Extensis™ Portfolio™

ON-PREMISE, CLOUD HOSTED, OR SAAS DAM

Which deployment model is right for your business?

Introduction: Why Digital Asset Management is critical to your business

You invest heavily in your digital assets, and need to ensure that images, video, collateral, and important documents are easy to find, use, re-use, publish, and distribute to internal teams, partners, and customers.

Yet with the increasing number of digital assets needed to serve all of your workgroups, the speed necessary to execute campaigns and programs, and the growing number of internal and external teams, including freelancers, agencies, and vendors you're working with, the environment in which you manage your digital assets is becoming more complex.

Digital Asset Management (DAM) systems help cross-departmental work groups intelligently organise digital assets, making them easily searchable and available to the appropriate end users when they need them. This reduces time searching for assets, helps to avoid costly re-shoots, re-creation or repurchasing of lost or missing assets, and ensures assets are secure, backed up, and used correctly according to 3rd party agreements and licenses. DAM systems make digital assets available to users via secure web portals, to be used internally, or across external web sites, mobile apps, catalogs, email, print, and social media.

When selecting the right DAM for your organisation, there are many factors to consider including features, usability, and whether to adopt an on-premise, cloud hosted, or SaaS deployment model. This paper will outline the various deployment models, as well as describe business considerations and scenarios that will help you reach that decision with more clarity, depending on your business needs.

What is meant by “on-premise”, “cloud hosted” and “SaaS” deployment?

On-Premise

An on-premise software deployment is software purchased and installed on hardware owned and managed in-house, by an internal IT team. Storage and backup of digital assets typically also occur on local storage devices, though backup may be managed in the cloud.

The system can remain behind the firewall, and require VPN access to search and download files, or it can be configured to allow access to assets via logging in to a secure web portal. Software updates are managed internally, and can be deployed based on the needs of the organisation.

On-premise deployments are often preferred in organisations that have custom DAM requirements for integration or security, or are working with very large file sizes and require high throughput and processing time. In addition, on-premise deployments may also be preferred in organizations with relatively straightforward DAM requirements, but who have hardware available and an engaged IT team to deploy and manage them.

Cloud Hosted

A cloud hosted software deployment is similar to an on-premise deployment, only the software is installed in a dedicated hardware environment managed by a cloud service provider, such as Amazon Web Services, Microsoft Cloud/Azure, or Rackspace. The cloud service provider can provide software installation, storage, monitoring, back up, availability, and update services, as specified by the organisation. However, the internal team is responsible for administration and management of the DAM system.

If the majority of your in-house software deployments are already hosted in the cloud via a managed services provider, this deployment option may best suit your business needs. While cloud offerings may include SaaS, or multi-tenant options, “Cloud” does not always mean SaaS. Many of the reasons organisations want to be on the cloud, including reducing capital expenditures, gaining elastic scalability, outsourcing software updates and SLAs, can be achieved in a single tenant cloud hosted environment, that is dedicated and can be customised to the needs of your organisation.

SaaS

SaaS is software hosted and delivered as a service. It is only accessed by logging in via a web browser, and typically paid for via a setup fee and ongoing subscription. It does not require any hardware or software deployments, but does typically require an internal IT administrator to configure and manage the system according to the needs of the end users.

Digital assets are stored and backed up by the service provider, in a multi-tenant environment, and are not typically available on local hard drives. The software is configurable, but not customisable. Software updates are pushed to all subscribers and are available at the time of release.

In a SaaS model, the subscribing organisation does not own the software, and will lose access if they discontinue their subscription. Subscription fees typically increase as storage, throughput, and number of users increase.

SaaS is a popular option for organisations who have relatively simple DAM requirements, want to be up and running quickly with lower startup costs, prefer not to deploy and manage their own software, and need scalable infrastructure. These definitions describe typical deployment scenarios and tradeoffs, but not all products adhere to these generalisations.

Business Considerations

When selecting a new DAM system, your organisation's business goals and objectives should drive the selection process. First, prioritise issues you may be trying to solve, determine what type of processes and workflows you need to create to solve them, and which teams will be the primary and secondary users of the system. Additional considerations follow, such as:

- Are the users distributed regionally or in the same location?
- Are there workflow benefits to building integrations to existing business applications?
- Will the volume of assets you manage grow slowly over time, or in large bursts?

Gaining clarity in these areas can help determine the highest performing and most cost-effective DAM deployment model for your business.

Distributed Work Groups

Do you have end users located in the same region, or distributed geographically across different countries? For distributed work groups, SaaS or cloud hosted deployments allow for real time collaboration and give end users the ability to work from any device.

However, access to files in cloud hosted or SaaS data-centers do depend on fast and steady Internet connections, and may be bandwidth constrained at the last mile, or be restricted in certain countries. For the fastest performance, consider multiple on-premise software instances hosted in regions with large end user groups, connected via WAN.

For teams that only need access to download finished assets globally, a hybrid deployment —with an on-premise deployment for work in progress assets, and a cloud deployment for finished assets— or a SaaS model may best suit your needs.

