Digital Asset Management at The Met

netx
DIGITAL ASSET MANAGEMENT

The Met solves scalability and workflow issues for digital media collections

Project Hallmarks:

- Migration management from existing DAM
- Workflow engine to create efficiencies
- Scalable infrastructure
- Flexible options for users from 20 departments
- Focus on platform adoption
- Integrations with multiple critical systems.

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January 2015

RFP completion and selection.

March 2015

Porject planning and contract completion. Commencement of test and dev environments.

March 2016

Final training and laucnh to all departments

Overview of The Met

Six million people visit The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York every year. They come to view works of art from ancient Egypt and classical antiquity, paintings and sculptures from nearly all the European masters, and an extensive collection of American and modern art. In all, The Met houses more than 1.5 million works of art spanning 5,000 years. Hundreds of employees work to preserve and share the priceless collection, including a team of photographers who tirelessly capture the art objects with digital cameras and other digital media specialists who generate audio and video assets. NetX provides a robust and intuitive tool to organize,

"Taking what we learned from evaluating the first DAM system implementation, we understood that we should expect our needs to evolve over time. We all felt that NetX could be a valuable partner going forward."

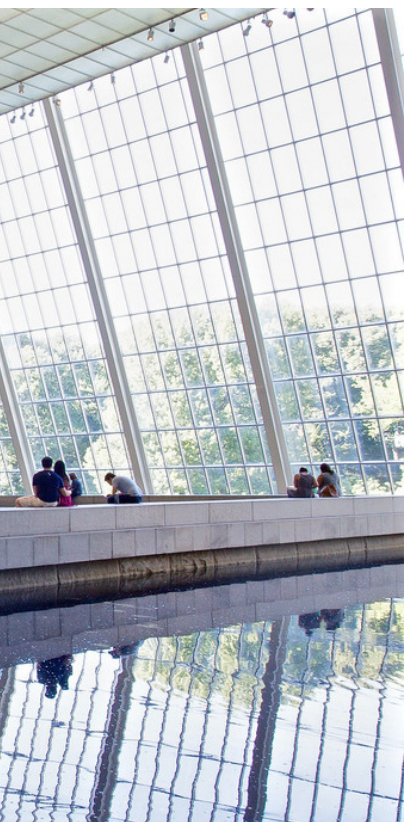- Julie Shean, Technical Architect

The Need

After almost 150 years of operation, The Met has collected over one million image files documenting its art objects, plus tens of thousands of audio, videos and document files. Managing all those files is challenging and the digital asset management solution (DAM) implemented at The Met in 2007-2008 was in need of an update.

As Julie Shean, technical architect for The Met's migration project, explains "Part of doing that work involves preserving, describing, and sharing information about the collection, in images, catalogues, and other interpretive media." When managing such an enormous volume of digital data, it is essential to have good tools.
"Our studio's imaging team was frustrated by how inefficient it was to archive their files," explains

Shean. "Also, we had trouble training new staff users on how to find out which images we already had of each object. We needed a better way to search, view, and deliver the images we had."

Discovering a Soution

The need to protect, preserve, and more easily share its digital assets was in fact the primary reason why The Met began the search for a new DAM solution. "We launched a highly-targeted search," recalls Shean. "We asked the finalists to conduct very specific product demonstrations for our team, gearing those demos to the actual tasks and workflow processes we wanted the system to handle."

"We were attracted to the product's approachable user interface, its flexibility, extensibility, scalability, and its ability to fit into our tech stack," says Shean. "Taking what we learned from evaluating the first DAM system implementation, we understood that we should expect our needs to evolve over time. We all felt that NetX could be a valuable partner going forward."

By Lydia Liu [(www.flickr.com/photos/lydiaxliu/20022954703) CC BY 2.0 (creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/)]

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1 Million

Assets trasfered from
legacy system

200

Metadata fields,
arranged in Museum-
specific sets

20

Departments utilizing
NetX

Collections Data Integration and Scalability

During the implementation process, NetX imported
more than a million assets from their legacy system,
along with the associated metadata. Post migration,
in a daily bidirectional synchronization, NetX
transfers the meta tags and image files to and from
The Museum System (TMS), The Met's collection
management system, to ensure both applications have
the most current information. NetX's ability to collect
and store a large volume of metadata for every digital
asset is vital to The Met. "We have defined more
than 200 meta tags in NetX," Shean says. "This is
important— both to ensure that a particular file can be
quickly located, and also to serve as a dynamic source
of information about each asset.

Finding the Right Fit

Today, more than 500 Met employees interact with NetX, with 20 to 30 percent of those utilizing the system at least weekly. One benefit The Met's staff touts is the ability to quickly upload multiple image files to NetX, and easily copy particular metatags to all of the uploaded files. "Using our old photography workflow, we had to upload files one at a time, and batch uploading was limited to a much smaller set of power users," notes Shean.

