

The background features a high-angle, close-up view of a modern building's facade, characterized by repetitive window patterns and balconies. A large, dark blue, semi-transparent geometric overlay, composed of numerous rectangular blocks of varying heights and widths, is positioned on the right side of the image, creating a sense of depth and architectural complexity.

Buy vs build:

Identifying the right DAM  
solution for your organization

## Introduction

# To buy or to build?

People ask us all the time: “If all we’re trying to do is set up an ‘image library’ to get a handle on our files and brand assets, then why wouldn’t we just build a solution ourselves?”. It’s a fair question because there are many considerations and trade offs to take into account when either buying or building a solution.

In this white paper, we would like to shed some light upon key factors to consider so that you can make an informed decision that fits best with your organization when building or buying a digital asset management (DAM) solution.

## Considerations

# DAM is more than “just an image library”

When considering buying or building a DAM, the common perception is that it’s an “image library”. In some cases that may be true and a company really only needs to manage and store a small amount of assets; however, to plan for the long term you’ll have to consider the questions below and see if an image library will be sufficient to deal with the complexities that will present themselves as your organization grows and evolves.

1. Will your company continue to invest in cloud-based applications?
2. Is your company growing and potentially expanding into new or different markets?
3. Is your marketing team planning on diversifying marketing channels to drive revenue?
4. Will the amount of content you produce continue to increase?

If your answer is “Yes” or “Maybe” to any of the questions above, then you’ll need more than an image library to scale for growth.

Digital asset management isn’t just about storing assets. It’s about:

- Enabling strategic roll out of digital content—right time, right person, right market
- Sharing and collaborating securely by tracking an asset’s every move
- Mitigating risks of asset misuse through usage rights, permissions and watermarks
- Increasing asset reuse and avoiding the costs of creating duplicate content
- Atomizing content and using it for many channels by, for example, automatically rendering different versions, and cropping on-the-go for different endpoints
- Understanding how your company is increasing the ROI on every single piece of content created by having data at hand showing how your assets and portal are performing
- Automating content distribution across other platform, such as CMS or E-commerce sites



## “Buy vs Build”

When the question arises about whether to buy or build a DAM, we usually get the following reasons in favor of building it in-house:

- “Building it in-house will be cheaper and saves on server costs”
- “We don’t want any surprises with increasing server costs of terabytes of data”
- “We really just need an image library and I’m sure that we can build that fairly quickly”
- “Building it custom would mean we’d have all the features we need”
- “The upfront costs of implementing a SaaS solution are higher than if we built it ourselves”
- “User license costs are unpredictable and will increase if we add new users”
- “We need to connect to a bunch of other systems. It’ll be easier to build it in-house”

The concerns above are all warranted and in some cases building a solution in-house might be better for your company. Nevertheless, because this decision will impact everything from your day-to-day operations through to your digital transformation strategy, we will share some insights showing why our customers choose Bynder, a cloud-based SaaS product, over building a DAM in-house.

## Risks to consider when building in-house

**Cost risks:** Underestimating costs and time allocation for project implementation, on-going maintenance and systems improvement that are usually not factored into the budget.

**System risks:** A system built in-house can easily become outdated if it's not updated regularly. Losing momentum during a project roll-out can lead to DAM becoming de-prioritized over time.

**Business risks:** Building a solution in-house may distract your IT team from core business operations.

Research by McKinsey sums it all up in one sentence: **“On average, large IT projects run 45 percent over budget and 7 percent over time, while delivering 56 percent less value than predicted”**

## Evaluation

# Cost, reliability and scalability

Below we will categorize the risks based on key deciding factors and go into a more detailed comparison around: **cost**, **reliability** and **scalability**. Both Marketing and IT professionals can use this comparison to determine what your best option is: buying an 'off-the-shelf' SaaS solution or building in-house. This comparison takes both technical and business aspects into consideration.

[AWS research shows that the number of enterprises using traditionally built IT infrastructure as the primary environment for at least one workload is declining from 77% in 2015 to 43% in 2018.](#)

## Cost

The cost factor is defined as the price you will pay, whether it's a monthly or yearly pricing model or based on the cost of internal resources. Here we focus more on the considerations you'll have to make in either scenario.

