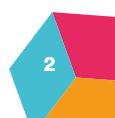
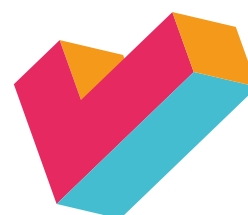


**AFEM & CI
METADATA
BEST PRACTICE
GUIDE**

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INTRODUCTION

Metadata is the foundation of the modern digital music industry.

- 1.** It enables fans to find and listen to tracks.
- 2.** It enables artists, producers, publishers and labels to know how their tracks are used.
- 3.** It enables artists, producers, publishers and labels to be paid for their products.
- 4.** It helps to fight piracy by pulling consumers toward licensed music services.

It is really *that* simple.

Do you want your fans and new listeners to find your music?

Do you want to know who is listening?

Do you want to get paid properly?

Do you want to reduce the risk of piracy?

If you answered “yes” to any of those, you need to care about metadata and this guide sets out the principles of good metadata to ensure it works for you.

This is a high-level, straightforward and understandable introduction to any artist, manager, producer or executive who is new to metadata, and a reminder to those already working with it.

On page 19 you will find the Top Tips for quick reference but for greater clarity and maximum enlightenment, we recommend reading the guide in full.

WHAT IS METADATA?

Metadata is ‘data about data’, e.g., a filename on your computer is data about the file, which itself is data.

The same idea applies to music. The music itself is the ‘data’ and the description of the music such as the track name, product title, and artist name, are data - metadata - about the music.

You want to get paid?

Metadata facilitates payment in two important ways.

1. In an increasingly digital world, metadata is how your listeners will find you. Spotify’s search bar is very important, as is playlist placement across music services. This is now managed by playlist editors, who will also have to find your music. Being easily discovered means more plays and listeners on music services.

2. And once your music is discovered and listened to on a service, you should get paid. Music services and everyone involved in the music industry (distributors, aggregators, labels and publishers) want to ensure you are paid but poor or incomplete metadata can cause difficulties with assigning payment. Good metadata includes correct identifiers such as ISRCs which make sure your payments make it to you.

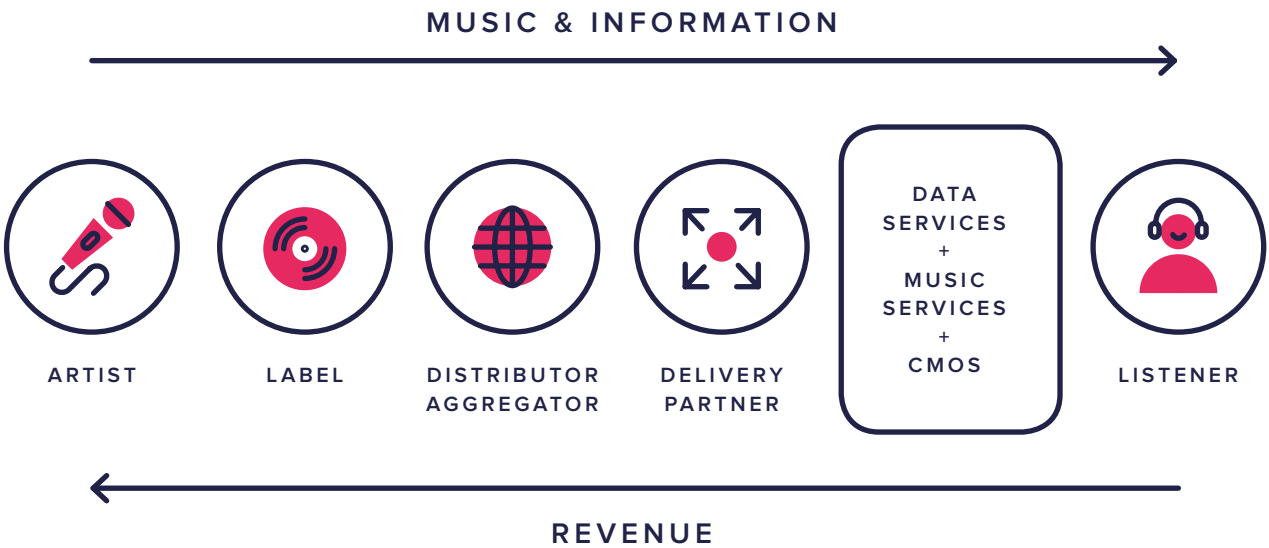
METADATA WEB

The web of metadata in the music industry is simple in theory but gets complex in practice, which is why it is important to get it right from the start.



