

Case study

“It was obvious that Axomic had developed OpenAsset from the point of view of an architectural workflow.”

– Katy Harris, Partner,  
Foster + Partners



Hearst Headquarters, New York

## Putting digital images to work for Foster + Partners

OpenAsset has enabled Foster + Partners to create a world class, easy to use architectural image library. Image resources used in projects and for reference are now available to all staff at the click of a mouse, no matter where in world they travel. This case study presents how Axomic worked with Foster + Partners to create this key business tool, and how the practice is saving time and putting its digital images to work.

### About Foster + Partners

Foster + Partners, one of the most innovative architectural practices in the world today, is based in London with project offices in 22 countries. The practice is more than 1000 strong, with a highly talented team drawn from more than 50 nations.

# How OpenAsset helps Foster + Partners make the most of their digital images

Foster + Partners had been seriously grappling with digital asset management (DAM) for almost a decade before being introduced to OpenAsset. The practice had previously invested in a solution when only a handful of (largely media-industry focused) image libraries were available. While this system was not rolled out to a wide user base, it enabled the practice to structure its data and organise its thoughts around DAM systems, helping to facilitate the eventual transition to OpenAsset.



Swiss Re HQ, 30 St Mary Axe, London

After a number of years, when image databases more targeted at architects started appearing on the market, the practice decided to re-evaluate options. When evaluating these new systems, the key criteria for Foster + Partners was finding a solution which was easy to use, and fitted well into the architectural workflow. Additionally, the system had to be made available to everyone in a practice that was rapidly growing, both in the UK and worldwide.

OpenAsset from Axomic had been closely developed with a group of leading UK architects a few years earlier, and was being adopted by a growing number of practices.

The communications team created a well thought-out image library matrix to define requirements. After 3 months the practice placed an order for OpenAsset and the project began.

“With OpenAsset, we get more out of our huge image collection.”

– Katy Harris, Partner, Foster + Partners

## Successful Implementation

With a system in place, the immediate challenge was how to export files from the existing database. Prior to the data migration, some cleansing of the keywords and data was required – but just three months after installation of OpenAsset, over 250,000 images were successfully moved into the new system. “The data migration was done really well, and Axomic were great to work with,” says Foster + Partners’ Tony Price.

Before the task of uploading and keywording, members of the communications team had

## OpenAsset makes using digital images simple

### Faster, better searches

OpenAsset allows Foster + Partners to find and use images quickly. OpenAsset has freed up time for the communications team, as users rarely need to ask questions once they’re familiar with the system.



### InDesign integration

OpenAsset has greatly improved the process of using images in Adobe InDesign. Using the AssetBar drag-and-drop tool, images can be instantly placed into an InDesign layout. Users are given access to only the image sizes they require, with helpful image descriptions to guide appropriate usage.



### PowerPoint creation

One of the most powerful tools in OpenAsset is the ability to easily create PowerPoint presentations. The selected images are automatically resized for on-screen viewing and embedded into a branded PowerPoint template. (The original high-resolution images are always retained safely within the OpenAsset.)





Millau Viaduct, Millau, France

attended intensive training courses held by Axomic. After a few months, OpenAsset was ready to be rolled out to users. With a combination of training, intranet videos, and targeting small groups of users, growing knowledge of OpenAsset cascaded through the practice.

**“The senior partners have definitely embraced OpenAsset”**

– **Katy Harris, Foster + Partners**

### Synergy with existing information

One of the most powerful tools in OpenAsset is the ability to automatically assign keywords to images by tagging them with project keywords such as ‘sector’, ‘location’, ‘type of building’ and so on. Foster + Partners use a well established facts-and-figures database and were keen to integrate OpenAsset with this system to ensure work was not duplicated. Axomic’s technical team provided Foster + Partners with an API (application programming interface) to link the two systems together.

Foster + Partners’ Kathryn Tollervey comments: “The process of data migration and tagging the images with keywords was really smooth. There are some great tools in OpenAsset which allow administrators to upload and tag images really efficiently.”

### Integration with the intranet

OpenAsset was seamlessly linked into the Foster + Partners intranet to provide users with easy access to the library. Once OpenAsset had been rolled out, the front page of the intranet was used to announce the launch of the image library with great success. The total number of staff who have used the system is now well over 1,000. Their response has been very positive – they report that OpenAsset is simple and intuitive to use.

### Regular users of OpenAsset at Foster + Partners

The chart below demonstrates how successful the project has been. Within four months of rollout, around 1,000 users were accessing the OpenAsset image library each week.



### Improved workflow with contact sheets and shared albums

At the click of a button, the communications team can print out contact sheets of images for review. These pages can be customised into different layouts and contain relevant information from the database.

OpenAsset also features tools to support workflow and collaboration. Users can create and share ‘albums’ of images without duplicating the original image files.



### Flexible access options

OpenAsset permissions are used by Foster + Partners to ensure users are given access to relevant content and the quality of the image library is maintained.

OpenAsset gives the Foster + Partners communications team total control over uploading and access privileges – which are set using a simple ‘traffic light’ system.



“The communications team share albums all the time. It’s a key part of our workflow.”

– **Katy Harris, Partner, Foster + Partners**

“The data migration was really straightforward.”

– **Kathryn Tollervey, Image Library Manager, Foster + Partners**

View the online demo at [www.axomic.com](http://www.axomic.com)



Petronas University of Technology, Malaysia

### Excellent technical support

Axomic's proven track record of implementing image library projects at large architectural practices was one of the key reasons Foster + Partners chose OpenAsset. As Kathryn Tollervey says: "The response time on support issues is always really good, which is not what you expect from a lot of software companies."

Foster + Partners have become key members of the OpenAsset user group. Annual meetings are held to discuss new features, and contributions are welcomed from all OpenAsset clients. "We've been really pleased with Axomic. We chose OpenAsset because we wanted a higher level of customer service and we haven't been let down," says Foster + Partners' Katy Harris.

Wembley Stadium



### Ongoing enhancements

Axomic are currently working with Foster + Partners on a number of features that will add value for all OpenAsset users. "We've no regrets that we chose OpenAsset. I think the product is absolutely the right fit for a practice of our size and complexity, and Axomic have been great to work with," says Katy Harris. With further upgrades in the pipeline and an ongoing commitment to develop OpenAsset for the architectural market, Axomic is confident the product will go from strength to strength. As Daniel Emmerson of Axomic says: "By partnering with great clients like Foster + Partners, we feel we've been able to build the best image library in the world for architects. We intend to build on this success by growing our client base around the globe, and look forward to doing so."

"It's interesting to hear other people's ideas at the user group. The product moves forward by collective feedback and we feel our voice has been heard."

– Kathryn Tollervey, Image Library Manager, Foster + Partners

### Simple licensing at the right price

One key reason for Foster + Partners' choice of OpenAsset was Axomic's simple licensing model and realistic pricing. All costs are transparent, guaranteeing that the image library can be made available to everyone in the practice.

To find out more about OpenAsset and to view the online demo, visit [www.axomic.com](http://www.axomic.com)  
Alternatively call +44 (0)870 850 0435 or email [sales@axomic.com](mailto:sales@axomic.com)

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