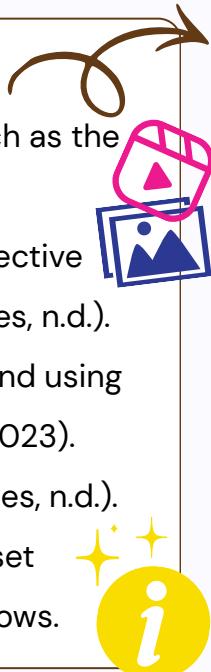


# Framework for Discoverability: Metadata & Taxonomy in DAM

Metadata and Taxonomy form the core of all Digital Asset Management (DAM) systems. Digital assets contain a wealth of information that can provide insights into asset attributes and usage, while also enhancing search and discoverability. Organizing this information in a structured way unlocks your library's full capabilities, improving workflows, collaboration, and operations.

## Metadata: Data about Data

- Holds information about an assets' attributes, not so much as the content of the asset itself (Holmes, n.d.).
- Each piece of data is a *value*, and is associated with respective metadata fields, which can be standard or custom (Holmes, n.d.).
- Data values make understanding, organizing, managing, and using assets in a DAM system easier and more efficient (Chia, 2023).
- A system of metadata fields is a metadata schema (Holmes, n.d.).
- By leveraging metadata effectively, users can improve asset discoverability, ensure compliance, and streamline workflows.



### EXAMPLE METADATA

<DATA FIELDS: VALUES>

- File Format: .PNG
- Origin: Procreate
- Colour Space: RGB
- Usage: Restricted
- Expiry: 12 / 01 / 2025
- Keywords: Coffee, latte, coffee beans, fall, cozy.

**Descriptive:** Title, subject, content, keywords, etc. These fields support discoverability of assets (Waldron, n.d.).  
**Technical:** Format, dimensions, resolution, colour space, page order, etc. (Waldron, n.d.).  
**Administrative:** Usage, creator, creation date, copyright, versioning, etc. (Solanki, 2024).

### Metadata Types

## Brand Assets



## Taxonomy: Clarity through Classification

- A taxonomy is an unseen structure integrated in a DAM system that uses consistent labelling and terminology to categorize and arrange assets into respective groups (Allouch, 2024).
- A well-structured, user-focused taxonomy streamlines asset discovery, keeps the library organized, and stays effective as it scales.
  - Users can search through customized categories instead of relying on traditional structures that may not be as intuitive (El Asaleh, 2025).

**metadata**  
**describes data**

**taxonomies**  
**organize data**

## The Core Framework of DAM Systems

Taxonomies rely on metadata to organize data, and together they make digital assets easy to find, manage, and use (Brain Traffic, n.d.). Without a taxonomy, assets lack structure and consistency; and without metadata, finding them becomes time consuming, especially within enterprise-level collections (El Asaleh, 2025). As taxonomies and metadata are interdependent, the design and evolution of each should be managed together (Hedden, 2018).

## Building the Schema

- What key information categories would be useful for your organization to search and filter by? (Bynder, n.d.)
- What kind of metadata or asset information would help end-users the most? (El Asaleh, 2025)
- Collect feedback from end-users and determine asset categories (for taxonomy) and attributes (for metadata) (El Asaleh, 2025).



Remember to start small, then scale strategically

## Keep in Mind

- Relevant Fields:** Metadata should be informative to the end-user (Bynder, n.d.), so be intentional and strategic.
- Controlled Vocabularies** – Implement controlled terms to avoid spelling differentiation or errors in metadata.
- Synonym Rings** – Bundle similar terms together to improve user search results (Garshol, 2004).
- DEI** – Ensure your metadata framework supports diverse identity facets (Mizota, 2023).



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