SEYBOLD

USER INTERFACE

COMPETITIVE BRIEF

A COMPETITIVE OVERVIEW
FOCUSED ON USER INTERFACE
OF DIGITAL ASSET MANAGEMENT
PRODUCTS AT SEYBOLD

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OVERVIEW

PURPOSE

The Seybold Conference, which took place in San Francisco September 24-28, provided an opportunity to look at WebWare's key competitors from the standpoint of their products' user interfaces and their marketing claims.

I reviewed the following companies exhibiting at Seybold. A special event, Digital Asset Management (DAM) Day was held Friday, Sept. 28. Hosted by Michael Moon of Gistics, this was a "bake-off" featuring most of the major players including WebWare.

- Artesia — Conference floor and DAM Day
- eMotion — Participant in DAM Day
- MediaBin — Conference floor and DAM Day
- North Plains — Conference floor and DAM Day
- Canto — Conference floor and DAM Day

METHODOLOGY

I gathered information in the following ways:

- visiting competitors' booths
- observing exhibit floor demos
- talking one on one with company representatives
- reviewing competitors' sales and marketing materials
- attending all of DAM Day
- studying each company's website

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UI EVALUATION

To set the context underlying these findings, there are three points to make about evaluating WebWare and its competitors.

- Any UI evaluation gathered at Seybold is based upon a company's marketing-focused demonstration, not real hands-on interaction with the product itself. It's important to make this distinction, as the real experience of any UI comes from being a user of it, and the context in which it's used. The conditions under which these products are shown are ***primarily for sales purposes within a very controlled environment;*** an in-depth look at the interface is virtually impossible***.*** An ideal hands-on evaluation should come from someone who has used a product for a period of time and formed opinions based on direct experience.

- Seybold was an opportunity to see an array of DAM products, including WebWare MAMBO 3.0, through the eyes of first-timers, evaluators and prospective buyers. Aside from the collateral marketing materials surrounding each product, the user interface is the product we see when we visit the company booths. This means the ***interface plays an incredibly important role in the sales process***, as people make many of decisions based on what they merely observe about the look and feel of the product at these venues.

- Given there are so many product offerings in the DAM space, and, in particular, variations in platform options, the WebWare offering should be compared with other companies offering comparable products. While there are some important features that companies offer in their native clients, our focus should be ***evaluating web-based products*** that compete directly with WebWare.

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OBSERVATIONS/SUMMARY

WEBWARE AT SEYBOLD: KEY MESSAGES

WebWare focuses on people. The video case studies were unique to the environment, and sent a powerful human message. Actual clients speaking to how WebWare MAMBO solved their problems clearly differentiated WebWare from the rest.

WebWare has great staff expertise, and competitors actually acknowledged that openly.

WebWare is solving people's problems, is accessible and offers a powerful – and simpler – solution.

WEBWARE COMPETITORS

Two companies, Artesia and e-Motion, are primary competitors for several reasons:

- Both offer a full-scale solution and position themselves as enterprise players.
- In addition, e-Motion gains points by presenting a complete and creative branded look and feel (more true of its marketing materials than its application).
- Both support virtually all file formats (inbound and outbound).
- Both companies have partnered to leverage new technologies (e.g. eVision visual search, XMP, Quark, XMP, Adobe AlterCast).
- Both claim the ability to customize solutions for any kind of client.
- Both attempt to simplify processes within their interface by reducing the number of options for interaction on their top-level screens.
  - Artesia has a one-button interface, signaling the company's belief in trying to convey an ease of use look up front.
  - eMotion offers a three-button interface (user, work, send), dividing the application into 3 basic areas of interaction.
  - In addition, e-Motion users may customize the terminology and color palettes for their preferred look and feel.

While the goal of this audit was to look at competitors' primary products such as Artesia TEAMS 4.2 and e-Motion MediaPartner 4.02, both of which are billed as enterprise solutions, it is equally important to note the **vertical market products** both companies released or offer. For example:

- Artesia's TeamToolz, geared to the goals and tasks of marketing managers
- eMotion's Global Brand Manager, addressing brand managers and creative agencies

Though the application interfaces for both these products are not outstanding, the idea behind them is critical – addressing particular audience segments with their need for specific workflows, processes and tools to get their job done. This creates a sense of great functionality and targeting. Where enterprise-wide products attempt to serve many different tasks and job functions, these products may be successful by appealing to verticals (industry or job level).

Both products were released after the initial core products and speak to a trend of WebWare's competitors to direct their efforts towards offering solutions for particular targeted audience segments.

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RUNNERS-UP: MEDIA BIN AND CANTO, NORTH PLAINS

MediaBin and Canto are also worth noting as WebWare competitors because of their impressive technology like visual search capabilities and Quark extensions. Of particular note is MediaBin's automated image processing capabilities.

CONCLUSIONS

What puts all of these companies' lead products out ahead of the existing WebWare product is their **"deliberate" look and feel**: clean, organized, with an attempt to apply design to the overall product. But despite their clean presentation, nothing really stands out in the DAM market as being a clear winner in category of usability, ease of use.

While some of WebWare's competitors mention their "ease of use" or recent upgrades to their UI for usability, none of them positions itself as **a leader in a user interface category.**

It's also clear that these products all depend on in-depth training before anyone can actually get a simple task done. Other than the targeted products like Artesia's TEAMToolz or eMotion's Brand Manager, **none of the products is truly " task-driven."** They do nothing to help casual users with easy to understand models or maps of the application.

So where does WebWare fit? The 3.0 product is clearly strong enough to compete with existing competitors, but its front end is not comparable. Therefore, there is a clear **opportunity to compete and excel in the quality of WebWare UI** going forward.

Just addressing key tasks and offering **step-based processes or wizards** to help users through the product would be an area where WebWare could clearly distinguish its product from the competition.

