

# Success Story: Mercy Corps

## Mercy Corps: Pictures Worth a Thousand Words

NetXposure helps Mercy Corps streamline the management of digital content that raises awareness of global relief efforts.



The proverb, "a picture is worth a thousand words" rings true for Mercy Corps, one of the world's leading global humanitarian organization working amid disasters, conflict and chronic poverty. Complex stories of suffering and oppression, as well as progress and hope are often described with an image or short video, making them powerful means to inspire, educate and raise awareness of the agency's mission and global relief efforts. These images have been instrumental in telling Mercy Corps' story and the stories of those it helps.

Managing these digital assets is vital but it hasn't always been easy. Phil Ottum, Photo Library Specialist at Mercy Corps' headquarters in Portland, Ore. respectfully acknowledges the impact the Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004 had on the photography and production departments, recognizing that event as one of the key catalysts for change in the way digital assets were managed at Mercy Corps.

"Managing the enormous amount of photographs coming in from the tsunami zone in Sri Lanka—both from field operatives and a large number of contracted photographers, became a big issue."

At that time, Mercy Corps used a legacy image management system that served well as a file repository but lagged in management capabilities or editing and repurposing features. Images from the field were e-mailed or delivered via CDs and the production team then had to upload and archive files individually. Worse, search and retrieval of images were time prohibitive. "We'd get a request for 'an image of a boy smiling,' for example and we'd have to drop everything to try to find it," Ottum added.

And so, in the wake of that experience, Mercy Corps set out to find a digital asset management (DAM) system that not only would consolidate all of its photography and video in a central repository, but also streamline access and retrieval and scale to meet the agency's projected explosive growth of digital content.

*"As a global organization, we have unique workflow requirements. We were looking for a DAM system that was easy to use, accessible from anywhere, scalable and flexible. NetXposure fit these requirements"*

**Angela Murray, Mercy Corps**

### Challenges – Finding the right fit for unique workflow

With over 3,500 staff operating in over 35 countries, Mercy Corps needed to find a powerful DAM that was easily accessible by production specialists and field operatives located all over the World, thus making a web-based, hosted DAM solution necessary.

At the broadest level, Mercy Corps wanted the DAM to enable all employees to search the library while delivering a quality user experience regardless of browser or bandwidth connection. However, requirements for the production department — a team of specialists responsible for the creation, management and distribution of the agency's creative assets,

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were more rigorous. With search and retrieval topping the priority list, the DAM-of-choice had to deliver robust and flexible metadata management capabilities, including customization and automation. The DAM also had to be cost effective, easy to maintain and able to scale to meet the expected growth of digital content.

"We invested a lot of time creating a metadata taxonomy that worked for our collection of images, but was tailored to the workflow of the production department," said Jennifer Dillan, Creative Services Manager at Mercy Corps. "We realized that the sheer volume and complexity of rich media demanded that the new taxonomy had to scale and enable a broader set of users to easily search content."

## EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

**Industry: Non-Profit**

### Organization Profile:

**One of the world's leading global humanitarian organizations working amid disasters, conflict and chronic poverty, Mercy Corps has provided \$1.5 billion in assistance to people in 106 nations. The agency's unified global programs employ 3,500 staff worldwide and reach nearly 16.4 million people in more than 35 countries.**

### Challenge:

**Mercy Corps was seeking a digital asset management system that consolidated the organization's photography and video in one central repository, improved search and accessibility and accelerated the delivery of time-sensitive content from remote areas located all over the world.**

### Toolkit:

- **NetXposure core DAM License (N2)**
- **Hosted solution on Linux**
- **NetXposure ad-on modules: Video Focus, Developer Tool kit, Metadata Manager**
- **Mac OS X**

### Benefits:

- **Centralized digital content repository:**
- **Speeds access to digital content for constituents around the globe**
- **Streamlines workflow of digital content, increasing productivity**
- **Provides a centralized point from which to push digital content out to other marketing outlets**
- **Countless hours saved searching for specific digital media**

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## NetXposure Solution

After careful consideration of other DAM offerings, Mercy Corps selected NetXposure, a hosted enterprise-class digital asset management solution that combines the flexibility of the Web with the responsiveness of the desktop for streamlining the management of large libraries of digital files.

