

Base Set Metadata for Distribution

Explanatory Cover Letter

The “Base Set Metadata for Distribution” presented by the German TV Platform consists of two parts: on the one hand, the set itself with a listing of fields, and on the other, as a linked element, a list of genres.

The entire “Base Set Metadata for Distribution” is a compilation intended as a recommendation and targeted primarily at broadcasters. At the same time, this Base Set expresses a common understanding of these metadata in the minds of relevant market forces, thus facilitating an exchange of metadata for distribution.

This revised version of the “Base Set Metadata for Distribution” (as of 26 June 2020) contains – for the first time – recommendations on metadata for linear as well as non-linear content.

Point of Departure

In this digital world with its ever-increasing amount of available content on ever more platforms and user devices, metadata are “digital lubricants” that allow all market players to achieve a transfer of metadata to the consumers that is as hassle-free as possible.

The distribution of program metadata is accomplished in several steps and often between more than two partners.

Displaying a data set on a device used by the consumer involves the broadcaster (herein also referred to as *data provider*), often one or even two metadata service provider(s), and finally the actual EPG operator. For simplicity’s sake, these two groups will be referred to herein as *data receivers*.

On the way from data providers to data receivers, various types of “friction loss” may occur, which then have to be fixed at great effort on the data receivers’ side.

Goal

Through the Base Set presented here, the German TV Platform’s Metadata Project aims at minimizing friction loss as well as workload.

To this end, the German TV Platform has compiled the minimum requirements for metadata for distribution in a cross-market initiative and undertaken a major step towards harmonization through an alignment of understanding among all parties involved.

The Base Set Metadata is a point of departure for the further use by metadata service providers and the various platforms with their relevant applications (e.g. EPG).

The question how and in which (technical) format data should be exchanged between market players may now be answered in bilateral arrangements between data providers and receivers. In addition, Project Metadata has exchanged views on technical structuring.

Broadcasters hope that with the set presented here, the distributed data will be adopted without further processing wherever and whenever possible. Metadata service providers and EPG operators, on the other hand, expect to minimize efforts on their side.

Special Role Genre List

Genres in particular are vital for so-called recommendation engines (“reco engines” for short) which are becoming more and more common, as they play an important role in the grouping and findability of content.

The present list is not complete and will be continuously expanded. It has to be said that the phrasing and granularity of a list like this may be represented in many different ways, depending on the broadcaster and the tone of the programming. The list contains some examples. The labeling of content with genre identifiers will be handled by the broadcasters, being most familiar with the editorial content of a program.

The assignment of a genres does not replace the more in-depth tagging of content, meaning its thematic analysis. The present list is no substitute for this level. The question to which depth and for what purpose these tags are needed remains open.

The **formal aspects** include terms which unambiguously describe form, production, or style of a program, such as *magazine*, *news*, *show*. For this group, we recommend that this base list be continuously adapted.

Contentual aspects serve the purpose of indicating and describing the content of a program thematically, which is not always possible along clear-cut lines. Certain terms may be ambiguous, such as *family* (a program *for* or *about* families?), animals, politics, etc. For the time being, the Base Set should focus on the first group.

A special case is certainly the generic term *sports*. Depending on the type of programming, far more precise descriptive terms are required. In this case, we recommend that an equally non-binding list be added (running, for example, from American Football through Olympic Games to Winter Sports).

This list does not contain any hierarchical structuring of genres, as the work group deemed a “flat list” more suitable to contentual aspects, given certain crossovers and redundancies.