



ONTOLOGY FOR MEDIA CREATION

PART 6: CREATIVE WORKS

VERSION 2.6

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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://movielabs.com/distribution-technology/distribution-specs/creative-works-ontology/>

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.
Custom Data	Anything that is application or workflow dependent that can't be otherwise expressed in the Ontology or needs to be present in a particular format.
→ <i>Context [...]</i>	Any Context for the Series. See Part 2: Context

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., official, working, internal
→ 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. Because of its wide industry acceptance, we encourage the use of the EIDR Title Classes (, working, etc.) for this field. See the Title Details section in the EIDR *Data Fields Reference* at <https://www.eidr.org/technical-documentation/> The RDF and JSON implementations support “working title”, “internal title”, and “release title.”

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

A Creative Work can have more than one Title, such as a working title and a release title.

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

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

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 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 a 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 currently implement “Movie”, “TV”, “Short”, and “Supplemental”.

Notes:

Creative Work Category is not necessary for formal subclasses of Creative Work (see below for episodic works.)

Because of its wide industry acceptance, we encourage the use of the simple EIDR Referent Types (TV, Movie, Short, Supplemental) for this field. See the Referent Type Details section in the *EIDR Data Fields Reference* at <https://www.eidr.org/technical-documentation/>

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 shul 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.

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.

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

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
Custom Data	Anything that is application or workflow dependent that can’t be otherwise expressed in the Ontology or needs to be present in a particular format.

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.

2.3 Episodic Creative Works

Episodic Creative Works are an essential part of the media ecosystem and OMC defines some basic building blocks for managing them.

2.3.1 Series

There are many kinds of series – episodic and serial, where there is an expected viewing order for the episodes; anthologies, where individual episodes are less connected but share a common theme of some sort; miniseries and limited series, which taken as a whole are self-contained and may be recut in different ways for different distribution channels; and many others. What is common across these kinds of series is that they are (usually) conceived of as a set, exist under a common title, and are distributed sequentially or as an entire group.

Episodes are the individual viewable parts of a series, and are often grouped into seasons, either as a way of organizing production or as a distribution concept.

Although a series is a grouping mechanism, it can have Concepts and Characters common across multiple episodes, common Participants, a set of narrative and production locations, and so on. For this reason, OMC treats a series as a Creative Work rather than as an Asset Group.

Series: A group of Creative Works with a common overarching title and a strong relationship between the individual Creative Works.

The episodes can be related by the narrative (characters, narrative locations, etc.), production (a common set of actors), or concepts (short horror on the same theme from different directors.)

Series and their components usually have a unity of time⁷ about them, either for production or distribution.

A Series can contain Seasons, Episodes, or a mix of the two.

Sample Attributes for Series

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>	As for Creative Work Title
Series Type	See notes
→ <i>Based On [...]</i>	As for Creative Work
→ <i>Inspired By [...]</i>	As for Creative Work
→ <i>Contribution [...]</i>	As for Creative work, and specifically including things like Showrunners and Series Producer
→ <i>Portrayal [...]</i>	These should only be portrayals that are common across multiple Episodes for the Series or its Seasons.
Approximate Length	This field is optional and should reflect the average or most common length of the episodes.
<i>Country of Origin [...]</i>	As for Creative Work
Original Language [...]	As for Creative Work

⁷ This is distinct from the Aristotelean unities that the series or its episodes may possess, of course. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Classical_unities

→ <i>Production Company</i> [...]	As for Creative Work
→ Related Works [...]	As for Creative Work
Custom Data	Anything that is application or workflow dependent that can't be otherwise expressed in the Ontology or needs to be present in a particular format.
→ <i>Context</i> [...]	Any Context for the Series. See Part 2: Context

Notes:

Series is a subclass of Creative Work.

A Series generally does not have a Script. There may be documents that are used for reference, cross-episode summaries, or to set the tone, and these can be included in Context, using the relationships `hasSupportingDocument/supportingDocumentFor`.)

Because of its wide industry acceptance, we encourage the use of the EIDR Series Class for Series Type. See the Series Class Details section in the EIDR *Data Fields Reference* at <https://www.eidr.org/technical-documentation/>

Although Series are usually thought of as a television concept, there have been Series of short films, such as [The Perils of Pauline](#) (1914), and web-based content, such as [lonelygirl15](#) (2006).

2.3.2 Season

Seasons group episodes of a Series together. At production time, Seasons are generally well-defined, but are often rearranged or contain recut Episodes when distributed. OMC allows this kind of complexity but does not define it or propose practices. Instead, that is left to a future release of the Ontology for Media Distribution.

Season: A group of Episodes in a Series that are made or distributed together.

Seasons can be ordered or unordered. In an ordered Season, the sequence in which the episodes are viewed is usually significant, for purposes of plot or distribution.⁸

Sample Attributes for Season

Attribute	Description
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⁸ The eight episodes of *Kaleidoscope* (2023), a heist series, all named after colors, were presented to viewers in a random order, although *Black* was always first. It is possible to watch the rest in any order; although some people preferred to watch *White* last.

<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>	As for Creative Work Title; A Season's title may be a "proper" title, or may be something like "Series: Season 1"
Season Type	See notes
Season Number	See notes
→ <i>Series</i>	The Series to which this Season belongs. This relationship is <i>seasonOf</i> , with inverse <i>hasSeason</i> .
→ <i>Based On [...]</i>	Used rarely
→ <i>Inspired By [...]</i>	Used rarely
→ <i>Contribution [...]</i>	As for Series
→ <i>Portrayal [...]</i>	These should only be portrayals that are common across multiple Episodes of the Season.
Approximate Length	This field is optional and should reflect the average or most common length of the Episodes in the Season.
<i>Country of Origin [...]</i>	As for Creative Work
Original Language [...]	As for Creative Work
→ <i>Production Company [...]</i>	As for Creative Work
→ Related Works [...]	Used rarely. This should not be used for relationships to Episodes, which are described below.
Custom Data	Anything that is application or workflow dependent that can't be otherwise expressed in the Ontology or needs to be present in a particular format.
→ <i>Context [...]</i>	Any Context for the Season. See Part 2: Context

Notes:

Season is a subclass of Creative Work.

