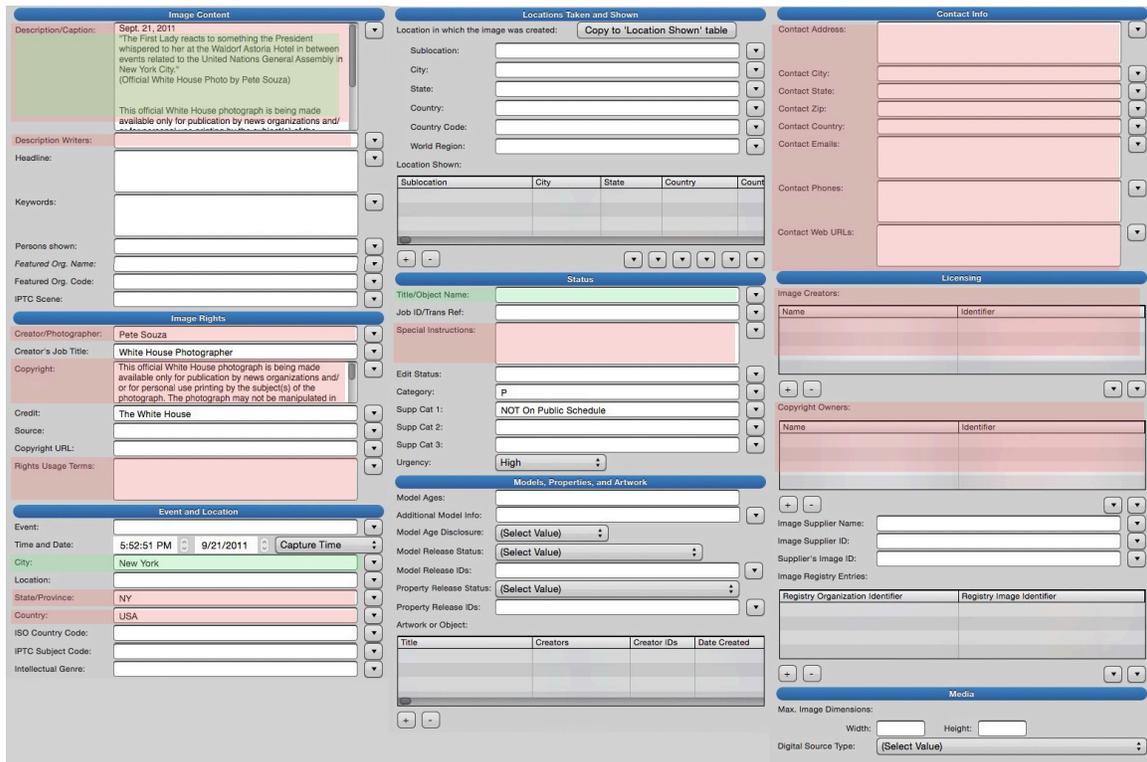


Metadata fields of interest to photographers



The screenshot shows a complex metadata form with several sections:

- Image Content:** Description/Caption (green highlight), Description Writers, Headline, Keywords, Persons shown, Featured Org. Name, Featured Org. Code, IPTC Scene.
- Image Rights:** Creator/Photographer, Creator's Job Title, Copyright (green highlight), Credit, Source, Copyright URL, Rights Usage Terms.
- Event and Location:** Event, Time and Date, City, Location, State/Province, Country, ISO Country Code, IPTC Subject Code, Intellectual Genre.
- Locations Taken and Shown:** Sublocation, City, State, Country, Country Code, World Region, Location Show: table.
- Status:** Title/Object Name, Job ID/Trans Ref, Special Instructions, Edit Status, Category, Supp Cat 1, Supp Cat 2, Supp Cat 3, Urgency.
- Models, Properties, and Artwork:** Model Ages, Additional Model Info, Model Age Disclosure, Model Release Status, Model Release IDs, Property Release Status, Property Release ID, Artwork or Object: table.
- Contact Info:** Contact Address, Contact City, Contact State, Contact Zip, Contact Country, Contact Emails, Contact Phones, Contact Web URLs.
- Licensing:** Image Creators: table, Copyright Owners: table.
- Media:** Image Supplier Name, Image Supplier ID, Supplier's Image ID, Image Registry Entries: table, Max. Image Dimensions, Digital Source Type.

Red highlighting is used for fields like Copyright, Credit, State/Province, Country, and various licensing fields. Green highlighting is used for Description/Caption and Copyright in the Image Content section.

IPTC metadata fields. Those that should be on your template are highlighted in red. Green highlighting appears on picture-by-picture fields. The image is a composite from Photo Mechanic's interface.

