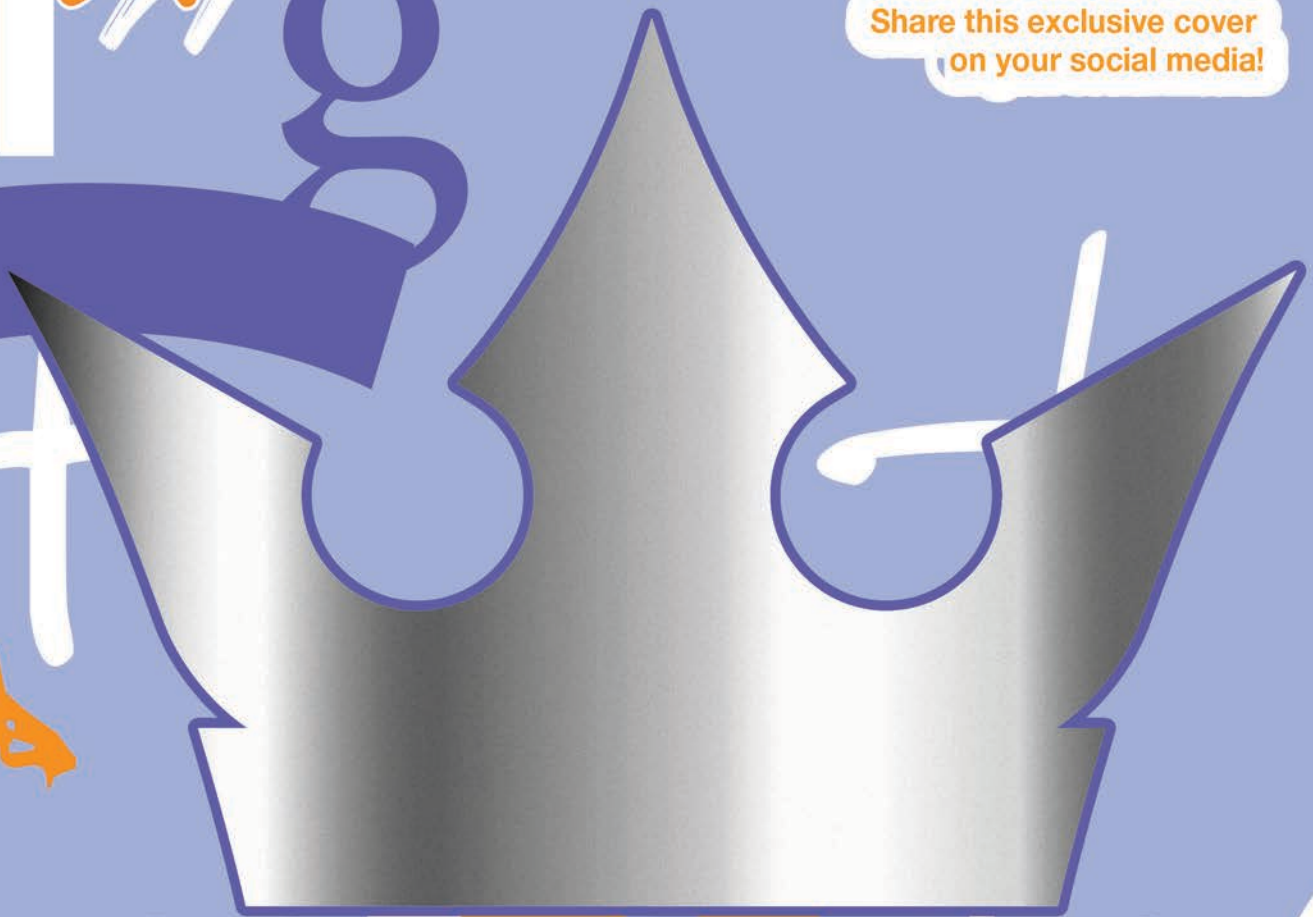


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THE M A G A Z I N E

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wie Du es seit 10 Jahren gemacht
hast, dann sind die Chancen
groß, dass Du es falsch machst!“

Charles Kettering

US-amerikanischer Wissenschaftler

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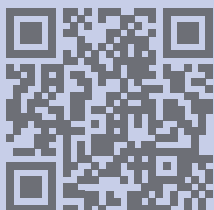
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Carol Werlé,
Chief Executive Officer
DALIM SOFTWARE



Back to the roots!

We are delighted that 2022 was the first year there was a return to near normalcy. This is particularly true of our first meetings at the start of the year, which brought together our users from all over the world and departments within companies whose employees have not met socially (for something as simple as sharing lunch together) for over 18 months!

While our previous edition **#WORK FROM #ANYWHERE** was shipped to many doorsteps due to the restrictions that prevented us from meeting up, we hope that if you are holding this year's edition in your hands, it is because one of us gave it to you in person! Welcome to the 27 edition of **THEMAGAZINE**, an entirely digitally printed edition featuring a unique cover for each reader.

This year's edition is packed with stories from around the globe, many of which were featured on the stage at our **DUO 2022** meeting, which took place at Europa Park(*) last June.

In this somewhat different and amazingly lightweight issue, **THEMAGAZINE** takes the reader from Scandinavia to New York via Chicago before returning to Europe through the UK. This edition gathers precious insight from **SAP** and **AWS**, who have allowed many of our clients and also ourselves to continue operating without interruption. At the same time, **DALIM ES** is being deployed on virtual machines anywhere between on-site premises and on a variety of cloud services. The past years for us were rich in investments, particularly in expert services, which now serve a broader scope and a constantly increasing number of brands worldwide.

As our industry grows further to **Brands** and **Retail**, don't be surprised if the stories within these pages take you from the world of consumer goods to fashion accessories, then store graphics POS automation, fixtures, and merchandising before ending with automated photography.

Just as the world realises how crucial it is to preserve our natural resources, **DALIM SOFTWARE** has been ahead of the curve, running entirely on sustainable energy sources since 2014. Since then, hydroelectricity has been the origin of all the software products we create and commercialise. The magazine you're holding is composed of a high percentage of recycled paper, and it's only half as heavy as a comparable volume magazine with the same amount of pages. Hence, it has an incredibly low carbon footprint. Please visit csr.dalim.com for more infos.

Enjoy the read!

Carol

(*) Did you know that **EuropaPark**, where our **DUO2012** also took place, is the second largest entertainment park in Europe? It is only 30mn away from our offices. It is a family-owned company with a division that builds and delivers high-tech attractions to the leading parks worldwide. You might want to visit **Europapark** when you next go to Europe! Want a sneak peek? Scan the QR code on the right to discover what you missed at **DUO2022**.



The Art of Possibilities with HP Digital Printing Hypercustomization

HP SmartStream Mosaic is a variable design technology software provided with HP's SmartStream Designer. Creating one-of-a-kind products and thus memorable customer experiences have been possible since its release.

World-famous brands such as **Coca-Cola**, **Planters Peanuts** and **Budweiser** have been creating millions of unique colourful designs through **Mosaic**.

Using a patent-pending algorithm, **HP Mosaic** can generate virtually unlimited variations of a seed pattern by using scaling, transposition, and rotation.

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- Key capabilities of HP SmartStream Designer
- Rules-based variable data
- HP Mosaic
- HP Collage
- Security solutions, such as micro-text, micro QR, security fonts, Guilloché
- Edge Printing and Spine Printing
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Leaving conventional printing in the past, **DALIM SOFTWARE** has created this magazine and its unique cover just for you with the help of **HP SmartStream Mosaic**.

Try to win a beautiful Apple Watch SE.

Every print can tell a different story, and every story can connect with people in a powerful way.

HP digital printing technology has enabled us to turn our idea into reality by personalising elements on the cover of this magazine and creating a bold way to connect with you and create moments that matter.

With the help of **HP** technology, we can generate unlimited variations of an Artwork that was cropped, rotated, resized, and had its colours changed, resulting in a unique piece of Art. That's why **#thiscoverisunique**

Take a picture of your unique cover and share it on **LinkedIn** with the **#thiscoverisunique** tag (Don't forget to tag us as well under **#DALIM**) and try to win a beautiful **Apple Watch SE**. (Winner will be drawn at random).



THEMAGAZINE 27



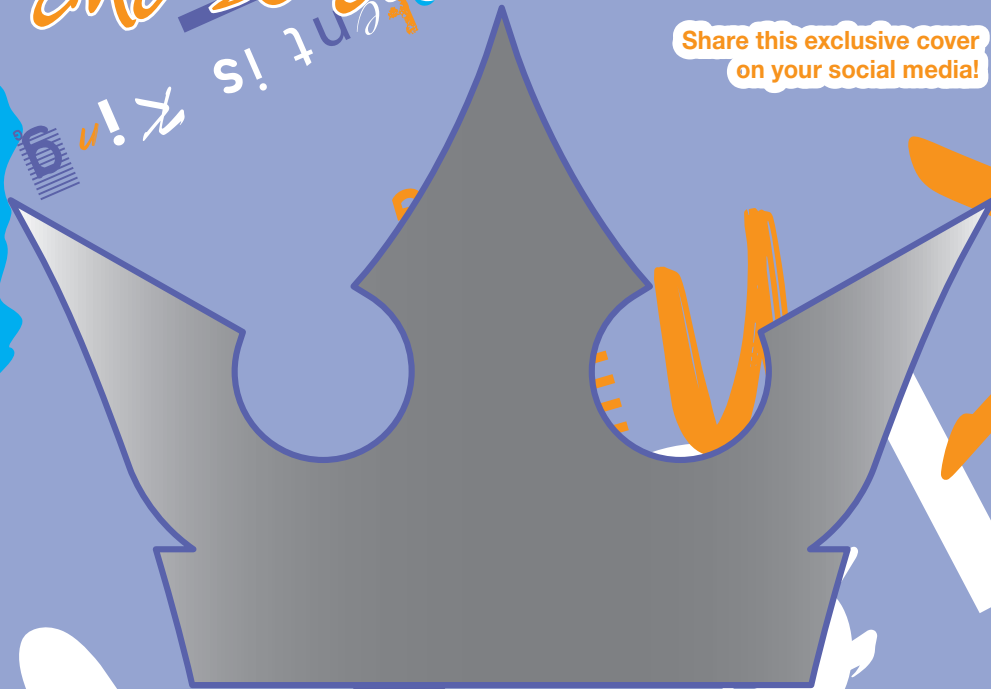
THEMAGAZINE

ISSUE 27

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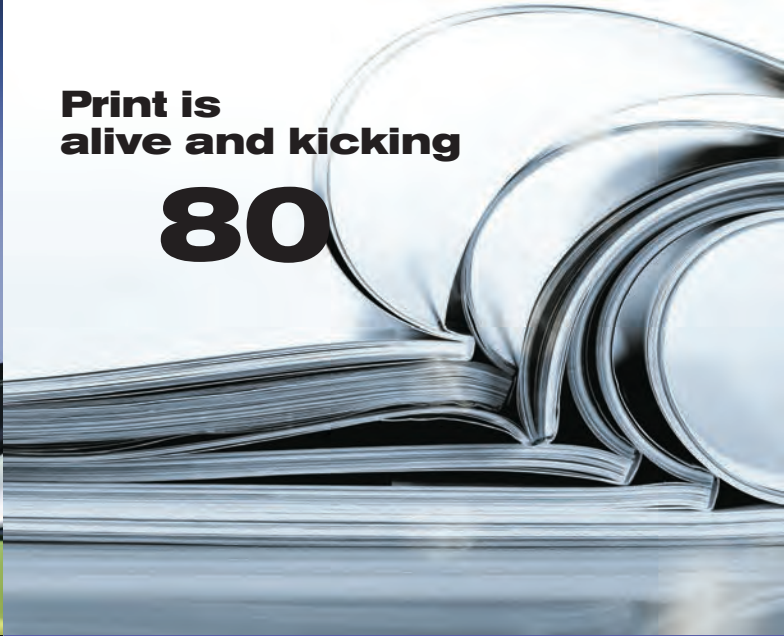


Just as the world realizes how crucial it is to preserve our natural resources, **DALIM SOFTWARE** has, since 2014, converted its energy to 100% sustainable sources. Hydroelectricity is now at the origin of all the software products we create and commercialize.

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In Style Content Production Cycles in the Fashion Industry

THEMAGAZINE 27



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Alessio Saraceno, CTO of Hyphen, introduced Marco Milioli, Chief Marketing Officer of Hyphen to talk about content production.

Alessio Saraceno:

Hyphen previously known as **Hyphen Italia**, is now called the **Hyphen Group**. Our company goals have changed a bit over the past two years. We are still focused on the content production processes of our customers in luxury and fashion brands, based primarily in Switzerland, Italy, and the UK.

Over the past two years, we created three different teams, the **Hyphen-Formula** team, the **Hyphen-Solutions** team and the **Hyphen-Media** team. One team is for consulting. When you try to help companies with digital transformation, there's always a consulting role in your job. Although it won't be our primary role, the first step of our job with the customer is always consulting. This is reserved for the **Hyphen-Formula** team. At the same time, the **Hyphen-Solutions** team is focused on software and hardware, especially photographic tools and processes. The last team is the **Hyphen-Media** team; it's our latest acquisition and is dedicated to producing pictures, 3D objects and many more.

Marco Milioli:

What we have been doing for the last 25 years has been helping put organizations in some order and organizing everything that has to do with their content production and distribution processes.





Alessio Saraceno

Chief Technology Officer
Hyphen Group

Alessio, initially working as an independent consultant on IT projects, started working with the **Hyphen-Group** in 2003 as a product manager, project manager and software

developer. Since then, he has held many roles within the company, including co-founder of both **Hyphen-UK** and **Hyphen-US**, as well as chief operating officer for **Hyphen Italia** from 2011 to 2021. He now works as Chief Technology Officer for the **Hyphen-Group**, and is responsible for the UK and US branches.

~ The physical vs digital supply chain

Over the past few years, what **Hyphen** has learned from organisations and clients we have been working with is that in most cases, when it comes to content production, all the steps of a standard supply chain are replicated into what we call a digital supply chain. We will start with the physical supply chain, and the major stages of a typical physical supply chain for a fashion product are research, development, industrialisation and production.

~ The four stages of the physical supply chain

The first step of research starts with the style office or style team that needs to research and understand the trends and determine what their collections should be composed of. It's a lot of work for the team, as they need to look outside the organisation and understand the trends, what the other brands are doing, and so on.

Then, you have a development phase in which, on top of the typical style advice and directions received from the market, the brand decides how to develop the collection, meaning how many and what kind of items. However, the process that also starts at this point is building the product, which means getting in contact with fabric and accessories providers and communicating with your product team to start prototyping the product properly.

The third phase is industrialisation and takes place once the product has been designed and finalised as a prototype. The product is developed into a sample that can be produced in a large number of pieces. This is when it is decided how to make the sample the most profitable, in essence, how to industrialise that sample in the best possible way.

Once that's done —that's where production starts. In most cases with our clients, we have worked on several digital activities and projects related to each of these primary product lifecycle steps.

~ The four stages of the digital supply chain

What we have been doing for most of our clients has been to develop dedicated tools to help from step one of the supply chain, to help the style teams organise all the input and inspiration from the market. That's the very first digitalisation step of the product supply chain. That's also where the physical supply chain starts - in the style office where the stylists start their inspirational work, as mentioned previously.

The second step in the digital supply chain is also development. Once the trends and the big topics and themes of the collection have been defined, it is time for the product office to start designing and rendering the product. This is one of those moments in which 3D prototyping becomes really impactful. This is another relevant digitalisation step in the supply chain, which also helps start the construction and building of the first digital version of the physical product.

Ultimately, this first digital product will be leveraged on several channels—for example, internal channels for prototyping, industrialisation, and production phases, but also in **B2B** and **B2C** selling dynamics. Third, as mentioned beforehand, the industrialisation step is the moment you have the first physical samples of the products. This is another step where digitalisation can really be supportive—where product photography becomes key. Suppose you have, in the development phase, the possibility to start designing and creating products from a digital perspective once you arrive at the industrialisation step. In that case, it will be the very first time you have a physical product that you can also take a picture of.

In most cases, you have part of the collection in the 3D prototype stage, and then you have the collection that has not gone through the 3D prototyping cycle but has been prototyped and sampled in traditional ways, so through the construction of a physical product. So at the end of the third step, 25% to 30% of the collection prototypes are in 3D. And the remaining 70% to 75% has been produced on a physical basis but can be digitalised through photography.



Marco Milioli

Chief Marketing Officer
Hyphen Group

Marco is an integrated marketing and digital transformation leader with over 15 years of experience. He worked for **Cohn & Wolfe**, a

global communications agency, before working at **Diesel** as Head of Global Digital and Content Marketing for five years. As well as working as Chief Marketing Operator for the **Hyphen-Group** since 2019, he also moonlights as a university professor in advertising and digital media.

~ Digital product catalog

When we digitise through photography, it means that the first step of a product's digital journey has started in a physical way. It's the first time a physical product also has a digital life. When you have a fully digitalised collection, part of which comes from 3D and part of which comes from photography, that's where you're also able, during the production phase, to consolidate an accurate digital product catalogue. A digital product catalogue is not only the collection of all the images, 3D, photography, or other; it is also the first moment in which you consolidate images and assets of the product with all the available product information. Having a digital product catalogue - in fashion, for example - means having a repository where all products have a specific name and a code. For every product, you have all available visuals. This means that images or videos of that product are connected with all the product information.

~ Production

Product information is everything that has to do with the construction of the product. This includes fabrics and accessories, as well as supply chain information, such as the producer, and all the legal information connected to that particular product or fabric, etc. Digitising those four supply chain steps enables you to consolidate the first version of the digital product with the collection in the digital product catalogue.

Once the product is ready to be launched on the market, having a digital catalogue of the product also becomes the starting point for a historical archive. All products that have been designed or produced - although not all products that are designed are also produced - can

all become part of your historical archive. The briefing solution really takes shape into what we call the 3D prototyping and predictive costing phase. I have a quick example of what happens to a digital product within a 3D world. All the phases related to adjusting the product to the production needs, meaning all specific measurements, proportions and fabrics associated with a single piece of the product can be done by translating the first drawing of the product into a 3D model. And you are able to do precisely what you would typically do during a typical traditional design and physical prototyping phase, but simply in a 3D rendering. Once you have the physical product, you can take different pictures and views of the product and can then have a digital rendering of the physical product, which becomes the digital product catalogue.

So far, we have been talking about different projects and phases, as well as digital moments related to different physical stages of the product supply chain. In reality, what happens is that a proper digital supply chain takes shape, and that is the key message we are trying to deliver. This is not new, and I'm just suggesting you look at what we've discussed from a different perspective. Instead of looking at different digital products that can be related to different phases or moments of the physical supply chain, consider the development of a proper digital supply chain, which runs in parallel with the physical supply chain.

~ Digital product identity

To make these concepts of physical and digital supply chains even more clear and to complete the comparison between the two, imagine the following. When you think about what is usually the result or output of a physical supply chain, you typically think about the physical product. But, when it comes to the digital supply chain, what is the output? What is the result of a digital supply chain? The result of a digital supply chain is what we call the digital product identity. This is a crucial concept that really drives everything we do—and also how we look at supporting brands during their content production phases. What is digital product identity? It is the result of a digital supply chain. But what does it really mean?

“...A digital showroom is one of the benefits of product digitalisation for physical brands...”



First, digital product identity - for us - is the very first univocal digital version of the physical product. It's the first moment where the product really takes a digital shape. Second, univocal means having just one digital version of the physical product, which, although enriched during the product lifecycle, always remains one. This means having one unique repository of everything that has to do with that single product. But what does having this single repository really mean? When we talk about digital product identity, we talk about consolidating everything that has to do with assets. This includes images, videos—2D and 3D—and all the information and metadata related to that single product, which is, in reality, a semi-finished product. If you think about digital product identity as a univocal version of the physical product, remember that all the information, assets and materials that are produced during the entire product lifecycle need to be connected and re-consolidated into that unique digital product repository.

Third, owning one unique digital version of the physical product also allows the organisation to start delivering the digital product on both B2B and B2C sales and marketing platforms. If you think about a digital marketing campaign or e-commerce, all these platforms present the end product to the user, which requires the digital product identity.

~ Making the showroom digital

When talking about digital product identity and the digital supply chain, we also must consider everything that happens from when the product is physically ready to be delivered until the moment when the consumer can really touch and use that product. This means not just thinking about the digitalisation of the supply chain or the digitalisation of the production process; it also means thinking about everything that happens afterwards. In this case, we will discuss the

three significant steps of commercialisation and product distribution, the first of which is digital showrooming. Then we will look at e-commerce and, finally, the metaverse. Digital showrooming is when the brand presents its products to buyers. For example, **Gucci** presents its new collection to **Galleries Lafayette** or other **Gucci** retail mono-brand stores. That's what we call the selling campaign or sales campaign.

The fact of adequately managing the digitisation of the supply chain and managing and driving the digital product identity allows the brand, in the selling phase, to properly enrich and leverage digital showroom tools. It helps to drive the selling campaign not only through physical showrooms but also remotely—through a digital showroom. This is something that took shape during the COVID pandemic. Almost 100% of selling campaigns before 2020 were conducted by a physical meeting between the brand's sales manager and the buyer. Then in 2020, 100% of those meetings had to be managed online. This was an enormous disruption in how the brands sold to their clients.

Now, with a return to some sort of normality, brands have been testing digital showrooms and are mixing digital showrooms with physical showrooms. Digital showrooms allow brands to reduce travel and CO2 emissions, making them more sustainable and enabling smaller brands to reach clients they were probably unable to reach beforehand. Indeed, if you have to meet a client in person, in a showroom, the brand or the buyer must travel there and don't necessarily have the budget to travel. Having a digital showroom also allows brands to expand the spectrum of buyers they can reach. Now, 30% to 35% of meetings are still managed online, whereas the rest are handled in physical showrooms, like before the COVID pandemic. What digital and 3D can allow brands to do, in a **B2B** phase, is to leverage the digital showroom platform to create fashion

shows that are made just with 3D products. By having an adequately digitalised supply chain, a properly organised digital product identity, as well as digital and 3D rendering of the product allows companies to present the products, even in the selling phase, with interesting and more dynamic assets—like a digital fashion show.

