

Metadata Management Unleashes the Potential of Enterprise Data



Data offers the potential for immense power in driving decisions and informing business strategy. But without organization, data simply uses up space or, worse, inhibits business. Metadata management provides the key to harnessing the power of data. This increases productivity, promotes security and regulatory compliance, and expands data longevity.

What is Metadata?

In simple terms, metadata is information about data. In the same way that cards in a card catalog provide information about books in a library, metadata describes data in a file, web page or database. Through solid metadata management, organizations establish standards and processes around the process of adding metadata tags to content.

Metadata falls into one of three main categories:

- **Descriptive** – Descriptive metadata identifies data. For a document file, this includes identifiers such as title, author, and keywords.
- **Structural** – Structural metadata indicates how the data is formatted, as well as how it relates to other data. For instance, does the data exist as part of one or more collections? Additional examples include indexes and tables of contents.

- Administrative – Administrative data includes rules about the usage of the data. These rules may indicate who can access the file, whether users can share the data, archiving information and so forth.

Organizing data through metadata management gives enterprises the ability to tap into the potential of the data available to them. Consider the following significant benefits.



Metadata Management Increases Productivity

Metadata management increases productivity in several ways. First, it makes data more visible, thus facilitating data retrieval. Without metadata, finding necessary information or files can prove as challenging as the proverbial needle in a haystack. With metadata, just enter keywords, along with other parameters such as creation date, and narrow the field in seconds.

Further, metadata enables searches to find all related digital assets, instead of just text documents. Without metadata to describe an image or video, for example, a text search would not see it.

In addition to streamlining data retrieval, metadata provides important clues to the researcher to aid in data analysis. These can include how and when the data was collected, as well as tips on how to read and understand the data.

Metadata also proves critical in optimizing an organization's web presence. Search engines evaluate websites to determine their purpose and relevance. Websites communicate that information to the search engine using metadata. Thus, metadata management significantly affects SEO.

Aids Regulatory Compliance and Security

Properly managed metadata increases digital security and helps organizations demonstrate proper access management for [regulatory compliance](#). For instance, metadata tags can determine access and

usage rights, as well as archiving. Additionally, they can provide an audit trail, indicating when a digital asset was created, modified and distributed.

Because metadata management facilitates version control, it helps to avoid errors by ensuring that employees use the most recent and correct information available. And by making data easily retrievable, it streamlines [eDiscovery](#) in the event of legal action.



Extends Data Lifespan

The usable lifespan of data often proves much shorter than necessary. Once a digital asset becomes corrupted or buried, it loses its value. On the other hand, when users can find data quickly, and when they can be sure they have the most recent version, it retains its value.

The metadata also provides context for data assets, thus allowing multiple departments to use the same data for different projects. Researchers avoid recreating data that already exists, reducing redundancy and ensuring consistency across projects. And when data has reached its end of life, metadata helps ensure proper archiving.

Metadata Management, Essential to Information Governance

Metadata management and [information governance](#) go hand in hand to ensure the accessibility, [security](#) and quality of enterprise data. When decision-makers have quick access to relevant data, they save time and avoid costly mistakes.

Messaging Architects offers the expertise and tools you need to develop a comprehensive information governance program. We will help you organize and secure your digital assets, optimize access management, and properly care for data throughout its lifecycle.