

# AES standards project report - Considerations for standardising AES metadata sets

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## **Abstract**

Digital management of audio assets - in projects, inventories, collections, libraries, and archives - will increasingly be controlled by metadata; that is, data that describes the audio in some way. Some audio-related metadata already exists in metadata sets developed by other communities, however there is a need within the audio community for more specific and detailed audio metadata.

The question was raised concerning how the upcoming AES metadata standards might be handled in a way that would be consistent across a number of AES documents, and also capable of being harmonised with relevant external metadata sets such as the SMPTE metadata dictionary standards (RP210 metadata elements, RP2009 metadata groups etc.) and the IEC work in the same field.

This report discusses primary issues and outlines some elementary considerations.

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## Foreword

This foreword is not part of the *AES standards project report - Considerations for standardising AES metadata sets*, AES-R9-2008.

The question was raised at the SC-03-06 and SC-03-07 meetings in Vienna, 2007-05, (and previously) how the upcoming AES metadata standards might be handled in a way that was consistent across the many AES documents, and also capable of being harmonised with the SMPTE metadata dictionary standards (RP210 metadata elements, RP2009 metadata groups etc.) and the IEC work in the same field.

In 2007-07, an ad-hoc task group met to consider some questions that are important for our standardisation of metadata in general. During subsequent discussions in the New York meeting of SC-03-07, 2007-10, the working group felt that this report - originally intended as an internal summary - would be a useful as a stimulus to wider discussion.

The members of the writing group that developed this document in draft are: C. Chambers, M. Yonge, and D. Ackerman.

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## Introduction

Digital management of audio assets - in projects, inventories, collections, libraries, and archives - will increasingly be controlled by metadata; that is, data that describes the audio in some way. Some audio-related metadata already exists in metadata sets developed by other communities, however there is a need within the audio community for more specific and detailed audio metadata.

The question was raised concerning how the upcoming AES metadata standards might be handled in a way that would be consistent across a number of AES documents, and also capable of being harmonised with relevant external metadata sets such as the SMPTE metadata dictionary standards (RP210 metadata elements, RP2009 metadata groups etc.) and the IEC work in the same field.

This report discusses primary issues and outlines some elementary considerations.

## 1. What assumptions do we start with?

### Metadata is organised in sets

A parameter standing on its own has little meaning. A set of parameters, on the other hand, provides an overall context that ensures consistent meaning for all parameters in that set.

### Metadata sets benefit from standardisation

Anyone can create a set of metadata and use it satisfactorily within a closed application. Where metadata needs to be handled in several applications developed and used by different companies and organisations, there needs to be a common understanding of what the metadata means.

A set of metadata developed and published as an open standard provides a common basis for meaningful metadata exchange for all parties.

### Multiple metadata sets will exist

Audio is not a discrete discipline. It overlaps many others. Any parameter may be described in more than one metadata set and, potentially, from more than one standards body. In the general case, practical applications will need to handle multiple metadata sets in a predictable way.

The meaning of any parameter may be distorted if it is not considered as part of a defining set. Any handling technique must know what set the parameter is related to.

### An application may use more than one metadata set

If an application requires metadata to describe picture and sound, it is as unreasonable to expect the picture specialists to completely describe sound as it would be for the sound specialists to completely describe pictures.