Editorial

Metadata spins content into gold. Our special issue on metadata sets forth several strategies and insights into the alchemy of “data about data”, metadata. As our contributors will show, metadata not only describes the “essence” or contents of a digital file, it enables the transformation of content into myriad derivative forms and renditions.

In my Cycle Time column, I lay the foundation for strategic sourcing in the marcom supply-chain, calling attention to the master framework for metadata and its central role in the marketing operations of all major enterprises.

Pam Williams picks up the thread with a cogent examination of the business requirements that digital asset management (DAM) and, therefore, metadata must address. Rightly, she emphasizes the operational aspects of commercializing digital assets – selling them and making money.

Cindy Cunningham of Corbis examines the larger role of DAM managers and how the creation and maintenance of search-keyword vocabularies must reflect customer or end-user needs, corporate objectives, and industry conventions.

Linda Tadic of ARTstor brings us to the foundation of DAM, namely library science and how to structure very large collections for speedy access by a wildly divergent group of users.

Getty Images’ Chris Porter expands our treatment of metadata and examines how to create a sustainable metadata model, when to start defining it and

how to enhance it without incurring huge, unnecessary costs.

The importance of defining metadata requirements before implementing a DAM system is stressed by Siemens Business Services’ Carol Owens in her paper. She notes that not all DAM systems manage metadata in an equally flexible manner, underscoring the need to understand what types of retrieval results, reporting and outputs your DAM must provide for your business operations.

One of the thorniest problems of DAM is tackled by Bill Rosenblatt of GiantSteps and Gail Dykstra of the University of Washington TechTransfer Digital Ventures, namely, management of digital rights. The author explains how controlling access to assets often constitutes the first step in a long-term process of digital rights management, moving towards end-to-end content-integration and content-processing systems.

Doug Coutts of OTB focuses upon the important subject of “modeling” various types of digital assets and final-form media objects, emphasizing how a robust content model of all basic types of marketing communications not only speeds retrieval by users throughout a global enterprise but also supports the highest levels of reuse and automated publishing workflows or dynamic outputs.

This issue’s penultimate paper is provided by Magan Arthur of ACG, who delivers a magisterial summation of

our issue, drilling into the business case for an enterprise metadata strategy.

Finally, Ron Roszkiewicz links the “upstream” creation of asset metadata with the “downstream” asset cataloging function of DAM, calling attention to important milestones such as the recent product and technology introductions from Adobe and the International

Press Telecommunications Council (IPTC).

This unique collection of papers raises some pertinent questions, I’m sure you’ll agree, as well as providing some excellent answers. As always, we welcome your comments.

Michael Moon
Managing Editor