PRISM Frequently Asked Questions

What is PRISM?

The Publishing Requirements for Industry Standard Metadata (PRISM) specification defines a set of XML metadata vocabularies for syndicating, aggregating, post-processing and multi-purposing content. PRISM provides a framework for the interchange and preservation of content and metadata, a collection of elements to describe that content, and a set of controlled vocabularies listing the values for those elements. PRISM can be XML, XML/RDF, or XMP and incorporates Dublin Core elements. PRISM can be thought of as a set of XML tags used to contain the metadata of articles and even tag article content.

What type of content can PRISM describe?

PRISM describes many components of print, online, mobile, and multimedia content including the following:

- **Who** created, contributed to, and owns the rights to the content?
- **What** locations, organizations, topics, people, and/or events it covers, the media it contains, and under what conditions it may be reproduced?
- **When** it was published (cover date, post date, volume, number), withdrawn?

- **Where** it can be republished and the original platform on which it appeared?
- **How** it can be reused?

What are common PRISM uses?
- Syndication to partners
- Content aggregation
- Content repurposing
- Resource discovery and search optimization
- Multiple platform and channel distribution
- Content archiving
- Capture rights usage information
- Creation of feeds, such as RSS
- Standalone services
- Embedded descriptions, such as XMP
- Web publishing

Do other specifications incorporate PRISM?
PRISM can be incorporated into other standards and at this time the PRISM Working Group is only aware of PRISM incorporation with RSS 1.0. See RSS 1.0 and the RSS 1.0 PRISM Module for more information.

What is PAM?
PRISM Aggregator Message (PAM) is a standard format for publishers to use when transmitting XML content and associated metadata to aggregators and syndicators. PAM provides a tag set for encoding both metadata and article content. See the PAM Guide for more information.

What is the difference between the PRISM Specification and PRISM Aggregator Message (PAM)?

PAM is a specific use of PRISM. PAM consists of a subset of PRISM elements combined with XHTML for encoding text. PRISM can be XML, XML/RDF, or XMP, but PAM is XML only. While both PRISM and PAM are sets of XML elements, only PAM has a DTD and an XSD with which XML files can be validated. See the PAM Guide for more information.

Why should I use PRISM?
- PRISM is specifically created for magazine, journal, and newsletter publishers who publish in multiple media
- PRISM enables content monetization
- PRISM is an industry standard developed and widely recognized by publishers and recipients
- PRISM is a format that can be used across multiple channels

Is PRISM only for print?

No, the first version of PRISM was primarily to handle content from print to multiple platforms. But the new versions of PRISM (2.*) contain metadata elements to handle content for multiple platforms (email, mobile, recordable media, print, broadcast, and web) and media types.

How can I compare PRISM to other content standards?

The PRISM specification defines a set of XML metadata vocabularies for syndicating, aggregating, post-processing and multi-purposing magazine, news, newsletter, marketing collateral, catalog, mainstream journal content, online content and feeds. PRISM provides a framework for the interchange and preservation of content and metadata, a collection of elements to describe that content, and a set of controlled vocabularies listing the values for those elements. Metadata is an exceedingly broad category of information covering everything from an article's country of origin to the fonts used in its layout. PRISM's scope is driven by the needs of publishers to receive, track, and deliver multi-part content. The focus is on additional uses for the content, so metadata concerning the content's appearance is outside PRISM's scope.

Before developing the PRISM Specification, the Working Group studied existing content standards to determine if one of the existing standards could be used. The determination was that a new content specification needed to be developed to fulfill the requirements of the members. Comparisons between PRISM and other popular content specifications are provided below.

NewsML [IPTC-NEWSML] is a specification from the International Press Telecommunications Council (IPTC) aimed at the transmission of news stories and the automation of newswire services. PRISM focuses on describing content and how it may be reused. While there is some overlap between the two standards, PRISM and NewsML are largely complementary. PRISM's controlled vocabularies have been specified in such a way that they can be used in NewsML. The PRISM working group and the IPTC are working together to investigate a common format and metadata vocabulary to satisfy the needs of the members of both organizations.