	SaaS	In-house
Short term costs	<p>SaaS sometimes has a higher initial cost as a vendor will usually charge a one-off fee for implementation and onboarding services, such as configuration, training and adoption.</p> <p>Most SaaS vendors have a streamlined process and leverage past experience, best practices and established processes to ensure that the project stays on track so that the customer realizes the value of the solution quickly.</p> <p><a href="#">At Bynder, the one-off fee includes initial scoping, technical configuration according to scoped needs and sharing best practices regarding roll-out by experienced onboarding consultants.</a></p>	<p>Lower upfront costs if built fully in-house with available resources. The main cost consideration will be the trade off between building the desired requirements, which may result in greater costs or development time, while balancing short term goals of keeping costs low.</p> <p>The initial investment will be high if you need to hire a consultant or a full time employee to build and execute on all the key action items needed to ensure a successful roll out.</p> <p>If there's already a solution in place, then the majority of the initial investment will go into determining needs, scoping technical requirements, validating use cases with test groups and ensuring adoption. Additional costs may include building out integrations for different systems.</p>

	SaaS	In-house
<b>Long term Capital Expenditure (CAPEX)</b>	<p>SaaS is favorable against the traditional upfront capital expenditure for an on-premise, in-house solution. The buyer will have lower costs in the long run as cloud hosting, platform maintenance and improvements are the responsibility of the vendor.</p> <p><b>Bynder's subscription and cloud-based offering spreads investment over time and is a predictable monthly fee.</b></p>	<p>Cost of in-house resources can remain constant if the scope of the project or needs do not change over time.</p> <p>To avoid any surprises, be sure to factor in extra development time in case unforeseen adaptations, improvements and maintenance are not accounted for during initial scoping.</p> <p>Some examples of longer term capital expenditures and risks come in the form of increasing the scope based on new requirements, scaling the solution or deprioritization of the project over time</p>
<b>Project duration</b>	<p>Vendors usually offer tailored training and onboarding consultation and can have a customer up and running, testing, and validating the solution quickly. Additionally, since a SaaS solution is already built, it only needs to be configured (not customized) and altered before the roll out.</p> <p><b>At Bynder, we'll translate your brand strategy and business goals to deliver a customized, enterprise-grade DAM solution and implementation that usually takes an average of 10 days to get started and approximately 60-70 days to complete the software configuration (or implementation).</b></p>	<p>In-house solutions require an internal team to drive the process and keep up momentum. The ideal setup involves a cross-functional team of "champions" that ensure adoption across different departments.</p> <p>Implementation includes scoping key needs, finding common processes, and then developing, delivering and validating whether the built features serve these needs.</p> <p>Compared to a SaaS application, building a solution in-house will take more time to implement since the technical requirements will have to be created from scratch and do not leverage an existing infrastructure that only needs configuration.</p>
<b>Development costs</b>	<p>'Resource pooling' is an attractive characteristic of cloud offerings as clients share resources, allowing the cloud vendor to distribute best features to all of its clients.</p> <p><b>Bynder leverages customer insights and the latest technological advancements to determine its product roadmap. By continually doing so, the new features released, will ensure Bynder offers customers a best-in-class solution.</b></p>	<p>If the scope of the project changes or new stakeholders require new features, then development costs will usually sit with IT.</p> <p>Allocating resources to continuously maintain or improve may cause the team to shift focus from core business operations to feature development on the in-house solution.</p>

## Reliability

Reliability of the solution is defined by the ability to access it whenever you need, regardless of geographical location, day or time and in accordance with international data privacy regulations.

