THE CONTENT ENGINEERING AGENCY

PORTFOLIO

Rafaëla Ellensburg

Senior Data & AI Strategist | Digital Transformation Lead

Specialist in content governance, data modelling and AI readiness

> I bring structure and ownership to fragmented content and data, so organisations can scale personalisation and AI reliably. From strategy and business case to implementation and adoption.



Featured at

BOYE & CO · plate · Frankwatching

Education and certification

PSPO I · TIAS

Professional Scrum Product Owner I
MSc Business Administration, TIAS
Research MSc and BSc Psychology, University of Amsterdam

WHEN TO BRING ME IN

Four signs your foundations are holding back your ambition

	WHAT YOU NOTICE	WHAT I DO	PROOF
1	**Personalisation takes more and more manual work**	I make the meaning of content, products, campaigns and customer segments explicit once, so systems can combine them.	**Semantic layer · p. 5**
2	**Content and data cannot be reused across channels**	I design domain models and metadata schemas: capture once, reuse everywhere.	**Schema and domain model · p. 3, 7**
3	**A CMS or DAM investment does not fix fragmentation on its own**	I set up metadata, ownership and processes before and during the migration.	**200,000+ assets to Content Hub · p. 7**
4	**An AI application lacks reliable context**	I deliver the concepts, taxonomy and definitions a model can build on.	**Governance and AI applications · p. 8–9**

WHAT SETS ME APART

Ten years at Albert Heijn, at scale



Speaker at the Frankwatching Content Conference, June 2026. Photo: Michiel Ton

01 **Content Engineering as a discipline**

In December 2019 I defined the Content Engineer role. In 2021 it became a recognised discipline and job at Albert Heijn, and I built the practice over four years.

02 **A semantic layer as new technology**

As project lead and Product Owner, I took Albert Heijn's first vendor-independent RDF semantic layer from pilot to production, with a team of eleven specialists.

14+
years in content, e-commerce, data and technology

10
years at Albert Heijn, in three roles from specialist to project lead

200,000+
assets migrated to a central Content Hub

23,000+
recipes in Allerhande's first domain model

COMMERCIAL FOUNDATION

Structure that starts with customer value and revenue

E-commerce and conversion first, then content engineering. I tie every structural choice to a customer or business goal.

+1.31%
average order value
Measured in an A/B test. Calculated: €4.2m a year on web

+19%
product conversion on theme shops
Measured. Target was +7%

−35%
process deviations
Measured. Lean Six Sigma in homepage production

+6%
online gross revenue
Measured. With 7% less website traffic

Teamlead Creative Content · Albert Heijn
5–7 specialists. Leadership score up from 82% to 90%.

E-commerce Manager · Van Gelder Groep
Three web shops plus bol.com, deBijenkorf.nl and vd.nl.

CASE 1 · ALBERT HEIJN · SEP 2024 – MAR 2026

Semantic layer: from pilot to production

Sep 2024	Nov 24 – Jan 25	Jul 2025	Sep – Oct 2025	Feb 2026	Mar 2026
Business case	Pilot	MVP start	Triplestore live	Ontology delivered	Business demo

Light bar: preparation and pilot · Dark bar: production implementation (MVP)

The problem

Content, product data, campaigns and customer segments sat in separate systems with no shared meaning. One message for one customer segment on one channel took more than twenty manual tasks across more than four teams.

My role: project lead and Product Owner for eleven specialists, while the technology, the role and the budget did not yet exist.

What I did

- Business case with three capacity scenarios; leadership sponsorship
- Pilot scope agreed with five teams in two weeks
- Wrote the functional requirements, epics and user stories myself
- Redirected to semantic tagging, usable straight away
- Brought in a new ontologist when the core team halved

Commercial relevance: personalisation reads from one shared source of meaning instead of twenty manual steps.

Next use case: rich context for the recommender model to solve the cold-start problem.