Further, **targeting specific audience segments** within an enterprise, offering them easy access to specific job-related workflows, can be a great differentiator for WebWare. It's also fine to offer the existing product to address broad solutions, but addressing different user needs in a very compelling way **within the current product** is an opportunity.

Finally, products that have succeeded in using the Web, not as application "wannabes" but by exploiting what the Web does better than any native client, will continue to differentiate themselves. True value will be perceived by how well the product enables people to actually work on their own and in groups through **rich community interaction and collaboration** on top of automated labor-intensive tasks.

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ARTESIA

http://www.artesia.com/teams_overview.html

Artesia is a primary competitor: WebWare often goes head to head on digital asset management /multimedia management RFPs with Artesia.

THE PROPOSITION

Artesia positions itself in the DAM arena with its product TEAMS Digital Asset Management (DAM) as an enterprise solution. Key observations:

- The corporate website reflects a “major player” position more clearly than the company’s presence at Seybold.
- Full enterprise solutions. Something for everyone. Everything to everyone. The Website is overgrown with text expounding these points, consequently is very time consuming to absorb.
- The branding seems consistent with positioning.
- TeamToolz (newly acquired in August) stands out as being completely uncoordinated with the Artesia brand (see TEAMToolz discussion below).
- Their materials are frustrating. The messaging is very vague about whether this is a web-based product. There are some references to a repository, which seems client-based, but it is unclear how users are really accessing all the touted functionality. I was demoed an “application” and occasionally the rep would go use the “web client” but would get frustrated with it and return to the client. It was difficult to understand the relationship between the two.

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PRODUCT OFFERINGS

TEAMS ™ 4.2

According to the Artesia.com site, they just released a new version of their application software, TEAMS 4.2. Features include “out-of-the-box applications to better support video production workflow, as well as expanded support for video formats, streaming servers and loggers, and localization.”

They also note that among other improvements, they have made “Web client ease-of-use enhancements through improved graphics and improved flow and navigation.”

UI : DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OR FUNCTIONALITY FOR TEAMS ™ 4.2

- Partnership with Virage 4.2 clearly addresses AV/multimedia DAM .
- Many features address the issues of editing and dealing with one, multiple or bulk quantities of assets – therefore very focused on scalability.
- Partnership with Accumedia addresses content and publishing solutions.
- Staffer claims that 80% of customers ***want out of box solutions*** and only 10% want customization (what happened to the other 10%?).
- TEAMS’ basic black, white, gray and blue interface borders on a Windows feel; all graphic detail and energy was put into the masthead bar along the top.
- Version 4.2 devotes much more space to content and to optimizing the organization and information elements of the assets, making for a stronger, clearer interface.
- There is some limited used of icons in relation to data types or actions performed on individual assets.
- TEAM Main Menu has one button (“Access”). Beneath that is “Input,” “Output,” “Search” and “Edit.” This is somewhat cluttered, although the main menu has one button to reinforce “easy.”
- 4.2 is a step up from the previous version. It looks professional and keeps with the company’s overall image, i.e., it’s not imaginative, but is functional.

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Native Mac Platform Application

At Seybold, Artesia announced a new “native Mac platform for the creative community.” It emphasizes high interoperability with creative tools like QuarkExpress, Illustrator, PhotoShop and Adobe XMP. In this release, they claim to have put emphasis on “superior usability” for creative workflow and project management. The Mac “experience” is maintained so “it makes it easy for user s to learn.” (Press release, 9.25.01) The audience for this product is “production” users.

Additional Products

The **TEAMS PowerPoint Presentation Option** is a custom software solution, developed by Artesia’s Professional Services group that captures, organizes, and generates Microsoft PowerPoint presentations from Artesia’s TEAMS enterprise digital asset management software.

On the Quark side, using the **TEAMS Advanced Quark Adapter** service pack, users can log into the TEAMS digital asset repository, search for assets, and drag-and-drop those assets into their pre-formatted Quark templates.

TeamToolz

In addition to showcasing the TEAMS 4.2 product at Seybold, Artesia devoted significant time to demonstrating TeamToolz software, which it acquired in August 2001. The product “offers the first marketing and brand management solution that includes workflow and collaboration features, brand resource management, budget tracking and digital distribution of marketing content - all integrated into a unified enterprise platform.” This is targeted specifically to Marketing Managers. I talked with a rep and attended a demo of this product.

UI : DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OR FUNCTIONALITY FOR TEAMTOOLZ

- Targeted to the Marketing/ Brand Manager, it features four simple tabs at top: “ Home, Projects, Resources, Office.”
- Uses a wizard-like step approach to help managers set up their projects.
- Lots of useful tools. Scheduling projects views are graphical and easy to understand, reporting tools for marketing intelligence, strategy and planning, meetings and agendas, plus a marketing library. Clearly a useful tool and front end for this target audience. Memorable because it attempts to address a very specific group and its work-task needs.
- **QUESTIONABLE GRAPHIC INTEGRITY.** The branding and interface appears to be designed for a 8 year old “Playskool” audience. It features bright, bold, primary colors, a smiling face logo and big easy-to-click tabs. This must be someone’s idea of an accessible interface for ”manager types” The entire experience looked artificial and would wear on the user quickly.
- Over-the-top use of graphics meant to be “creative.” The best ill-conceived interface I ‘ve seen is the Workflow status represented by tiny (c. 10 pixels high) people. The running person means there was no approval yet. A red-faced person means the deadline had passed. A person holding a checkered flag means the project and approvals are complete, and so on. It is virtually impossible to easily make out the state of a user’s 20-odd projects based on tens of little people in various positions lined up like the New York marathon! A good example of graphical visualization of information gone awry.

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DAM DAY

Artesia demo'd their "Native Mac Interface for the Creative Professional."

- Defined Search, went to Contact Sheet, did Asset Checkout.
- One click and the item appeared in PhotoShop. Changed some graphics and checked it back into system.
- Drag-and-dropped the asset into a project folder, to be used in Quark document.
- Also showed "Asset Wallet" as a container for all of the assets the user is currently working with.

