

believe®

Audio Content Guidelines

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With the following guidelines Believe comes fully transparent regarding the editorial policy to all believers and clients. They detail all the rules by which checks and corrections are operated by content management teams, to deliver releases that are compliant with stores guidelines. Our main goal is to serve our clients the best we can by maximizing our clients' revenues.

What happens to my release in Believe's systems?



The main stores have very strict and precise rules on what kind of content they accept and how it should be presented. Not abiding by these rules may result on a reduced visibility of the content, or even a refusal to host it. To avoid this, and to help producers optimize their revenues, Believe put together a synthesis of these rules to apply when producers create a release.

1. Content - Audio

An audio (or video) file is mandatory to create a release.

1.1. Audio quality rules

Audio format by Believe. The generic format of audio file is WAV 16 bits, 44,100 Hz, Stereo. Do not use multiple formats in the same release. The file must be complete (not cut) and good quality (no noise for example)

HD files. For 24-bit format, file must be among the following options: 24-bit / 44100 Hz (24/44); 24-bit / 48000 Hz (24/48); 24-bit / 88200 Hz (24/88); 24-bit / 96000 Hz (24/96).

Track length. For singles, EPs and albums, at least half of the tracks of the release must last more than 45 seconds.

Number of tracks. The number of tracks can be limited according to stores' guidelines.

1.2. Audio content rules (include but are not limited to)

Pornographic content. Audio displaying pornographic content is not accepted. Pornography refers to content that are designed to cause sexual excitement by showing or describing sexual acts. (Collins dictionary).

Nazi propaganda. Content making the apology of Nazism is not accepted.

Terrorism. Audio displaying terrorist content or promoting terrorist activities is not accepted.

Cultural sensitivities. (according to stores policies and territorial legislation) Audio promoting or displaying any form of hate speech, children safety issues, harassment, extreme violence, xenophobic content or any other discriminatory content may not be accepted.

Delivery to MENA. Content managers make sure that the content is fit for delivery in this region. Ex: no blaspheme, no Israeli content delivery to Lebanon, etc. Else the delivery to MENA will be blocked.

Believe will have complete freedom to adapt its content guidelines regarding delivery to sensitive territories, at its sole discretion, from time to time.

1.3. Audio legal rules

Only submit an audio file to Believe as owner as a rightsowner or licensee of the Master recording.

Third parties IP. Mentioning a third party's intellectual property is not accepted on any store. Do not mention any third party's intellectual property without prior authorization from their owner.

Blacklisted artists/releases. To avoid infringement, Believe's system automatically checks the artist name in the top artists list.

Curated artist. Is considered "curated artist", an artist having sufficient instances of a song or catalogue already available on stores. Believe may prevent delivery to certain stores if the artist or the audio is identified as "curated artist" or "cover version" by stores and/or by Believe.

Public Domain. According to local laws or rules and to stores policies, Believe may reject "public domain content". For example in France: releases produced before 1965 (for 2021) are "public domain" and can't be delivered to Apple and Spotify.

Note: In case of masters' ownership, exceptions may apply.

1.4. Audio duplicates

Tracks with identical audio files and identical metadata as another one already in Believe's database will not be accepted (based on MD5 algorithm).

2. Cover artwork

Cover artworks are mandatory. Deliver the original artwork whenever possible.

2.1. Artwork quality rules

Artwork format. The artwork must be in JPEG format, between 1440x1440 and 3000x3000 pixels.

Pixelated, blurry, stretched, misaligned or rotated artworks are not accepted.

Cropped images / Additional bars on artworks. Not accepted: covers containing additional bars (that are not a part of artwork's design) to fit the required resolution or artworks that a missing part(s) of the image (or information).

Artistic choice. In some cases, blurry, pixelated, misaligned, cropped and rotated artworks may be accepted if the mentioned effects are displayed as artistic choice and in artistic purposes.

2.2. Artwork image content rules (include but are not limited to)

Third parties IP. Displaying of third party's intellectual property on the artwork is not accepted on any store. Do not display famous characters, pieces of arts, logos, trademarks, industrial design etc. without prior authorization from their owner. Representation of an artist as a character of movie, TV show or cartoon may be tolerated for artistic choices. Note that any parody or misuse of third parties IP may be rejected despite artistic choice.

Pornographic content. Artworks displaying pornographic content are not accepted.

Nazi propaganda. Artworks depicting Nazi symbolism are not accepted.

Terrorism. Artworks displaying terrorist content or promoting terrorist activities are not accepted.

