



Music Metadata Style Guide

This publication is a work product of digitalmusic.org’s Digital Supply Chain and Operations Workgroup. The group is co-chaired by Sony DADC’s Chris Read and Neurotic Media’s Shachar Oren. Representatives from the following companies contributed to the project: 7digital, Amazon, Beats Music, CI, Emusic, Google, INgrooves Fontana, iTunes, Livewire Entertainment, MediaNet, Microsoft, Neurotic Media, The Orchard, Omnifone, Rdio, Rhapsody, Rovi, Slacker, Sony Music Entertainment, Sony DADC, Sony Network Entertainment, Spotify, Universal Music Group Distribution, Turntable.fm, Warner Music Group, and West10 Entertainment.

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OVERVIEW

The digitalmusic.org Music Metadata Style Guide was created to create harmony and consistency across digital music retailers with respect to how music is listed, ingested, and managed by establishing a common set of metadata guidelines. It is designed to provide all music industry stakeholders the opportunity to work from common naming conventions and data entry standards to help avoid past pitfalls and improve on data quality on a going forward basis. Conforming to a common set of metadata entry rules is critical to ensuring content can be easily discovered, correctly presented, and accurately disclosed in order to eliminate customer confusion, complaints and costly processing errors.

The guidelines outlined within focus on the most common areas of conflict — albums, tracks, ringtones and music videos — and can be applied to any other derivative product that includes music metadata. Classical music designations are not included. It is designed for digital retailers (retailers, carriers, apps, widgets, blogs, etc.) and rightsholders alike.

On the surface this topic may appear a bit intimidating, but in reality it is mostly a series of questions in which you already know the answer.

- Did I perform on all of the songs?
- Was this track used as part of a movie soundtrack?
- Do I have any artists featured on my tracks?
- Did I record these tracks with anyone?
- How many tracks do I have and how long are those tracks?

This very basic Q&A is part of the foundation for creating a very intricate and detailed data set for your entire music catalogue. Each music service is different, so there will be caveats along the way, but the core practices are consistent across most major platforms.

Note: You will be seeing Related DDEX Fields in this document. If your operation utilizes the DDEX standard then please note how these fields apply to you. For those not using DDEX, we highly recommend researching the standard to see how it can benefit your organization.

CONTENT DEFINITIONS

- Content - Song, album, music video or ringtone.
- Album - A collection of tracks.
- Track - Song or music video.
- Song - An audio recording.
- Music Video - A video for a song.
- Ringtone - Standalone audio to be used as a mobile ringtone.
- Artist - The primary performer (for example, an individual musician, a duo, or a band).
- Title - A track, album, music video, or ringtone title as it appears in the Digital Merchant Store.
- Ringtone - A standalone audio recording to be used as a ringtone for a mobile phone.
- Digital Merchant - An online/mobile service or e-store that displays and provides digital music content to end-users / fans / consumers. A digital merchant is a broad term, as the offering may involve (and is not restricted to) download sales, streaming services (radio, subscriptions, etc.), discovery services, recommendations, blogs, and any other use of the products, which this Style Guide attempts to help define.



ERROR DEFINITIONS

- Error - Deviation from guide standard, which results in display errors.
- Critical Error - An error that may cause certain digital merchants to reject the content.
- Acceptable - Deviation from guide that will not cause critical errors.
- Must, must not - Required for style guide conformance.
- Should, should not - A best practice and expected format for your content.
- May - Not required.

ARTIST NAMES

The main performing artists must be credited as Primary on all content.

Failure to visibly credit the main performing artists is a Critical Error.

Standard artist name spellings (full artist name) must be used for all Primary artists.

Non-classical composers, if listed, must only be on tracks, with the exception of Soundtracks and Scores. Non-classical composers may be listed as first initial, last name.

For example:

- **T. Smith**
- **K. Vogel**

Artist names must be sent as the artist would like to appear. Middle names, middle initials, maiden names, nicknames and name suffixes (e.g. Jr.) may be used. Artist name spelling must remain consistent for all content for an artist. For artists with content already available for sale, the appropriate spelling must be obtained from the Digital Merchant Store. Artist names must not include any additional information beyond the name - no role, date, instrument, former band, etc.

Correct	Incorrect	Issue Causing Conflict
Jimi Hendrix	Jimi Hendrix (Guitarist)	Includes Instrument
Bob Marley	Marley, Bob	Formatted as Last, First
OutKast	Outcast	Incorrect Spelling
Jimmy Page	Jimmy Page (Of Led Zeppelin)	Includes Band Name
Jim Morrison	Jim Morrison (1943-1971)	Includes Birth And Death Dates



VARIOUS ARTISTS

The main performing artists must be credited as Primary on all content.

The Primary album-level artist must be “Various Artists” if there are four or more primary performers on the album. This does not apply to Classical content. “Various Artists” must not be a track-level artist, except on continuous mix tracks if performed by various artists.

Incorrect use of “Various Artists” is a Critical Error.