Without the artists/producers and the fans, there is no music industry. This is fundamentally the simplest model of the industry.

However, given the scale of the industry, there are some intermediaries that have grown up to help both music creators (who would be overwhelmed trying to find and directly work with all their listeners) and listeners (who would otherwise be overwhelmed trying to find artists they want to listen to):



Metadata about the product (album, EP or single) and metadata about product ownership flow from left to right first - when products are created and sent out into the market for people to listen to. Once they have been listened to and payment is due, usage information and money flows back from right to left based on the ownership metadata provided in the first stage.

Metadata must go to a few other places aside from the 'straight' route to download and streaming services if you want to get paid for use of your music on satellite or internet radio, or in clubs and festivals.

Collective Management Organisations

To collect royalties when your music is purchased, streamed, played or downloaded you will need to be a member of the relevant performing right and neighbouring right organisations in your territory and ensure your music metadata is registered with them.

Samples

For artists, producers, publishers and labels, who own tracks sampled in recordings and digital products, ensuring that metadata is detailed and accurate is equally as important so that they can also be paid.

Data services

If you want to be able to be 'Shazamed' by listeners, then Shazam will need your metadata too. This kind of activity is represented as 'data services' in the diagram above.

There are a number of other 'data services' such as:

- MusicBrainz, who supply metadata including broader contextual content for various uses such as Google web search (see next page), and
- Music services to help power discovery activity, car companies for CD track recognition and connected music information display in cars.

Make sure that the metadata across all these different places is correct. That way, Google will display the right information, your music will be available in the music services your fans use, you will be able to be discovered, played and paid.

Google web search for the artist Gold Panda. Note the right hand panel with information pulled from MusicBrainz among other sources.

The image shows a Google search for "gold panda". The search results on the left include links to the artist's website (iamgoldpanda.com), Twitter (@goldpanda), Wikipedia, SoundCloud, Facebook, and YouTube. The right-hand panel is a knowledge panel for Gold Panda, a record producer. It features a profile picture, a bio, and lists of songs and albums. The songs listed are "Time Eater", "Quitter's Raga", and "Snow and Taxis". The albums listed are "Good Luck And Do Your Best", "Lucky Shiner", "Hall of Whare You Live", and "Unreleased Medical Journal".

Search Results:

- GOLD PANDA**
www.iamgoldpanda.com/ security_splash.png. LIVE · LISTEN / BUY.
- Gold Panda 金熊貓 (@goldpanda) · Twitter**
Tonight @OvalSpace Hackney, London 8.30 @_babaali_ 9.30 Gold Panda pic.twitter.com/wygFMV... 23 hours ago · Twitter
- Gold Panda - Wikipedia**
Gold Panda (born 1980) is a British electronic record producer, performer, and composer from the United Kingdom. He was born in Peckham, London, England, ...
- Gold Panda | Free Listening on SoundCloud**
Profile photos by www.lauralovishphotography.co.uk · 109 Tracks. 5685044 Followers. Stream Tracks and Playlists from Gold Panda on your desktop or ...
- Gold Panda | Facebook**
Two of the UK's best, most forward-thinking dance producers cross paths on a new track. Earlier this year, Gold Panda released his album Good Luck And Do ...
- Gold Panda - You - YouTube**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Su1wk7iCQfQ 2 Jun 2010 - Uploaded by the50s
- Gold Panda - In My Car (Official Video) - YouTube**
30 Mar 2016 - Uploaded by gold panda
- RA: Gold Panda**
Gold Panda plus special guests at Oval Space, London. 44 Attending ... Watch the video for Gold Panda's new single, 'Chiba Nights'. The song's video, like the ...
- Gold Panda | Listen and Stream Free Music, Albums, New Releases ...**
Gold Panda's profile including the latest music, albums, songs, music videos and more updates.
- RA Reviews: Gold Panda - Good Luck And Do Your Best on City ...**
Gold Panda's DJ-Kicks didn't do much to set things straight the following year, casually mixing the likes of Bok Bok, Sigha, 2562 and Urtold ...
- reviewing new albums from Lone, Flume, and Gold Panda - The Verge**
All of them — Lone's Levitate, Flume's Skin, and Gold Panda's Good Luck and Do Your Best — draw from the same pool of influences: the ...
- Gold Panda (live) – Tickets – U Street Music Hall – Washington, DC ...**
Hailing from Chelmsford in Essex, but newly located to Hamburg, Germany, Gold Panda started writing beats and collaborating a few years ago ...