CASE 1 · RESULTS

What was demonstrably delivered

PILOT

2,000	1,300	700	100
assets	products	campaigns	customer profiles

Connected in **200,000 triples**: linked data statements that give systems and AI the same meaning.

PRODUCTION IMPLEMENTATION

Sep – Oct 2025	Triplestore in production
Feb 2026	Ontology delivered
Mar 2026	Semantic tagging enabled in the CMS, shown in a business demo

Albert Heijn's first vendor-independent RDF semantic layer

My contribution

Direction and scope, requirements, planning, decision-making and alignment between teams

The team

Eleven specialists. Ontologists modelled the ontology and taxonomy; data management and architecture safeguarded the fit

Technical implementation

Engineers, DevOps and architects built the integrations and the triplestore

Commercial relevance: every next use case, from GEO to personalisation to the recommender, builds on the same source.

CASE 2 · ALBERT HEIJN · APR 2024 – JUN 2026

Metadata and Content Hub: 200,000+ assets migrated

The decision that made the difference

Proposal
Derive metadata from existing file names. Meaning keeps depending on a convention that differs at every hand-off.

→

Implemented
The requester fills in fields on the order form; the metadata and file name are generated from them.

What I did

- Asset policy, metadata schema and requirements, with an owner for every field
- Current and target processes, with a role for every step
- Field mapping, lists and taxonomies for the migration

What was delivered

- More than 200,000 assets migrated to a central Content Hub
- Naming convention and asset types in production
- Lunch talk “Metadata for Dummies” (30 attendees), workshops and training

Business problem: every hand-off created a new folder and naming, so images were uploaded again.

Commercial relevance: metadata is created at the source, so campaign images are findable and reusable on every channel.

CASE 3 · RELIABLE AI · GOVERNANCE AND ADOPTION

Organising ownership and shared meaning

One concept, one meaning

Four teams used the word **"week"** every day, each with a different meaning:

creation week **campaign week** **publication week** **consumer week**

I had the concept defined in the metadata schema.

One route for changes

Roles for data owner, steward, custodian and user, plus a process for the central glossary:

User flags → **Steward** updates → **Owner** approves

Decision-making

Business case with three capacity scenarios, followed by leadership sponsorship

Prioritising

Weighed on value, dependencies and capacity; what did not fit was parked, with an explanation

Adoption

Content Engineering recognised as a discipline; 20% less recurring manual work

Why this makes AI reliable: a model can only be right when concepts are unambiguous and someone looks after them.

CASE 3 · RELIABLE AI · APPLICATIONS

AI becomes useful once meaning is defined

In production

Semantic layer

The ontology and semantic tagging give systems the same meaning. Next use case: context for the recommender model.

My role: project lead and Product Owner

Implemented on the intranet

AI assistant for employees

A RAG assistant for questions about internal news, HR information and policies; started as a hackathon prototype.

My role: the taxonomy as structured context for retrieval

PoC, decision to scale

GenAI auto-tagging

Definitions of more than forty AH concepts for a GPT-4 PoC. The output became more accurate and relevant.

My role: definitions, context and evaluation

Commercial relevance: AI applications speak your organisation's language and scale without every use case starting from scratch.

Own practice: Claude, OpenAI API and Make.com, with fixed instructions, scoped sources and a review step.

TRANSLATING THIS TO YOUR ORGANISATION

What this could mean for your organisation

My experience comes from a large retailer with a lot of content, products, campaigns and channels. I see the same patterns in other commercial organisations. Below are four recognisable challenges and what I can contribute.

Personalisation at scale

Every variant per segment and channel takes manual work from several teams.

Possible contribution: a semantic layer that connects content, products, campaigns and segments.

Findability and reuse

Content and images are recreated because nobody can find them.

Possible contribution: a metadata schema with rules for every field, captured where content is created.

Shared concepts

The same word means something different in each team.

Possible contribution: an owner for every concept and one route for changes.

Reliable AI

AI ambitions rest on content without unambiguous meaning.

