



ONTOLOGY FOR MEDIA CREATION
PART 6: CREATIVE WORKS
VERSION 2.0



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1 Introduction

The production process can range from relative simplicity to vast complexity. It uses Participants, Tasks, and Assets, informed by Context, to reach a final result, which can be a feature film, a documentary, a talk show, a TV episode, a direct-to-video movie, a student film, or something else. What should we call the ends that rely on all these means?

There are many colloquial terms for this, sometimes specific to an industry segment or to a company or even to divisions within a company. “Title” and “production” are often used in different parts of the filmmaking ecosystem, and “show” and “program” are used in much of the television industry.

“Creative Work” has the advantage of being true and descriptive.¹ The Ontology is about the production process – an act of creation – and “work” has a long history as a word for literary (“The collected works of Shakespeare”) and musical creations (the works of composer are given an opus number even if they lack a title, and *opus* is Latin for “work.”²).

1.1 Scope

Creative Work is a very broad term, and at face value can cover things outside the scope of this Ontology – books, plays, songs, and music, for example. The document considers only Creative Works that are part of the production process described in the rest of the Ontology.

However, having the broader term available can be helpful.³ Many of the attributes of a Creative Work are specific example of more general concepts, and some of those more general concepts apply to creative works in other fields that can be related to our Creative Works. As one example, a film has contributors (actors, directors, screenwriters), and so do books (authors, illustrators) and songs (songwriters, performers, and composers.)

In this Ontology, Creative Work covers only aspects of the Creative Work that are directly related to or outputs of the film and television production process. The *Movielabs Creative Works Ontology for the Film and Television Industry*⁴ has a much wider scope, dealing with many aspects of distribution and data for analytics and marketing. Many of those pieces (ratings, rankings, genres, distribution channels, revenue, etc.) will be extracted from it and converted to a connected ontology; making this connection will, we hope, improve data transfer from the production process to the distribution process.

1.2 Appropriate Granularity

The Creative Work is treated as a single entity. Versions, edits, and so on can be treated as separate Creative Works, using an ontology for derivation, which is currently out of scope.

¹ It also has a formal legal meaning in some jurisdictions.

² Although *labor* and *opus* in Latin can both mean “work or effort” and the results of that work or effort, *labor* tends to be used for the former and *opus* for the latter, hence *magnum opus* rather than *magnus labor* for a masterpiece.

³ There is precedent for this level of generality. The Dublin Core ontology was designed to cover almost all creative things, but is so high-level that it cannot be used well for many concrete applications, and there are many cases of competing industry extensions for it. As another example, MovieLabs Common Metadata can cover non-audiovisual works, but is not generally used for non-audiovisual types.

⁴ <https://test.movielabs.com/cwontology/A-Creative-Works-Ontology-for-the-Film-and-Television-Industry-Final-2018-9-24.pdf>

1.3 Relationships

A Creative Work can have direct relationships to other Creative Works, such as an episode to a series, and to other things that fit a broader definition of Creative Work (such as the book upon which it is based, or a play that inspired it.) It also has indirect relationships to many of the Participants (see below for details.) And of course, it can be connected to a Media Creation Context.

1.4 Notational Conventions

In documents generally:

- The definition of a term included in the Dictionary is in bold, followed by the definition, e.g., **Creative Work**: A uniquely identified production.
- When a defined term is used in the text of a document, it is capitalized, for example in “The Production Scene is usually derived from a numbered scene in the Script,” Production Scene and Script are defined in the Ontology. (Note, a word that is part of defined term may sometimes be capitalized by itself as a shorthand, e.g., “Scene” may be used to indicate “Narrative or Production Scene.”)
- References to other Ontology Documents are in ***bold italic***, e.g., ***Part 3: Assets*** or ***Part 3A: Camera Metadata***.

For Sample Attributes in the concept documents:

- If a data field or attribute is formally defined in this ontology or a connected ontology, it is italicized, e.g., *Setup* as an attribute refers to a defined concept.
- Attribute [...] indicates an attribute can appear more than once, e.g., *Identifier* [...]
- →Thing means that an attribute is expressed as a relationship to a Thing, e.g., the →*Script* attribute of Creative Work means there is a relationship Creative Work→*Script*
- A combination of the two indicates that the concept can have relationships to a set of things, e.g., →*Components* [...]
- Many elements of the Ontology have a Context element. (See **Part 2: Context**.) Relationships declared in the Context are implied to have the item to which the Context is attached as their starting point, for example, Narrative Location→Context→Narrative Scene.

