ICONIK
by Backlight

CHECKLIST

DIGITAL ASSET MANAGEMENT CHECKLIST

Selecting your enterprise-ready media hub

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BREAKING NEWS

The old digital asset management checklist is officially obsolete.

If your organization handles high-resolution video, 3D assets, or global distribution, the basic requirements (simple search and general tagging) are no longer enough. Working with or for modern media requires an operational infrastructure designed for the chaos and volume of the entire content lifecycle.

Wondering how to build that infrastructure, especially if you're working with older digital asset management features?

Use this checklist to bypass obsolete solutions and find the core capabilities needed to future-proof your creative operation.

CHECKLIST

01 Control your costs: Demand hybrid cloud architecture

Your media library is not a monolith in one location — at least, it shouldn't be

For financial and operational survival, you need blazing fast local access for active projects and a cost-effective, long-term archive for cold assets.

THE TEST

Are you dealing with vendors who keep trying to corner your media into their specific proprietary bucket? See that for the red flag it likely is, and focus on non-negotiables instead:

- [ ] **Bring your own storage**
  The system must index assets across your existing cloud buckets (e.g., S3, Azure, Google Cloud) and all existing on-prem hardware (NAS/SAN). This is the key to managing costs and avoiding the mandatory, ruinously expensive migrations legacy systems demand.

- [ ] **Storage-agnostic indexing**
  The system must treat every asset the same, regardless of physical location. The editor should see one unified library, even if the files are currently residing in five different locations, from a local SAN to a glacier-cold S3 archive.

- [ ] **Proxy generation on ingest**
  The system must instantly generate lightweight proxy files for every massive, high-res asset. This permanently solves the fundamental remote access problem, allowing a producer to review 8K footage over a standard home Wi-Fi signal without any complex downloads.

CHECKLIST

02 Reduce (necessary, repetitive) manual labor with automation and AI

Manual metadata is digital quicksand. It's error-prone, inconsistent, and slows down every project it touches.

To keep up with project timelines and save your team a lot of headaches, your digital asset management features should have automation and/or AI taking care of back-end busywork (including the bulk of metadata management).

THE TEST

Does the system require a human to enter descriptive keywords for every uploaded file? Remember that instead of needing to deal with that, you're looking for:

- [ ] **Automated content analysis**
  The system must use AI to identify and tag objects ("sailboat"), scenes ("exterior, night"), and recognized faces. This completely eliminates the soul-crushing process of manual tagging.

- [ ] **Time code transcription**
  AI must automatically transcribe all spoken dialogue and map it precisely to the video's time code. This means your team can instantly search for a spoken phrase, such as "Show me the lines about the Q4 earnings call," and jump instantly to that moment in the clip.

- [ ] **Advanced technical metadata extraction**
  The system must automatically extract technical data that is critical for post-production (e.g., codec, frame rate, lens details, HDR status) and make that highly specific information instantly searchable.

CHECKLIST

03 Synchronize your review with integrated approval workflows

Creative collaboration fails when your team's connection methods are scattered across five different systems — various storage platforms, review tools, email, Slack, and project management apps.

Instead, your review and approval cycle must be synchronized and embedded directly within the asset management platform.

THE TEST

Does the system force you to pay for and manage a third-party review platform just to leave comments on a video? Instead, seek out:

- [ ] **Frame-accurate commenting**
  Reviewers must be able to leave time-coded feedback directly on the proxy file. "Make the cut smoother" is instantly replaced by the surgical instruction: "Make the cut smoother starting at 00:00:14:12."

- [ ] **Approval accountability gates**
  The system must strictly enforce approval workflows (e.g., Legal must approve before Marketing can download the final version). Only approved assets should be made available for distribution.

- [ ] **Comprehensive version history**
  Every edit, every comment, and every formal approval must be logged against a specific asset version. The ability to instantly roll back to an older version is essential for correcting mistakes without triggering a major operational event.

CHECKLIST

04 Connect everything with extensible integrations and an open API

A core key feature required for a modern media hub is its ability to communicate seamlessly and play nicely with your existing creative and business software.

