

Modernizing Media Workflows to Improve Shopper Experience and Reduce Costs

RIVER ISLAND

INDUSTRY

Fashion

SIZE

60,000 employees
250 stores

HEADQUARTERS

West London, UK

Time-consuming image correction process reduced by up to 75%

Support for new, lightweight image formats greatly improves digital performance and online shopping experiences

Headless DAM streamlines retailer's entire media workflow and eliminates potential for human error

Significant cost savings and better performance value over legacy incumbent



Hamstrung by expensive legacy software that could no longer meet its needs, major UK fashion retailer River Island migrated to a Microservices-based, API-first, Cloud-native SaaS and Headless (MACH) tech stack and partnerships with modern, best-of-breed vendors. At the heart of its new topology: the Cloudinary DAM, which fit perfectly with the brand new MACH solutions, and simplified and optimized image and video management immediately.

ABOUT

A legacy of fashion success

A \$1bn European multi-channel fashion retail leader, River Island dates its roots to the vision of East London 'barrow boy' Bernard Lewis, who in 1948 channeled his and his three brothers' entrepreneurial energy into the clothing business. Previously known as pioneering UK fashion boutique chain Chelsea Girl, the business has grown to an international operation selling everything from menswear to homeware to jewelry. The firm remains a privately-held operation still run by the Lewis family.



THE CHALLENGE

Yesterday's media solution no longer meeting today's needs

After years of growth, River Island began to experience programmatic growing pains: a key application, Adobe Scene7, had become incapable of meeting the brand's increasingly complex needs. Adobe Scene7's unclear roadmap and high price tag made continued use of the product hard to justify. This was particularly apparent in the area of image management. Not only was Scene7 continuing to rely on outdated technologies like Flash, it wasn't able to access modern, lightweight formats optimized for iOS or Android.

Head of Technology, David Edwards, decided it was time for a change: "As a fashion retailer, it's really important to not just be able to take quality images, but provide our team with the right tooling to manage the lifecycle of those images - from first taking the shots right through to how we curate them and then make them discoverable."

THE CLOUDINARY SOLUTION

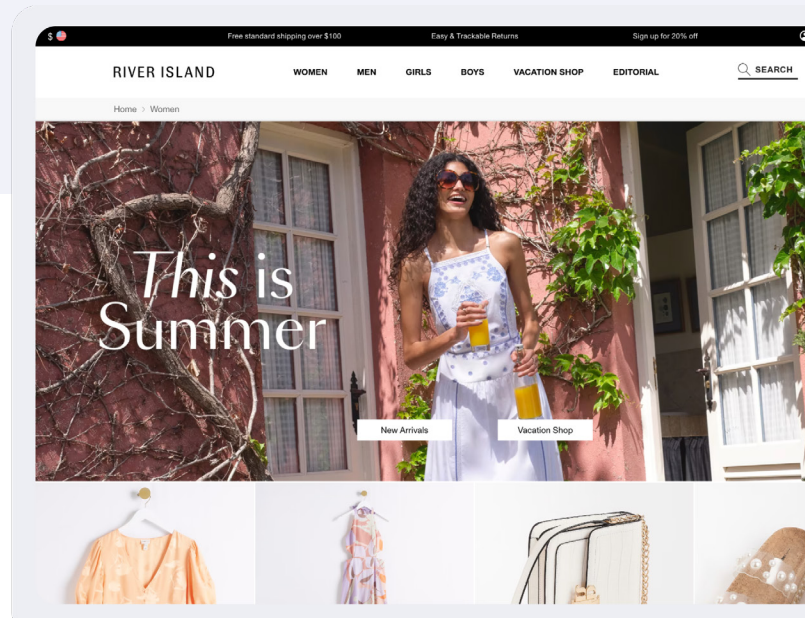
A perfect MACH

As the brand looked to replace a legacy media platform, Edwards and his team were attracted to the idea of a best-of-breed MACH approach. The first stage of their transition to MACH was to adopt the headless e-commerce platforms commercetools and Talon.One's promotion engine. The team also sought a new way to manage and optimize all the high-quality visual media that River Island uses to engage shoppers along the customer journey.

