

An **evolphin**[®] **Software** Technology White Paper



7172 Regional Street Suite 229

Dublin, CA 94586

+1 888-386-4114

info@evolphin.com

www.evolphin.com

How leading creative organizations are deploying next generation workflow technology to address current challenges

Contents

Executive Summary	2
Problem Statement	2
Previous Options	3
Evolphin Solution	5
Top three benefits of Zoom Workflow	5
Conclusion	6
Resources	7

Executive Summary

In the current economic climate, creative teams around the world are faced with executing more projects with limited resources. Without compromising quality, speed to market is a major challenge for creative teams today. Existing practices involving manual coordination between various stakeholders in the creative process are not serving creative organizations too well.

Beyond the basic management of digital assets, automating the review-reject-iterate cycle for valuable digital assets is critical in ensuring the seamless delivery of creative project milestones. This is where workflow solutions integrated with digital asset management ([DAM](#)) and version control are gaining traction with creative organizations at large.

The unique architecture of the evolphin Zoom Digital Asset Management suite enables it to automate the entire creative design lifecycle via:

- Tight integration with creative applications such as Photoshop, Flash and InDesign
- Unique workflow module interwoven into DAM and version control system

Problem Statement

Today's creative organizations face a number of challenges including:

1. **Over budget projects:** General lack of automation in creative workflow is leading to increased costs causing projects to go over budget. Reasons include – without workflow automation too many manual processes consume personnel that could be deployed elsewhere, wrong versions of artwork delivered to printers require costly re-

runs, duplication of effort due to creative team's inability to find published versions of assets in time, valuable creative work being over-written without proper tracking & locking of assets during production, ad-hoc reviews lead to work being redone late in the creative project lifecycle

2. **Overdue schedules:** Creative teams are finding it difficult to stay within schedule. Aggravating factors include - poor collaboration between stakeholders leads to confusion, unnecessary work iterations, unbalanced workload amongst creative resources, and poor visibility into current creative jobs leads to misaligned priorities and thus, missed deadlines.
3. **Poor end client satisfaction:** Creative teams are under duress to stay on budget and on time, this often causes corners to be cut. An even bigger issue is, despite the widespread adoption of Internet technology, creative organizations are struggling to involve their busy end-clients into the creative approval process early in the project. This causes headaches later as client feedback arrives late in the game. Wrong versions of digital assets/artwork can further aggravate end-client satisfaction.
4. **More competition:** In the golden era of digital communication, global forces are conspiring to present more choices to the end-client. Creative organizations with archaic processes and practices risk being left behind as more nimble competitors take advantage of new workflow technologies that speed-up their time to market.
5. **Executing more creative projects:** With more data in the digital domain, tremendous emphasis on the visual

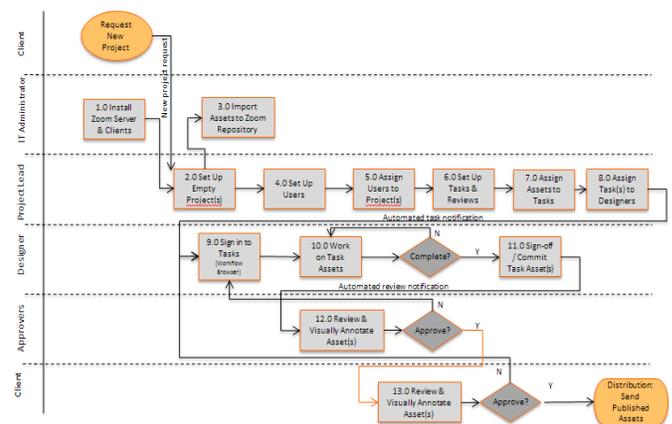
elements, be it new gadgets, advertising, packaging, or user interfaces, the creative projects that organizations have to manage and execute are exploding. Without more automation, it is extremely challenging for organizations to keep pace with the volume of creative assignments.

6. **Managing with fewer resources:** The global economic climate is going through a volatile phase with organizations reluctant to increase headcount. Creative teams are particularly hard hit because by definition creative work in itself cannot be automated. The creative processes however are very amenable to automation, without which the resource crunch creative organizations face is hard to deal with.

Previous Options

Traditionally, creative organizations have used the following options to manage their creative processes:

- 1) **Manual Coordination:** Many creative organizations staff up an operations or project management team that is responsible for manual handoffs of creative tasks. Often this takes the form of a staff member using a physical job jacket to notify the next contributor in the job workflow. Issues that arise include: a) Cost of staffing a coordination team. b) Slow, error prone approach due to manual processes involved.