~ e-commerce applications

A digital showroom is one of the benefits of product digitalisation for physical brands. Another benefit of product digitisation can be for e-commerce. Having a structured digital supply chain, which is what we call a digital content factory, means that we're able to set the system to prepare for the unique, univocal digital product identity. We also prepare the different versions of that product that match the requirements of various e-commerce sites where the brand sells its products.

Take, for example, a mono-brand website and two other websites reselling that brand like **Zalando** and **Farfetch**. The product is always the same. The digital product is the identity. The univocal version is always the same, but the system can deliver different kinds of assets and information because that information and those product features are precisely those required by each resale channel.

Properly structuring the digital supply chain or digital content factory allows the brand to automatically deliver different content and information to various vendors, depending on their requirements, which can happen automatically, resulting in a significant reduction in the time-to-market.

~ Moving to the metaverse

In the future, another benefit for brands of a properly digitalised supply chain will be the metaverse. Everyone is talking about the metaverse. We still don't have a proper metaverse context accessed by users even though, in the past three months, many new platforms have taken shape on which the very first digital events have also started to develop. We had the very first **Fashion Week** with proper fashion shows in the metaverse in March 2022. In this example, to allow online users to join the fashion show and see the products, the brands delivered to the metaverse the 3D models that we mentioned at the beginning of this article. Those models were created and realised by the product office and were enriched, adjusted, and perfected during the creation process. In the end, those 3D models are the same that have been used for fashion shows or presentations in the metaverse.

To conclude, it has been interesting to see what it really means to digitise the fashion supply chain from a more systemic perspective. It is not about digitising or offering brands single specific digitised projects. It is about looking at the product system and understanding how to enrich, step by step, a unique supply chain— aka the digital content factory.

“...with a return to some sort of normality, brands have been testing digital showrooms and are mixing digital showrooms with physical showrooms...”

“..We had the very
first **Fashion Week**
with proper fashion
shows in the metaverse
in March 2022...”



~ A digital content factory on wheels

I have one last contribution to offer regarding the digital content factory. **Hyphen** launched a new system in April—a truck. That's right, a van that we have called a digital content factory on wheels. In just one place, it has all the technology and process optimisation that we've been working on for the past 25 years. The truck is a complete digital content factory able to consolidate both hardware capabilities—like photographic capabilities, photographic sets and the hardware that we have developed during the past 15 years - as well as all the software that can realise, create and support all the steps that I have mentioned. The truck is able to become a proper digital content factory, which is entirely autonomous because it is 100% connected, thanks to 3G, 4G, 5G, satellite and WIFI connections.

The truck also has seven solar panels, offering a pretty substantial autonomy when it comes to energy. It is embedded with all the software technology needed to create everything from online input research of all the inspirations for the style office through to 3D prototyping and 3D scanning of a physical product. We can put a product into the truck, scan it with photogrammetry and create a 3D model. Product shooting is also possible with our digital content factory on wheels. You can bring a physical product into the truck and shoot the product with 360 interactive assets, images, videos and gifs. Everything is doable in the truck.

“...The truck is a complete digital content factory able to consolidate both hardware capabilities...”

The system also connects all the images shot in real-time with all the product information related to that product. The software system is connected with an artificial intelligence engine that we use to add metadata to the product. The software can also consolidate the digital product catalogue—the fourth phase mentioned before. Finally, it can deliver the digital product identity to the different channels mentioned beforehand—digital showrooming, e-commerce, and potentially, the metaverse in the future.

From content production to post-production and omnichannel delivery, Hyphen Truck is the digital content factory on wheels.■

~ Truck

~
~
H Y P H E N

MODS

Protecting
the creative vision
through production
with the help of

DALIM ES





Images and tech development are the two topics that **Daniel Almstedt** has worked with for many years. He loves to challenge old habits. His work philosophy is simple, direct, and successful: ‘Streamlined production, working smart, and correct, is the way to go. There is no need to do something in a bad way. It just ends up that you will need to do it twice. **Do it correctly, smart, and quickly.**’ It has worked well for him. After studying at the **School of Communication Arts** in Raleigh, NC, **Daniel** spent two years as a retouch artist and prepress operator at **KåPe Productions AB** before becoming a founder and head of DAM and IT at **Mods Graphic Studio AB**—a move that has suited him very well. He is currently CEO of **Mods**. We caught up with **Daniel** to ask him about his company and his use of **DALIM ES**.

THEMAGAZINE: Tell us a little bit about MODS.

Daniel Almstedt: MODS was founded in April 2000. The primary purpose was to have a fresh start with a company working in full RGB mode with all images—just let go of all the CMYK files and keep everything in RGB—and colour-manage everything. We started off early with a big clothing company in Sweden, and most of their print material went through our systems in some way or another.

We have always said we retouch images because it’s easier to explain. But, for the last 15 years, the truth has been more about colour management, creating and converting PDF files, and adapting them for print and different media. During the last five or six years, that actually turned out to be true because now our biggest focus is image retouching, so we’re back to where we started. So, we do image retouching and colour management.

All images courtesy of **MODS** - All rights reserved.

Most of the time, it's directly for clients like; marketing departments and ad agencies, on a more minor scale. That was the opposite 15 years ago when it was all ad agencies, but it's turned around slightly.

How many employees do you have?

DA: Nineteen. Most team members are retouchers, but we also have people who create artwork, along with colour experts and project leaders. We're a small company, but since we are in such a niche business, we're one of the bigger ones in Stockholm, Sweden.

What is the business goal of your company?

DA We're here to make sure that whatever visually an art director sees in a shot, it keeps that vision. **Our purpose is to assure that for someone who is creative—who has an idea for an image or a campaign—our job is to transform that idea, with all its emotions, colours and meaning, into final media—whether it's print, online, web.**

Just to be clear, we are not a creative company. We work for creative people as a production company.

Retouching, as a word, is often associated with manipulating images. But that is not just moving pixels around with the cloning tool. Colour is such a big part of the work. There are so many bad images out there, wrong in colour and poor feeling and look. **And there is so much knowledge about this, and we are going deeper into that. Stay updated! ;)**

Volume is our key—but we also love clients with very high demands and complex image works as well, the range of images we work on is vast. What our work always has in common is speed, control and high quality, and we need a platform to support that. **ES** has been a good choice for us and supports all that. The **ES** platform **comes from the print industry and is designed for high-volume, it can take on any task and is extremely robust.**

Do you want to say anything about your new relationship with the H&H Group?

DA: We're in a group with 15 sister companies, and we're all in communication somehow. Whether it's advertising agencies, PR, strategic companies, or movies and 3D, we're all in the same area, making it more fun. I'm sure that we can both contribute to the group but also benefit from the group.

Could you describe yourself a little bit?

DA: Sure. I'm creative with a technical interest. I started off as an image retoucher and was one of the founders of **MODS**. The image retouching came along with all the technical things that needed to be fixed—servers, colour management, and workflows. Someone needed to take care of all the technology as we grew, so that was me. It was an honour to be asked to be the CEO.

What was going on before you used DALIM ES? What tools were you using?

DA: Email and printouts actually, emailing JPEGs back and forth.



“I’m creative
with a technical
interest”

Daniel Almstedt
Managing Director at **Mods Graphic Studio AB**



“...We’re also using it as a central hub for all our images...”

Obviously, you had some pain points.

DA: Yes. A larger client of ours asked for a complete workflow to keep track of the whole process—all the comments, annotations, approval workflows, and so on. That was the thing that got us to really say, “Okay, we need a platform to see if we could have something.” Since we already used **DALIM TWIST**, we knew about **ES**. We knew about it and learned at that stage that it would solve our problem. **But we are still exploring ES as a product; you discover there is more to it once you start using it.**

How was the installation, and how helpful was your **DALIM** reseller, **NI Solutions**?

DA: They were very helpful. We have had a good relationship with **NI Solutions** for 20 years.

You said you purchased **DALIM ES** because a client wanted a very specific workflow upfront, and you were able to do that pretty quickly.

DA: It’s my job to listen to the client’s challenges and help them understand how to solve them. I know what tools I can work with and to make that match. **ES** makes it a lot easier because it has such a complete toolbox.

What are you doing with it for the most part now?

DA: Actually, both internal and external reviews. It’s for image commenting, annotations and approvals, and rejects. We’re also using it as a central hub for all our images—not all, but most. We’re also connecting it to external systems via the **API**. We can connect more with external systems from the **ES** platform with the **API**, so we’re using that for some of our workflows. It solves pretty much anything since we can access all features of **ES** via the **API**.

For example, one of our clients creates annotations in their own system, so we’re moving those annotations into **ES**, and they end up as annotations for our team to start work with. We use the **API** for that.

Where have you found the most significant benefit of the **ES** system?

DA: **Control. That’s the short answer.** It’s one place to keep track of everything: who said what, and why, and when, and who fixed it, and if it is okay or not. **It’s the one place to go when we look at images in our context.**

Is there any favorite feature you have?

DA: I know it sounds cheesy, but the compare tool is nice. **When you can compare a series of images—maybe four—and you can synchronize them all, zooming and comparing, it’s just nice and neat, and it just works.** You don’t sell that to a client, but it’s a good feeling - the power, the stability - when you’re working in the system.

Were there any surprises?

DA: Pretty much every time, because it’s just up to our imagination. Would it be possible to do this? Most of the time, we can do it in **ES**. It just feels terrific to have that as a platform because I know we can do so much in it, and we don’t need to add extra features to it because it’s very complete from the beginning.

How effective has **DALIM ES** been for you?

DA: We can probably crunch those numbers, but **the effectiveness is probably best described as Control.** For example, we have clients whose

people are working on the same project world-wide. Some are in the US, in the UK, in Sweden, in China, and so on, and they are all going in and providing annotations to the same image. Of course, it accelerates the entire process when the platform is online 24/7, and we can have fixed dates and times when approvals or annotations should be completed. They have time slots when they should be doing their tasks instead of having someone collect JPEGs with all comments and trying to organize them all. Of course, **it saves time and brings control with it.**

Is there a specific job that explains how helpful ES has been?

DA: Sure. Referring to what I just said, we have a client with product images. **At least five people are commenting and making annotations on each image and are responsible for different parts of the product.** Someone could be taking care of the overall feeling of the image, someone is looking at a specific detail of the product, someone is in charge of the colour, background, etc. Without a system that can connect all these people into one place, it would have been a nightmare to keep track.

From the client side, we have had client meetings many times, and before they worked with us and used our system, they had a project leader. It was like a 50% task force just to collect all those comments and remind people to do the commenting. ‘Can you do this? Are you done yet? Where are you?’ **ES takes care of all the babysitting parts.** Otherwise, I don’t think there could ever be a project that we could run. We’ve been fortunate to work with this client for many years now, and I don’t think that would have happened without ES.

How are you using DALIM TWIST?

DA: **TWIST came along in 2015 for a specific project. We would merge PDF files, text layers, and image layers for a catalogue—for many catalogues actually - and the catalogue was produced in 38 languages.** The PDFs came from two different companies: one company did just the text layer, and another company did the image layer. We were asked if we could merge

“...I don’t think that would have happened without ES...”

those PDF files, colour manage them, pre-flight and keep track of them all. We built a database where the client could tell what print house to print what languages, and the **TWIST** workflow selected the correct colour profile when we started processing. It was a very nice setup!

I had meetings with **NI Solution**, who helped us build that workflow for a couple of weeks. That was just crazy—to build that workflow, have it controlled, do all the normalizing and colour management, and just take care of all those conditional if’s: ‘If that happens, if that happens, then what?’ That’s actually how it all started.

We already had the GMG colour management platform, and then we could connect those two together. **TWIST is the backbone of the whole workflow.** All PDF files —everything—is calculated and treated. The resolution, interpolation, pre-flight and so on.

Is the DAM something you’re looking at?

DA: We’re discussing how the DAM could be used in the best way. When you look ahead at the **ES** roadmap, it works.

I also like that **DALIM** is adapting the **API** First approach, which tells me that DALIM is keen that the software should function from the ground up. And really want a platform that is future-proof and really functioning and working.

I think **ES** will be an even more central figure in our company because we’re moving more projects into the system and letting all our internal and external retouchers in the system now.

DALIM ES feels like such a good foundation to stand on. We can do pretty much anything with it. ■



World Wide **Technology** Meeting 22

Save the date!

We are thrilled to announce the return of our **World Wide Technology Meeting 22** which will take place from the **5th to the 9th of December**. Join us for two days of talks about technology innovations in our products and two days of workshops to discover those newest features with our outstanding tech teams.

Sign up on our website to receive exclusive information on our fabulous line-up and training sessions.

Don't miss out on WWTM22!




The Developer Portal!

A
new
knowledge
base
for
DALIM's software
developers





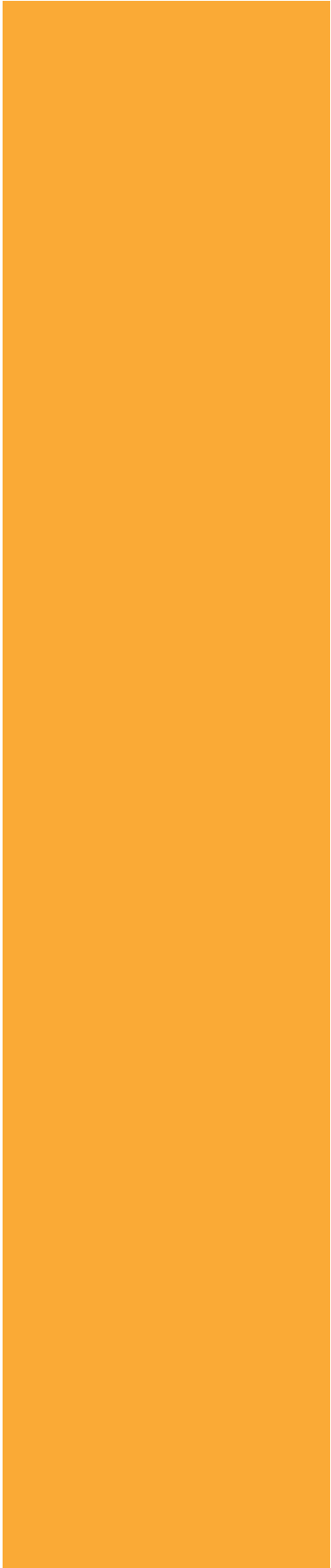


DALIM SOFTWARE has launched something new and exciting: **the Developer Portal is now online!**

Clients and partners have consistently recognised the **DALIM support team** for bringing valuable support and empowering software to solve specific use cases. Integrations and custom scripts have been able to do miracles, but, unfortunately, all this information was documented internally in pieces and was sometimes missing altogether. It was never accessible to the broader public. It's why we decided to create the **DALIM Developer Portal**. We wanted to make the knowledge of our excellent service team available to everyone.

Our goal was to create a controlled space for the technical aspect of our products, and that's what makes the Developer Portal so unique. It is an exclusive tool for sharing and distributing essential documentation for the intensive use of our products, and it contains all the documentation you could be looking for.

Let's look more closely at the different parts of the Developer Portal. To start with, there is the documentation section, which contains technical resources to integrate with **DALIM products**. For example, there is a section dedicated to the **API**. For those who don't know what an **API** is, it's the acronym for '**application program interface**'. It's a software intermediary that allows two applications to talk to each other.



“While this portal is dedicated to technical members, it’s really for everyone. Try it!”

Marine Laëtitia Allenbach is Digital Marketing Manager at **DALIM SOFTWARE**. She is responsible for internal and external communications—particularly digital content—as well as marketing operations. **Marine** was previously a consultant and part-time teacher, as well as a digital and influence project manager at **Havas Play**, a marketing communications and services agency located in Puteaux, within **metro** Paris.



Aurélien Knapp
Senior Software Engineer &
Senior Application Consultant
DALIM SOFTWARE



“...Feel free
to challenge
us to build an
integration for
you...”

For twenty years, **Aurélien Knapp** has been a Senior Software Engineer and Senior Application Consultant at **DALIM SOFTWARE**. People may know him from his role providing software service and support, but **Aurélien** also has been involved in product development, particularly using Java, JavaScript, HTML and JSP. **Aurélien** began his career providing software development and IT work for both **LA Otterbach** and **Nokia**.

The **API** section is similar in structure to other sections of the **Developer Portal**. For example, it presents the requirements to use the **API**. There is a section where you can learn how to make some **API** calls and another section on how to use Postman—an **API** platform for building and using **APIs**. You can also improve your **API**; we will send you tools that can be imported into your Postman, this will create different sections with different objects that can be used to call other **API** fields. There is a folder area with sub-sections showing the various calls you can use. There are also suggestions of how to call them and different results from the calls.

Going back to same the **API** section of the **Developer Portal**, there is also a section where examples of how to integrate your **API** code in Python or batch scripts are available.

Another section of the **Developer Portal** is the **DALIM ES Plugins and Desktops** section, which can be navigated quickly and easily. This section will also help you to get more from your interface. You will find documentation for the desktop and plugin, including information to create your first plugin. A step-by-step tutorial is provided. Besides documentation, there are also some practical examples that you can download.

Some pages are still under construction, but more information will be added in the near future. And all currently available pages of the **Developer Portal** will evolve over time as we add even more information, tutorials, examples of practical customer use cases, etc., to help you better integrate your **DALIM** software.



A search bar is also available on the portal, which makes it easy to search for information quickly. If your request does not exist, feel free to challenge us to build an integration for you.

The developer side will provide all our in-house developments, such as customised Adobe to DALIM integration scripts, etc. You can browse to see if we have a solution for you. Or, you can contact us and find out about the cost of having **DALIM** personalise your integrations even further for your needs.

We will add new techniques every week to ensure that we bring new technical information on a massive scale into this portal. You will be able to read not only technical news but also tutorials on products—all written by DALIM's expert development, marketing, and support teams.

While this portal is dedicated to technical members, it's really for everyone. Try it now by scanning the qrcode! ■



An aerial photograph capturing a vast expanse of white, fluffy clouds that resemble a sea. The sun is setting on the right side of the frame, casting a warm, golden glow across the clouds and the sky. The sky transitions from a deep blue at the top to a vibrant orange and red near the horizon. The text "WALKING ON CLOUDS" is superimposed in the center of the image in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

WALKING ON CLOUDS



AWS X **DALIM SOFTWARE**

A conversation between
Talke Maria Oetken,
Account Manager at **Amazon Web Services**
and
Aristide Zouheir-Kuhnle,
Marketing Director at **DALIM SOFTWARE**

...It's really about **'How fast we can move?'**...

Aristide Zouheir-Kuhnle: Talke, before we jump into serious questions, I would like to know how you came across DALIM SOFTWARE and why you are here today.

Talke: Well, three and a half years ago, when I started my job at AWS, our team had just decided to lay a stronger focus on how we can help software vendors. I was just lucky to get DALIM SOFTWARE on my customer list. The nice thing is that DALIM had been a customer that was, very early on, engaged with cloud technology. They were really forward-thinking. From there emerged a partnership where we continuously worked on a joint cloud offering.

I am lucky enough to enjoy the partnership with DALIM. That's how it came about that I'm here and how I got to know DALIM.

...Over the past ten years the **SaaS** market has continuously grown between **15 to 30 million per year**...



Aristide: Before we jump into the 'hows' and 'whats' of the cloud and SaaS, I'd like to ask 'Why SaaS? Why cloud?' Let's start with the cloud.

Talke: That makes a lot of sense because these topics are interrelated. In the beginning, the question was, 'Are we going to the cloud or not?' That conversation has fundamentally shifted. Today, the cloud is the new normal. We find ourselves in discussions with customers today not about 'can we move' or 'if we move'. It's really about 'How fast we can move?' and 'What do we move first? What applications should be our next targets?'

This is a fundamental shift. Market projections also back it up. Gartner's projections are that by 2024, 45% of the total IT spend will have shifted to the cloud. They also expect that by 2025 the enterprise applications in the cloud will have doubled compared to all the non-cloud markets by that time. The reasons are quite simple. Our customers manage to achieve their business outcomes by moving to the cloud.

Our customers achieve over 50% in cost reductions—in particular, operations. We see them benefiting from increased staff productivity, and 94% reduced downtime. Those things matter today, especially if you're trying to deliver value to your end customers. Because of that, the cloud has really become the new paradigm for infrastructure in the IT market. We see a similar pattern when we think about the conversation shifting to SaaS.

Over the past ten years, the SaaS market has continuously grown between 15 to 30 million per year. That's pretty much representative of the cloud markets. To understand why it is that successful, you need to get a better picture of the market situation. The reality today is that most companies—more than 75% of CTOs and CIOs have skill gaps in their departments. In Germany, every second business is unable to fill their IT roles or open mid to long-term IT roles.

These roles will not be filled because they can't find personnel. Almost 60% of business leaders describe the skill gap as their most significant risk factor. Concurrently, **DALIM SOFTWARE** has become increasingly feature-rich. The infrastructure and operational overhead requirements to sustain high performance and security become increasingly larger. You're finding yourself in a situation where on the one hand, you have a massive skill gap while the requirements of what it takes to continue to run applications become greater.

This is where SaaS really hits home because customers see a much improved total cost of ownership. It's not just the license cost but the total cost of the application—the license cost plus the hardware plus the required personnel, the energy, the water, and even time to value. If you buy new software and it takes you six months to even provide the hardware before you can use the license, that's not great for your business.

