Use of **IPTC Photo Metadata**
by photo suppliers
(companies and photographers)
in 2019

The survey results

Conducted and published by IPTC **Photo Metadata Working Group**
June 2019
Do we still need photo metadata? Ask the suppliers!

IPTC provides standards for photo metadata since 1995 and raised the question: is there still a need for it?

To find that out IPTC ran a survey among photo suppliers in spring 2019. CEPIC* strongly supported it in Europe, BVPA* in Germany and DMLA in the USA. (* CEPIC and BVPA are IPTC members)

135 persons started to fill in, about 100 completed it. (We did a similar survey in 2010: 80 started it …)

Two types of suppliers participated:
- Companies (55%)
- Individual photographers (45%)

Find the results on the next pages
What kinds of images are supplied

- Stock Images
- News Photos
- Video Footage
- Cultural Heritage
- PR

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Suppliers submitting a survey are from …
How relevant is IPTC Photo Metadata for …

... these business purposes in your company: (%)

- Support of user searches: 74%
- Description of images: 84%
- Business use (accounting, fees …): 51%
- Documentation of rights: 65%

... these business purposes for you as photographer: (%)

- Support of user searches: 60%
- Description of images: 68%
- Business use (accounting, fees …): 50%
- Documentation of rights: 74%
Note on grouping metadata fields

The IPTC Photo Metadata Standard has many fields and they can be split into groups:

- Free text description of the content: Description/caption, Headline, Keywords + categorization terms from CVs …
- Things shown: locations, persons, companies, events, products, artwork, objects
- Rights data: Creator, Copyright Notice, Credit, Copyright Owner, Web Statement of Rights, …
- Licensing data: Usage Terms, Image Supplier, Licensor
- Administrative data: Date Created, Instructions, Job ID, Image Registry Entry …

These groups were used for options of survey answers.

Find more about these groups in the IPTC Photo Metadata User Guide
What kinds of fields are used …

By companies

- Free text description: Frequently (%), Sometimes (%), Rarely/never (%)
- Things shown: Frequently (%), Sometimes (%), Rarely/never (%)
- Rights data: Frequently (%), Sometimes (%), Rarely/never (%)
- Licensing data: Frequently (%), Sometimes (%), Rarely/never (%)
- Administration data: Frequently (%), Sometimes (%), Rarely/never (%)

By photographers

- Free text description: Frequently (%), Sometimes (%), Rarely/never (%)
- Things shown: Frequently (%), Sometimes (%), Rarely/never (%)
- Rights data: Frequently (%), Sometimes (%), Rarely/never (%)
- Licensing data: Frequently (%), Sometimes (%), Rarely/never (%)
- Administration data: Frequently (%), Sometimes (%), Rarely/never (%)
Are fields shared with customers?

What is not shared

Companies: internal administration (accounting, fees, licensing rule), info about the source

Photographers: internal administration data, GPS data and other technical details, “depending on user requirements”
Did the metadata use change in the past years?

At companies:
- Free text descriptions: Increased (29%), About the same (31%), Decreased (10%)
- Things shown: Increased (31%), About the same (28%), Decreased (5%)
- Rights data: Increased (41%), About the same (28%), Decreased (10%)
- Licensing data: Increased (56%), About the same (28%), Decreased (5%)
- Administration data: Increased (58%), About the same (28%), Decreased (10%)

At photographers:
- Free text descriptions: Increased (31%), About the same (21%), Decreased (4%)
- Things shown: Increased (43%), About the same (21%), Decreased (8%)
- Rights data: Increased (57%), About the same (37%), Decreased (2%)
- Licensing data: Increased (61%), About the same (18%), Decreased (2%)
- Administration data: Increased (69%), About the same (18%), Decreased (2%)
What drives decisions to use …

… at companies

- Free text descriptions
- Things shown
- Rights data
- Licensing data
- Administration data

- Internal business requirements (%)
- Legal requirements (%)
- Customer requirements (%)
What drives decisions …

… at photographers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Type</th>
<th>Internal Business Requirements (%)</th>
<th>Legal Requirements (%)</th>
<th>Customer Requirements (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Free text descriptions</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Things shown</td>
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<td>Rights data</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administration data</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How photographers deal with metadata

