

Taxonomies and Content Models | A Practical Guide

Gilbane Conference, Washington, DC | June, 2007

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Independent, buyer-centered evaluations of content technologies & practices



The Web CMS Report evaluates 30 Web CMS packages.









Enterprise Search Report evaluates 28 Search vendors.

Enterprise Portals Report evaluates 15 products of 13 major Enterprise Portals vendors.

New:

- The ECM Suites Report
- Web Analytics Report

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Agenda

- · A bit about each of us
- Level-setting of terms and concepts
 - Not just a methodology, a way of thinking
 - Content models, taxonomy, meta data, folksonomies and the current state of their use
- A few case study examples
- Creating a taxonomy and content model: step-by-step approach
- Interactive exercise
- Maintenance and governance

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A bit about me

- Principal at CMS Watch since May 2006
- Prior, taxonomy designer and implementer of many a CMS for over a decade
- "Back-end Information Architect"
- Focus on how content technologies can (or can't) use content structures
- Educational background in languages and linguistics
- Currently developing a training and certification program for AIIM around Information Organization and Access (IOA)

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A bit about YOU

- Why are you here?
- What would you like to learn?
- In which areas of CM do you work (DM, RM, WCM other)?
- Would you consider yourself beginner, intermediate or advanced in terms of taxonomy knowledge?
- What are your current challenges with regards to taxonomy?
- Do you use a CMS?
- Do you own an iPod?
- Do you play golf?

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The best taxonomists....

....see the world differently

So do the best golfers.

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Important "content" for Tiger and Steve to consider

- · Distance to target
- Weather conditions
 - Wind
 - Rain
- Dampness of course
- Hazards
 - Bunkers / Sand Traps
 - Water
- · Hole layout
 - Dogleg?
 - · Elevated green?



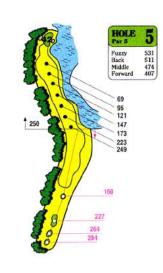


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Tiger and Steve's content model



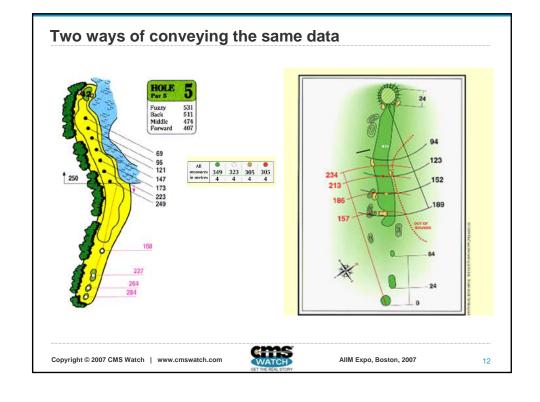
- Pictorial
 - Illustration of hazards
 - · Layout of hole
- Textual
 - Distances (yards) from tees to green
 - · Distance from each tee to water hazard
 - · Distance from hazard to green

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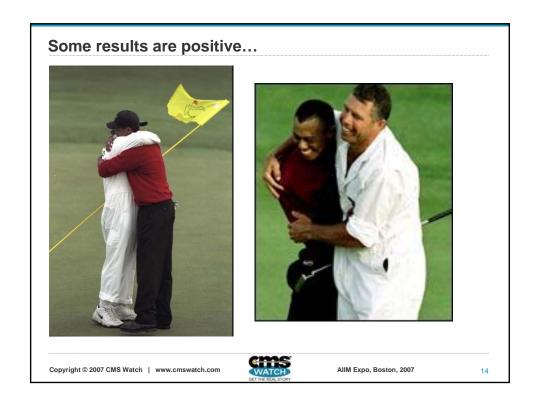


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Same content, different content model Pictorial Illustration of hazards · Layout of hole • Red indicates "out of bounds" Textual • Distances (meters) from tee to various spots on the hole (markers, hazards) · Distances from various hazards to the green • Distances between the tees • Distances from tee to green All measures 349 323 305 305 in metres 4 4 4 4 Copyright © 2007 CMS Watch | www.cmswatch.com AIIM Expo, Boston, 2007







...and some aren't so positive



- Effective content models enable business users and end customers to find and act on the information they need to make them successful
- Where would Tiger be without his well-stocked, granular and detailed data source (his caddy?)
 - Shooting blind...
- How do the elements of a golfer's content model help Tiger make smart decisions?

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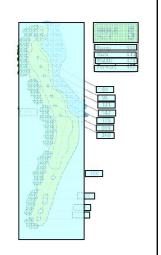


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Definitions of Content Model

- The components that comprise a body of content
 - (a.k.a., all the content pieces)
- The semantic structure of a body of content
 - (a.k.a., how those pieces relate to each other)
- A framework applied to data to create information
 - (a.k.a., making those related pieces useful to the people who need it)

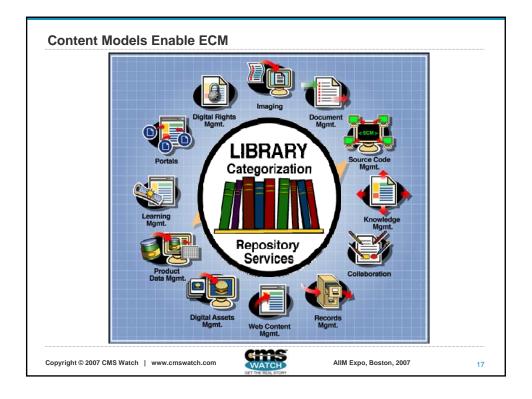


This is how you need to see and think about information.

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Setting the stage | Some definitions

Content Models are just as important as (if not more important than) the technology you use

What comprises a content model?

<u>Taxonomy</u>

• Law for categorizing information

Meta Data and/or Content Attributes

Information about content: "data about the data"

Vocabularies

• A sum or stock of words employed in a field of knowledge

Content Components

· How your content "breaks down" into discreet "chunks"

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And in case you're not a golfer...



Is this really better than The Shuffle, which doesn't rely on meta data?

