How to Use Cru's Taxonomy (Tags)

Together, we are actively engaging millions of people: men and women, young and old, high school and college students, those entering the workforce and seasoned executives, young married couples and empty nesters, some curious about Jesus and others devoted to telling others about Christ. They live close by and on distant shores. Some speak our language, most do not.

Cru has much to offer on life's journey: gospel presentations, Bible studies, seminars and workshops, conferences and trips. There are teachings and training on every topic tailored to every audience – delivered as articles, videos and more.

Taxonomy is the language we use to describe, classify and organize everything. We can tag content, experiences and even people. There are obvious applications for taxonomy, like organizing a library of content to make it easier to filter search results. Then there are less obvious applications. The tags on content can be fed into Cru's analytics when a user accesses a page. That data can be used to make assumptions about a user's interests and demographics and even dig into spiritual needs. When combined with artificial intelligence and analytics, tags are the secret ingredient that makes personalization possible by matching users to contextually relevant content.

Why Is Cru Using Taxonomy?

Most people assume we are using tags to improve our rankings in search engines like Google and Bing. But **tags have absolutely no effect on search engine rankings.**

Many years ago, search engines relied heavily on keyword tags to rank search results. It didn't take long for website owners to discover they could cram thousands of keywords onto a page so it would show up for search terms completely unrelated to the content. Those site owners could make money tricking users into following links from search engines to bogus pages serving advertisements. That trick created a horrible experience for users, so search engines stopped using keyword tags in the algorithms. Some search engines, like Microsoft's Bing, actually penalize websites with keyword tags on their pages.

So, if we aren't using tags for better search engine results, why are we using tags?

Better internal site search

While tags do not help us with external search engines like Google and Bing, they do help with our own "site search." The search box running on Cru websites uses tags to offer "filters" and "facets" when searching by category. For example, a user may want to go on a mission trip but only see trips of a certain duration, cost or location. Tags can help that user narrow the search to only the relevant trips.

Discoverability in the content management system for authors

As a content author, tags can help you find content created by your peers, which could live anywhere in our ecosystem. We are also making use of artificial intelligence to auto-tag images to help you quickly find an image from Cru's library to illustrate your content.

User behavior website/app analytics

Our engineers take the tags you apply to content and feed those tags into Cru's analytics tools so we can better understand the content each person visiting our websites and mobile applications is consuming. Cru has its own algorithms that help evaluate where visitors are at on their spiritual journeys, as well as which demographics they belong to.

Personalization and recommendations

Cru can offer users content and opportunities that are extremely relevant to them once we know where they are at on their spiritual journeys and what demographics they belong to.

cru

How Is Cru Using Tags?

Cru has adopted a "controlled taxonomy," which means we have predetermined which words will be used to describe everything we are tagging. Ideally, this language of taxonomy will be consistent across content and various back-end systems so the words we use to describe the things that matter to Cru have the same consistent meaning wherever they are used.

Let's look at an example that illustrates why this consistency is helpful.

There are many correct ways to identify the United States of America, such as the U.S., US, USA, US of A, America, or the United States. If we left it up to each person in the organization to use whatever he or she prefers, tags would not be very useful. We've adopted the two-letter codes established by the International Standards Organization to describe countries. Doing this allows us to always count on the code "US" identifying everything from the United States.

We've organized our taxonomy into nine super-categories called "**namespaces.**" These are "faith topics," "secular topics," "location," "target audience," "ministry affiliation," "Cru experiences," "bible & biblical figures," "scale of belief" and "languages."

Tagging Principles

Use as many tags as you need but as few as possible

You don't need to add a tag for every possible concept expressed in the content. Too many tags will dilute the effectiveness of our taxonomy because marginally relevant content will begin to inflate our content searches.

Tag the main idea

The title of your content is already a great indicator of what the primary tags of your content should be.

Skip tags that are not relevant

There may be some tag namespaces you won't use at all. An executive biography probably won't have secular topic, faith topic or bible & biblical figures tags. That's OK. Only use what the content actually needs to describe it.

Don't overlook target audiences

One of the biggest benefits of implementing tagging on our content is the ability to recommend the right content for our users. We have a lot of similar content that has been slightly modified for different audiences. Target audience tags help us know which variation is contextually relevant, so don't skip over them.

cru

Tagging Step by Step

When tagging our content, carefully consider content in light of each tag namespace. Ask yourself which tag or tags should be applied from each distinct area:

1. Secular Topics

Use tags from secular topics when one of the main ideas is to address everyday topics like relationships, life issues and emotions. If your content is seasonal or holiday-themed, you will find tags to support that concept here.

2. Faith Topics

Use tags from faith topics to describe theological concepts. Most of our content will include a faith topic tag.

3. Location

Most content in Adobe Experience Manager is already being created under a two-letter country node (e.g., us, mx, de, etc.). Use tags from the location namespace only when the content is about a different location. For example, if Mexico's website has a page about a mission trip they are sending to the United States, then adding the tag "US" would be appropriate.

4. Target Audience

The target audience namespace is meant to answer the question, "Who is the content intended for?" These tags are really important for personalization. Use all that apply, but do not overtag. For example, if you are tagging a women's Bible study, make sure to select "women" from target audiences. But if it is a Bible study for anyone, skip the gender tag. Do **not** tag it "men" and "women."

5. Ministry Affiliation

The ministry affiliation namespace identifies which ministry produced the content. Not all content is affiliated with a ministry, so it's OK to skip this if it's not relevant. This tag is most useful when there are multiple teams producing content for a target audience, like college students, and we want to show related content produced by the same ministry.

6. Cru Experiences

Use the Cru experiences tags to describe content about real-world experiences people can have with Cru, such as events, conferences, mission trips, volunteering, and learning or training.

cru

7. Bible & Biblical Figures

These tags are most useful for Bible studies, devotionals and spiritual growth content. For now, the tags only go as deep as book and chapter. It's okay to add multiple "book" or "chapter" tags if the content warrants multiple Scripture references, but pick as few as possible, tagging based on the main idea. For biblical figures, only add the tag if the biblical figure is one of the main points of the content.

8. Scale of Belief

The scale of belief namespace is essentially an extension of target audiences, but we've pulled it out into its own namespace because of its importance to the ministry. The scale of belief is a numerical scale that identifies where someone is at on his or her spiritual journey and identifies the content relevant to that stage of the journey.

9. Language

All content in Adobe Experience Manager is being created under two-letter language nodes (e.g., en, es, fr, zh, etc). No additional language tagging is necessary at this time.

Formulas for Creating Concepts From Multiple Tags

Sometimes you might need to combine multiple tags to accurately describe your content. For example, you won't find a single tag called, "women's Bible study." To express this concept, you would use these tags:

> Faith Topics > Spiritual Growth > Bible Study
> Target Audience > Gender > Women

Taxonomy Change Requests

We recognize that from time to time it will be necessary to make additions and other changes to the taxonomy. You can make change requests by sending an email to taxonomy@cru.org. Most change requests go through a review and analysis before being considered by the Taxonomy Committee, which meets four times a year. (Urgent requests can be fast-tracked).

Before making a change request, please consider these guidelines:
- New tags must be unique — the same tag cannot appear in multiple namespaces.
- New tags should not be synonyms of existing tags.
- New tags should not introduce confusion with existing tags.
- Whenever possible, it is better to use existing tags to describe something than to create a new tag.

You can view current change requests and their status here: https://bit.ly/2Q1cydg.