# Who Needs a DAM Librarian? Part I: Come Out, Come Out, Wherever You Are



by Deborah Fanslow | October 10, 2014

In <u>Library Science</u>, Not <u>Library Silence</u>, David Diamond proclaimed that the skills of information professionals are sorely needed in the DAM field. In no uncertain terms, he initiated a call to action, urging librarians to "wake up and smell the marketing:"

"It's time for you information professionals out there to start telling a story that actually interests us....Come out of the library closet and show us how fabulous you are. Sell us on the value you provide. Make us beg to involve you and fear losing you. Market yourselves."

This is not the first time that David has advocated on behalf of librarians. Last year, he sat on a <u>panel</u> with librarians <u>Deb Hunt</u> and <u>Ruth Kneale</u> at the Internet Librarian Conference, where he shared the most common "DAM Killers"—unclear goals; lack of ownership and decision making; and lack of training, follow up, and ongoing evaluation. He stressed that these areas represent key opportunities for information professionals to market their skills. He even offered marketing advice when connecting with organizations in need of DAM services:

"Make yourself visible on their stage. Do effective content marketing: make it clear what you do and why it matters. Contribute content to guest blogs....Speak their language and feel their pain. Stay benefits-focused and describe a world that's better and attainable....What users need is more interesting than what you know. Tell them how much better DAM will be with you involved."

Of course, by the nature of his job, David has a vested interest in seeing adequate resources (human and otherwise) dedicated to DAM system implementations in order to ensure successful outcomes. Successful implementations make vendors look good. But in fact, all DAM professionals—vendors, consultants, and stakeholders within organizations engaged in DAM implementations—must realize their own benefits in achieving that goal. Supporting DAM implementations (and ongoing digital strategy) properly sets the stage for success on all sides.

## In search of greener pastures

One reason that many information professionals haven't been louder in marketing their skills within the DAM field is because they have simply been unaware of the existence of DAM as a parallel career opportunity within the corporate sector. Although, there are some signs that change is on the horizon.

As newly minted librarians and archivists continue to face the reality of an oversaturated market within traditional cultural heritage organizations—despite the continuing <u>prediction</u> of librarian shortages—the word has gotten out. Academic Library and Information Science (LIS) departments are now increasingly promoting "alternative" careers outside of libraries, museums, and archives. This has resulted in the recent expansion of faculty, curricula, and professional development offerings to include

courses designed for application within the corporate sector. It's now common to see courses such as knowledge management, competitive intelligence, and data curation on the menu for many LIS degrees.

Notably, there has also been a recent increase in the number of dedicated DAM courses offered by higher education institutions:

- King's College London: Introduction to Digital Asset and Media Management
- Pratt: Digital Asset Management (untitled in development)
- San José State University: Digital Asset Management (LIBR 282)
- Simmons College: Digital Asset Management for Libraries, Archives and Museums (LIS 532F)
- <u>UCLA:</u> Digital Asset Management (MIAS 298 Special Topics)

To my knowledge, the program at King's College London still stands as the only Master's program available in DAM. Although the courses at Simmons and Pratt maintain a focus on DAM within the cultural heritage sector, the courses offered at San José State University and UCLA present a broader perspective with the inclusion of DAM within the corporate sector.

### Where's the DAM advocacy?

After reading David's article, I was inspired to do a little informal research. I was curious...when did the topic of librarians enter the DAM conversation? Have any vendors other than Picturepark published any advocacy on behalf of librarians in DAM? What do DAM consultants and DAM practitioners have to say about information professionals? As it turns out, there has been quite a bit of advocacy published:

#### 2005

• Linda Tadic wrote about <u>The importance of library science in implementing DAM systems</u> in the *Journal of Digital Asset Management*.