Integrations

Do you plan to integrate your DAM with other business applications, such as a project management, ecommerce, Web Content Management or a Customer Relationship Management system? It is possible to integrate your existing systems with a DAM deployed on-premise, in the cloud or SaaS. However, you will be able to build a more customized workflow with a system deployed in the same environment, whether it be on-premise or cloud hosted.

There are efficiencies to managing integrated systems co-located in the same environment, such as testing and deploying updates and new functionality in a controlled process at the same time.

Additionally, you can deploy DAM in a hybrid on-premise and cloud model in order to maintain control over your systems of record while still leveraging integrations to third party cloud service providers for functionality such as image recognition or digital rights management, as you would in a SaaS deployment.

Cost

SaaS deployments are a low cost of entry option, with initial setup fees, but no initial capital expenditures. However, over time, the cost of the subscription, especially for large and growing asset repositories, may outweigh the initial expense for a software license, servers, and storage needed to run the asset repository on-premise. In addition, setup fees are not able to be leveraged in the future if you switch to a new deployment.

Cloud hosted models are usually the most expensive, as you are purchasing a software license and outsourcing ongoing management of your environment to a 3rd party provider. However, the additional cost is often justified by the rationale of higher availability with server co-location.

Additionally, expect your initial subscription fees in a SaaS or cloud hosted model to grow over time as you consume more storage and bandwidth, especially if your organisation has / consumes large files like high-definition videos, 3-D, or other similar formats.

For an on-premise deployment, the software and assets need to be stored on a physical server and IT administrative resources need to be allocated to support and manage it. If an organisation does not have server space available, a capital expenditure will be required. However, in many organisations, physical servers are going unused and can be dedicated to an on-premise DAM deployment—keeping initial CapEx startup costs low, and the time to ROI much faster.

Ongoing maintenance is always required for any deployment, but carefully consider where your break-even point is prior to assuming that cloud hosted or SaaS is the lowest cost option.

Technology Considerations

The level of control an organisation needs to have over their enterprise systems of record is often the primary driver of deployment considerations. In addition, factors such as availability of computing resources and IT personnel to support regular maintenance and upgrades will weigh into any deployment decision.

Performance

Are you working often with large files (such as 4K video, 3D file types, high resolution images) that require file format conversion and media processing? While media conversion can take place regardless of deployment model, processing time is often much faster when operated on-premise, or in a distributed cloud hosted environment, especially when working with large work in progress files that must be uploaded and downloaded by end users frequently. In addition, with an on-premise deployment, you still have access to your files if an Internet connection is not available.

For an organisation that is often working with large media files that require high throughput, an on-premise deployment may be the best way to achieve end user satisfaction. Performance that relies on the cloud, especially in a SaaS deployment, can be unpredictable and unaddressable - that is, there's very little a company can do to understand why performance is slow and address it.

Scalability

How large is your asset repository, and what is your average file size? Do you expect your storage and file size requirements to grow linearly or exponentially? SaaS or cloud hosted DAM deployments are a good option for organizations that need flexibility to add storage and capacity on demand, however, this also makes it more difficult for forecast your annual costs. As the DAM is used more, costs increase. For asset repositories that grow linearly over time, advanced planning can allow on-premise deployments to scale quickly as needed.

Security

Cloud hosted service providers such as AWS are investing heavily to ensure their infrastructure is adhering to world class security standards such as HIPPA, FedRAMP, ITAR, and CSA - indeed their business depends on it.

In cases where an organisation needs higher levels of security for their assets, such as work in progress assets that are kept behind a firewall, cloud hosted or on-premise deployments provide the most control. Cloud hosted offerings can be configured securely in a way that operates similarly to a remote office that is part of a WAN. In some cases, regulatory requirements in healthcare, government, or financial sectors may necessitate sensitive assets be stored within a local on-premise environment. In these scenarios, an on-premise software deployment may best suit your organisation's specific needs for asset security.

While SaaS deployments may also be considered highly secure, your organisation has less control over the practices the vendor uses to secure your assets. With SaaS deployments, carefully evaluate the vendor's software as well as hosting practices to alleviate any security concerns.

Software Updates

Do you prefer to deliver updates on your timeline, under your control, or to provide new features and fixes as soon as the vendor makes them available?

One of the benefits of SaaS software is that updates and fixes are introduced regularly.

However, an organisation may prefer to control the timeframe for introducing new software versions to their environments and end users. In this case, consider an on-premise or cloud hosted software deployment, that allows you to adopt new versions on your timeframe.

Backup and Recovery

All SaaS and cloud hosted service providers should have a process for data recovery. However, in some cases, it may require a custom request at an additional cost - and may not be as straightforward as managing the backup and recovery process on site. In addition, cost optimisation of archival practices is more challenging when you don't control the cloud hosted environment.

If having control over the backup and recovery processes and costs for lost assets is an important consideration for your organisation, an on-premise or a hybrid cloud software deployment may be right for you.