Albums with less than four primary performers must not have an album-level artist of “Various Artists.” The artists must be listed individually.

Variations or abbreviations of “Various Artists” (such as “V/A,” “V.A.,” “Various,” “Various Artist,” and “Varios”) must not be used as an artist name for English language content. Translated versions of “Various Artists” are acceptable as long as they are consistent with the content’s language.

The following are examples of the acceptable format in various languages:

“The criteria for defining ‘Various Artists’ is unresolved as a best practice. Some suggest 3 or more artists or to ignore the Album Artist field and list primary artists at the track level. Review the criteria for your Digital Merchant to help ensure accuracy.

Language	Translation
Dutch	Verschillende Artiesten
French	Multi-Interprètes
German	Verschiedene Interpreten
Italian	Artisti Vari
Portuguese	Vários Intérpretes
Spanish	Varios Artistas
Swedish	Blandade Artister



COMPOUND ARTISTS

Only one artist name must occupy each artist field. Two or more people or groups in one artist field is called a compound artist. Compound artists prevent the Digital Merchant Store from identifying individual artists. This prevents an album from appearing on the correct artist page(s).

Some services only support one artist at the album level. In that case it is advised that you combine artist names (e.g., Monica & Brandy)

A compound artist is a Critical Error.

If more than one artist performs on the content, each artist must be listed individually and indicated as Primary.

Correct	Incorrect
Track Title: Ain't No Mountain High Enough Artists: Marvin Gaye (Primary) Tammi Terrell (Primary)	Track Title: Ain't No Mountain High Enough Artists: Marvin Gaye & Tammi Terrell (Primary)
Track Title: Fishwater Artists: The Dirty Dozen Brass Band (Primary) & Widespread Panic (Primary)	Track Title: Fishwater Artists: The Dirty Dozen Brass Band & Widespread Panic (Primary)

Some Digital Merchants allow other contributors at the track level (e.g., Producer). It is advised to add as much contextual data to your content as possible.

When individual artists are not considered separate entities, but rather exist as the name of a group or the Artists must appear together when individuals are not considered separate artists, or when the name of a group contains the individuals' names. These are not considered compound artists. For artists with content already available for sale, the appropriate spelling must be obtained from the Digital Merchant Store.

For example:

- **Simon & Garfunkel**
- **Anderson Bruford Wakeman Howe**
- **Brooks & Dunn**
- **Katrina & The Waves**
- **Dizzy Gillespie & His Fab Five**
- **Hootie & The Blowfish**
- **Miles Davis Quintet**

Contact your Digital Merchant regarding the searchability and linkage of compound artist names to the individual artist (e.g., Miles Davis, Miles Davis Quintet)



NOTES ON DDEX™

Display Artist

DDEX ERN standard provides a <DisplayArtist> data composite that includes nested <FullNameText> and <ArtistRole> sub-elements. DDEX provides a predefined allowed value list of ArtistRoles which includes MainArtist, FeaturedArtist, Composer and others.

Compound Artist

The DDEX ERN standard also provides the DisplayArtistName element to enable content distributors to communicate the exact display text for the artists associated with the Release. This element enables one to clearly communicate the formatting, capitalization and ordering of any and all artists that are associated with this Release. This may be the distributor’s own preferences or there may be contractual obligations that the distributor must meet.

DDEX Definition References:

- MainArtist — http://ddex.net/dd/ERN36_DSR42/dd/ddex_MainArtist.html
- DisplayArtist Data Composite: — http://ddex.net/dd/ERN36_DSR42/dd/ddexC_Artist.html
- DisplayArtist — http://ddex.net/dd/ERN36_DSR42/dd/ddex_DisplayArtist.html
- DisplayArtistName — http://ddex.net/dd/ERN36_DSR42/dd/ddex_DisplayArtistName.html
- ArtistRole — http://ddex.net/dd/ERN36_DSR42/dd/ddex_ArtistRole.html
- FeaturedArtist — http://ddex.net/dd/ERN36_DSR42/dd/ddex_FeaturedArtist.html

DDEX Xpath Expressions:

- Display Artist Composite
/ernm:NewReleaseMessage/ReleaseList/Release/ReleaseDetailsByTerritory/DisplayArtist/PartyName/
- FullName
/ernm:NewReleaseMessage/ReleaseList/Release/ReleaseDetailsByTerritory/DisplayArtist/Artist-Role
- Display Artist Name Composite
/ernm:NewReleaseMessage/ReleaseList/Release/ReleaseDetailsByTerritory/DisplayArtistName

FEATURING ARTISTS

Multiple artists must be entered separately if a track has a featuring artist.

A featuring artist listed as a compound artist is a Critical Error.

The following are examples of correct ways to list featuring artists:

Track Title	Track Artists
Who Dat Girl (feat. Akon)	Flo Rida (Primary) Akon (Featuring)
If I Get Locked Up (feat. Eminem & Dr. Dre)	Funkmaster Flex (Primary) Big Kap (Primary) Eminem (Featuring) Dr. Dre (Featuring)

See Track Titles section for additional detail on properly crediting featured artists.



