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White Paper

Enabling Content Usage Through Rights Metadata

Introduction to Content Usage

Changing consumer patterns of content consumption have been the impetus for major media and entertainment corporations to transform themselves from creators to creator/distributors. The primary business strategy for many of the worlds' leading M&E entities is how to profitably connect directly with the individual consumer and keep them connected. Content access, and the ability to deliver content directly to consumers, has repositioned rights management to the center of the media value chain. The core asset itself is not necessarily the film or TV show, but rather the "right" to monetize that asset to its' fullest potential. The asset becomes part of a portfolio that must be managed across the enterprise as silos of content limit the ability to quickly and efficiently monetize the assets.

It is a business imperative that rights management becomes a core competency which will enable the optimization of the portfolio of assets. The IP that is governed by a rights management system can inform downstream tools that enable revenue optimization. Rights metadata has now become the key to success as effective metadata management helps manage complex distribution contracts and quickly exploit new consumer access channels. As an Industry, it is a business imperative to define and implement standardized terminology for the various rights vectors and dimensions. This will enable future

RIGHTS MANAGEMENT,

at its' broadest definition, refers to the fact that a creator and/or IP owner has the authority to define, via the legal tool called a license, the "right" to grant some form of use of the IP. The right itself could be tied to a single, personal use, or it might grant the right to pass the IP to someone else for a defined, our undefined period of time. Rights management may take the form of Enterprise Rights Management, Digital Rights Management or Active Rights Management. All three are defined as ways to control IP use, limit and/or prevent unauthorized users from accessing the IP whether the content is accessed online, offline or from some other channel.

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automation tools, like blockchain, to quickly increase profits coupled with lower transaction costs.

As major content distributors continue to develop new revenue streams, "content usage", as both a metric and business process, has come to the forefront. IP owners need to better account for the usage of their various content types while also requiring a clear and extremely accurate report of the content consumers are actually consuming. Actionable content usage reports are only available when the enterprise has a centralized, accurate and universally available rights database. Usage reports enable the distributor to quickly and efficiently identify synergies across divisions and geographies which, in turn, enable the creation of new and diverse content.

But as content usage becomes easier in the access layer, it simultaneously complicates system requirements in the back office. New administrative complexities like GDPR and digital distribution make

DEFINITION OF CONTENT USAGE:

For the consumer, content usage simply means the right to access an asset or set of assets. But for the D2C provider, issues such as channel, timing, location, device type, format, subscription type, exclusivity, etc, will dictate what content the consumer actually can access. Effective rights management has moved from a simple technical and administrative activity to true strategic differentiator.

legacy systems expensive to maintain/update due the fact they were designed for industry standards decades ago.

The pendulum continues to swing between crowning content or distribution as "king." But unless the kingdom has a strategy for content usage, the king will fall. While most every content owner has invested in ERP suites, rights management systems have typically been a niche technology, implemented in silos across film, TV, Home Ent, Games and Music. This fragmented approach, coupled with the fragmentation of the content itself, has hampered the enterprise from realizing the full potential of their asset library. If content usage became the metric of success, rights management systems would be seen more as an enabler rather than a tool to simply track and report usage. Content usage should become the metric to

Those media and entertainment companies that can manage content usage with smart rights management systems are often able to exploit the efficiencies enabled by the digital value chain.

gauge how effective the enterprise is in monetizing content. For those companies that generate revenue from acquiring or licensing content, rights to that content is the primary asset. It would follow suit that if revenue follows the rights, rights management systems must be at the core of the enterprise feeding both upstream and downstream technologies related to production, acquisition, distribution, sales, asset management, etc.

Content Usage should also be a process that supports the distribution system, which, in turn, should know which asset resides where. The fact that distribution systems are often siloed across division, clearly demonstrates why the silos of knowledge need to be broken down and unified. Well-defined content usage protocols, with rights management as the enabler, improve the flow of business. The increasing complexity of contracts and related reporting requirements has been driven by the ever-changing structure of restrictions and holdbacks, exclusions, expirations, new window of exhibition definitions, and even the changing structure of participations deals. To realize new revenue, Content Usage strategies must ensure that fragmented content rights are included as a key dimension. Sophisticated rights systems can then be used to create multiple series of hierarchies that can categorize channels, restrictions, territories and other content metadata. This strategic approach to content usage will then allow traditional rights bundles to be managed in smaller fragments, generating new revenue opportunities due to this fragmentation and shortened distribution windows.

Leveraging Cross System Metadata

The first step to figuring out the usage of an asset is the identification and differentiation of said asset. The only way to do that is, you guessed it, metadata.