Searches related to gold panda

- gold panda tour
- gold panda good luck and do your best
- gold panda live
- gold panda youtube
- gold panda new album
- gold panda bandcamp
- gold panda toronto
- gold panda san francisco

Knowledge Panel: Gold Panda
Record producer
iamgoldpanda.com

Available on

- YouTube
- Spotify
- Deezer
- Tuneln

Gold Panda is a British electronic record producer, performer, and composer from the United Kingdom. He was born in Peckham, London, England, and was raised in Chelmsford, Essex. Wikipedia

Born: 1980, Peckham, London
Record labels: Ghostly International, Wichita Recordings
Genres: Electronica, UK garage, Bass music, Folktronica, Ambient music, Microhouse, Minimal techno

Songs

- Time Eater
Good Luck And Do Your Best - 2016
- Quitter's Raga
Companion - 2010
- Snow and Taxis
Lucky Shiner - 2010

View 25+ more

Profiles

- Twitter
- Facebook
- Myspace
- YouTube

Albums

- Good Luck And Do Your Best - 2016
- Lucky Shiner - 2010
- Hall of Whare You Live - 2013
- Unreleased Medical Journal - 2016

View 5+ more

More about Gold Panda

PRINCIPLES OF GOOD METADATA

There are a few simple principles of good metadata to make your life easier:

CONSISTENCY

CLARITY

QUALITY

CONTROL

CONSISTENCY

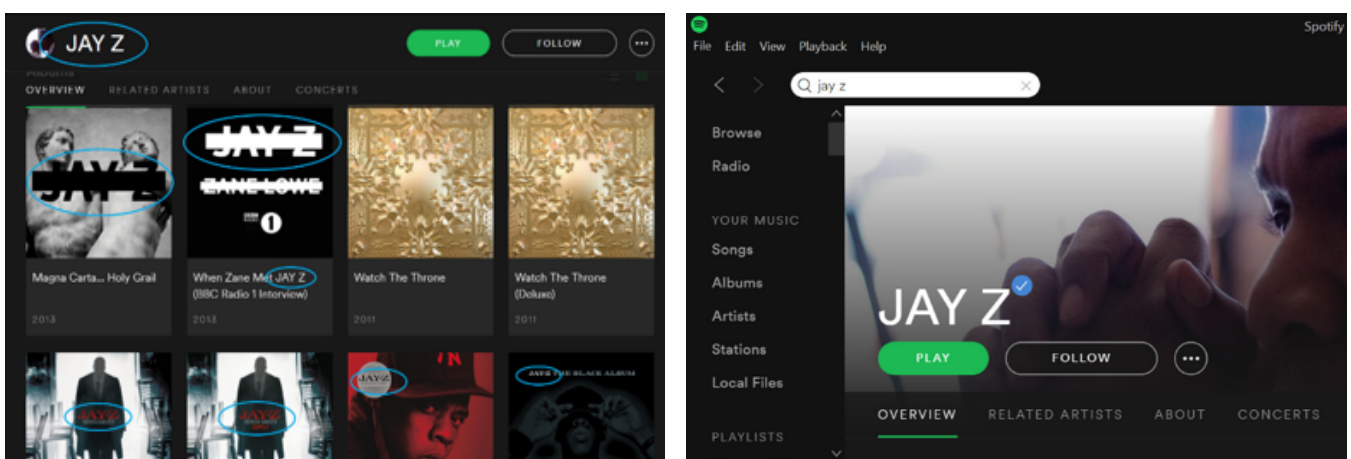
This is the central rule of metadata.

Metadata about the product (e.g., track name, product title, artist name and label name) should be exactly the same across the entire metadata web we looked at above. Everywhere your metadata lives across the industry should have precisely the same metadata about the product.

Artist identification is one of the most important aspects of metadata to keep it consistent. This enables music services to easily group products from the same artist together on an artist page, so that fans can find any of the artist's music in a single place.

Spelling mistakes

The artist name must always be spelt the same, with any capital letters and punctuation always in the same place. A classic example of the problems inconsistency can cause is that of Jay Z.



We can see that in the artwork of his earlier albums, he is “JAY-Z” but his Spotify artist page is under “JAY Z” with no hyphen. Removing the hyphen means that there is now content in Spotify’s (and all the other music services’) system by artist “Jay-Z”, “JAY-Z”, “Jay Z” or “JAY Z”. How can the systems at music services know that these different strings of characters are actually the same guy?

