

Case Study: American Media, Inc. (AMI)

American Media Inc. (AMI) is the undisputed US leader in celebrity and fitness publishing, reaching 40 million readers every month. With some of the most renowned titles in the industry, including Star, OK! and National Enquirer, AMI has to meet demanding editorial deadlines.

As part of a long term vision to migrate IT Systems and Services to the Cloud, when AMI chose to replace its internal DAM software, they wanted to be sure its replacement could provide the level of service and support they required, and be accessed from any of its offices, or by any personnel regardless of where they were based. That's when AMI turned to London-based IDS.

AMI's brief was simple in concept: give us a fast, easy-to-use system that will handle tens of millions of assets and can process 100,000 images on Oscar night. Keep the hi-res files away from our network until we need them, deal with all agency feeds, and easily integrate with our workflow.

An industry veteran with more than 25 years experience, AMI's Executive Vice President Chief Information Officer, Dave Thompson, has seen dramatic changes during his career in publishing. "Industry leaders were insisting this couldn't be done. That systems weren't mature enough to handle the image volumes we needed to via the web, and that a multi-faceted hosted solution would come apart at the seams. Fortunately, we found a partner with the technology and flexibility we needed to succeed."

Having worked with newspaper and magazine publishers for 20 years, IDS was familiar with the pressures picture editors face when a story breaks as they are going to press. Thompson appointed AMI's Senior IT Operations Director, Peter Brennan, to liaise with IDS, who provided AMI with a custom SaaS solution, based on IDS's flagship image portal, www.idspicturedesk.com.

AMI's archive of 5 million images and PDFs was ingested by IDS, and 50 photo agencies were setup to supply to AMI's titles. The custom solution was then integrated into the workflow. Using IDS's platform AMI users can publish images directly from IDS to its DALIM workflow with the touch of the button. Within a matter of weeks, IDS had developed and delivered a bespoke SaaS solution that met all the requirements of the original brief.

Historically IDS's business has been in creating very fast large databases using text to find images. IDS's new range of services is based on its proprietary visual search algorithm, ImageDiscovery™, uses images to match images and retrieve relevant metadata.. This allows IDS to automatically match images based on visual characteristics alone. Integrating this software to AMI's system unlocks additional value for the publisher.

AMI uploads each issue of its publications to IDS as a PDF. IDS identifies the images and using its ImageDiscovery algorithm extracts thousands of features to create a unique visual fingerprint. The fingerprint is used to query the image

database, and identify which images have been used in each page of a magazine. ImageDiscovery identifies images even where they have been significantly altered, as demonstrated below:

IDS ImageDiscovery : Deconstructing composites



Single composite image as it appeared on client's website



IDS ImageDiscovery identifies the three images that were cropped, cut out and composited.

IDS ImageDiscovery : Finding non-existent images



Single composite image as it appeared on client's website



The image on the left was cut out and placed onto the image on the right to create this composite. Both images are identified by *IDS ImageDiscovery*.

By applying *IDS ImageDiscovery* to its PDF library, AMI can determine the origination of any image, and accurately quantify page costs and settle licensing fees. Gone are the days when editors need to markup hard copies with Sharpies and Post-It notes for reconciliation.

AMI's use of *IDS ImageDiscovery* represents the tip of the iceberg in terms of what publishers could do with the service. Whether it's a 'pre-flight' check before publication to confirm rights, or identify legal warnings - or tracking usage of its

own images across a portfolio of titles, ImageDiscovery has the power to unlock value with every publisher.

The custom solution developed for AMI has been a great success. Peter Brennan explains: "Working with IDS has been very rewarding. They understand our needs and are highly responsive when we require changes or customisation. The migration to IDS's new system has been very positively received. The integration to our workflow is slick, and the ability to match images in PDFs through the overlay of ImageDiscovery is truly unique."

Matthew Carse IDS's CEO echoes the sentiment: "It's a real pleasure to work with a company like AMI that knows exactly what it wants. They have high standards and demand them of others. This can be challenging, but it has meant IDS has been able to supply a first class system to meet their needs."