- 2) **Email and Network shares:** Email is ubiquitous and so too are network file shares. Many creative organizations use emails as the ad-hoc mechanism to notify stakeholders about status of specific tasks or jobs. The digital assets themselves are shared via a network file system. For instance, a designer may email the Client Services group about a new Adobe Illustrator artwork file they have saved on the network share. Issues with this approach include: a) Unstructured practices lead to artwork duplication when the designer cannot find the published asset. b) Without proper task management, conventions are used to track file versions as they evolve during a creative task. This can result in work being over-written or deleted. c) Management does not have visibility into the job workflow. In order to determine the status, a senior manager may have to talk to a number of contributors to establish where the job is stalled. d) The end-client cannot visually annotate the artwork in order to provide immediate visual feedback to creative team. e) Multiple copies of the artwork may exist on the network share, with no central authority to specify which revisions are published and what is work in progress. f) Mix-ups are common and cause wrong versions to be delivered to the client
- 3) **Existing DAM systems:** Existing DAM solutions are optimized for importing and then letting users search and find matching files. Version control is an afterthought; workflow is limited to manual uploads of assets and setting status tags to indicate job progress. When a contributor needs to

modify a file they often end up creating a new copy on the server. Unlike fully functional workflow management software, DAM solutions have limited workflow features. Orchestrating the entire creative process from asset creation to storage to approval is beyond the scope of typical DAM software. The critical stakeholders do not have visibility into the workflow steps as they progress through the system. Integration with expensive third party workflow software is often required.

- 4) **Existing Workflow management software:** Business process management (BPM) software systems have been around for decades. They are optimized for orchestrating approval workflows for business problems like the finance department's expense approval process. These are standalone systems with non-existent integration with a digital asset repository. There is no automated routing of digital assets. Asset versioning is far from the scope of such systems. They often require programmers to customize the workflow templates and rules. Cost tends to be prohibitive even with limited applicability to a creative workflow. The user interfaces are not visual enough for creative teams, presenting major usability hurdles for adoption.
- 5) **Document Management systems:** In order to reign in the chaos around digital asset workflows, IT admins in the past have looked upon Document Management solutions (DMS) such as Microsoft SharePoint for help. While these solutions do help in centralizing the storage of documents, they fail to address the following key issues: a) Scalability - DMS is not optimized for storing large binary digital files. Beyond 20-50MB file size, the performance starts to degrade. b) Automated workflow is completely missing with such solutions or it may require expensive programming and engineering support to automate the workflow around documents. Most creative organizations do not have in-house resources to develop custom code to manage a workflow solution. In addition, the cost tends to be

high. c) There is no integration with a lock management system, essential for collaborative workflows.

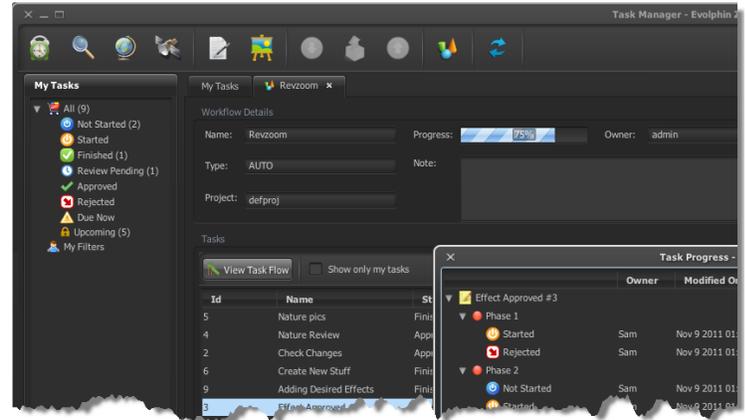
Evolphin Solution

Evolphin Zoom workflow is a disruptive technology that was designed from the ground up to provide end to end automation of the entire creative workflow. An integrated stack of DAM, Asset Versioning, Workflow, Project Management & Reporting modules allow all the stakeholders in the creative process to benefit from the solution.



The Zoom Workflow Task manager application on the desktop integrates with creative tools such as Adobe CS, to allow users to browse their tasks and associated assets from within the creative application. Files versions, checked-in as part of a workflow task are kept in a work-in-progress table on the server. Customers and other team members can view published assets to isolate themselves from intermediate versions. Zoom Workflow Task Manager can automatically detect when a creative professional is finished with a task, and can transition the workflow to *review pending* status with notifications to reviewers. Reviewers can visually annotate comments to those checked-in revisions. If a change is rejected, work can be resubmitted with new revisions to those assets. Zoom Workflow tracks

all the iterations, and supports hierarchical reviews.



The Web based Workflow Studio allows you to visually design custom workflow templates and save them to a template library. Account/Project managers can instantiate a job from a template and update the asset and task routing rules. Once a job is started, Zoom automates the management of digital assets that are produced and approved or rejected. Email notifications as well as desktop alerts are appropriately triggered as the job transitions to various states. Finally, the managers can use the web based reporting features to determine the status of jobs, where they are stalled, unfinished steps and resource bottlenecks.