Cultural sensitivities. (according to stores policies and territorial legislation) May be rejected: artworks displaying shocking images or graphic content, artworks promoting or displaying any form of children safety issues, harassment, extreme violence, xenophobic content or any other discriminatory content, artworks containing images of nudity (even with Explicit Content Logo), drug reference or depiction of drug.

Generic templates. Artworks using generic templates are not accepted. Artworks using the same image while changing the color pallet are considered as generic templates and are not accepted either.

Believe will have complete freedom to adapt its artwork guidelines regarding delivery to sensitive territories, at its sole discretion, from time to time.

2.3. Artwork information rules

Artwork/Metadata Mismatch. Information displayed on the artwork should match exactly the release's metadata (i.e. Artist's Name, Release Titles, etc.). Note that displaying information in alphabet/language that is different to metadata's but matches it in meaning is considered a mismatch.

Misuse of Parental Advisory/Explicit Content logo. Don't use the Parental Advisory/Explicit Content logo on the artwork unless one of the tracks is marked as explicit. Note that the "**Restricted logo**" is solely used for R rated movies, not music.

Stores names and logos. Artworks containing Digital Music Store names or logos are not accepted. Do not display Stores names or logos even if the release will be distributed on these stores.

Misleading artworks / Missing content. Artworks referencing information or content (i.e. "video included") that is not included in the release are not accepted. Do not display information that may mislead a customer in any way on the artwork.

References to physical or digital product. Artworks containing references to physical support or digital product (i.e., "CD", "Cassette", "mp3", etc.) are not accepted.

Information limited in time. Artworks containing terms and notions that can be true only for a certain period (i.e., "New", "Latest", "Coming Soon", etc.) are not accepted.

Pricing tags / Barcodes. Artworks containing prices in any currency or barcodes (even for design purposes) are not accepted.

Rights limitation. Artworks that forbid or limit distribution rights in any way are not accepted (i.e., phrases like "All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means").

Up-selling / Advertising. Artworks that up-sell or advertise another product are not accepted.

Contact information. Artworks containing contact information of any sort (phone numbers, e-mail, etc.) or web-links are not accepted.

3. Explicit content

3.1. Explicit Content definition

An explicit track must be tagged as Explicit. "Explicit" mention is used only to qualify language (not pictures or art covers for instance).

Explicit definition. Content containing explicit language, sexual behavior, discriminatory language, drug reference or depiction of drug use.

3.2. Cleaned version

Clean versions of explicit tracks must be tagged as Clean. Tracks should only be flagged Clean if there is an explicit version of the track.

Explicit and Clean must be entered using the proper tag, which is a separate field in metadata format, and not part of the track title. Terms like “(Clean),” “(Clean Version),” “(Explicit),” and “(Explicit Version)” must not be used for track or product titles/versions.

3.3. Censoring words

Album and track titles must be submitted in the original form that was intended by the artist. Explicit words may be automatically censored by stores. Do not insert the asterisks yourself as it affects customers’ ability to search for and find the content they are looking for.

4. Metadata consistency

4.1. Metadata consistency

All mandatory fields must be filled: track titles, composers, label...

Correct format and number of characters for codes (UPC, ISRC, EAN...) is required, or a blocking error during ingestion will occur. Correct format for genre and language is ensured by constrained lists during ingestion.

For Jazz releases, the detailed contribution of each performer must be added.

For opera / western classical genres specific fields must be filled: movement, n° opus, tonality, etc.

Else, content managers fill highlighted empty fields with internet (imsip) or ask the producer.

4.2. Duplicates

Release duplicates. A release is considered a duplicate if:

- it has already been delivered on store.
- there is already a release with the same ISRC or UPC in the database.

Track duplicate in a release. Believe’s system doesn’t accept two tracks with the same metadata in one release.

4.3. Language

Metadata Language : The track title language must match with the manually entered language metadata, and the casing for this language must be respected.

Lyrics Language: The appropriate audio language must be set in the metadata at the track level.

Language must match the language spoken or sung in the audio. Nonlinguistic content must be set as instrumental. Note: For lyrics in some Indian content, Original Metadata Language must be set to English.

4.4. Original Release Dates

Accuracy. Albums, tracks, and music videos must be delivered with the release date of their original issue, digitally or physically, regardless of version or country or region of origin

5. Artist fields

5.1. Artist's Name Formatting and Spelling

The standard, full artist's name and proper spelling should be used in the artist's name field. Artist's name spelling must remain consistent throughout the track list and the database. When a single artist is present on all tracks of a release, list that artist on the album level as well.

Use only the name indicated on the official artist's page in social media and/or official Internet resources (i.e. Wikipedia, Discogs, etc.).