Is an on-premise, cloud, or SaaS DAM Deployment Model Right for you?

Make a tick in the boxes below for requirements that are a high priority for your organisation. Add the totals below to determine which deployment option(s) can best meet your needs.

		On-Premise		Cloud-Hosted/Hybrid		SaaS
Distributed Work Groups	☐	Teams concentrated in multiple countries or regions need access to files that is not Internet constrained.	☐	Teams concentrated in multiple countries or regions need access to files that is not Internet constrained.	☐	Teams concentrated in multiple countries or regions will login via a secure web portal.
Integrations (ERP, PIM, WCM, etc.)	☐	Flexible, can be customised, and controlled.	☐	Flexible, can be customised, and controlled.	☐	Integrations are less customisable, except to other web based cloud services.
Cost	☐	One time start-up fee for perpetual license and hardware.	☐	License fee, plus variable, ongoing services fees.	☐	Lower start-up fees, with variable, ongoing subscription fees in perpetuity.
Scalability	☐	Add storage and capacity via internal planning.	☐	Add storage and capacity on demand, with increased costs.	☐	Add storage and capacity on demand, with increased costs.
Performance	☐	High priority due to large file sizes, heavy media processing requirements, high throughput.	☐	Can be customised to meet an organisation's needs with corresponding costs.	☐	Less control over performance, throughput and media processing.
Security	☐	Internally controlled or regulated security practices and restricted access.	☐	Reliant on cloud service provider security best practices.	☐	Comfortable to rely on cloud service provider security best practices.
Software Updates	☐	Updates controlled and delivered based on the organisation's internal timeline.	☐	Updates controlled and delivered based on the organisation's internal timeline.	☐	Latest updates available immediately when published via the SaaS provider.
Backup & Recovery	☐	Backup, and recovery, access to archived assets managed locally.	☐	Backup, recovery, and access to archived assets available via managed service provider.	☐	Backup, recovery, and access to archived assets available via SaaS provider.
TOTAL	___		___		___	

Still have questions?

We're here to help:

http://www.extensis.com/company/contact-us/

Customer Story

Interstate Batteries, the number one replacement brand battery brand in North America, recently chose an on-premise deployment of Extensis Portfolio to organize and store their vast image catalog of over 20,000 SKUs. Prior to implementing Portfolio, the team was storing files on an internal file drive, which was difficult to search and often relied on specialist knowledge. Now, searching for and finding the right files is easy, so that the creative production team and their business partners, vendors, and distributors can utilize images in their campaigns, product catalogs, and websites, without spending hours looking for them.

The production team, who typically works with large layered .PSD files of around .5GB, needed fast performance for file access and conversion, and couldn't afford any lag time due to slow Internet connections. In addition, an on-premise software deployment made it easier to get IT approval, and go live faster, eliminating any security concerns or roadblocks to going live. Creative work in progress assets are stored behind the firewall, while the team plans to leverage the Portfolio module, NetPublish to push finished assets to vendors and distributors outside the firewall.

Conclusion

Getting the most value from your DAM system requires a discipline and methodology by which you conduct your business. It is important to have a vision of where you are going in the long term. Expect to deliver assets to new consumer touchpoints, deliver on an exploding number of asset types, and serve a variety of groups in your organization. Determine how much flexibility you need in your workflow, and how much scalability, customization and accessibility is required. From there, find a DAM system and deployment model that supports your business and makes your digital assets available to those who need them, when they need them.

About Portfolio by Extensis

Extensis Portfolio is a highly rated Digital Asset Management system that is designed to help companies and workgroups of all sizes efficiently manage asset creation, organisation and utilisation. It ensures users have immediate access to the correct files in the desired format in a central location. It is the only digital asset management solution that is affordable, simple to use, can be setup within a day, and provides everything organisations need to get started right out of the box. As a standards-based platform that works with other systems and existing workflows, Portfolio provides a single place for teams to locate important files with consistent metadata information using a web browser or Mac and Windows desktop applications. Portfolio is ideal for organisations with large collections of images, videos, and marketing collateral.

Extensis Portfolio can be deployed on-premise or hosted in the cloud. Its on-premise technology is based on more than 20 years of software engineering and its cloud hosted technology has been developed and continues to be supported by certified cloud-op engineers on staff. Portfolio uses web based APIs to integrate with key business applications, for example, to monitor and ingest assets from Box, Dropbox and Google drive, so that you can consolidate all assets in a centralised location. In addition, Extensis is investing in cloud integrations with industry leading partners that allow you to leverage services such as Clarifai for image recognition and automated asset tagging, and FADEL for asset rights clearance. Extensis Portfolio ensures that your digital assets are always available to your users whenever they need them, whether you choose an on-premise or cloud hosted deployment.



For more information, visit:
http://www.extensis.com/digital-asset-management/portfolio/

Europe: +44 (0) 1604 654 270 | North America: 1.800.796.9798 | www.extensis.com | ©2017 Celartem, Inc. d.b.a. Extensis All rights reserved.