

Technology Case Study: DAM + Single Sign-On



Daimler Trucks North America saves time, improves operational efficiency, and seamlessly provides access to MarCom assets across the organization by implementing NetXposure's enterprise Digital Asset Management solution with Single Sign-On technology.

DAIMLER

Daimler Trucks North America (DTNA) is the largest heavy-duty truck manufacturer in North America and a leading producer of medium-duty trucks and specialized commercial vehicles.

Headquartered in Portland, Oregon, DTNA manufactures, sells and services several renowned commercial vehicle brands including Freightliner Trucks, Western Star and Thomas Built Buses. Through the company's affiliates, DTNA is also a leading provider of heavy and medium-duty diesel engines and other components. The company's strategic partners in the North American commercial vehicles market include Daimler Truck Financial and TravelCenters of America.

Selecting a Digital Asset Management Solution

Until 2008, the Corporate Communications and Marketing groups at DTNA managed an archive of digital files in a DAM solution shared with Chrysler. This archive consisted primarily of product photos, but also included logos and line art. After the DaimlerChrysler split, they were left without a DAM solution, and needed to find one of their own.

Tasked with managing the digital assets for over 14,000 employees at DTNA, the Communications and Marketing groups began their search for a new solution. Before they began evaluating solutions they spent a considerable amount of time gathering information about what was needed in a DAM. They put together a requirements document that ranked desired features in order of importance.

Among the highest priority requirements were the following:

- Secure, controlled web access for all staff members
- Easy access for a large number of users (e.g. Single Sign-On capability)
- Excellent search capability
- Intuitive / user friendly interface for non-technical users
- Support for a range of critical formats
- Good zoom capability for images

After an exhaustive search and evaluation of several options, Daimler Trucks North America settled on NetXposure's enterprise Digital Asset Management solution with the Single Sign-On module option.



NetXposure's Digital Asset Management solution is used to manage digital images, documents and video for the marketing and communications department of the largest heavy-duty truck manufacturer in North America.

NetXposure was one of several vendors that we consulted with in seeking a new digital asset management system. Not only was the application that they offered, technology-wise, superior to the others that we previewed, we were also impressed by the entire team, particularly in their depth of knowledge in the latest technologies.

NetXposure was incredible to work with. Our project manager stated several times over that he had never had a project go as smoothly as this one. I attribute a large part of this to NetXposure's willingness to work with us, troubleshoot issues (even when they were outside of their control), and technical expertise.

Within days of our application's launch, I had more than 2,000 new users successfully logged in using the Single Sign-On solution they provided without a single problem or negative response and several very positive comments. I was very impressed with NetXposure's ability to deliver exemplary results.

Molly Lee
Interactive Communications Coordinator
Daimler Trucks North America

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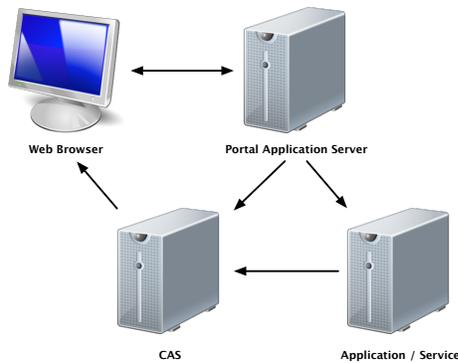


Single Sign-On Technology

Single Sign-On (SSO) is a mechanism whereby a single action of user authentication and authorization can permit a user to access all computers and systems throughout an organization (where there is access permission) without the need to enter multiple usernames / passwords.

NetXposure's Single Sign-On technology allows users in a large organization like Daimler Trucks North America to bypass the traditional login screen each time they access the DAM, yet still guarantees secure user authentication.

The main underlying system for Single Sign-On is the CAS or "Central Authentication Service" server. This is an open source, Java-based Single Sign-On solution developed at Yale University that is widely adopted by many universities and companies world-wide. It is compatible with Active Directory and supports both LDAP and Kerberos protocols. It also supports SAML protocol for ticket authentication. All Web applications are configured to talk to CAS server via SSL. CAS server is responsible for authentication of the user, and decides whether or not to re-route the user to the target Web application.



The following are the main steps in the authentication protocol:

- 1) The user attempts to access an application using its URL. The user is redirected to the CAS login URL over an HTTPS connection, passing the name of the requested service as a parameter. The user is presented with a username/password dialog box.
- 2) The user enters ID and password details and CAS attempts to authenticate the user. If authentication fails, the target application never hears about it — the user remains at the CAS server.
- 3) If authentication succeeds, then CAS redirects the user back to the target application, appending a parameter called a ticket to the URL. CAS then attempts to create an in-memory cookie called a ticket-granting cookie. This is done to allow for automatic re-authentication later — if present, then it indicates that the user has already successfully logged in and the user avoids having to re-enter his username and password.
- 4) The application then validates that this is a correct ticket and represents a valid user by calling the CAS Service Validate URL by opening an HTTPS connection and passing the ticket and service name as parameters. CAS checks that the supplied ticket is valid and is associated with the requested service. If validation is successful, CAS returns the username to the application.

Benefits of DAM + Single Sign-On at DTNA

While it's difficult to determine how much time is saved at DTNA due to the installation of NetXposure's Digital Asset Management solution + Single Sign-On technology, clearly it has made a difference. Employees can now find their own approved image assets without having to request help from busy marketing managers or from expensive agency resources.

One shortcoming of the previous DAM used by DTNA was the lack of helpful metadata associated with each asset. While there were a great many images available on the system, they were sometimes hard to retrieve using a keyword search. Before the launch of the current system, every asset was fully vetted to ensure that proper tags and descriptions were associated with each image.

Easy access to the system was considered critical from the start. If employees and dealers had to memorize yet another login and password, the DAM would never find widespread acceptance. Since its implementation, the single sign on component has allowed thousands access to the system seamlessly, greatly contributing to widespread acceptance.

DAM System Requirements

Windows

Microsoft Windows 2000/2003/2008 server
Microsoft Windows 7

Mac OS X

Mac OS X 10.5 or higher

Linux

Ubuntu, Red Hat, or CentOS

Solaris

Sparc Solaris 10

Processor

2.0 GHz or faster

Memory

1GB RAM minimum, 2 GB recommended

Java

Java 1.5 or higher

Directory Server (optional)

Open LDAP, MS Active Directory, Sun Dir. Server

Application Server

J2EE-compliant App Servers
Apache Tomcat (default)

Database

JDBC-compliant databases:
Apache Derby (default), MySQL 5.0+,
Microsoft SQL Server 2000/2005/2008, Oracle 10g

Note: Optional add on modules may have platform restrictions.
A distributed architecture may be recommended for some installations.

About NetXposure

NetXposure delivers software solutions that reduce the time and cost of content production, maximize ROI from media assets, and streamline the workflows of managing large libraries of digital files. With a history as an industry pioneer in developing Rich Internet Applications (RIAs), NetXposure has become a leader in delivering Digital Asset Management (DAM) solutions to organizations of all sizes across a wide range of industries.

Founded in 1995, NetXposure is headquartered in Portland, Oregon with offices in London, England and Tokyo, Japan. For more information visit www.netx.net or call 503.499.4342.