More info:
http://www.artesia.com/seminar/

WORTH NOTING

- Native Mac client is geared specifically towards a strong target market, one that will gladly embrace a Mac solution. I had an interesting discussion with their rep about whether to go broad or offer more vertical solutions. They have chosen to go vertical with products like this native Mac solution and TeamToolz for Marketing Managers.
- Artesia's Marketing Director originally wrote the core suite of tools for NorthPlains and considers it a "workspace" tool. When asked about WebWare, he was complimentary in terms of the product and specifically mentioned how great the people were.

ASSESSMENT FOR ARTESIA

- Strong soup to nuts solution.
- Partnered with all the right people.
- Conveys a look of confidence, major player status, despite a brand that doesn't seem particularly memorable.
- Staying ahead and going vertical.
- A good benchmark for the kind of look and feel most products have and potential customers are seeing.
- On a scale from 1 to 10, an 8 for overall offerings and decent -looking UI.

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NORTH PLAINS

http://www.northplains.com/

North Plains is also a primary competitor of WebWare.

THE PROPOSITION

They also clearly position them selves in the Digital Asset arena with their product, TeleScope.

- A strong player, one of three featured at Seybold alongside WebWare and Artesia.
- Core focus: Strong production-ware capability with extensibility.
- They were missing all their literature at Seybold – it was held up in customs.
- They seem more conservative and a bit smaller in their scope than Artesia but are attempting to stay ahead with partnerships with Adobe XMP and eVision.
- The brand look is bright green and blue. Looks outdated although they launched a new website during the show.
- Easy to find their product offerings.

PRODUCT OFFERINGS

North Plains offers either an application client for Windows or the Macintosh and a browser-based client. They address the enterprise, small workgroups and modular plug-ins to leverage new technology.

From their website:

TeleScope Enterprise
TeleScope Enterprise is the most robust and scalable DAM solution on the market. It is designed to solve the DAM challenges of worldwide organizations, and supports thousands of users in global 24/7 operations. Customized with North Plains Systems exclusive I-Piece Technology, the TeleScope Enterprise solution can be tailored to the unique organizational and workflow needs of any company, in any market.

TeleScope Workgroup
TeleScope Workgroup is ideal for companies that need to implement a DAM solution within a small enterprise, single workgroup or corporate department.

I-Piece Technology
North Plains Systems' revolutionary I-Piece Technology is a modular plug-in technology designed to extend the functionality of the core TeleScope software to support new technologies and new features

UI : DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OR FUNCTIONALITY OF TELESCOPE ENTERPRISE

- Has similar functionality as WebWare – assets come up in a separate window with thumbnails and metadata like Inspector, Contact Sheet views, etc.
- Interface is the typical white, gray and blue - the serious, pseudo-Window application look. It's crowded and uninspired.
- Interface accommodates NorthPlains' observation that most users "don't' like to type," so they offer many pick lists.
- Search functionality is very robust, allowing search, retrieval of a large number of results, and then sorting for ease of viewing. It can also "refine" another search within the results of the first one. Can also construct searches, name them and save them for future use. NP feels search and retrieval is one of its core strengths, i.e., the ability to search, construct a hierarchical search, customer searches, and sorts.

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- Input into the system is set up as an “import with approval” approach, which means nothing goes in that hasn’t been seen by an “approver” first.
- A weakness: they appear to have no way to “transform” any assets into other file types. According to a booth staffer, you have to download them onto your desktop and transform them from there.
- Big feature in client app – “containers” – is a way to associate a group of assets together (e.g., all five pictures that go in a poster). Drag and drop from contact sheet into another window/container, and it tags them all as having a relationship and creates a link-to among the group.
- No “constructors” or tools. To do something with the asset, users must copy them onto the desktop and manipulate them there. There is no way to construct a presentation or layout.
- The Main Menu bar for Web-based application is “User,” “Search,” and “Actions.” The Main Menu for apps is File, Edit, Catalog, Document (anything having to do with asset or history of asset), and Search.

DAM DAY

North Plains demo’d their Workflow capabilities

- Before an asset is added, a user needs to have approval from a lawyer (who must approve every asset before it’s entered the system!).
- Built-in message technology.
- Supports digital rights management.
- Cascading pop-up list.
- Extensive support for Quark Express (system automatically references and links relationship to Quark document when it’s first entered).
- XMP Adapter.

WORTH NOTING

- Partners with e-Vision and showed that in their Seybold booth.
- I overheard a business conversation about partnering with a company who specializes in “digital rights” management.
- They offer a huge Professional Services role. A “BA” (Business Associate) evaluates client needs and sets up the entire initial system for a separate Professional Services fee. The BA sets up all Admin functions and about two days of training is required for internal staff.

RATING

- Interface look and feel is not unique and seems undistinguished.
- Feels like an Artesia “wannabe” (in fact, they requested being placed next to Artesia on the show floor) .
- Have partnerships and initiatives that keep them in the game.
- On a scale from 1 to 10, a 5 for overall offering.

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CANTO

http://www.canto.com/

Canto was evaluated because of their purported strength of user interface.

THE PROPOSITION

Canto positions itself as " the Ultimate Metadata Machine" and as the "perfect archiving system for multimedia data."

- Offers strong competition in terms of a Mac solution. They have specifically designed for that market and that could appeal to a primarily Mac-driven workplace.
- Core messaging is unclear; there are multiple messages for each product.
- While Canto has addressed its product offerings in a modular way, the large number of options – 13 were referenced in the demo – dilutes its message. Hard to track all of the products.
- Conversely, this modular approach has allowed Canto to specifically target some very bounded tasks like PDF, Kodak DCS filters, MP3 and Oracle 8I connectivity. It also means Canto can sell a platform with the idea of upgrades and add-ons from both Canto and third parties.
- Brand look is amazingly weak, with the best example being their website.
- Canto is a strong product if a company is looking for a desktop solution but transparent access, workflow and collaborative integration are missing.
- Canto has really targeted the European marketplace. It is partnering heavily with European companies and is offering seminars within Europe.

