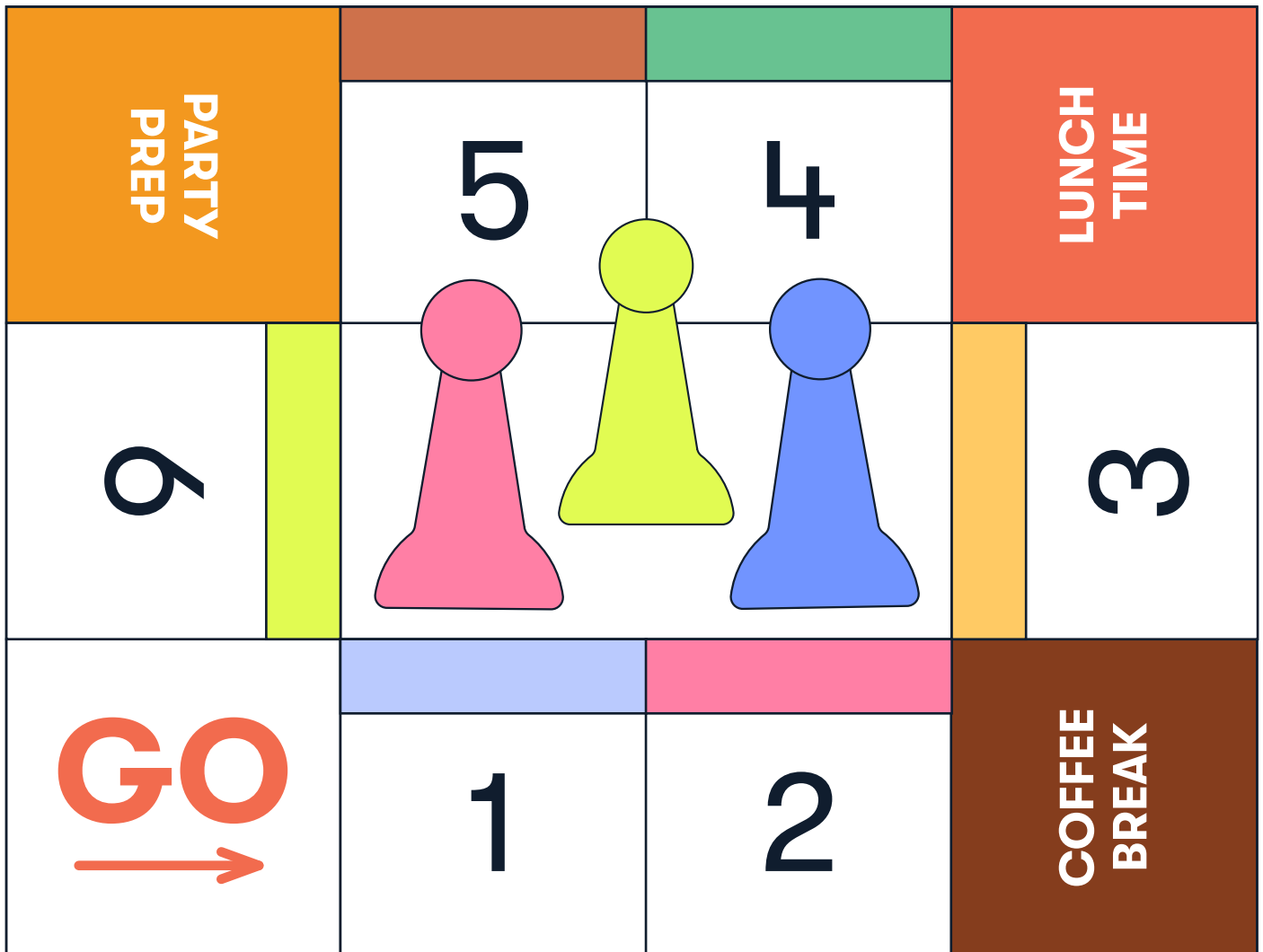


Creative Asset Management In Six Highly-Effective Steps



Let's learn what creative asset management is and how to do it effectively so you can smooth out the rough spots in your creative operations and make sure they're boosting your bottom line.

Creative Asset Management Is No Legend Or Myth

Creative asset management is a real thing, but it's a nebulous thing, so explaining creative asset management is kind of like explaining every process that occurs in your mind and body when you drive your car—i.e., when you manage creative assets, there are a series of both conscious and unconscious actions you automatically take that get you where you need to go (creatively speaking).

