



**Wisconsin  
Watch** *The Wisconsin Center for  
Investigative Journalism*

How Merlin Made The Wisconsin  
Center for Investigative Journalism's  
Visual Assets More Accessible,  
Searchable & Secure



## CASE STUDY

### COMPANY:

Wisconsin Center for  
Investigative Journalism

### BEEN A CUSTOMER SINCE:

2018

### INDUSTRY:

Journalism/Media

### LOCATION:

Madison, WI

### ABOUT THE COMPANY:

The Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism is an independent, nonpartisan and nonprofit news organization based in Madison, Wis. The Center publishes news stories on its website, [WisconsinWatch.org](http://WisconsinWatch.org), and distributes them statewide through an in-house distribution system, and nationally through a partnership with the Associated Press. The Center has been in operation since 2009, and in that time has produced more than 350 news reports, most of which included photos and/or graphics. Visual content is produced by staff photographers, interns, fellows and freelancers. Since implementing Merlin, the Center has solved the problem of having visual assets stored in a variety of places, including hard drives, desktops, laptops and Google Drive — all without searchable metadata. Now the Center's content is centrally located, highly searchable, and totally secure.





## THE “IN-A-NUTSHELL” CHALLENGE

The Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism has an extensive and growing library of content, including thousands of photos, video and graphics. Being in a deadline-driven industry, the company needed a better way to organize its digital files so stories could get to other news organizations and the public faster and more efficiently.



### GOALS

- To save time looking for and sharing assets
- To work offsite as easily as in the office
- To have a secure system to keep assets safe



### APPROACH

- The Center selected MerlinOne’s Digital Asset Management system to store and organize content



### GENERAL RESULTS

- MerlinOne transformed the Center into a more nimble, agile and professional operation, able to more quickly respond to the demanding visual needs of the editorial and business teams.



## HOW THE PROBLEM IMPACTED BUSINESS BEFORE MERLIN

Before the Center adopted Merlin, the editorial and business teams were often frustrated with the inability to quickly and easily access images. The editorial team always has multiple stories in production, some of them stretching over a year, and needed a way to file visual material in a way that was searchable and easily accessible from anywhere. The business team regularly produces reports to stakeholders, promotional materials, social media and blog posts about the Center that rely on visual assets. Before having Merlin, the Center often used repetitive imagery, simply because those were the ones easily on hand. Now, the Center uses Collections in Merlin to group editorial images for publication and store a wider variety of images for promotional use, including photos of its staff working in the field, logos, and staff portraits. The Center's staff no longer spends time searching on hard drives or individual laptops for files, which significantly had delayed project deadlines in the past.





## HOW MERLIN MET ALL OF THE WISCONSIN CENTER FOR INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM'S VISUAL STORAGE NEEDS

After evaluating more than a dozen DAM vendors, MerlinOne was the only vendor that offered a multi-tiered solution that could meet all of the Center's requirements for its journalistic and business needs for a price it could afford.



“ Without Merlin, the team would be stumbling along, trying to remember who saved what assets and where.

I honestly don't think we'd be as streamlined and as swift of an operation as we are today if we didn't have Merlin as part of our production process... It truly has transformed the way we work.”

Coburn Dukehart,  
Digital & Multimedia Director,  
Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism



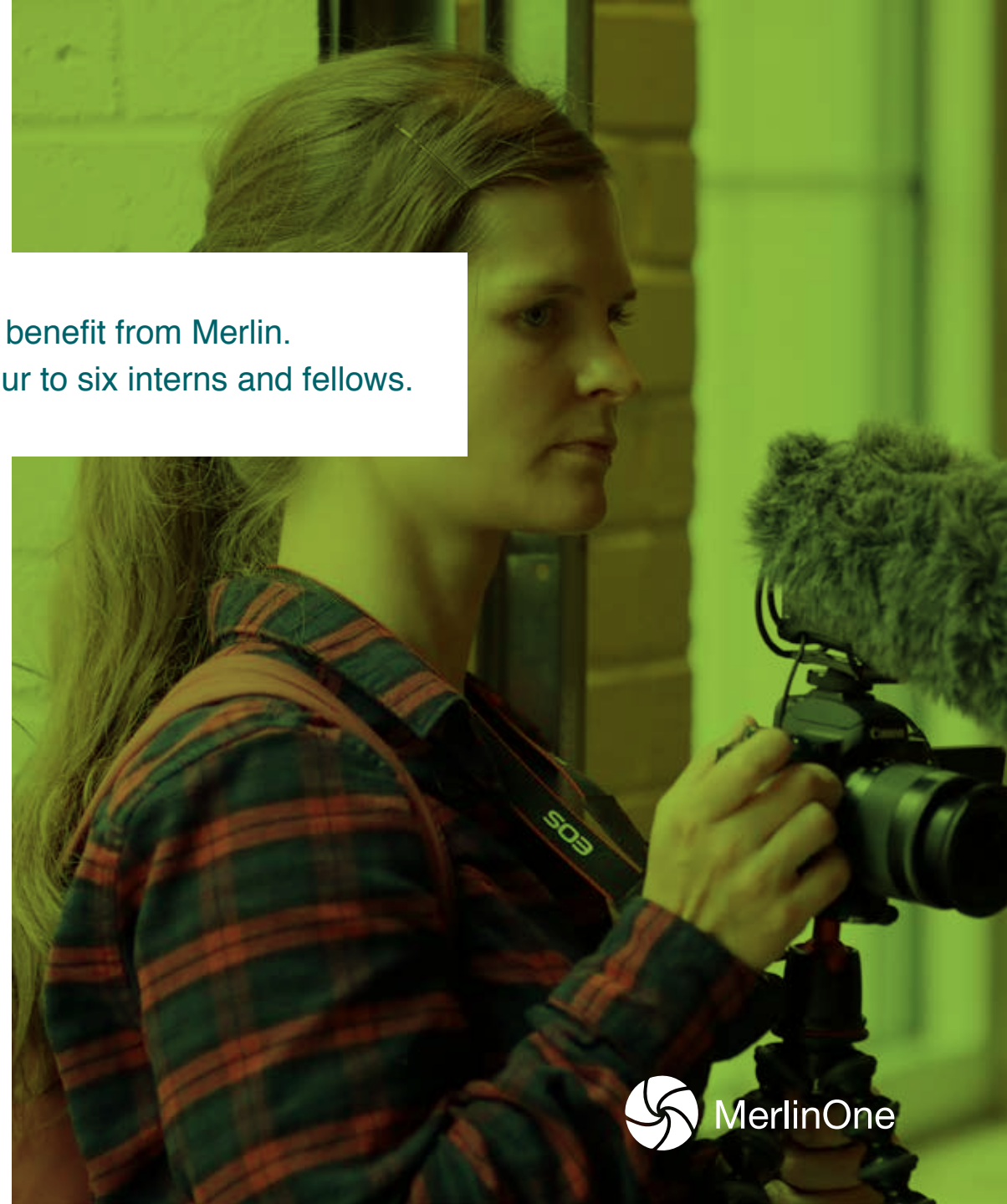


## DEPARTMENTS THE MERLIN DAM BENEFITS

Both the business and editorial teams at the Center benefit from Merlin. The company has six full-time staff members and four to six interns and fellows.

### Top 3 Things Merlin has helped the Center accomplish:

- **Less searching, more doing:** Looking for visual assets prior to having Merlin often meant the Center's staff spent time browsing through folders and wading through shared drives, which significantly ate into their time and productivity. With Merlin, the team is now able to immediately locate the items they need, as soon as they need them.
- **Share files more easily:** Merlin offers a faster and more convenient way to distribute and share files, both internally and externally. The Center no longer has to spend time attaching items to emails or downloading bulky files from colleagues. Staff can simply gather their digital content in a Collection and share the Collection or individual assets with collaborators who need access.
- **Organize assets:** With Merlin, staff create Collections of regularly used photos, like those used for marketing, as well as Collections for each individual story in production. This allows them to quickly see what assets they have, make edits for stories, and reduce the need to keep searching for the same images time and time again. Everything is organized into logical folders and can be accessed immediately when needed.





## HOW MERLIN HELPED IMPROVE PRODUCTION WORKFLOW

The Center's teams are vastly more productive, especially when producing a story on deadline, now that they can search for and organize their visual assets on the fly.

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MERLIN IN ACTION?**

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“ I'd tell any organization that relies on visuals as a major part of their operation, that Merlin is a robust web-based DAM that supports complex metadata. Its ability to upload and download most types of data files with embedded metadata is invaluable. Users can create Collections and share files internally and externally... Once an organization implements Merlin, they'll never want to work without it again! ”

Coburn Dukehart,  
Digital & Multimedia Director,  
Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism





## MERLIN SAVES THE DAY

When a burst water pipe flooded the Center's offices in February 2019, the company incurred thousands of dollars in damages to files and equipment...

But not a single photo or graphic was lost:  
**Everything was safe in Merlin!**



“ Our investment in Merlin paid off by keeping our digital assets in the Cloud, safely away from our flooded offices,” Dukehart said. “We were able to sleep easily that night knowing that our visual archive was safe.”

Coburn Dukehart,  
Digital & Multimedia Director,  
Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism

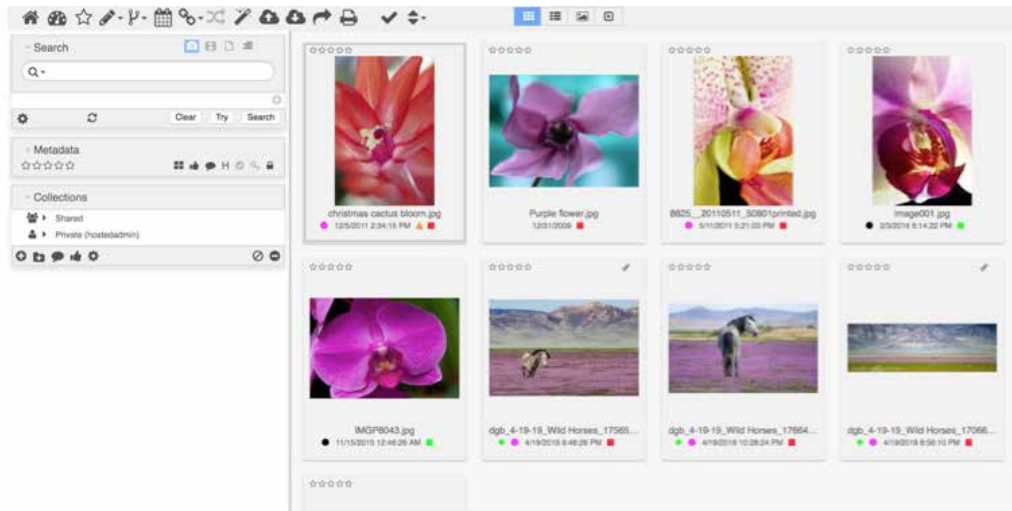






## ABOUT MERLINONE

MerlinOne Digital Asset Management (DAM) empowers marketers, creative teams, photographers, journalists, editors, archivists and more to effectively organize and manage their digital files so teams can get their content to market faster. Aimed to make visual storytelling easier, MerlinOne allows express access to digital assets from virtually anywhere. MerlinOne is the trusted DAM vendor for hundreds of businesses and some of the world's most leading brands thanks to its reliability, flexibility, optimal performance, and world-class customer service.



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