...more than **75%** of CTOs and CIOs have **skill gaps** in their departments...



Talke Maria Oetken, account manager for software vendors, has worked at **Amazon Web Services (AWS)** for over three and a half years. In her role, she helps software vendors like **DALIM SOFTWARE** navigate the challenges with their journeys in the cloud. This includes helping them transition to the cloud, showing options, what their new business in the cloud could be, and assisting in transitioning from license models to SaaS.



...It's
important
to have
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technology...

That's different in the SaaS world because you have immediate access to applications and the latest features. Also incredibly important is that in a SaaS environment, you always get new features with your subscription. You also have a faster pace of innovation because the software vendor can develop and roll out new features more quickly. They can do this centrally and make these features available for all customers. The operational burden is less because you simply outsource it to the software vendor.

We also see increased levels of security and uptime because the software vendor can really focus on managing and securing the application as a matter of a core service. That's the essence of their business. SaaS is ultimately about delivering value, which is a very compelling value proposition for end customers. **It eliminates all the hassle, and you get all the benefits.** This is why it makes a lot of sense for customers from all segments, be it enterprise or even a standard Internet file system—the Service Message Block (SMB) in particular. For example, people in Germany move to SaaS because it's just the best value option.

Aristide: When we look at the market, we don't have a gold rush—it's a cloud rush. Why is this cloud rush taking time? Why are companies trying to move so quickly now to the cloud?

Talke: I think it touches in part on what I already said. There are five primary reasons why customers are moving to the cloud. The first one is agility—the sheer ability to spin up service in minutes and stop them if you don't need them anymore. That's a significant benefit, and it lets businesses respond to changing market needs. If we think about the past two years, there was an unprecedented change in market demands, and our customers could match the current demand for infrastructure to their needs.

...People in Germany move to **SaaS** because it's just the best value option...

Looking forward, it's critical to have this ability because other unforeseen conditions can affect your business. It's essential to have immediate access to the latest technology—to respond to trends and build something that's of value for your customers and saves your competitive situation. The total cost of ownership is important, as are cost savings.

For example, **Dow Jones saved \$100 million per year in infrastructure costs** by moving their data centres to **AWS** because they were able to run it much more efficiently than they could in their own data centre. The same refers to elasticity—scaling up and down over the course of the year. **There's no need to run a business application at full load during the night when business users aren't actually using it,** and you don't need that capacity. That might also apply when you are providing services in different global regions.

I know **DALIM** is increasingly providing services abroad, for example. It's about balancing the load from different regions. You don't want everything to be at peak load all the time. You want to sustain a good business for yourself. There's also a faster pace of innovation. For example, Kenshoo, a software vendor and customer from Israel, was able to reduce their new product development time from over a year to just a few months.

...We're on the way to be **100%** renewable energy powered by **2025**...

That matters a lot because it's ultimately about how fast you can bring a product to market. How quickly can you have past customers pay for it? That's a tremendous value. Also, the ability to go beyond your current borders is easier. In the cloud, you have regions and data centres available all across the globe. Suppose a customer comes to you today and says, 'I like the solution, but I need it in Australia'. You can provide it without having to send someone, hire a contractor, and spend time figuring out the correct setup in that local market.

You get that service straight out of the box. That's a massive benefit for businesses that want to scale—for all of our customers with global ambitions..

Aristide: I have these large data centres in mind. DALIM SOFTWARE has corporate social responsibility goals, which doesn't sound sustainable. How do we tackle this problem?

Talke: Sustainability is a huge factor for Amazon as well. We recognize that we have a big commitment. As a large global business, we have a large global footprint. There's no way around that responsibility. We definitely see this. The way we approach this is that we take what's closest to our business. Amazon has always been about innovating on behalf of our customers, and that applies equally to sustainability and innovation in our data centres.

We've been continuously investing to make our data centres run more efficiently and to innovate cooling systems, water usage, and the pooling of resources in our data centres so they can run at the highest efficiency possible. If you look at research from 451 Research, AWS infrastructure is 3.6 times more efficient than an average US data centre. That's a result of the innovation that we put into it. And that's just one element.

Amazon also founded the Climate Pledge in 2019. It calls on its assignees to reach net carbon zero by 2040, ten years ahead of the Paris Agreement. Today, over 200 companies in over 21 countries have joined. As the first signee, Amazon has set a more ambitious goal for itself. Our original target was 2030, but right now, we're on the way to being 100% renewable energy powered by 2025.

We're making huge investments because it's a huge priority, and we want to make sure that we live up to that. Of course, that's our own infrastructure. At the same time, there's the element of what we do to help our customers better understand—other than just the infrastructure we provide. When customers build workloads on AWS, one activity that we usually perform with them is a well-architected review.

We look at their workloads and check to see if what they build is according to the best practices we've learned over ten years. One aspect is sustainability. When we perform this mini audit, we give our customers a much better understanding of how their current workloads match against their own security or sustainability goals. It also gives them traceable metrics to focus on as they optimize their workloads for sustainability. We do that with our customers to ensure they are also architected on top of our infrastructure as efficiently as possible.

Aristide Zouheir-Kuhnle
Marketing Director
DALIM SOFTWARE



...**Security** has always been our **number one priority**...

Aristide: Our customers' content is their lifeblood. In a certain way, it's also their life insurance. You want to keep control over your life insurance, and you don't want to give content away to anyone. How do we respond to those people? Is the AWS cloud secure?

Talke: Of course, it's secure. Security has always been our number one priority. We built **AWS to be the most scalable and flexible but also secure platform available**, and our cloud market leadership has supported that for the past ten consecutive years. We fully understand that customers consider their data as core to their businesses, and you want to retain control of it. First, AWS does not take away control of data.

One of the first paragraphs in our data processing agreement says that every customer that stores data in AWS retains complete control of their data. We will not touch customer data unless you, as a user, do that. We would never touch data that is not ours. So, from a legal dimension, that data is safe.

AWS uses the same secure hardware and software in all of our regions—for example, in a service like S3 and a storage service that we have provided for several years.

It allows tight control that is truly unmatched by on-premises infrastructures these days. You can apply access rights and encryption onto each object—managed to a tight granularity. When customers move their data assets to the cloud, they usually see higher levels of security. Just because it's in the back of your office doesn't mean it's necessarily safe. AWS makes tremendous investments in securing and protecting data because of our sheer scale. **Our main priority is to keep data safe because we would be essentially out of business if we didn't.**

In terms of compliance standards, **AWS** has over 90 security and compliance certifications—everything from ISIL, PCI, HIPAA, and so forth. The list is long.

The important thing is that it's a hand-in-hand conversation, not just AWS protecting data. AWS is protecting the security of the cloud. We take care of our physical infrastructure and also the security of the host operating system and the hypervisor. **We're lucky to work with partners like DALIM, who are building secure applications on top of the cloud. To help them do this, AWS provides over 200 services that help them meet industry-leading audit and compliance standards.**

Aristide: Can you walk me through the process and tell me the biggest challenges that I need to be aware of and how I can tackle them?

Talke: The funny thing is that the main challenges are rarely the technology. We've seen from thousands of customer migrations that there are few things setting customers apart that address migrating to the cloud, compared to those who actually do it. It usually comes down to primarily organizational things. Our most successful customers are the ones where the leadership is aligned and sets a solid priority to move to the cloud. They do that, ideally, by setting an aggressive business goal.

For example, **AWS** customers set themselves a goal. To migrate all their business applications—like all **DALIM**, for instance - within 24 months. That can mean migrating in a 'lift and shift' scenario where you take an existing application and re-host it on a server in the cloud. Or you could also switch your licensing. Instead of taking the license and applying it to your own server, you can switch to a software-as-a-service model. That's also a way to ensure you're managing this transition.

It's also essential to educate the organization on what the cloud really means for the business. These days the cloud touches all business areas, from finance to marketing to sales, and it changes how companies operate in today's economy.

Very often many businesses are not ready for this. This is where it's imperative to not just look at the technical skill set—which is, of course, important. A key enabler is ensuring that the organization is equally trained on all dimensions. Otherwise, you just keep fighting the same battles, but just with someone else.

Aristide: As a final question, could you mention some companies that have built an infrastructure on the cloud with AWS?

Talke: There are millions of customers, but I will try to give some remotely relevant examples. A big success story has been the cooperation between **Capital One** and **AWS**. Early on, they moved all of their data centres to **AWS**. **BP** is a more traditional business, and perhaps you wouldn't think they would have a strong cooperation with us. But they are 'all in' on **AWS**.

The same applies for **Deutsche Bundesliga**. Maybe that's something of interest. We are working with them on an innovative way to reinvent the digital customer experience in football—or soccer, for our American friends. For more local examples, I'm working with a customer called **d.velop**, a German document management provider from Northern Germany. They've worked with us for many years. Just last year, they migrated over 60 million documents for **Schmitz Cargobull** in, I think, three months max, into the cloud. That was a big success for them.

The German software Haufe-Lexware is used in that context. They're a customer reference, as well as our friends and a longstanding partner. We are very fortunate that many software vendors in Germany put their trust in us. They're cooperating with us to deliver great business software for future end customers and current ones.

We're really excited to reinvent the road map going forward with them—and **DALIM**. Thank you, **DALIM SOFTWARE**, for our partnership and letting me speak with you! ■

...**AWS** has
over **90 security** and **compliance**
certifications...

**Studio
as a
Service**

**Focus
on
Image Capture**





Our Contributors

THEMAGAZINE 27



Seasoned entrepreneur, thought leader, and technology executive with more than two decades of leadership experience in the creative and marketing technology industries. **JAMES INGRAM** is CEO of the **Liiv Group**, the parent company of **SPLASHLIGHT**, a visual content creation company, and **Telmar/Helixa**, a global company providing Audience Intelligence and Media Planning technology. As well as, along with his business partner **Benoit Lagarde**, created the **Liiv Center** - a non-profit company committed to deep human insights for the public good.



PHILLIP TASKER is the Business Development Director for **PiXL**, an agency part of the **Pureprint Group** of companies in the UK. **PiXL** is the new creative production division. It looks after photography, videography, various content creation, and post-production, working primarily with retailers and e-commerce businesses throughout the **UK**.



TIM D'ELIA is Product Manager at **DALIM SOFTWARE**, although his journey with **DALIM** started when working for **Immediate Media** as Repro Systems Engineer, where he supported the publishing systems for **BBC Magazines** and other publications. He then joined an integrator, **Ethos**, as a developer, where he spent six years working with **DALIM** products before he finally joined our UK office to become Technical Lead—completing his journey from customer to being part of the **DALIM** family.

TIM

I do a lot of research on why customers use our software—the problems they’re trying to solve and the solutions they’re looking for. I’ve noticed a definite trend in photography. Many photography companies have adopted our software, and many agencies have started their photography workflows. People are beginning to realize this is a new emerging market and are looking for technologies that do that. I want to find out **what these organizations are doing with collaboration and everything in between.**

Phil, managing a studio is more than just buying a camera, finding a space, and hoping someone show up with something to take a picture of. You have to offer a way to book these jobs and provide data. What do you use to capture this data and provide project management? Also, what data is critical in the first phase of that booking and that transaction between the two businesses?

PHIL

Talking about data, I’d say it’s important. But I wouldn’t classify it as essential because **we have too many briefs lacking client data for it to become essential.** Several times we will work with a brand, and they will say, “We want it to look cool or want it to look good.” And that’s the entire brief. It’s not always data-led. Although I wish it were.

I think the crucial thing about data is getting clear guidance on what the customer wants. Many of them work around style guides, and **it helps to understand the customer’s visuals,** whether it’s something we’ve done with them in the past or a legacy and knowing where they see their brand and how they want to see it represented. **That’s essential. That data is key.**

“...You have to have that single version of the truth and your style guides...”

Product data that goes into metadata is also essential. Thankfully, the brands we work with have pretty good product information systems from their buying perspective. When working from an e-commerce perspective, we are used to getting feeds from those systems, even before the photoshoots. Strangely enough, we have integrations into our original production MIS software at the minute, which is a bit of a legacy from the print side of the business and has pretty robust job booking, job tracking, and time tracking—those elements. That’s how we’ve run the shoots and the studio side of our business.

But coming back to your question about where data is most important. We’ve been in a start-up phase for the last couple of years with Ecom Studios, which means new team members, growth, expansion, and the use of freelancers as we scale up the business. I think that’s where data and the quality of data have become the most important. It allows team collaboration and different people to have different touchpoints with other brands.

If you want to have an agile business, having that data—and somewhere to place that data at the start of the workflow—is crucial. Otherwise, you end up in a scenario where one person doing a shoot for a client can be the only person to do another shoot for that same client. You’ve got to move away from that scenario. When I think about where data is most important, I would say it’s around our flexibility and speed to market.

TIM

The style guides ensure that you're consistent across each brand and don't have to reshoot things, in other words, making sure that things get done correctly the first time. That must also be a critical stage?

PHIL

Exactly. Also, ensuring that data is inputted correctly with the work you put in at that point so that it goes through the entire process without any other handling. That's quite crucial.

TIM

James, you work a lot with retail, which uses a lot of stylized style guides for booking shoots. Would you agree with Phil's points?

JAMES

I think Phil summed it up correctly. Customers expect that once you've been onboarded, the creative will come out consistently to their brand. And so, how they're onboarded is documented. We also do style guides, this step is core in fact, because it is the single version of the truth of what they're looking for.

We place dedicated teams to those brands who are larger clients, so they get familiar. We see two styles. We have project-based work—more editorial advertising where each project has a unique side to it. You've got to know the client and what they're looking for. Then there's the larger side of eCommerce, where you can set the tone of what they're looking for as a brand.

You're more autonomous with the content coming in. It's very logistic-heavy. You have to have that single version of the truth and your style guides to let your teams have access to it and create content based on that information. It's what the customer needs and what the internal teams need as well.

“...We want it to look cool or want it to look good.”

And that's the entire brief...

TIM

Thanks, James. I have another question for you. Before something becomes digital—before you even photograph it—it's physical, and it has to get to you somehow. You've invested some resources in inventory management and tracking. How do you keep customers up to date with that process, and how do you track all that physical content that comes through your business?

JAMES

It's one of the core things we needed when we partnered up with **DALIM SOFTWARE**. It was quite a process to have APIs in the system to tie the digital assets with the physical asset. It's been a tremendous amount of work, but it's really how the entire system runs. It starts with the product. Our technology connects with the manufacturers directly, even bypassing retailers. We know what's coming, when it's coming and the volume. It has structured style guides of how they want the views and how they should crop.

As it comes in, that system talks to DALIM ES and creates all the folders and all the workflows. All the naming conventions occur automatically, and the two systems tie that together to flow through it. Also, all that metadata is tracked. That's how we can begin to correlate the styling around those items and how they get style connected to the digital style guide.

There are three points. The digital style guides must relate to the item, and the items must be coming in. It's heavy logistics. Then, that is passed into the digital system so, when it's reviewed after it's photographed, you can look at the style guide to compare it's done correctly and the information about the merchandise. It's a massive logistics process.



MPZ 18-105 G OSS

0.45m/1.48ft-0.95m/3.12ft



Image courtesy of PiXL - All rights reserved.

TIM

I'm interested in covering this because many people face these same challenges when they start their photography workflows. Phil, I think you are also trying to work this out from the start-up perspective of tracking all of this. I know that some companies use QR codes or RFIDs; is this the type of thing you're looking at?

PHIL

We're still old school at the moment when it comes to physical asset tracking. We're comfortable with job tracking, but the product on those jobs is more of an offline process. It's managed, but the more significant we get, the more challenging it becomes. It's an area where we're investing some research time, discovering what's in the marketplace we could use.

Internally, we've got what we call 'pack track solutions'. In the production facilities, everything is tracked through different factory areas on the print side. We're trying to determine whether we should use that tracking technology. However, from the photography side, we're pretty old school.

I've been quite surprised that when I've talked with about six or seven well-known retailers in the UK, none of them has a tech-driven sample management system. I ask, "What are you guys using? How are you managing this internally?" They all look at me, roll their eyes, and tell me how stressful it is—how difficult it is for them to manage it.

They then gave me an example of how last week they had an editorial shoot, and the person in buying didn't know where the sample was. They had to search throughout an entire building to find it. Then they discovered that the photo studio had it all along. That example is from a retailer that has been working in the UK for 40 years. There's still a lot of work and growth to do, not only from us as a start-up agency but also from the perspective of the actual retailers. There's going to be lots of developments in this area.

I think the more tech-led businesses will be successful, so I'm researching what's available to find the best fit for us to go out and support our clients.

JAMES

Even with influencer photography, we see the need for workflows because they're given garments they've got to photograph, which has to tie back to everything. We end up having to build it ourselves. I would love to see that develop into a more powerful alliance between ES and physical asset tracking—and bringing that together.

"...customers are becoming increasingly aware of 'over-Photoshopping' and over-edited images..."

TIM

It's definitely an unsolved solution regarding an industry-standard way of doing it and an exciting topic.

Once you've got that physical piece of content—once you have the booking, the information, the brief, and the style guide, you need to take the photographs. So then comes the time to collaborate, with requests to reshoot and make some adaptations, and because of the pandemic, a lot of this has to be done online.

Customers can't physically come to your photography studio every time. Therefore, the time it takes to deliver that image from the camera to the user so they can request more work must be a critical part of the system. Phil, how do you manage that? Do you have your customers on your case immediately, as soon as they know it's being shot?

PHIL

Yes, we do. For example, a customer told me last week that the shots we took on Tuesday were for a promo going live on Wednesday night, and we found out about it on Wednesday afternoon. So, time is definitely of the essence. I think the biggest challenge we've faced is the global issues—supply chain issues, a driving pressure in every area for us.

We have retailers that used to create a sample three months before it would even be a product and ready for retail. What we're finding is that product is a finished product. Full container loads of products are arriving, and we need to be able

to take the photography and post-production with finished goods. The speed of production impacts the time to market. In a retail business, losing two or three days of sales because the photography process takes time becomes huge for them.

We've got many challenges on that side. **The crucial** thing for us is not how we get the images online and get them to the customer. It's the ability of the customer to interact with those images quickly—making selections so that we can start post-production. Then, when you're in post-production, you can give us feedback and suggest corrections to get a finished product quickly and effectively.

That's one of the things where **DALIM** tech has helped us, and it's an area where I think we can even do more. From our side, we're looking at how to make things a one-click process for the customer when they're navigating for selections and providing approvals. Maybe it's going into a decision mode where people can make quick, one-click decisions on certain assets.

All those little things seem minor, but when people review four or five shoots that have taken place in the past 24 hours and have only a limited amount of time to review those assets, everything we can do to improve is huge. It's crucial for us. It's a bit that we've managed, with **DALIM's** help, to improve over the last few months. And it's an area we'll focus on as we move forward this year.

“...we're looking at how to make things a one-click process for the customer...”

“...We talked about 'inventory manager', which allows a feed for the release of the content. We know when it's coming and when it needs to be released...”

TIM

We look forward to working with you on that! James, Phil mentioned post-production. **Post-production in your businesses is a large part of your offering.** Once photography is complete, is that when a large percentage of the work happens, or does it lean more towards photography because they have their in-house editors?

JAMES

Some have in-house help, but it's a large part for us. Most of the time, it's turnkey from receiving the merchandise to the final image, then pushed up their website. We've faced some of the exact requests. Things change on their behalf—wherever we can get the feed from their release. They tend to have a release when they push it up into the website or for marketing projects like merchandise tracking. We talked about 'inventory manager', which allows a feed for the release of the content. We know when it's coming and when it needs to be released.

Then, that communicates with **ES**. Those workflows are enabled to know what's late and when it needs to be done. **We've built some dashboards so we can manage and expedite the work.** One of the things we love about **ES** is that we can make those workflows depending on the kind, the customer, and even the roles of the customer.

TIM

Now we're going to talk about AI. I'm interested in your opinion of where AI will sit in your industry.

When I'm doing a lot of research into photography—anything to do with images—there's a lot of AI. We have AI that can generate 3D models from four images, and AI can create a model that's not even an actual human, and you can place clothes on them. AI can remove objects from backgrounds. We don't want to be replaced by AI. What are you doing that could work with AI to expand your services?

PHIL

We already use it in our business, and that's a matter of fact in terms of the way that turn-arounds have gone. From a post-production perspective, there's an AI element to it already. If any big agency claims they're not using AI, they're probably not being honest because everybody uses it where they can.

You've got to use it because the market has moved there and has a competitive advantage. It works well for us. It helps us do more, and it serves our customers better. We embrace it. There are other elements of it that we've been looking at. You talk about AI in terms of placing clothes on people.

The technology is being developed in Europe around model shoots that are entirely AI, where the models have been captured. So, they are real models, real people, genuine people with genuine licensing, captured at one point. Then, you capture the clothing, and you can create an entire AI model shoot.

A lot of people think that that's going to be big. There are already at least two large UK-based retail businesses I know that are trialling and using the technology on a trial basis. I don't think it's something my clients would consider because it doesn't have a natural feel. We've gone through a period where customers are becoming



“...If any big agency claims they're not using AI, they're probably not being honest because everybody uses it where they can...”

increasingly aware of ‘over-Photoshopping’ and over-edited images that don’t represent a real person and don’t resonate with the customer. I don’t believe that AI-generated imagery is close enough to ensure that customers feel it works for them.

I think there’s a little gap in terms of complete AI in the retail space. But I think we’ve got to be conscious that it’s not just AI but AR and VR. I think it’s going to be huge in retail. Retail is one of the spaces that leverage AR and VR the fastest. Last week I saw a product come out around virtual fitting, where you can map yourself and then do AI fitting of clothes and other things online. I think that going into the VR space, and there’s huge potential.