I … from previous sources

- ... use embedded metadata ...
  - Yes: 44
  - No: 56

- ... use metadata handed over ...
  - Yes: 11
  - No: 89

- ... delete metadata ...
  - Yes: 5
  - No: 95

- ... edit metadata ...
  - Yes: 33
  - No: 67

I add my own metadata
  - Yes: 100
  - No: 0
How companies deal with metadata

We … from previous sources

- ... use embedded metadata …
  - Yes: 82
  - No: 18

- ... use metadata handed over …
  - Yes: 69
  - No: 31

- ... delete metadata …
  - Yes: 59
  - No: 41

- ... edit metadata …
  - Yes: 71
  - No: 29

- We add our own metadata
  - Yes: 98
  - No: 2
Who takes care of metadata at …

… companies →

… photographers →

Artificial Intelligence systems
Automated rule-based software
External human editor(s)
Our human metadata editor(s)
What software is used by suppliers

Preferred software
- Adobe Lightroom
- Adobe Photoshop
- Photo Mechanic
- Fotostation
- Adobe Bridge
- Capture One

Bar chart showing the distribution of software used by companies and photographers.
Are suppliers aware of Google’s Image Credits

Example:

Does your company/do you embed the (three) required rights fields?

- We embed already: 93% (Companies), 71% (Photographers)
- We plan to embed: 12% (Companies), 14% (Photographers)
- We have to consider this: 14% (Companies), 12% (Photographers)
Do you want to see more embedded fields?

What else: (was an open ended question, ranking by counting occurrences)

1. Caption/description / Headline
2. Shown locations
3. Shown persons
4. Usage terms/licence
Are suppliers strict on persistence of metadata

Do your licences prohibit customers to remove metadata?

- Yes
- Yes, rights data only
- No

If you prohibit: do you check if your customers obey?

- Yes
- No
- No - due to limited resources
Do suppliers track the use of their images

If Yes: “We are tracking for” finding unlicensed images (90%!), kind of use, count use of images

If you track: do you check if uses are licenced?

Companies (%) | Photographers (%)
---|---
Yes | Only cases promising success | No
---|---|---|---|---|---
30 | 32 | 30 | 32 | 30 | 32 | 30 | 32 | 30 | 32
35 | 35 | 35 | 35 | 35 | 35 | 35 | 35 | 35 | 35
34 | 34 | 34 | 34 | 34 | 34 | 34 | 34 | 34 | 34
65 | 66 | 65 | 66 | 65 | 66 | 65 | 66 | 65 | 66

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Does your company need more metadata fields

This was an open ended question:

• 60% said explicitly No

• Suggested additional metadata fields covered:
  • More details of existing fields, like more about shown models or fields with prices for licensing
  • The need to secure embedded values against being changed or removed by others.
How could IPTC help suppliers

Other suggestions:

- How-to videos – also for amateur photographers
- “Copyright education” webinar/video … showing a proper use of rights metadata
- Translations: into German and French
- Open source software supporting the use of IPTC Photo Metadata
- Prevent stripping out metadata by technical means
IPTC response (presented on 6 June)

Translations:
- IPTC will take this seriously, first steps in French, German and Spanish

Webinars:
- IPTC will consider this – webinars also need a good educational layout this make take some time

Additional fields:
- IPTC sees no wider need for a specific field.

What IPTC can’t do:
- Stopping the removal of embedded metadata at a technical level
  → metadata are in a wrapper defined by the technical standard of the image file format (JPEG, DNG, PNG, …). Such standards could try to stop removing such wrappers – but technical knowledge tells: this is very hard.
Dear supplier companies and photographers having filled in our survey,
thank you for sharing your use of IPTC Photo Metadata
Background: what exactly is IPTC Photo Metadata

IPTC Photo Metadata (PMD) …

• … is a set of fields bound to an image (file):
  → primarily by embedding
  → can be used with a DAM/MAM system
  → can be used for inline HTML metadata (keyword “schema.org”)

• … fields focus on describing the content of the image, setting rights data
  and providing administrative data – NO technical data (covered by Exif)

IPTC Photo Metadata exist …

- Since 1995 as set of fields of Adobe Photoshop, then of other image software
- Since 2005 as [Photo Metadata Standard](#) defining the best use of each field
- Since 2008 with an extended set of fields based on user requirements

For embedding the data into image files the technical formats IPTC IIM and ISO XMP are used.
Who takes care of IPTC Photo Metadata

IPTC’s Photo Metadata Working Group

- **Objectives:**
  - The goal of this WG is to act as a special interest group regarding all photo metadata issues of the IPTC.

... a group of persons nominated by IPTC members – current regulars are

- Sarah Saunders, CEPIC
- David Ricks, PLUS
- Karl Csoknyay, Keystone-SDA
- Brendan Quinn, IPTC MD
- Michael Steidl, IPTC (Lead)
- Annette Feldman, AP
- Linda Burman, LB Assoc