PRODUCT OFFERINGS

Canto offers either an application client for Windows or Macintosh platform.

Cumulus 5

Their core product is Cumulus 5. In addition, they now offer Cumulus 5 specifically for Mac OS X and the OS X server, which boasts a "Web Publisher" component.

"When cataloging your digital assets Cumulus automatically reads the contained metadata, creates a thumbnail and references to the original data – no matter which storage media they are on. The Cumulus product line consists of three Editions: Single User, Workgroup, Enterprise, as well as additional Options offered either by Canto or Partner companies."

Canto has also integrated Idée's Espion Visual Search Option with Cumulus 5. A fully integrated add-on allows users to perform visual searches within a Cumulus catalog. This was touted at the Canto booth.

UI: DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OR FUNCTIONALITY

- Interface is the typical white, gray and blue. It looks like a standard Windows-type desktop application.
- The power of this product comes from its ability to live as a client app on a user's desktop. The ability to drag and drop and emulate directory structures, for instance, is facilitated by it being a desktop, not web-based, application.

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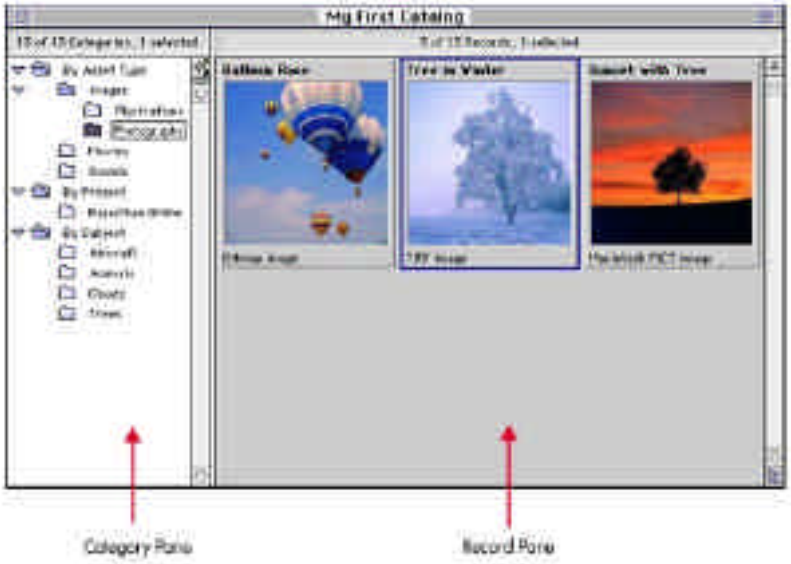
- Organization is implied through a hierarchical file structure on the left. Assets can be organized as nested files so it maps to users desktop structure and model.



- A nice feature is the user's ability to automatically catalog an asset by dragging and dropping a file into the right window, thus creating a thumbnail plus a file which has captured all available data about the asset. e.g. font, text, and layering, etc.

- Search results are displayed as thumbnails, which can be dragged directly into a user's "basket" (equivalent to WW's clipboard) for quick gathering of assets.
- The thumbnail view (like WW's Inspector) lets a user add it to this basket as well as download it as another file format they choose from a drop down menu. This allows for instant transformation of the file into another format.

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- The web interface component is read-only. Users can publish a catalog to the Internet; it converts these assets on the fly to be previewed in the browser and allows them to be downloaded from the web.
- In terms of a workflow solution, there are definite limitations because it is not web-based. Their Enterprise solution states " Cumulus Vault is a component of E5 that provides check-in/check-out and asset version control that forms an integral part of any workflow management solution. Copies of catalogued assets can be stored in a central location and users can check out assets work on and check them back in again when they are finished."
- Canto provides some good "ease of use" features that are well worth emulating in a web-based product where possible.

DAM DAY

Canto demo'd the following capabilities:

- Open an asset, and then in the process of checking it out, opening it directly into to PhotoShop for editing. Also showed off ability to support color file information.
- PDF Asset Store is additional option. It provides a separate view where a PDF can be previewed, edited, and checked out.
- An impressive demo using Espion visual search is integrated into application. Demonstrator drew a rough sketch of a man with a pipe and the search resulted in the self-portrait of Van Gogh. Clearly canned, but cool.
-

WORTH NOTING

- Their demo on the Conference floor was one of the weakest, in that it was extremely hard to follow a run- through of all their product options.
- This product seems like it would appeal to an in-house production or creative services business, not really enterprise-class companies. The feature sets speak to a vertical market.

RATING

- Interface takes advantage of all the great direct manipulation aspects of a desktop-based application.
- Look and feel is not distinctive, but is consistent with normal application models.
- On a scale from 1 to 10, a 5 for overall offering.

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E-MOTION

http://www.emotion.com/

WebWare considers e-Motion a direct competitor, as it has been evaluated alongside e-Motion more than once.

e-Motion was only at Seybold during DAM Day to give a presentation. Most of this review is based on information available on their website. There are no screen views of their product available on their site.

THE PROPOSITION

e-Motion positions itself as having an out-of-the-box enterprise product.

- Offers strong competition in terms of web-based enterprise solution.
- Brand approach is very strong, professional and cohesive. Strong use of color and "mascot" feature. The brand clearly speaks to a creative community and it is well positioned towards the entertainment industry. In fact, brand looks amazingly like a Sega game (One of the board of directors came form Sega and LucasGames). In addition, the tone and voice is more casual than corporate. Their website is about problem solving in ways that potential users would find familiar, e.g. "Say good-bye to closets stuffed with slide sleeves. To cupboards crammed with cassettes."
- e-Motion does one of the best jobs describing the problem and the solutions. It addresses it in an easy to understand way that is not too technical.