Contextual relationships that are especially important to the concept being defined are given in the sample attributes tables as C→Thing or C→Thing [...] as appropriate. These relationships can just as well be on the object that has the Context. For example, if Narrative Location has “C→Narrative Scene” as an attribute, it is ok to have the relationship directly on the Narrative Location or in its Context, e.g. Narrative Location→Narrative Scene or Narrative Location→Context→Narrative Scene.

Some implementations (e.g. RDF) place these relationships directly on the class as well as allowing them in Context, and others (e.g. JSON) place all relationship in a Context.

2 Concepts and Terms

2.1 Creative Work

Creative Work: A uniquely identified production.

A single production process can produce multiple Creative Works, e.g., several episodes of a series, or the theatrical version and an extended streaming version of a movie.

Sample Attributes for Creative Work

Attribute	Description
<i>Identifier</i> [...]	One or more identifiers for the Creative Work. At least one of these should be resolvable within the production environment; others might point to sources with fuller information about the Creative Work
<i>Creative Work Title</i>	See below
<i>Creative Work Category</i>	See below
→ <i>Based On</i> [...]	See below
→ <i>Inspired By</i> [...]	See below
→ <i>Contribution</i> [...]	See below
→ <i>Portrayal</i> [...]	See below
Approximate Length	This field is optional and may change over the course of the production. It can only be approximate until the production is finished and may vary for different distribution channels.
<i>Country of Origin</i> [...]	See below.
Original Language [...]	A list of the primary languages used in the Creative Work.
→ <i>Production Company</i> [...]	See below
→ Related Works [...]	See below.
→ <i>Script</i>	A link to the Creative Work's Script.

Notes:

Although news, sports, etc., may not think of themselves as Creative Works, they share many common platforms and technologies with movies and episodic television, and the definition includes them if they want to be included.

The Original Languages should be used in an important way, rather than merely to add color. For example, Spanish and English are both essential in *¿Qué Pasa, USA?* (1977-1980), but Vulcan is not essential in the *Star Trek* movies.⁵

Languages added for regional distribution, such as subtitles or dubbing, apply to the derived distribution of the Creative Work, rather than to the original production. Some movies are produced simultaneously in two languages, e.g., *Murder!* (1930) and *Mary* (1930) are the “same” script shot by Hitchcock in English and German respectively. Similarly, *Mumbai Express* (2005) was double-shot in Hindi and Tamil. Unlike those clear-cut cases, animated works that render faces separately for different languages, such as *Kung Fu Panda III* (016) for Mandarin and English, are a gray area.

2.2 Creative Work Attributes

Creative Work Title: A name for a Creative Work.

Creative Works can have many titles: the eventual release title, a working title, a title used when looking for finance, titles used to obscure the nature of the Creative Work from people who do not need to know it, and so on.

Sample Attributes for Creative Work Title

Attribute	Description
Title	A name of the Creative Work.
Language	The language of the title.
Title Type	The kind of title, e.g., Release, Working, Numeric, Security
→ Context	This can be used, for example, for a list of Participants with whom his title should be used or not used.

Notes:

A future version of the Ontology will propose a set of standard Title Types, based on industry needs.

Individual implementations will dictate practices for the use of the Context field.

Creative Work Category: The type or form of a Creative Work.

The “type” of a Creative Work has historically been a mix of form (long, short, episodic) and distribution channel (theatrical, broadcast, direct to consumer.) For example, “Movie” and “TV” are very common in

⁵ Nor is Latin in *Brideshead Revisited* (2008)

lists of types. “Movie” implies a certain minimum length⁶ and theatrical distribution, but what about a feature-length production for a streaming service? “TV” implies broadcast distribution, but some things never intended to have an initial release on television end up there anyway. “Series” usually implies episodic television content, but other than distribution medium, how does it differ from a theatrical serial?

This is difficult technical and social issue. The weight of tradition (standards such as EIDR and ISAN, databases such as IMDB, and reference catalogues at multiple national film and television archives) and emotion (is it a better career move to direct a TV Movie or a Movie?) lie heavy upon it. Controlled vocabulary for this field will be investigated for a future version of the Ontology, though the RDF and JSON implementations of this version will make some suggestions.

Based On: Anything on which a Creative Work is based.

This can include other Creative Works, but can also cover books, plays, and even theme park rides. It often has legal and financial ramifications.

Inspired By: Anything that provided inspiration for a Creative Work.