	SaaS	In-house
<b>Access</b>	<p>For a cloud-based SaaS solution, all you need is a computer and an internet connection. You do not need to install anything on your own servers, but simply securely access it via a web browser. This results in always having your DAM accessible, even when you're not physically at the office where servers are located.</p> <p>Next to the computer, via a cloud-based solution you can also securely access your assets via your phone or tablet as simply as accessing any web page</p> <p><b>Bynder delivers assets via Cloudfront's Content Delivery Network (CDN), leveraging local servers worldwide to deliver faster across different regions.</b></p>	<p>Giving remote access to in-house solutions is possible with Identity &amp; Access Management providers. In the event that those services are not available in a company, access to the DAM can be limited and require a physical presence at the office to login and access files on a server.</p> <p>Alternatively, using your corporate VPN will always connect you to your data center, however, the connection will most likely be slow, especially when dealing with large files.</p> <p>Additionally, enabling CDN for your custom built solution increases complexity, cost and at the end creates a hybrid solution which is neither fully in-house nor cloud-based.</p>
<b>Security</b>	<p>SaaS vendors generally abide by a variety of security, data privacy and compliance standards to ensure that they can safely store a customer's data and assets. This can take the form of either being independently certified or certification via a cloud-hosting service provider, for example.</p> <p><b>Bynder's independent certifications are evidence of our commitment to privacy, security and business continuity: ISO 270001:2013, ISO 27018:2014, ISO 22301:2012 (expected end 2019) and GDPR compliant.</b></p> <p><b>Bynder is continuously reviewing its HIPAA and PCI-DSS compliance status and improving its processes and operations to ensure compliance with requirements. Additionally, Bynder's processing activities fall within SAQ-A, the most limited type of processing activities covered by PCI-DSS.</b></p>	<p>Building in-house and knowing your data is located within your servers and IT infrastructure can give "peace of mind". In this case it's key to make sure that not only the storage of assets is secure, but also the way they are created and distributed within the organization or with external partners.</p> <p>Because some in-house solutions might have limitations with regards to accessing, collaborating and distributing content, there's a risk that employees will adopt free solutions that are easier to use, leading to a "Shadow IT" problem.</p> <p>In-house solutions, most of the time, also lack rigorous and robust user access management..</p>

	SaaS	In-house
<b>Performance</b>	<p>SaaS vendors contractually agree via Service License Agreements (SLA) to make sure the software is up and running and performing optimally to avoid downtime.</p> <p><b>Bynder's cloud-based architecture is built on Amazon Web Services, which offers features like 99.9% uptime.</b></p>	<p>For self-built solutions, your company will need in-house resources that can quickly identify and troubleshoot any issues that arise. Moreover, access to internal resources, when not in the office, can be slow, especially when dealing with large files.</p>
<b>Backups and disaster recovery</b>	<p>In the cloud, content can be backed up regularly and automatically, and companies only have to pay for the resources they use. This means that, in case of damage to a physical server or loss due to employee error or natural disasters, you will always have a backup of your assets.</p> <p><b>Bynder is safeguarded from damage to physical servers by offering a cloud based service in partnership with AWS. Any accidentally removed files, can be restored quickly and easily.</b></p>	<p>On-premise solutions require up front storage and server investments. You also need to take licensing costs into account for the operating system, the server storage software, backup software and more. Backing up archived and unnecessary data can also significantly increase the total cost of ownership.</p> <p>Additionally, data loss is more likely to occur during disaster if an in-house solution doesn't have a cloud backup or a duplicate server located at another place other than where the original was affected. A backup recovery site would require a similar hardware and licensing setup as the primary one, doubling the costs.</p>

# Scalability

Scalability refers to the ability to adapt and expand your digital asset management operations through company growth.. This section covers sustainability in the long term, as well as platform/infrastructure scalability.

	SaaS	In-house
<b>Best practices</b>	<p>Buying from an established vendor in the market ensures you have a better setup by industry experts from the outset.</p> <p>This gives you the opportunity to focus immediately on core business operations instead of building out new applications with relatively less knowledge or experience as specialized vendors.</p> <p><b>At Bynder, the one-off fee includes initial scoping, technical configuration according to requirements and internal roll out and education by an experienced onboarding consultant, to name a few of the key steps.</b></p> <p><b>Bynder's Customer Success team have experience with rolling out different use cases for customers and will gladly share these in order for your team to achieve the best results.</b></p>	<p>Building a solution in-house can help meet immediate requirements by building according to the needs of the teams. If the scope of the project does not increase, then you can “set-it-and-forget-it”.</p> <p>In reality, most of the time the scope and needs will increase. If not met, the project may lose traction and/or buy-in, leading to more resources being poured into it. If needs become more complex and a company does not have the in-house knowledge, this will lead to more resources being used, or, worst case scenario: having to go back to the drawing board if the solution wasn't built to accommodate the new requirements.</p>
<b>Application integration</b>	<p>SaaS applications can be integrated with other platforms and systems using APIs, which means that over time, as you buy more cloud-based solutions, you can integrate them easily.</p> <p><b>Bynder has over 33 integrations with best-of-breed solutions and offers a developer portal with SDKs for clients who want to build their own connections using Bynder's API. Every “out-of-the-box” integration could potentially require some customization and development to make it specific to a use case.</b></p>	<p>Leveraging you in-house IT team to build out integrations can be beneficial for creating custom-built connections with the technology you work with, that otherwise cannot be found “out-of-the-box”.</p> <p>A key consideration about building this in-house is whether you have the resources to improve and adapt over time as new versions of software are released by other vendors.</p>

