

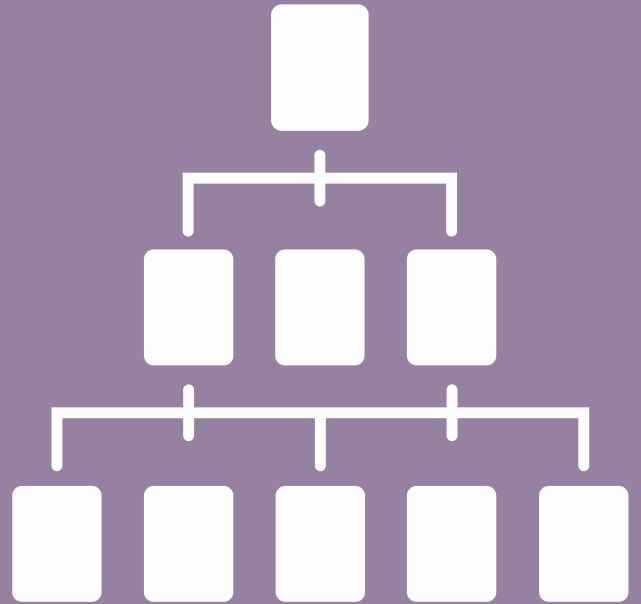
# WHY YOUR TAXONOMY NEEDS SKOS

Introduction to Semantic Web Standards:  
Simple Knowledge Organization System (SKOS)

**IF YOU WANT MORE OUT OF YOUR TAXONOMY, IT'S TIME TO LEARN ABOUT SKOS STANDARDS.**

When you think of a taxonomy, you might picture a hierarchical structure, like a family tree.

While the hierarchical structure of a taxonomy is an important feature, this shouldn't be the only feature your taxonomy represents if you want the taxonomy to support advanced content management or data analytics solutions.

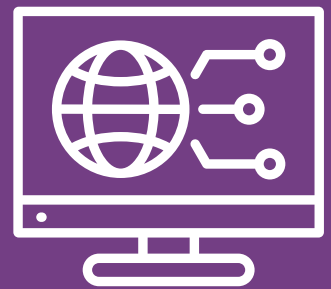


## SO, WHAT IS SKOS?



SKOS is both **human-readable** and **machine-readable**. The structured nature of SKOS supports LLMs (Large Language Models) by providing **patterns** that support **conceptual disambiguation** and **reasoning**.

SKOS is a **W3C (World Wide Web Consortium)** recommended standard for taxonomy design that can be encoded in **RDF (Resource Description Framework)**. Taxonomies built in SKOS can be easily extended with **ontologies** built on **RDFS (RDF Schema)** or **OWL (Web Ontology Language)**.

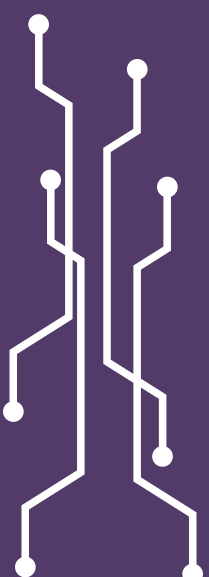


**Taxonomy Management Systems (TMS)** support the **importing** and **exporting** of taxonomies expressed in SKOS. Once you're ready to invest in a TMS, you can import your taxonomy from a spreadsheet with only minor formatting changes.

Creating a taxonomy in SKOS format allows you to **easily integrate with other taxonomies** in SKOS format by providing a standard data model.

## WHAT CAN SKOS DO THAT A SIMPLE HIERARCHY OF TERMS CANNOT?

SKOS provides a standardized framework to capture the following elements:



- **Preferred Label:** The official, clearest name for a concept that you want users to employ.
- **Alternative Label:** The equivalent terms or synonyms that users may also use to refer to a concept. These may also include specific instances of the preferred label. They are often used for query expansion in search.
- **Hidden Label:** Outdated, replaced, or otherwise inappropriate terms. Hidden labels should be leveraged when a user interacts with a text-based search function in a knowledge organization system, as it can capture non-preferred terms for a concept and steer users to content pertaining to the correct term.
- **Definition:** An explanation of the concept. This is especially important for concepts that lack shared understanding or are particularly complex.
- **Scope Note:** Additional notes that further elaborate the concept beyond the definition. Scope notes can include usage guidelines or references to other concepts for disambiguation.

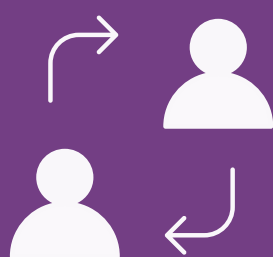
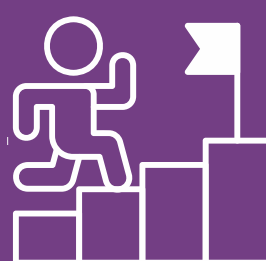
## WHAT DOES A TAXONOMY EXPRESSED IN SKOS LOOK LIKE?

Preferred Label	Alternative Labels	Definition	Scope Notes
<b>Webinar</b>	<b>Web Seminar</b> <b>Webcast</b> <b>Web Conference</b>	A live, online, and informative presentation during which participating viewers can submit questions and comments.	For on-demand video recordings of presentations without live interaction, use Virtual Presentation.
<b>Blog</b>	<b>Weblog</b>	An informational, regularly-updated website or web page, typically written in a conversational style.	For an in-depth written article on a specific topic with illustrative examples, use Case Study.

## WHAT IF I ALREADY HAVE A TAXONOMY, BUT IT DOESN'T FOLLOW THE SKOS FORMAT?

You may encounter the following issues:

Limited ability to **scale** the taxonomy to support more **advanced use cases**



Risk of teams using **different terms** for the same thing, or different teams using the same terms for different things

Difficulty extending taxonomies to **ontologies** or **knowledge graphs**



Inability to import into **Taxonomy Management Systems**

## MY TAXONOMY DOESN'T FOLLOW SKOS STANDARDS. WHAT CAN I DO?

Many of our clients come to us with taxonomies in a basic stage of maturity; they may have outdated **business glossaries**, **incomplete controlled vocabularies**, or **partial hierarchical structures** lacking additional semantic context. EK's taxonomy experts help clients across industries elevate their taxonomies to follow SKOS standards, support key use cases, and provide guidance on taxonomy tool selection and integration.

EK offers **taxonomy design workshops** that can help get your team started. Transform your draft taxonomy into a **foundational taxonomy** better-suited to support your organizational use cases today.

**Contact us to learn more.**

## CONTACT US!

Looking to take your taxonomy to the next level?

Need expert guidance?

Contact us today or learn more at [www.enterprise-knowledge.com](http://www.enterprise-knowledge.com)

[info@enterprise-knowledge.com](mailto:info@enterprise-knowledge.com)

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