Adobe Creative Cloud Libraries:

The Productivity Impact of Shared Assets and Settings

About this research

This report presents the findings of a market-specific benchmarking project conducted by Pfeiffer Consulting for Adobe. The main aim of the research was to document the efficiency and productivity gains linked to Adobe CC Libraries, compared to typical workflow situations that rely on shared template documents stored on a server, or on the use of corporate style guides. In addition, the research also analyzed how small, repetitive productivity gains can add up over time, particularly in a workgroup situation that relies on frequently shared and updated elements.

Benchmarks were executed using Pfeiffer Consulting's Methodology for Productivity Benchmarking, which has been fine-tuned over more than a decade, and measures the time experienced operators take to execute specific tasks. Please refer to the Methodology section on the last page of this document for more information.

About CC Libraries

CC Libraries is a feature of Adobe Creative Cloud available within all Adobe design, web and video desktop apps, that allows for assets, color swatches, style-sheets, brushes and other graphics and settings to be shared and automatically updated between multiple applications, computers, or between members of a workgroup. It is not really surprising that replacing the cumbersome process of locating and accessing template documents and settings with shared libraries should improve productivity. Nevertheless, the benchmarks in this research show that productivity gains are more significant than might have initially been expected.

Executive Summary

▷ Creative Cloud Libraries allow **highly efficient sharing and updating** of settings, styles and assets among different applications and computers, as well as team members.

▷ Benchmarks conducted for this project show **significant productivity gains resulting from the use of** CC Libraries: the average of six workflow benchmarks showed **close to 10x productivity gains** for the benchmarked operations (see chart below.)

▷ Cumulative, small productivity gains in repetitive operations **add up significantly** and **could save workgroups hours** in the course of a week.

▷ Sharing and one update of colour settings, one set of graphics, and one image asset, **took almost twenty minutes** to complete using common workflow methods - and **just over three minutes with CC Libraries.**

Key Benchmark Results: Average of Six Workflow Benchmarks

With CC Libraries (13,24%)

Without CC Libraries (100 %)

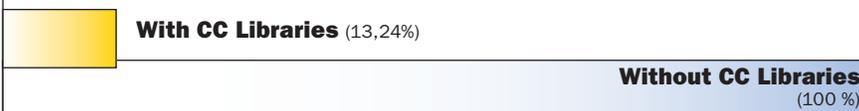# Pfeiffer
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Chart based on the average of six complete workflow scenarios per solution.
A total of 132 individual benchmark measures were taken.
Reference value: Average time when working with shared files on a server. **Shorter is better.**

Streamlining Design Efficiency with CC Libraries

How CC Libraries Help Implementing Style Guides

Libraries re-imagined

Storing frequently used information and settings in libraries has been around for almost as long as computer graphics, and many creative apps offer some form of library functionality as part of their feature set.
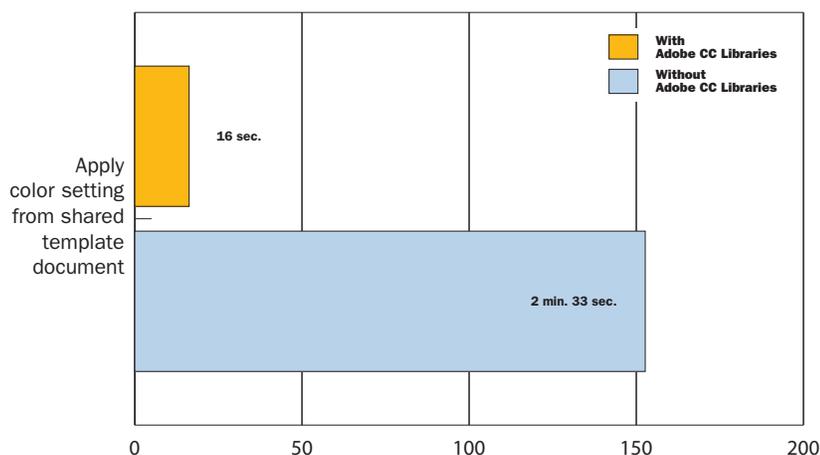
What distinguishes Adobe's new implementation, however, are two unique aspects. First, **CC Libraries work across most major Creative Cloud desktop and mobile apps**, from Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign to Dreamweaver, Premiere Pro, After Effects and more; and **they can easily be shared** among several computers, or (and that's where it gets really interesting in terms of productivity gains) among workgroups—**even when they are working at different locations around the globe.**