A powerful and flexible workflow engine in NetX supports The Met's unique processes by enabling staff to define a chain of events to take place at various touchpoints. For example, as part of a new image upload, NetX will automatically create three different sizes of the image file — a thumbnail, preview, and full resolution renditions. Metadata updates are used to trigger file routing, deployment to network drives, or lookups to external data sources for enhanced cataloging. This system can also be used to automatically notify various users when an image is downloaded or a metatag is changed.
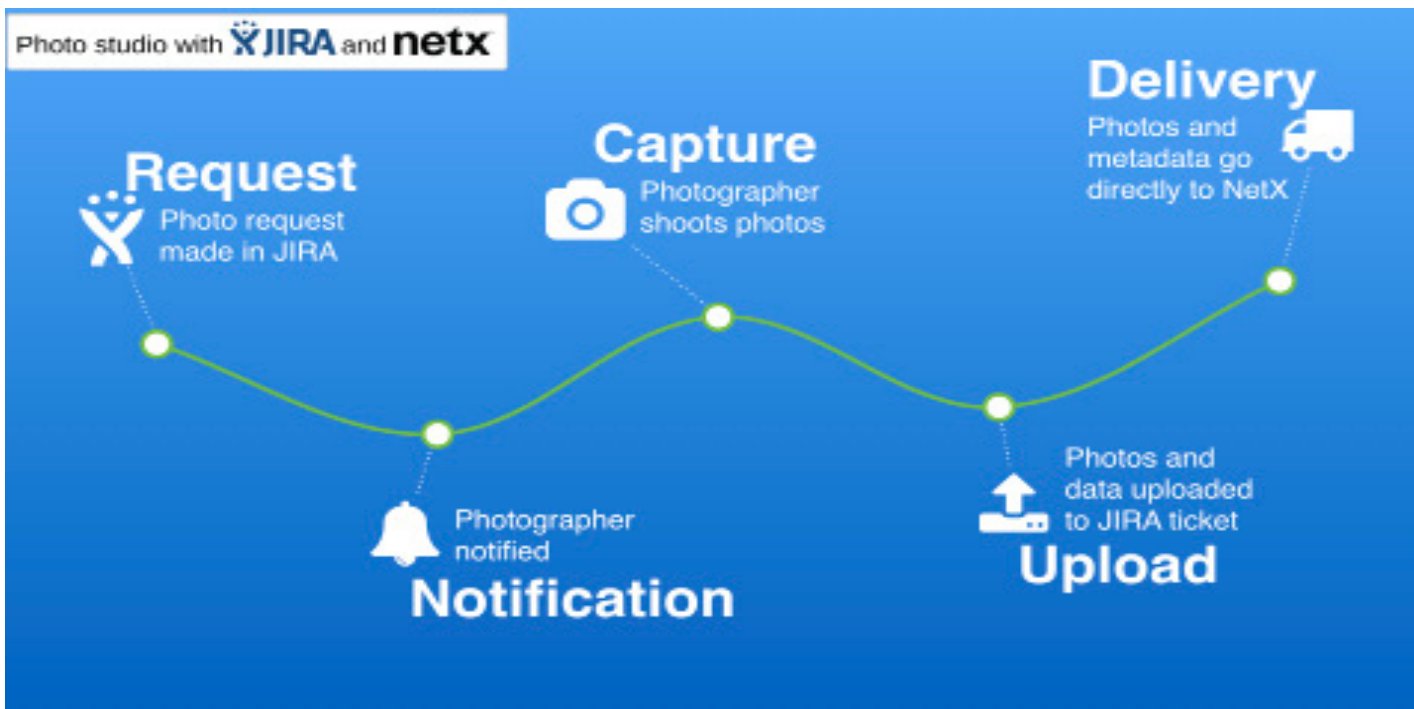

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Streamlining Photography Workflow

The Met utilizes the popular Atlassian JIRA Service Desk software, and collaborated with NetX to develop the NetX integration. The NetX JIRA Connector allows JIRA users to import images and metadata directly into the DAM. "The integration between NetX and JIRA has been key to streamlining our photography workflow. Our collections and curatorial staff creates tickets in JIRA to request specific imagery for use in an upcoming exhibit," explains Shean. "The request comes to our imaging staff through JIRA. They schedule and complete the photography request, select the shots, import the files, and deliver them to the requester in NetX. It's so much more efficient, and allows everyone to make much more productive use of their time."

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- Julie Shean, Technical Architect

Success through Partnership

Shean says that the museum's relationship with the NetX team is one of partnership and collaboration. "They are problem solvers who are passionate about their product. They work to understand how we operate, and listen to our suggestions and requests for additional functionality. We really enjoy working with them."

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