List artist's name only in artist's field, don't list it in album or track titles followed by dash (i.e. track title "Guns n' Roses – Sweet Child o' Mine" is not accepted).

There are three types of artist names:

- **Personal Names.** Artists using personal names, instead of stage names or pseudonyms, should always be listed in the native name order. Native name order is defined by grammar rules of a language (i.e. artist's name in English should be listed as "First_Name Last_Name", when artist's name in Chinese should be listed as "Last_Name First_Name").
- **Stage Names / Pseudonyms.** There are no restrictions on artists' stage names, they must be listed in the fashion dictated by the artist (on condition they comply to the rules here below). Note that if a stage name or pseudonym is explicit the album must be tagged as explicit as well.
- **Bands / Collectives.** List only the name of band / collective in the artist's field. Do not list individual members of the band in the main artist field. In cases when a main artist performs with an accompanying band, list only the main artist.

5.2. Artist's fields content

Generic or Fake artists. Content that is using generic or fake artists profiles is not accepted on some stores (e.g. Apple, Spotify). The purpose of fake artists is to generate streams and downloads by using either fake audio files, sound-alike covers for famous songs or original audios of famous songs. Generic artists are names like: White Noise, Yoga, Workout, Meditation, Baby, Christmas, Top Hits, Chorus, Orchestra, or Singer.

Any generic or fake artists releases, when spotted after being delivered, is a subject to immediate takedown without the right of being restored on relevant stores. The decision is applicable to the whole catalogue of such artist.

Multiple Artists Formatting. If a release contains more than one main artist, use a new field to list an additional artist (or separate artists' names by coma). When a track list contains two or three different artists, they all must be indicated on album level and separated by comas.

Various Artists. If there are four or more different performing artists on track level, the artist on the album level must be indicated as "Various Artists". Do not list "Various Artists" on the track level. List all the performing artists instead separated by comas. For one track singles it is accepted to indicate all performing artists at the album level even if they are more than five. Note that when one artist is present on all tracks of the track list, it is possible to indicate only that artist on album level (even if more than five artists are present in the track list).

Compound Artists. Artists who are generally listed together and were performing throughout whole or (in some exceptional cases) a part of their career together are considered compound (i.e. "Bob Marley and the Wailers" is considered as compound, even though Bob Marley had a solo career afterwards). Such artists can be indicted together in the same field by using & or any other conjunctive separator (i.e. Simon & Garfunkel, etc.).

Compound artists are considered as one artist by the stores. Any misuse of compound artist may lead to disorder and incorrect display of the artists' pages.

Using “Meets” or “vs.”. For artists using “Meets” or “vs.”, all artists involved must be listed at the album or track level and separated as two independent artists by a coma. The terms “Meets” and “vs.” must only appear in the album or track title. These terms must not be used in the artist's field.

5.3. Artist roles

Presenting artists and presented artists. A "presenting artist" is introducing a "presented artist". The "presented artist" must always be listed as main artist, whereas the "presenting artist" will be treated according to his actual performance:

- Presenting artist performs alongside a presented artist. In this case the presenting artist may be listed as the main artist with the presented artist.
- Presenting artist doesn't perform with a presented artist. In this case the presenting artist may be indicated only in the release or track version. Do not list non-performing presenting artist in the main artist field. If the presenting relationship does not apply to every track, the non-performing presenting artist should be named only in the track titles.

Featuring artists. Featuring artists must only be listed in the featuring field on track and/or album level. Do not list them in track version or artist field. Do not use mentions “feat.” or “featuring” in any metadata field to identify a featuring artist.

If a same artist is present on all tracks of a release list them in the featuring field at album level as well. When multiple featuring artists are present at track/album level, use the same rules of formatting as for the artists. Do not use “Various Artists” mention in featuring field neither on track nor at album level. If different featuring artists are present on each or some tracks, do not list them all at album level.

Remixers. Remixers should be listed in the Remixer field. Do not list remixers in main artist field or featuring field. When listing multiple remixers, apply the same rules as for the artists. Do not use “Various Artists” mention in the remixer field, list all the remixers instead.

Authors and Composers. Full names of authors and composers must be listed in the relevant fields. Stage or band names may be used in these fields if they are registered in Copyright Collecting Societies.

