



Digimarc® for Images
With ImageSpan™ LicenseStream™



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Digimarc Case Study | Missouri History Museum

Missouri History Museum Manages, Monitors and Monetizes Digital Assets with LicenseStream and Digimarc for Images



Overview

The Missouri History Museum wanted to leverage the power of the Web to extend its reach globally so that anyone, anywhere in the world could quickly find and license images in its extensive collections. Its rich store of content includes images, photos, sound and video that bring to life U.S. history, from the birth of St. Louis in 1764 to modern times. Even as the museum wanted to raise the visibility of its digital images to expand revenue opportunities, it needed to protect those images from unauthorized use. It also wanted to reduce overhead associated with complex, manual licensing transactions.

The museum implemented ImageSpan's LicenseStream Business Edition to more effectively manage, monitor and maximize the value of its wide-ranging archives. LicenseStream automates the costly processes of content licensing and royalty settlement, including ongoing management of licensing renewals. To track and manage the Missouri History Museum images once they are posted to the Web, the museum implemented Digimarc for Images. The Digimarc for Images solution embeds unique digital watermarks into each image to provide a digital identity that is imperceptible and persists even as images are copied, manipulated, distributed, transformed or converted to new formats. The watermark communicates copyright ownership, contact information, and applicable usage rights and restrictions. It can also link viewers of the image directly to the museum's website.

The Challenge: Manual Licensing Processes Limited Customer Access to the Annals of Americana

The Missouri History Museum in 2007 first published to its website for licensing images of its vintage photos, paintings, and artifacts for licensing purposes.

However, manual licensing processes made it difficult for museum staffers to keep pace with demand. "We lost business because we failed to respond to e-mails that came in at odd hours or when we were swamped with other projects," said Angie Dietz, digital assets archivist for the Missouri History Museum.

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Because most of the museum's content remained offline, new customers often met in person with museum staffers to find the images they needed. Image selection and pricing for repeat customers were handled via e-mail or phone. In both cases, licensing requests required hours of museum staff time to resolve and ate into potential licensing profits.

In addition, visible watermarks that helped protect images online from unauthorized uses marred their appeal to licensors. "You want the images to be credited and tracked back to your site," Dietz said, "but you don't want visible watermarks all over your content, nor do you want some of the protections available stripped out, which is common."

Solution: Standards-based Solution Makes Content Itself the Storefront to Speed Customer Access, Transactions

Eager to make more of its content available to the public online both for licensing and educational purposes, Missouri History Museum executives chose LicenseStream. "LicenseStream allows us to license our digital assets directly from our own website, instead of requiring us to upload images to a separate Web service," Dietz said "This is important to us as the museum adopts a new, more robust content management system this year. LicenseStream allows us to adapt this system as we see fit, while taking full advantage of the LicenseStream platform."

Standards-based LicenseStream makes the content itself the storefront, with defined ownership and rights embedded, enabling flexible pricing based on use. This enables Missouri History Museum to publish its search-optimized images to the Web and to major search engines in a way that lets customers license the images with a few mouse clicks. By turning each of the museum's images into a storefront online, LicenseStream shortens the transaction time between search, discovery and payment.

Implementing the LicenseStream system took about nine weeks. That time included preparing scans of more than 3,000 images, adding keywords and other metadata that would make the images easier to find, uploading the images with attached metadata, and training staff on the new system. "Museums that already have a digitization process in place would spend much less time – perhaps as little as a week – in adopting the ImageSpan system," Dietz said.

Results: LicenseStream Drives Revenues, Uncovers New Markets, Cuts Costs

Within five months of launch, the new LicenseStream-powered Missouri History Museum Image Store generated enough revenue to pay for itself. It also exceeded the number of orders typically placed with the museum in a year. "With LicenseStream, we've been able to increase by a factor of 10 the number of transactions we'd typically be able to do in a month," Dietz said.

It also helped the museum uncover new markets for its images. For example, a designer for a popular women's athletic wear retailer licensed more than 100 vintage sports images through the museum's online Image Store using the LicenseStream service, resulting in more than \$10,000 of revenues from a previously untapped market.