- Taxonomies and content models are part of our everyday lives.
- They're also usually INCONSISTENT.
- Have you ever ripped CDs to an iPod?
- Meta data = Artist, album, song title, genre, composer, playlist
- Awful for classical music composer vs. artist, misspellings, variants
 - Beethoven
 - · Ludwig van Beethoven
 - · Beethoven, Ludwig van
 - · van Beethoven, Ludwig
- Inconsistency muddles user experience

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A few more definitions

- Facets: Allow for a more complex classification structure, where the categories are applied to the information like keywords. Thus, information about a subject can be "approached" and found in different ways.
 - Hypertension
 - Publications / Medical / Journal of Hypertension
 - Diseases / Cardiovascular / Hypertension
 - Associations / Medical / American Society of Hypertension
 - Red Rock Crab
 - Animals / Invertebrates / Crustaceans
 - World / Seas / Pacific
 - World / Land / Australasia
 - · Beethoven Violin Concerto
 - · Genres / Classical / Artists / Heifetz
 - Albums / Beethoven Violin Concerto
 - Composers / Beethoven, Ludwig van / Beethoven Violin Concerto

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A few more definitions

- Synonym Ring: A set of words/phrases that can be used interchangeably for searching. (Hypertension, high blood pressure)
- Thesaurus: A tool that controls synonyms and identifies the relationships among terms
- Controlled Vocabulary: A list of preferred and variant terms, with relationships (hierarchical and associative) defined. A taxonomy is a type of controlled vocabulary.

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Dewey vs. Uncle Sam





- Dewey Decimal
- 000 General & Bibliography 100 Philosophy & Psychology ... 200 Religion..... 300 Social Science
- 400 Languages & Linguistics.... 500 Sciences
- 600 Technology 800 Literature.....
- 900 Geography & History

- 1. General Works
- Philosophy, Psychology, Religion
- History: Auxiliary Sciences
- History: General and Old World
- History: United States
- History: Western Hemisphere
- Geography, Anthropology, Recreation
- Social Science
- Political Science 9.
- 10. Law
- 11. Education
- 12. Music13. Fine Arts
- 14. Literature & Languages
- 15. Science
- Medicine
- 17. Agriculture
- 18. Technology
- 19. Military Science
- 20. Naval Science
- 21. Bibliography & Library Science

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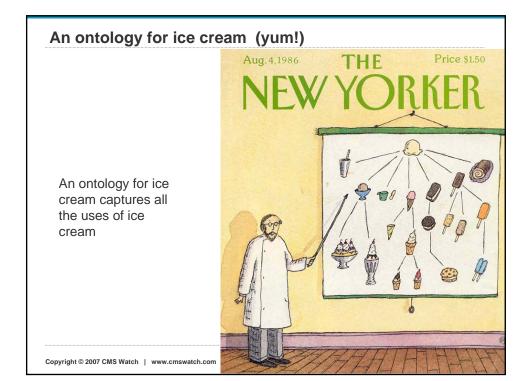
What about "ontologies"?

- Resemble faceted taxonomies but use richer semantic relationships among terms and attributes
- Apply rules specifying terms and relationships
- Ontologies do more than just control vocabulary
- They are a knowledge representation
- The oft-quoted definition of ontology is "the specification of one's conceptualization of a knowledge domain"
- Thus, an ontology for salad would contain the structure for how it relates to everything, from ingredients to growers to the rodents that might eat it, and how a salad is different in Japan vs. Italy.

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And finally, what about....

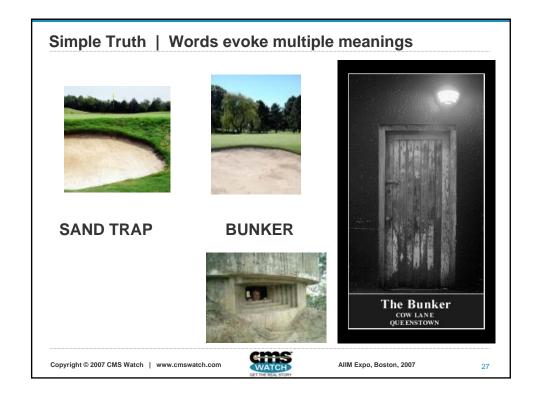
"Folksonomies"?

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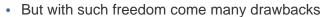
Taxonomy Backlash

- · Taxonomies are top-down, dictatorial, "expertly"determined classification schemes with variable flexibility
- Though invaluable in the CMS realm, taxonomies are rarely exhaustive or encompassing of many individuals' perspectives on content
- Folksonomies give "Power to the People" to tag and retrieve content to their liking, and share that approach/perspective with others









Folksonomies are more anarchistic than democratic

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Folksonomy Basics

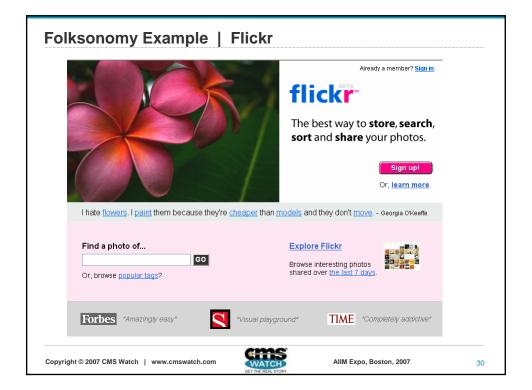
- <u>Folksonomy</u>: the anti-controlled vocabulary.
 Collaborative, user-driven vocabularies for tagging content, rarely with any sort of control
- · Portmanteau of the words "folks" and "taxonomy"
- Method of labeling and organizing data by collaborative tagging
- Generally arise in Web-based communities where technology exists that allow users to self-publish, share content, then create and use tags (e.g., blogs)
- Relevance between meta data and content may be determined by users in a democratic fashion
 - · four users define an object as being 'green'
 - · one user defines an object as being 'aqua'
 - relevance can be defined as "more green than aqua"
 - · derived by the user-defined meta tags