- When listing several different authors or composers, separate them by comas. Do not use any other conjunctive separator.
- When one of the authors or composers has adapted music or translated/adapted lyrics, list only the name of that author or composer.
- Each track must have at least one Composer listed in Composer field. Each track containing lyrics must have at least one Author indicated in the Author field. For instrumental tracks do not list Authors in the Author field, indicate “Instrumental” as the lyrics language instead.
- All composers that are present on track level should be credited on the album level in Composer field. If there are 5 or more different composers on track level, list “Various Composers” at album level instead.
- Do not use “DR”, “RR”, “Rights reserved”, “Public Domain” mentions in author and composer fields. The use of “Traditional” or “Anonymous” mention for folk songs is accepted.

5.4. Artist ID

Artist ID definition. It is a suite of characters (numbers, letters, or both), that is unique for each store. It is attributed by stores automatically when at least one release of an artist has been delivered. Artist ID defines an artist's page and catalogues all albums of that artist on the same page.

If possible, **indicate Artist ID** for main and featuring artists for Apple, Spotify, and any other store artist ID required by Believe system, to ensure that artist's releases are delivered to the correct profiles.

If no Artist ID is indicated, Believe system will try to create a new artist's profile on Apple and/or Spotify, on the condition that it cannot find an exact match for the artist's name on stores.

6. Title fields

6.1. Formatting

Title format. Album and Track Titles must be accurate, formatted correctly and use a proper capitalization depending on the language of the Title. Do not use generic titles, such as Track 1, Track 2, or Instrumental, unless they are the actual titles of the tracks or ringtones. Title formatting in a series should be consistent.

Titles should not be in all capitals, all lowercase, or random casing, as stores may refuse releases for this reason.

Abbreviations. Descriptors like Part and Volume should be abbreviated with "Pt." and "Vol." Titles should be formatted as "Title, Vol. x" and "Title, Pt. x," where x is a number.

6.2. Version

Original version. The standard, original version of an album, track, or music video must not include any additional information in the title unless it is needed to identify the content. Note that the track title without a version field is counted as "Original Version" or "Original Mix", do not indicate them in the version field.

Unaccepted versions. List of unaccepted versions (the list can vary):

Original Version, Album Version, Exclusive, Limited Edition, Tone, Alert Tone, Text Tone, Ringtone, Ringtone Version, E-Release, Digital Only, Digital Download, Digital Single, E-Album, 2 CD Set, With Lyrics, Official Music Video, Full Song Video, Full Version.

Do not submit any title version information that is already addressed with store badges or tags. For example: Clean Version, Explicit Version, Apple Digital Masters...

6.3. Album Version Information

If multiple versions of an album exist, the album version field must be used to indicate the correct version.

If an album offers more content than the standard version of the album (for example, extra tracks or a bonus video), indicate the difference in the album version field. An album containing only music videos needs to be labeled "Video Album" in the album version.

6.4. Multiple Version

It is possible to use multiple track or album versions to identify the content. The rule of formatting multiple versions is following:

- The first version must be enclosed in parentheses - "()"
- The second version must be enclosed in brackets "[]"
- The third and each next version must be enclosed in double brackets "[[]]"

For example, "Whole Lotta Love (Fatboy Slim Remix) [Radio Edit] [[Live]]"

In case of multiple versions, the order should be from less generic version to most generic version.

6.5. Track Version information

All track titles performed by the same artist on an album must be unique, except for different versions of the same track that are differentiated by Parental Advisory tags.

To differentiate multiple versions of the same track title, use terms in parentheses or brackets such as: Alternate Take (for example, 1, 2, and so on), Live, Instrumental, Single Version, Radio Edit, Special Format Mix (for example, 12" Mix), Extended, Session Date Version (for example, 1947 Version), Incomplete, Rehearsal, Breakdown, Male Version, etc.

Standard spellings with no abbreviations should be used for track version information.

6.6. Singles

An album must be identified as a single if it contains one to three songs that are less than 10 minutes each. “- Single” must appear at the end of the title. If “- Single” is not included in the title, we will add it automatically.

6.7. EPs

An album must be identified as an EP if it has:

- One to three songs with one song at least 10 minutes long and a total running time of 30 minutes or less
- Four to six songs with a total running time of 30 minutes or less

“- EP” must appear at the end of the title. If “- EP” is not included in the title, we will add it automatically.

6.8. One Track Products

One-track products must have matching album and track titles, including any parentheses or brackets. The only exception is the addition of “- Single” in the album title. Additionally, all artist information for one-track products must be consistent across the album and track levels.

6.9. Multiple album and medley tracks

Multiple album or track titles in the title field must be separated by a slash. A space must be placed before and after the slash.

6.10. Re-recorded version

If a track is rerecorded, the track title must include “Rerecorded.”

A rerecorded track may be hidden by Apple for editorial reasons if the original “hit” version is live.