NITF [IPTC-NITF] is another IPTC specification. NITF provides a DTD designed to mark up news stories. PRISM is a metadata vocabulary designed to describe resources and their relationship to other resources. Although NITF has some elements to specify metadata and header information that are duplicated in PRISM, the two standards are largely complementary. Where there is overlap, such as with PRISM's inline markup, it is noted in the specification.

DocBook is a schema maintained by the DocBook Technical Committee of OASIS. DocBook is available in many languages including XML and is particularly well suited to books and technical documentation. DocBook uses Dublin Core to describe metadata, as does PRISM. The PRISM metadata vocabulary can be used to supplement the metadata features offered in the DocBook specification.

ePub is an open format defined by the Open eBook Forum of the International Digital Publishing Forum (). It offers a single-file, reflowable format for digital books and publications.

What is XML?

Extensible Markup Language (XML) is a W3C data encoding language [XML]. XML can be used to describe metadata as elements with attributes and element content. When using XML by itself, relationships between metadata elements can only be expressed through the order, frequency and hierarchy of the elements and their attributes. Well-

formed PRISM XML provides the simplest model for encoding PRISM metadata. See [Extensible Markup Language (XML) 1.1](#)

What is RDF?

The Resource Description Framework (RDF) is a language for representing information about resources in the World Wide Web but can be used to represent information about any resource that can be identified with a URI, or Uniform Resource Identifier. It is particularly useful for representing metadata about resources, such as the title, author modification date of a digital asset and copyright and licensing information for a resource. RDF describes resources in terms of simple properties and property values. See the [RDF Primer](#).

What is XMP?

The Extensible Metadata Platform [XMP], developed by Adobe Systems and fostered by the open industry XMP-Open industry initiative of IDEAlliance, provides for a unique implementation of XML and RDF. The profile of RDF specified within the XMP Specification differs in some ways from the RDF profile. Profile 2 recommended by PRISM. But because XMP provides for an implementation for embedding RDF/XML metadata into a wide variety of multimedia objects, PRISM adopted XMP as a third compliance profile in 2007. XMP provides the unique ability to facilitate a PRISM implementation in the multimedia environment. See the [XMP Specification.](#)

What are XML Schemas, XML DTDs and XML XSDs? What differentiates them?

An XML Schema describes an XML document. It contains declarations for the structure of elements and attributes and assigns datatypes. XML Schemas provide for XML document validation and serve as a contract for data exchange between trading partners, such as between a publisher and an aggregator. There are two common types of XML schemas; DTDs and XSDs.

Both Document Type Definitions (DTDs) and W3C XML Schema Definition Language (XSDs) can be used to create an XML Schema.

- The DTD is written in a simple, compact non-XML syntax. DTDs do not easily support namespaces. They provide for datatyping of attributes only.
- XSDs are written in a more verbose XML syntax. XSDs easily support namespaces and provide for datatyping of both attributes and element content. XSD datatyping is much stronger than the datatyping provided by an XML DTD.

The PRISM Specification provides both DTDs and XSDs for its PAM Message and an XSD for its rights model.

Who created PRISM?

In 1999, IDEAlliance contracted Linda Burman to found the PRISM Working Group to address emerging publisher requirements for a metadata standard to facilitate "agile" content for search, digital asset management, content aggregation. Since that time, individuals from more than 50 IDEAlliance member companies have participated in the development of the specifications.

What is the PRISM Working Group?

The PRISM Working Group is open to all IDEAlliance members and includes: Adobe Systems, Hachette Filipacchi Media, Hearst, L.A. Burman Associates, LexisNexis, The McGraw-Hill Companies, Reader's Digest, Source Interlink Media Companies, Time Inc., The Nature Publishing Group, and U.S. News and World Report.

For additional information on the PRISM Working Group, send an email to info@prismstandard.org.

Who owns the PRISM Copyright?

PRISM is an IDEAlliance specification but is available free of charge. IDEAlliance (International Digital Enterprise Alliance) is a not-for-profit membership organization. Its mission is to advance user-driven, cross-industry solutions for all publishing and content-related processes by developing standards, fostering business alliances, and identifying best practices. See www.idealliance.org.

