A GUIDE TO

EQUITY DIVERSITY
INCLUSION ACCESSIBILITY
IN METADATA

WHAT?

Inclusive Metadata aims to accurately portray individuals based on their self-descriptions. While no DAM system is entirely neutral, proactive measures can be implemented to minimize bias and prevent the use of harmful language. Inclusive metadata frequently encompasses details such as race, gender, ability, cultural background, language, orientation, and more (Mizota, 2023).

WHY?

Equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility revolves around people. If your DAM includes content featuring people, it is a platform where social identities are portrayed including gender, ethnicity, and more. By aligning your metadata with EDIA principles, you respect the identities of the people depicted in the content and those engaging with the DAM.

With images in particular, you cannot always identify a person's race solely based on appearance. Other aspects, like disability and sexual orientation may be unidentifiable based on looks alone (Waldron, 2023).

What can we do to collect accurate information about the model's identities? Just Ask.

Rather than relying on assumptions later on, ask the models for the necessary information during the photo shoot (Waldron, 2023).

HOW? *Conversations with experts*

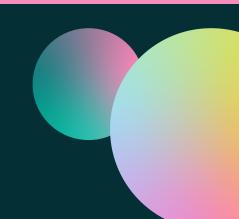### What are some techniques to implement EDIA in metadata?

John Horodyski

Using the following framework to consider EDIA:
1. **People**: Do you have people on your team, and within your company with knowledge of metadata to do this work?
2. **Process**: Do you have goal-oriented and purposeful documentation, a process, and a plan for EDIA efforts with your content?
3. **Technology**: What technology are you using to amplify business operations, and is your technology guided and influenced by quality data ingestion? And, if AI is on your roadmap, how will this affect EDIA efforts?
4. **Data**: If data is the foundation for any digital strategy and allows technology to communicate with consistent and accurate data to simplify the process, then how accurate, authentic, and authoritative is your metadata?

Clemency Wright

A Controlled Vocabulary aids in managing keywords. The DAM manager can set a "preferred term" that is considered relevant and appropriate, and it can be updated over time as needed. Synonyms can be assigned to this term, so if a user tags an asset with an outdated or inappropriate term, the controlled vocabulary will automatically show the "preferred term."

In particular, how can we incorporate accessibility in our metadata/make our metadata more accessible?

A practical and achievable method to enhance your metadata's accessibility is by including meaningful Alt-Text in your images. While it requires time and effort, John believes Alt-text is no longer optional but a crucial element of accessibility best practices. Additionally, explore the "longer description" option for your tags. Educating on all levels of accessibility, starting with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 requirements, is always an opportunity worth considering.

This should be guided by user research, such as conducting surveys or interviews, to identify acceptable terminology. Clients often discover varied ways to tag aspects, especially regarding keywords for people like gender, sexual orientation, and ethnicity/cultural heritage. It's important to recognize that pleasing everyone is not always possible. The key is to put in the effort to improve metadata and communicate these efforts within the organization.

Do you have any case studies or examples of EDIA in metadata improving the effectiveness of a DAM?

A client enhanced their location metadata in China and Korea by collaborating with local content creators to update outdated terms, making it more inclusive and respectful of regional cultures. This improved search results and optimized metadata tagging in the DAM. There's a growing trend of such metadata update projects in heritage services and various organizations, emphasizing the importance of regularly reviewing and updating metadata (J. Horodyski, personal communication, November 26, 2023).

Clemency collaborates with heritage institutions and universities, focusing on EDIA. A UK university asked them to review and update terms for ethnicity to showcase student diversity. Another arts organization is using LGBTQ+ terminology to broaden their audience and create a more inclusive event program (C. Wright, personal communication, November 28, 2023).