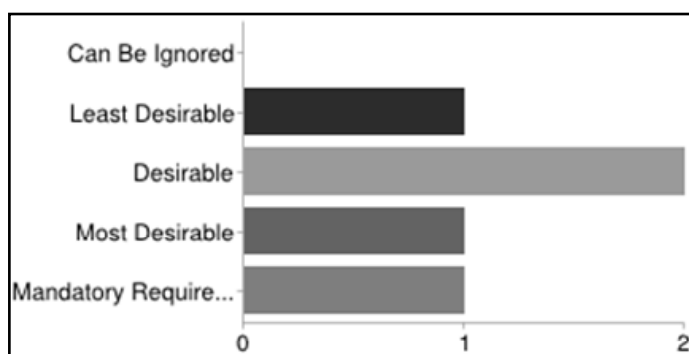


Fig. 10:

This finding is most interesting. General feedback received is that not too many broadcasters in India have taken the plunge to implement DAM. Hence, they would look at a partner having global experience

Domestic Experience on DAM

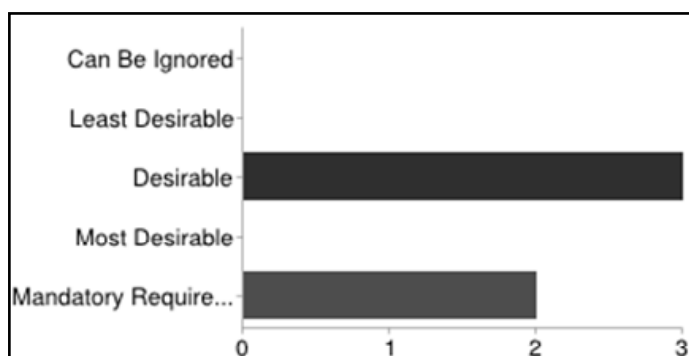


Fig. 11:

However, 3 respondents have expressed their desire on partnering with a solution provider who has domestic experience, since it exposes the partner to nuances of the Indian working environment, while 2 respondents have indicated a willingness to delay DAM project unless they find a suitable partner having domestic experience

Reputation & Brand

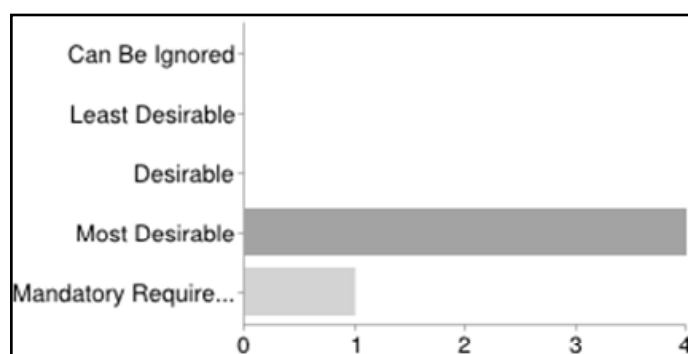


Fig. 12:

Broadcasters are not willing to work with partners who are not of repute. This goes to show that the broadcaster is looking at DAM implementation with utmost seriousness and unwilling to work with unknown players in this area.

Price of the solution

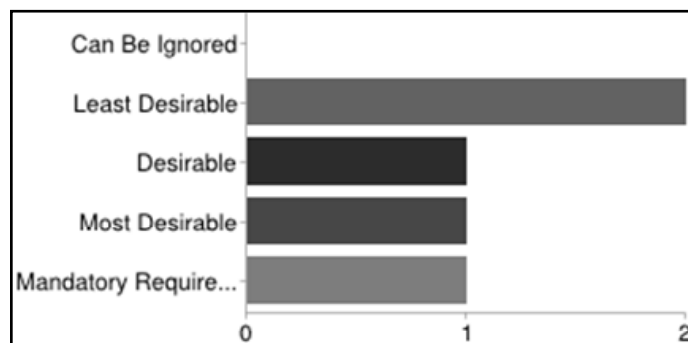


Fig. 13:

This is another interesting finding. 2 CIOs of India's leading broadcasters have emphasized that they are willing to increase the budgets for an appropriate solution.

