EGNYTE

Data is Valuable But Only When It's Usable

The Importance of Metadata for Enterprise Content

Introduction

Metadata accelerates data discovery that can lead to better, more informed classification and organization of the content that enterprises create and manage. By applying key-values to identify and combine content, it's possible to locate and deploy data that is contextually relevant to business decision-making. Armed with that information, organizations are equipped to use content to meet business goals.

Inside content repositories, most organizations rely on ad-hoc folder structures and basic search to organize and find their content. When content stores grow large, those methods become less efficient. They also lose their effectiveness at actually identifying the data that's needed, which puts a burden on manual retrieval and management of content. The lack of visibility and structure prevents organizations from putting the full value of their content to work in their effort to meet business goals.

This has been a common problem for companies of all types, and as content becomes the new currency for the modern enterprise, the effective use of that data is a major competitive differentiator. Consider the impact in a case where a company holds a benefits on-boarding session every quarter for new employees. An HR representative could use metadata to quickly find every employee whose start date came after the latest on-boarding session, and send that group an invite about the up-coming event. **Metadata powers this type of capability which in turn, delivers value for companies that need to move fast to meet changing market demands.**

The importance of metadata for enterprise content

Metadata enables the effective organization and deployment of content in the right context, enabling a business to scale files and data seamlessly. Creating structure to create, classify, and search data, and to apply security configurations, will dramatically reduce hours spent on locating data.

Unstructured business content has grown exponentially in the last decade, making it more challenging to organize, discover, and protect the files your users create. Enterprise users are very active in the creation, sharing, and storage of content. When it has outlived its value, it's given the "cluttered garage" treatment; put it in the corner, and I'll figure out where it is when I need it.

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But when the need to address a situation that requires data arises, a lack of visibility is a time killer. When that happens, companies are unable to apply their storehouses of usable data towards meeting important goals or delivering rapidly in a way that satisfies the speed of business.

At issue is not the data; there is all manner of data that could be useful. To be useful, however, it has to be findable, and unstructured data usually hinders that findability. But metadata lets teams structure that data according to business needs, set security policies based on that information, and glean meaningful context and insights from that data. The metadata layer promotes rapid data discovery while working behind the scenes to keep it safe.

Egnyte uses metadata to provide a framework for organizing highly searchable, relevant content. Our users are able to create metadata guidelines and apply them within the Egnyte platform, all without the need for technical development. In other words, those who manage and transact in content can easily and rapidly solve for their content findability needs, irrespective of their technical capabilities. This reduces the hours spent on discovery, and creates new insights that help inform decision-makers. This gives individuals, teams, and organizations the ability to take control of how sensitive data is tracked, viewed, and stored, all while using security policies that can be customized to the needs of the organization. Those needs might be based on company-specific guidelines, or they might be used to adhere to compliance frameworks.

The metadata layer in the Egnyte platform

Egnyte users in the construction, life sciences, financial services, and other markets are sitting on massive troves of content, and are incrementally adding to it daily. To help them derive hidden benefits and make content a core element of their business strategy, Egnyte delivers an advanced metadata layer that uses both visibility and context so they can identify and make use of relevant content that resides within the landscape of their intellectual property.

Custom metadata is now available in Egnyte under the admin tab. Users can create custom data labels that admins or users can use to add structure to your data, which makes it easier to organize, search, and analyze. These fields can be applied to any file type such as video, images, and documents. Built-in flexibility

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means users can label entire folders, or just specific versions of a file. They can add custom metadata using integrated apps for more control over content. Users can now fill out tags when creating or storing files, adding value to your data quickly.

Additionally, the classification capabilities in the Egnyte platform provide the guidelines for how organizations structure their content. With this aspect of the platform, users can classify data based on organizationally-relevant frameworks, or even to structure in a way that adheres with specific compliance frameworks. Custom metadata tags can be created in the repository, with policies applying to all content within the repository. This is of great value especially when sensitive content is being used.

Making metadata work

Egnyte users can begin to realize immediate value with metadata, and are able to employ it with four use cases that are critical to gaining visibility and making better meaning out of their enterprise content.

Metadata creation and tagging

The structuring of data begins with tagging content and applying organizational definition to it. Different organizations and teams will do it differently, but the essence is in associating terms and descriptors that can be used to find the content later.

For example, an IT admin creates the following metadata tags to capture employee information:

> First Name: String
>
> Last Name: String
>
> Department: String/Code
>
> Title: String
>
> Manager: String
>
> C-Level Manager: String
>
> Hire date: Date
>
> Office (geo): String
>
> Employee ID: String (employee number)

> Document Type: Dropdown: I-9, W-4, Background Check, ESCR (Employee Status Change Request), PAN (Personnel Action Notification), PIIA, NDA, Contract

With no code needed, it's easy to add more relevant fields that enable faster data access and grant greater control.

Or, consider a construction project manager tags photos on a job site using tags for [RFI #], [job #], and [change order #], to make this information easy to retrieve at closeout.

This data can now verify RFIs are being resolved within a specified date range.

Metadata search

Structured search empowers your line of business users to contribute to data discovery and productivity. Metadata search helps users to get to their content faster, making it easy for to leverage the data already available to them.