ARTIST ROLES

To be visible on the Digital Merchant Store, a non-classical artist must be a Primary artist. Additional artist roles are not visible in the Digital Merchant Store but are stored for future use. The artist names that would appear on the spine of a physical CD must be Primary artists at the album level. Non-classical composers, if listed, must only be listed on tracks with the exception of Soundtracks and Scores. Composers will be delivered with the track data when the customer purchases the track. Featuring artists must have the Featuring role. If the artist is featured on every track on the album, the artist must also be a Featuring artist at the album level.

ALBUM TITLES

The album title must be spelled correctly and must match the cover art. Album titles must not have extra information that is not necessary to identify the content. See the Capitalization & Abbreviations section for capitalization standards.

SINGLE

If an album contains 1–3 normal-length tracks (with each song less than 10 minutes), it must be identified as a single. Videos are not part of the track total. The term “- Single” must appear after the album title. The term “- Single” must always be in English, and is not localized. If “- Single” is not included in the title, it may be automatically added by the Digital Merchant. Albums that do not meet the criteria must not be identified as a single. With the exception of the term “- Single”, the album title of one-track single albums must match the track title, including any extra information in parenthesis or brackets.

EP

If the album meets the following criteria, it must be identified as an EP: 1–3 tracks, one or more tracks with a running time of 10 minutes or more, total running time 30 minutes or less 4–6 tracks, with a running time of 30 minutes or less. Videos are not part of the track total. If “- EP” is not included in the title, it may be automatically added by the Digital Merchant. Albums that do not meet the above criteria must not be identified as an EP. To identify the album as an EP, the term “- EP” must appear after the album title unless the term “EP” is already part of the album title.

The term “EP” must always be in English, and is not localized: **The Title of the Album - EP**

For example:

- **LoveStoned / I Think She Knows (Remixes) - EP**
- **Gårdakvarnar och skit - EP**
- **The Slim Shady EP**

Single & EP classification isn't consistent across platforms. Not all service use EP as part of their primary classification structure. Ex: Some digital merchants classify anything 5 tracks or less AND a duration of 30 min or less as a single.



NOTES ON DDEX™

The DDEX Electronic Release Notification Message standard (ERN) provides a <Title> data composite structure intended to express information about a Release's title. This data composite contains both a <TitleText> element and an optional <SubTitle> element. The <Title> data composite provides for optional @TitleType attribute where "DisplayTitle" is one available option that can be specified.

The DDEX ERN standard provides a <ReleaseType> data element to capture a Release's type description which includes an extensive allowed value set that can be specified. "EP" is not included in the DDEX <ReleaseType> allowed value set but can be specified as a "UserDefined" type. The definitions provided by the DDEX standard for each of the <ReleaseType> allowed values may not be defined same as those defined in this style guide. One can determine the number of SoundRecording Resources associated with each Release by tabulating the number ReleaseResourceReferences within the <ReleaseResourceReferenceList> data composite. Duration information about the Release and the individual SoundRecordings contained in the Release can be found in the <Duration> element in the Release composite and Resource SoundRecording Composite respectively.

DDEX Definition References

- TitleText — http://ddex.net/dd/ERN36_DSR42/dd/ddex_TitleText.html
- SubTitle — http://ddex.net/dd/ERN36_DSR42/dd/ddexC_TypedSubTitle.html
- TitleType — http://ddex.net/dd/ERN36_DSR42/dd/ddex_TitleType.html
- ReleaseType — http://ddex.net/dd/ERN36_DSR42/dd/ddex_ReleaseType.html
- ReleaseResourceReference — http://ddex.net/dd/ERN36_DSR42/dd/ddex_ReleaseResourceReference.html
- Duration — http://ddex.net/dd/ERN36_DSR42/dd/ddex_Duration.html

DDEX Xpath Expressions

- Title Data Composite:
`/ernm:NewReleaseMessage/ReleaseList/Release/ReleaseDetailsByTerritory/Title`
- ReleaseResourceReferenceList Data Composite
`/ernm:NewReleaseMessage/ReleaseList/Release/ReleaseResourceReferenceList`
- Release Duration
`/ernm:NewReleaseMessage/ReleaseList/Release/Duration`
- Sound Recording Duration
`/ernm:NewReleaseMessage/ResourceList/SoundRecording/Duration`



SOUNDTRACKS AND SCORES

Soundtracks and scores for movies, TV and musicals must include wording in the title that indicates the version of the soundtrack or score enclosed in parentheses. The wording that appears on the cover art should be used.

For example:

Version	Example
Original Motion Picture Soundtrack	Twilight (Original Motion Picture Soundtrack)
Original Score	Happy Feet (Original Score)
Music Inspired By The Film	Dazed & Confused (Music Inspired By the Film)
Original Off-Broadway Cast	The Threepenny Opera (Original Off-Broadway Cast)

Scores for TV and movies must have the composer in both the Composer and Primary roles on the album and tracks.