THE TEST

Can the system easily connect with all my existing tools using a public, well-documented API? To make sure that happens easily, look out for:

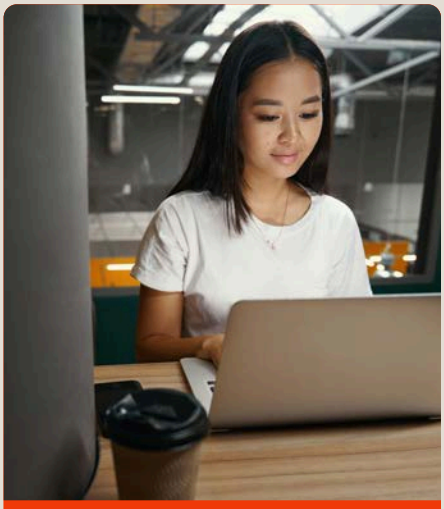
- [ ] **NLE integration**
  Your system must integrate directly into NLE suites (e.g., Adobe Premiere Pro, Avid, Final Cut). Editors must be able to browse, retrieve, and check in assets without ever leaving their timeline interface.

- [ ] **Open representational state transfer (REST) API:**
  A transparent, well-documented API is absolutely necessary for building custom connections to your CRM (e.g., Salesforce), analytics platforms, and project management tools (e.g., Slack, Jira).

- [ ] **Automated workflow orchestration**
  The system must automatically trigger actions based on simple workflow events (for example, "Once Legal approves the asset, automatically transcode a copy and move it to the Distribution folder").

CHECKLIST

05 Guarantee performance with true enterprise scalability



Here's a fact for you: Your organization's media archive is only going to grow exponentially.

A system that works efficiently at 10 terabytes often collapses at 100 terabytes. True enterprise readiness is measured in petabytes.

THE TEST

Can the system guarantee lightning-fast search performance across petabytes of data without degradation? A system should come with:

- [ ] **A petabyte performance guarantee**
  The system must be proven to handle search, ingestion, and proxy creation efficiently across petabytes of data, maintaining consistent speed as the archive size explodes.

- [ ] **Global access speed**
  It must support fast, concurrent access for globally distributed teams (e.g., utilizing cloud acceleration and geographically optimized nodes) without requiring complex, slow virtual private network (VPN) tunnels.

- [ ] **Zero migration penalties**
  Look for systems that can instantly integrate new storage locations (on-prem or cloud), bypassing the disruptive multi-week internal migration process that legacy systems demand.

CHECKLIST

06 Control your budget and your total cost of ownership (TCO)

A system that scales technically must also scale financially.

Legacy models often punish growth with rigid, escalating subscription fees. Effective financial scaling is critical for avoiding catastrophic "seat shock."

THE TEST

Does the pricing model financially penalize user growth or encourage it? To select a media asset manager (MAM) solution with a weather eye to the future, keep a lookout for:

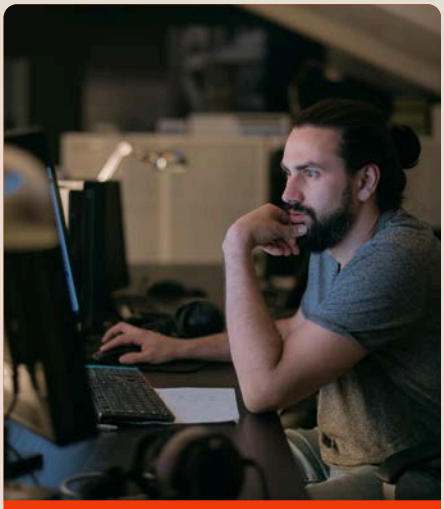
- [ ] **Usage-based pricing**
  Billing should be based primarily on asset volume or usage (i.e., data transfer), not a fixed per-user fee. This keeps TCO low for massive, cold archives with infrequent access.

- [ ] **Unlimited collaborators**
  The system must offer unlimited viewers or low-access users at a fixed price. Financial penalties for adding non-technical users (Legal, Executives) are a guaranteed way to destroy internal adoption

- [ ] **Storage independence**
  Direct control over your storage layer (BYOS) ensures you are paying competitive, commodity prices for storage, not inflated vendor margins.

CHECKLIST

07 Mandate an intuitive user experience (UX) to maximize adoption



A powerful system with all the right digital asset management features is useless if no one on your team will actually use it.

