

# Improving Brand Reputation of the DoD VI Archive

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## Abstract

*Defense Media Activity (DMA) is the Department of Defense's (DoD) direct line of communication for news and information to U.S. forces worldwide. The agency informs DoD audiences, entertains DoD audience overseas, trains Public Affairs and Visual Information professionals, and manages the DoD's visual information.*

*This paper presents an overview of how the Defense Imagery Management Operations Center (DIMOC) will improve its reputation within the defense community and increase brand awareness throughout the U.S. Department of Defense. DIMOC's mission is to integrate imagery capabilities while centrally managing and archiving current and historical visual information media from throughout the DoD. DIMOC's higher headquarters, Defense Media Activity (DMA), established a balanced scorecard methodology in December 2014 for implementing a strategic planning and management system in support of DMA's strategic management framework. As a result, DIMOC reviewed internal practices and determined there was room for improvement in reputation management. Strategic objectives, measures, targets, and initiatives were developed to make DIMOC the most sought after resource in the VI community.*

## DIMOC Background

DIMOC provides DoD enterprise-level visual information services including operational support, preservation, digitization, storage, access, records management of the Department's visual content, and accessions to the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).

DIMOC serves as the official DoD Visual Information (VI) Records Center for the storage of original and irreplaceable motion picture, video, still, audio, and mixed VI records depicting the heritage and current activities of Department of Defense (DoD). DIMOC is the operational arm of the Defense Visual Information (DVI) component of Defense Media Activity. DIMOC is also the single DoD VI Records Center for central management and preservation of records in accordance with the NARA-approved VI Records Schedule.

DIMOC's mission is governed by several DoD policies, instructions, and regulations [1 & 2]. However, the defense community and many military photographers and videographers do not consistently submit their VI products to DIMOC via the Defense Video & Imagery Distribution System (DVIDS) as the main ingest. When transmission and technology challenges occur, social media is often an easier option for photographers and videographers, but that option puts preservation and long-term access at risk. Research has determined that our technology systems are not viewed as user friendly and military photographers and videographers simply do not trust DIMOC to store VI content. In the past, DIMOC was viewed as a "black hole" in the VI community. It is time to change the reputation of the DIMOC brand in the DoD VI community fulfilling our mission as the DoD VI Records Center and ensuring DoD VI records will be accessible for years to come.

Many executives, both in public and private sectors, spend years developing a brand only to be devastated when finding out the reputation of that brand is extremely negative with many disenfranchised customers. That is exactly what happened within the Defense Imagery Management Operations Center (DIMOC).

## Strategic Planning

Because DIMOC values its important mission and recognizes the importance of lifecycle management for VI products, several strategic management sessions were held in 2015 to discuss the path forward. It was determined that in order to improve DIMOC brand awareness and reputation several initiatives would need to be implemented.[figure 1].

The first strategic objective that needs to be accomplished and will be the focus of this discussion is improving the technology within DIMOC. By following the arrows on the strategy map (figure 1), one can see that improving technology will directly cause an improvement in the VI life cycle and an increase in accessibility. These two initiatives will lead to an improved use of resources and improved satisfaction, which should increase brand reputation.

Four results are anticipated from improving technology: asset management systems are reliable and easy to use; clients have appropriate access at all times; technology has an effective support staff; and technology is collaborative and scalable to meet clients' needs.

It is easy enough to say we want these results but how does one know they are being achieved? DIMOC took the next step and assigned measurable targets to these intended results: 3.65 or less days of unavailability per year; 20% increase in a technology suitability index; and ensuring all technology staff are properly trained and certified.

It is predicted that the creation and marketing of this system will quickly improve the DIMOC reputation and DoD content submitters will be more willing to send us their products. Once a new system is established, accessibility to the VI products will improve, increasing trust and credibility within the DoD community thereby improving client satisfaction. It becomes a win for all.

In essence, reputation is simply perception and that perception is reality [3]. The perception of DIMOC within the DoD community needs to be altered. The first step DIMOC is taking is to formally surveying its customers to determine the customer's perception of DIMOC. With that baseline data, additional measurable targets can be established, new improvement initiatives can begin, and measurement techniques can be initiated. The goal needs to be constant process and technological improvement.

Understanding exactly how beliefs and expectations are evolving is not easy, but there are ways to develop a picture over time. Surveys are powerful marketing research tools that help determine opinions and attitudes about companies from a large number of people [4]. "Open response" questions can be used to elicit new issues of importance—and thus new expectations—that other questions might miss. It is generally useful to supplement these surveys with focus groups and in-depth interviews to develop a deeper understanding of the causes and possible consequences of trends [5].

DIMOC has already completed informal surveys gaining valuable qualitative information from our clients. The need for video on demand, web-based streaming, and an ability to utilize smartphone technology are prime examples discovered during these discussions.

In addition, formal surveys conducted in 2014 revealed several significant complaints from DIMOC customers. Although the survey utilized was designed to provide more quantitative data, the open ended questions provided valuable information.

## Strategic Changes

Comments from the 2014 survey indicated that customers and clients view of DIMOC as a whole was not so favorable. Some comments include [6]:

- “The picture that I sought is on a publicly available website listed with its ID number.”
- “I would try to seek the information elsewhere.”
- “The site looks outdated.”
- “Searching for files online. The interface is tough to navigate for the average user.”
- “Fix the website.”
- “It is extremely difficult to navigate.”
- “More detailed search options on the website.”
- “You really need to move to a better DAMS as your current site has a lot of downtime and often returns errors.”
- “I recommend a more user friendly way of finding materials and the ability to download content to DoD computers with PKI certificates.”
- “DVIDS [dvidshub.net/] now fulfills my VI needs and DIMOC has drifted into insignificance.”