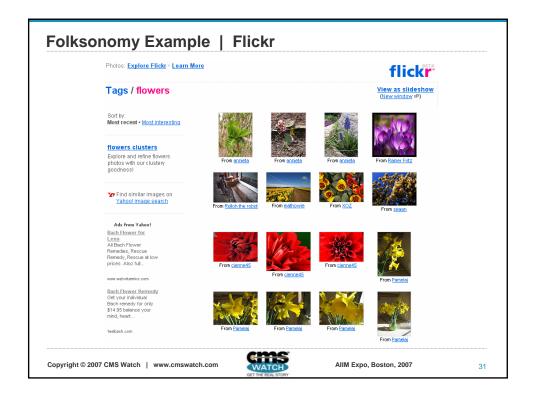


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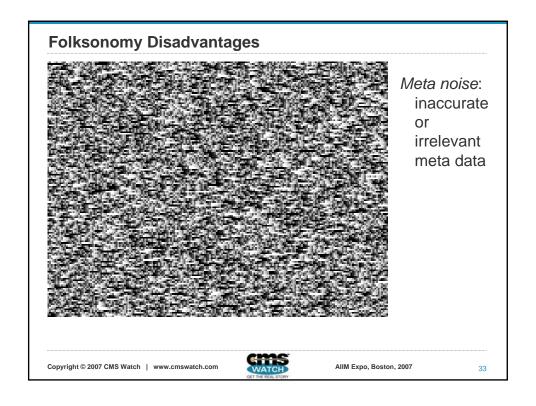
Folksonomy roots and related trends

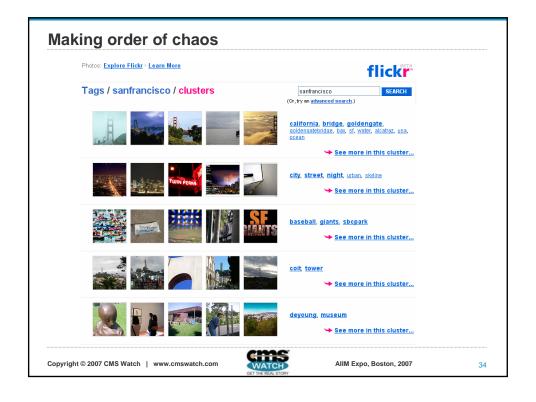
- <u>Social networking software</u>: applications that connect friends, business partners, or other individuals together using a variety of tools
 - · MySpace, LinkedIn
 - · Folksonomies facilitate social networking
- One of many technologies that allow users to "take over" and be the master of their domains
 - · Wikis, RSS, blogs, faceted browsing

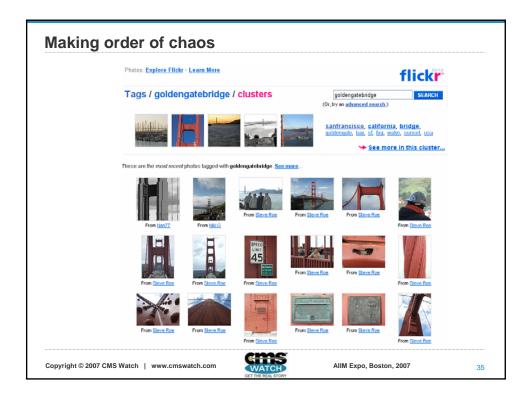
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Best of both worlds

- Modern practice is usually a moderated / edited folksonomy, supported by a taxonomy framework
 - · Create clusters and hierarchies based on user tags, like flickr
 - · Eliminate / merge redundant tags
 - · Flickr is a great example
- Give users tagging guidelines
- User research and analysis should be the foundation of any taxonomy design process
 - · This will minimize the need for folksonomy

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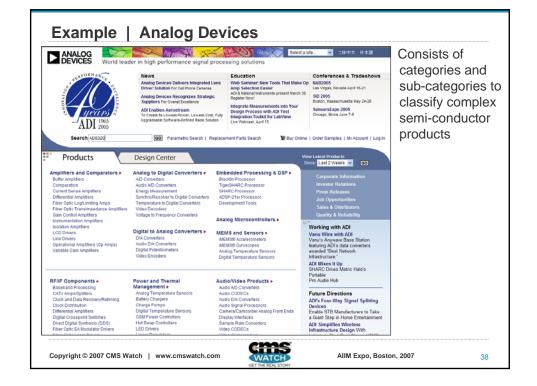
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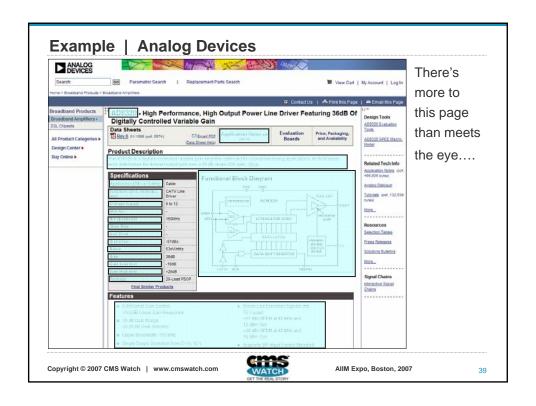
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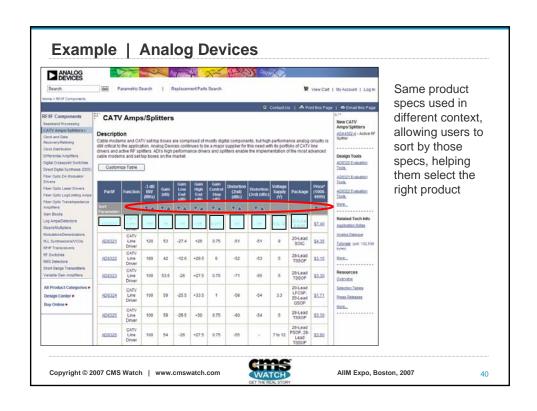
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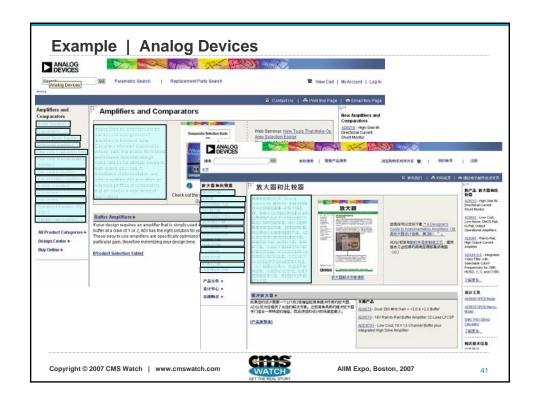
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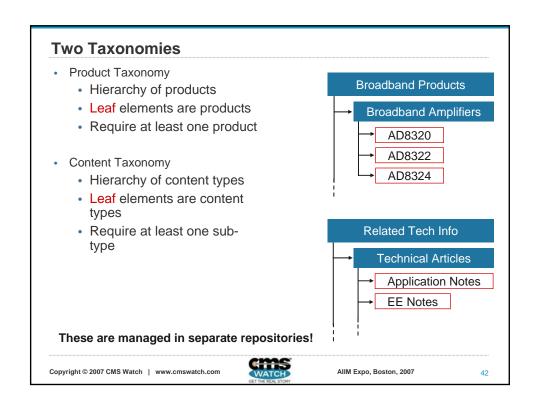
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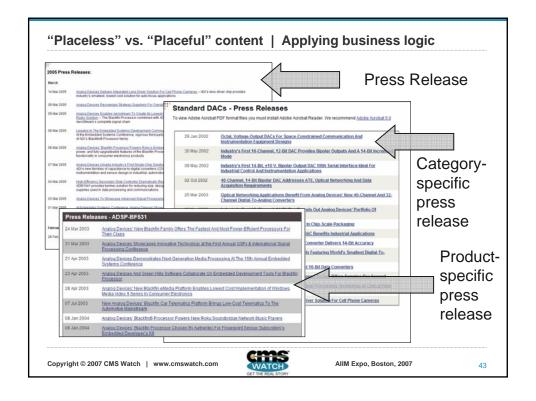