09. Do you think implementing DAM and having an exclusive online presence to offer subscriptions will help build your brand for the conventional business?

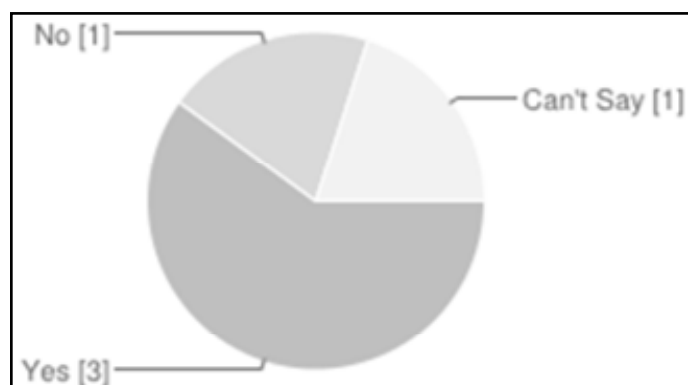


Fig. 14

As seen from the chart, majority of the respondents believe that an exclusive online property will be able to drive more audiences to the conventional television. However, there is still uncertainty on ability to monetize content online.

10. How challenging would it be to manage the change once workflows are automated with DAM?

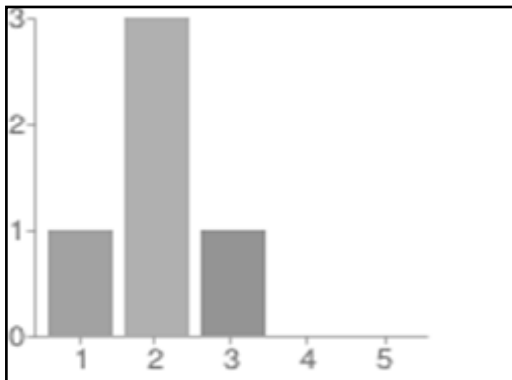


Fig. 15:

Moving from tape based to tapeless, and automating workflows with the implementation of DAM will lead to a complete mindset change in the operations resources. This will have to be driven from the top and will be quite a complex task.

Table 5: Qualitative Analysis of Broadcasters

“Companies will move to outsourcing options eventually. Typical cost of outsourcing is USD \$20K. Costs reduce on physical media, people, machine time and logistics. Piracy will curb because there is no physical movement of tapes. Broadcaster will keep hi-res file within the organization and give out low-res proxy files. When moving from physical to tapeless once DAM is implemented, the change management is critical and complex. Two things are of paramount importance. (1) Mindset to move from tape to tapeless (2) Understanding limitations of automated workflow and mitigating risks therein”.

(Top representative from a leading GEC company)

VII. Conclusion

It can be inferred from this research that in today's day and age, digitization holds a very important place in the broadcasting industry. Since the 1980s, media technologies have gone through a phase of digitization. CDs and digital music media replaced records and tapes in the 1980s and 1990s, and movies are increasingly being produced and distributed digitally. Satellite television is completely digitized in many countries, cable networks are partly digitized, and in several countries terrestrial networks for television are being digitized. One single computer can be used to create and consume variants of all media.

VIII. Limitations of the Study

The qualitative data collection was confined only to representatives from five leading broadcasters in India, primarily in the function of IT since constraints were faced during data collection. The replication of the study at other broadcasters in India would enable better generalizability of the findings of the study. Data collection from representatives with other functions in broadcasting could have elicited better responses improving findings.

This study explored Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Value-add to broadcasters using DAM. However, this research has limitations to capture the impact of a broadcaster using DAM solution on a consumer.

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