Show me the bottlenecks

Organizing creative workgroups can be very challenging: in today's complex media landscape, practically any creative project involves **a mind-boggling variety of application programs, file types, assets, color and type specifications, and other settings**, all of which are meant to integrate gracefully and efficiently, ideally among all the members of a workgroup, even if they are collaborating from many miles away.

Apply Color Setting from Shared Template Document
Time-scale in seconds. Shorter is better.

With Adobe CC Libraries
Without Adobe CC Libraries

16 sec.

Apply color setting from shared template document

2 min. 33 sec.

0   50   100   150   200

Applying color settings is one of the areas where CC Libraries produce the most impressive results over common workflows, since they eliminate the need to export and share a swatch library or a template document.

In our benchmarks, locating the template document on the server and importing color swatches took well over two minutes; real–world times necessary to complete these tasks are likely to be higher.

In addition to providing access to the swatches, CC Libraries allows Dreamweaver users to copy Hex values of colors, a task that can be complicated with standard swatches.

In practical terms this means that teams most often rely on a server-based workflow, where shared assets, style-guides, template documents and setting files are stored. **But here is the problem: each time a change has occurred, all team members need to be informed about a change, and have to update the assets and settings they work with**. One simple example: each time the creative director makes a change to one of the color swatches used in a project, the new color values (which, to make things even more complex, use different color definitions for web, print and imaging) need to be shared with the team. This means exporting a swatch library and storing it on a server—or sharing it in some other way if some team members don't have access to the corporate network. And for each project **there are many different assets, settings and specifications to be shared and updated on an ongoing basis**. This is one of the significant bottlenecks in creative workflows: even if (as was the case with our benchmarks) you take the most optimistic scenario, every change in any one of the assets and settings has a ripple effect of accumulated, constantly growing loss of productivity. To put things in perspective: our workgroup productivity benchmark (see sidebar on next page), which covered sharing and one update of color settings, one set of graphics, and one image asset, **took almost twenty minutes** to complete using common workflow methods - and just over **three minutes with CC Libraries**.

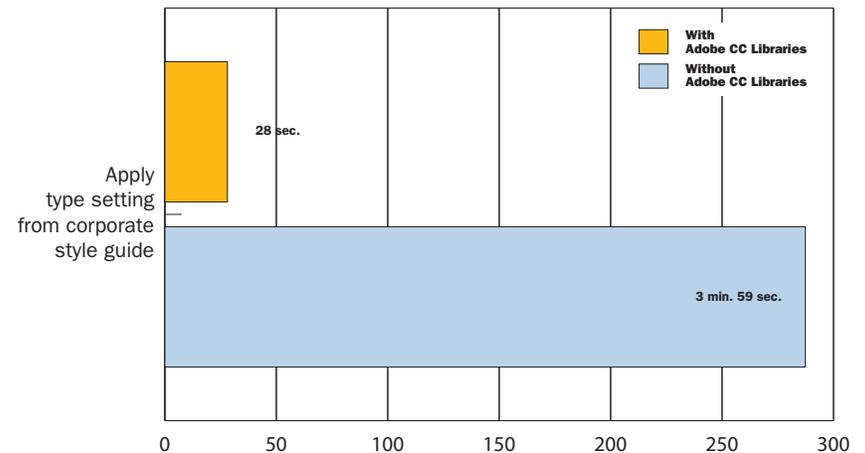## Key Productivity Gains: Using Assets and Styles with CC Libraries (Details)

▷ **A question of style:** Corporate style guides are the backbone of coherent corporate communication—however, finding the right setting for a specific design context can be time-consuming.

In our benchmarks, locating and downloading the styleguide, finding and copying a specific type setting and applying it in InDesign **took several minutes.**

By comparison, selecting the appropriate library and using the right style-sheet **could be achieved in less than 30 seconds.**

Apply Type Setting from Corporate Style Guide
Time-scale in seconds. Shorter is better.