It’s something that I feel like everybody needs to understand and get on board with. But I think it’s got to be used correctly without losing the work done around trying to create a more natural image—a more body-positive image in fashion. We don’t want to lose that side of things. Many of our customers work hard on relating the product to the end customer. You’ve got to tread carefully, but you’ve also got to continue to invest time looking at it because, if you don’t, you’ll be left behind.

TIM

James, I know that you already have some technology you’re using—your genome 2 module, which maybe does auto-tagging and detects some information inside the asset. Is this something you’re looking at even more and adding more?

“...to create better, whether with AI assistance or naturally...”

JAMES

I would make the very same assessment as Phil has. There are aspects of workflow where it’s just replacing manual labour—it’s less creative, but it makes things faster and 100% more efficient. AI is there, and machine learning is helping to remove manual labour. When it starts trying to create content, I agree with Phil. I think it’s not there yet, but it is something we’re paying close attention to.

Because of that, we’re working on creative intelligence, knowing it will get there. We’ll figure out they need the data around what’s working and why. We’re embracing the fact that change will happen. The quality isn’t there yet, but we want to harness the necessary information and data in the process—qualitative data about the creative, what they like and what they don’t like—so at least it’s getting informed. Then, if you can have an informed AI, you will be able to address those things ethically. It’s like Phillip’s saying: body image and what you’re promoting are actual, and you need those safeguards.

We’re trying to get ahead of the curve and build workflows and processes that harness qualitative and quantitative data to create better, whether with AI assistance or naturally. Either way, using better data helps to understand the consumer profoundly.

TIM

Your points are very valid, and I didn’t even think about the ethical side of it. I know that when it comes to AI, we want to try and work with it to enhance our service. It should feel like it’s natural. It shouldn’t feel like it’s been done by a machine. It’s interesting to keep an eye on it inside this space because it seems like it has accelerated massively in the past six or twelve months. I’ve learned some beneficial information. This was an interesting conversation! ■



Putting ourselves
in our clients' shoes with

SAP

Business ByDesign







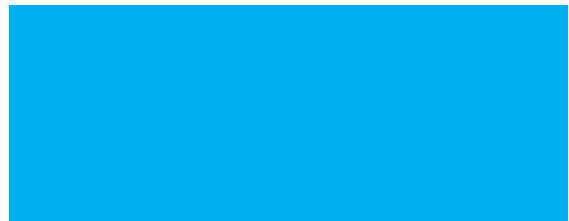
Daniel Lohrbächer,
Head of Channel Sales ERP
Manager—Germany at **SAP**

Aristide Zouheir-Kuhnle,
Marketing Director at
DALIM SOFTWARE

Christophe Bindler,
Support and Services Director at
DALIM SOFTWARE

SAP and their implementation partner, **Bradler GmbH** in Mannheim, have been helping **DALIM SOFTWARE** with their accounting. As many know, about 50% of **DALIM** clients are located in Europe. The rest, whether it's the American continents or Asia, are also served from Kehl. **Carol Werlé**, CEO of **DALIM SOFTWARE**, says **SAP** brings structure into a company. "I would say that we are leveraging about 10% of our workforce—much better now than before. And our departments are much better connected with a single source of truth. We simply wanted the very best for us, but it has helped us much more than we originally thought."

Daniel Lohrbächer, Head of Channel Sales ERP Manager—Germany, at **SAP**, discussed the use cases that **DALIM** has already created for itself with **Christophe Bindler**, Support and Services Director, and **Aristide Zouheir-Kuhnle**, Digital Marketing Manager.



Daniel: I have to thank **DALIM** for their trust and allowing me to discuss **SAP** a bit—particularly **SAP Business ByDesign**. **SAP** is very proud and honored to have customers like **DALIM**. **SAP** is a German software company, and while you think it's only for larger companies, our relationship shows that it's not. We have over 400,000 customers worldwide. Eighty percent of them are in small or midsized enterprises.

SAP was founded April 1, 1972. We are 50 years old, with ERP knowledge within different industries. To give you an example, **SAP Business ByDesign** has 12,000 businesses in over 150 countries. That's a pure public cloud solution that runs globally. We have about 65 country localizations. You can start quite easily with one of those localizations.

Our many, many partners support us. They will even help with global implementation projects. Like other add-ons, they have modern ERP solutions. The **SAP** partner will help with the rest of it. I'm the head of **SAP** Channel Sales ERP Manager in Germany. My team supports all the **SAP** partners to win over new customers and to accelerate some install-based customers.

"...We have
over
400,000
customers
worldwide..."



“...to get a feeling of what our customers have been going through...”

SAP Business ByDesign is quite easy to scale. You can start with five users but it can be scaled up for mid-sized companies just as well. **SAP** has extensive knowledge in different industries—in particular, using ERP. In the industries that we cover, 27 are also sub-industries. However, for this solution, we focus on, and are quite strong in, professional service, manufacturing, wholesale, and the US public health sector.

Why should you use an ERP solution, and why **SAP**? We have the knowledge, we have the network, and we have our partners. They know the regions and local requirements very well. Basically, when you work with **SAP**, you gain two partners.

Some customers have asked me, “COVID is probably the best example just to digitalize your business. But when does it start? Shall I print some documents or shall I digitalize my business?” If you haven’t done your homework or created your home office before COVID, now is the time to digitalize your business. The reason is also just to transform your business.

But, the board is probably thinking, “Well, we want to grow as well.” How can you grow; how you can expand? You need tools. For us, **SAP** is important. We want to give you some tools and solutions so you can focus on your business. You are good at your business—and we are good at developing some ERP solutions.

Just as an example, what is SAP Business ByDesign? It’s a pure public cloud solution. I call it a ‘suite in a box’. It means that you have CRM, finance, project management, and so on, in just one solution. It’s for one single truth.



SAP Business ByDesign is built for growth. You can scale easily. As we have one solution for different areas, we have built-in analytics so you can use some reports real-time. At the moment, hopefully, you can say, “Okay, my win is probably €1 billion—or something like that. That will be perfect. That is real-time information to get insights. Also, it’s a public cloud solution. You get continuous innovation; not just the features that, for example, are specifically required in Germany, the US or somewhere else. You also receive other new features. Let’s look at some use cases that **DALIM** has already provided.

Aristide: **SAP** was the last missing piece to allow us to operate completely remotely when the COVID crisis hit. Our **SAP** journey had started way before that because our customers using **SAP** wanted us to integrate **SAP** with **DALIM ES**. It’s our duty as a software provider to put ourselves in our clients’ shoes, so to speak. That was one of the reasons why we decided to invest in **SAP** ourselves: to get a feeling of what our customers have been going through, and how it could help us.

This is exactly what we want to showcase, here: **ES** success stories with **SAP**. We will start with a world leader in the decor printing industry. I think those who read the last **THEMAGAZINE** will know whom are we talking about.

“...It’s a pure public cloud solution...”



Christophe: Our objective was to create a new **ES** project so our customers would have a fantastic layout with plenty of rules, etc. We wanted to be able to import lots of metadata, and this starts with a project. There are deadlines, milestones, dates to respect, etc. They fill it up. So far, we have developed a project milestone, a project step which is using a Java piece of code which calls **SAP** a web service—a SOAP interface developed by our developers.

This web service reads the XML metadata, and it recreates a job inside the **SAP** system. We transmit the date, and all the details that have been completed in the job ticket, to **SAP**. The next step is that **ES** receives data in parallel. When someone is creating a project, they use a library of decors, they choose a wood, a color, and so on. In December, we used it for a printing project. A large TIFF file was sent to the RIP.

As a next step, **SAP** will also feed production management system information for the planning of the printing presses, the delivery, and other activities like stock management. The RIP itself will feed the separations of the TIFF objects after being color-corrected, to the printing machine—which could be digital. Everything is triggered by **ES** because we have a nice job ticket with all the necessary information.

“...That’s why they bought **ES**; because it can integrate with **SAP**...”

“...Everything is triggered by **ES**...”

Aristide: Could you go back to the start of the project? I think the world leader we’re talking about already had **SAP** in its tech stack—and it was one of their requirements. That’s why they bought **ES**; because it can integrate with **SAP**. What did they want to do and what was the benefit?

Christophe: The benefit is about the cost of the library. It’s media, so it’s a bank of objects. It’s asset management.

Basically, they start from their asset library with a variety of words, many colors, with or without varnish, and so on. There are many specific things—highly creative objects that have been improved over the years. So, they have a very unique database of objects and they need to take these objects and start the project from that. Then it is used for the printing of tables, chairs, cupboards—whatever. They even print on floors. But the unique thing is that it starts from the DAM and then they create a publishing project to print.

Aristide: Another example is also a world leader in the chocolate industry. Could you walk us through the process?

Christophe: This is a German product that you can find at **Kaufland** or **Decathlon**. You probably know the very square packaging. This brand is very creative and they develop new chocolate flavors on a regular basis, like for Easter. They create a new product, a new flavor, or whatever, and then there are plenty of ingredients that arrive at the factory to produce the chocolate itself. Associated with this you have a complete marketing campaign, a declaration to the ministry, and the packaging— everything you see in the stores, in fact.



“...The
very
important
game
is
synchronization...”

Christophe Bindler,
Support and Services Director
at DALIM SOFTWARE



What we need here is not how to produce the chocolate itself. What we need is to define what will be on the foil and on the packaging—which barcode, which ingredients, and so on. This is what the company is completing in their **SAP** system. They describe the product. Once this is done, we read in the products that are significant for us—not the chocolate or the pallets or whatever, but the foils, labels, or anything that gets printed.

We import this from **SAP**, by reading the database. Then we use an **SAP** http connector to trigger our **ES** API to create a project with certain metadata. We also collect the planning deadlines because this project is driven by **SAP**. Then there is an entire project management cycle with many events. We collect some briefing files, some artwork, and then the print PDF. They all get approved by several partners, and then it goes to print to third-party print providers—one for the foil, one for labels, etc.

Aristide: We discussed an example where we had **ES** from the start. Now, we have an example where **SAP** is being used at the start of the project. It involves one of the larger European cosmetics companies. Actually there's no real start. They are both running together in parallel.

“...What we need is to define what will be on the foil and on the packaging...”

Christophe: Here, I manually create a job ticket using **ES**, feeding plenty of media for pre-press and metadata. There is an **SAP** product involved—the product is a perfume or bottle that needs packaging. You need a barcode, etc. Both have their own lives; **SAP** for the products and delivery to the different countries.

Then, with **ES**, it's about the artwork. They have different artwork with different languages for different regions. When artwork is approved, it is sent to the print supplier who makes a print-ready PDF and this gets approved, as well. We get plenty of delivery updates, as well as approval updates—when it's approved, and so on. At different points in the workflow, our system feeds **SAP** again, through a SOAP interface to say, “Okay, this artwork is now valid.” At this point in **SAP**, we receive information that one of the packages, perhaps from last year, is going to be replaced.

They should not order any print material again for this packaging because they may have some in stock and the next one will be ready very soon. The next step is when we get the print-ready PDF. Once this is approved, the **SAP** system says: “Okay, the new packaging is available. If you need some for this country, or for a certain retailer, order this new PDF file to print.” It's very important to them to respect the delivery of the new product design—not to order old packaging for the new product line coming out in 2022.

The very important game is synchronization. We update product information, and anything else. It's also about the revision cycle. There could be expiring assets. You have to make sure that, in **SAP**, a salesperson cannot order something that is outdated.

Aristide: Daniel, I guess you see this in your everyday work. You need to integrate **SAP** and other products. We see it as well. Is there something we didn't mention in the use cases that might still be of interest?

Christophe: We spoke about three integration examples: with our **API**, with the SOAP interface, and with the web services of **SAP**. We can cite another example, integrating with an Oracle database. At this point, we completely defined a job with these print sections. In fact, the print sections are ready, knowing which press it goes to, with which color profile, at what resolution, and at what due date.

Also about planning: From my point of view, we now have a Gantt chart and the possibility to do project planning in a more advanced way. Certainly, it's a step where we will get some requests from the field.

“...our system feeds **SAP** again, through a SOAP interface...”

“...It's quite important to think outside the box...”

Aristide: Daniel, maybe you can walk us through the experience you have with your clients and the integration piece you tackle every day.

Daniel: Well, the first question the customer always asks is which ERP—what is my foundation? That's the first question. However, if you think further, the integration part is very important, between your partners and your vendors. **SAP** always advises, “Just expand your kind of network.” It doesn't matter if you have integrated with your vendor, with your customers or with others. In the business world, everyone is connected.

It's quite important to think outside the box. Don't think only about your company. Everything is neat, everything is digitalized, and everything is good—but think further. Develop new solutions: digital solutions and digital products. Connect with your customers, with your vendors and others. This is very important, not only here in Europe, but globally.

Some customers have some supply chain issues. You can use that integration part as well with your supply chain using a broader and stronger network. This is also about integration. It's a perfect way that has been mentioned in your use cases. The possibilities are endless to be honest, but step-by-step I would say this is a perfect example.■





STAUD STUDIOS
Media.Monks

Using **DALIM ES** to fuel content
production in the automotive industry

Evolution



Bertin Sorgenfrey, DALIM SOFTWARE Business Development Manager, served as an interviewer and sat in for **Patrick Staud**, Chief Creative Technologist at **STAUD STUDIOS**. **Patrick Staud** provided much of the content before the interview but had to attend a last-minute meeting—something we have all experienced!

Patrick Schüle has been to many **DALIM** events, and we have known each other for many years, working at various companies. He will explain the challenges of content creation for the automotive industry.

I will also provide background information and history content for **Patrick Staud**, the former owner of **STAUD STUDIOS**, who had a last-minute obligation.

Patrick Schüle

I am a **Workflow.Monk**. I work for **Media.Monks**, formerly known as **STAUD STUDIOS**. This year, we rebranded with a new **Media.Monks** identity. Our hub is called **Mobility.Monks**. The dot stands for the identification of each hub and each individual: **Media.Monks**, **Mobility.Monks** or **Workflow.Monks**, like me.

I have never sat next to a **Workflow.Monk** before! We will start by giving a little bit of history about the company, and then we will provide an update on the new organisation. Why was the company previously called **STAUD STUDIOS** and has now been renamed **Media.Monks**? The company's history is quite long, with many new challenges coming along the way.





PICTURE 1

From left to right, **Pascal Staud**, **René Staud** and **Patrick Staud**

STAUD STUDIOS is an old and traditional company with more than 40 years of experience in production. In the **‘Staud family’** portrait (see **PICTURE 1**), in the middle, is **René Staud**, the founder of the studio and a professional photographer. Photography was very reputable and considered ‘real art’. You may have noticed the car in this photograph, which is, in fact, his private car. **René Staud** was quite an automobile enthusiast, and I would even go as far as to say he was a ‘car nut’. He made beautiful pictures of stunning cars, which is how the company started.

Although, as soon as he built his photography studio in 1983, he discovered that taking photos of cars was quite a challenge. Lighting is essential, and every photographer can agree on that. However, back then, the largest light sources available for photo studios were about one meter in diameter. Yet you needed three or four light sources to photograph a small **Porsche**. But then, the lighting was not uniform.



That is why **René Staud** invented the **Magic Flash**. It measured up to nine meters long and was a huge flash (see **PICTURE 2**). I cannot remember exactly how many thousands of watts it produced, but it was astronomical at the time. As a result, they could now take pictures with proper lighting, and no longer just small vehicles but also trucks and buses that would drive right into the studio. That was a game changer for **STAUD STUDIOS**, and they started to take entire studio photography very, very seriously.



PICTURE 2

The Magic Flash, a nine meters long flash, invented by René Staud.

In 1988, the studio did the photographs for the premiere of the old SL Mercedes (see **PICTURE 3**). There was a significant photo studio connection to **Mercedes** already back then. As you can see, they were planting grass or placing fake grass in the studio and had a background photo. It was 'pure' studio photography without any of today's various technological improvements and upgrades.

A few years later, digitalisation began to materialise. It was now possible to digitally enhance an image, for example, retouching, cleaning up

and creating special effects in the background, all of which added value to the photograph (see **PICTURE 4**).

Another milestone in the company's history was the invention of computer-generated images (CGI). There was no longer the need to have a physical truck in a studio to create a photograph (see **PICTURE 5**).

In fact, many of the pictures you see in advertising today — and even back then — were never 'real' pictures and have been generated on the computer. This technological innovation led to other possibilities: more integration with CGI in photographs, movies, music videos, etc.

**PICTURE 3**

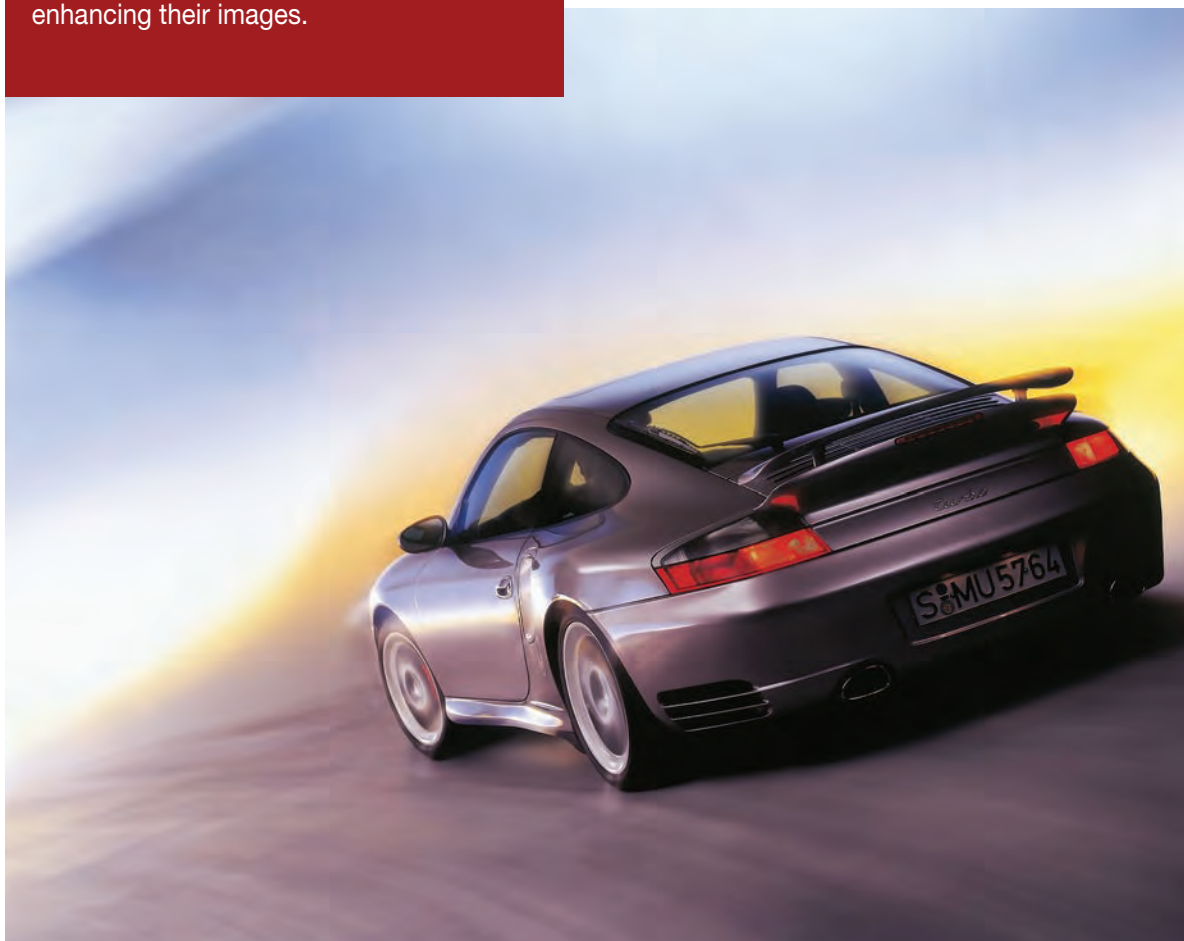
Premiere of the SL Mercedes using traditional and tangible props inside the studio

Recently, CGI has evolved further. It is not only about good visuals; it is about the customer experience. Over the past few years, some **Mercedes** dealerships have added interactive monitors that show 3D representations of the **Mercedes AMG** series. The screen will show you the disc brakes by clicking on the wheels, for example (see **PICTURE 6**). However, you can click on any part of the digital car to get more detailed information about what is under the hood. All that real-time information visible with the gaming engine is possible thanks to programming done within **STAUD STUDIOS**.

For the past 40 years, **STAUD STUDIOS** has been doing all this and more in the Automotive and Mobility industry. It is not only cars but also motorcycles, boats, and other forms of transportation. Their exceptional experience has enabled them to work for some of the most iconic car brands, including **Aston Marton, Bentley, Bugatti, Ferrari, Lamborghini, McLaren, Porsche** and many more. About 90% of which you would want in your garage! It is an exciting industry to work in if you like cars, but like in any industry, it has its challenges. I will give the floor to **Patrick Schüle** to explain more about the modern changes in the company.

PICTURE 4

STAUD STUDIOS start digitally enhancing their images.

**Patrick Schüle**

The big merger with **Media.Monks** is the latest milestone for **STAUD STUDIOS**. We decided we wanted to be a true end-to-end partner for the automotive and mobility industry, combining production, technology, creativity and data in one global mobility hub.

Data prep, digital production, photography, film, script & automation are just a few things **STAUD STUDIOS** is taking over now as a global mobility hub. I started working at the company in 2017, and in the beginning, nobody believed that Unreal

Engine and gamification could be up to date with full CG. But now, with real-time rendering or raytracing, it has become state-of-the-art. And automation and scripting, as well as all the data-driven content, are coming together too.

Let me tell you more about a current case story we are working on for the **BMW group**. We inherit all the product data - like the model, colour, upholstery, price, etc. - from systems. We also inherit all the user journey - meaning the customer data - such as gender, age, language, interests, location, etc. And by connecting the two, it is now possible to generate user-based assets and content that fit the client perfectly.