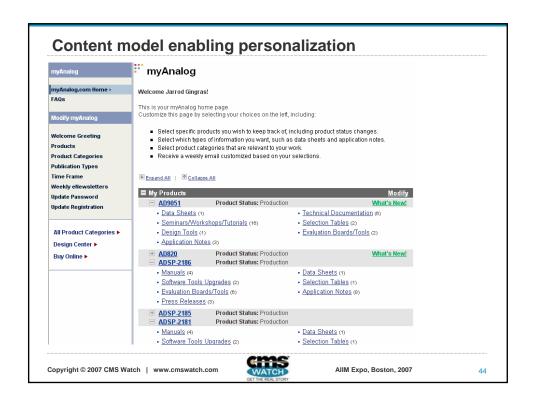


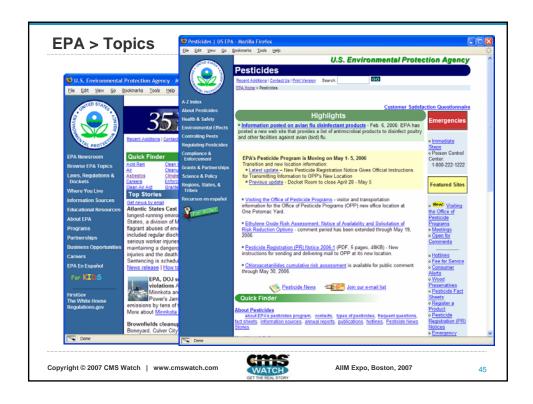




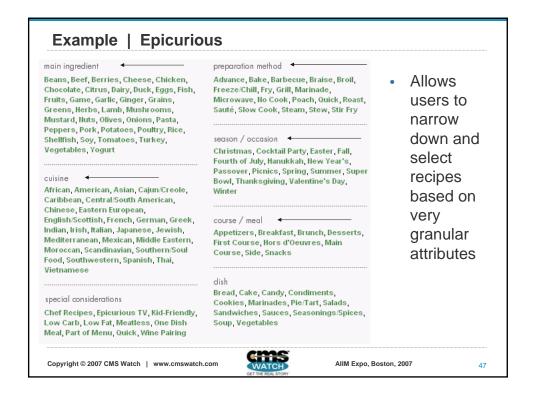


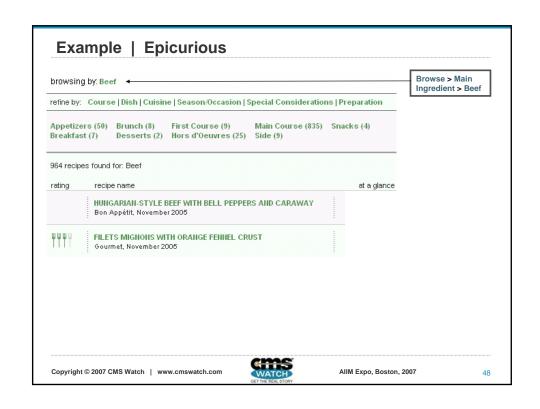


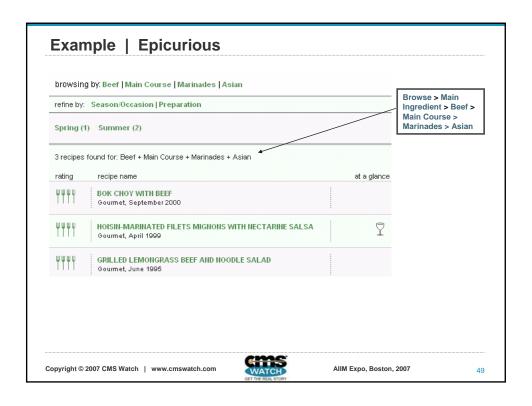


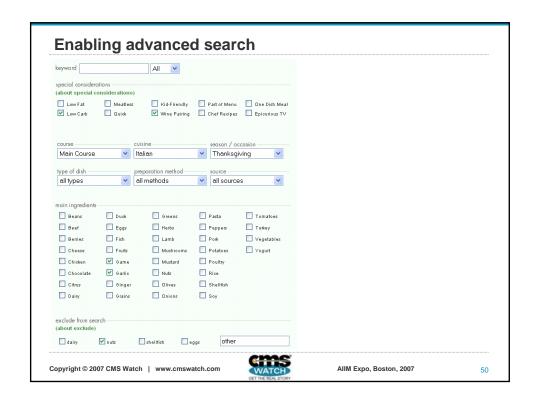












Case studies | Key takeaways

- Think about what you want the user experience to be
- Design your content model to accommodate that experience
- Don't "over-chunk" keep management process in mind
- Meta data can be both inherent OR defined, implicit OR explicit
- Categorization can be applied at any level to an entire document in a DM scenario or a single parameter in a WCM or search scenario

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It's time for a.....

