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DANCE ONLINE: A Resource



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We'd love to hear from you! If you use the guidance in your work or have comments or questions,
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In memory of Kat Hawkins



INTRODUCTION

Sharing content online is a common part of dance making. In some projects, film-making and/or documentation might be a key part of the practice and digital outputs shared online either permanently or for limited periods of time. Other projects might be more focused on live performance. However, even in primarily live contexts, it is common for clips, trailers, reels and/or images to be shared online. Online audiences can find dance on a wide array of platforms and in many different formats. Online dances might also be (re)used in many different ways. Dances could be the inspiration for new artistic or commercial work, they might be re-embodied, copied digitally and/or edited, shared in new contexts, integrated into new film or media works, or drawn on to train AI models. Furthermore, the making of dance is often reliant on collaboration, which might involve the bodily learning, creation and transmission of movement as well as possible collaboration with film-makers, editors, designers, producers, funders and so forth. Each of the people involved in the process will have different legal rights and ethical expectations about the way that their contribution is attributed, owned, used and shared.

This booklet is intended to encourage dance makers, audiences and people wishing to use dance content to reflect on the ownership of dance and support ethical making, sharing and reuse. It is organised into four



parts: *Making, Sharing, Using* and *Watching*. We think it will be particularly helpful for those who are starting to engage in these activities.

For dance makers, it is focused on identifying what it is that you feel ownership of when you create dances. It will help you to discuss ownership with your collaborators and decide what you will share online and why and where it will be shared. We hope it will also help you to think through what you would like to happen to your dances and how you might prevent them being shared or used in ways that you don't want to happen. For people who use dance online, it is designed to help you use dance in a way that is in line with the social and individual expectations of the person and context it was made within. Audiences will be invited to explore questions about the nature of the content they're watching. You might move between these different roles in your work.

Each section involves a series of questions and things to consider. These are designed to prompt thinking rather than be a prescriptive guide. The prompts refer primarily to ethical issues, although legal frameworks are also referenced. They focus on the UK context. While similar ethical issues might arise across different geographical contexts, the law differs across countries. We will link to information about legal rights from other sources, but this booklet is not intended to operate as legal guidance.

We developed these prompts based on our experiences during the project *Moving Online: Ontology and Ownership of Internet Dance*, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (2022-25, grant ref AH/W01002X/1). The prompts are based on our understanding about what might be helpful for the sector based on information gathered throughout the project. They draw on our processes of watching and analysing dance online, reading about the sharing and ownership of dance, noticing practices within the dance sector and conversations with our project partners: One Dance UK and Sadler's Wells. We also interviewed

a number of artists during *Moving Online* and observed the making process of three new dance films by Anjana Bala, Kat Hawkins and Brooke Milliner. These conversations and experiences all contributed to our thinking. In February 2025, we held a workshop with people working across the dance sector to examine a draft of the resource and discuss experiences in each of the four areas it addresses. The feedback from that day was very helpful in developing the prompts. We extend our gratitude to the workshop attendees, commissioned artists, project partners, project advisory group for their feedback, Scott deLahunta for his mentorship, Joe Askew for his support, Kaiya Waerea for the thoughtful design of this document and all the interviewees and the scholars whose perspectives have informed our work in this booklet. References to some of the academic texts we've used in the project can be found [here](#).

Hetty Blades, Vipavinee Artpradid and Lily Hayward-Smith.

MAKING

- *What kind of thing are you making?*

Are you making a film or a dance that is being filmed? Is it a screened performance with live elements, process documentation, trailer or prototype, for example? How does it relate to existing and/or possible future content? These might sound like obvious or abstract questions, but how you think about what it is might matter when you start to think about ownership and what you do or don't mind being copied/shared/given away. Thinking about these questions early on will likely help you to respond to the questions below about how and where the dance will be shared.

- *Why are you making it?*

What is the key aim of the dance? For example, is it intended to reach the widest audience possible? Is it educational? Is it meant to be watched and/or be re-embodied by other people?

- *How will it be shared?*

Some dances are openly available online for an in-



definite period. Others are shared via screenings or live streams, which might or might not be recorded. They might be available openly but only for a predetermined period of time, or you might want to ask people to pay or sign up or subscribe to access the dance. Might you want to hold an in person screening and/or submit to a film festival? Might these contexts be in conflict at any point? For example sharing it in some contexts might mean that it can't be shared anywhere else during that period. Related topics are covered in the Sharing section, but thinking about this early on in the making process can be helpful.

- *Where will it be shared?*

Which platform(s) will you use to host your dance? Examples might include YouTube, Vimeo, organisations' websites, your own or collaborators' websites and social media. How many copies of the digital file will be needed? Will any of these contexts potentially be in conflict?