NetXposure's intuitive and flexible user interface and advanced roundtrip-support for XMP metadata help Mercy Corps improve workflow efficiencies and team collaboration, both of which contribute to lower costs and improved productivity for the organization.

The flexibility of NetXposure's user interface is ideal for Mercy Corps' globally disperse workforce. Production specialists utilize NetXposure's intuitively expressive Adobe® Flex™-based user interface, including cascading pull-down menus, slider resizing capabilities and the ability to visually sort thousands of files, helping to streamline workflow and productivity. The system also provides the ability to view and interact with the library in standard HTML format that delivers full functionality with minimal computing resources, making it ideal for Mercy Corps' field operatives.



NetXposure delivers unlimited unique metadata fields and templates based on user group, asset category, or asset attribute. Utilizing NetXposure's Roundtrip XMP support has helped streamline the migration process from the old file system to the DAM. Select embedded metadata fields from the legacy system, including a broad range of file types including Dublin Core, EXIF, IPTC, Photoshop, PDF, XMP and more, can be extracted and mapped to the custom metadata attribute fields in the DAM. Edits to those metadata attribute fields in the DAM can then be written back to the file in the embedded form before export, ensuring easy access to all metadata, and that no metadata is lost.

Image editing and repurposing capabilities including resizing, low-resolution or thumbnail previews, image rotation, drag-n-drop bulk importing, and support for all major rich media file formats add to the systems' attributes. According to Phil Ottum, "The PDF context sheet is great. The fact that we can grab ten or eleven images, automatically turn it into a PDF context sheet and e-mail it out is very useful."

## Benefits

With NetXposure serving as the centralized photo library for Mercy Corps, the agency has realized the following benefits:

- **Helps employees find the right files quickly** - A centralized, web-based photo library delivers broad and improved access to files while flexible search capabilities and robust asset management capabilities, including auto-tasking, saved searches and automatic file conversion, reduce the amount of time employees spend looking for assets or repurposing them.

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- **Streamlined workflow and collaboration** - Production specialists can share images and files with field operatives in batches or groups, enabling teams to quickly review, compare and share assets. This helps all employees find the right files quickly, improving the use and re-use of images and content for educational programs, marketing, fundraising, or media opportunities.

- **Increased productivity** - Web-based collaboration and workflow automation enables Mercy Corps to create, store, search, repurpose, share and deliver images more efficiently and effectively.

## What's Next - Video Management at new Action Centers

In October 2008, Mercy Corps opened the Action Center to End World Hunger, a first-of-its-kind, interactive public space that educates and empowers visitors to tackle the global challenges posed by hunger and poverty. Located in New York City, the Action Center uses multimedia to explain and illustrate the challenges and associated with poverty and hunger and inspire change and community participation.

Interactive information kiosks located in the Action Center stream videos clips and other educational multimedia content to visitors. Select videos and content is also posted on the recently launched Action Center website at <http://www.actioncenter.org/>.

Video, photos and other rich media files used in the creation of content for the Action Center and website will be stored in the central NetXposure DAM repository. Production teams in New York will transfer original videos via File Transfer Protocol (FTP) to the production teams at Mercy Corps headquarters in Portland, enabling all video content from the Action Center to be archived in the central NetXposure repository for safekeeping and accessibility.

The Action Center is expected to draw 50,000 visitors a year, including local residents, school groups, and tourists to New York from around the world. In the fall of 2009, the Action Center will be joined by a companion center in Mercy Corps' new global headquarters building in Portland, Ore. As such, Mercy Corps expects the volume of video content to increase significantly and is confident in the scalability of NetXposure to meet this demand. As of November 2008, Mercy Corps stores about 30,000 images in the NetXposure DAM or about 100 Gigabytes of content but expects to add about 25,000 more images in the next year including 300 Gigabytes of video.

## About NetXposure

NetXposure delivers software solutions that reduce the time and cost of content production, maximize ROI from media assets, and streamline the workflows of managing large libraries of digital files. With a history as an industry pioneer in developing Rich Internet Applications (RIAs), NetXposure has become a leader in delivering Digital Asset Management (DAM) solutions to organizations of all sizes across a wide range of industries.

Call 503-499-4342 to find out how NetXposure can unlock the value of your digital assets.