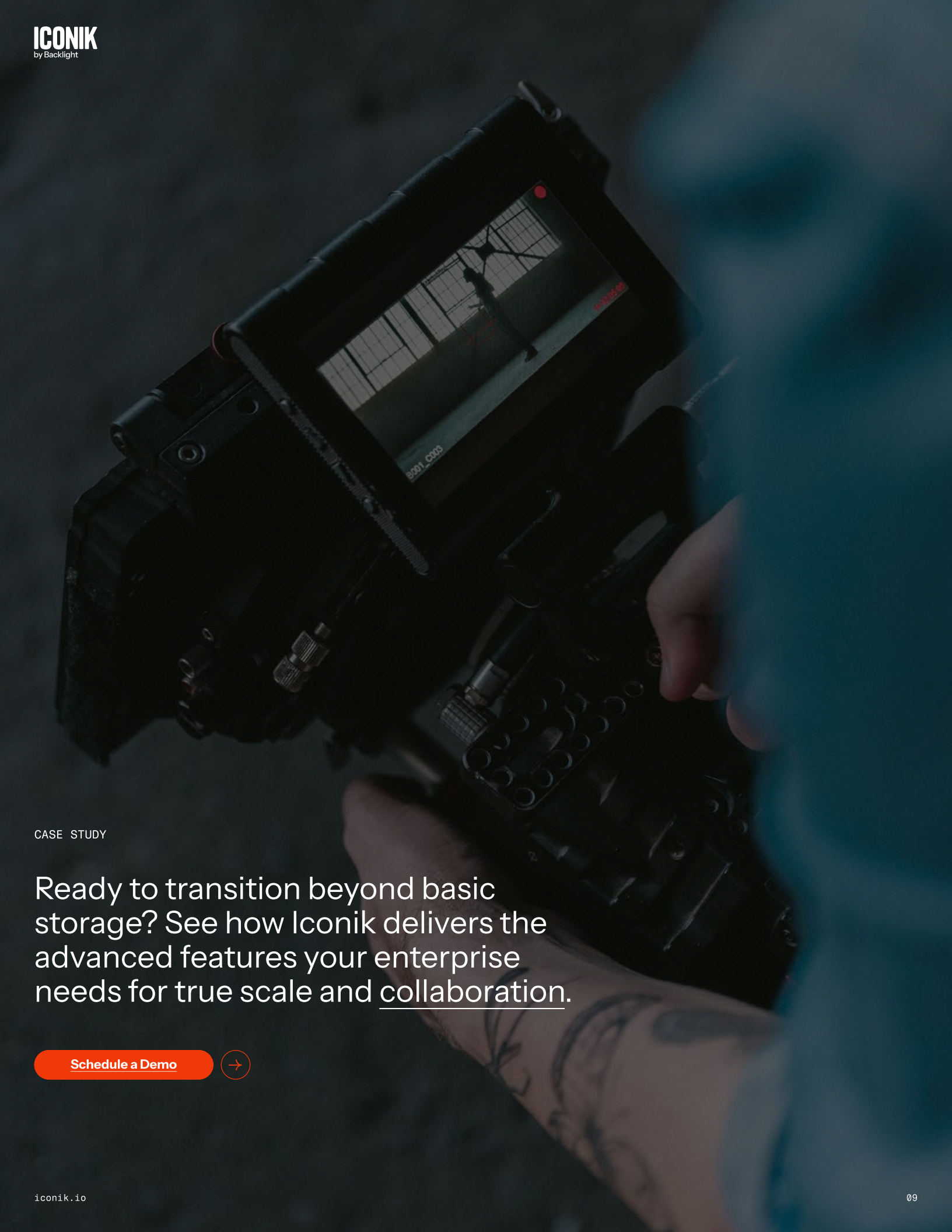
THE TEST

Can a busy executive easily find and approve an asset without any prior training? To build a UX that makes using your MAM as intuitive as possible, look for:

- [ ] **A fast, intuitive interface**
  The speed and simplicity of the interface must encourage organization across all user types, from the technical editor to the non-technical legal team. It should feel simple, not heavy.

- [ ] **Mobile accessibility**
  The system must allow users to review, comment, and approve assets from any mobile device or tablet, integrating the research and analysis cycle into modern life.

- [ ] **Minimal training requirements**
  The design must be simple and fast enough so teams adopt it organically, minimizing the high cost and time of complex change management.



CASE STUDY

Ready to transition beyond basic storage? See how Iconik delivers the advanced features your enterprise needs for true scale and collaboration.

Schedule a Demo