This is much looser than Based On, and should be used for sources to which the Creative Work has only a loose but important connection. Like Based On, it can have legal and financial implications.

Contribution: An entity’s credited activity in the Creative Work.

Contribution is essentially how a Person or Organization is listed in the credits of the Creative Work. It is usually tied closely to a Person’s Job Title or the kind of Organization (VFX, etc.). It is narrower in scope than Participant, which covers any activity on the production.

Contribution is a reification of the relationship between a Person or Organization and what they did. For a Person, what they did may be the same as a Job Title, or in the case of an Actor, a Portrayal.

Sample Attributes for Contribution

Attribute	Description
<i>Identifier [...]</i>	One or more optional Identifiers for the Contribution.
→ Contributor	The Person or Organization making the contribution. See Part 4: Participants
Contributor Title	The title or label used to describe the Contributor in the credits.
→ <i>Portrayal</i>	For an Actor, the Portrayal being credited. See Part 2: Context

⁶ Although even length is problematic. In the US, a “Short” is under 40 minutes, while in many European countries a short film is under 60 minutes.

Notes:

The Portrayal must be a Portrayal by a Person; it does not include Portrayals achieved in any other way. For example, for an animated character the computer model Portrayal does not generate a Contribution, but the Voice Actor does.

Not all Participants will be listed as Contributors. In the production process, Contributions can be used as input for the closing credits, and in the distribution chain a subset can be used for promotion and marketing. There are often contractual requirements about being included as a Contributor. Contributor Title is often the same as Job Title, but does not have to be.

“Special thanks to” and “Production baby” can be Contributor Titles, even if the parties involved are not Participants.

Portrayal: For convenience, a list of Portrayals in the Creative Work, for example for the use of analytics systems and contracts. This should only include portrayals by people.

Country of Origin: The home country of the companies that had primary creative control of the creation of the Creative Work, generally the producers.

This definition does not include purely financial Participants. A Creative Work can have more than one Country of Origin.

Production Company: An Organization responsible for the development and production of a Creative Work.

This includes companies actually doing the production or providing financing, but excludes entities such as VFX vendors or Post houses. A Creative Work can have more than one production Company.

Related Work: The connection between two creative Works.

Many Creative Works are related to other Creative Works. A movie can have sequels and prequels, an episode can be part of a series, and so on. This is obviously important for distribution and marketing, but it can also be important during the production process. For example, the production team for a sequel might want to look at Concept Art for the previous movie, and film in a flashback scene in one episode can benefit from knowing about the original version of the scene in a previous episode.

There are many kinds of relationships, often dressed up in terms like “universe” and “franchise”, and they will be the topic of a future Connected Ontology. Related Work is a simple reification of the relationship between two Creative Works, with some extra information for explaining the details of the relationship.

Sample Attributes for Related Work

Attribute	Description
→ Creative Work	The Creative Work at which the relationship starts
→ Relative	The target of the relationship

Relationship Type	The type of relationship between the two Creative Works.
Details	Other information about the relationship

Notes:

Relationship Type should be expressed as a real relationship, e.g., *Furious 7* isSequelOf *Fast & Furious 3*. Formalization of Relationship Type is a possible area of future expansion for the Ontology.

Appendix A External Definitions

These are terms defined elsewhere in the Production Ontology, included here for ease of reference.

Media Creation Context: Informs scope within the construction process of a Creative Work.

See **Part 2: Context**

Asset: A physical or digital object or collection of objects specific to the creation of the Creative Work.

See **Part 3: Assets**

Camera Metadata: Capture-specific details and information about the Camera itself.

See **Part 3A: Camera Metadata**

Participant: The entities (people, organizations, or services) that are responsible for the production of the Creative Work.

See **Part 4: Participants**

Task: A piece of work to be done and completed as a step in the production process.

See **Part 5: Tasks**

Creative Work: A uniquely identified production.

See **Part 6: Creative Works**

Relationship: Describes and defines the connections between elements of the Ontology, such as Assets, Tasks, Participants, and Contexts.

See **Part 7: Relationships**

Infrastructure: The underlying systems and framework required for the production of the Creative Work; it is generally not specific to a particular Creative Work.

See **Part 8: Infrastructure**

Utilities: Common data models and data structures used in multiple places and in multiple ways in a larger system.

See **Part 9: Utilities**

Identifier: An identifier uniquely identifies an entity within a particular scope.

See **Part 9: Utilities**