PICTURE 5

Computer-generated images (CGI) simplify studio photography and gradually become the norm in advertising.

This all leads to a massive explosion of assets. We must create all the assets to adjust for colour variations, locations, and interchangeable talent (models). We also need to adjust to other market adaptations like which side the steering wheel is on, the license plates, interchangeable props, and whether the asset is shown in the day or night, or different setups, like in the snow. We need a system to store all this content while staying connected to the corresponding metadata. And that is where DALIM ES comes into play.

The merger between **STAUD STUDIOS** and **Media.Monks** was two years ago now, but is it true that this merger was actually initiated by **BMW**, who selected a new lead—or exclusive—agency?

Patrick

Yes. We needed a lot more skilled people to handle the number of assets we were confronted with. We needed more manpower to connect to more data-driven companies. This was not possible beforehand, thanks to the big merger with **Media.Monks** it now is. Working from different locations was one of their specialities. Consequently, we are connected even though **STAUD STUDIOS'** head office is in Stuttgart. And this solution is a remarkable success.

Of course, the merger has created some challenges. A few years ago, when **STAUD STUDIOS** and **DALIM SOFTWARE** started working together, you were one of the first customers that said: “we need a single sign-in and user authentication”. Due to the merge, we had to adapt quickly and change this single sign-on solution that we had been developing because suddenly, **Media.Monks** and **BMW** came into play and changed everything.

The pandemic also caused challenges. You guys needed to work from home with lots of data, so you needed to upgrade your infrastructure towards High Availability (HA) setups to use **ES**. Luckily our friends from **schwabe+braun** helped a lot.

Schwabe+braun has nearly 30 years of experience in Workflow & Automation, IT Solutions and Colour Management. On the basis of a long-standing business relationship with **STAUD STUDIOS**, they were the reason **STAUD STUDIOS** implemented **DALIM's** software. Because **STAUD STUDIOS** works hand in hand with leading companies in the automotive industry, they have specific needs when it comes to image rights and licence management. **Schwabe+braun**, therefore, customized and extended their **ES** to ensure nothing slipped through the cracks. Based on this extension, all relevant data about assets, including rights for country use, validity, expiration date and many more, are now available and linked to a reporting system. And **schwabe+braun's** IT team can provide support whenever they need it. In fact, they can communicate instantly through their windows as their headquarters are literally across the street from **STAUD STUDIOS!** Isn't that practical!



Patrick Schüle is Workflow Engineer at **Media.Monks** (formerly **STAUD STUDIOS**) providing process/workflow optimisation and developing multichannel workflows, administration and support of **DALIM ES** and **DALIM TWIST**. He has served similar roles at **Meyle+Müller GmbH+Co**. **Patrick** studied at **SRH Technical School** for IT and Media, Pforzheim University. He also has a certificate of excellence in **DALIM ES Advanced Training**.

Another hurdle was a new ‘audience’ and new user types. It was not only **STAUD STUDIOS’** tech guys using **ES**, but this large marketing organisation was also suddenly using it, and these different users looked at the UI and asked us if we could make it ‘pretty’.

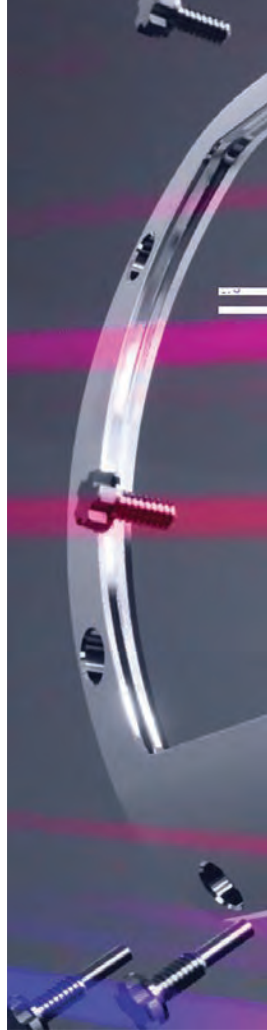
Those were some of the challenges you were also facing, plus the completely different needs to navigate through all the various assets and workflows.

Patrick

We have been through a tough couple of years, but we have succeeded with the help from you and our partners. Our biggest goal was to improve the usability—the user experience, as I like to call it— and the workflows to solve our various problems.

ES became really attractive to work with. We used to have so many problems with terrible folder structures that people made because the project was so overwhelming. But with the new UI, we could use all the milestones as taggable features and have the assets presented in a really appealing way. It was also essential for the approval of all the creatives we are working with and became an attractive way to approach our new clients. The new filtering methods in **ES** were also significant for us. It was a big step in moving away from excessive and disorganised subfolders. We can now filter all our assets with text and metadata, which is crucial because they process and change all the time. We can have assets side by side in a table view and keep track of which phase we are in. It is much easier to work with now.

Because we are now part of **Media.Monks**, and the automotive industry has tight regulations; we must work very carefully to implement a dedicated global quality assurance department. In



MAKING THE INVISIBLE VISIBLE

THE RICHARD MILLE
INTERACTIVE
POS EXPERIENCE

addition, a legal department reviews each asset we intend to use in different countries to ensure that everything complies with local regulations and the law. This is why we implemented a sophisticated workflow system within ES. Now, we can check the approval cycle status quickly and easily. There is also a point within the workflow—a distribution role where we can send files to the different departments for approval. Our producers or project managers can now easily choose the files and say: “Okay, this has to go to the quality assurance department,” or “This one must be sent to the legal department.” We can easily keep track of everything, thanks to the new interface.

For one of our projects, we performed an update on the production system while we were in the product phase, for which we needed a new video viewer. And we needed an alternative to **Frame IO**, which we also used in our company because the security regulations in the automotive world made it impossible to use. Uploading security-related/secret data to a cloud is an absolute no-go. We needed **Frame IO** functionalities

PICTURE 6

To improve the customer experience, Mercedes creates a 3D computer-generated image (CGI) of the AMG series.

somewhere else. So **DALIM** delivered their new and improved **ES Video Viewer**, making the project much more manageable.

It works similarly to other systems but has even more features; for example, making notes is a no-brainer, we can also compare an ungraded video with a graded one using a slider bar, we can play videos simultaneously and see the colour change. Those features help so much in these project phases.

A big shout out to **Maxime and Tim at DALIM**, who developed and helped us implement all these new features, because it was a huge deal to get it on track.■

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Print is alive and kicking




THEMAGAZINE 27

GRAHAM BLANKS

is the **Business Development Director** for **DALIM SOFTWARE** in North America, based in Boston, Massachusetts. He works very closely with **DALIM's** North American distributor, **Blanchard Systems**.

MICHAEL CLERVI

is a **Senior Solutions Architect** at **DALIM SOFTWARE**. He first started with **Brown Printing Company** in 2005, which was owned by **Gruner + Jahr** (Bertelsmann), and later acquired by **Quad** in 2014. From a technical standpoint, he was responsible for production automation, removing technical roadblocks and finding efficiencies. He deployed customer-facing portals interacting directly with the workflows. **Michael** had an eight-person team at **Quad**, which was using **DALIM** for many things: 100% of normalized print production output, upstream photo studio workflows, brand and agency content/ approval workflows, etc.

A photograph of two men sitting on a stage in a modern, dimly lit room. The man on the left is bald, wearing a grey jacket and khaki pants, sitting in a dark armchair. The man on the right is wearing glasses, a blue shirt, and dark pants, sitting in a similar dark armchair. They are facing each other, engaged in conversation. Between them is a small, round, light-colored table with a glass of water on it. The background features a large screen with a vibrant, abstract pink and purple wave pattern. To the right, there are vertical light fixtures and a decorative wall sconce. The overall atmosphere is professional and contemporary.

A quartet of experienced print experts met to discuss the current status of print, along with its future.

RYAN FROM,

who has been in the industry for over 30 years—the first 10-12 in prepress and printing—works for **Blanchard Systems**. For the last 20 years, **Ryan** has been a **Software Integrator** for a few different companies, dealing with printers, agencies, brand owners, and retailers. He helps these people organize data and data asset management and help them automate the production of different collateral.

ALAN DARLING,

a **DALIM SOFTWARE** user is the principal of **Congruent Development**, an independent consultant company. Immediately prior to that, he was **VP of Information Systems** at **Quantum Group**, an offset and digital commercial and direct mail printer in Chicago. He has over 40 years of experience in print, advertising and publishing technologies.

GRAHAM

We thought we would look back at our heritage and where we've come from and talk a little bit about print and how print is very much alive.

ALAN

I'm going to focus on the wellness of direct mail. We're going to look at what it's like in the American market right now. From **Quantum's** point of view, direct mail had been growing significantly from year to year. In 2019, we produced about 50 million pieces going into mail, postcards and letters. In 2020, that grew to 80 million. In 2021 that had increased to 150 million, and it's continuing to grow.

While I've known Carol and **DALIM SOFTWARE** for years, my association with **DALIM** really started by putting **DALIM DRIVE** in place in October 2019. We were one of the earliest adopters, if not the first, specifically to ingest, pre-flight and fix PDF files from some of our clients—working primarily in direct mail. Quantum can process somewhere in the region of 850,000 PDF files daily. If you do the math backwards, you'll see that more than covers the 150 million pieces we've got coming in, and that is hardware-based on-premises. We have a dedicated server in place with about 200 cores.

I'm also very much involved in and working with real end-to-end workflows—not just receiving PDF files and getting them out the back of a printer or a press. I'm talking about returning to the files coming in with information about the files, taking the file metadata, ingesting them into databases, and linking those databases up with the **ERP** system. It's hugely important to take the

current islands of automation that we have and link them together. We can do that with **APIs**. It's a significant amount of work, but it's something we need to do.

Quantum is a seasonal business, and the fourth quarter kills them. What we want to be able to do is flex the work. By 'containerizing' up in the cloud, we should be able to flex that processing resource to cover the increase in Q4 volumes when the work arrives.

I did some research: The top 100 printers in the US who say they do some direct mail work report overall revenues of about \$21 billion. If you take just the income that they're generating from direct mail, it reduces to \$4.3 billion. There's a lot of work that's going through on these workflows.

It's interesting that for the top 10 printers, more than 95% of their work is direct mail—about \$1 billion for those top 10 companies.

Certainly, in terms of COVID's effect, the B2B space died because everyone worked from home. Very few companies had mechanisms in place to take mail arriving at the typical areas of business and distributing it. But there has been a lot of growth in business-to-consumer work.



As far as the future, I think print will continue to play a significant role. It's to do with multichannel and omnichannel, where you are actually employing all the different channels that got responses and action from your clients. That comes along with things like QR codes. If you can supply a QR code on a postcard that someone can just scan on their smartphone, it'll take them to wherever you wish—to a specific landing page, for example, and then get them into the rest of your sales funnel.

AR and VR are going to play a major part as well. Plus, there's digital voice recognition. You can send someone a postcard that tells the recipient to say, "Hey, Alexa, find out about this." You give them the script of what to say to Alexa to capture that person. That is going to be important in getting B2B clients back again. You've got to recapture them if they continue working from home.

Just a final thought on omnichannel: I have yet to hear a full, consistent definition of what omnichannel means, except for one definition I heard from someone who said, "Omnichannel is like kissing in high school. Everyone talks about it, few people actually do it, and very few people do it well."

MICHAEL

With regard to print, I agree with what Alan said about omnichannel and multichannel. There is undoubtedly a place for print in today's ecosystem, and I don't think we need to make a convincing argument for that. Instead, I think we can just look at what's happening with some of the more prominent brands, marketing partners, and agencies because the real value today is in what we call 'first-party data'. Data that people voluntarily give to brands in response to marketing campaigns is the most valuable type of data that can be used.



The question is, what should we do as we try to empower our customers to do those things? The answer is precisely what Alan said, which is to do omnichannel properly. It means that you own the entire campaign—not just the campaign, but the campaign of campaigns. You are the marketer on behalf of your client. Whatever they want to do themselves, they can do themselves, but they need a partner.

A huge company like **Quad** is doing that. They have painstakingly built the capacity over many years to address every piece of that puzzle, and they will do it well. It will take a little bit more time to do it properly, but I think they'll be the first really big company to do that.

GRAHAM

I think that part of Quad's general strategy is getting into the agency space, and they've made that move from a traditional print service provider to a marketing service provider. You talked about e-commerce, and I think now Quad is the 13th largest agency in the world.

MICHAEL

Yes. They don't want to get into the agency space; they want to own the agency space.



GRAHAM

To follow what Alan was saying, I thought I'd offer some numbers about printing in general. Obviously, this panel's very North American-based. Despite the myths we've heard that maybe print is dead, print is very much alive. Print is green, though people tend to say that it's not and is here to stay.

Commercial print operations in the US in 2021 accounted for about \$78 billion in revenue, and global printing is about an \$800 billion business. Revenue from print advertising increased about 18% between 2019 and 2020, which is quite impressive. The US printing industry is the 14th largest manufacturing industry in the US, employing around 350,000 people across about 45,000 American printing shops. It's quite a significant business.

What would you say to those who believe that print is not alive, not green, and not renewable, and maybe it's not as effective as other channels? How do you speak to people who wouldn't necessarily consider print in their marketing pool of campaigns they could leverage?

MICHAEL

I would say if you didn't look at print, what did you look at? What information did you get by doing that? Maybe you should look at the rest because it's just a part of the puzzle. If you want to market correctly, you have to cover all important segments to your particular target—and it's almost impossible, even if you try, to avoid print. You can't because you've got packaging, and you've got in-store signs, and you've got direct mail. Maybe publishing is declining, but direct mail and packaging are both going through the roof.

**GRAHAM**

I think that, generally, it's accepted that labels and packaging are growing. I think direct mail is growing, but the audience is a little more seasoned than some of the younger people you might come across in the marketing department. What would be the justification for print? How would you justify the effectiveness of a particular campaign?

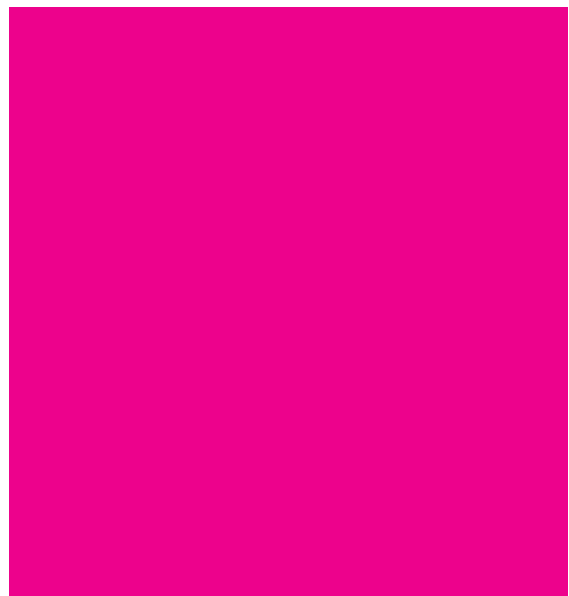
MICHAEL

First of all, I don't think it's a foregone conclusion because you have to ask what the campaign is about and who the demographic target is. Maybe there are some for whom print is not super relevant, but there will be times when print should be used almost exclusively.

ALAN

During the pandemic, it slowed down. B2B direct mail actually decreased significantly. People are thinking, "Well, how do I get to these people if they're going to stay at home, and how do I get their mailing addresses?"

This is where print comes in. Everyone probably gets way too many email messages with some call to action, and their spam filters have been set to put them into junk. They're thrown away, whereas people in the US are getting less and less mail in their mailboxes. When they get it, and it's personalized, it looks like someone's put some thought into what they're doing. They'll pick it up, read it, and take some action.



One client at Quantum was getting about a 10% response rate from black and white postcards that were very relevant. They were targeted at individuals, but a 10% return is enormous. However, in general, direct mail or print doesn't work in some markets, and if it doesn't work, don't do it.

It goes back to those old discussions, 'Did video kill the movie business? Did radio kill reading books?' Everything filters itself back down. Radio is vibrant now, especially podcasts if you consider those as radio. They've grown, adapted, they're relevant, and they're vital. It's a lot of money – \$4 billion is a chunk of change when you're looking at what's going on just with direct mail.

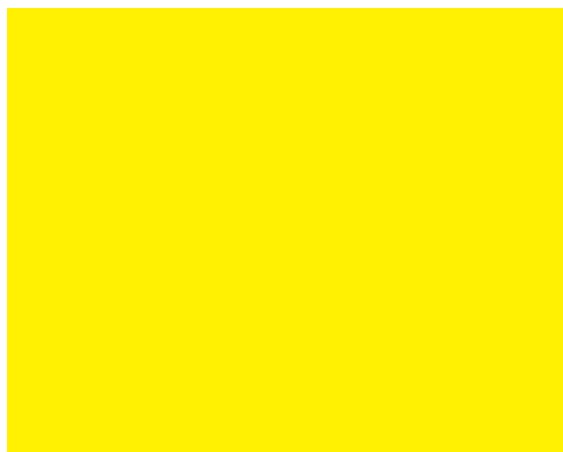
GRAHAM

With that growth in direct mail, what challenges and opportunities in your environment do you need to tackle?

ALAN

You've got to do more with less, and you've got to do it quickly, depending on the client you're dealing with. The service level agreement often is that 48 hours after you've received those files, it had better be in the mail.

One example is when the direct mail campaign triggers people to reach out to a call centre. If you've set up that call centre and the mail doesn't get there, you've got people sitting around doing nothing.



GRAHAM

What was the real issue for which you needed **DRIVE**?

ALAN

Many people do not know how to create good PDF files and generate PDF files that break RIPs. If you take a digital press and you impose a bunch of postcards that have transparency and those transparencies overlap, it kills the RIP, and the RIP runs at least half-speed.

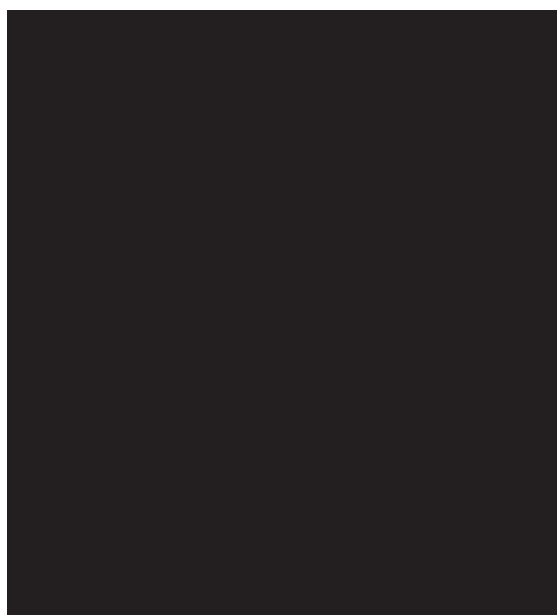
If we know what the target product is, one of the things we're doing is using a special profile that flattens transparency. We might as well make sure we've got all the fonts embedded.

GRAHAM

Michael, with your experience at Quad, what were you using in terms of technology, and what was driving your choices of how you deploy the technology?

MICHAEL

Primarily, the technology that we used was the **DALIM** stack. Quad bought a lot of companies over the years, and Quad is well known for creating solutions in-house. Historically, they're a self-bootstrapped DIY shop, and ultimately over many years, we did replace some of that with **DALIM**.



GRAHAM

They moved from the build versus buy.

MICHAEL

Yes. We had a meeting the other day, and we had around 500 people in IT.

After we tackled production and efficiencies, we moved on to integrations and building onto the platform—to help with things like administration and rapid onboarding of clients. Probably the most powerful tool that we built on top of the **DALIM** stack is standardized workflows per work stream. For retail—for example, publications, catalogues, and photos—we have a standardized workflow to support photo studio activities.

GRAHAM

Ryan, regarding clients you're working with, you've got web to print, and you've got retailers. Have you seen any major shifts?

RYAN

In the last four to six years, there has been a big uptick in web to print. We've done some pretty exciting things—a lot of automation and API work—workflows that are designed to do many different things. Based on the type of input you're getting, an XML or some kind of an API call can do various things, with integrations and making proofs. I'd say web to print has definitely had a huge uptick, with the improvement of the quality or functionality within companies hosting the websites.

GRAHAM

We're putting a really positive spin on the printing community or the printing industry as a whole. What do you guys think the future will look like in terms of technology changes, opportunities for growth, or technology in the industry?