You may think “Well, what does it matter - his artist page has all his content on it”. This is because we are talking about one of the most well-known artists in the world, and the music services including Spotify will have lined up all of the content from Jay-Z, JAY-Z, Jay Z and JAY Z under the same artist identity. Will your artist get the same treatment from services? Would you like to make that kind of problem for yourselves and services to manage? Consistency from day one is how you avoid such issues and the problem of multiple artist pages for the same artist.

Another point to be conscious of regarding consistency is the spelling of label names. It’s surprising how often label names are misspelled or changed. It’s pretty common for the following variations to occur in metadata across the catalogue of one particular label:

Example Records

Example Recordings

Example Records Ltd

Example Recordings Ltd

Example Records Limited

Example Recordings Limited

Exampe Records

EXMPL Records

We can't really complain to services for not making much use of label identities in their apps for users if we are handing them such inconsistent metadata for something as simple as a label name.

Labels should decide on a single public version of the label name and make sure all products that go out to the market carry that precise name. By doing this we give the music services the opportunity to build user experiences which make the most of label identities and heritage, which is of course particularly important in the electronic music sector and could drive significant additional listens for new artists on trusted and established labels.

CLARITY

Ambiguity is an invitation to make mistakes.

Coming back to artist names, there is still no industry-agreed standard adopted across the board, to tell artists of the same name apart. For example, as well as the Lawrence brothers duo Disclosure there is also another dance artist called Disclosure. On a number of online services, the releases of both artists are sometimes jumbled together or there are two separate artist pages but some releases from the Lawrence brothers appear on the wrong artist page. This issue should be addressed by the new metadata element: ISNI identifier, which could allow services to differentiate between different authors: (<http://www.isni.org>). New metadata elements are introduced from time to time, so it is advisable to make sure your metadata is up to date and for artists starting out to try very hard to choose a name not shared by any other artist.

There are also hundreds of tracks called “My Way” on music services. Some of them are the exact same recording on different albums (e.g., original album and compilation), some are different tracks with the same name, and sometimes there are multiple versions of the same track by the same or various producers (remixes, live versions etc).

Music industry identifiers

This lack of clarity has been vastly improved by the creation of the International Standard Recording Code (ISRC), which is assigned to each recording - each track - in order to tell different recordings of the same name apart.

Without ISRCs, it would be very difficult to know which “My Way” was listened to and should be paid for, who owns each one, or which version should be corrected when the ownership of a particular recording changes.

The barcode (UPC/EAN) is another code which is assigned to a product, so that everyone working with it knows exactly which product they are dealing with.

The ISRC and UPC/EAN are examples of music industry identifiers - codes governed by rules on when they are assigned and how they are used to help those working with them know what product (UPC/EAN), recording (ISRC), or musical work (ISWC) is being used, reported or discussed.

ISWC anomaly

In the case of electronic music, the ISWC will identify the recording in the same way that the ISRC does. In the case of non-electronic music, the ISWC would identify the musical work, which describes the musical composition (musical notes in a score) and the lyrics in a song. Both of which will very often have been created by different people to those who created the recording.

Although composers and lyricists do not “write” electronic music, producers, publishers and labels must still assign ISWCs to ensure that they are paid for ownership of the track as a musical work too.

Responsibility to assign

Clarity means using industry standard identifiers correctly, as much as possible and as soon as possible in the recording and product creation process. It is usually the job of the publisher, label or distributor to assign these identifiers. Ensure that they do so and that they provide you with that information for your records.

QUALITY

Consumers tend to gravitate towards quality in markets in general, especially where there is no price increase to access a higher quality product or experience. Even where there is a significant price attached to quality, we can see from the continued success of the iPhone that perceived quality is a significant advantage in a market.

Perception of quality is a complex phenomenon, resulting from function, form or style, presentation, brand affinity, social cues and many other aspects.

Think about this in terms of music consumption and you probably start to consider things like the audio quality, the artwork attached to the product, the artist's brand identity, and the music services' presentation of content.

Artwork quality

As services become more visually appealing over time, artwork becomes an integral part of bringing listeners to your music so the content of the artwork is important. Think about the technical quality of the artwork file you deliver to music services in the same way.

A standard 12" sleeve specification for a physically printed product is 300 dots per inch, which translates into a digital file of 3600 pixels x 3600 pixels. Sourcing a file of 4096 pixels x 4096 pixels, as 4K TV displays are 4096 pixels wide is recommended to make it future-proof for when music consumption moves to apps on the big screen in the home and services become more ambitious with visual design around cover art.

Audio quality

For the audio itself, mp3s are dying out in developed markets as smartphones pack in more memory and the services and networks become able and willing to handle more data. Consider a high quality file as the master file - 24bit, 96kHz is the highest you need to go, and of course all lower quality files required can be encoded from that high quality master file. Again, this approach will future-proof your content and enable you to serve those listeners who are keen to listen in high quality.