	SaaS	In-house
<b>Platform scalability</b>	<p>Cloud-based SaaS models have become popular because of their ability to scale quickly and almost instantly, while not bound by physical limitations, such as a server room space or limits on storage. Because of this, buyers are better equipped to withstand abrupt changes within an organization, for example onboarding hundreds of new users in case because of a merger or acquisition, or handling a sudden increase in heavy and hi-res assets created and that also need to be distributed to partners or press.</p> <p>Additionally, as SaaS vendors develop their product's capabilities to meet more use cases and client needs, you can feel confident that any solution you pick today will scale for your needs tomorrow.</p> <p><b>With over 1500 customers trusting in Bynder's leading DAM solution, we are constantly finding ways to make complex operations more efficient so that we can continue to serve customer needs today and in the long-run.</b></p>	<p>In-house solutions can scale gradually over time by allocating more IT resources, or acquiring more on-premise or hybrid cloud servers for storage space and network capacity. These are likely the most volatile factors in case of abrupt or large-scale business changes and can rake up significant costs if not accounted for.</p> <p>Future considerations of an in-house solution will require the ability to cater to changes over time. Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extending from image or file management to optimizing creative and content workflows</li> <li>• Having the right controls in place to safeguard brand assets</li> <li>• Catering to the growing amount of marketing and customer experience channels</li> <li>• Abiding by security standards that are changing globally</li> <li>• Lifecycle management of all IT resources</li> <li>• Support contracts for all IT resources</li> </ul>
<b>Development costs</b>	<p>Because a SaaS vendor is responsible for maintaining and improving software, as well as keeping their business afloat, they offer competitive services in order to keep a client. Most SaaS vendors offer dedicated Customer Success Managers to ensure a client's success and increased ROI over time.</p> <p>This relieves companies of the burden of hiring new IT staff as they do not need to build large teams to produce and maintain applications.</p> <p><b>Bynder has 60+ dedicated developers, as well as Customer Success and Technical Support who work around the clock and around the globe to ensure the system is running smoothly at any given moment.</b></p>	<p>Managing, maintaining and improving an in-house built solution is the responsibility of the IT team and will require developing or acquiring expertise to build out solutions that meet the company's requirements over time.</p> <p>This is a viable option if you are willing to either develop in-house knowledge or hire external experts to guide the process on an on-going basis.</p> <p>Major considerations to take into account include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether you have development and implementation resources that are focused and dedicated to long-term maintenance</li> <li>• Whether you have long term vision beyond the "image library" to scale the solution according to increased demands over time</li> </ul>

## Decision

# Why 1500+ customers choose Bynder's cloud-based SaaS solution

We trust that we've provided you with enough material to make an informed decision about whether it's an in-house or off-the-shelf SaaS solution that meets both your technical and business needs. If you believe the latter is the best fit for your organization - or if you've got any questions at all - we'd love to talk. Here are a few reasons why our customers choose for Bynder:

- SaaS model spreads investment over time with a predictable monthly subscription fees
- 60+ dedicated developers release features and improvements on a daily basis,
- Experienced on-boarding, customer success and technical support teams
- Average 10 days to get started and 60-70 days to complete the software configuration
- Cloud-based architecture is built on Amazon Web Services, offering 99.9% uptime
- Optimal asset delivery with Cloudfront's Content Delivery Network (CDN)
- Over 30 integrations, 6 mature SDKs and a RESTful API available
- Security at the forefront with independent certifications for: ISO 270001:2013, ISO 27018:2014 and PCI-DSS v3.1., GDPR, and HIPPA compliant

## Want to learn more?

Bynder is a unique solution for every business and is priced as such to offer the best value for each client. Your solution is developed in partnership with a solutions consultant, and is based on specific use cases.

For more information, please [book a demo](#) or [request a quote](#).

Bynder is the fastest growing DAM service,  
offering a simplified solution for marketing  
professionals to manage their digital content  
in the cloud.

For more information please visit our website  
[www.bynder.com](http://www.bynder.com).