An HR rep applies the metadata provided by the admin to headshots and personnel folders, making it easier to find employee information for tasks like employment verification, department metrics, hiring trends. For example, employees hired before or after changes to stock options or health benefits.

A business analyst enriches client folders with tags like [account age] and [check for 401k document type]. The analyst marks W2's and other document types as [sensitive].
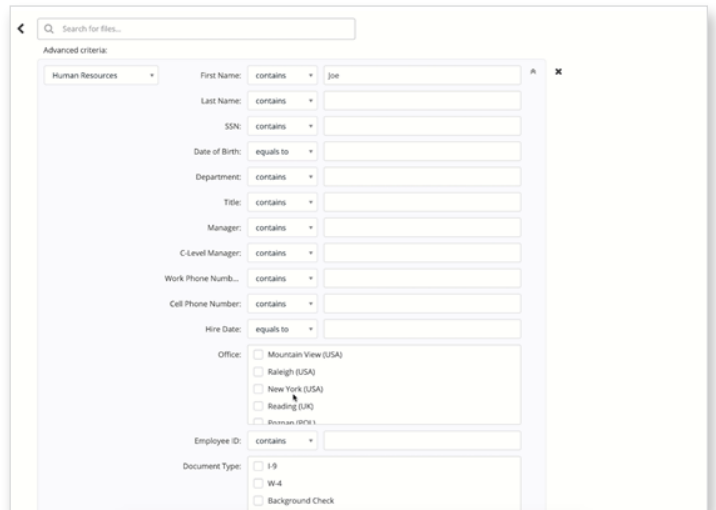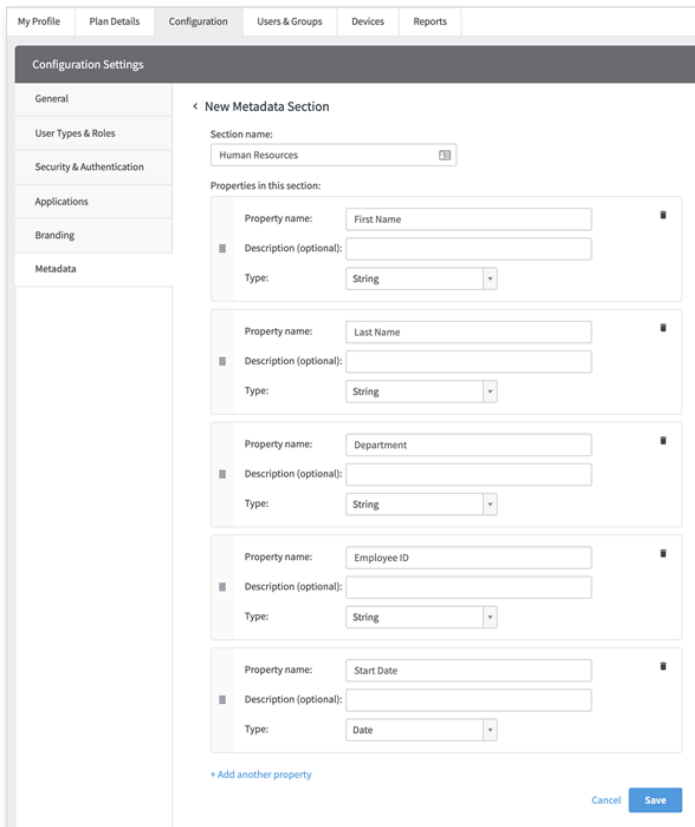
Metadata classification

Use metadata classification to customize how sensitive content is defined, stored, and accessed. Create policies based on one or more metadata tag or tag groups to automate data retention or arching workflows. Admins can prevent or monitor external sharing using sensitive data tags.

An engineer uses a metadata tag type of [prototype], the metadata tag [prototype] belongs to a group of tags labelled [sensitive]. [prototype] can then be tracked and monitored in data governance dashboard, alerting admins if any of the sensitive data is moved or shared out of bounds.
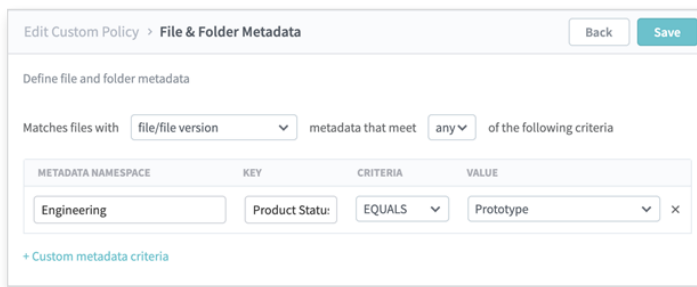
Populating metadata with the Egnyte API

Egnyte also provides an API that enables users to define custom fields, and to populate values for files, file versions, and folders. These metadata fields are grouped together in namespaces which can be either public or private. This is especially critical when for files that share data among different stakeholders.

Imagine, for example, an eSignature app could save back the signer's name, sign date, and transaction id when it saves the signed doc back to Egnyte. Or the case where a customer could set up a workflow with Microsoft Flow (or any number of other tools) that eventually saves back the result in metadata.

Egnyte's advanced metadata lets you structure that data according to your business needs, set security policies based on that information, and glean meaningful context and insights from your data.

Ready to try Egnyte?

15-DAY FREE TRAIL