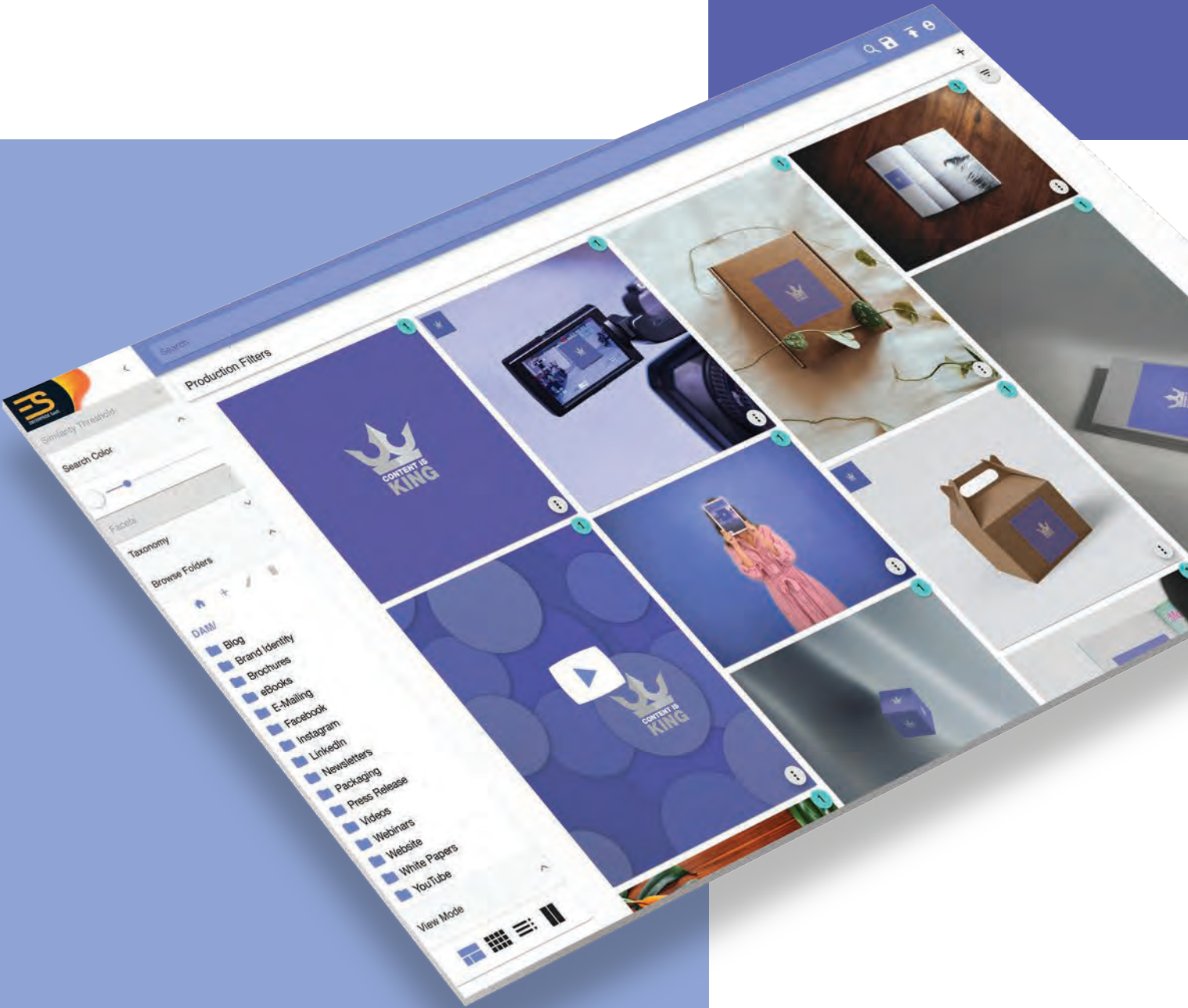
ALAN

We've developed a whole bunch in the printing industry. The printing industry is very much a cottage industry, and so many different independent solutions are floating out there. A massive step forward is the advent of real APIs to unite people and things—the linking of these islands of automation. You're going back to defining what an end-to-end solution really means and implementing it.

GRAHAM

There have been lots of M&As and rationalization in the US marketplace. We're seeing many multi-site print service providers or marketing service providers looking at centralizing. The initial move was off bare metal to virtual machines. Now, it's virtual machines out to the cloud, whether it's AWS or some competing technology. They are rationalizing and centralizing to being able to support multiple plants in multiple time-sensitive projects, dealing with different time zones over different regions. We will have to tackle those challenges, but it certainly supports the business. ■

Automate your
Content Marketing
Operations



PIXL

Betting on the future with DALIM ES



THE MAGAZINE



Pureprint Group is a world-class print and marketing services business, employing over 400 colleagues across four sites in the UK. Established by **Edward** and **Ellen Handford** in 1926, the proud family business has grown from strength to strength. Driven by an entrepreneurial spirit, a desire for innovation and a passion for the environment; **Pureprint** has become the UK's leader in sustainable print and grown annual revenues to more than £60 million.

In 2021, **Pureprint Group** launched its new creative production division, **PiXL**. **PiXL** by **Pureprint** provides a wide range of creative services from photography and videography through to creative design and post-production. Based in a 4,000 sq. ft facility in Leeds city centre, the team at **PiXL** are focused on providing clients with the highest quality digital content.

The desire for innovation within the group identified a need for diversification, and the need for a greater offering in digital marketing services. With a customer base of over 2,500 companies worldwide, including many household names; the opportunity to expand the product offering made perfect sense. “We were becoming inundated with



requests from clients for digital marketing support” explains Group CEO **Mark Handford**, “but didn’t have the right skillset in-house to capitalise on these opportunities. The only way we could guarantee that we could provide these services with the same level of quality that Pureprint customers expect, was to invest in our people and facilities”.

Pureprint Group’s Imprint division was seen as the perfect home to oversee the launch of the **PiXL** brand. Imprint Managing Director **Dave Bullivant** explains, “We’ve been delivering campaign point-of-sale for the retail sector for over 30 years, and with many of the requests for content and production coming from businesses in this sector, it made complete sense to use the expertise that existed within our business to help drive **PiXL** forwards”. He adds, “**Pureprint Group** has several sites across the UK and saw Leeds as an emerging city with huge growth potential. Leeds has been successful in developing digital agencies and has a huge talent pool, but doesn’t have a world-class production business, so we feel it’s a huge opportunity.”



Scan the QR code to watch a taste of what the PiXL team can produce.



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The Group's enthusiasm for **PiXL** has been matched by the reception of its customers, with revenues growing tenfold within the first year and several high-street retailers on board. "We've got a very dynamic and exciting customer base, and not just within our core retail sector, we've done work in both the corporate and hospitality sectors as well. The drive for content is becoming more and more crucial regardless of industry, and we've seen demand for video content increase rapidly". Explains **Phillip Tasker**, Business Development Director for **PiXL**.

E-commerce photography has also played a significant part in the company's growth, through partnerships with the **Bonmarché** and **Peacocks** brands. The **PiXL** studio supports the delivery of both physical and digital marketing assets for over 500 retail outlets, as well as supporting all content for their web presence. **Cath Chandler**, E-Commerce Trading Manager at **Peacocks** says, "**PiXL** consistently provide **Peacocks** with a prompt and efficient, high-quality service. From model selection through to image delivery, their friendly and flexible team have a good understanding of our brand and product styling requirements, helping us bring our products to life and speed up the post-production process."

"...It's transformed how we interact with our customers and reduced the lead time of delivery and approval of content by over 80%..."

The process with **Peacocks** has been helped in no small part by the partnership with **DALIM SOFTWARE** after **PiXL** invested in the **DALIM ES** software suite in early 2021. "We were delighted to bring **Pureprint Group** into the **DALIM** family" says **Colin Price**, **DALIM SOFTWARE UK** Managing Director, "they're a business we've admired for a long time, so to have a chance to play a crucial role in developing the **PiXL** division is fantastic for us". **ES** has been tailored to handle all aspects of the selection and post-production photography studio processes. **Phillip Tasker** adds "It's transformed how we interact with our customers and reduced the lead time of delivery and approval of content by over 80%". The **PiXL** team are working closely with **DALIM** on future development and solutions specific to photography studios, recognising the huge potential that the software offers.

PiXL's work with **DALIM** is crucial to achieving the businesses' long-term plans, with aims to grow to be seen as the market leader in providing omnichannel content. "Given our strong position in the print and large format markets, we see a unique opportunity to offer clients a true turnkey service" explains **Mark Handford**. "Take our strength in direct mail and point-of-sale for example. If we can create campaigns that link these services with the digital content produced by the **PiXL** team, we'll provide clients with a truly joined-up omnichannel strategy that few people in the market will be able to match" **Mark** expands.

To find out more about our services and how we can bring your brand to life, contact us at **info@wearepixl.co.uk** or **scan the QR code** to visit our website. ■



Pixl

by Pureprint Group



Image courtesy of PiXL - All rights reserved.

Pixl is the creative hub of world-class print and marketing services business, **Pureprint Group**. With over 20 years' experience in photography, videography, and brand asset creation, we at **Pixl** are committed to providing our clients with the highest-quality digital content.

Photography

Our in-house photographic studio teamed with our investment in the latest technology and our dedicated team, enable us to deliver impactful and cost-effective assets every time. We're experts in providing solutions for the fashion and e-commerce industries and are relied upon by several high-street retailers. Together, our studio team has a wide range of experience in producing lifestyle, creative, product, model, and food photography shoots.

Videography

Driven by our clients' need for video asset creation and our constant thirst for innovation, our investment in equipment allows us to produce beautiful results that drive sales and increase brand awareness. We work with our clients to create a content strategy, before using our expertise to manage all phases of production. From social media adverts to viral content, documentaries and more; our team push creativity to its limits to take our clients to the next level.

Post-production

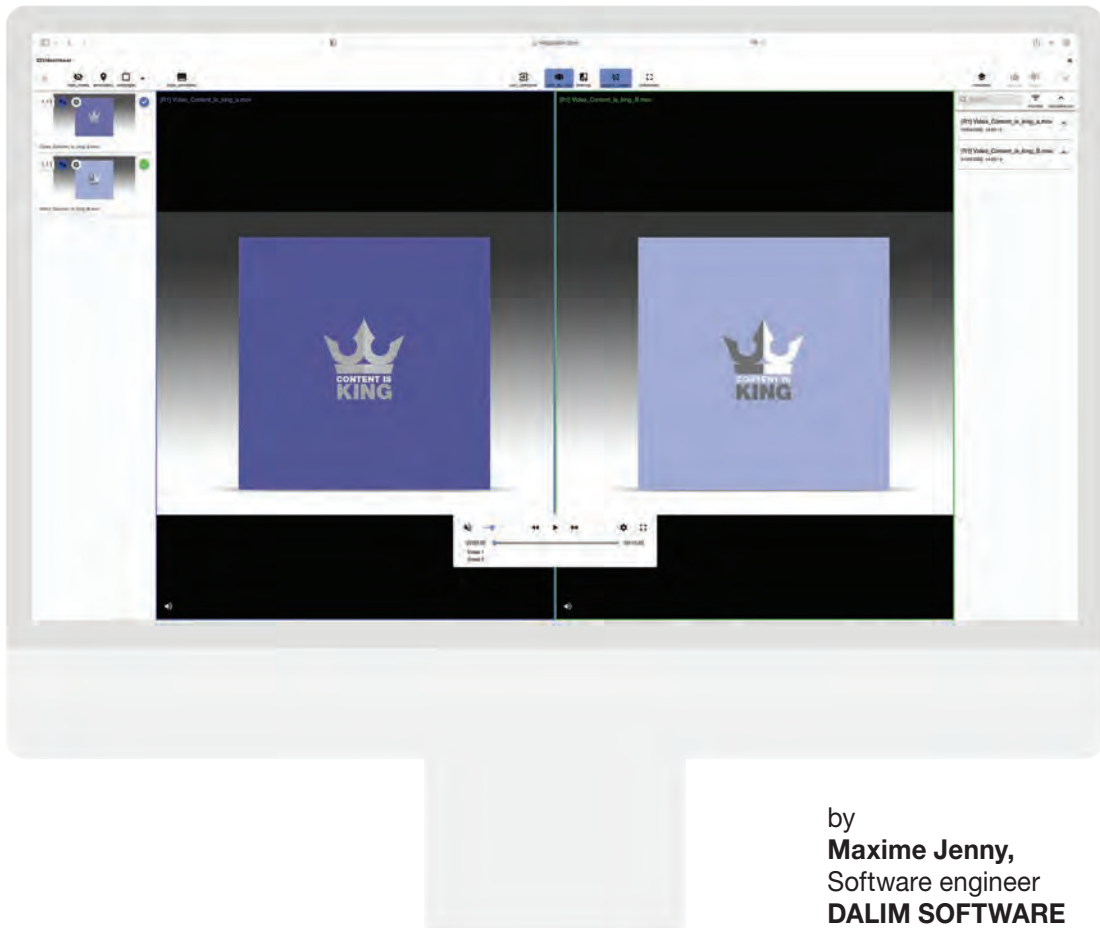
Years of experience within our retouching teams means we have a solution to make every project come to life. We are specialists in post-production for retail, with teams skilled at editorial, close-up beauty work and still-life product shots. We work with our clients to deliver images on a 24-hour turnaround, ensuring that we can support even the tightest of deadlines.

Creative Design

We can deliver a wide range of creative services, from on-brief brand identities through to effective cross media campaigns. Working from an initial brief and exploring visual concepts to deliver the most suitable messaging, our multi-discipline team work on execution across all media to ensure a full turnkey service. Our adaptable studio format means that we create a bespoke service for every client.

The **DALIM ES** Video Viewer

A powerful collaborative
post-production tool



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by
Maxime Jenny,
Software engineer
DALIM SOFTWARE

“...you can generate a
PDF report with a preview of the
video and of each frame that has
been annotated...”

Nowadays, video through social media like Instagram, Twitter, or LinkedIn is one of the more impactful means of communication. It is a relatable and natural medium for companies to interact with their customers.

And although creating videos has become accessible to almost everyone, sometimes you need a professional helping hand and reliable tools to collaborate during the creation process. One of those tools is a computer with some «horsepower». Indeed, many video formats can be heavy and therefore take up space on your computer's hard drive, so working on videos is not always practical. That is why **DALIM SOFTWARE** decided to update its video viewer. It is now more efficient and powerful than ever, empowering teams in their content creation and answering the needs of content creators better.

Working with all file types

One of the technical obstacles to overcome was how various video file formats such as MP4, Apple's MOV format, and AVI are supported by different web browsers. For example, when using **DALIM ES'** earlier Video Viewer, Google Chrome only supported the MP4 format, while Apple's Safari browser supported MOV files. Now **ES** can play every video format, no matter what browser you're using.

When uploading a PDF file into **ES**, the software generates an image preview that you can see in the gallery. The idea was to use the same preview system with videos. When you upload a video to **ES**, the server automatically converts the file to MP4 because all browsers support that format. The **ES Video Viewer** can then play the new MP4 video, which is the same as the original, on every device - mobile and desktop - and every browser.

“...you can generate a PDF report with a preview of the video and of each frame that has been annotated...”

Navigating the system

Our interface may have changed but opening the new Video Viewer is just as simple as before, all you need to do is double-click on the video you wish to see. Using the control window, you can change the volume and navigate through the video with specific buttons or the newly available keyboard shortcuts. Another new feature is a menu within the control window. You can see exactly how many frames compose the video and which one you are currently on. Additionally, you can now personalise the buttons' behaviours.

The timeline has also been adjusted; you can now manually change the timestamp to arrive at a specific frame or chose a specific frame by hovering above the timeline where a detailed preview is available. A second timeline with bookmarks appears once you start annotating the video. You can then click on those bookmarks to quickly navigate to your annotations, which are also visible in chronological order in a sidebar.

The toolbar has distinctive features. It enables you to add annotations that you can edit at any time. You can add reference shapes, such as rectangles, ellipses, or you can draw freely. You can also hide the controller and navigate the video with the keyboard shortcuts. And with our new **ES Video Viewer**, you no longer have to exit your video to approve annotations. It is already available within the viewer!

When selecting multiple assets, the layout changes and shows additional information about them. You can see the number of revisions and which revision you are currently working on. While the viewer opens the active revision by default, you can opt to select a different revision. You will also be able to see whether there are annotations, the approval cycle status, and an options menu accessible with a right-click.

Easy to access captions

If captions are available, you will be able to configure them in the options menu of the controller. You will see all the available caption languages and can select the one you prefer. When annotating a video, **ES** will detect and precise the language and reference it in the various notes.

Comparing revisions: a brand-new feature

While you have always been able to make revisions, now you can compare them simultaneously. Selecting 'compare' in the revisions menu opens by default an overlay view of two video versions. However, the toolbar offers other comparison options. You can compare views side-by-side or on full screen— which is particularly helpful if you want to assess two specific frames. You can also compare two different frames from two versions of a video. For example, if you added 2 or 3 seconds of content between your revisions, you can still compare frames. And another feature even allows you to synchronise videos.



Working outside DALIM ES

Imagine working on a video with another company that does not have access to your **ES**. You want to send them a report with the annotations and feedback on said video. Within **ES** Video Viewer, you can generate a PDF report with a preview of the video and of each frame that has been annotated. While not a complete **ES** view, you can still see the content and timestamp for each annotation after each frame.

In short, the new **ES Video Viewer** is better than ever before! You can do annotations anywhere in the frame, even with different shapes to highlight specific elements, which can be incredibly helpful when collaborating with others. The revision capabilities and our new and powerful 'compare' mode have made creating videos with the **ES Video Viewer** easy!

Saving the best for last

While there are other acceptable and fully functioning video viewers, they may be missing two key components. One is all the collaboration and production tools that make **ES** special. The other critical thing if you are working on an important secret project, is privacy. Some systems might not be completely secure because, unlike **ES**, they might upload files in an open cloud, and **ES** does not. ■

Want to learn more?

Just visit our video by following the QRcode

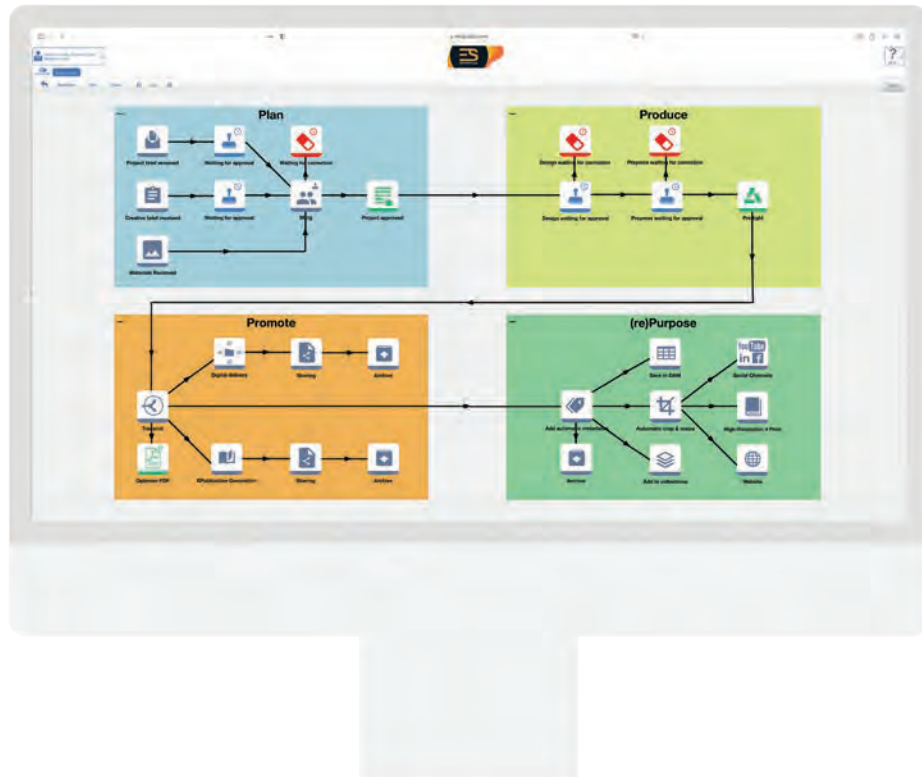
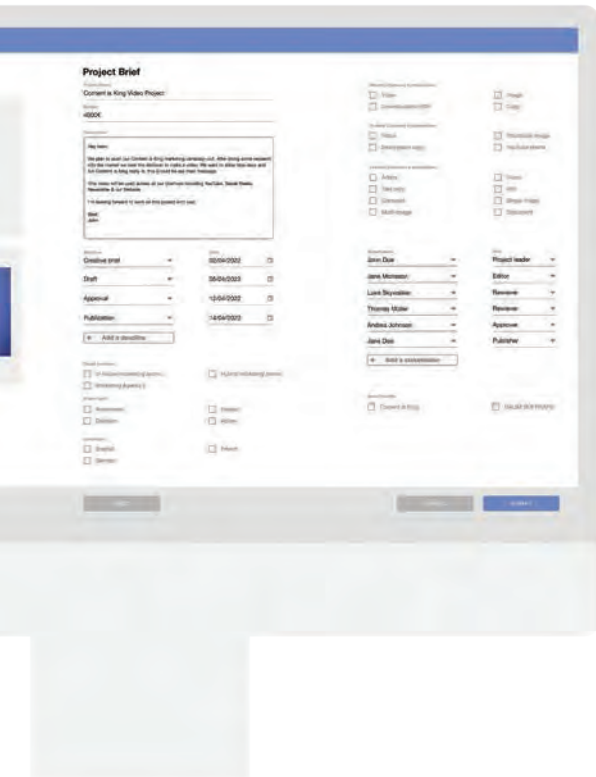


“In short, the new
DALIM ES Video Viewer is
better than ever before!”

