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# Gain Competitive Advantage With Managed File Transfer

## Unearth a Key, Hidden Cost in Digital Asset Management Workflows



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## Introduction

In today's world of high-speed Internet connections, few companies put much thought into their file transfer systems. They've invested in an enterprise Digital Asset Management system (DAM) for storing and managing their assets. They have fast Internet connections. They're covered, or so they think.

In reality, there can be a considerable drain to resources that occurs in the exchange of files between staffers, departments, and third parties during the use of many enterprise DAM solutions. In fact, a recent Group Logic survey revealed that 75% of companies rely on these solutions, thereby wasting their company's money and endangering their supply chains. This can grind productivity to a halt.

The solution? A valuable addition to your DAM solution — Managed File Transfer (MFT). This simple, yet powerful add-on can transform the productivity and cost-effectiveness of your DAM investment. In this special report, we'll explain why.

## The Role of Digital Asset Management:

Before addressing the role of Managed File Transfer, it's important to understand the larger environment in which it operates.

In any Digital Asset Management system, the core of the system is the ability to store digital assets in a central location and make them available to users across an enterprise or supply chain. There is a continual "checking in" and "checking out" of assets, whether they are being uploaded, replaced, downloaded, used, or transferred from one location or another.

Especially in high-volume operations, the number of digital assets in transit at any given time can be staggering. Large DAM systems can handle thousands of projects across supply chains involving hundreds or thousands of users. In such systems, there is a constant need to move files in and out of the system. At any one time, many gigabytes of data and tens of thousands of files may be in transit.

This makes file transfer a critical but often overlooked component of DAM systems. Without Managed File Transfer, companies incur major costs due to file transfer workflow inefficiencies and, worse, create substantial barriers to realizing the value of their DAM investment and their digital assets.

## Unearthing Hidden Costs

There are two components to any DAM system:

- The DAM system itself
- The file transfer mechanism that handles the exchange of assets between the system and external sites and users

Most DAM solutions use HTTP and FTP to handle their file transfers. These solutions are adequate for small files (less than 40 MB), but they cannot handle large files and are ill-equipped to handle the massive volumes flowing between the DAM repository and users. While these solutions are free (or bundled with the DAM system), customers fail to take into consideration the serious deficiencies in these technologies that can create serious problems and add substantial cost for high-volume operations.

## Limits of Free Transfer Mechanisms

For instance, consider the following characteristics of FTP and HTTP:

**They aren't reliable.** Time-outs, connection failures, and corruption using these transfer methods are common, especially under challenging network conditions, such as overseas transfers.

**They cannot handle uploading and downloading large files.** Free solutions cannot be used to upload a 2.5 GB video clip or a 4.8 GB TIFF file to your DAM. File folders and files with long names also present significant challenges.

**They are manual processes that tend to be labor-intensive.** When you're asking users to manage a high volume of transactions, this can have a serious impact on productivity, even in the most sophisticated DAM system. It also injects the potential for mistakes.

**Interfaces can be confusing and intimidating to users.** Users are turned into de facto shipping and receiving clerks, spending significant time each day manually processing files for delivery. They are constantly dealing with issues related to the failure of assets to deliver during the upload, delivery, or check-in /check-out process.

**They miss opportunities.** FTP and HTTP offer no way to capture metadata when files are delivered to the system. This means that valuable assets can be lost or vastly underutilized.

**No tracking or reporting.** Free solutions provide little information regarding successful or unsuccessful transfers. This makes it difficult to confirm that critical transfers have occurred. In addition, when problems occur, it is very difficult to identify and repair the problem.

## Gain the Competitive Advantage with Managed File Transfer

The solution to these challenges? Managed File Transfer (MFT). MFT technologies eliminate the challenges created by HTTP and FTP and ensure that file transfer is not a barrier, but an integrated part of a total, optimized DAM solution. This ensures that users can fully and productively tap the value of the DAM and the digital assets it contains.

Among the characteristics of best-in-class Managed File Transfer solutions:

**They handle files of virtually any size.** They can easily handle files in excess of 10 to 20 gigabytes or larger. Not only that, but they can handle entire folders, protect Macintosh resource forks, and handle long file names.

**They are highly reliable.** Dedicated and proprietary file transfer mechanisms increase the success rate of file transfers, eliminate time-outs and connection failures, and minimize corruption. This can be particularly important in very high-volume environments, especially those that involve challenging networking conditions like overseas transfers.

**They automate previously manual, labor-intensive operations.** Managed File Transfer maximizes productivity by automating many of the formerly manual tasks, such as compression, e-mail notification and routing of files on the network. This minimizes error and increases productivity.

**They are easy to use.** With solutions such as MassTransit from Group Logic, the “drag and drop” user interface makes it easy for even untrained users to successfully exchange any file or folder regardless of size or complexity. This removes a major barrier to using the DAM system, thereby maximizing the return on a company’s DAM investment.