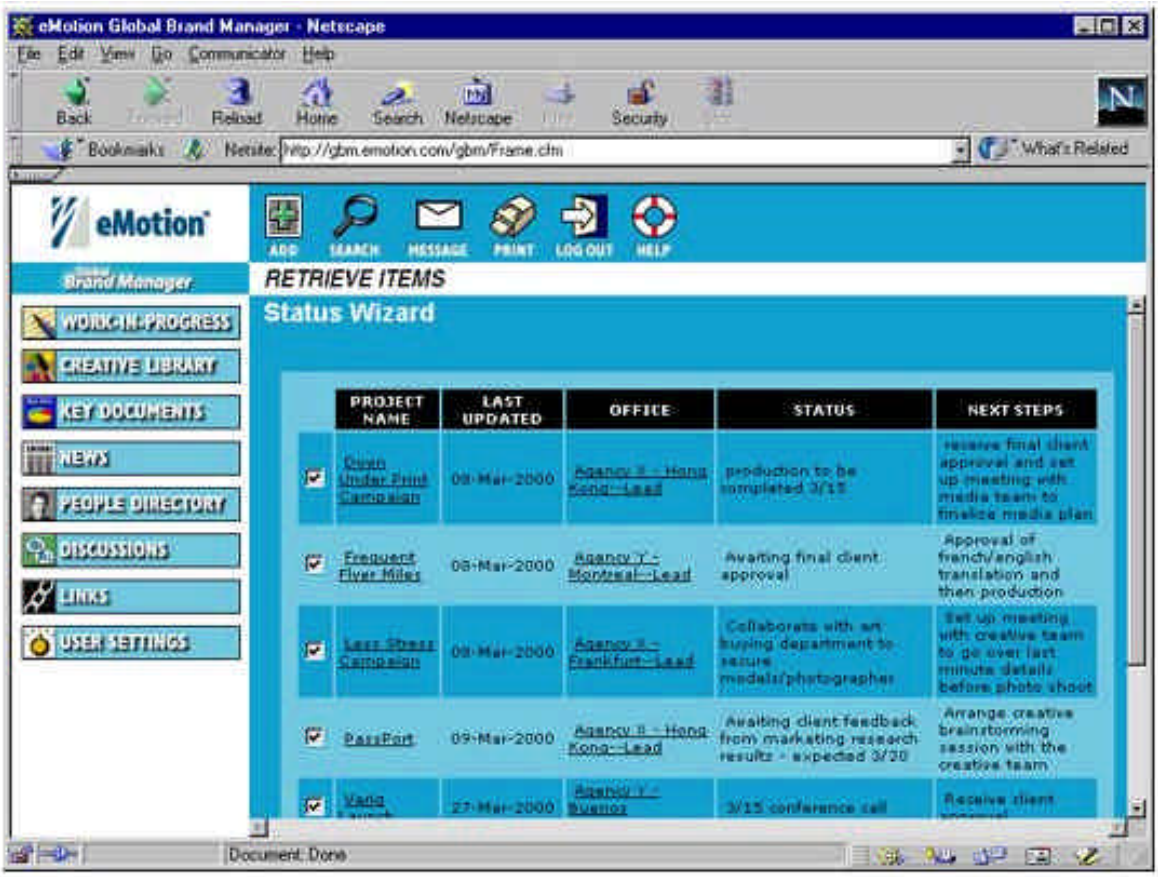
PRODUCT OFFERINGS

EMotion MediaPartner 4.0.2

e-Motion offers a web-based product called MediaPartner 4.0.2, "Your Online Digital Media Manager." It is available as an installed product or a hosted solution.

Global Brand Manager

e-Motion also offers a product called “Global Brand Manager.” While no demo was given, it seems relevant to WebWare because it is specifically directed at the brand management market and therefore should be considered a competitor.



Their website lists the following features for E-Motion Global Brand Manager:

Project Collaboration

- Multi-office status reporting
- Share project briefs and strategy documents
- Review creative materials online

Project Tracking and Reporting

- View, print and export with a simple-to-use ad-hoc reporting tool
- Project timelines

Creative Library

- Allows immediate access to creative assets
- Automatically creates previews for over 100 image types
- Automatically creates streaming video and storyboard preview for MPEG1 files

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Messaging

- Send messages to any Global Brand Manager team member—anywhere

Knowledge Management

- Share case histories, brand strategies, guidelines, competitive analyses, research and presentations with your entire global marketing team

People Directory

- Contact information
- Photographs
- Personal Profile

User Settings

- Choose among five graphic designs to personalize your manager's look and feel
- Choose the number of storyboard thumbnails to appear in Creative Library retrieval
- Select your personal set of News topics
- Change password

DAM DAY

e-Motion demo'd the following capabilities:

- Three-button interface: "Send," which is "email on steroids." "Work" is the project environment for groups, and "Store" is the deep archive.
- Also, use "Breadcrumbs" as a navigation device, which helps give users sense of where they are.
- Showed the Usability Manager, which allows a user to change the colors of the buttons and change name of any labeling. Good demo material, but how useful?
- Ability to create a "new project" by naming it and then adding members.
- The e-Motion Viewer™ shows how a project team can mark up still art and Adobe Acrobat files, or annotate a video frame by frame with voice, pen, sticky note or text. This was the most impressive part of demo.

RATING

- Based mainly on its marketing materials, e-Motion ***looks*** like one of the most impressive players in this market.
- The look and feel of the part of the application shown is very clean. Interaction is based on three buttons: "Send," "Work" and "Store," which reinforces "simple to use."
- On a scale from 1 to 10, an 8 for the overall offering.

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MEDIABIN

http://www.mediabin.com/index.htm

THE PROPOSITION

MediaBin positions itself as being about content management for images.

- They exhibited within a shared space adjacent to Adobe, because of their early adoption of Adobe's AlterCast.
- For one of the smaller companies (and one person demoing at their station), I was impressed with the product's capabilities and breath.
- Their legacy comes from primarily focusing on image management, which both limits them and makes them a strong contender for clients who have those specific needs.
- They also had one of the best brochures explaining their capabilities clearly and in a way that was very graspable and easy to understand.
- In addition, they have a very nice demo of their capabilities on their website.