Legend:
- With Adobe CC Libraries
- Without Adobe CC Libraries

Apply type setting from corporate style guide:
- 28 sec.
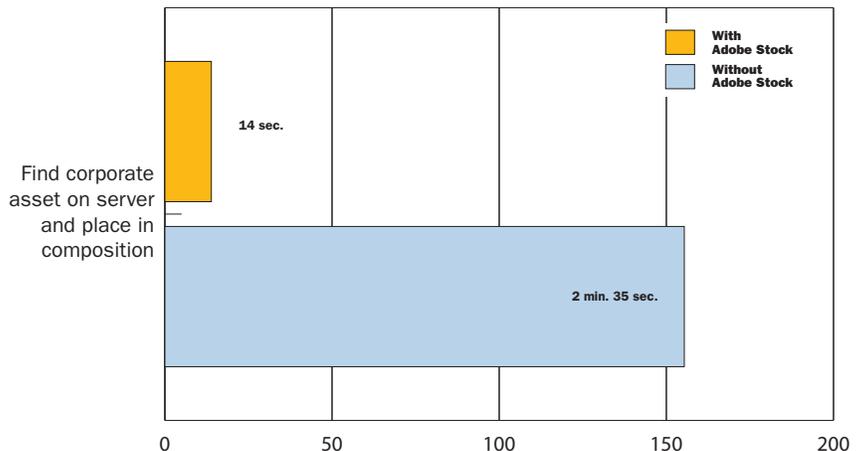- 3 min. 59 sec.

(x-axis: 0, 50, 100, 150, 200, 250, 300)

▷ **Finding the right asset:** Our benchmarks compared the time necessary to click through a succession of folders to locate the appropriate corporate asset, to verify the color space and resolution, and to place the asset in a project. Even in a best-case scenario, **these tasks take at least two to three minutes.**

CC Libraries, on the other hand, allow for corporate assets to be made accessible directly from a panel in the application program, **reducing the time necessary to seconds.**

Find and Place Corporate Asset
Time-scale in seconds. Shorter is better.

Legend:
- With Adobe Stock
- Without Adobe Stock

Find corporate asset on server and place in composition:
- 14 sec.
- 2 min. 35 sec.

(x-axis: 0, 50, 100, 150, 200)

CC Libraries: streamlining creative workflows

The way CC Libraries streamlines this cumbersome process is as simple as it is efficient: any user in a team can share graphics, illustrations, images, but also style-sheets and color settings, by simply clicking on an icon in the Libraries panel of his application. **Every shared element is stored in the cloud, and immediately available to other applications on the same computer,** another computer logged into the same Creative Cloud account—or indeed **any Creative Cloud user the library has been shared with**. To come back to the color swatch example: as soon as the creative director updates the swatch, the new color values are available to everybody connected to the same library. This means that graphic designers can share assets and graphics they are still working on, and be sure that they are automatically updated everywhere as soon as they modify them, whether the team members are in the same room or in another country.

The benchmarks conducted for this research underline the significant productivity and workflow efficiency gains that can result from using CC Libraries, especially in a team setting. Beyond the efficiency gains, however, Adobe's technology promises to allow an increasingly sophisticated organization of creative workflows that **could profoundly change the way creative teams collaborate.**