For example:

Album Title	Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope (Original Motion Picture Soundtrack)
Album Artists	John Williams (Primary) John Williams (Composer)
Track Titles	20th Century Fox Fanfare
Medley	Main Title / Rebel Blockade Runner / Imperial Attack
Medley	The Dune Sea of Tatooine / Jawa Sandcrawler
Track Artists (for all tracks)	John Williams (Primary) John Williams (Composer)



NOTES ON DDEX™

As previously described, the DDEX ERN <Title> data composite provides a means to sufficiently capture title information for this type of Release.

DDEX ERN standard provides a <DisplayArtist> data composite that includes nested <FullNameText> and <ArtistRole> sub-elements to capture performing artists and composer information.

DDEX ERN standard provides the flag <IsMedley> element as a setting to communicate when SoundRecording Resources contain a combination of continuous and sequential musical works.

Also, DDEX ERN standard provides the flag <IsMultiArtistCompilation> element as a setting to communicate when a Release contains a compilation of many different artist's recordings.

DDEX Definition References

- DisplayArtist Data Composite: — http://ddex.net/dd/ERN36_DSR42/dd/ddexC_Artist.html
- DisplayArtist — http://ddex.net/dd/ERN36_DSR42/dd/ddex_DisplayArtist.html
- DisplayArtistName — http://ddex.net/dd/ERN36_DSR42/dd/ddex_DisplayArtistName.html
- ArtistRole — http://ddex.net/dd/ERN36_DSR42/dd/ddex_ArtistRole.html
- IsMedley — http://ddex.net/dd/ERN36_DSR42/dd/ddex_IsMedley.html
- IsMultiArtistCompilation — http://ddex.net/dd/ERN36_DSR42/dd/ddex_IsMultiArtistCompilation.html

DDEX Xpath Expressions:

- DisplayArtist Data Composite
`/ernm:NewReleaseMessage/ReleaseList/Release/ReleaseDetailsByTerritory/DisplayArtist`
- IsMedley
`/ernm:NewReleaseMessage/ResourceList/SoundRecording/IsMedley)`
- IsMultiArtistCompilation
`/ernm:NewReleaseMessage/ReleaseList/Release/ReleaseDetailsByTerritory/IsMultiArtistCompilation`



ALBUMS IN A SERIES

When formatting titles for albums that are part of a series, the information should be presented as follows:
Series Title: Album Title

For example:

- **6x6: The Sixties**
- **6x6: The Seventies**
- **Héroes de los 80: Pasto de Tiburones**
- **Héroes de los 80: Moviles**
- **Dreyfus Jazz Club: In the Mood of...Miles**
- **Dreyfus Jazz Club: In the Mood of...Coltrane**

When formatting titles for albums that are part of a series that don't have a specific album name, the information should be presented as follows: Series Title: Artist Name

For example:

- **RCA Country Legends: Charley Pride**
- **RCA 100 Años de Música: Marco Antonio Muñoz**

NOTES ON DDEX™

As previously described, the DDEX ERN <Title> data composite provides a means to sufficiently capture title information for this type of Release

If album series part of a box-set, the DDEX ERN standard provides a means to indicate this using the "DigitalBoxSetRelease" allowed value using the <ReleaseType> data element.

The DDEX ERN standard also provides an optional <RelatedRelease> data composite for use when associating related Releases. The <ReleaseRelationshipType> element provides a UserDefined field to capture Releases which are related by a common series.

COMPLETE AND PARTIAL ALBUMS

All tracks are required. For the digital version of an album, all tracks that exist on the physical version must be delivered and the track numbering must match. The total track count must be provided in your delivery.

Complete albums are required. An album is incomplete if it is missing tracks that are available on the physical version (in the same market). For example, if the physical version of an album has ten tracks, and the version provided to Digital Merchant contains eight tracks, the album is incomplete. The album will be marked with a partial flag and will not be available for purchase in the digital store.

An incomplete album that is provided as complete is a Critical Error.



TRACK TITLES

Audio must correctly match the titles. Titles must be spelled correctly. In addition, all track titles on an album must be unique. This does not apply to different versions of the same song that are distinctly marked Clean/Explicit.

Audio that does not match the track title is a Critical Error.

Two or more track titles on an album sharing exactly the same name by the same artist is a Critical Error.

Use the title to differentiate multiple versions of tracks with terms such as the following:

- **(Live)**
- **(Radio Edit)**
- **(Extended Version)**
- **(Single Version)**

UTILIZATION OF "FEAT." AND "WITH"

Terms that indicate additional artist collaboration on a track—such as “feat.” (for “featuring”) and “with”—when included in the title must be lowercase and in English. No diversion of spelling is acceptable (i.e.: “featuring,” “Featuring,” “Feat,” “w/,” “With,” etc.) For multiple performances, use the below as a guide:

- **Name of Track (feat. Other Artist)**
- **Name of Track (with Other Artist)**
- **Name of Track (feat. Other Artist #1 & Other Artist #2)**
- **Name of Track (feat. Other Artist #1, Other Artist #2 & Other Artist #3)**

For example:

- **Ayo Technology (feat. Justin Timberlake)**
- **The Prayer (with Charlotte Church)**
- **Shortie Like Mine (feat. Chris Brown & Jhnta Austin)**
- **Sweetest Girl (Dollar Bill) [feat. Akon, Lil Wayne & Niia]**
- **Cose della vita (feat. Maggie & Penta)**

In addition to adding the names as text in the titles, the featuring artist must have the Featuring role. If the same artist is featured for every track, they must also be listed as “feat.” in the album title.