BREAK

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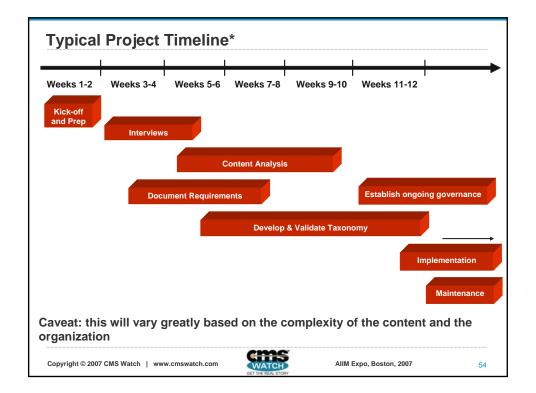
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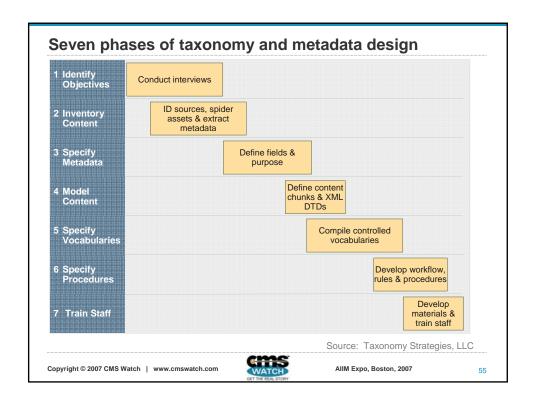
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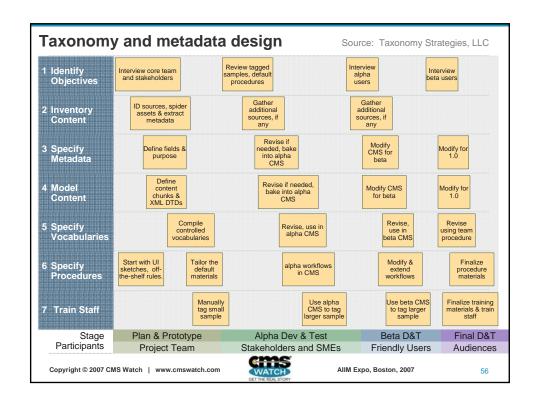
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WATCH

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Project Prep | Key Considerations

- What is the level of knowledge about taxonomy in the company as a whole?
- What are the most important priorities for the taxonomy?
- How much do I know about the subject matter? How much ramp up do I need?
- How many types of content will I need to consider?
- How much content is there (quantity-wise)?
- How many stakeholders and subject matter experts (SMEs) are there? How are they organized? (e.g. one "owner/SME" per product line?)
- What types of politics or challenges exist today between groups of owners/subject matter experts? Will they debate and/or argue over terminology or what should be classified where?

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Project Prep | Key Considerations

- Does any of the terminology need to be created from scratch or re-written?
- What kind of data store will the taxonomy be used in? (Database? XML repository?)
- Has any user feedback been received so far (internal or external, formal or informal), as to what they like and don't like about finding the company's information?
- Is there a product database of any sort in existence today?
 What product characteristics are accounted for? (name, description, number, etc.)
- If there is a web site, how is it organized today? (e.g. products, solutions, roles, etc.)
- How will users tag content using this taxonomy? Do they have that software/interface in place today?
- Will we need to train users to tag content?

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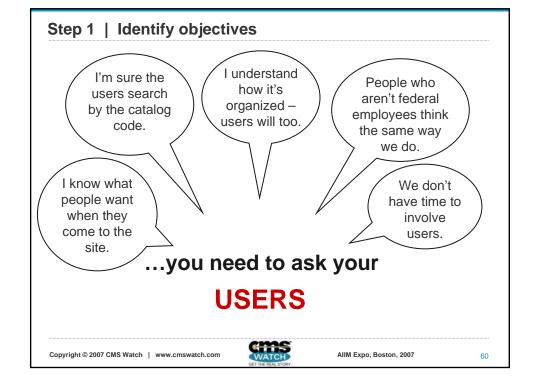
Project Prep | Integration | Key Considerations

- What kind of data store will the content model be used in? (Database? XML repository?)
- What is the appropriate level of granularity?
 - Break down of every element?
 - Storing content as "blobs"?
- Which systems will need to use the content model, and at which levels of granularity? (this might vary from system to system)
- How might each individual element of the content model relate to content that exists elsewhere in the enterprise?

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Step 1 | Identify objectives | User-centered content modeling

- Listen to your customers! (both internal and external)
 - Qualitative research: focus groups, card sorting
 - Quantitative research: surveys, search logs
- Think of your content model as part of the customer experience, rather than just a way of organizing data
 - How do your users need to USE the data? (search, display, sorting, etc.)
 - Once applied via CMS, your content model affects how you can display, target and search for content
- Validate content models with BOTH internal stakeholders AND external customers
 - Usability tests aren't just for user interfaces
- Essentially: apply human factors best practices to your content model design

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Step 1 | Identify objectives | Stakeholder objectives

- · Catalog site ROI based on increased sales through improved:
 - · Product findability
 - · Product cross-sells and up-sells
 - · Customer loyalty
- · Call center ROI based on cutting costs through:
 - · Fewer customer calls due to improved website self-service
 - · Faster, more accurate CSR responses through better information access
- Compliance ROI based on:
 - · Avoiding penalties for breaching regulations
 - Following required procedures (e.g. Medical claims)
- Knowledge worker productivity ROI based on cutting costs through:
 - · Less time searching for things
 - Less time recreating existing materials, with knock-on benefits of less confusion and reduced storage and backup costs
- Executive mandate
 - No ROI at the start, just someone with a vision and the budget to make it happen