- *Who has control over the work?*

The platform that you share the dance on will likely impact the answer to this question. Some platforms allow users to upload and share their own content and give them access to analytics data, whereas others might licence the work from you and control its circulation. It is important that you read the terms and conditions of the platform you are sharing it on. If you are licencing the work to a platform, make sure it is clear in the contract what can and cannot happen to it (eg. can it be edited?). It is also worth thinking about whether you want access to data regarding its reach, such as the number of views etc. This information might be useful for later funding applications. If you would like this data, it is a good idea to get this agreed at the contracting/licensing stage.

- *Who is involved?*

Can you list every person involved in the creation of the dance, from the very start of the process? Examples might include the choreographer, performer(s), composer, musician, film-maker, lighting designer,

set designer, costume designer, cinematographer, dramaturg, commissioning organisation, producer, rehearsal director, runners and editors. It's a good idea to keep an ongoing list of people who contribute during the process. Each of these people might have different feelings of ownership towards the dance, as well as different rights over where and how it is shared and reused.

- *Which rights do they have?*

Each person involved in the making of the dance will have different legal rights. You can find out more about rights on the Copyright User site. We also recommend the Digital Rights Toolkit from The Space. It is worth noting that film-makers and photographers own the rights to their outputs, unless they are developed in the course of their employment. More information about employment status can be found on the UK Government website. A choreographer has rights over the dance they create but not necessarily the film and/or any images of the dance. If you want to maintain access, this needs to be stipulated in the agreements you have in place (see below).

- *What agreements are needed?*

If you are in the role of choreographer, it is helpful to make expectations around ownership clear with each of your collaborators. This should include the legal rights mentioned above but can also include other expectations and agreements, for example about where and how it will be shared and/or reused. It might be helpful to go through some of the questions above and below with your collaborators and include your decisions within the agreements you make between you. The Cross-Cultural Partnership developed a useful Partnership Template for developing agreements. Arts Council England has some helpful advice about partnership agreements for ACE funded projects. The Freelance Dancer Collective provide helpful pay guidelines for freelance dancers.

- *What are you being asked to sign?*

If you are performing in someone else's piece, you might be asked to sign a contract or might want to ask for one. It is important to look closely at this and ask if you don't understand anything. Think



about the possible ways that the dance might be shared, edited and used online (see later sections of this booklet). Are there things you want to ask to be written into the contract about future use? Try to schedule time to read the contract so that this is not rushed. It is a good idea to ask for contracts in advance so that you are not under pressure to sign them on the day you are performing and/or recording the dance and you have time to consider what is being asked. The performing arts and entertainment trade union, Equity provide helpful advice about contracts, including making your own contract. They also provide support for members.

- Who is able to access it?

What is needed to make the dance accessible? Examples might include audio description, subtitles and alt text image captions. Some of these processes might be supported by digital tools, but it's a good idea to check that any automated content accurately reflects what you want to say about the movement or content of the work.

The question of who is able to access the dance might

also be relevant if there are certain contexts that you don't wish the work to be shared within, perhaps certain commercial contexts, for example. You can find more information about preventing this in the sharing section below.

SHARING

- What are the potential revenue streams for this dance?

Examples might include commissions, ticket sales for screenings, charging for online access, Non Fungible Tokens, crowd funding or donations, sponsorship/brand partnership, advertising. Look at what is available across different platforms. Eg. The YouTube Partner Programme and different options on TikTok. There is helpful advice about different ways of charging for content provided by Vimeo.

- Which type of content can earn revenue?

For example, could you charge a small fee or subscription for access to rehearsal footage or content related to the making process? What are the pros and cons of this? Could outtakes, or different versions have different financial values attached to them? Is there another way of sharing aspects of the work? Eg. Dance podcasts might make money via Spotify or as video content. See the reference list for examples of dance podcasts.

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- *What are you willing to share for 'free' (ie. not in direct exchange for money)?*

Examples might include full dances, edited sections, trailers, process documentation.

- *What (if anything) do you expect in return for the things you give away for 'free'?*

Examples might include visibility, prestige, community building, new audiences and/or new opportunities or analytics data (For more on the idea of dance as a 'gift', see Bench 2020, Franko 2004, Foster 2019, Kraut 2016, Leach 2014, in this [reference list](#).)

- *How can you make the expected return clear to viewers?*

Examples might include asking for the content to be shared, liked or reposted, asking for credit, asking for people sharing the content to tag people or organisations whose interest might lead to future opportunities, asking for feedback and/or asking people to come to paid performances.

- *How might it get re-used/shared?*

This is different to the question of how you want it to be shared. How might the dance circulate once it's available online? Examples might include social media sharing, sharing via a link, re-embodied, copied digitally, re-made, edited and/or used to train AI models. Someone copying the dance via re-embodiment might aim to replicate as precisely as possible, or adapt it, or use it as inspiration for a new dance.

- *What don't you want to happen to this?*

Examples might include any of the above. Also think about how and where these things happen. Eg. you might not mind it being re-embodied as long as you're acknowledged, or you might not mind it being copied in some contexts but don't want it to be used for commercial means or by AI.