The following are examples of correctly formatted multitrack albums on which the same artists are featured on all tracks:

Album Title	The Journey (Remixes) [feat. Ursula Rucker]
Album Artists	Sander Kleinenberg (Primary) Kraak & Smaak (Primary) Ursula
Track Titles	The Journey (Extended Mix) [feat. Ursula Rucker] The Journey (Sander Kleinenberg Dub Mix) [feat. Ursula Rucker]
Track Artists (for all tracks)	Sander Kleinenberg (Primary) Kraak & Smaak (Primary) Ursula Rucker (Featuring)



MEDLEYS

For medleys, each listed song in the medley must be spaced and separated by a forward slash. If the word medley or a title for the medley itself is included, it should either precede the songs and be followed by a colon or follow the songs and be contained in parentheses.

For example:

Version	Example
Song A / Song B / Song C	A Merry Christmas / Joy Be With You / Apples in Water
Medley: Song A / Song B / Song C	Medley: God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen / Deck the Halls / Hark! The Herald Angels Sing
Medley Title: Song A / Song B / Song C	Closing Medley: Folsom Prison Blues / I Walk the Line / Ring of Fire
Song A / Song B / Song C (Medley)	We Are Trying to Stay Alive / Real Thing / Ain't Nobody (Medley)

SOUNDTRACKS

If all tracks on an album are from the same soundtrack, the album title must indicate the version of the soundtrack as described in Soundtracks and Scores.

If the tracks on the album are not from the same soundtrack, the track title must indicate the soundtrack from which it is from: Song Title (From "Soundtrack Name")

For example:

- **Make 'Em Laugh (From "Singin' in the Rain")**
- **Fast Streets of Shanghai (From "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom")**

GHOST, SILENT AND HIDDEN TRACKS

Intentionally silent tracks placed either on their own or as a gap before a hidden or ghost track must be clearly labeled in the title.

A silent track that is not clearly labeled in the title is a **Critical Error.**

For Example:

Version	Track Example
Silent Track	Outro (Silent Track)
Hidden Track	A Rockin' Good Way (Hidden Track) [feat. Maceo Parker]
Ghost Track	Open My Eyes (Ghost Track)



NOTES ON DDEX™

The DDEX Electronic Release Notification Message standard (ERN) provides a <Title> data composite structure intended to express information about a Release's title. This data composite contains both a <TitleText> element and an optional <SubTitle> element. The <Title> data composite provides for optional @TitleType attribute where "DisplayTitle" is one available option that can be specified.

The DDEX ERN standard provides a <ReleaseType> data element to capture a Release's type description which includes an extensive allowed value set that can be specified. TrackRelease is included as one of the DDEX <ReleaseType> allowed values.

Explicit, Edited, NotExplicit, Unknown and NoAdviseAvailable are included allowed values that are included in the DDEX ERN standard to conveyed information about a Release using the <ParentalWarningType> element.

As mentioned earlier, DDEX ERN standard provides a <DisplayArtist> data composite that includes nested <Full-NameText> and <ArtistRole> sub-elements to convey FeaturedArtist information.

The DDEX ERN standard provides the flag <IsMedley> element as a setting to communicate when SoundRecording Resources contain a combination of continuous and sequential musical works.

The DDEX ERN standard provides the flag <IsHiddenResource> element as a setting to communicate when a SoundRecording Resource is hidden from the consumer is some way.

DDEX Definition References

- TitleText — http://ddex.net/dd/ERN36_DSR42/dd/ddex_TitleText.html
- SubTitle — http://ddex.net/dd/ERN36_DSR42/dd/ddexC_TypedSubTitle.html
- TitleType — http://ddex.net/dd/ERN36_DSR42/dd/ddex_TitleType.html
- ReleaseType — http://ddex.net/dd/ERN36_DSR42/dd/ddex_ReleaseType.html
- ParentalWarningType — http://ddex.net/dd/ERN36_DSR42/dd/ddex_ParentalWarningType.html
- DisplayArtist Data Composite — http://ddex.net/dd/ERN36_DSR42/dd/ddexC_Artist.html
- DisplayArtist — http://ddex.net/dd/ERN36_DSR42/dd/ddex_DisplayArtist.html
- DisplayArtistName — http://ddex.net/dd/ERN36_DSR42/dd/ddex_DisplayArtistName.html
- ArtistRole http://ddex.net/dd/ERN36_DSR42/dd/ddex_ArtistRole.html
- IsMedley — http://ddex.net/dd/ERN36_DSR42/dd/ddex_IsMedley.html
- IsHiddenResource — http://ddex.net/dd/ERN36_DSR42/dd/ddex_IsHiddenResource.html