Metadata is information that describes other data — data about data. It is the descriptive, administrative and structural data that define assets.

As a structural component of a DAM or CMS, metadata becomes an asset unto itself — and an important one, at that. It provides the foundation needed to make assets more discoverable, accessible and, therefore, more valuable. In other words: Metadata transforms content into "smart assets." Simply digitizing video, audio, graphic files provides a certain convenience, but it is the ability to find, share and distribute files with specific attributes that unlocks their full potential and value.

If you are working within a DAM, you likely already have metadata fields on your assets which help you define them, these fields are the foundational keys to rights management. Specific metadata fields will help you both identify the uniqueness of the asset you are trying to use, and also will indicate which contracts, license and/or sales agreements might be in play. Fields like Creator, Talent, Brand and Purpose are all informational ties to contractual agreements and their requirements. Other technical metadata fields like date, version or even title, can clarify for you further how and where you are able to use the content.

Rights management systems are essentially digital asset management systems for rights. Since contracts and license agreements were not written with automation in mind, these systems can help parse out the often complicated and layered rules that come about when you put together all of the different legal agreements that are signed when you are creating content. Not all of the rules in contract and license agreements are simple or easy. Many of the platforms we are currently looking to distribute content to, may not have even existed when some of the agreements in play were written. This means there will be a certain amount of work involved to decipher whether content can be used. This does not mean that Rights management platforms can't help here, part of the benefit of organizing your rights in a system is that you can easily find out what content is easily usable and focus your manual efforts on the content which needs a little more investigation.

The key question that most people are trying to answer is either "where can I sell what I have?" or "where have sent what I already have?". Using metadata from a DAM to identify the asset itself, and then that information pulling the appropriate rules from a DRM system you can easily identify exactly where your assets are able to go. If you add the layer of a live avails system, you can get quick updates on any

exclusivity in sales agreements which may affect an assets availability. New platforms are launching all the time, and these new platforms have provided a lot of opportunity for legacy content to find second lives. To be able to benefit from this new environment, you have to identify easily what you have and where it can go. By connecting the asset metadata within a DAM, to the contract/legal agreement & avails metadata within a DRM, you have a dynamic tool which can help you easily package and deliver content.

What happens if I am wrong?

It is critical for any organization to understand, track and make the rights associated to content available to users to avoid some potentially major impacts to the business.

Financial Risk: Misuse of content is illegal and can cost your organization a lot of money resulting from lawsuits and litigation – *This can be avoided by ensuring your rights metadata is available and accurate.*

Lost Intellectual Property: If you don't effectively understand and manage your content rights, how are you supposed to enforce them? This can allow others to profit from using your IP and get away with it – *this profit should be yours.*

Lost Opportunity: If your content rights are unknown, this will discourage usage – *not using your content can lead to lost opportunity for content reuse and revenue generation.*

Bad Press/Lost Customer Trust: Any misuse of content and resulting litigation can result in very bad press for your organization. Customers tend to form strong opinions based on what they read – *bad press can lead to lost customer trust and loyalty.*

The US Postal Service just learned a very expensive lesson after being sued for copyright infringement for a total of 3.5 Million dollars by the sculptor of the replica of the Statue of Liberty outside the New York-New York casino in Las Vegas for using an image on stamps without securing the appropriate rights.

Source: Svachula, Amanda. "Statue Of Liberty Stamp Mistake To Cost Postal SErvice $3.5 Million." New York Times. 2018.

Conclusion

Content drives brand regardless of where it comes from and what it is, content is what is driving your brand. Think of content for what it does for you but also for what it is for your users and their access; content is the constant connection between you and your users. Content is critical to your business operations and needs to be discovered at all points within a digital lifecycle. Metadata is a strategic imperative in effectively manage content and unlocks the potential to ingest, discover, share and distribute your content. The robustness and relevance of the metadata associated with your content is what makes it findable, and therefore usable. Leveraging rights metadata provides your best chance for a return on investment on the content created and becomes an essential line of defense against lost opportunities. Make the rights metadata meaningful and manage it well.

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Over a 20+ career in the M&E Industry. Has worked with every major motion picture and TV studio, game publisher and music label in operations surrounding digital and physical content creation, distribution and engagement.

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RSG MEDIA

The world's leading media & entertainment companies understand that their success is driven by both art and science. Since 1985 they have trusted RSG Media's industry experts, data scientists, and technologists to help them drive revenue and increase profits from their rights, audiences, and advertising.

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