SHRSS DAM Operating Model & Readiness Guide

AAEMDAM-3736 - Enablement | DAM Training & Usage Guide for Admins

1. Document Purpose

This document is intended to capture both where the implementation currently stands and what maturity looks like as SHRSS moves into the next phase of platform evolution. It is not an audit, but a shared foundation for informed backlog prioritization and continued acceleration.

2. Platform Maturity Context

The current SHRSS AEM Sites and Assets implementation represents the first operational release (R1) of a multi-phase enterprise modernization initiative.

R1 Achievement Summary

R1 successfully:

- Established AEMaaCS as the enterprise web and asset platform

- Migrated and launched two production web properties

- Implemented custom Sites authoring functionality aligned to initial business requirements

- Deployed DAM infrastructure and publishing workflows

- Validated production hosting, replication, and cache layers

- Achieved operational go-live stability in a cloud-native environment

The R1 scope reflected the requirements and priorities agreed upon during initial planning and UAT signoff at that time.

Enterprise platform transformations typically progress through phases:

1. Activation (initial launch and operational viability)

2. Stabilization (structural refinement and governance alignment)

3. Optimization (scalability and capability expansion)

4. Acceleration (automation, personalization, AI-enabled workflows)

SHRSS is now transitioning from activation to stabilization and optimization.

Advancement to the next maturity phase requires cross-functional alignment and executive sponsorship of structural governance decisions.

3. Current State vs Foundational State

3.1 Current State Observations

The current DAM reflects organic growth and phased migration rather than long-term structural design.

Observed characteristics include:

- Folder structures shaped by historical project needs

- Limited separation between legacy and forward-governed assets

- Inconsistent metadata enforcement

- Search behavior dependent on browsing

- Informal approval coordination

- Dynamic Media provisioned but not structurally integrated

These conditions are typical during activation-phase implementations. As scale increases, structural ambiguity becomes operational friction.

3.2 Foundational State Definition

A foundational DAM state is defined by structural clarity and behavioral discipline.

It includes:

- Explicit structural boundaries

- Metadata-driven discovery

- Controlled asset lifecycle discipline

- Defined governance authority

- Reference-safe publishing

- Structural readiness for advanced capabilities

Governance maturity precedes capability expansion.

4. Structural Architecture Model

Architectural Principle

Folder hierarchy enforces governance boundaries and operational clarity. It is not a taxonomy and should not function as the primary search mechanism.

Structure defines control.
Metadata enables scale.

Legacy Isolation Strategy

- Establish a designated legacy root

- Consolidate migrated assets within this boundary

- Freeze legacy structure from net-new asset growth

Governed Structure for Net-New Assets

- Align to domain segmentation

- Maintain consistent naming

- Avoid ad-hoc top-level folder creation

- Limit asset counts per folder

Structural changes should be intentional and governed.

5. Metadata & Discovery Model

Metadata as Infrastructure

Metadata determines:

- Search precision

- Filtering reliability

- Rights governance

- Automation feasibility

- Reporting integrity

Required Baseline for Net-New Assets

- Brand / Line of Business

- Property

- Asset Category

- Rights / Usage constraints

- Lifecycle status

- Language

Metadata completeness should be treated as a prerequisite to publication.

Tag Governance

- Maintain controlled namespace

- Restrict ad-hoc tag creation

- Route taxonomy changes through DAM Architect

Discovery Model Shift

Move from browsing-based retrieval to metadata-driven filtering.

If assets cannot be reliably located through structured criteria within seconds, governance reinforcement is required.

AI & Capability Readiness

AI-driven capabilities derive full value from structured and consistent metadata.

Emerging capabilities amplify existing structure. Strong metadata discipline increases capability leverage.

6. Operating Model & Roles

DAM Architect / Librarian

- Owns structural model

- Owns taxonomy governance

- Approves schema and structural changes

Content Administrators

- Enforce approved structure

- Validate metadata completeness

Developers / Technical Architects

- Ensure component compliance

- Avoid hard-coded asset paths

- Protect reference integrity

7. Asset Lifecycle Discipline

Once referenced, an asset's path and identity become contractual.

Lifecycle discipline increases publishing reliability and reduces operational risk.

- Create within governed structure

- Update responsibly

- Version intentionally (short-term safety net)

- Move/Rename with reference validation

- Publish with propagation awareness

- Delete only after reference cleanup

8. Reference Integrity & Publishing

Reference integrity is the highest-risk domain in DAM operations.

Most perceptions of platform instability originate from unclear lifecycle or reference discipline rather than systemic platform limitations.

9. Gap Analysis & Backlog Alignment

IMPORTANT: Where custom functionality in the current implementation does not align with evolving business practices, the appropriate response is structured gap analysis and backlog prioritization.

Before expanding scope or initiating additional migrations:

1. Ensure shared understanding of the current implementation

2. Align on structural refinements

3. Validate authoring workflows

4. Conduct structured gap analysis

Backlog evolution should incorporate workflow friction validated through structured analysis and aligned to strategic objectives.

10. Readiness Gaps Identified

- Structural ambiguity between legacy and governed domains

- Inconsistent metadata enforcement

- Undefined net-new asset boundary

- Informal approval processes

- Search dependent on browsing

- Undefined Dynamic Media event horizon

These gaps reflect transition from activation to maturity, not platform failure.

Clarifying structure and governance increases scalability confidence.

11. Structured Next Steps

Stabilization

- Define legacy boundary

- Establish governed structure

- Align roles and permissions

- Define metadata enforcement baseline

Structural Reinforcement

- Consolidate legacy assets

- Enforce net-new placement discipline

- Conduct metadata quality review

Capability Preparation

- Define Dynamic Media readiness criteria

- Evaluate workflow enforcement

- Assess metadata maturity for AI enablement

Sequencing matters. Structural readiness precedes expansion.