DDEX Xpath Expressions

- Title Data Composite
`/ernm:NewReleaseMessage/ReleaseList/Release/ReleaseDetailsByTerritory/Title`
- ParentalWarningType
`/ernm:NewReleaseMessage/ReleaseList/Release/ReleaseDetailsByTerritory/ParentalWarning-Type`
- DisplayArtsits Data Composite
`/ernm:NewReleaseMessage/ReleaseList/Release/ReleaseDetailsByTerritory/DisplayArtist`
- IsMedley
`/ernm:NewReleaseMessage/ResourceList/SoundRecording/IsMedley`
- IsHidden
`ernm:NewReleaseMessage/ResourceList/SoundRecording/IsHiddenResource`



GENRES

Accuracy. Genres must not be egregiously misclassified (for example, Hip Hop/Rap in place of Children’s Music). For a complete list of acceptable genres, contact your Digital Merchant Store. Keep in mind that the genre list could change at any time. Although you may be able to select primary and secondary genres, the primary genre must be the best description for the content. The secondary genre provides an additional search term that may help users find the content. A second genre is not always required, but it should be used when applicable.

CAPITALIZATION & TITLE CASING

Titles must not be in all capitals, all lowercase, or random casing.

For example:

Incorrect	Reason
YOUNG AMERICANS	Title is all upper case.
the downward spiral	Title is all lower case.
a TIME to love	Title has random capitalization.

“The” must be capitalized when it is the start of an Artist’s name. The following words must be lowercase, with a few exceptions:

- **a, an, and, as, but, for, from, nor, of, or, so, the, to, yet**
- Prepositions of four letters or fewer (**at, by, for, from, in, into, of, off, on, onto, out, over, to, up, and with**), except when the word is part of a verb phrase or is used as another part of speech (such as an adverb, adjective, noun, or verb)

For Example:

- **In the Still of the Night**
- **(You Make Me Feel Like A) Natural Woman**
- **To Be, or Not to Be**
- **The One and Only**

Always capitalize the first and last word in a title. Capitalize the first and last word in parentheses.

For Example:

- **To Be, or Not to Be**
- **What They’re Looking For**
- **War (What Is It Good For?)**
- **(You Make Me Feel Like A) Natural Woman**



Intentionally misspelled words must respect the same title casing rules.

For example:

- **In da House**
- **Kill 'Em n' Grill 'Em**
- **It's fo' Realz**

The elements of hyphenated words must be capitalized except for a, an, and, for, from, of, or, the, to and in.

For example:

- **Down-and-Out Blues**
- **Just Another Run-of-the-Mill Day**

*For general cases on capitalization and title casing not addressed in this guide, refer to The Chicago Manual of Style.

ABBREVIATIONS

Frequent abbreviations of the original title must not be used to provide additional information about the content.

The following abbreviations are acceptable: **& a.k.a. DJ feat. No. Pt. Pts. TV vs. Vol.**

To be used only in titles. Must not be used in artist names.

In the majority of cases this creates a compound artist Critical Error.

The following case-specific abbreviations must not be used: **Alt. Dj Ft. Feat. N. Rmx Tv tv V. VI. Vs. v. w/ w/o**

LANGUAGE – CASING & ACCENTS

The appropriate language must be designated in the metadata to ensure that accents, capitalizations and casings appear correctly in the Digital Merchant Store.

If an album is sent in with `<language>en-US</language>` and the song titles are all in French, accents and casings will be lost or changed during import.

An incorrect language setting is a Critical Error.

ENGLISH, SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE

English albums and track titles must be in title case format and follow the casing conventions as outlined in Capitalization & Title Case section. In addition, for English, words before and after a -, /, or : must be capitalized.

For Spanish and Portuguese album and track titles, the content provider can decide on either title or sentence casing (as long as the casing is consistent through a given album).



SWEDISH, FRENCH AND ITALIAN

Swedish, French, and Italian album and track titles must be formatted in sentence case format.

For Example:

Swedish, French and Italian Albums	Swedish, French and Italian Tracks
L'amour dans la rue	Jonques de pêcheurs au crépuscule
Il mondo che vorrei	Les chants magnétiques
C'è chi dice no	Il mondo che vorrei
Hoppa upp!	E adesso che tocca a me
För sent för edelweiss	Kärlek är ett brev skickat tusen gånger
Swing de Paris	Sur les monts d'Auvergne

GERMAN

For German album and track titles, sentence case must be used and the first letter of every noun must be capitalized.

For example:

German Albums	German Tracks
Was ihr wollt	Ich tu dir Weh
So ist das Spiel	Dicke Mädchen haben schöne Namen

For German names and titles, all characters commonly used in German orthography must be used, such as: **Ä ä, Ö ö, Ü ü, ß**

For example:

Correct	Incorrect
Ihre größten Erfolge	Ihre groessten Erfolge
1000 Träume weit	1000 Traeume weit

All accents must be included for all supported languages.