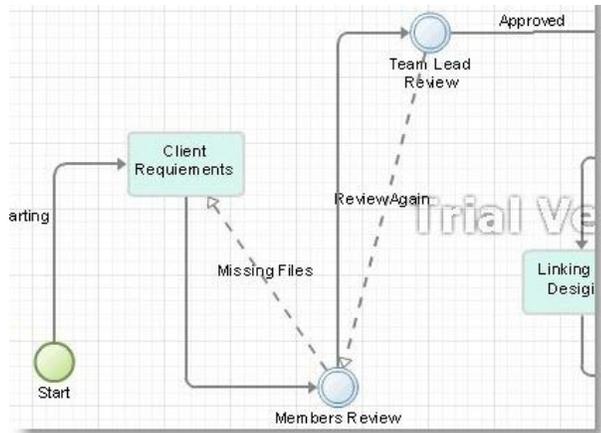
The intuitive installers bundled with the Zoom Workflow product ensure a short deployment cycle. Customers can implement and be productive in less than a week.

Top three benefits of Zoom Workflow

#1: Dramatically reduce project costs

Zoom Workflow automates task and asset handoffs, reducing the need for additional staff to orchestrate the creative process manually. It eliminates time spent on fixing glitches such as over-written files, merging conflicting changes to digital assets from multiple contributors, effort duplication due to being assigned the wrong version of an artwork. This allows more

creative projects to be executed with fewer resources. Costly re-runs of artwork are avoided because assets are marked as published once a job completes within the Zoom Workflow allowing client services teams to deliver the correct version for printing or consumption by the end-clients.

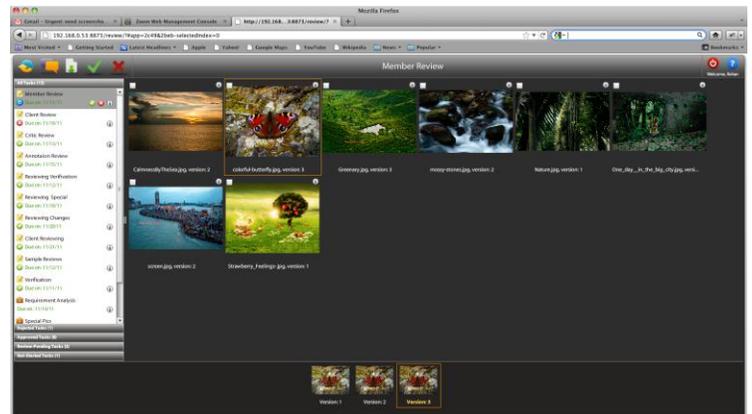


#2: Speed up time to market

Targeting multiple stakeholders within the creative process including internal contributors, external partners and clients, Zoom Workflow radically improves collaboration. Creative workflows move at digital speed with Zoom's task notification and visual annotation tool that allows real-time commenting by multiple reviewers much like an instant messaging service. Issues are identified early in the process by using Zoom's parallel review technology and thus preventing late-stage iterations of artwork. In conjunction with the integrated DAM solution, art directors and creative managers are able to locate published assets faster eliminating time spent searching for or duplicating the artwork that can't be located. Project managers can spot resource and job bottlenecks faster by using the web based workflow dashboard in Zoom.

#3: Make customers happy

Zoom Workflow is designed to bring all key stakeholders into the creative approval process including your end-clients. Right down to a white-labeled web approval application, your end client will feel that they are in control and have a say in the execution of the creative project. They are empowered to visually comment on the produced artwork, and they can download the correct version of the relevant digital assets in a variety of formats including; PDF, JPEG, and PNG. Customers can review comments on previous revisions using the Zoom Web approval application to ensure the artwork is evolving in the right direction. The net result is better quality outcomes. Almost all Zoom customers report increased client satisfaction once the workflow solution is deployed.



Conclusion

Organizations can start reaping the benefits of Zoom Workflow automation by eliminating manual tasks, paper-based files and the un-structured, informal activities associated with multiple stakeholders and approvers collaborating on individual projects.

evolpin Workflow is a disruptive technology that will enable creative organizations to dramatically lower the cost of project execution, while simultaneously driving speed and quality into the digital asset deliverables. Targeting multiple stakeholders within the creative

process including internal contributors, external partners and clients; context specific workflows manage, integrate and report on the inputs/outputs of each stakeholder within a structured, efficient and automated framework.

Resources

Please contact our sales team and they can arrange for our technical experts to answer any questions you may have.



Our sales team can also provide customer case studies, business ROI reports upon request.