#### 2011

 Rob Corrao described <u>"Librarians of the Digital Age:" Digital Asset Managers</u> on the LAC group blog

## 2012

- Elspeth Hyams mentioned New opportunities opening up for librarians in CILIP Update
- Deb Hunt and Chris Orr presented <u>The Role of Librarians in DAM and your Organization</u> at the Createasphere DAM conference in Los Angeles
- Deb Hunt published <u>The role of digital librarians in Digital Asset Management</u> on the FreePint blog, which served as an abstract to the full article, <u>Put information management skills to work for Digital Asset Management</u>, published simultaneously in *Fumsi Magazine*.
- Extensis advised DAM implementers "to consider including a librarian" in their <u>Digital Asset</u>
   Management Best Practices Guide
- Naresh Sarwan <u>spreads the word</u> about Deb's article on *DAM News*
- John Horodyski responded to Deb Hunt's article on his blog, asserting <u>Librarians and Archivists</u> and <u>DAM...well worth the point!</u>
- Deb Hunt published <u>The role of librarians in DAM projects</u> in *The Journal of Digital Media Management.*
- Dawn Bassett said to librarians on the SLA Western Canada Chapter blog, DAM, You Can Do It
- Deb Hunt published <u>The Role of Librarians in DAM Projects</u> in the *Journal of Digital Asset Management*
- David Diamond advocated for retaining information professionals in the <u>DAM Survival Guide</u>

• Deb Hunt promoted DAM in her presentation, <u>Career Agility: Transforming Knowledge and Expertise into Strategic Value</u>, at the South Central Regional Library Council

## 2013

- Henrik de Gyor <u>advised</u> on his blog that organizations looking for DAM interns should recruit digital librarians
- Rob Corrao and Phil Spiegel described the process of <u>Turning information professionals into</u> <u>digital archivists for success in today's world of digital asset management</u> in the *Journal of Digital* <u>Media Management</u>
- Deb Hunt promoted DAM as a career option in her SLA Asian Chapter presentation, <u>Career</u>
  Agility: Transforming Knowledge and Expertise into Strategic Value
- Jan Dejosse reviewed David's book on the Marketing Governance blog, highlighting <u>The People</u> You Need for a Successful DAM Initiative
- Deb Hunt advised librarians on <u>Reaching Your Career Potential</u> at an SLA Pacific Northwest Chapter board meeting
- Deb Hunt listed DAM as an essential career skill for librarians in The Librarian's Skillbook
- Ralph Windsor mentioned hiring librarians in the Daydream whitepaper, <u>Metadata Management</u>
   Strategies for Digital Asset Management
- Canto mentions using the services of librarians, archivists, and taxonomists in their whitepaper, Build a Better DAM.
- Deb Hunt, David Diamond, and Ruth Kneale presented on <u>Information Skills of the Future</u> at the Internet Librarian Conference (ILC)
- Anthony Myers covers the ILC presentation on *CMS Wire*: How Local Librarians can Impact the Digital Asset Management Industry
- Miwa Yokoyama, Gretchen Nadasky, Katie Hut, and Julie Maher presented DAM as a viable career option for librarians on A DAM Good Panel at Pratt Institute SLA meeting
- Deb Hunt presented on DAM in her presentation, <u>Career Agility: Transforming Knowledge and</u> Expertise into Strategic Value, at the SLA 56<sup>th</sup> Military Libraries Workshop

### 2014

- A panel of DAM practitioners, consultants, and vendors mentioned the critical need for librarians in DAM at the NYC DAM Meetup, Digital Asset Management and Advertising
- Elizabeth Keathley <u>suggested</u> staffing DAM projects with people who have experience dealing with large library cataloging systems
- Mark Davey advised, <u>Don't Gamble on Your DAM Strategy</u> on the DAM Foundation blog
- John Horodyski interviewed Ian Matzen on an SJSU blog, claiming <u>Job Growth in Digital Asset</u> <u>Management Offers Career Opportunities for Information Professionals</u>
- Elizabeth Keathley revealed data on the staffing of information professionals in DAM within her book, <u>Digital Asset Management</u>: <u>Content Architectures</u>, <u>Project Management</u>, <u>and Creating</u> <u>Order out of Media Chaos</u>
- Mark Davey advocated for librarians in his <u>presentation</u> at the Henry Stewart DAM NY conference
- Kiersten Bryant spread the word about DAM: A Career Opportunity for LIS Pros on INALJ
- Chad Beer presented an <u>Introduction to Digital Asset Management</u> workshop, intended for people interested in exploring DAM as "an avenue for applying library sciences, information sciences, and related skills"
- Ian Matzen exclaimed on his blog, <u>MLIS graduates</u>, the world needs you!