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Step 2 | Content inventory and analysis

- Conduct industry competitive analysis if appropriate
- Review content and create a high-level inventory
- Determine the terms the business uses to categorize information (top-down approach)
- Determine the term the employees use when seeking information (bottom-up approach)
- Gather all terms / categories / content types
- Check vis-à-vis original content inventory to ensure everything is accounted for

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	Α	В	С	
1	Document Name	Topic	SubTopic	
2	Incentive Compensation Plan	Weight		
3	Incentive Compensation Plan	Objective	Corporate	
4	Incentive Compensation Plan	Objective	Division	
5	Incentive Compensation Plan	Objective	Individual	
6	Incentive Compensation Plan	Focus]	
7	Incentive Compensation Plan	Metrics		
8	Incentive Compensation Plan	Measured Expected Results	Threshold	
9	Incentive Compensation Plan	Measured Expected Results	Target	
10	Incentive Compensation Plan	Measured Expected Results	Exceptional	
11	Strategic Presentations	Succession Planning	Objectives	
12	Strategic Presentations	Succession Planning	Priorities	
13	Strategic Presentations	Succession Planning	Leadership	
14	Strategic Presentations	Succession Planning	Job	
15	Strategic Presentations	Succession Planning	Candidate	
16	Strategic Presentations	Succession Planning	Mission	
17	Strategic Presentations	Succession Planning	Nominating	
18	Corporate Objectives	Vision		
19	Corporate Objectives	Mission		
20	Corporate Objectives	Marketplace Drivers		
21	Corporate Objectives	Success Factors		
22	Corporate Objectives	Corporate Objectives	Claims Management	
23	Corporate Objectives	Corporate Objectives	Underwriting	
24	Corporate Objectives	Corporate Objectives	Loss Prevention and Patient Safety	
	Corporate Objectives	Corporate Objectives	Finance	

Cosmetics	Eyes	Eye Lashes
		Eye Liner & Pencils
		Eye Shadow
		Mascara
		Tools & Accessories
	Face	Blush
		Concealer
		Foundation
		Makeup Remover
		Powders
		Tools & Accessories
	Lips	Lip Balm
		Lip Gloss
		Lip Liner & Pencils
		Lipstick
		Tools & Accessories
	Nails	Nail Polish
		Nail Polish Remover
		Nail Tips
		Nail Treatments
		Tools & Accessories
Diet & Nutrition	Appetite Suppressants	no subcategories
	Diet & Nutrition Supplements	no subcategories
	Weight Loss Foods & Drinks	Snacks

Steps 3 & 4 | Specify metadata and model content

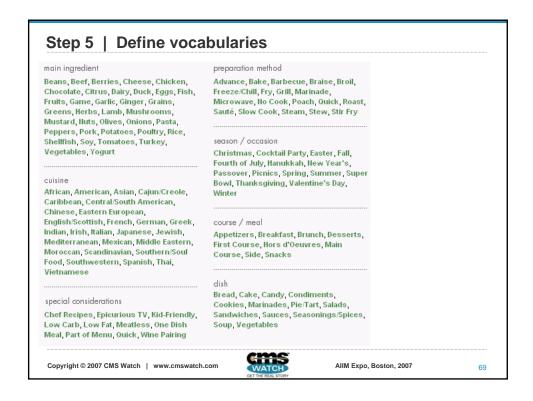
- SME analysis of content to determine categories and/or tags
- Workshops with SMEs and stakeholders to gain additional understanding of content
- Card sorting exercises with business users or end customers to determine intuitive clustering and category names
- Auto-generation of "rough" taxonomy via software tool
 - Refine with SMEs and taxonomy experts
- Iterative taxonomy creation over a period of several weeks depending on size and scope of the effort

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WATCH

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Element	Data Type	Length	Req. / Repeat	Source	Purpose	
Asset Metadata						
Unique ID	Integer	Fixed	1	System supplied	Basic accountability	
Recipe Title	String	Variable	1	Licensed Content	Text search & results display	
Recipe summary	String	Variable	1	Licensed Content	Content	
Main Ingredients	List	Variable	?	Main Ingredients vocabulary	Key index to retrieve & aggregate recipes, & generate shopping list	
Subject Metadata						
Meal Types	List	Variable	*	Meal Types vocab		
Cuisines	List	Variable	*	Cuisines	Browse or group recipes & filter	
Courses	List	Variable	*	Courses vocab	search results	
Cooking Method	Flag	Fixed	*	Cooking vocab		
Link Metadata						
Recipe Image	Pointer	Variable	?	Product Group	Merchandize products	
Use Metadata						
Rating	String	Variable	1	Licensed Content	Filter, rank, & evaluate recipes	
Release Date	Date	Fixed	1	Product Group	Publish & feature new recipes	
Legend: ? – 1 or more * - 0 or more				Source	e: Taxonomy Strategies, LLC	



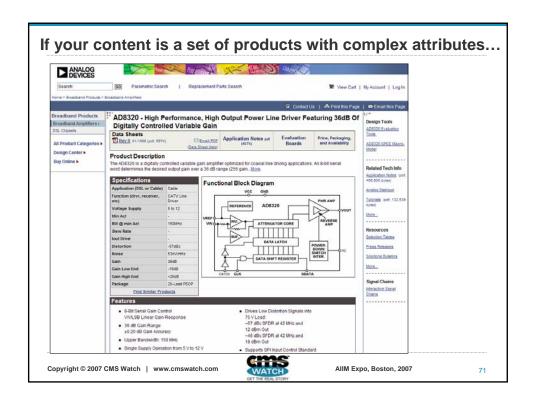
Taxonomy creation process | Best practices