6.11. Remastered Versions and New Mixes of Previously Released Recordings

The year of remastering should be included in the title version to properly indicate the version of the master. For example, 2017 Remastered Version. Albums or tracks that are designated as Remastered in the title version should be delivered with the first-known release date of the original version of the recording.

In cases where an entirely new mix has been created for a previously released album, the album should also be delivered with the first-known release date of the original version of the album. The year of the new mix should also be noted. For example, 2013 Mix.

6.12. Soundtrack version information

Soundtracks and scores must include version information in the album title, enclosed in parentheses or brackets.

O.S.T. abbreviation should not be used as an album or song title version for scores, movies, TV, musicals, or video games.

If the tracks are compiled from different soundtracks, each track title must indicate the soundtrack (From “Soundtrack Name”).

Singles from the soundtrack should have the same album and track title in the format Track Title (From “Movie Name”).

Soundtrack remixes must not include the movie title if the track is not from the original soundtrack.

Musicals must reference the year and location of the performance or release. Do not use the word “Original” if the performance is not the initial staging or release of the production.

Music videos taken from musical films must contain a title version that refers to the film such as (From “Name of Film”).

6.13. DJ Mixes version information

DJ Mix albums should include a title version of "DJ Mix" in the album-level version information. Mixed tracks appearing on a DJ Mix must include the title version [Mixed] after all other version information.

6.14. Remixes collection version information

Albums that are a collection of remixes of the same track must indicate this in the album title. To avoid identical track titles, the titles must include enough information about the remixes to differentiate them.

If an artist is featured on the original song, the remix should be formatted as "Title (feat. Artist) [Remix]." If an artist is not featured on the original song, the remix should be formatted as "Title (Remix) [feat. Artist]."

6.15. Live recording version information

If the audio is from a live recording, the title version must be indicated as "Live." Territory-specific versions ("Ao Vivo" in Portuguese, and "En Vivo" or "En Directo" in Spanish) should be used. Do not use "Live" for Standup/Comedy albums.

Live Albums, Alternate Takes, Rare Recordings, Early Recordings, Radio Broadcasts, Interviews, and other albums commonly referred to as "Bootlegs" may be hidden based on editorial discretion.

If the version includes time and venue, it should be formatted as Live at Place, Year/Date.

For music videos to be considered Live, audio and video must match and be from the same performance. Prerecorded audio set to different performance footage is not considered Live.

6.16. Karaoke, Tribute, Japanese Orgel, Parody, and Cover version information

Titles. The album title must not begin with the original artist name.

Track or ringtone titles for cover, orgel, parody songs, or tributes must not make reference to the original artist. Do not use phrases such as "Originally Performed By," "In the Style of," "Tribute to," or "Cover of."

Cover content. Covers delivery restrictions: if all the track types of the release are set to "cover", automatically no delivery to Apple, Spotify, Youtube and Facebook.

Karaoke. Karaoke track titles can refer to the original artist. You must use clarifying language to ensure that consumers will not think those artists are performing. You should use phrases such as "Originally Performed By... (original artist name)."

Titles of karaoke albums and tracks must indicate that they are an instrumental or karaoke version.

6.17. Silent, hidden and ghost tracks

Silent, hidden, and ghost tracks must be clearly labeled in the track title.

6.18. Performance, Backing, and Split tracks

If a track is a performance track, backing track, or split track, that information must be included in the title.

6.19. Booklet title

Digital Booklet title should follow the format: Digital Booklet - Album title.

7. Genre fields

7.1. Genre accuracy

Primary genre. the first genre listed will be the primary genre and must be the best description for the content. A secondary genre is not required, but it should be used when applicable. Primary and

secondary genres must not be egregiously misclassified (for example, Hip Hop/Rap in place of Children's Music).

Use the **most specific primary genre** that applies to your music, such as Pop in Spanish y Tropical, instead of more generic genres such as Latin or Pop.

Note: The content will only chart in the primary genre. Albums with Latin genres or the K-Pop genre will chart in both the primary and secondary genres. Additionally, stores may apply their own genre table or sort content according to their own editorial rules.

7.2. Genre specificity

Use the **most specific primary genre** that applies to your music, such as Pop in Spanish y Tropical, instead of more generic genres such as Latin or Pop.

Soundtracks, or ringtones from a soundtrack, must use Soundtrack as the primary genre.

Music from Anime must use Anime as the primary genre.

Karaoke content must use Karaoke as the primary genre. This includes backing tracks, performance tracks, or any other type of content that could be identified as Karaoke.

Fitness remixes and fitness cover versions of tracks must use the Fitness & Workout genre .