Because of its wide industry acceptance, we encourage the use of the EIDR Season Class for this field. See the Season Class Details section in the EIDR *Data Fields Reference* at <https://www.eidr.org/technical-documentation/>

Season Number is usually an integer, but there are examples (in distribution) of things like “1.5” and “2A”.

2.3.3 Episode

Episodes are the individually watchable/playable Creative Works in a Series. They can be included in a Season or in the Series itself. As with Seasons, the organization is relatively straightforward at production time but can change during distribution. As with Seasons, OMC concentrates on Episodes during the production process rather than their subsequent life.

Episode: A single Creative Work that is part of Series or Season.

Sample Attributes for Episode

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>	As for Creative Work Title; An Episode’s title may be a “proper” title, or may be something like “Series: Season 1 Episode:3” or “Series s1e3” or even “s1e3”.
Episode Type	See notes
<i>Episode Sequence</i>	See below
→ <i>Series</i> → <i>Season</i>	The Series or Season to which this Episode belongs. This relationship is episodeOf, with inverse hasEpisode.
→ <i>Based On [...]</i>	Used rarely
→ <i>Inspired By [...]</i>	Used rarely
→ <i>Contribution [...]</i>	As for Series
→ <i>Portrayal [...]</i>	These should only be portrayals that are in this Episode.
Approximate Length	

Country of Origin [...]	As for Creative Work
Original Language [...]	As for Creative Woerk
→ Production Company [...]	As for Creative Work
→ Related Works [...]	Used rarely
Custom Data	Anything that is application or workflow dependent that can't be otherwise expressed in the Ontology or needs to be present in a particular format.
→ Context [...]	Any Context for the Episode. See Part 2: Context

Notes:

Episode is a subclass of Creative Work.

Because of its wide industry acceptance, we encourage the use of the EIDR Episode Class conventions for Episode Type. See the Episode Class section in the EIDR *Data Fields Reference* at <https://www.eidr.org/technical-documentation/>, e.g. “Main”, “Pilot”, “Standalone”, and “Special”

2.3.4 Episode Sequence Information

Episodic numbering can be very complex. Episodes can be produced out of order, reordered for distribution, moved between seasons, or recut – for example, reducing 6 episodes to 4 for different regional timeslots. Much of this renumbering happens after production, and OMC focuses on the numbering of episodes during the production process, for which two numbers are most important

House Sequence: The internal Episode number assigned by the producer or commissioning broadcaster.

Notes:

The House Sequence may differ in format and sequence from an initial Distribution Number.

Distribution Number: The position number of the Episode within its parent Season (or parent Series, if the Episode is directly in a Series) during initial broadcast or distribution.

Since an Episode can have multiple distribution numbers, there must a way of indicating ‘sets’ of episode numbers, similar to the Scope in an OMC Identifier. However, since Distribution Numbers are not formally Identifiers, OMC uses a different structure, Episode Number, mirroring the conventions of EIDR and MDDF. This structure also applies to House Number, where it can use the domain field to indicate the entity that assigned the House Number.

For example, some of the episodes of *Phineas and Ferb* (2007 -), which originally aired on The Disney Channel, were rearranged when it was released on Disney+. The domain for the original distribution

numbers could be “disneychannel.disney.com” and the domain for the streaming release could be “disneyplus.disney.com”.

Attributes for Episode Sequence Information

Attribute	Description
House Sequence	A number or string
→ <i>Distribution Number</i> [...]	An Episode Number

Attributes for Episode Number

Attribute	Description
value	The number of the episode in the domain, e.g. “1” or “2a”
domain	A text string with no whitespace characters, following the general pattern of a dot-separated list of sub-domains ending in a top-level domain: e.g.: prodco.com

Notes:

Because of its wide industry acceptance, we encourage the use of the EIDR conventions for episodic numbering. See the Episode Number Details section in the EIDR *Data Fields Reference* at <https://www.eidr.org/technical-documentation/>

For compatibility with EIDR and MDDF, a House Sequence number should be no more than 8 characters.

2.3.5 Notes on Relationships in Episodic Creative Works

Series can contain Seasons and/or Episodes. For example, a Christmas Special episode may not belong in any Season, but it is still an Episode of the Series.

Seasons have a seasonOf relationship to a Series, and the Series has a hasSeason relationship to it. Some implementations may only need one, and infer the other – it is always safe to infer the inverse relationship in this case.

Episodes can belong to a Season or a Series. In both cases the relationship is episodeOf/hasEpisode. Some implementations may only need one, and infer the other – it is always safe to infer the inverse relationship in this case.

2.4 Other Ways of Organizing Creative Works

Not everything is formally episodic. Long-running movie series, for example, are often thought of as Series even if they are not formally defined as such. This is very much a grey area, but some general guidelines apply, where OMC emphasizes the production process rather than marketing and distribution.

- Movie sequels, prequels, and remakes should not be considered part of a Series, although there may be special cases. From the point of view of the production process and OMC, they are generally separate productions rather than tightly coupled.
- Franchises, Universes, and so on are not Series. There is skeletal support for them in the Ontology for Media Distribution, which will be revised and extended in the future. Although elements of these can share Characters, Concepts, et al., they are more connected to distribution and marketing than to production.

Implementations should use the Related Works element of a Creative Work to represent these.

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**