"We can absolutely attribute this retailer's interest to LicenseStream because the service made it easy for this designer to browse and select the images she wanted from our collection," Dietz said. "Under our previous manual services, this type of buyer would have gone elsewhere to find the images she needed."

LicenseStream shaves up to six weeks off the time it takes customers to find and license an image using previous manual processes. It also boosts potential profits as it dramatically cuts the time spent by museum staff on internal searches for images, processing forms and tracking financials.

"As customers adapt to this automated system, we would expect a marginal increase in sales of up to 20 percent in 2010," Dietz said.

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The Missouri History Museum Image Store has achieved revenue of more than \$10,000 from licensing images.

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Within five years, the museum expects to transition a good portion of e-mailed requests for images into transactions that occur through its LicenseStream-powered Image Store. “We also expect that those requests will increase as we reach buyers that never would have thought to go to Missouri History Museum for their image needs,” Dietz added.

Looking Ahead: Monitoring and Managing Digital Assets to Drive Incremental Web Traffic and Revenues

Looking ahead, the museum wanted to monitor and manage images posted to the Web. Leveraging the Digimarc and ImageSpan partnership, the museum implemented Digimarc for Images, which adds an imperceptible digital watermark to each image to consistently communicate copyright ownership and usage rights wherever the image is found online.

The Digimarc Search Service then continuously monitors the Web looking for uniquely watermarked content and provides regular reporting on where a content owner’s images are found. When content is used without permission, the museum can select from several automated e-mails that request the user to license the image on the spot, provide attribution, link back to the museum’s site, initiate collections or take down an image. With these content tracking and remedy capabilities, the joint solution turns the museum’s portfolio of images on the Web into multiple agents that drive traffic back to the museum’s website.

“We love that LicenseStream’s Content Tracker provides multiple ways to address unauthorized uses of materials,” said Dietz. “For example, if a blogger grabs one of our images, we can simply ask them to credit us. As a public institution, we’re not solely profit-driven and want to allow for uses that educate the public about our collections.”

Anticipating Additional Growth of Revenues and Profits

Dietz estimates that with the joint ImageSpan-Digimarc solution, the museum will increase net revenues 35 percent this year, and see a 50 percent increase in years two and three. “Those numbers are still conservative, given that in our best year with the old system we earned \$20,000 in licensing revenue,” she added.

As the joint solution turns the museum’s portfolio of images on the Web into multiple agents that drive traffic back to the museum’s website, Dietz added that she also expects to see the volume of its transactions increase.

“We are very excited that ImageSpan’s LicenseStream with Digimarc for Images has shown that it can help us and other museums tend to our public missions,” Dietz said, “as it protects the value of our content and increases our revenues.”

With content tracking and remedy capabilities, the joint solution turns the museum’s portfolio of images on the Web into multiple agents that drive traffic back to the museum’s website.

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SUMMARY:

Challenge:

- Complex, manual licensing processes resulted in lost revenues & profits
- Most content remained unavailable to Web buyers
- Visible watermarks marred images and left them vulnerable to unauthorized use

Solution:

LicenseStream Business Edition empowers Missouri History Museum to:

- Publish license-ready content directly to its website and to major search engines
- License content directly from its own website, instead of via a separate Web service
- Shorten the transaction time between search, discovery and payment

Digimarc for Images:

- Adds an imperceptible digital watermark to each image
- Consistently communicates copyright ownership and usage rights
- Alerts owners to how and where their content is used

Results:

LicenseStream:

- Generates enough revenue within five months to pay for itself
- Exceeds the number of orders typically placed with the museum in a year
- Shaves up to six weeks off the time it takes customers to license content and uncovers new markets

Digimarc for Images with LicenseStream's Content Tracker:

- Spots unauthorized uses that can be converted into revenue-generating opportunities
- Provides multiple options to address unauthorized use
- Resolves unauthorized use with automated tools
- Turns the museum's catalog of content into multiple agents that drive traffic back to the museum's website

Getting Started

Digimarc for Images is sold as a subscription that is renewable annually. The license allows companies and organizations to embed watermarks into an unlimited number of images, and the digital watermarks will be uniquely yours. As we know that no two businesses are the same, we have developed an expertise at putting together just the right solution to meet your specific needs. **Give us a call today to get started – 1.800.344.4627.**

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