Key Productivity Figures : How CC Libraries Can Improve Workgroup Productivity

▷ **Small time savings add up:** For the final portion of our benchmarks we set up a very simple workgroup productivity scenario: **a five-person-team that needs to share, access and update three different assets and settings.** The elements we chose were a color theme for the project, four small icons created in Illustrator, and one image asset created in Photoshop.
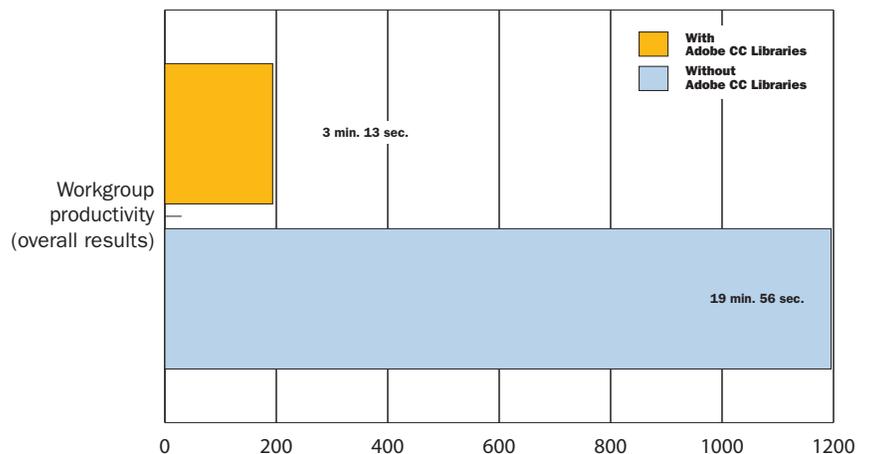
The benchmarks measured the time necessary **to share these elements,** and for the team members **to access and place them** in their documents. In addition, we measured **the time necessary to update all these elements just once** after a modification. (For the conventional workflow, images and graphics were placed on a server, and could simply be updated by refreshing the link.)

The results for the benchmark clearly document how small, individual time savings can add up: in the conventional workflow, **the team spent collectively almost twenty minutes to complete these simple tasks.**

CC Libraries, by comparison, **took just over 3 minutes** to achieve the same results. (See table on the right.) This means that in more complex workflow situations, **CC Libraries could easily save hours** over the course of a week.

License high-res image and replace in composition
Time-scale in seconds. Shorter is better.

Workgroup productivity (overall results) — With Adobe CC Libraries: 3 min. 13 sec. / Without Adobe CC Libraries: 19 min. 56 sec.

Workgroup productivity: Time saved thorough using CC Libraries (5 person workgroup) *Each figure is the average of three individual benchmark measures*	Total time **without** CC Libraries	Total time **with** CC Libraries
Share color theme on project server/share on CC Libraries (creative director)	61,08	6,97
Total import color theme (5 users)	208,45	
Total update color theme (5 users)	269,53	
Share 4 UI icons on project server/share on CC Libraries (creative director)	102,13	21,76
Total import and update 4 icons (5 users)	345,28	127,25
Share image asset on project server (share on CC Libraries)	38,15	3,62
Total import and update image asset (5 users)	171,06	33,75
Total	**1195,67**	**193,35**

Time in seconds, lower is better

	Total time without CC Libraries	Total time with CC Libraries
Workgroup productivity, overall results (minutes/seconds)	19:55,7	03:13,4

Methodology

This benchmark project was commissioned by Adobe and independently executed by Pfeiffer Consulting.

All the productivity measures presented in this document are based on real-world workflow examples, designed and executed by professionals with many years of experience with the programs and workflows involved.

▷ How We Design the Benchmarks

The basic approach is simple: in order to assess productivity gains that a program or solution may (or may not) bring, we start by analyzing the minimum number of steps necessary to achieve a given result in each of the applications that have to be compared.

Once this list of actions has been clearly established, we start to execute the operation or workflow in each solution, with the help of seasoned professionals who have long-standing experience in the field and with the solutions that are tested.

Every set of steps is executed three times, the average of the three measures used.

▷ About Pfeiffer Consulting

Pfeiffer Consulting is an independent technology research institute and benchmarking operation focused on the needs of publishing, digital content production, and new media professionals.

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Adobe Stock:

Boosting Design Efficiency Through Integration

Creative Cloud integration significantly increases productivity for creative workflows working with stock images

About this research

This report presents the findings of a market-specific benchmarking project conducted by Pfeiffer Consulting for Adobe. The main aim of the research was to document the efficiency and productivity gains linked to Adobe Stock, compared to using web-based stock libraries.

Benchmarks were executed using Pfeiffer Consulting's Methodology for Productivity Benchmarking, which has been fine-tuned over more than a decade, and measures the time experienced operators take to execute specific tasks. Please refer to the Methodology section on the last page of this document for more information.