For example:

- **Hôtel d'Angleterre**
- **Révérence**
- **Max Gazzè**
- **L'uomo più furbo**
- **Les plus belles chansons françaises**



JAPANESE

The use of capitalization varies for Japanese albums and songs. This topic and other areas will be addressed in the future release of the Japanese version of this guide. For more information please refer to the Japanese style guides of your digital merchant. A long-term goal for the guide is to provide multi-language support for Asian territories.

CONTENT DELIVERY

Although a very a critical element to making your content available, format is not enough. In most cases the Digital Merchant will provide a set of terms that must be closely followed to help ensure your tracks, videos, ringtones, etc. are accurately ingested into their systems. The following are some standard components and excerpts of a typical Digital Merchant SLA (Service Level Agreement):

- **Initial Delivery** – Each Digital Merchant will have specific timelines and requirements for delivering content. These will be critical deadlines as they pertain to the release date, launch, etc. for the content submitted.
 - *Ex: “Content should be delivered at least 5 business days before earliest territory release date, with respect to proper delivery specifications as “insert” deliveries”*
- **Updates (Pre-release)** – After the initial content submission, the Digital Merchant will most likely provide a window of time for updates, takedowns, etc.
 - *Ex: “Metadata updates and takedowns should be delivered at least 36 hours before expected live date through our feed”*
- **Format** – Each Digital Merchant will have specific format requirements and restrictions.
 - *Ex: “We accept audio files in wav, aiff and mp3 formats.*
 - *Ex: “We do not accept hard-drive deliveries.”*
- **Definitions** – Similar to the definitions provided for this style guide, each Digital Merchant will have a specific set of definitions that relate to content submissions.



NEXT STEPS

Please note that this guide is an entry-level guide to properly creating metadata for tracks, albums and artists. Future versions of the guide will focus on adding additional topics to make the guide even more comprehensive (e.g., classical content, continuous mixes, etc.). Short-term next steps are to translate the guide into a wiki where changes and updates can be submitted and mediated in an aggregated platform. As the features and capabilities for new music services continue to grow at a rapid pace, our plan is for this guide to serve as a foundation for creating additional standards for contextual areas needed to meet market demand.

digitalmusic.org's Music Industry Style Guide was established in May 2012 in order to facilitate a collaborative effort within music industry. We welcome feedback from all stakeholders. We will continue to accept updates and changes and periodically release the document in new version in the future as additional improvements are introduced and accepted by the digitalmusic.org community.

Please remember that digitalmusic.org is available as a resource for many key digital initiatives and challenges presented in the music industry. To learn more about the organization and how you can be involved visit <http://digitalmusic.org/> or send an email to info@digitalmusic.org.

**This document and appendices were sourced with permission from various retailer-supplied documents.*





APPENDIX A: EXAMPLE SLA

Document: Example Service Level Agreement (SLA)

From: Streaming Service Provider (Content Operations)

To: Record Label, Artist, Management Company, etc.

Our Content Operations team is committed to providing top-level service to all our partners. To improve the reliability of our services, we have sanctioned this service level agreement. This SLA is based on requested lead times and general content operations trends that we have observed and experienced over time. It is valid for properly delivered products only.

Refer to our Metadata Style Guide for details on our metadata requirements. If you have any questions regarding the SLA/ Style Guide or if you have a priority product that is in danger of breaching the SLA, please contact the Content Operations team (content@exampleco.com). We will do our very best to assist with any issues.

- Content should be delivered at least 5 business days before earliest territory release date, with respect to proper delivery specifications as “insert” deliveries
- Metadata updates/takedowns should be delivered at least 36 hours before expected live date through our feed
- We define “delivered” as when content has been accurately prepared, batches have been successfully sent through the feed, marked as complete and properly ingested
- Content, metadata updates and takedowns must be delivered through our feed.
- We do not accept hard-drive deliveries.

**Please know that this SLA is not guaranteed during maintenance or server downtimes.*

Thank you,
Content Operations

Post Ingestion

We currently display metadata articulated in the most recent ingested, indexed xml delivery.

- **Artist Name Misspellings**
 - All metadata must be delivered accurately upon first release. If not, artist pages would be created with artist/ title misspellings and accent/caps inaccuracies.
- **Album Relocations**
 - Albums can be relocated if they exist on the wrong artist page (except “Appears On” section). Please contact your account manager if you encounter any inconsistencies.
- **Display Years**
 - Albums are displayed on artist pages in descending order (newest releases first).
 - After album listings, we display singles, then the “Appears On” section
 - Please see our Metadata Style Guide for more details on how we define albums and singles.
 - If you encounter any inconsistencies, please reach out to content@exampleco.com.
- **Artist Biographies and Images**
 - All biographies and images are fed through xyzcompany.com.
 - For any updates, please reach out to XYZ Company. They have their own editorial but accept official submissions to use as a guide.
- **Album or Single**
 - Products containing 5 tracks or less and has a duration of 30 minutes or less, is defined as a single on our service.
- **Track Linking**
 - Our linking logic is still a work in progress, so please refrain from relying on it too heavily. We do advise to keep singles available on the service, even after the album is released.
- **Top Lists**
 - These lists are refreshed weekly on Mondays. If you do not see an update, please reach out to your account manager for more details.