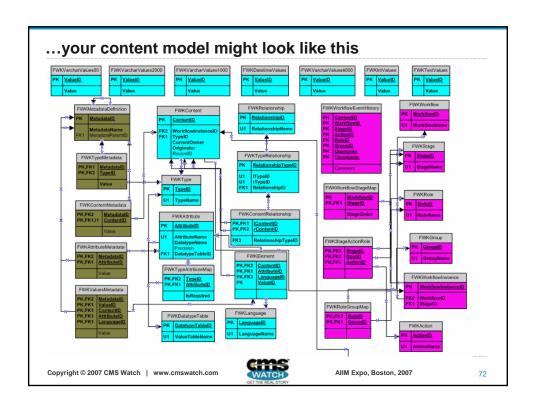
- Be aware of the competition: how they name and categorize products
- Involve engineers early: ensure that the taxonomy you're creating can be used with the technology
- Be aware of key parties' viewpoints
- After determining the high-level categories, have a midpoint check in with stakeholders to ensure you're on the right track and build ongoing consensus
- For the purposes of web design, leverage sample page layouts to show how categorization and tagging will affect page layout and content
- Remember taxonomies must evolve and progress as your business changes

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Steps 6 & 7 | Specify procedures and train staff

- Taxonomies must change, gradually, over time if they are to remain relevant
- Maintenance processes need to be specified so that the changes are based on rational cost/benefit decisions
- A team will need to maintain the taxonomy on a part-time basis
- Taxonomy team reports into CM governance or steering committee

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The Tagging Problem

- How are we going to populate metadata elements with complete and consistent values?
- What can we expect to get from automatic classifiers?

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Steps 6 & 7 | Specify procedures & training | Tagging

- Province of authors (SMEs) or editors?
- Taxonomy often highly granular to meet task and re-use needs
- Vocabulary dependent on originating department
- The more tags there are (and the more values for each tag), the more hooks to the content
- If there are too many, authors will resist and use "general" tags (if available)
- Automatic classification tools exist, and are valuable, but results are not as good as humans'
 - · "Semi-automated" is best
 - Degree of human involvement is a cost/benefit tradeoff

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Steps 6 & 7	Specify	procedures &	training	Taxonomy	/ testing
Otops o de 7	Opcomy	procedures a	training	I axononi	, icainig

Method	Process	Validation
Walk-throughs	Show and explain	▶ Approach
		Consistency to rules
		Appropriateness to task
Usability Testing	Contextual analysis	Tasks are completed successfully
		Time to complete task is reduced
User Satisfaction	Survey	Reaction to new interface
		Reaction to search results
Tagging samples	Tag sample content with taxonomy	Content 'fit'
		Fills out content inventory
		Training materials for people & algorithms
		Basis for quantitative methods

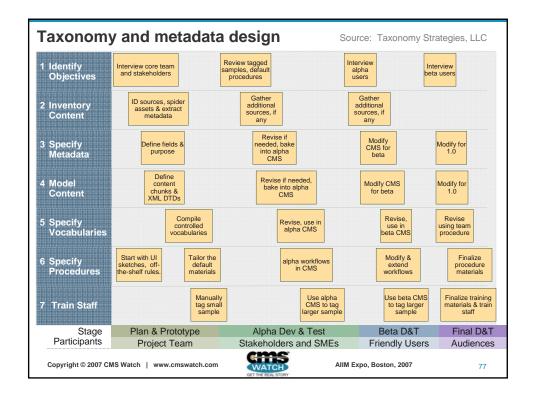
Source: Taxonomy Strategies, LLC

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Agenda

- A bit about each of us
- Level-setting of terms and concepts
 - · Not just a methodology, a way of thinking
 - Content models, taxonomy, meta data, folksonomies and the current state of their use.
- A few case study examples
- Creating a taxonomy and content model: step-by-step approach
- Interactive exercise
- Maintenance and governance

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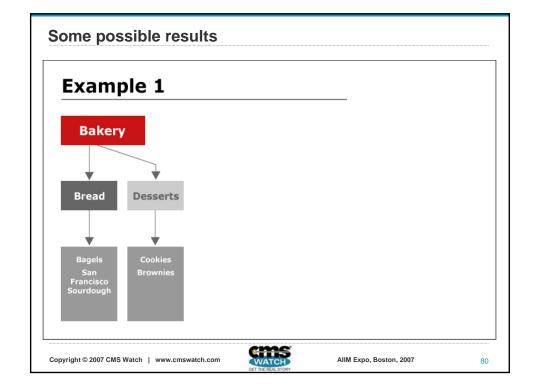
Quick taxonomy exercise!

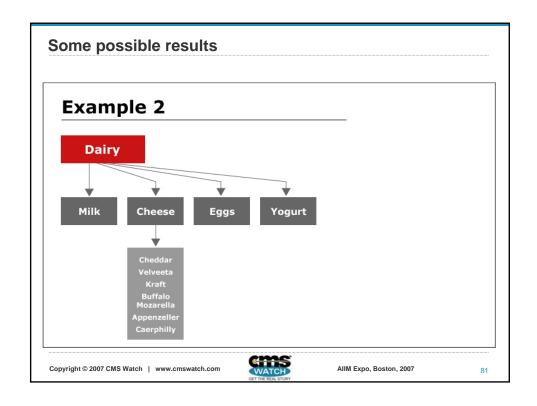
- Break into groups of 5-6
- You are creating a taxonomy for a grocery store / company
- The taxonomy will also be used to manage documents of nutritional information within the enterprise
- What you have are preliminary topic and product inventories
- In addition to the terms in your stack, you can create new terms or categories as well
- · After 20 minutes, regroup and discuss approach
- If you have any questions, pretend I'm your business stakeholder

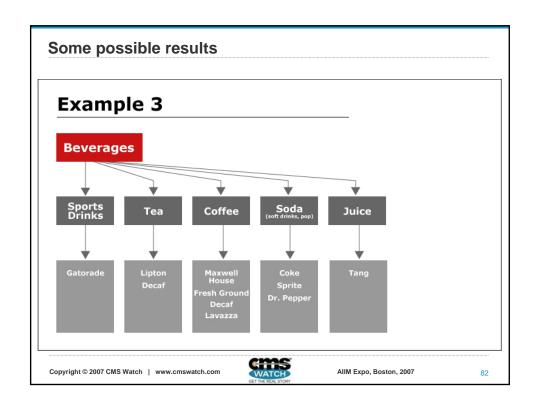
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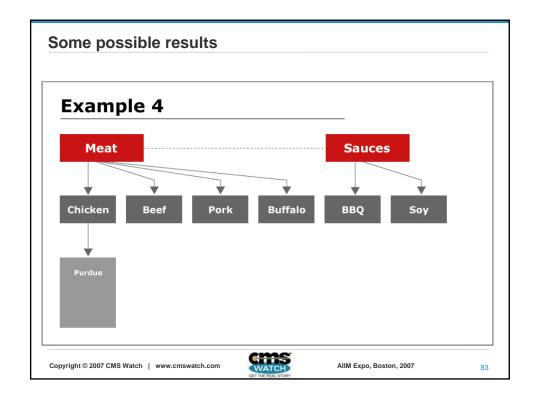