Caption (also called "Description") (Per picture, but partly templated)

This one is pretty obvious, apart from having two names (Yup, the IPTC sanctions that.) The caption is the most important of all the fields, so we'll talk about it in some detail.

Your caption should describe what's going on in your photo. It should identify, as specifically as possible, any people, things or places in the photo. It should

provide context and background. In other words, the “five W’s” we all learned in grammar school. The “H”, “how”, is usually handled in the content of the photo itself.

If you’re a fine arts photographer, a mini artist’s statement could go here.

Your caption should include your byline. Also, your caption needs to include any ancillary information that the end user of the picture **must** see or obey.

And it should be publishable. Assume that many users of your photo will post or publish it with your caption unedited, *exactly* as you have written it. (Which, while not as good as professionally copy editing it, it a darned sight better than just slapping the photo up with no information what-so-ever. So, we’ll be grateful regardless.)

Notice that I just let that slip gently off my tongue, knowing that I just **also** said you’ll need to clutter up your caption with things like embargoes and warnings, **and** I said that you needed to include all the information anybody a hundred years from now will need to know about the picture. Welcome to the cold, hard world. Like everything else in photography, your caption must struggle to balance competing forces. You have to assume that your caption will be the only information a user will see, if they’re conscientious enough to even look in the first place!

Your byline, which can include a copyright assertion and your employer or agency, should be pre-placed in the caption field by your template. (Photo by Suzy Photographer/SuperDuperAgency/ (CC)Creative Commons SA) Simplest that works is best. Your client may dictate punctuation and style details.

ALWAYS, ALWAYS, ALWAYS use your template! DO NOT try to type repetitive values. I don’t care how well you type. The photographer who can type his or her name 100,000 times in a row with perfect consistency hasn’t been born yet.

Description writer (On template, optional)

Your initials. It matters more if the person who wrote the caption wasn’t the photographer. It goes on your template or you can skip it, depending on your client.

Headline (Per picture, optional)

A short (two to five words are best) headline. Some CMSes map this field to a headline or bangline field on the page. Most news services use this field. Note that some services simply list the names of people in the picture in this field. Baring word otherwise from the client, I'd skip it.

Keywords (Per picture or per assignment, optional)

Usually filled in by an archivist later. If you are your own archivist, I advise using this field for terms that characterize your picture, like is it a “product shot”, or a “lifestyle” picture?

Search terms that don't fit in your caption can go here.

Note that many desktop photo management software packages, like Lightroom or DigiKam, place their keywords or tags in this field. Many, but not all. Check, don't assume. Different CMSes and DAMs treat this field differently.

Different archivists hold, shall we say, rather passionate (and disparate) views about keywording. Most of the time you can skip this field and avoid the fray.

Creator/ Photographer (Also called “Author”, or “Byline”, depending on software.)

(On template.)

Your name. Just your name.

Credit (On template, optional)

This is a tricky one. Credit is who you work for, or who is distributing your photo. Often the name of a photo agency appears here. Unless your client says otherwise, skip it.

Some publishing systems create a byline automatically by concatenating the contents of the Creator and Credit fields.

Copyright (On template.)

Super important, obviously. This is a pretty large field. You can fit in “© 2017 Suzy Photographer” and some contact information (business phone is good), and even some license information, like “(CC) Share Alike. creativecommons.org for details” Many websites - Facebook comes to mind - strip away all your metadata but this field. It could be your only line of defense against becoming an orphan work. Make it count! Many cameras can write copyright information in this field at the time of exposure.

Rights Usage Terms (Per picture or template, depending)

Describe the license you are granting, or conditions or embargoes or the like. Briefly. (“Web only rights for one year granted to Widget Corp.”)

Create date (Usually populated automatically)

But glance and check it to be sure it’s right.

City, State, and Country (Per picture or template, depending)

I put State and Country in my template and choose City from the picklist in Photo Mechanic. (If you populate a picklist, *be sure* names and spellings are correct. In use, it’s really hard to notice if a picklist item has an error.)

Title/Object Name (Per picture or per assignment)

Sometimes called the “Slug”. Could literally be the picture’s title. Or a very brief (two or three words, tops) description of the assignment or story. Some people put the (hopefully descriptive) file name here. Could be unique to each picture or could be applied as a batch. Nothing bad will happen if you skip this field.

Special Instructions (Per picture or template, depending)

As close to a general comments field as we have. A great place for embargoes or warnings. Very often left blank.

Contact and owner fields (On template)

Pretty obvious. They're going to be on your template so they take no effort. You'll want to decide if you want to include your office or email addresses, of course. I'm leaning towards using my URL instead of an email address. A Twitter handle is another possibility. It's not like spammers are harvesting email addresses out of photos, but hopefully your metadata will be around for decades.

If there's any chance at all that an editor might try on deadline to contact you about a reuse fee, a phone number is a really good idea.