Creative Asset Management Defined For Fun

Creative asset management is the process of manipulating design elements like fonts, stock photos, and motion graphics from here to there and there to here until they coalesce into a brand asset.

What fun!



The Definition Doesn't Stop There

Next, the brand asset itself must also be manipulated, and for the sake of this story let's have the brand asset be a logo that must incorporate a majestic if not slightly moist porpoising dolphin on it. Awesome.

Next stop (after final approval and all that, which is rarely a problem c'mon now), is to incorporate the brand asset/dolphin logo (told ya it had to be manipulated) into the design of, oh let's say a 970 x 250 digital billboard (PNG or GIF) on harpers.org.

And Then What Happens?

AND THEN, after hard-won approval and lots of handwringing, the final ad gets handed over to production. Which comes with a whole host of other problems (sorry 'bout that) we'll get into later.

Oh, and everyone's on deadline this entire time. Oof.

That's right dear reader, creative asset management is the engine that drives **"creative operations,"** and its many dependencies explain why you're always too tired to go to yoga after work.

So Creative Assets Include Design Elements And...Brand Assets...And...Ads?

For the purposes of understanding creative asset management, you betcha! Why? Because they share the same qualifying traits, given they're digital files that:

- + Belong to an individual or organization and are used for business purposes.
- + Live within a searchable (thanks to metadata) digital infrastructure.
- + Provide unique value to the individual or organization.
- + Take a massive emotional toll on the creative team to produce and manage (we help with that.)
- + Cost ten billion dollars if they're managed ineffectively because of both productivity gaps and errors that must be corrected (we help with that as well.)

Bottom line: whenever you're searching for design elements like stock photos of dolphins, sharing brand assets like marine-mammal-themed logos, or handing final, approved ads over to production, you're "doing creative asset management."

Good grief. You deserve a day off.

Why Creative Asset Management Matters

That's easy: your already cacophonous workday gets way worse if you can't search, organize, activate, or share the right design element at the right time to create the dolphin logo in the first place, because delays make it way harder to get the ad to production on time.

Plus, all those disparate design elements have a nasty habit of coming with their own licenses, so before you hand the ad off to production, somebody's got to make sure licensing compliance is all buttoned-up—lest the project be forever forged in the annals of *The Top Ten Worst Ever Agency Or Production House Disasters You Got Caught Up In*.

Because both re-do's and legal disputes over licensing violations cost lots of hard-earned cash.

Initial Steps For Effective Creative Asset Management

Never fear, we've been helping smart, charming, stylish, and generally remarkable customers manage creative assets for 30 years, so we know what we're talking about.

If you'd like to learn some practical first steps for effective creative asset management, we've included a handy instruction manual at the bottom of this guide. **Jump to it right now** to get started.



What Life Is Like With Effective Creative Asset Management

Imagine a world where teams can accelerate their creative work process, prevent individual design elements from becoming problems in the first place, and ultimately confirm and report that all creative assets are in **tip-top shape** before the hand off to production.

That world arrives when teams can quickly:

- + Find, share, organize, and auto-activate every design element involved in a project.
- + Manage all the disparate licenses to mitigate risk.
- + Make critical decisions through analytics and insights that confirm everything is in great shape before somebody hit's the "go" button.

When that happens, projects ship faster with less stress, there's freedom to create impactful work, and clients receive more than they paid for—which is every agency's recipe for new business, client retention, revenue growth, and profitability.

Sounds like a pretty sweet life. Reminds us of that time our friends gave us their time share in Barcelona for the summer and it came with a boat.

Why We're Telling You All This

We make Extensis Connect, software that gives teams control over and visibility of design elements, the brand assets they live in, and the final creative work product throughout the entire creative operations cycle.

That means we help teams, brands, and agencies make efficient use of their precious time, reduce risk, and ensure employees have the energy to go to yoga after work.

This year we've introduced font license management as well as font usage and license compliance reporting to both understand how fonts are used across campaigns, collateral, or clients and mitigate risk. Together, these tools prevent production disasters from happening, which doubles as an easy way to both maintain compliance and lower costs.

Plus it turns out having more perspective, insight, and control is the best way for our customers (*ahem*, that would be you, potentially) to both smooth out the bumps in their creative operations and boost their bottom lines.

If you have a team, let's talk. **Contact our team**, and we'll cover details, benefits, pricing, demos, and answer any questions you may have.

