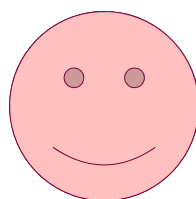


Introduction to machine readable rights in the picture library industry

by Abbie Enock, CEO of Capture Ltd – creator and technologist

www.capture.co.uk

In the perfect world



Easy licensing, clear terms, all information available ...
and a culture where usage is granted (even if it is free),
rather than taken.

capture *simply powerful solutions*

In the real world



- X** Metadata, copyright and release information lost.
- X** Licensing information not recorded or passed on.
- X** Embedded information out-of-date.
- X** More complex copyright needs not accommodated.
- X** Licencees lose track of what they have and can use.
- X** Licensors and creators lose out.
- X** Creative spirit curbed; digital ownership disregarded.

capture *simply powerful solutions*

The key to the solution



1. Persistent, unique IDs for every digital work, and party.
2. Standardised licensing terms.
3. Cloud-based, standardised, interconnected registries.
4. Dynamic information in cloud; GUID in asset.
5. Asset security services, visual search.
6. Technologists making it easy ...

capture

streamlining your workflows

June 12th, 2013 v3
Prepared by: Abbie Enock
e: abbie@capture.co.uk
t: +44 (0)1491 873011
w: www.capture.co.uk

My name is Abbie Enock. I am CEO of Capture Ltd, a technology company that has been providing solutions to the picture library industry and beyond since the late 1990s ... but I am also a creator: I started life as a journalist and photographer. So I have experienced the whole journey from analogue days to where we are now ... from the perspectives of both a creator and now, for more than a decade, a technologist.

Introduction to machine readable rights in the picture library industry

Machine readable rights! A subject to set your soul on fire! But actually it should – as it is your road to freedom. Your passport to being able to get maximum value for your work and to participate safely in the wide world of creative talent that embraces the full spectrum of digital offerings ... images, video, audio, text, illustrations, designs, mash-ups of all this and more.

We are at a crucial point along the road at the moment – and adaptation and change is needed – although the good news for you is that mostly all you need to do is embrace the goals and concepts ... it is the job of us, the technologists, to make it happen, and make it easy for you.

So ... I thought it would be pertinent to take a quick look at how we got to where we are ... and what we need to do to move forward.

The early pioneers of our industry – some 40 years ago now – did a lot of things right. Trade associations such as BAPLA were formed, standard ways of doing business and managing rights documented, material was available to newcomers on how to set up and run a picture agency according to best practices.

As you know, IPTC came into being, and in the early 90s the concept of “IPTC headers” took root as Adobe introduced it into Photoshop.

In some ways the very nature of the business – handling and managing gazillions of tiny things (transparencies) forced the need for creative souls to be unusually organized in order to stand a prayer of success.

But organized many of them became, with similar (if not standard) usage criteria and working practices being used across the board.

Intricate **numbering, cataloguing and cross-referencing systems** ensured that any image could be plucked from ranks of filling cabinets the moment it was needed.

Barcode readers and unique barcode numbers within each picture library were the cornerstone of how it all worked – and **actually the beginning of machine-readable rights and metadata.**

The digital age came along in the 1990s, and technology providers such as Capture wrote systems that helped bridge the transition from analogue to digital – and before long, in one form or another, picture agencies had electronic systems managing their businesses.

In actual fact, each library or agency had really become a digital copyright exchange of its own – managing and trading rights, and sometimes inter-operating with agents and partners and portals. Lots of island states with their own private passports/ID for their subjects and parties (the images, photographers and clients).

The importance – and shortcomings – of the internal numbering systems used by libraries was starting to be felt: when images were sent to agents to go in a catalogue (or on their website) and sales were made ... back came usage reports ... but quite often with different unique identifiers, leaving accounts staff tearing their hair out.

Of course, technology supplier such as Capture then wrote “exchange modules” in their software meaning that any of the various identifiers would resolve to the correct

image and photographers – and it solved the problem. Sort of ...

So when, in the wake of the Hargreaves Review published in 2011, organizations such as the Technology Strategy Board started talking about the need to create Digital Licensing Frameworks, we in the picture library industry were scratching our heads thinking: “We have been doing this for years – what are they talking about!”