How much is PRISM and where do I get it?

PRISM specifications are available free of charge. DTDs, XSDs, and PAM specifications can be downloaded from the PRISM website www.prismstandard.org.

Who uses PRISM?

Many organizations use PRISM because it provides a common metadata standard across platforms, media types and business units. Organizations who are involved in any type of content creation, categorization, management, aggregation and distribution, both commercially and within intranet and extranet frameworks can use the PRISM standards. See the list PRISM users.

What does the PRISM specification include?

PRISM is actually a set of specifications that includes metadata fields, controlled vocabularies, schemas, a rights model and a specification for a PRISM use case -- the PRISM Aggregator Message (PAM).

What is the current version of PRISM?

PRISM 2.1 is the current version and was released in May 2009 2.x versions are not backwards compatible with 1.x versions. PRISM recommends new implementers use the current version.

Where can I view a sample PRISM article?

We recommend you download the PRISM Cookbook. The PRISM Introduction and PAM Guide also contain several examples.

Why did PRISM incorporate elements from other namespaces?

PRISM conforms to the World Wide Web standard for Namespaces. PRISM namespaces are PRISM (prism:), PRISM Usage Rights (pur:), Dublin Core (dc: and dcterms:), PRISM Inline Metadata (pim:), PRISM Rights Language (prl:), PRISM Aggregator Message (pam:), and PRISM Controlled Vocabulary (pcv:).

PRISM incorporated existing industry standards such as Dublin Core and XHTML in order to leverage work that had already been done in the publishing industry. New elements were created only when required, and were assigned to PRISM specific namespaces.

Why does PRISM have so many namespaces?

PRISM is intended to be a modular specification. Each namespace addresses a distinct, functional set of elements. Modularized namespaces allow tools to use a portion of the specification in cases where the entire specification is not necessary.

Can I include my own elements along with PRISM?

Yes, PRISM is an extensible specification and includes a guide for creating your own namespace. You can create a custom DTD/XSD by combining custom XML elements with PRISM elements.

Can I include my own elements in my PAM feeds?

In order to be strictly compliant with PAM you must use the PAM Schema or DTD, which does not allow the inclusion of additional elements. However, you can request that the PRISM Working Group consider adding elements to PAM. There is a change request procedure, which you can follow. The best practice is to attend the Working Group meetings to make a case for your change(s). If you must use your own elements for your feeds, you must communicate this with your channel or distribution partners.

Please submit requests for new PRISM elements, including elements you'd like to have included in PAM, to: info@prismstandard.org.

What are PRISM Profiles?

The PRISM specification defines a set of metadata vocabularies. PRISM metadata may be expressed in a different syntax depending on the specific use-case scenario. Currently PRISM metadata can be encoded XML, XML/RDF, or as XMP. Each of these expressions of PRISM metadata is called a profile.

- Profile 1 is for the expression of PRISM metadata in XML. An example is the XML PRISM Aggregator Message (PAM).
- Profile 2 is for the expression of PRISM metadata in XML/RDF such as for expressing PRISM metadata in RSS feeds.
- Profile 3 is for embedding PRISM metadata in media objects such as digital images or PDFs using XMP technology.

No matter which profile is used, the PRISM metadata fields and values remain constant. The expression of PRISM metadata for each profile is documented within the PRISM Specification.

What is the PRISM Cookbook?

The PRISM Cookbook is a step-by-step guide that demonstrates how to apply PRISM elements in particular business scenarios. The cookbook was written by current PRISM implementers. The existing PRISM Cookbook addresses only PRISM Profile 1 (XML).

Whom can I contact for help with implementing PRISM?

Active PRISM implementers participate in the PRISM Working Group and would be happy to help new implementers. The working group can be contacted at: info@prismstandard.org.

You can also join the LinkedIn PRISM Practitioners group to ask questions and get answers. Go to http://www.linkedin.com and join the PRISM Practitioners Group.