Hey, The Water's Warm Over Here, Come On In

If you'd like to know more about us, here are some handy links:

[Read The Extensis Blog](#)

[Explore Connect](#)

[Visit Compliance HUB](#)

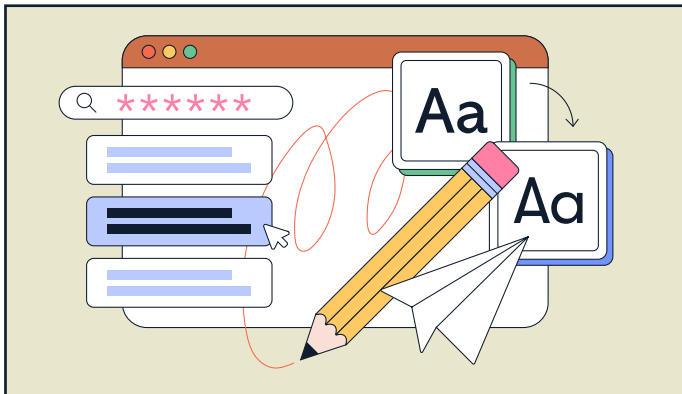
By the way, we'll hang out with stylish users like you any time.

NOTICE

Read And Understand This Instruction Manual Before Operating Any Creative Asset Management Equipment

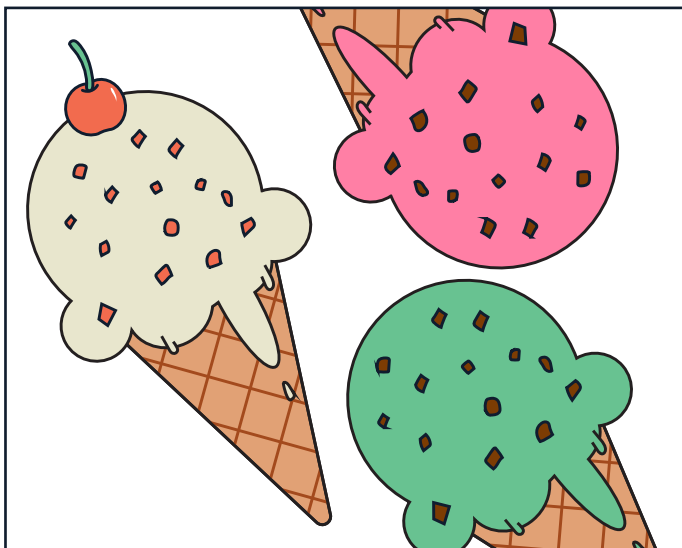
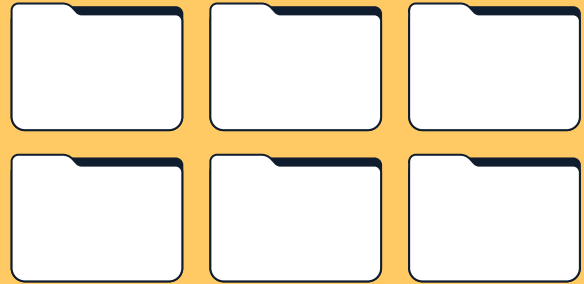
Step Two: Throw A Creative Asset Auditing Party

We recommend splitting your creative assets into these two groups: **Current Projects** and **Archival Projects**.



Current Projects are the creative assets your organization uses regularly. These assets are part of current or ongoing work for your organization or client(s).

Archival Projects are creative assets that your organization wishes to retain but are not part of any current work. They may be internal files or work for clients, but these assets no longer require modification.



Next, it's audit party time! Get your team together and answer the following questions to determine which category to place a creative asset. Then go out for ice cream, y'all deserve it.

- + Do we need continuous access?
- + When was this last used?
- + How often is it used?
- + Is it still relevant?
- + How will placing it in this category impact future work?
- + Does that ice cream place serve affogatos? Yum.



Step Three: Get Into Some Artful Organization

Create a folder with an unforgettable name such as “All Assets, Do Not Lose.” Within that folder, create a folder hierarchy entitled “Current” and “Archive.”

Then, create subfolders for each, based on how you desire your assets to be organized.