However, what was really happening was rather like a great, slow moving river meeting the sea – things get very different when you get into the open, choppy waters of the ocean where it’s every man for himself.

The analogy here is of course the images we could once control so well, were out there pitching around in the digital sea, on the internet – often having managed to escape from home without any passport or identification. Or embedded metadata somehow getting washed away in uploading processes.

Confusingly, applications and processes were making it possible for buyers to ‘mash’ images and other picture agency assets in with all kinds of other media, making licensing harder to describe and determine.

It might be tempting to withdraw from this scary world, but of course, we do want our creative assets to be part of the mix – we are creatives after all – and it is our business.

While we were ahead of the game in some aspects - we built very robust, self-contained islands – the eventual need to break out of this isolation and be able to travel and trade in the big, wide world passed us by.

That, in a way, has made it hard to understand why now we need to adopt global standards to manage rights. **These of course must be machine-readable as automation is essential when dealing with digital images ... there are just too many of them to do otherwise.**

But adopt them we **must** if we are to protect the ownership of our creations – and also the ability to maximize their potential. This could mean the potential available in known markets today ... but also to fully participate in licensing opportunities of the future that are yet unknown. Be well placed to take advantage.

In actual fact the notion of Machine Readable Rights should make most of you sigh [phew] with relief – the onus is on us, the technology providers, to create systems that take the pain out of managing rights through providing automation in our systems.

We at Capture – and others - are committed to promoting standards such as PLUS (Picture Licensing Universal System) – and also to making it as easy as possible for the industry to technologically adopt them.

PLUS was ahead of its time, and we recognized immediately the sort of joined-up thinking that was going on with this enormous task. Now – as the digital economy debate escalates and the need for greater automation becomes clear – PLUS is at the centre as a standard that has independent governance and embraces the full spectrum of the industry, from creators right through to end users.

Remember it is a STANDARD. It is not there to dominate or control in any way – it is a standard to be embraced when other registries are being built (or, of course, you can use the PLUS registry service), so they can all talk to each other and be INTEROPERABLE.

The message from the authorities is very clear: use it (i.e. get our house in order, embrace what's out there and put it into practice to protect our copyright) ... or lose it!

So what would it take to create a perfect, joined up world, where there is...

- NO loss of metadata.
- NO loss of copyright information.
- NO old assets without proper information.
- NO orphan works.
- NO confusing identifiers for assets and parties.
- NO infringements either by mistake or design.
- NO lost or confusing licensing terms.

A world where there is an ethos of granting use (even if it's free) rather than taking it.

In the real world - often the following occurs:

- Metadata, copyright and release information is lost.
- Licensing information is not recorded or passed on – or embedded information is out-of-date.
- More complex copyright needs are not properly accommodated.
- Licensees lose track of what they have and how they can use it.
- Licensors and creators lose out; illegal uses occur ... temperatures rise: time, money, energy lost.
- Creative and inventive spirit is curbed – and respect for digital ownership is disregarded.

The key to the solution lies in the following:

1. Persistent, unique identifiers for every digital work, and party involved, including: images, text, video, audio, books, pdfs, designs, illustrations, creators, agencies, licencees ... *[PLUS has developed these as well, and is working with the Linked Content Coalition on this topic.]*
2. Standardised licensing terms so everyone knows what rights they have and clashes can be flagged up.
3. Cloud-based registries that are interconnected and that conform to agreed standards – so information is interoperable and can flow across system boundaries.
4. These registries should hold information as well as control the GUIDs – so that this data can be updatable, dynamic, linking back to the asset via the GUID. *[Registries should have the ability to designate certain metadata as private (controlled access). There are competitive concerns and confidentiality concerns with metadata.]*
5. Asset security services, for easily identifying assets found via Internet; crawling and tracking usages; infringements.
6. Making it easy - software systems that support standards and interact with registries and security seamlessly.

And that is what this session is all about ...**Thank you.**

[I have various diagrams and links to good reading matter on the subject of rights available if people would like to come to the Capture stand C afterwards, or contact me at abbie@capture.co.uk]

www.capture.co.uk