Possible contribution: concepts first, a scoped pilot and criteria for scaling up.

Sound familiar? Bring the challenge to a first conversation; the next page shows how I approach it.

HOW I WORK

From ambition to a first use case in practice

01

Ambition and business question

Which commercial ambition is stuck, and what should be different a year from now?

02

Content, data and governance

What content and data exist, in which systems, and who owns them?

03

Value and priority

Which bottlenecks cost the most time, revenue or speed, and what pays off first?

04

Business case and first step

A scoped pilot with an owner, a plan, success criteria and a decision point.

Principles I work by

Meaning before technology. Concepts and ownership first, then tooling.

Think big, start small. A pilot on real data, then scale up.

Vendor-independent. Open standards; the organisation keeps its knowledge.

What you have after the exploration: a well-founded choice of first use case, with a business case and roadmap.

TOOLS AND METHODS

Tools I have worked with, among others

Knowledge graph & semantic layer

Apache Jena · Gruff · Protégé · Neo4j · RDF · OWL · SKOS · SHACL · SPARQL · gist · TARQL

Content, assets and channels

Sitecore Content Hub · Bloomreach XM · MediaValet · JSON-LD · Schema.org · Dublin Core

Data, governance and cloud

Microsoft Purview · Azure · Databricks · Confluence · SharePoint · Microsoft 365

AI and automation

Claude · OpenAI API · Gemini · NotebookLM · Make.com · RAG · GPT-4 auto-tagging

Analysis and measurement

GA4 · Search Console · A/B testing · R · SPSS · Matlab

Agile and change management

Scrum (PSPO I) · Lean Six Sigma · Jira · draw.io · PoC and PoT · RACI · OKR

Evaluated in vendor selection: AllegroGraph, Stardog, Ontotext GraphDB, RDFox, Triply, TigerGraph, PoolParty, Conscia.ai.

WORKING TOGETHER

Interim roles, consultancy and speaking

01

Advice and strategy

Diagnosis of the content and data foundations, roadmap and business case for personalisation, CMS, DAM or AI programmes.

02

Project and interim roles

Project leadership, Product Ownership and content, metadata and data architecture, from requirements to adoption.

03

Keynotes and workshops

From complexity to coherence: why AI ambitions stall on knowledge organisations have not got in order.

Recent stages

Frankwatching Content Conference
Jun 2026 · rated 5 out of 5

World IA Day London
Mar 2026 · Content as Linked Data

LocWorld Dublin
Jun 2026 · panellist

Boye & Company and CMS Experts
2022–2026 · member calls and meetups

Frankwatching

BOYE & CO

REFERENCES

What others say

Case 1 · Semantic layer

"Rafaela played a key role in our organisation to implement future-proof content structures and introduce innovative concepts like domain models and knowledge graphs."

Group Product Manager Martech
Albert Heijn, my manager

Case 2 · Metadata and Content Hub

"You make sure everyone is involved in setting up the right (data) structures. As a result, more colleagues think about the possible and desired structures within Content Hub and beyond." (translated from Dutch)

Product Owner, Albert Heijn
Colleague on the Content Hub programme

Case 3 · Ownership and adoption

"That way you build a sense of shared ownership, and real results follow." (translated from Dutch)

Product Manager, Albert Heijn
Colleague in e-commerce

Business sense

"Intelligent, strong business sense, great team player, can-do mentality and excellent communication skills."

Now Head of Digital Innovation
Reported directly to me

E-commerce and commercial

"Rafaela is professional in her work and you often only need to explain something once." (translated from Dutch)

Now co-owner, Pig & Hen
Was my manager in e-commerce

Leadership

"She was involved, driven and supportive. I liked how open and honest she communicated with me but also with other team members and stakeholders."

Now Product Owner Conversion
Team member, I was her team lead

LET'S TALK

Shall we plan a conversation about your challenge?

Bring a concrete challenge: personalisation stuck on manual work, an upcoming migration or an AI application without reliable context.

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