In order to improve our customer’s experience, DIMOC began partnering with a leading provider of cloud-based video management and licensing services. DIMOC will leverage the company’s asset management system to provide online access to more than 3 million unclassified DoD assets including video and photographs. The archive ranges pre-WWI to present, as well as instructional videos used for training. Designated users within various government departments are able to login, search and download current and historic DoD multimedia with just a few clicks.

In October 2015, the old website was taken offline and customers began to use the new website and another survey was distributed. When asked about the new website, more favorable comments were received including [7]:

- “Ease of use.”
- “The selection of images.”
- “Variety of media.”
- “Increase historical photo content.”

Although there are still many favorable improvements being made to the new website, it was a step in the right direction for DIMOC. Now more than ever, it is crucial for every business to have a robust online presence. When done right, it assists in the recruitment of new customers as well as maintaining better relationships with current customers [8].

Once the online presence is improved within DIMOC, the additional strategic initiatives will also begin to take form and the

reputation of DIMOC will be improved. DIMOC will be the premier manager of DoD imagery.

## References

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## Author Biography

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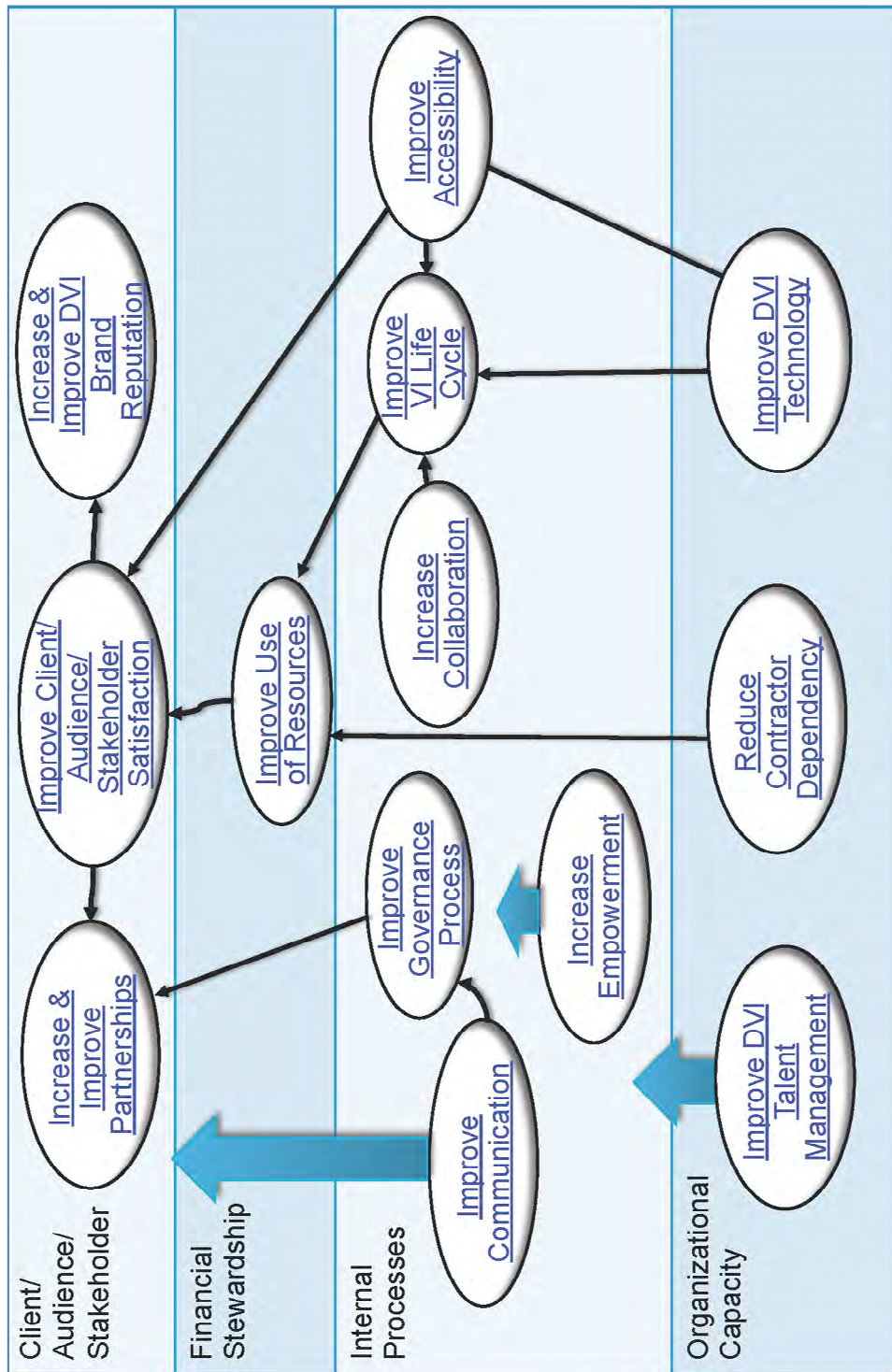


Figure 1. Manage Visual Information Strategy Map [9].