PRODUCT OFFERINGS

MediaBin 2.0

MediaBin is a Windows client with Browser client access through IE 5.0. They also reference a Mac OS X version coming shortly. They currently have Java class libraries and a native Java interface.

- Theirs is a "digital masters" model for printing and publishing similar to DigitalZones' product. The notion is that there are many "recipes cards" for how to cook the file, but the master is left untouched. Layers, or instructions for how to process the master, never actually touch the master directly.
- This model is what makes it particularly easy to integrate and offer server-based image processing with Adobe's AlterCast (see DAM Day description of AlterCast).
- Interface model relies on the desktop directory structure for organization and hierarchy.
- Web-based client is for online access, distribution and downloads only.
- They have included some form of visual search but do not mention a partner or particular technology they use to do this. Their visual search lets users search for assets that "look most similar" to a desired image.
- Catalog assets in MediaBin with a single drag and drop operation - which automatically generates asset previews, stores asset metadata (keywords, author, etc.), and preserves folder hierarchies from operating system folders."
- One of their core strengths is their automated image processing. See below for explanation from their website. The combination of being able to automate this process while keeping the integrity of the images and its layers seems unique to MediaBin.

AUTOMATED IMAGE PROCESSING

- Automate common image processing tasks to speed production.
- Process a single image or thousands far faster than using desktop imaging products using MediaBin's server optimized image processing abilities.
- Automatically create the multiple image sizes needed for eCommerce sites (thumbnail, medium, large, PDA-view, etc.).
- Add borders to images, pad images, fit to a box, or crop to a defined size.

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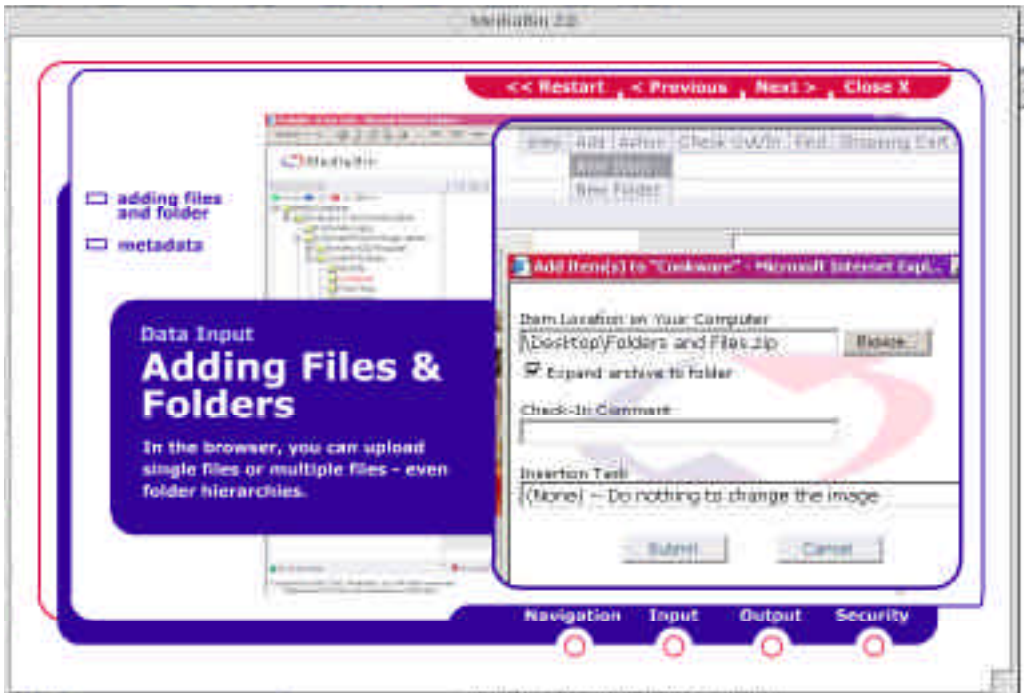
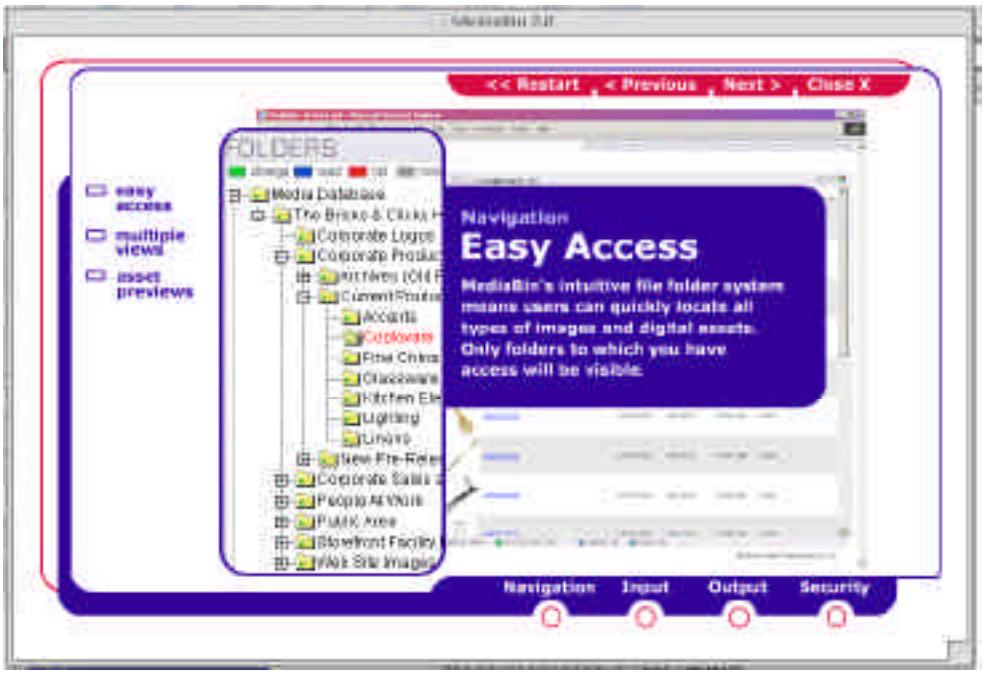
- Generate "composed" images based on database fields - for example, put "25% off today only" on a group of sale items.
- Generate rasterized formats (JPEG, BMP, etc.) from vector EPS and Adobe PDF files using on-board "RIP" functionality.
- Process images using hot folders and/or sophisticated scripting using database variables in Visual Basic, Perl, or even Java.
- Access an expandable library of imaging functions:
    - Scale (change image size and resolution)
    - Pad/canvas expansion
    - Crop
    - Apply unsharp masking
    - Flatten and/or replace selected Photoshop layers
    - Convert file types
    - Covert color space to and from RGB, CMYK, LAB, grayscale, etc.
    - Convert color depth