APPENDIX B: Letter From DDEX

The following pages contain comments from DDEX on how digitalmusic.org and DDEX can work together on V.2.0 of this Style Guide.



c/o Sony Music Entertainment, 550 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10022, USA

1st May 2013

Bill Wilson
Digitalmusic.org
9 Eves Drive
Suite 120
Marlton
New Jersey
NJ 08053
United States of America

Dear Bill,

Re: Digitalmusic.org's Style Guide

Thank you for providing DDEX with an advanced copy of Digitalmusic.org's Music Industry Style Guide. We very much appreciate the explicit references to DDEX!

As requested we have had a look at the style guide not just as a stand alone document but with reference to DDEX's current standards, particular the business and release profiles, and in light of our planned activities for the remainder of 2013. This letter sets out the comments that we have. As these comments are reasonably detailed and as you are so close to publication of v1.0 we would not expect them to be included in this version of the document. We would suggest therefore that there be a joint work item carried out by member representatives of Digitalmusic.org and DDEX. We can discuss how this might be organised at MusicBiz 2013.

So, in no particular order:

1. We would suggest that a link to DDEX's website appears in the style guide. It would be good to have a specific reference to the profiles on the knowledge base (see <http://kb.ddex.net/display/ERNRP/Release+Profiles+for+Common+Release+Types>). We also suggest adding a link to the DDEX ERN Choreography standard as a way of harmonising delivery;
2. DDEX aims to avoid the term "ERN Standards" preferring instead the more general term "Release Delivery Standards". We have found that this makes the grasp of what the standard does much easier. We would suggest that is also worth mentioning in the style guide that with most of DDEX's standard there is the baseline standard, which then has specific profiles (and in some cases choreographies) and it is these that enable consistency in implementations;
3. It would be helpful for the style guide to separate DisplayArtists from DisplayArtistNames. There can only ever be one DisplayArtistName for each creation (be it a "track" or an "album") but each individual or group with a separate "identity" should be listed separately in the DisplayArtist (together with a role). In this context,

the samples in the table on page "Compound" would be easier to read if the data elements are clearly separated, e.g. into individual lines, as per the below (the same applies to all tables):

Correct:

Title: ...

Artist: Marvin Gaye

Role: Primary

Artist: Tammi Terrell

Role: Primary

etc;

4. In some subject areas there are rules in DDEX but no rules in the style guide. This is because some of the DDEX rules go beyond the scope of a style guide. In those circumstances we suggest that the style guide references them (e.g. "When using DDEX, there is an additional rule: XXXX");
5. Similarly where there are style guide rules but no DDEX equivalent DDEX would want to consider adding these to its Knowledge Base. Some examples of these are as follows:
 - (i) When communicating a Release with more than one sound recording, DDEX mandates that for each Resource a single-Resource Release is to be communicated. There is no rule for this in the style guide;
 - (ii) DDEX defines clear rules on how to express the order of the tracks in a Release. There is no rule for this in the style guide;
 - (iii) The style guide does not mention the requirement that territorial information is required even for products that are only available in one territory and/or may only contain data valid for the entire world;
 - (iv) DDEX separates between the ReferenceTitle and a Title. DDEX indicates that a title of type FormalTitle and a Title of type DisplayTitle shall be provided. There is no rule for this in the style guide;
 - (v) The style guide references a "secondary" genre. Unless this references to a sub genre, there is no such concept in DDEX. In fact, DDEX specifically agreed that all genres (other than sub genres) are equal. This may be a conflict that needs to be ironed out;
 - (vi) DDEX requires the communication of a PLine. There is no rule for this in the style guide;
 - (vii) The same applies for a parental warning field, release date for each product, information in relationships to other products, the need to communicate writer information, and DDEX's limitation on the identifiers to be used;
 - (viii) DDEX separates out the communication of DisplayArtists and a DisplayArtistName. There is no separation of these elements in the style guide;
 - (ix) In the context of classical albums DDEX has complex rules on how to communicate titles and product hierarchies. There are no rules for this in the style guide;
 - (x) Singles can have 1-∞ sound recordings in DDEX but only 1-3 in the style guide rules and the style guide also applies a limitation on the track length which does not exist in DDEX;
 - (xi) Singles have to have a cover image in DDEX. There is no rule for this in the style guide; and

- (xii) The style guide mandates that the term "- Single" must be part of the title. There is no rule for this in DDEX and the same applies to EPs.

I hope that you will find these comments constructive (which is very much the spirit in which they are provided) and look forward to seeing you at **MusicBiz 2013**. Whilst there we can figure out how best to move forward.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Isherwood". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mark Isherwood
DDEX Secretariat