Maxime Jenny,
Software engineer
DALIM SOFTWARE



Automate your Content Marketing Operations

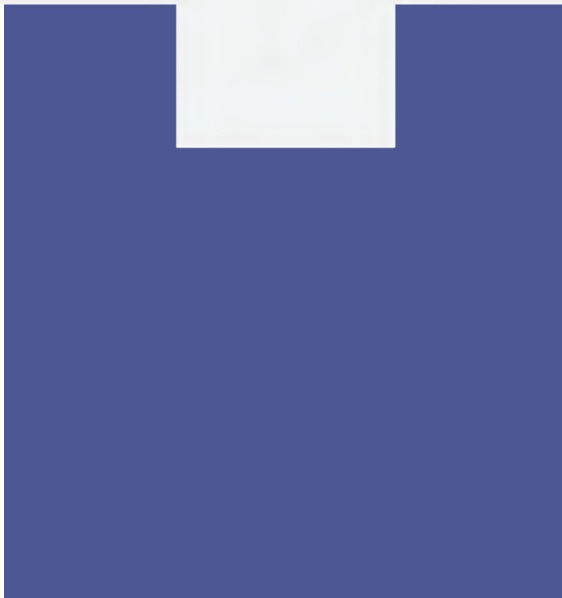
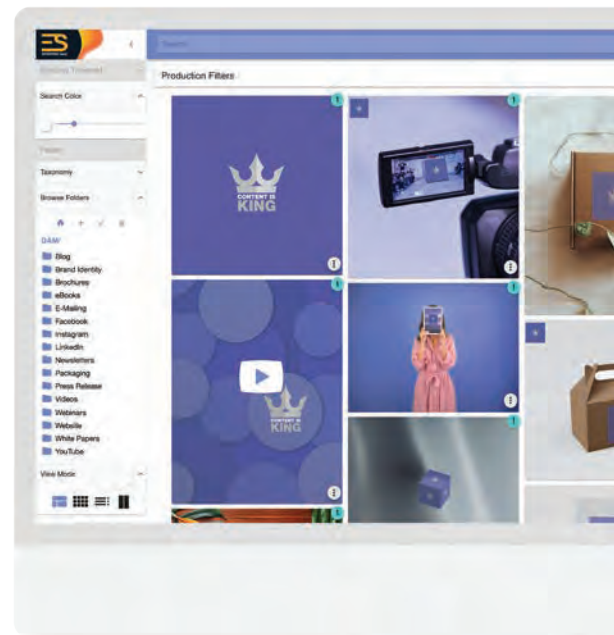
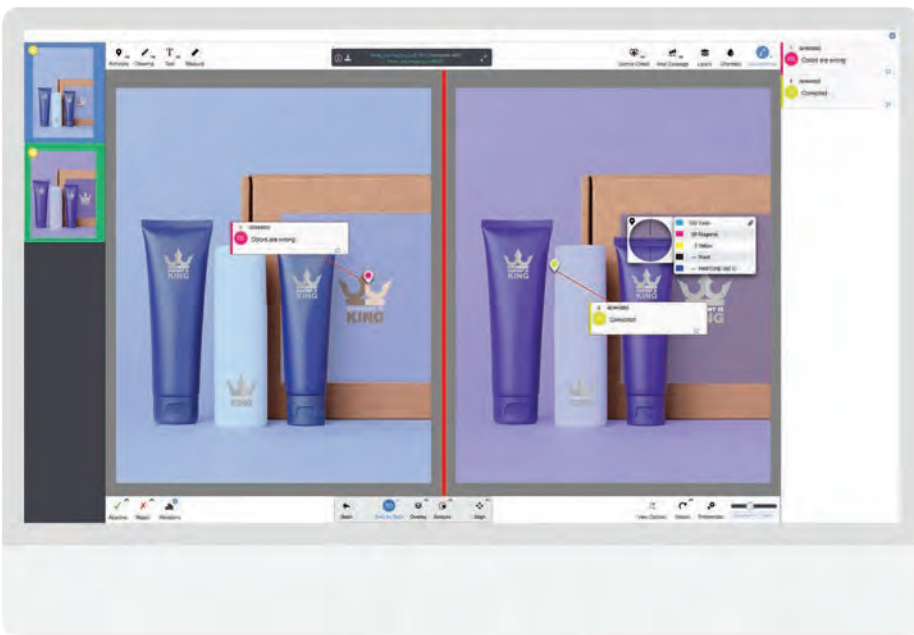


Aristide Zouheir-Kuhnle,
Marketing Director
DALIM SOFTWARE

Tim D'Elia,
Product Manager
DALIM SOFTWARE

*Your CMO
will love you!*

with the '4Ps'

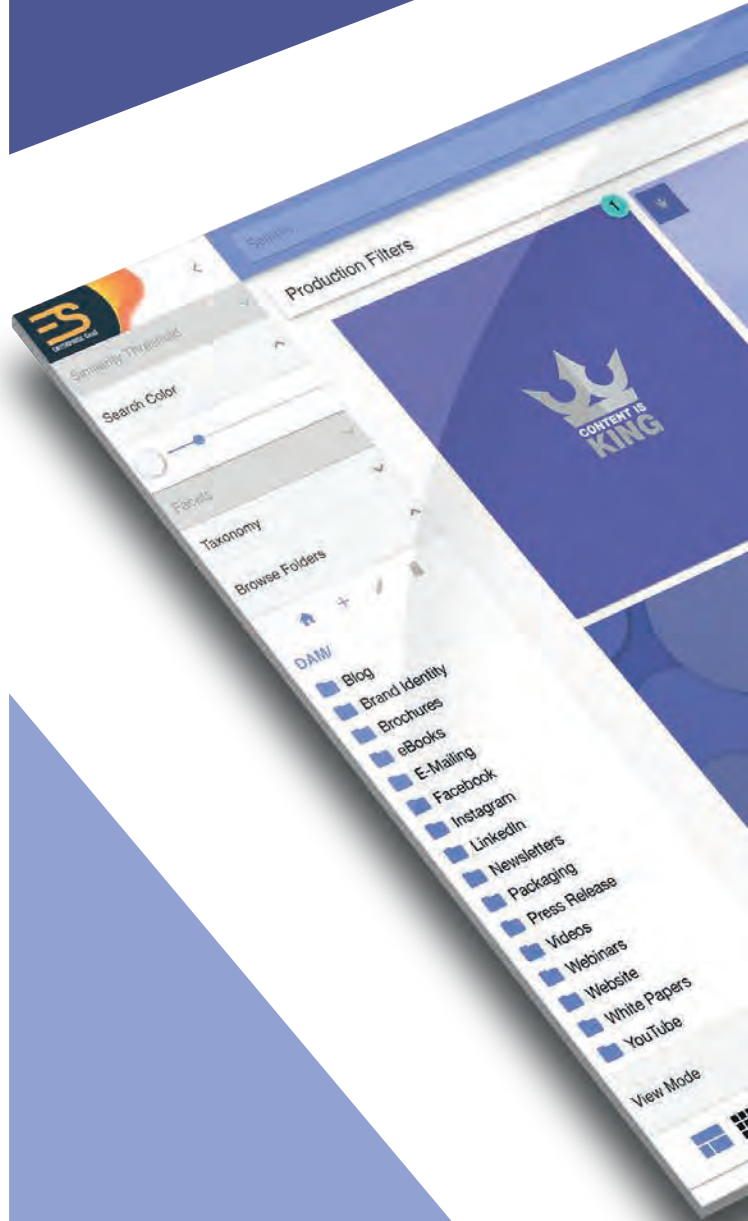


DALIM SOFTWARE has been creating products that solve problems around content production in many companies and industries. However, we want to focus on a specific solution we have been offering for a long time. It is the ability to: produce content, keep up with demands for that content in a world with many different channels, remain consistent when delivering that content, and avoid mistakes.

DALIM delivers software that solves client problems, but we do not always integrate the solutions to those problems. We provide all the tools, and then some clever people from **DALIM** work in the background to deliver those solutions. One of our goals today is to implement solutions and best practices into our software.

That means taking a specific department or problem, building a solution to that problem, and natively implementing it into the software. So that, in the best-case scenario, you - the customer - can take this solution, implement it, start using it, and take advantage of best practices. Plus, this solution needs to be deployed and implemented quickly; it needs to be readily available. Maybe you'll even change the way you work because of this solution.

The first step was to find a problem to solve, so we started searching for a problem—a department that needed our help. As it turns out, the answer was right under our noses. We were discussing issues that marketing departments have. We said to ourselves, “Okay, if we can determine where the problem lies and how to resolve it, then maybe we can build a solution, which we will try to implement into all our products, present and future, for anyone to access.”





“...a good brief is essential, as it makes projects go faster...”

Aristide created a fantastic framework, which we are calling the ‘4Ps’ of Marketing Content.” It includes Planning, Production, Publishing and Purposing.

Let us explain the ‘4Ps’ and some of the features we plan to implement into **DALIM ES**. Some of those features already exist in our software, some we will need to build, and some will be configurations we will be able to deliver to users.

Content Marketing Operations

The most important part of this project is content marketing operations. Working at **DALIM**, we all understand what content is. Those who work in marketing departments understand what marketing is. We also understand a bit about operations. If you combine those words, what do they really mean?



Search...

Similarity Threshold

Search Color



Facets

Taxonomy

Browse Folders



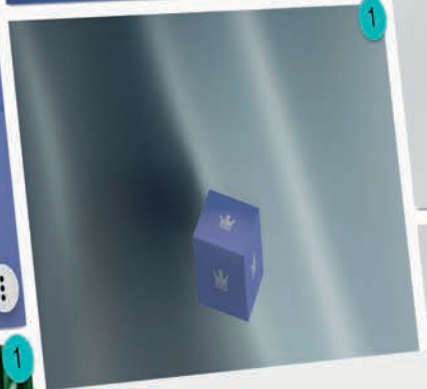
DAM

- Blog
- Brand Identity
- Brochures
- eBooks
- E-Mailing
- Facebook
- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- Newsletters
- Packaging
- Press Release
- Videos
- Webinars
- Website
- White Papers
- YouTube

View Mode



Production Filters





It starts with something every company has—where much of the value of every company lies, and it helps define the essence of each company. Content marketing operations start with the people. The people who work for our customers are the most important constituents of the work we do each day. The second important consideration is how to make those people operate effectively. What are the processes behind those people to make it easier to enjoy the work they do every day? The only way we can help is by providing technology. If you put all those three things together—the people, the operations, and the processes—you have all the ingredients you need to produce viable content for every channel. This issue is what we decided to tackle. We came up with the framework: to automate content marketing operations. We intend to do that by placing digital and print content at the centre. This framework will allow you to plan, produce, promote, and repurpose your content.

At **DALIM**, we love automation, and we love workflows. This project would not be a **DALIM** ‘thing’ if it were not a big workflow.

Our mission with the ‘4Ps’ framework is to let you do more, faster, and with less because that is how you keep money in your pockets. And this makes us happy.

The first challenge of any marketer is locating all the superheroes on your team producing content for various channels. The problem is that while they are incredibly good at producing content, much of it stays on their computers, stashed somewhere in a file system. This untouched content is the first problem we decided to tackle: all content needs to be available at your fingertips without asking anyone where it is and how to find it.

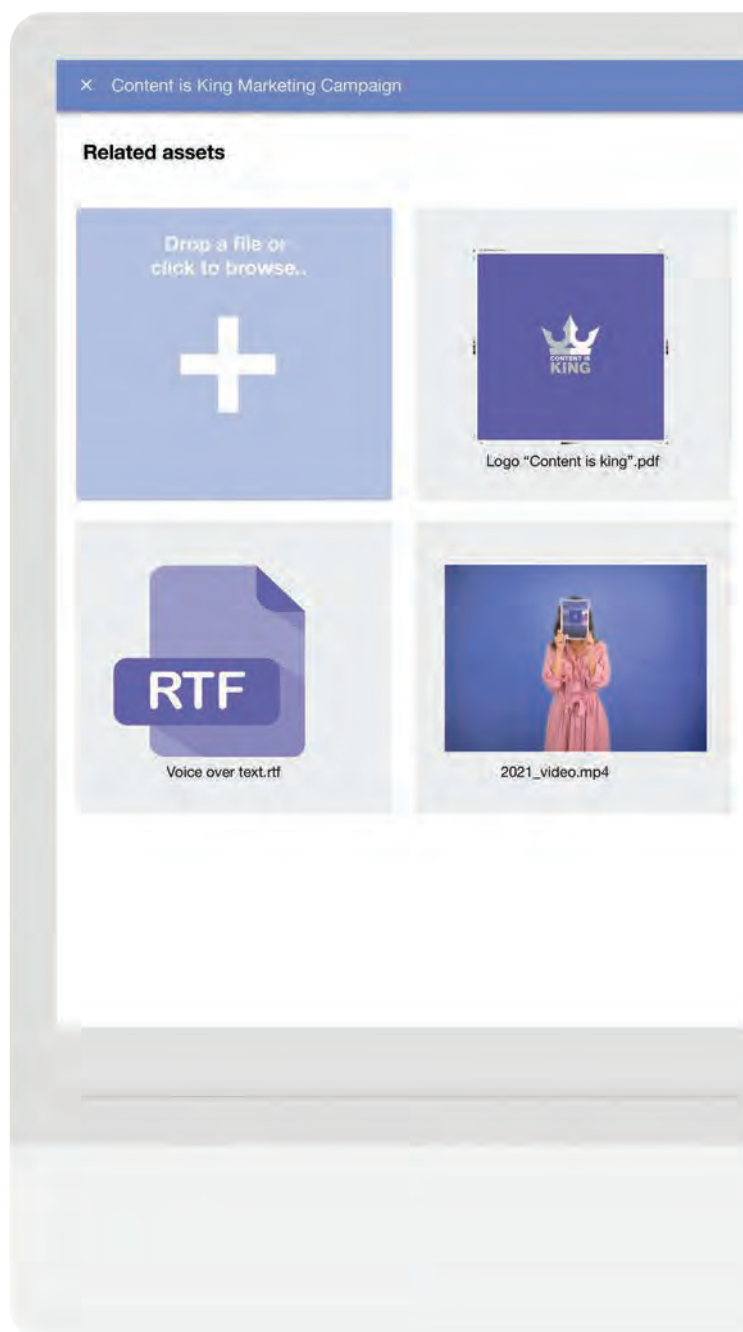
“...At **DALIM**,
we love
automation,
and we love
workflows...”

When a marketer considers a new project, everyone thinks the job starts with describing what they want to produce and then creating the content. But, in reality, it should not; it should start by looking at the centralised data and assets to identify what you already own. Many marketing departments often order new content without realising they can repurpose something they already have. Or worse, they already owned an image and purchased a virtual duplicate because they do not have a centralised repository.

The first hurdle to overcome should not be to provide a way of requesting more content; it should be to see what you already have. You need to be able to search for it. You might not know the file's name, so a filename search might not work. That is why **DALIM** provides tools that work with marketing departments. If you are creating a specific campaign, and that product's brand policy is to use a particular colour, why not search for the colour?

Planning within DALIM ES: Determining what content you need

Once you have found assets you can use, you might need to investigate further. “Who is my target? What are my project goals? In what languages do I need this content?” It would be helpful to find out precisely what you own, so you can make a conscious decision as to whether you can repurpose something or need to produce brand new content. By (re)purposing this content, by placing it in a single source of truth, you give it value because now it has a digital life.



It is rare, however, that everything you need is already available to you and your teams. Ultimately, marketing departments need to create more content. Some people might immediately start to seize a piece of paper and start drawing, but this does not reflect best practices. One way of doing this usually includes meetings where teams discuss the project's needs. Another way might be to speak about it in an informal setting, for example, at the bar after a day's work—where some great campaign ideas often come from.

Project Brief

Project Name
Content is King Video Project

Budget
4000€

Description

Hey team,

We plan to push our Content is King marketing campaign out. After doing some research into the market we took the decision to make a video. We want to show how easy and fun Content is King really is, this should be our main message.

This video will be used across all our channels including YouTube, Social Media, Newsletter & our Website.

I'm looking forward to work on this project with you!

Best
John

Decision	Date
Creative brief	02/04/2022
Draft	05/04/2022
Approval	12/04/2022
Publication	14/04/2022
+ Add a deadline	

Target Audience

In-house marketing teams Hybrid marketing teams

Marketing Agency's

Project goal

Awareness Interest

Decision Action

Language

English French

German

Website (Channels & deliverables)

Video Image

Downloadable PDF Copy

Youtube (Channels & deliverables)

Video Thumbnail image

Description copy YouTube shorts

LinkedIn (Channels & deliverables)

Article Video

Text-only Post

Carousel Single image

Multi-image Document

Stakeholders

John Doe

Jane Morisson

Luke Skywalker

Thomas Müller

Andrea Johnson

Jane Doe

+ Add a stakeholder

Role

Project leader

Editor

Reviewer

Reviewer

Approver

Publisher

Brand identity

Content is King DALIM SOFTWARE

RESET CANCEL SUBMIT

Unfortunately, by the next day, we often forget what has been said. So, the question is, what solution can **DALIM** offer to help us gather all this information and make our teams more effective?

You need a way to capture everything you have discussed at the bar or anywhere else and every piece of information that everyone involved in this workflow, whether they work within your organisation or outside your firm, needs to create the content.

This information is generally described in a project brief, which defines the project's parameters, such as goals and budgets, as well as the knowledge of the target audience, which is essential for designers to understand how they should present the content, but also languages, and channels. Without this information, everyone involved will not know what to do.

So, when does automation fall into place?

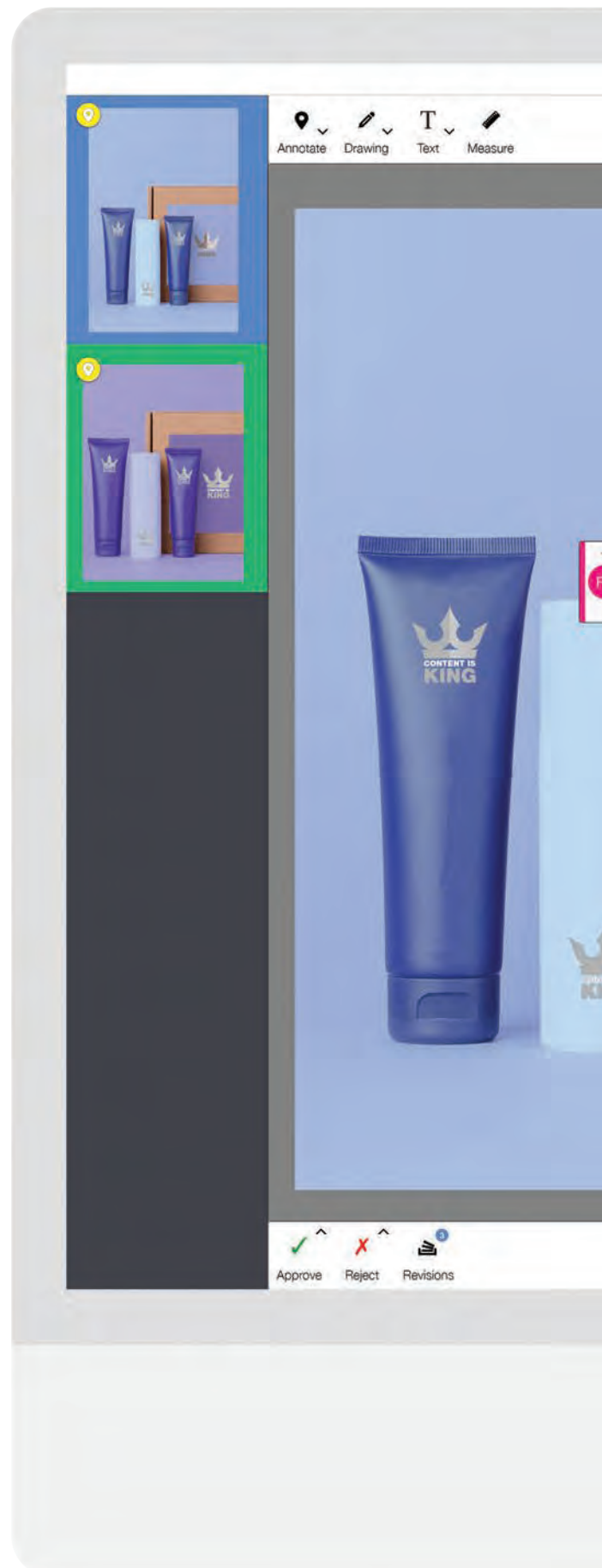
Without this data, automation would be impossible; the automated workflow cannot know what to do without this data. It will be rewarding to spend the time upfront to enter this data at the beginning of each project. Indeed, a good brief is essential, as it makes projects go faster, creates accountability, reduces the review and approval cycles, and helps deliver high-quality content.

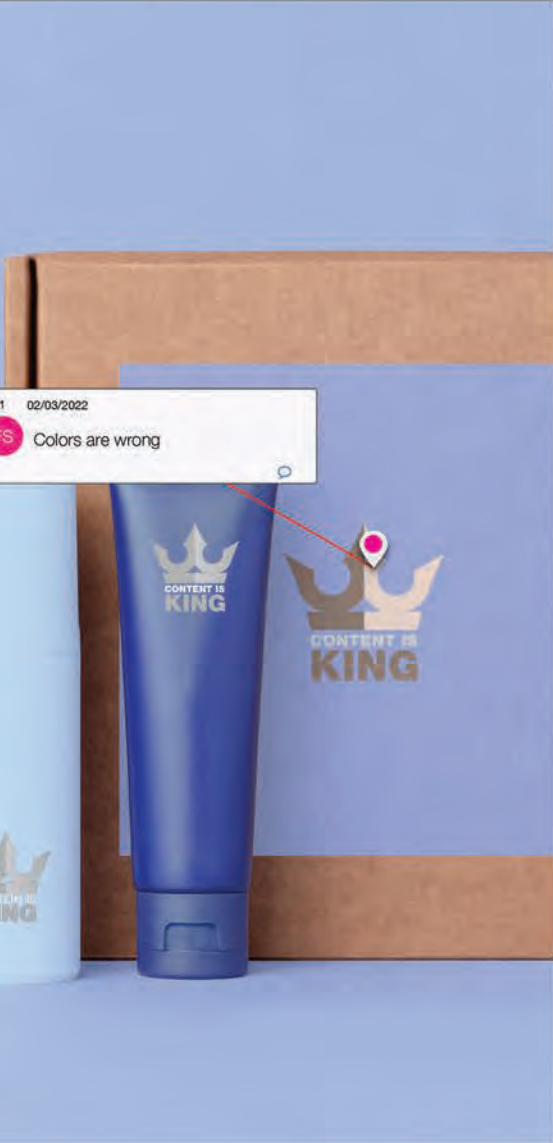
But why should you work in **ES** when you can do this in a Word document?

Production within DALIM ES: An automated and collaborative tool

Once the planning is complete, and the brief has been distributed to the right people, they are ready to produce the best content possible. The copywriters and designers need to roll up their sleeves and get their hands dirty. But it is not just about delivering good content. It is about delivering good content on time.

“...This framework will allow you to **plan, produce, promote, and repurpose** your content...”