Screens from their demo:





WORTH NOTING

- The fact that they have had only a Windows client seems to have kept them out of the running with potential clients who have Mac-based resource management.
- The announcement of a Mac OS X client coming, and their recent partnership with Adobe AlterCast, could make them a significant competitor.

RATING

- This company seems to be working really hard to catch up and provide a full service solution.
- On a scale from 1 to 10, a 7 for the overall offering.

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DAM DAY

Below are some bullets points from some of the presenters. The morning included several presentations. I have included links to the PowerPoint Presentations from Michael Martin of Fahrenheit 450, Michael Moon, and Charles Caldwell from NextQuarter. All three gave extremely valuable presentations and I feel it is well worth reviewing their slides.

GISTICS

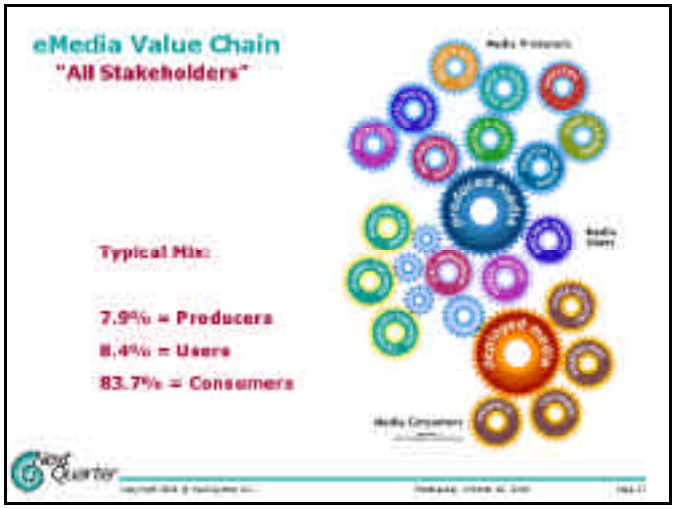
Michael Moon
http://www.gistics.com/

Slides: http://www.krstudio.com/WEBWARE/wwhome.html

NEXTQUARTER

Charles Caldwell
http://www.f450.com/index.html

Slides: http://www.krstudio.com/WEBWARE/wwhome.html

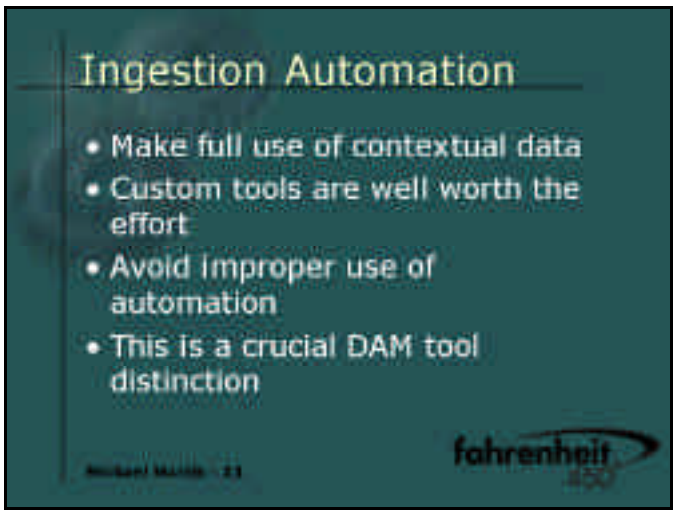


I highly recommend NextQuarter's presentation. There is very valuable information on ROI benchmarking as well as lots of data to back up who the customers are and how they are spending their time, plus a variety of asset management tasks.

FARENHEIT450

Michael Martin
http://www.f450.com/index.html

Slides: http://www.krstudio.com/WEBWARE/wwhome.html



ADOBE
XMP, The Extensible Metadata Platform

Key points:

- Strategic Importance: transform content (expense items) on balance sheet to show assets' value
- Transfer assets and all the metadata goes with it
- An open standard – a common platform for industry-wide use and development
- XML for metadata

Definition of a non-linear workflow or workspace includes:

- Authoring
- Transformation
- Collaboration
- Visualization
- Staging
- Repository
- Publish
- Assembly

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E-VISION

- Focused on their relationship with North Plains as offering enterprise-class, object-oriented search only available though North Plains as an “acuity” search.
- Search by color, object, shape, texture.
- Takes 2 Java developers over 3-day period to incorporate eVision into a system.,
- Claimed 25% productivity increase.
- Lowers threshold of casual users skills to catalog assets.

MEDIA PRISE

http://www.mediaprise.com/about.html

- Managed service providers (ASP).
- Provide brand resource management.
- Product suite and guidelines.
- Demo’d their “Notification Inbox.”
- Note: Website looks great, but is a great example of “brochure-ware.” No screen shots, very little useful information for evaluation purposes.

