AI Preferences
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Vocabulary For Expressing Content Signals
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Abstract

This Internet Draft proposes three categories that would enable parties to express preferences regarding how digital assets are used by automated processing systems. The proposal is for these categories to nest within the larger category of Automated Processing, currently envisaged in the [AIPREF-VOCAB].

About This Document

This note is to be removed before publishing as an RFC.

The latest revision of this draft can be found at https://l-romm.github.io/draft-romm-aipref-vocab-contentsignals/draft-romm-aipref-contentsignals.html. Status information for this document may be found at https://datatracker.ietf.org/doc/draft-romm-aipref-contentsignals/.

Discussion of this document takes place on the AI Preferences Working Group mailing list (mailto:ai-control@ietf.org), which is archived at https://mailarchive.ietf.org/arch/browse/ai-control/. Subscribe at https://www.ietf.org/mailman/listinfo/ai-control/.

Source for this draft and an issue tracker can be found at https://github.com/l-romm/draft-romm-aipref-vocab-contentsignals.

Status of This Memo

This Internet-Draft is submitted in full conformance with the provisions of BCP 78 and BCP 79.

Internet-Drafts are working documents of the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF). Note that other groups may also distribute working documents as Internet-Drafts. The list of current Internet-Drafts is at https://datatracker.ietf.org/drafts/current/.

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1. Introduction

This proposal introduces and aims to define a specific set of preferences to address the need for expressing how digital assets can be used by automated systems, particularly in the context of training artificial intelligence (AI) models and generating search results. These preference categories enable clear and explicit communication of preferences regarding the use of digital assets for search indexing and AI training.

2. Conventions and Definitions

The key words "MUST", "MUST NOT", "REQUIRED", "SHALL", "SHALL NOT", "SHOULD", "SHOULD NOT", "RECOMMENDED", "NOT RECOMMENDED", "MAY", and "OPTIONAL" in this document are to be interpreted as described in BCP 14 [RFC2119] [RFC8174] when, and only when, they appear in all capitals, as shown here.

For the purposes of this document, in addition to the definitions in Section 4 of [AIPREF-VOCAB], the following terms are used:

* *Search Results:* hyperlinks and short excerpts returned from contents of the retrieved asset(s)

* *Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG):* A technique where external content is retrieved at query time and supplied to a model to condition the generated output (B. Silver)

3. Vocabulary Definition

3.1. Search

The act of using one or more assets to build a search index and provide Search Results. Search does not include providing AI-generated search summaries. The use of assets for Search is a proper subset of Automated Processing usage.

3.2. AI Input

The act of inputting an asset or assets into one or more AI models for purposes of retrieval-augmented generation, grounding, or other real-time taking of content for generative AI search answers. The use of assets for AI Input is a proper subset of Automated Processing usage.

3.3. AI Training

The act of training or fine-tuning AI models. The use of assets for AI Training is a proper subset of Automated Processing usage.

4. Usage Category Labels

Each usage category in Section 3 is mapped to a short textual label. Table 1 specifies this mapping.

Category	Label	Reference
Search	search	Section 3.1
AI Input	ai-input	Section 3.2
AI Training	ai-train	Section 3.3

Table 1: Usage category labels

5. Security Considerations

TODO Security

6. IANA Considerations

This document has no IANA actions.

7. Addendum

The definition definition for Search (3.1) provided in this document may be replaced with the Search Category definition proposed in [AIPREF-VOCAB] and copied below:

Using one or more assets in a search application that directs users to the location from which the assets were retrieved. Search applications can be complex and may serve multiple purposes. Only those parts of applications that direct users to the location of an asset are included in this category of use. This includes the use of titles or excerpts from assets that are used to help users select between multiple candidate options.

Preferences for the Search category apply to those parts of applications that provide search capabilities, regardless of what other preferences are stated.

Parts of applications that do not direct users to the location of assets, such as summaries, are not covered by this category of use.

The use of assets for Search is a proper subset of Automated Processing usage.

8. References

8.1. Normative References

[ASCII] Bradner, S., "Key words for use in RFCs to Indicate Requirement Levels", BCP 14, RFC 2119, DOI 10.17487/RFC2119, March 1997, <https://www.rfc-editor.org/rfc/rfc2119>.

[FIELDS] Leiba, B., "Ambiguity of Uppercase vs Lowercase in RFC 2119 Key Words", BCP 14, RFC 8174, DOI 10.17487/RFC8174, May 2017, <https://www.rfc-editor.org/rfc/rfc8174>.

[RFC2119] Bradner, S., "Key words for use in RFCs to Indicate Requirement Levels", BCP 14, RFC 2119, DOI 10.17487/RFC2119, March 1997, <https://www.rfc-editor.org/rfc/rfc2119>.

[RFC8174] Leiba, B., "Ambiguity of Uppercase vs Lowercase in RFC 2119 Key Words", BCP 14, RFC 8174, DOI 10.17487/RFC8174, May 2017, <https://www.rfc-editor.org/rfc/rfc8174>.

8.2. Informative References

[AIPREF-VOCAB] Keller, P. and M. Thomson, Ed., "A Vocabulary For Expressing AI Usage Preferences", Work in Progress, Internet-Draft, draft-ietf-aipref-vocab, October 2025, <https://datatracker.ietf.org/doc/html/draft-ietf-aipref-vocab>.

[UTF8] Yergeau, F., "UTF-8, a transformation format of ISO 10646", STD 63, RFC 3629, DOI 10.17487/RFC3629, November 2003, <https://www.rfc-editor.org/rfc/rfc3629>.

Appendix A. Acknowledgments

TODO acknowledge.

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