If you don’t have an organized structure you use daily, here are some strategies for organizing and naming the subfolders of “Current” and “Archive:”

EXAMPLE A:

+ Client Name

- Project Name
 - + A-Z subfolders
- Commission/Completion Date
 - + YYYY-MM (this naming method keeps things organized in calendar order)

EXAMPLE B:

+ Collection Name

- File Size
- File Type
 - + Documents
 - + Images
 - + Fonts
 - + Video

EXAMPLE C:

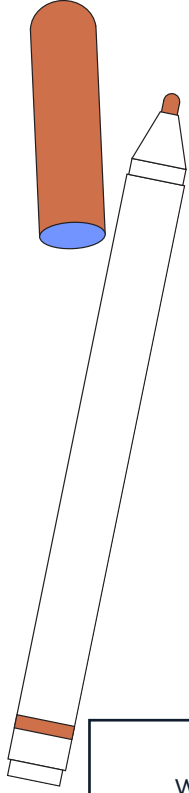
+ Templates

- Brand Guides
- Style Guides

EXAMPLE D:

+ Organization/Office Location

- Project Manager or Project Group
- Creative Group or Creative Assignee



Whatever strategy you employ to organize subfolders, please make sure the logic is understood by all users.

Also, you’ll want one single source of truth to both **store** and **manage** the assets from here on out. This, dear reader, is called a creative asset management system, and there are plenty out there to choose from.

However, you may need software that combines all your creative assets, workflows, teams, and stakeholders into one happy digital family so creative operations run as smooth as a well-oiled chain on a fixed-gear bike.

Yep, we make software called **Connect** that does just that, and then some. It’s worth checking out.

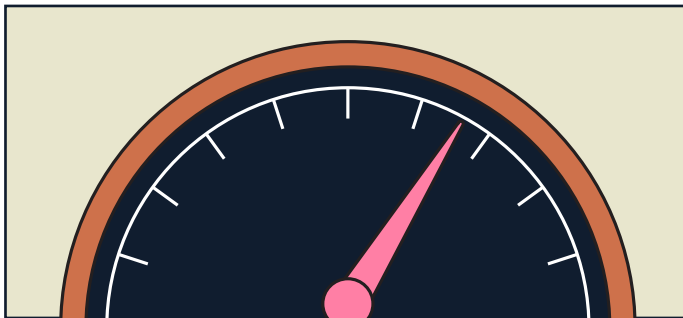
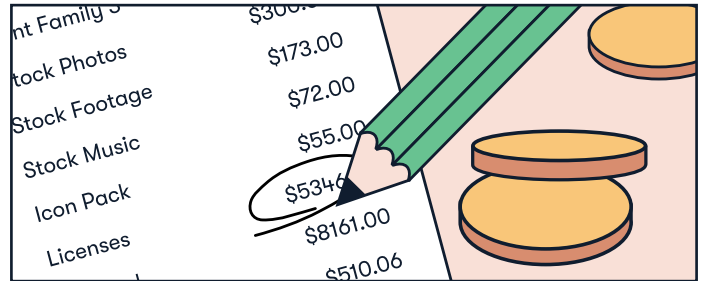
Step Four: Centralize Your Creative Assets

Ahem, as previously stated, we've been helping professional creatives with their creative operations for about 30 years, so we're pretty good at it.

Check our backstory to learn more, but in the meantime, here are a few things to ponder when deciding how to move forward.

Beware The Hidden Costs Of Server Management

This handy PDF explains the whole deal, but in a nutshell, you'll likely find the on-demand computing power and data storage offered by the cloud very appealing, especially when you discover how much cheaper the cloud is compared to on-premises servers.



Check Your Upload Speed

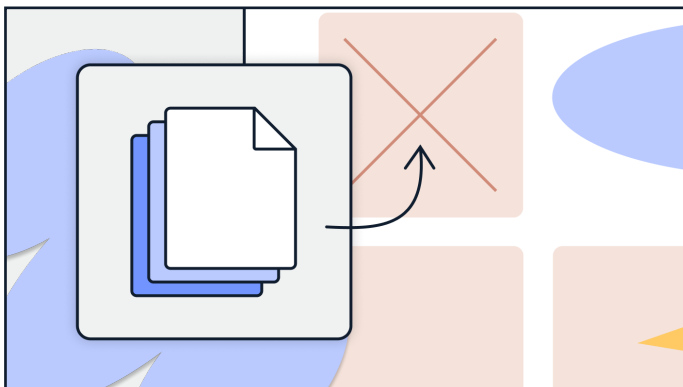
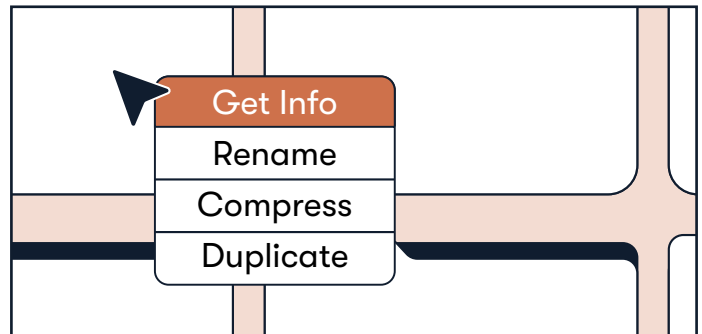
One way or another you'll end up in a cloud platform, we just know it, so checking your upload connection to the Internet is important to forecast how long uploading all those digital files will take.

