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## **What to look for...**

### **... in a digital asset management or online library system**

Looking for a digital asset management system or a multi-media online library can be quite daunting. There are many different features available and it can be hard to find out whether the ones you need are included. Indeed, you might not yet be sure what you do need.

Here are some of the fundamental aspects likely to be important when considering options.

#### ***Just images or other types of file as well?***

Although an initial requirement may be only for images, it would be as well to ensure that the system can also seamlessly handle other types of media, for example video, audio, PDFs, Microsoft Office documents etc...

#### ***Hosted service or on your own servers?***

Deciding whether a system is to be hosted externally or within a company network is a purely technical or perhaps commercial matter - because regardless of the system being available only internally or as a public website - a good and flexible solution for either requirement will be capable of being hosted anywhere.

#### ***Managing what users are able to do***

Consider the management and extent of what users, and different categories of users, are able to do. For example:

- access any part of the system without having to login.
- access to some parts of the system requires login credentials.
- some users can see all of the records, while others can only see those records for which they have been given the necessary permissions by a system administrator.
- upload assets and edit associated text data (metadata).
- download assets without authorisation, with or without a watermark if an image.
- request assets free of charge if authorised by an administrator.
- ask for a quotation for purchasing assets.
- purchase assets with either ecommerce or on an invoice basis.
- fulfil requests or orders for digital versions by authorising self-download, or by posting a disc, or emailing the file.
- self registration by new users, or only by an administrator.

#### ***Associated text / metadata***

The information to be stored with assets is unique to each requirement, and so a system is needed in which as many database fields as are required can be created, and changed later as the system evolves.

There may be different types of items requiring different sets of metadata fields. For example, when managing digital assets, trying to use the same database structure for in-depth cataloguing of both scenic water colours and textile machinery might prove too challenging.

So as well as being able to have whatever data fields are needed, it will also be important be able to create different 'item types', each having its own set of metadata fields.



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### ***Hierarchical keywords and relationships***

A professional system will not only enable the creation of a hierarchical keyword / subject / category structure with as many sub-levels as required, but also support parent / child relationships and multiple views of the same object - for example several different views of a three dimensional object.

It is also very useful to be able to group records into sets for collections, best-sellers, by department or topic etc...

### ***Branding - look and feel***

The system might need matching to an existing website or the branding style of marketing materials. For example:

- Home page banner, colours, text, images and menu bar labels customisable.
- Position of quick / word search.
- Collections, electronic exhibitions, best seller's gallery etc...
- Additional text pages.
- Watermarking requirements - if any.
- Footer links either within the site or to external locations.

The home page could contain, for example, just text with some static images or graphics, or to make it more dynamic have rotating images or display collections / highlights / exhibitions - or indeed both.

### ***Competitive pricing and a subscription option***

Naturally competitive pricing and good value for money are important, and a choice between outright purchase and a subscription may be useful to suit budget profiles.

### ***What have we missed?***

There are many features of media asset management and online libraries not mentioned on this page. To find out more browse around our website, use the site search at the top right, or pick up the phone...

**+44(0)1943 60 36 36**

... tell us what you want to be able to do and we'll advise on the best solution.

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