- *How can you make it clear what you don't want?*

Sometimes your content will be protected by copyright, but not always. You can find out more about dance copyright on the [Resilience and Inclusion On-](#)

line Toolkit. If it is not protected, you can still make a request about what you don't want. This might not be legally binding, but being explicit might prevent people using it in a way that you don't want them to. If it is protected by copyright, you might want to include a © symbol. You can also look at Creative Commons licenses which work alongside copyright to stipulate particular requirements. For example, a CC BY-NC allows for reuse with attribution in non-commercial contexts. These licenses are useful if you don't want to stop the dance circulating but wish to prevent it from being used commercially and ensure you and your collaborators are credited. There are different versions of creative commons licenses. More information can be found on the Creative Commons website. To control circulation and/or downloads, check what is possible on the platform that you're using. Some platforms allow users to prevent videos being downloaded, shared, searched and/or the video being embedded within other websites. There are also ways you can opt out of your content being used to train AI models. If you are posting your video yourself, check the guidance on the platform you're using. There is more information about other possible approaches in the UKIPO Copyright and AI consultation document).

- Who should be acknowledged?

This will likely include collaborators, any rights holders and funders. Authors of copyrighted content need to be acknowledged legally, but you might also think about who should be acknowledged from an ethical or contractual perspective. You can think quite broadly about acknowledgment. For example, do you want to acknowledge any practices, teaching, traditions, lineages, experiences that informed the work?

- How can this acknowledgement happen?

Examples might include tagging, text, and/or audio. The norms and technical potentials of each platform will shape how this happens. It is important to look at and understand the norms of particular platforms. For example, there has been a lot of discussion about the practice of crediting on TikTok and the increased role of 'dc' or dance credit. You can read more about credit on TikTok in Trevor Boffone's book Renegade (2021) and the rountable, 'TikTok and Short-Form Screendance Before and After Covid' (Harlig et al 2021).



USING

Assumptions

Don't assume you can use it based on type of content, length or context. Dances are often covered by copyright meaning there are restrictions on what you can do with it. There might also be ethical reasons not to use the dance in particular ways. It's important to understand the context that the dance was made within and the possible expectations of the artists. If in doubt...

Ask

Do you need to ask permission to use this content? If you want to copy something that is protected by copyright you need permission, unless it is covered by an exception. You can find information about exceptions on the Intellectual Property Office website. Even if it is not copyrighted, would the community and/or platform norms mean that permission would be expected? How can you contact the person who made or shared the dance?

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Agreement

Even if the dance is not covered by copyright or you intend to adapt it so that it's not a copy, what kind of agreement with the owner might support ethical reuse? This article on the Copyright User website is helpful regarding copying and adapting. In this article, Mario Biagioli-Ravetto and Kriss Ravetto-Biagioli describe the agreements that dance artist Mathias Sperling created with other artists when he wanted to use parts of their dances in his piece Riff (2007).

Acknowledge

Who should be acknowledged? Authors of copyrighted content need to be acknowledged legally. You can also think about who should be acknowledged from an ethical perspective. How can you do this? (see 'How can this acknowledgment happen?' above re tagging, links etc). If you don't need permission you still need to acknowledge the source and makers of the piece.

WATCHING

Thinking about the kind of content that you're watching can deepen your understanding of the dance and the ecosystem that it is shared within. Looking at other practices around sharing, attribution and economic models can also help artists to think differently about how they share their own work. During *Moving Online*, we used the following headings to analyse digital content. We're sharing them in case they are useful for your analysis of dance. You can also access our [database of analysis](#), which is open for anyone to contribute to.

Name of content

Online location(s)

Artist(s)

What kind of thing is it? (eg. film, screening, documentation)

Relationship to other digital/non digital objects or events

Attributions

Audio

Economic model

Notes

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Making

- What kind of thing are you making?
- Why are you making it?
- How will it be shared?
- Where will it be shared?
- Who has control over the work?
- Who is involved?
- Which rights do they have?
- What agreements are needed?
- What are you being asked to sign?
- Who is able to access it?

Sharing

- What are the potential revenue streams for this dance?
- Which type of content can earn revenue?
- What are you willing to share for 'free' (ie. not in direct exchange for money)?
- What (if anything) do you expect in return for the things you give away for 'free'?
- How can you make the expected return clear to viewers?
- How might it get re-used/shared?
- What don't you want to happen to this?

- How can you make it clear what you don't want?
- Who should be acknowledged?
- How can this acknowledgement happen?

Using

- Assumptions
- Ask
- Agreement
- Acknowledge

Watching

- Name of content
- Online location(s)
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- Audio
- Economic model
- Notes

MOVING ONLINE

ONTOLOGY AND OWNERSHIP OF
INTERNET DANCE

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Dance



Designed by Kaiya Waerea