For best results, it is recommended to have a minimum **upload speed of 5 Mbps or higher**.

Calculate How Much Space The Assets Will Use

Right click on the folder name on the folder you're going to upload (e.g., "All Assets, Do Not Lose"), then select **Get Info** on macOS or **Properties** on Windows OS to show the file size of the folder.

Note: Extensis provides each user 100GB with a Connect subscription, and up to 1TB with a Connect + Insight subscription.



Upload "All Assets, Do Not Lose"

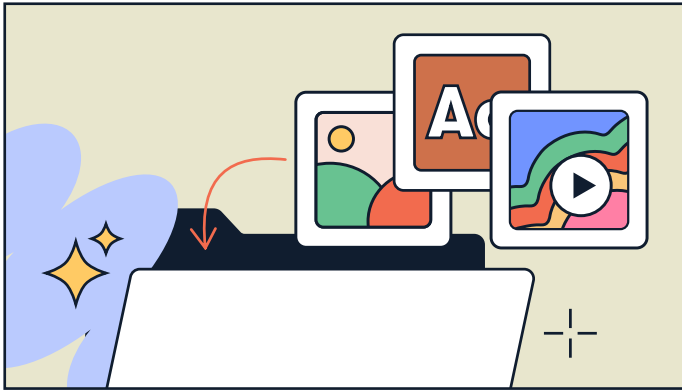
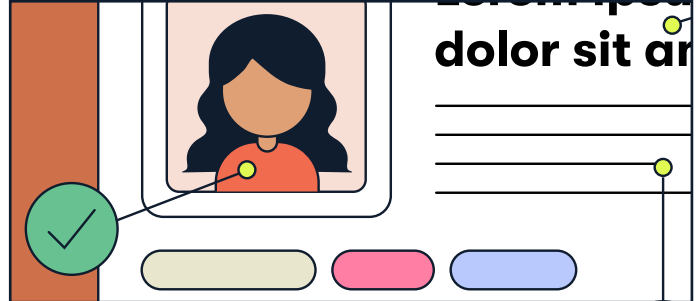
If you're using Extensis Connect, **here's a link with uploading instructions**.

Note: whether you choose our software to enhance your creative operations, or a slightly less charming creative asset management system, if the upload process is taking too long (or if there's a risk of interruption to your Internet connection) we recommend that you upload files in smaller batches by selecting fewer files or folders to upload at a time.

Step Five: Don't Forget About Those Font Licenses

Note: failure to comply with fonts' licensing agreements can lead to legal disputes, hefty fines, and litigation, so it's crucial that you prioritize licensing compliance while crafting creative gold.

You'll want to keep fonts and their licensing information together so your team can choose appropriately licensed fonts from the git-go (which also makes your team's work way less stressful).



For example, with **Extensis Connect** you can:

- + Access fonts' licensing and usage information right within the tool.
- + Track font usage and license compliance with straightforward analytics and reporting.
- + Organize your collections by workgroups to ensure that creative teams have access to the licensed fonts they need.

On that note, check out our infographic **Layered Licensing In Creative Projects** to learn more about what to watch out for with licensing.

But whatever path you choose to organize creative assets, just make sure font license and usage tracking are part of the deal.



Step Six: You're Done!

Now Please Share This Instruction Manual With A Friend



Know someone who's a disorganized mess? (It's all good, sometimes we are too.) Then share this instruction manual with 'em!

After all, sharing is caring, and we all need a little help from our friends.

Say, thanks taking this trip with us. Let us know if we can lend a hand.

[Contact Our Team](#)