This also benefits DJs buying electronic music downloads who know that lower quality files are not as good to play out through high-end audio systems in clubs.

Style guides

A strong approach to quality will help you to meet service-specific requirements regarding the presentation of metadata, e.g., Apple's style guide for how metadata should be presented now runs to 60 pages or so, while other services such as Beatport have their own requirements for display approaches. Metadata should be put together with at least an awareness of the issues that these services view as important.

CONTROL

Everyone managing music should maintain a Master Archive of their content (music and artwork and metadata) to give you freedom to choose how to arrange your business and not become reliant on one sole distributor or other intermediary and locked into their services.

Start building one now following these principles:

- Use an online cloud storage provider like Google Drive, Dropbox or Box to avoid using a hard drive or laptop which can be lost, corrupted or stolen.
- Retain multiple backups.
- Protect your archive with a strong password and Two-Factor Authentication to make online accounts much more secure.
- Use a Password Manager so that you can share the password with whoever is working on your product, but also revoke access when the project is complete or someone stop working on it.
- Store high quality audio masters so you can easily switch between distributors or delivery partners. This also serves as a backup, in case there are any problems with your partners' storage systems.
- Store high quality (4096 x 4096 pixel) product artwork, for the same reason, and to have easy access for promotional purposes. Consider storing high quality artist photos and other artwork here too, for media and the music services.
- Store your full product metadata. Try not to enter metadata in multiple places, such as through web interfaces. The more times you are typing metadata, the higher the chance of human error messing up your UPC/EAN, ISRC or any other metadata. By having a master set of metadata, you can maintain consistency. If your distributor assigns any of the identifiers, ask your distributor for them and enter them into your metadata archive.

Having a centralised and shared archive will also improve efficiency. Everyone will know where to find the definitive master audio, artwork and metadata instead of having to search through a patchwork of emailed files, DropBox links, and files living across different laptops with varying levels of quality.

TOP TIPS

- 1.** Complete and consistent metadata ensures maximum income when your music is used/consumed and facilitates fan discovery of your tracks.
- 2.** Everywhere your metadata is delivered across the industry should have exactly the same metadata about the product.
- 3.** Obtain and supply industry-standard identifiers in your metadata whenever possible - product (UPC), recording (ISRC), or musical work (ISWC)
- 4.** Decide early on in your career how your artist name will be spelt/displayed and stick to it to ensure there consistency across all products and services, making artist discovery easier.
- 5.** Ensure your release metadata is registered with the relevant Collectivemement Management Organisations in your territory.
- 6.** Include 'composer' information in your metadata to help ensure composers & publishers of the tracks get paid as well as the artist and label.
- 7.** Artists starting out should try very hard to choose a name not shared by any other artist.
- 8.** Store high quality audio masters so you can change distributors or delivery partners more easily in the future.
- 9.** Store high quality (4096 x 4096 pixel) product artwork.
- 10.** Every rights owner should maintain a full master archive of their content (music and artwork) and metadata – protect with a strong password and make back-ups

DEFINITIONS

Artist: Performer(s) under whose name a musical recording is released.

CMO: Collective Management Organisation including Performing Right and Neighbouring Right Organisations.

Label: a company that markets music and music videos.

Metadata: data about data. For example, the name of a computer file is data (the name) about data (the file).

Master Archive: a collection of all your original, highest quality master audio files, artwork files and complete metadata for your entire catalogue.

Music Services: consumer-facing download or streaming services, such as Beatport, Spotify, Amazon, Apple Music / iTunes, Google Play Music and many others.

Producers: manages the creation of a sound recording.

Product: a way of grouping of presenting tracks, e.g., in the digital market. A product could be a 'single', including only one track, or an 'EP' and 'album' containing multiple tracks.

Product Title: the name of the product, e.g., if the product is an album, the product title is the name of the album.

Publisher: a company responsible for collecting payment when musical works, or in the case of electronic music, sound recordings are played.

Sound Recording: a musical composition captured in a sound recording, the rights of which are usually owned by artists or labels.

Track: a sound recording in a music product.

Two-Factor Authentication: security method including 'something you know' (password) and 'something you have' (mobile phone) to receive a code by text or use an authenticator app such as Google Authenticator.

UPC/EAN: Universal Product Code/European Article Number. In other words, the technical name for a barcode.



association for
electronic
music



For more information about AFEM please
contact membership@afemorg.net

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