

Organizing assets is the constant and common struggle that most of our clients experience. Where are files located, how are they organized and how easily can you find what you're looking for can make the difference between an efficient workflow and one of constant chaos, stress, missed deadlines and decreased profitability.

Assets can be any digital file – layouts, fonts, images, graphics, video, audio, word docs and excel spreadsheets. Whatever you can save that has value, is considered an asset. How long does it take you to find an asset? At what point in time do you give up and recreate that asset? How often does this happen times however many people are in your department or organization? How much do they make an hour? Multiply the hourly loss by wages and the number would surprise you.

An operating system can only take you so far. In and of itself, it functions like a flat file database, storing filenames, sizes, dates, etc. These labels give you some assistance in finding and identifying files. However you are at the mercy of the originator or the last editor as to the meaning of the filenames and locations.

Do you depend on a folder structure to enhance the meaning of the filename? If so, what happens if the file is moved from its “meaningful” folder? When taken out of context a file simply named “proof” is meaningless to the file hunter. Within a job folder with a client name and job number, the filename “proof” suddenly becomes meaningful.

How can we attach keywords or tags to files that create additional meaning for the searcher? And what kind of system or application would allow us to search by that metadata? A system or application that would give us greater functionality, the ability to cross-reference, and enough visual cues so that we did not have to open the file (a notorious time drain) and look inside of it in order to identify it.

While there are many systems on the market to choose from, having a handle on the problem by being able to quantify your situation is important.

How many assets do you want to organize and where are those assets currently located? Moving assets to a central location is preferable unless you already have a distributed system of servers with consistent methodology across those servers. This also implies a certain scale (enterprise). What, if any, database standard are you currently working with? What kind of skill sets can be applied to the situation? Do you need access to these assets from remote locations? Would you like to offer these assets as a service to others – clients, vendors, branch offices, etc.

These are the considerations for an asset audit. This white paper takes the initial step of defining and quantifying the problem. The next step in solution methodology will be the requirements draft.