DIGITALZONE

http://www.digitalzone.dk/

- Demoed Digital Zone Enterprise 5.0 product.
- Key Message: All about a single master digital file = Digital master + lots of recipes.
- Digital Master lets you “cook” media (no children) based on recipes which let you recreate and re-cook that piece again.
- Create “recipe cards” for how to cook that particular file – includes all layers.
- Focus on webflow and reusability.
- Tabbed top interface including search – by keyword, by category, download basket, order basket.

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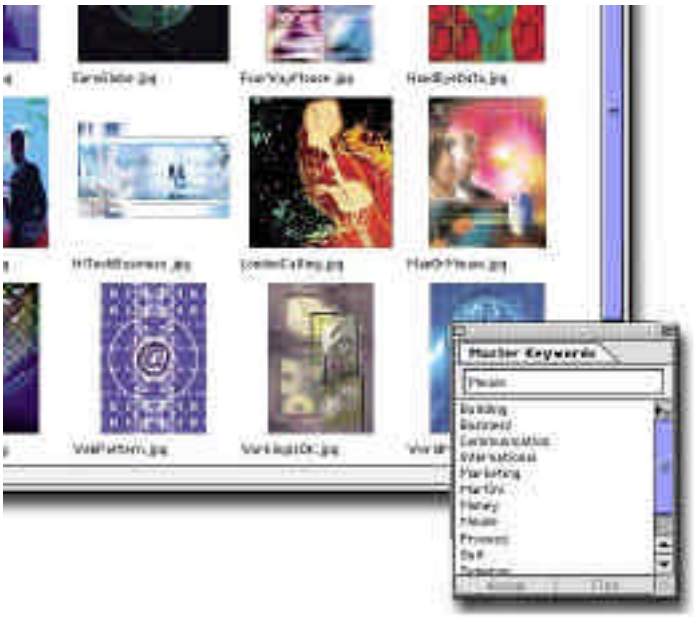
- Their interface has clearly been designed. While some of their design choices (white type on grey background in list) make it very hard to read, there are elements that are well done. Simplicity of color palette, useful, distinct colored tabs at top. Most importantly, the use of five icons under each asset that let you inspect, download, put in basket, get information and view it quickly.

EXTENSIS PORTFOLIO

- Small to medium enterprise solution.
- Success has been in direct proportion to end users' happiness.
- Automatically generated keywords based on hierarchical organization.
- Master keywords palette, drag and drop keywords batch onto pictures directly.



- Drag directly into Power Point
- Live link to web

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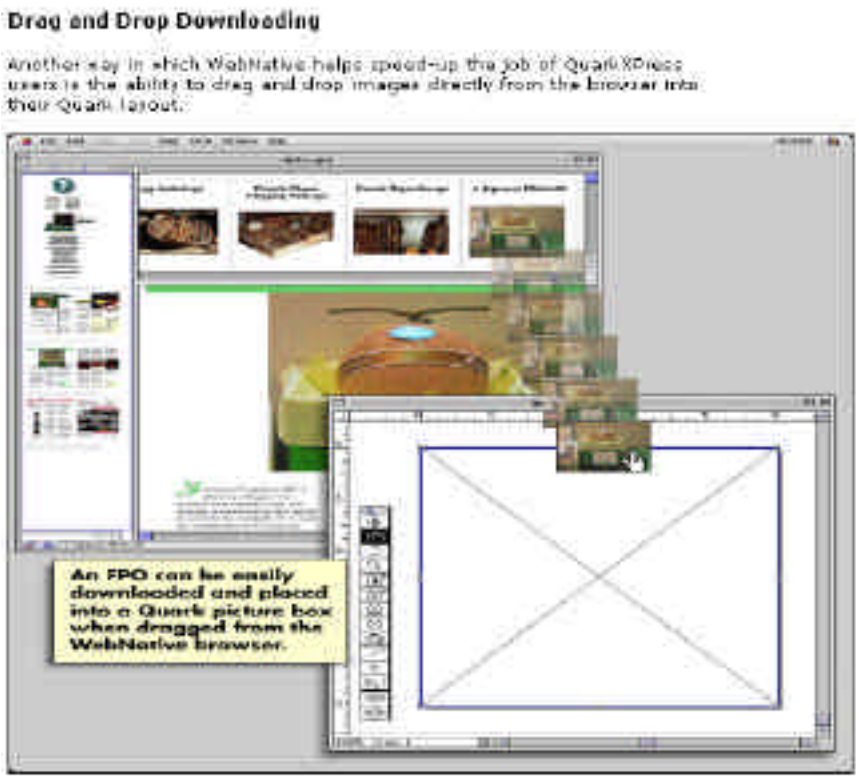
XINET

http://www.xinet.com/

Demo'd their WebNative product

- Company's focus is really on printing and prepress products, but WebNative adds a whole new set of functionality to their existing offering.
- Fully integrated with product workflow.
- A "window into your local server."
- Add and subtract query fields.
- Shopping cart model for fulfillment.
- Must be purchased as an add-on to a site's existing FullPress license, or bought in tandem with a new FullPress purchase.
- Powerful capabilities like being able to drag and drop (download) from web browser directly into QuarkExpress.



- From the demo (full demo is available on their site), this appears to be a very strong product. The interface is straightforward, and the web functionality and its integration with applications like Quark are very powerful.

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BEST OF COMPETITIVE BREED AT SEYBOLD

Strongest “Enterprise” Player:	Artesia
Best Branding:	eMotion
Best Brochure:	MediaBin
Best Video Integration:	Artesia
Best Vertical Product:	eMotion’s Brand Manager
Best Integration with Quark:	NorthPlains and Xinet
Best Visual Search:	eVision
Best Automated Image Processing:	MediaBin
Best New Technology at Seybold:	Adobe’s AlterCast
Best Small Player ‘s Great Product:	Xinet

Best Quote of the Day: “The fastest, earliest adoption comes from the user experience.” - Michael Moon

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