- Tim Strehle asked on his blog, Where have all the librarians gone?
- David Diamond tells librarians to "wake up and smell the marketing" in the CMS Wire article, <u>Library Science</u>, Not <u>Library Silence</u>
- Emily Kolvitz forecasted <u>The Future of Metadata and the Roles of the Metadata Professional</u> on her blog
- Irina Guseva stated that librarians are critical for DAM success in her recent DAM Guru Talk

Although this list is by no means exhaustive, one can still recognize the significant increase in advocacy within the past few years by information professionals currently working in DAM (both consultants and DAM practitioners), as well as consultants and other professionals with non-information science backgrounds. Advocacy has occured within scholarly journals, books, and blogs, as well as at industry conferences and meetings within both the DAM and LIS professional communities. Editors of DAM related publications have helped spread the word, and certainly social media has been an active advocacy channel as well. Universities (not surprisingly, those located near large cities with the most DAM jobs) are adding DAM related courses to their curricula, and information professionals are becoming more aware of DAM as a career option.

As past President of the <u>Special Libraries Association</u> (SLA), Deb Hunt engaged in significant advocacy for librarians in DAM on numerous occasions. Traditionally, corporate libraries and information centers have been considered "special libraries" within the LIS field. It is refreshing to see that Deb's work in the special librarian community has helped spread the word about DAM as a career path for librarians.

I was especially pleased to discover that Picturepark is not the only DAM vendor that has advocated for involving librarians in DAM projects—both Extensis and Canto gave a small plug for librarians within their educational materials. Although I'm sure there are smaller references to the value of librarian services in DAM by vendors (please do give me a shout if you know of any), such advocacy is not yet widely published and promoted. Still, despite the threat of extended sales cycles, it is encouraging to see more vendors focusing on educating their customers as part of their marketing strategy and giving credence to the need for information professionals in DAM.

Particularly telling is that DAM consultants—the seasoned professionals with the broadest experience in formulating digital strategies and implementing DAM systems across a variety of industries and verticals—are so vocal on the critical need for the expertise of information management professionals. This would not be unexpected from consultants with information science backgrounds looking to market these skills to prospective clients. However, the same advocacy can be heard loud and clear from consultants with backgrounds in any number of fields as well.

If anyone should know the formula for DAM success, surely it would be the seasoned consultants. And what they are advising across the board is the need for the information professionals to help organizations get their DAM strategy and DAM systems in order.

## Answering the call

Although advocacy has increased and awareness of DAM as a parallel career is rising within the LIS community, David is right. Information professionals need to kick it up a notch.

In order to increase awareness of the need for information professionals in DAM among organizations and practices in need of our information management skills (vendors, integrators, analysts, consultants, and companies drowning in data - know of any who aren't?), we have to do our part in first helping organizations answer the question, why do I need a digital asset manager?, and in explaining why a DAM system needs to be maintained. We need to start selling our expertise in taming what David calls "DAMS Gone Wild"—and better yet, how we can help prevent these types of misadventures and the business pain they cause in the first place.

Within the next three articles, I will respond to David's call to action with some content marketing. I'll tell the story of information professionals and the value they can bring to DAM by answering the following questions:

- What is an information professional?
- What DAM skills do information professionals bring to the table?

And most importantly for DAM vendors and DAM implementers,

• How can information professionals help me solve my DAM problems?