

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.

Key Benchmark Results: Average of Six Workflow Benchmarks

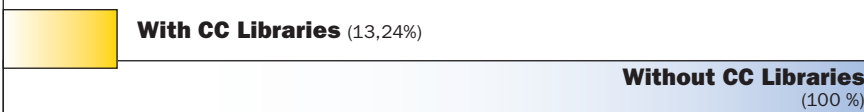


Chart based on the average of six complete workflow scenarios per solution. A total of 132 individual benchmark measures were taken.

Reference value: Average time when working with shared files on a server. **Shorter is better.**

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.**



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.

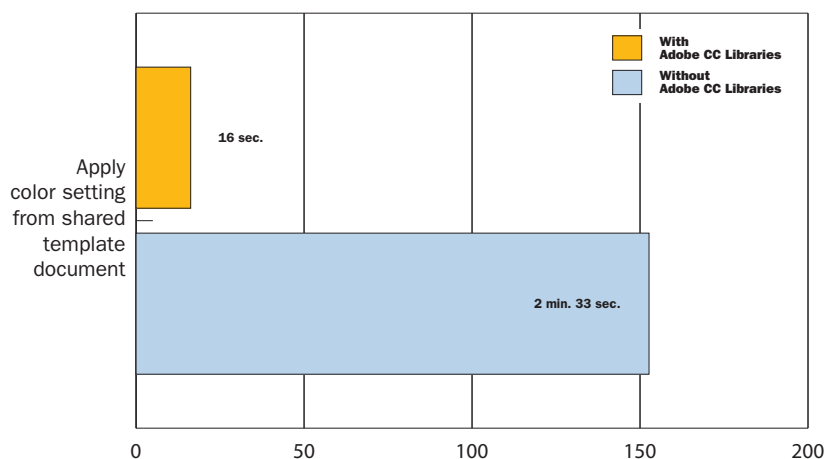
What distinguishes Adobe's new implementation, however, are two unique aspects. First, **CC Libraries work across most major Creative Cloud desktop and mobile apps**, from Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign to Dreamweaver, Premiere Pro, After Effects and more; and **they can easily be shared** among 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.



Major Points

- ▶ Real-world productivity gains for sharing settings and assets through CC Libraries **can be very significant.**
- ▶ Applying shared color themes **took seconds with CC Libraries**, compared to over two minutes in a conventional workflow.
- ▶ Cumulative productivity gains in a workgroup situation add up significantly: **our workgroup benchmark took just over 3 minutes with CC Libraries**, compared to almost twenty minutes otherwise.
- ▶ Beyond productivity gains, CC Libraries lays the groundwork **for an increasingly efficient and sophisticated organization** of creative workflows.

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)

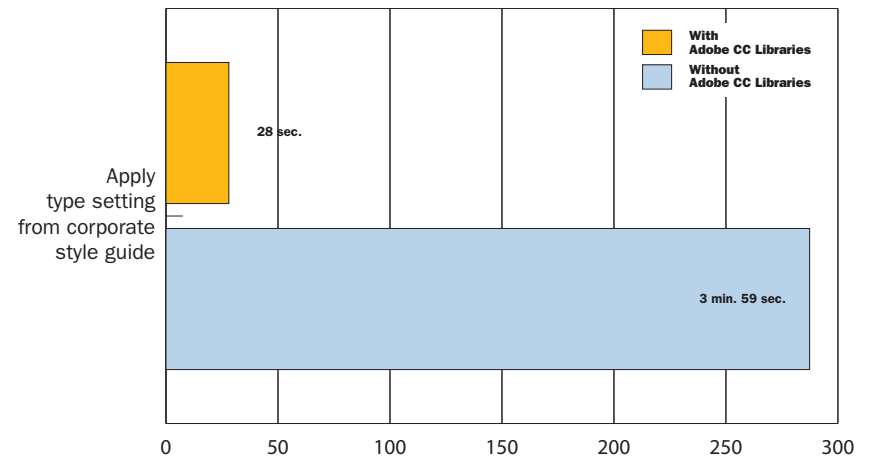
► **A question of style:** Corporate style guides are the backbone of coherent corporate communication—however, finding the right setting for a specific design context can be time-consuming.

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.

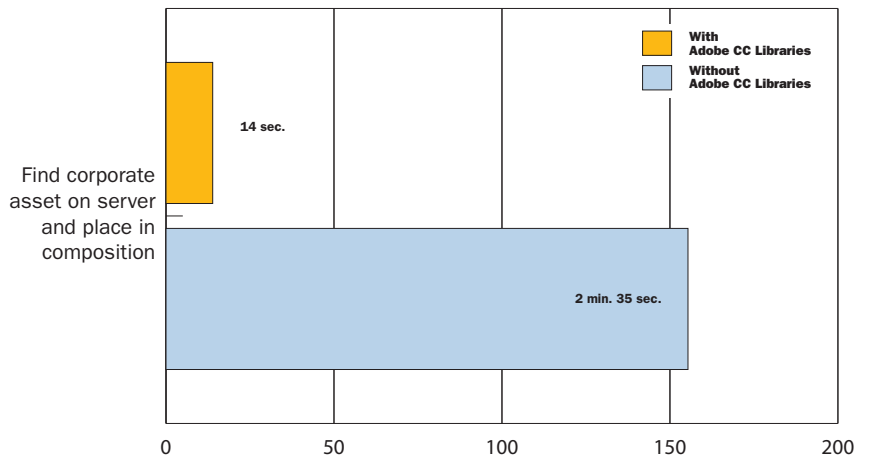


► **Finding the right asset:** Our benchmarks compared the time necessary to click through a succession of folders to locate the appropriate corporate asset, to verify the color space and resolution, and to place the asset in a project. Even in a best-case scenario, **these tasks take at least two to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



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.

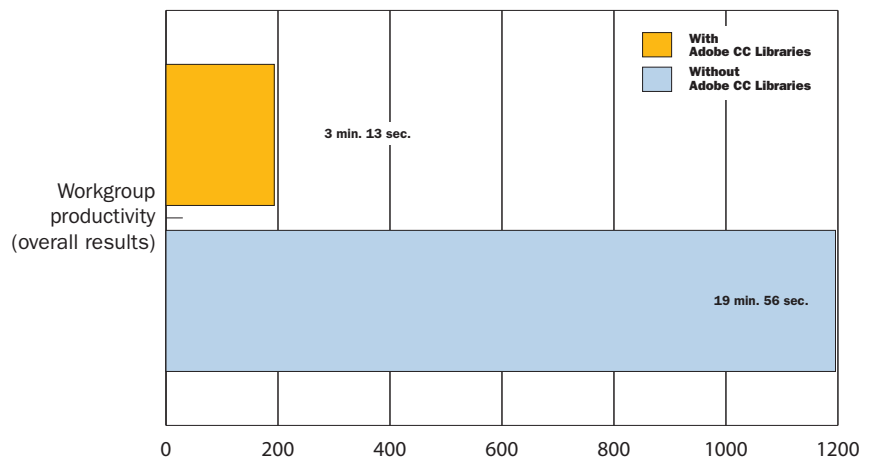
The benchmarks measured the time necessary **to share these elements**, and for the team members **to access and place them** in their documents. In addition, we measured **the time necessary to update all these elements just once** after a modification. (For the conventional workflow, images and graphics 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.

Workgroup productivity (overall results)

Time-scale in seconds. Shorter is better.



Workgroup productivity:

Time saved through 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

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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