Cycle Time

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THE DIFFERENCE THAT MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE

How many times have associates and management asked you to explain the real difference between DAM and content management? I'm sure many times, more than you would care to count. This special issue on metadata will help you. Let's start from the general and abstract and work towards the particular and concrete.

WHAT CIOs THINK ABOUT METADATA

Forward-thinking chief information officers (CIOs) who now use DAM to drive new value creation for the companies, know a few things about metadata that many of us do not. I will share highlights of recent conversations with visionary CIOs.

First, DAMster CIOs know that content management deals primarily with files and their distribution; most metadata in the content management context constitutes a minimal, just-enough-to-get-by afterthought — the less metadata, the better!

Secondly, these CIOs know that DAM consists mostly of metadata, and the fewer the files (renditions and derivatives), the better!

Thirdly, they know that metadata enable the fast, on-demand versioning of digital assets — one of the core ideas of DAM.

Lastly, they use metadata to drive change in organizations and business models. They use metadata to transform digital files into new revenue and brand franchises.

Okay, enough of the abstract; now, let's get into the concrete particulars of DAM and metadata.

TRANSFORMATION OF MARCOM SUPPLY CHAINS

I recently completed a research project that investigated a general strategy for outsourcing marketing communications (marcom) operations for international marketing communications. We found that a few chief marketing officers (CMOs) use DAM as a process-transformation strategy.

This strategy not only requires a deep understanding of marketing communications as an industrial process (to which management can apply statistical process quality controls), it also emphasizes the strategic role of metadata as a driver of business-process transformation.

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Figure 1: Key elements of a networked marcom supply chain

Figure 1 depicts key elements of a networked marcom supply chain. Each element consists largely of metadata.

Our research reveals that most brand-marketers start by implementing strategic sourcing in their marcom supply chain. This emphasizes the creation of uniform transaction data and detail reporting

Branding navigators provide detailed technical descriptions of every meaningful element of a brand, demonstrating how to express a brand voice with clarity, consistency and credibility. Branding navigators give marketing staff and partners the information and examples that they need to co-market a new product with another partner. Branding navigators also deliver distance learning, testing and assessment, and certification of a particular firm's way of brand-building.

Marketing content strategies provide blueprints for automating multichannel publishing workflows and the strategic sourcing of marketing content among a network of certified vendors. A data-content model plays a central role in the execution of marketing content strategies; this data model specifies how each 'atomic' element of marketing collateral fits together into a seamless whole (eg brochures, direct mailers, catalogs).

Strategic sourcing in marcom supply chains submits every creative or production project to competitive bidding and paperless procurement and payment systems. Strategic sourcing requires a unified process for defining and managing campaigns and related products. Uniform processes depend on a federal data dictionary that defines each element of a vendor's bid, order

confirmation and invoice; this enables company-wide reporting and analysis.

Market-coverage tracking of key brand-customer touchpoints entails the definition of technical specifications for measuring operational efficiency and communication of effectiveness by type of customer, channel and marketing communication. Market-coverage tracking takes consumer-behavior analysis to the next level, emphasizing brand interactions throughout a lifecycle model.

Paths to purchase and satisfaction define how to track customer behaviors throughout the buying and using phases of a customer lifecycle model. Paths to purchase and satisfaction models complete market-coverage tracking, correlating satisfaction, loyalty and customer referrals to demographic and psychographic consumer models.

Consumer brandspace defines the technical specifications for how to track one's brand among a constellation of other brands (complementary and competitive) and, specifically, how consumers position various competing brands in their own mental space.

Brand-value calculus completes the roadmap for marketing operations, defining how customers experience a brand-marketing effort — the cognitive science and neurolinguistics of a brand's voice and cultural icons.¹

NAUTICAL MAPS OF THE 21ST CENTURY

When England ruled the high seas, the Crown considered its navigation charts

and calculations a top secret source of considerable advantage in both times of war and peace.

Many deep parallels exist between these maps and the metadata of digital asset management. The other fine monographs in this issue explain how metadata work and the role they play in retrieving and transforming reusable digital files — how to transform these files into cash.

We encourage your letters and emails. Let us know what else you would like to read and understand about metadata and DAM.

Note

- 1 Psychometrics constitute an approach for modeling the subjective or non-behavioral facets of human experience. Psychometric specifications correlate aspects of a brand's story and a product's utility to the subjective experience of a target market customer. Correlation of customer psychometrics to a product, its brand and its entailments requires the use of a quantitative framework, enabling a mathematical or computational procedure for predicting customers' response and comparing one set of customer responses to another set resulting from different inputs. In consumer markets, these psychometric specifications will, by necessity, require a formal definition of a consumer's social identity. In business to business markets, these psychometric specifications will require a data model depicting the dynamics of an organization's business model and its tactics and generally hidden cultural norms.