About Adobe Stock

Adobe Stock differs from most stock image services through the tight integration it offers with Creative Cloud applications such as Adobe Photoshop CC, Adobe Illustrator CC, Adobe InDesign CC and more: placement images are made available in CC Libraries, and can be dropped directly into a document. More importantly, images can be licensed directly from the CC application, and the high-res version of the data replaces the watermarked image, eliminating the need to re-apply non-destructive adjustments and modifications made in Photoshop, resulting in significant productivity gains. We benchmarked Adobe Stock in three distinct workflow situations with bitmap images: simply replacing a placement image with its licensed, high resolution version; replacing an image that had some color grading applied in Photoshop; and finally, replacing an image that had multiple non-destructive Photoshop effects applied.

Executive Summary

▷ Adobe Stock provides tight integration with Creative Cloud applications **that resulted on average in 10x efficiency gains** over working with common stock image services in the benchmarks conducted for this research. (See chart below.)

▷ Adobe Stock allows images to be **licensed directly from Creative Cloud applications**. All occurrences of the placement image are replaced, and **non-destructive adjustments in Photoshop are automatically applied.**

▷ Productivity gains measured in these benchmarks **are very significant.** Efficiency improvements linked to using Adobe Stock **are particularly important in complex workflow situations** where images are included in complex Photoshop compositions or used in multiple documents and resolutions.

Key Benchmark Results: Average of Three Workflow Benchmarks

With Adobe Stock (9,55 %)

Without Adobe Stock (100 %)

Chart based on the average of three different workflow scenarios per solution.
A total of 36 individual benchmark measures were taken.
Reference value: Average time when working with shared files on a server. **Shorter is better.**

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Workflow Scenario 1: Simple Replacement of Licensed Image

License high-res image and replace in composition
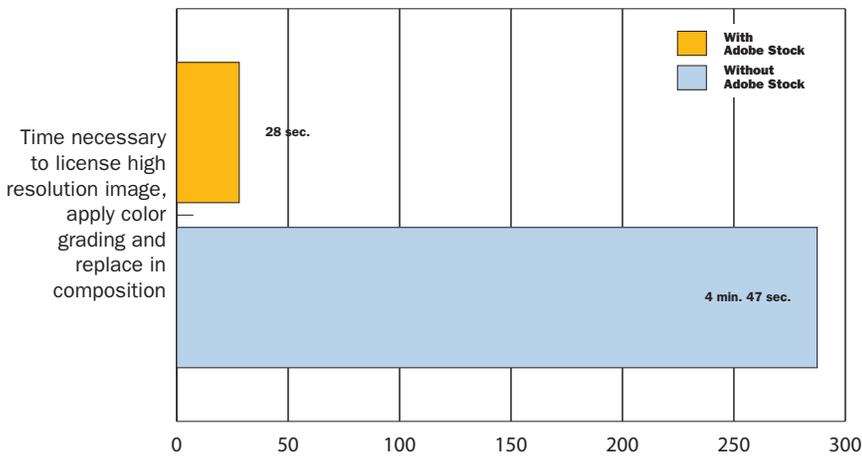Time-scale in seconds. Shorter is better.

Time necessary to license high resolution image and replace in composition

- With Adobe Stock: 16 sec.
- Without Adobe Stock: 2 min. 52 sec.
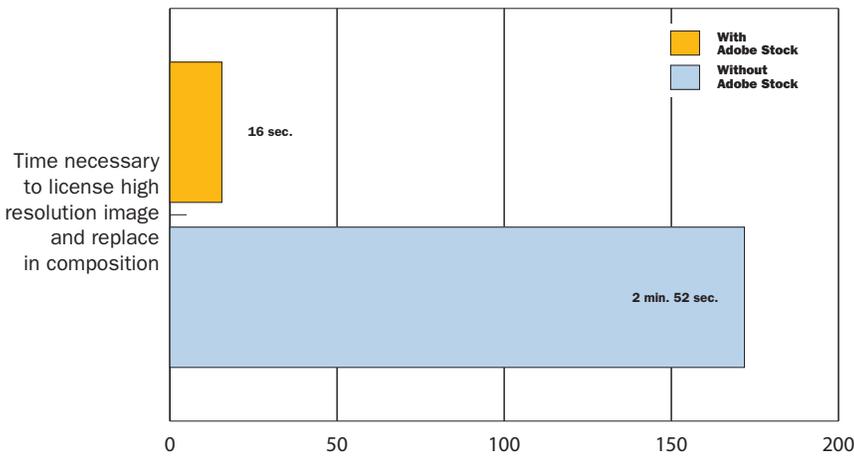
▷ **Basic stock image bottlenecks:** Working with stock images can be cumbersome, obliging the user to download first a watermarked placement image, and subsequently licensing and downloading the full version of the image, and then manually substituting it for the low-res placement image. In our benchmarks, completing these tasks **took almost three minutes**.