**They offer opportunities to improve the process.** For instance, systems like MassTransit that allow users to include meta-data when they upload files result in great improvements in the system.

**They offer tracking and reporting.** These solutions provide users with easily accessible information regarding successful or unsuccessful transfers. This makes it easy to confirm the completion of critical transfers. If problems occur, these solutions provide detailed, easily accessible logs and reports making it straightforward to identify and resolve issues

## Who Needs Managed File Transfer?

But does everyone need Managed File Transfer? Generally, this process is suited to large corporations, retailers, publishers, and others that have one or more of the following characteristics:

- Large, central repository of assets
- Produce high volumes of graphics, video, or similar files
- Multiple locations
- Distributed workgroups accessing the system
- High volume of international transfers
- Timely distribution of files is business critical

In all of these cases, customers are managing large files and large volumes of data that must be exchanged with high frequency. It is not unusual for the system to be moving hundreds of terabytes representing tens of thousands of files per week.

## Best-in-Class Case Study: Christie's

Take the example of Christie's. As the world's leading art business, Christie's publishes more than 600 fine-art-quality catalogs every year to showcase auction items in more than 80 categories, including fine and decorative arts, jewelry, photographs, collectibles, and wine.

To produce these catalogs, Christie's needs to move more than 350,000 digital files between its photographers, sales offices, and printers every year. With aggressive production deadlines and file sizes averaging 30 MB, Christie's requires dependable file delivery, but was continually hindered by traditional delivery methods, including CDs, DVDs, and FTP.

"The process of moving files became as painful as you can possibly imagine," states Neil McCutcheon, head of catalog production for Christie's, which has 85 offices in 43 countries and 14 salesrooms worldwide. "We couldn't guarantee when, or even if, files would get to their destinations." The inconsistencies and time constraints of these file delivery methods forced Christie's to print all of its catalogs internally to meet its aggressive deadlines.

The solution? Christie's integrated MassTransit, a Managed File Transfer system from Group Logic, into its DAM solution.

Users simply drag and drop files to a local server, which then conducts the file transfer. The process offloads the transfer from desktops, relieves the burden on Christie's users and provides the ability to easily and consistently deliver large, graphic-intensive files to prepress vendors and printers around the world. Christie's photographers use MassTransit's Web Browser Client to upload photos into the DAM system and add critical metadata for identifying images and their intended use. This metadata is then automatically loaded into the DAM along with images, allowing users to more quickly locate the exact file they need.

With the MassTransit managed file transfer workflow, Christie's no longer needs to produce its own catalogs. Instead, it sends production files to half a dozen printers around the globe. It uses Mass Transit to move its 80,000 print-ready PDFs and more than a quarter of a million high-resolution images annually.

"We now have the confidence that all of our files will reach their destinations and all of our partners and employees will meet their production deadlines," McCutcheon says. "MassTransit is extremely reliable, which is critical given the very high volume of large files we move on a regular basis. Our users trust the system and know that files are reaching their destination as quickly as possible."

### Best-in-Class Managed File Transfer

Now that we've seen how one best-in-class Managed File Transfer system works, let's assume that you are convinced that this is the right solution for your business. What are some of the characteristics you should be considering in the purchase of a managed file transfer system?

Below is a comprehensive list of capabilities that best-in-class Managed File Transfer solutions offer:

- Provides reliable, fast delivery
- Supports files of virtually any size
- Offers easy-to-use interfaces that require little or no training
- Automates transfers and eliminates manual processes
- Capable of delivering meta-data with assets
- Offers complete logging and tracking to allow users to track mission-critical file transfers
- Provides visibility and control
- Capable of securing proprietary data

- Capable of integrating tightly with any DAM system
- Scales with reliability, performance
- Offers appropriate pre-and post-sales support
- Offers professional services for workflow customization

## Conclusion

FTP and HTTP are free utilities adequate for transfer of low volumes and small files. In enterprise environments, many people think they're saving money by using these transfer mechanisms, but the reality is the opposite.

FTP or HTTP solutions have the following drawbacks:

- They aren't reliable.
- They are labor-intensive.
- Users are turned into de facto shipping and receiving clerks, spending significant time each day manually processing files for delivery.
- They cannot handle uploading and downloading large files
- They miss opportunities to capture metadata.
- They do not offer tracking or reporting.

Consequently, using these utilities to fulfill the file transfer needs of enterprise DAM deployments can bog down the entire system. It is not unusual for companies to fail to achieve major DAM project objectives because of undiagnosed file transfer issues.

For these reasons, companies such as Christie's, International Greetings, and Transcontinental Printing are turning to Managed File Transfer systems.

By integrating Group Logic's MassTransit or similar MFT solution with their DAM workflows, these companies are eliminating resource draining file transfer issues, increasing the productivity of their personnel, and capturing opportunities to improve digital asset transfer processes. More importantly, they are maximizing the efficiency and effectiveness of their DAM solutions and ensuring that their major investments in digital asset management systems bring the maximum benefit to their businesses.