

## Spring 2016 Digital Content Management: Process for Managing and Efficiently Searching for Pictures

### *Introduction:*

The Western Michigan University Office for Sustainability is one of the most significant organizations within the University. Seeing that eight dollars out of everyone's tuition goes toward campus sustainability it is important to convey a great brand image through pictures. Pictures are used on every platform of publicity from the website, press releases, social media, and other digital content. This means that it is very important to manage and be able to efficiently search for pictures that serve as digital assets within the organization. Currently OfS uses the shared drive to store pictures and other files which over time has become unorganized and cluttered from many different users, adding, deleting, and rearranging files. The Spring 2016 Semester gave us the opportunity to do research on Digital Asset Management, speak with professionals in DAM or related fields, and learn through trial and error. Our steps to gaining insight on our problem and possible solution included the following:

- Hours of internet research about Digital Asset Management and software options
- Brainstorm meetings with Jeff Spoelstra and Anne Copeland
- Meetings with WMU IT Managers James Amos and Allan Poole
- Phone Conversations with BYU Digital Asset Manager, Jaren Wilkey
- Talks with WMU Photographer Mike Lanka
- Reading a book called *The DAM Strategy*

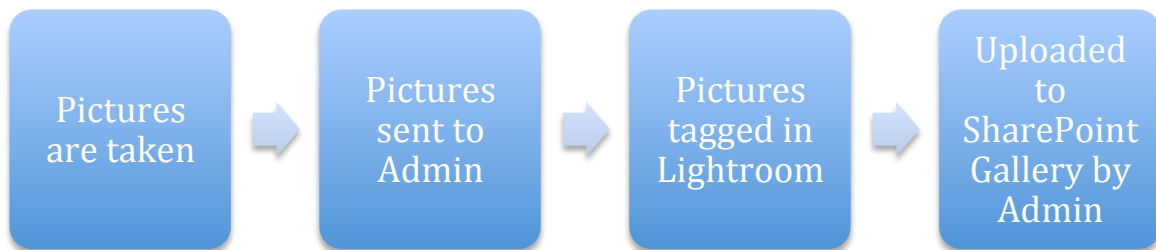
### *Procedures & Results:*

Through hours of Internet research we found many different software options with the capability of managing thousands and even millions of pictures and files. Reading *The DAM Strategy* book made me realize that we would not need anything of that caliber seeing that OfS on average only incurs about 100 pictures into the share drive every year. Through brainstorming and talking with the WMU IT Managers we discovered that WMU would be eventually switching over to Microsoft One Drive as their official cloud storage mechanism, which we also found out, is somehow linked with Microsoft SharePoint. We then had the IT Department create OfS our own Microsoft SharePoint site in which we have now added a test folder that would host all of our best photos.

During our research process we gained lots of insight about picture metadata, which is the summary or description of data embedded within a file. Tags are a very

important aspect to use when it comes to metadata because it allows us to search in an easier more efficient way. With some video tutorials and more online research, we decided to use Adobe Lightroom for our post process tagging of pictures. This allows us to search using keywords in the SharePoint picture gallery. SharePoint has its own tagging feature that is not available in the Universities version of the software. We have tested the process on several people who were all obliged at how good the search feature worked.

Here is the current process that we have tested and found successful thus far:



### *Commentary & Reflection:*

In this Spring 2016 Semester we learned a lot about our digital asset management needs and capabilities. I believe our process, comprised of actions and policy, is efficient and cost us virtually no money to set up and run with the benefits of an easily searchable platform. Throughout the duration of configuring this process we also comprised ideas that would benefit us in the future with the growth of OfS and Western Michigan University as a whole including:

- Post-to-Post process (Posting photos within seconds to social media during events)
- Perfecting OfS Search Engine Optimization
- Upgrading OfS Photography Equipment

Perfecting our digital content management will come in due time with more research and experience. This document will serve as a reference to what we have done thus far.