1 02/03/2022
Colors are wrong



2 02/04/2022
Corrected

100 Cyan
96 Magenta
3 Yellow
--- Black
--- PANTONE 300 C

ES can help automate a workflow that will meet all these requirements. **People need to know what they need to do and when they must deliver it.** Without this information, you cannot do that. And you—nor anyone else in your workflow—can get that information from a Word document.

This step is crucial for a marketer because, as soon as the brief is created, it automatically triggers the other tasks in the workflow: “Did I get my files right? Is the brand identity correct?”

ES offers software tools and connections to allow anyone to create content immediately. They are not necessarily built into **ES**, but there are ways to access and coordinate those tools from within **ES** easily. Therefore, it is possible to produce content from scratch inside **ES**. With all the tools that **DALIM** has added to their products, especially thanks to our partnership with Adobe, you can build content, place it in the system, approve it, and make revisions if necessary.

The ES ‘bread and butter is its collaboration. Part of marketers’ roles is communications. Unfortunately, marketers are often the worst communicators between themselves. Even if they sit in the same office, it is difficult for them to share ideas correctly. If they are working remotely, it is even more difficult. That is why everyday marketers use these collaboration tools that help offer feedback to their teams.

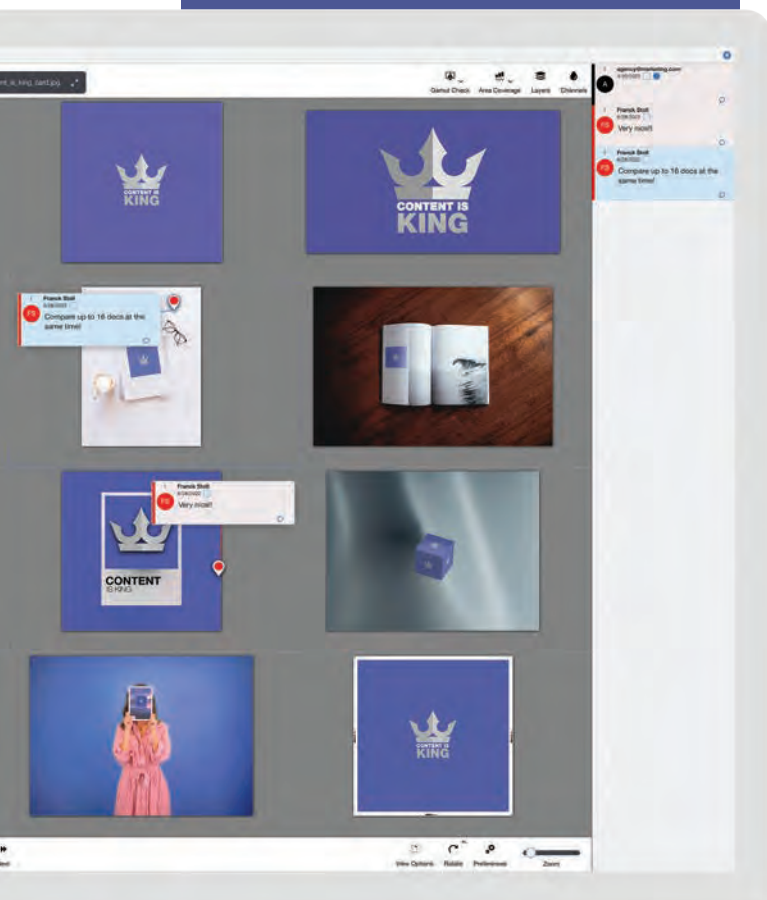
“...it is possible to produce content from scratch inside **ES**...”



Publishing the content correctly

Marketing communications is more than creating or printing PDF files. It is about other formats, like jpeg files, which are essential for social media. If you are making a blog or a website, you will want to review HTML files with your team. Many other formats, like video, are also crucial for social media. And these are just a few examples.

With the final content approved, it is ready to be promoted. When marketers hear ‘promotion’, they often want to publish their content on a wide variety of media channels— like on their website, on social media, or in emails.



After speaking to many marketers, we confirmed that publishing from a centralised platform is not necessarily always what they want to do. Many unique, specialised tools are exclusively available on each social media channel. Unless you post on the actual platform itself, you are not taking advantage of those features they have built to encourage you to use their platforms rather than centralised publishing platforms.

Purposing content to fit each medium

While marketers learn about marketing practices in university, they do not necessarily learn about the mechanics—every file format and possible output file needed. **Marketers want formats ready to be published to various channels and want them at their fingertips**, so they do not have to rely on art directors or anyone else to perform a fundamental workflow task. They need it automated.

Every day marketers search Google, asking, “What are the different formats of the different media channels?” This raises the question: How good is your channel game? Why do you have two—or more—pieces of information? While there are accepted, standardised channels, many are proprietary to companies like YouTube, Google, Facebook and others, who dictate their own rules.

This information is available and can be imported into ES, so you do not have to worry about it. But where there is a failure is the company’s own ‘channels’.

However, **ES** cannot define, on its own, how content is created in each company. The software alone cannot determine the specifications of your packaging, print brochure or direct mail piece.

This is all the responsibility of the brand owner. **DALIM** helps by making it easy to enter this information into **ES**. Every time content is produced, it is done according to your rules— and, of course, according to the regulations of those proprietary channels.

Another requirement is not only seeing the content you want to publish but assuring it is delivered by the numbers—that is, formatted and colour-managed correctly. We need to understand how the colours would behave in different channels. **ES** can maintain the accuracy of your brand identity to keep a deep connection with your customers, which is likely the most essential part when producing content.

The cycle of the '4Ps' is now complete. But it would be wise if some content could be repurposed in the future, mainly because you already own it. For example, when **DALIM** produces a 2022 product guide, much of the content has been pulled from our 2021 product guide, and it might only need a title change. How can we repurpose our content in different ways?

Remember, you probably need content in different formats. By accessing aspect ratios of an image for each media channel, you can easily send content to any channel. You can also conduct a custom download and, for example, convert an image to a GIF.



“...If you follow the '4Ps' of content marketing with **ES**, you are left with one more 'P': **Painless...**”

But it goes well beyond that.

Remember all the data you filled out at the beginning of the project? Now you are being rewarded for that effort. The information you entered in the briefs has value. Of course, an asset has a value, but the metadata—the information behind it—is far more valuable at this point of the workflow. People can use it to determine how to reuse this content.

You are probably faced with many used rights licenses. For example, some might say that you cannot post a specific image on social media—or you cannot print it. Some images might not come with permission to use in certain geographic regions. Information could also include the owner, the expiration date, and the country where it has already been used or published. Other information might include who is seen this content before, so your teams can ask themselves whether they want to reuse it in a certain territory. All the valuable information you previously entered allows you to make educated decisions.

The marketing department is not the only one searching for content. Everyone inside your business is, too. You might have someone writing a blog in the service department. Perhaps someone in sales wants to grab something and share it with a customer. They need to know more than just the content available to them. They need to know the metadata—the target audience, the languages it is in, and their rights to repurpose it.

This is why it was important to complete a brief at the beginning of the project, beyond the use of automation tools. By linking all this information to the content you have produced, it is easily accessible—and usable—to everyone in the business.

From planning to production to promoting and purposing content, **ES** can help marketers easily produce creative content and utilise on-target messaging. They can then become heroes by using **ES** to understand all the different channels and what it means to format them technically correctly.

If you follow the '4Ps' of content marketing with **ES**, you are left with one more 'P': **Painless. ■**



ES

ENTERPRISE SaaS

Creating Adobe InDesign work using the DALIM ES Creative Cloud Connector

Automated
server-
based
collaboration
between
designers,
clients
and
printers

THEMAGAZINE 27

By

Frank Hirsch
Senior Application Consultant
& Project Manager
Gaficon GmbH

and

Florent Epaud
Solution Project Manager
DALIM SOFTWARE

Many prepress departments are looking for a better way of building images in collaboration mode with **DALIM ES**. To help out, **DALIM SOFTWARE** recently introduced a new version of **DALIM ES Creative Cloud (CC) Connector**. **It directly connects Adobe InDesign, Illustrator, and Photoshop to DALIM ES** to produce and use assets and generate new versions of content to launch workflows automatically. With this plugin, you can download and automatically create a PDF with the help of OPI-like technology.

"...we want to
'keep it simple and
make it fast'..."



Frank Hirsch
Senior Application Consultant
& Project Manager
Gaficon GmbH

You begin with a regular **ES** workflow. You start with job creation by providing metadata to configure the job and tasks. After the job creation, you do ‘templating’: You define the metadata, the product, and what kind of layout you want to create. The templating often happens by uploading a specific **InDesign** file, or you can do it manually. Once the template has been provided, metadata is typically added to the template. In addition to the document, a milestone approval list and a custom job ticket are created.

To provide metadata, **the user doesn't have to be a designer within InDesign**. The layout is created automatically in the background, and you feed metadata to the **InDesign** server. It's simple because there is not a lot of **InDesign** scripting required, and it uses straightforward XML technology, which is well documented.

People using database technology do not require significant technology. Some people prefer the **EasyCatalog** plugin, which directly takes data from a file or database into **InDesign**.

Many companies use a lot of ‘commit database’—editing a database—to publish catalogues with hundreds of pages and thousands of products. The products and digital assets need to be perfect—therefore, well organised. The data has to be correct, and the images should be tagged and normalised. **If done correctly, you can produce catalogues without any issues. That's a big thing!**

Once the template layout has been loaded, you already have a nice-looking document that needs to be finished. That's where the **DALIM ES CC Connector** comes into play, and the designer checks the **InDesign** file from **ES**. At this point, we are still working remotely via a complete web-based production system, which is very common among layout artists or graphic designers.

People can still edit the layout and even reuse the same XML data to make variations. So, if you are interested in flyers in different sizes and formats, you can create the same content in various formats, driven by the **ES** workflow.

Since we recently integrated **InDesign Server** into **ES**, we now support highres soft proof based on native **InDesign** files. Graphic artists and customers can now work simultaneously on the same files. Instead of manually creating PDF files from layouts to do text extraction & correction, annotations and approvals - collaboration will now take place in one single file. In the end, it's just the digital delivery of the result.

The workflow process with these files can be that simple. Of course, you can still build large workflows around the concept; you can implement database publishing, or use **ES CC connector** to build a whole web based production system with enterprise level workflows around your **ES** - basically everything you can typically do in **ES**, **but primarily we want to 'keep it simple and make it fast'.**

The technology is straightforward to use. It's an XML merge and works with **Illustrator** and **Photoshop** as well. You add an XML file exported from a job ticket. Then you match that file to blocks in the design software, where they are filled with text or images. You then send the file to the **InDesign** server, where it will create the document, fill it—and then you can modify it with the **DALIM ES CC Connector** and generate the PDF.

This system can generate almost any kind of document, from one original document to multiple end documents from the same file—for example, for translations, internationalisation, or whatever. You can also use it for different kinds of documents like images and movies. **Use your imagination to personalise whatever you want.** **InDesign** is a very powerful tool that can generate lots of varied content.

With this, you have personalisation and internationalisation. It's also a self-service tool everybody can use to access content and generate reproducible documents that you can edit because your **InDesign** document is a PDF file, and you can reuse it. **The digital product's life starts here.**

Florent Epaud
Solution Project Manager
DALIM SOFTWARE



FAQ

Florent: Can you access old revisions with the CC connector?

Frank: You can access and edit all revisions with the **DALIM ES CC Connector** and still use a previous one if the client changes his mind. You can't switch back past versions to the active version, but you can see them in **DALIM ES CC Connector** and edit them in a new document.

Florent: Are there solutions other than InDesign to do that?

Frank: To create layouts, you could virtually program anything. However, InDesign is pretty easy because **DALIM ES CC Connector** makes it very simple to run a data integration process—just an XML import. But you can script anything, and that's the significant advantage of a **ES** workflow system. You can use custom scripts and program links, and it's open to making happen whatever you want it to do.

Florent: Can it be connected to Salesforce?

Frank: You can connect it to **Salesforce**. In fact, if you can extract the data, you can build anything. If you are running an e-commerce shop, for example, you can feed or grab metadata on-demand. Or, feed your metadata to create your jobs—to provide the template and the data fully automatically, to feed and normalise the image, and do the preflight. Customers may upload images in RGB if they are not print agnostic. You can run your workflows to convert files to CMYK, normalise them, and create layouts. You can even implement a soft proof into your e-commerce shop and make it print-ready at the end. Now you are ready for your web-to-print shop.

Florent: If you build an InDesign page or pages for a catalogue, what can the actual digital output be?

Frank: It can be any type of file that **InDesign** can export. In many cases, it might be an **InDesign** file, and in other cases, it could be a PDF file. If you have the information ready, it could be an interactive PDF.

Florent: So, can you create InDesign templates as a standard InDesign user? Or do you need special skills to edit text, XML, or anything else?

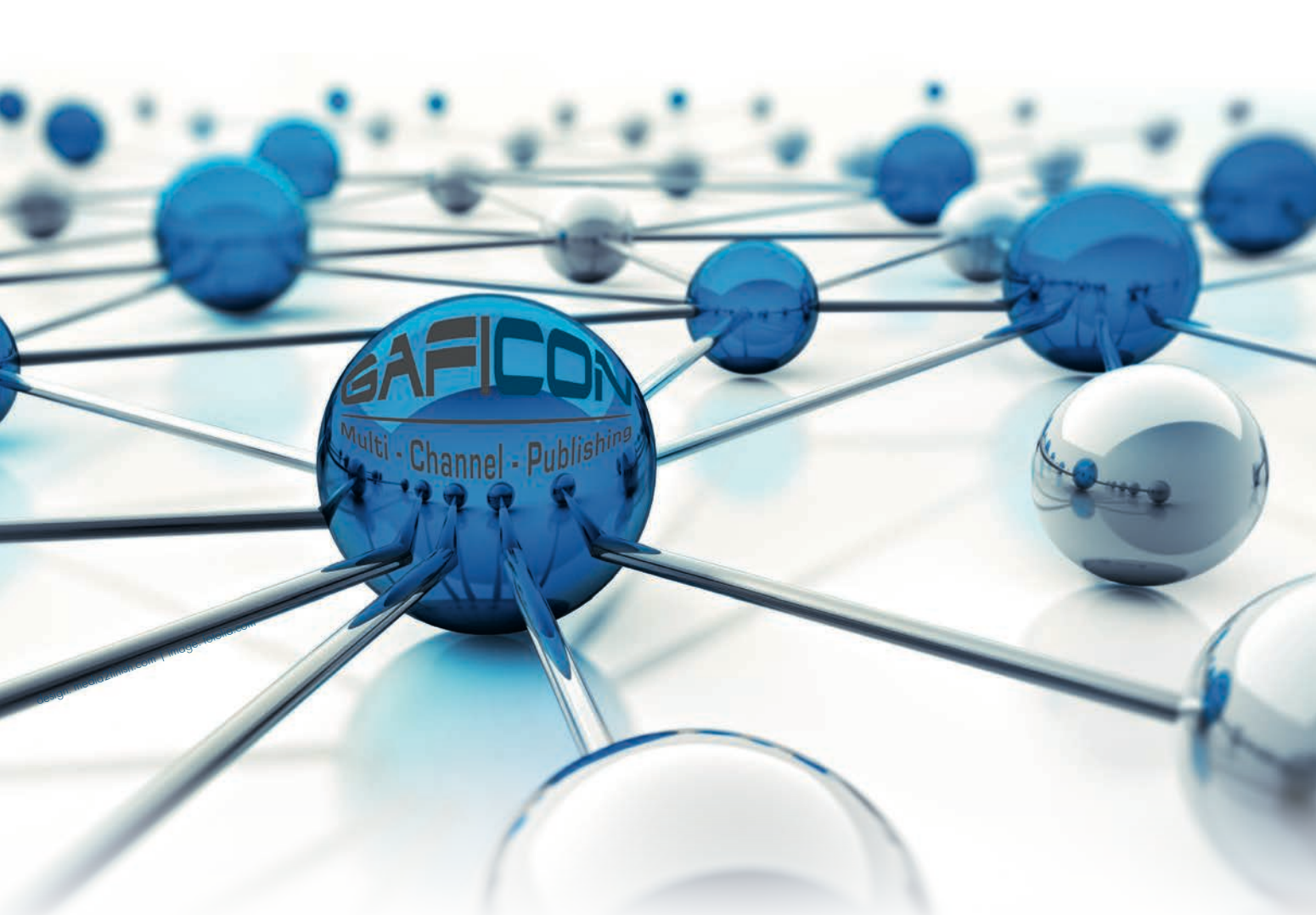
Frank: Pure **InDesign** template files are not very complicated. You have to know how to do it but assigning XML content to an **InDesign** layout is relatively easy. It is OK for straightforward layouts, and it gets slightly more complicated if you want to do things not covered natively by XML. You will need database publishing or scripting if you want dynamic layouts or specific features like image resizing or reshaping frames. Other solutions can also be implemented in basically the same way.

Florent: Could you explain a bit more how easy the process is?

Frank: It's the intelligence of the **DALIM ES CC Connector**. Ultimately, you want a layout that looks good but on which you can apply finishing touches for printing. Everything can be done remotely with the **DALIM ES CC plugin**, even working with high-resolution images over HTTP connections in your home office, rather than being stuck on the corporate network next to the file server. The primary point is that you can earn money because your client can create many design versions. In the end, you will still do the work. Your designer will still work, but your clients will have used your system for hours, trying all kinds of designs on their side. You give the client the first step, and your designer will finish the document and make it look more professional. That's a critical point because people want to get involved and be part of the process.

Florent: What kinds of documents can you generate with this technology? Can you develop packaging?

Frank: In essence, yes. Think of 2D layouts for packaging—for example, in a white label packaging file; you want to load the PDF, TIFF, or PSD files that the end customer provides. Of course, you can load them into the layout. Most packaging customers work with other tools, as well. They have their cut-outs and everything in an **InDesign** layout and load the content into said layouts. Of course, you can add the decoration and make dynamic content with colour—or add metadata to be displayed on the sheet. ■



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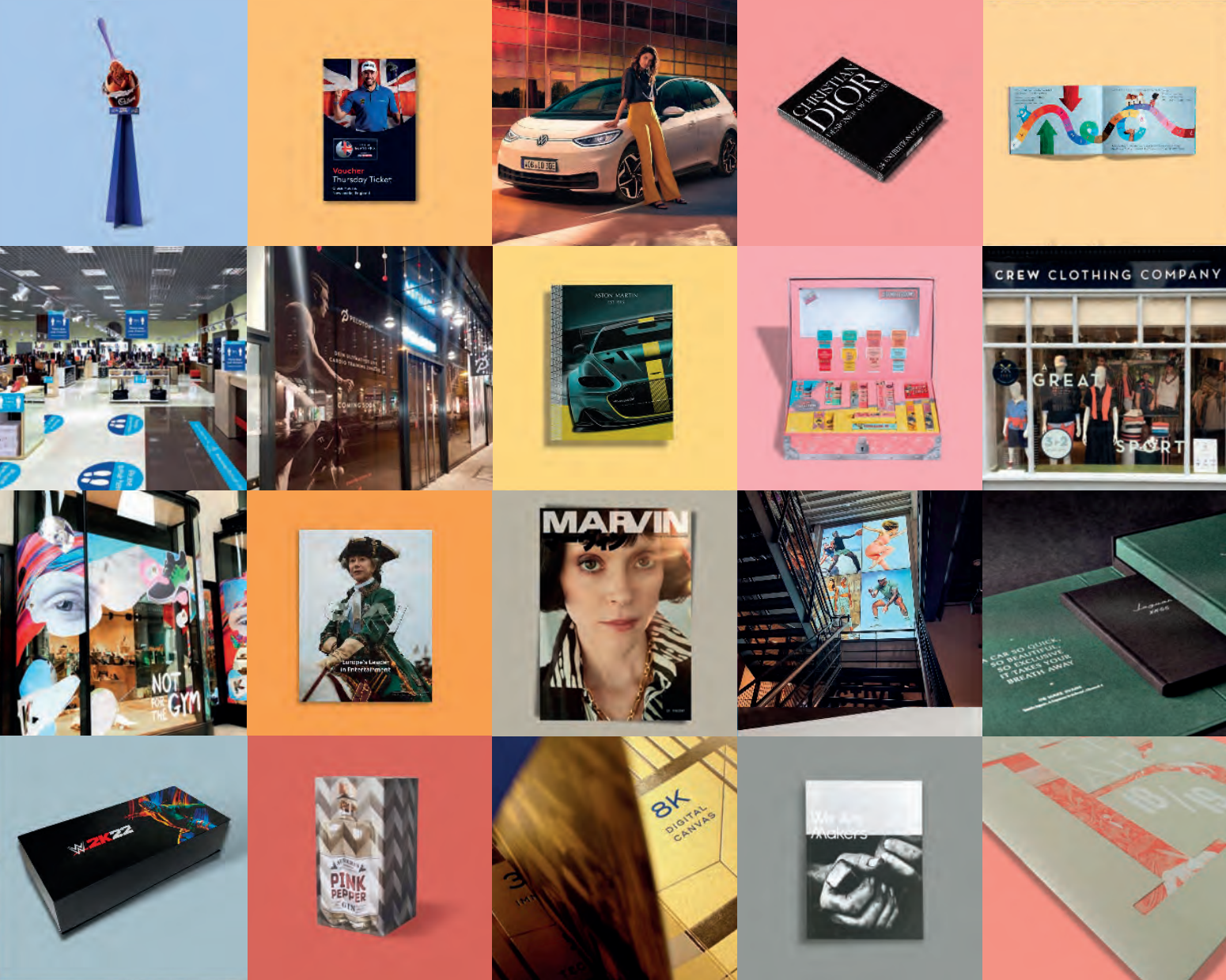
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