

May the best MAM win

We can do the technology easily, but change management is the tricky part says **Andrew Davies**, business development manager, TSL

A fundamental part of selecting an asset management system is to make your request for proposal (RFP) about choosing a good systems integrator. This should help you select and implement your MAM as part of a wider tapeless workflow rather than issuing an RFP just for the MAM, and then trusting your SI's judgement.

Most broadcasters carry out a project like this once every 7-10 years and some of the staff – and much of the technology – from the last roll out will have changed. By contrast, a good SI will implement four or five MAM projects a year, thereby staying abreast of the very latest technology. An independent SI can provide even better insights because they will have implemented several different types of MAM system.

Don't lose sight of the fact that a MAM is just one part of a tapeless workflow. Too many broadcasters employ an army of consultants who

conjure up a theoretical MAM system that, on paper, meets all of the broadcaster's needs. However, in reality such a MAM system is highly unlikely to exist in a single product, meaning that the project will require unacceptable and time-consuming levels of development or complex multi-vendor solutions. This makes the project very risky and reduces the value-to-risk ratio considerably.

Aim to choose a MAM vendor who can deliver all the low risk/high value features, and ignore high risk/low value features. You can analyse those features that fall in the middle to see which are really critical. However, you should find that a very high percentage of the ROI in most cases is actually derived from very low risk features.

Change in the business is much more difficult than implementing the technology; it is also usually much more costly. I always tell TSL cus-

tomers that we can do the technology easily, but change management is the tricky part. Many CEO's are sold the concept of a MAM system on the basis of it being able to give them an ROI on monetised content that will pay for itself in three years.

That may be true, but what is not spoken about is the massive cost of changing the organisation to enable the technology to be used correctly. Lots of companies have successfully implemented MAMs that could, if used properly, pay for itself in three years, but not as many have actually achieved it because they didn't invest in those charged with actually operating it.

And I think I need to take a moment to clarify that MAM and DAM are essentially catch-all acronyms. Some companies need a tapeless workflow of which MAM is only one element. A tapeless workflow is now essential because tape workflows are economically difficult to build these days.

Opinion



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A tapeless workflow can manage without a full-blown MAM, but some mechanism for moving files around is likely to be a minimum requirement. For some people, that's their MAM. For others, it's just FTP with rules. And who rules in that debate? An independent systems integrator who knows the difference.

10.B41/OE113