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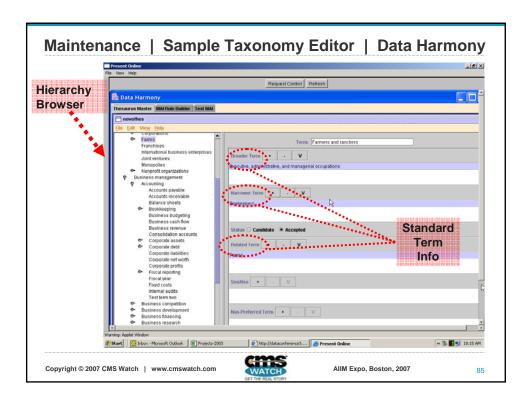
Agenda

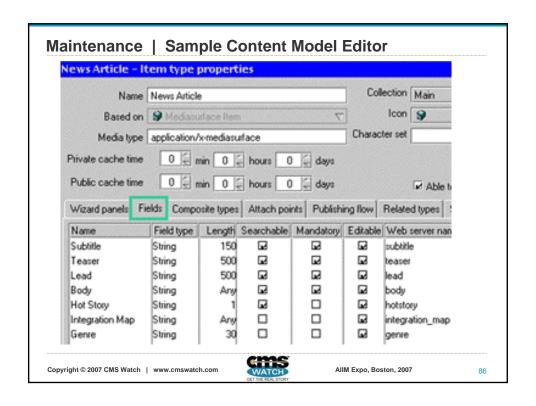
- · A bit about each of us
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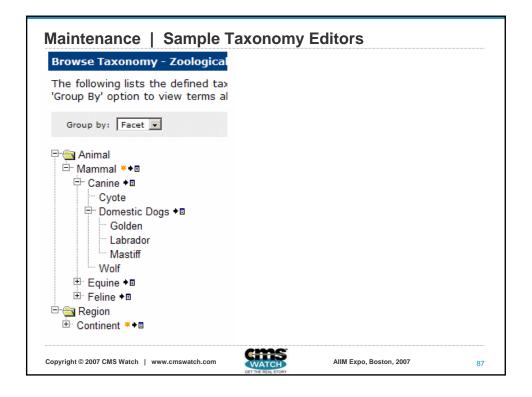
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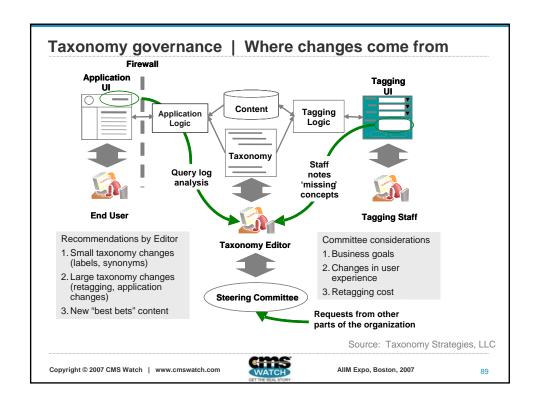
Taxonomy governance | Generic team charter

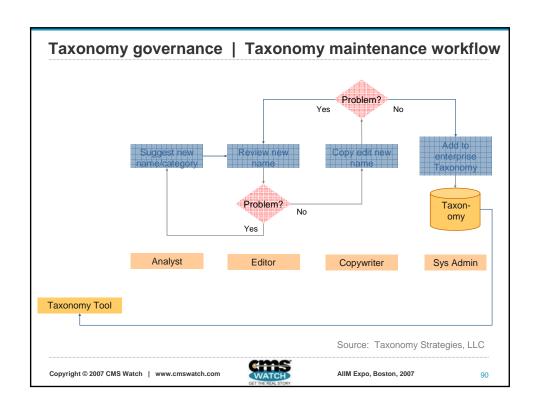
- Taxonomy team is responsible for maintaining:
 - The taxonomy
 - Associated taxonomy materials, such as:
 - · Editorial style guide
 - · Training materials
 - · Metadata standard
 - Team rules and procedures
- Committee considers costs and benefits of suggested change
- Taxonomy team:
 - Manages relationship between providers of source vocabularies and consumers of the taxonomy
 - Identifies new opportunities to use the taxonomy across the enterprise to improve information management practices
 - · Promote awareness and use of the taxonomy

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Summary

- What is the problem you are trying to solve?
 - Improve search (or findability)
 - Browse for content on an enterprise-wide portal
 - · Enable business users to syndicate content
 - Otherwise provide the basis for content re-use
 - · Comply with regulations
- What data and metadata do you need to solve it?
- Where will you get the data and metadata?
- How will you control the cost of creating and maintaining the data and metadata needed to solve these problems?
 - CMS with a metadata tagging products
 - · Semi-automated classification
 - · Taxonomy editing tools
 - · Appropriate governance process

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Summary | Seven practical rules for taxonomies

- 1. Incremental, extensible process that identifies and enables users, and engages stakeholders
- 2. Quick implementation that provides measurable results as quickly as possible
- 3. Not monolithic—has separately maintainable facets
- 4. Re-uses existing IP as much as possible
- 5. A means to an end, and not the end in itself
- 6. Not perfect, but it does the job it is supposed to do—such as improving search and navigation
- 7. Improved over time, and maintained

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The reliable data source is the secret to success...



• Design it so users can accomplish their goals!

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Thank you!

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Other references Taxonomy Strategies (Joseph Bush and Ron Daniel)











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