Cloudinary met River Island's immediate and future functional requirements at a better price point than the incumbent solution. "We started on a MACH journey," said Edwards, "so we looked at about three Digital Asset Management solutions that played well in that space. Cloudinary soon emerged as the obvious choice. We liked the product. We liked the people. We liked the culture, and we liked the way it would play nicely with any future CMS we might choose."

"Quite often you talk to a potential partner about MACH but find they're not truly living MACH. From our first conversations with [Cloudinary], we really felt like from the ground up, the architecture and Cloudinary as a company was living those MACH principles."

—David Edwards, Head of Technology, River Island

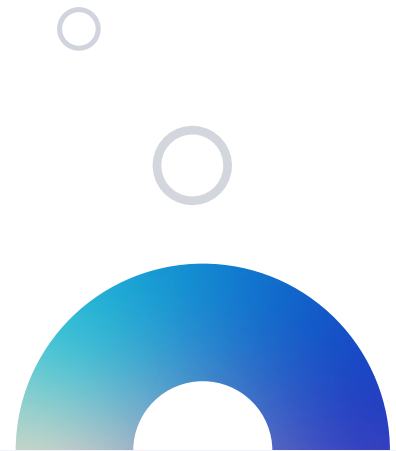




THE RESULTS

Keeping River Island flowing

Within a few months, River Island began to notice significant improvements and time efficiencies in the ways Cloudinary curates, manages and shares images. Cloudinary's auto-tagging and metadata capture are proving instrumental, as are the platform's support for image recognition, automated product attribution, and its multi-CDN approach. Crucially, River Island is now able to support new, lightweight visual media formats across all its channels. Supporting these results in faster page loads, leading to lower bounce rates, higher conversions, better SEO rankings, and overall a much better user experience.



“With Cloudinary, we were able to take advantage of the latest technologies and all the latest image types to serve images optimally back to customers without quality loss, yet while improving performance.”

—David Edwards, Head of Technology, River Island

The move to Cloudinary has opened up the prospect of richer and more complex image search and collation, Edwards adds, “...such as measuring which images have the most beneficial impact for campaigns.”

“If you’re looking for a specific green top, for example, [Auto-tagging] ensures you can find them all in an instant. Garment color matching is now also much better optimized. And I love how quickly we can now match and swap images around. All in all, resolving image issues which was once up to a three-day process is now down to under a day.”

—Emma Ryan, Senior Studio Manager, River Island

Slashing image management time by two-thirds

Everything River Island’s photographers shoot is checked and corrected by internal specialists. Once they confirm all images are of the highest quality and adhere to brand guidelines, they’re uploaded onto Cloudinary. As part of the company’s continual cycle of photo shoots, uploads, and retouches, Senior Studio Manager for River Island UK, Emma Ryan and her team manage 500 images a day, or 10,000 a month.

According to Ryan, “With the previous platform it could take up to 24 hours for new images to appear. There were also errors with codes as so much had to be input manually. With Cloudinary, it’s considerably faster and the folder system means it’s just easier to view and make changes if there’s a product code mislabelling or missing image.”

The Cloudinary auto-tagging feature helps Ryan and her team save an enormous amount of time and drastically reduces the likelihood of human error.

An added Cloudinary perk is ease of discoverability. Ryan’s team has to make 5-6 image and video adjustments every day so being able to search for items efficiently is essential.



About Cloudinary

Cloudinary is the image and video technology platform that enables the world’s most engaging brands to deliver transformative visual experiences at global scale. More than 1.5 million users and 10,000 customers, including Apartment Therapy, Bleacher Report, Bombas, Grubhub, Hinge, NBC, Mediavine, Minted, Paul Smith and Peloton, rely on Cloudinary to bring their campaigns, apps and sites to life. With the world’s most powerful image and video APIs backed by industry-leading artificial intelligence and patented technology, Cloudinary offers a single source of truth for brands to manage, transform, optimize, and deliver visual experiences at scale. As a result, the most engaging brands across all industries are seeing [up to a 203% ROI](#) using Cloudinary with benefits including faster time to market, higher user satisfaction and increased engagement and conversions.

For more information, [visit **www.cloudinary.com**](https://www.cloudinary.com).

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