Adobe Stock eliminates these steps, since the licensed version automatically replaces all occurrences of the previous image, requiring **less then half a minute** for the same tasks.

Workflow Scenario 2: Replacement of Licensed Image, Including Color Adjustment

License high-res image, apply color grading and replace in composition
Time-scale in seconds. Shorter is better.

Time necessary to license high resolution image, apply color grading and replace in composition

- With Adobe Stock: 28 sec.
- Without Adobe Stock: 4 min. 47 sec.

▷ **Applying adjustments:** With most stock services, when a placement image has been color corrected, it is necessary to manually document the exact values of the adjustment, and then manually apply them to the licensed high-res file. Licensing the image and completing these steps **required almost five minutes in our benchmarks.**

With Adobe Stock, any non-destructive adjustment in Photoshop will be automatically applied when the image is licensed, a process that took just **28 seconds in our benchmarks.**

Workflow Scenario 3: Stock Images as Smart Objects in Photoshop

Update stock image used as Smart Object in Photoshop and replace with licensed file
Time-scale in seconds. Shorter is better.

Update placement image used as Smart Object in Photoshop and replace with licensed file

- With Adobe Stock: 28 sec.
- Without Adobe Stock: 2 min. 31 sec.
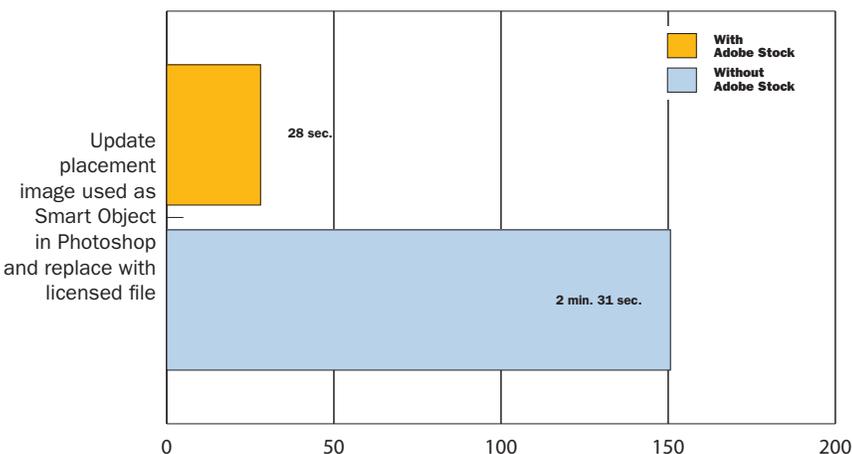
▷ **Using Smart Objects magic:** Using placement images from a stock service allows Photoshop users to integrate low resolution images in complex compositions, then swap them out for the licensed file without having to re-apply non-destructive changes.

While this method works with stock images from different sources, Adobe Stock had a clear productivity advantage because of its direct integration into CC Libraries. Licensing and updating the placement image **took only 28 seconds with Adobe Stock**—compared to **two and a half minutes with other stock images**.

Methodology

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All the productivity measures presented in this document are based on real-world workflow examples, designed and executed by professionals with many years of experience with the programs and workflows involved.

▷ **How We Design the Benchmarks**

The basic approach is simple: in order to assess productivity gains that a program or solution may (or may not) bring, we start by analyzing the minimum number of steps necessary to achieve a given result in each of the applications that have to be compared.

Once this list of actions has been clearly established, we start to execute the operation or workflow in each solution, with the help of seasoned professionals who have long-standing experience in the field and with the solutions that are tested.

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