

OPEN STANDARD · CONTENT CLASSIFICATION

S · H · O · W

The SHOW Standard

Version 2.1 · July 2026

A content classification standard for narrative and creative works.

Created by Modern Media Mastery & LMDC

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What SHOW Is

SHOW is a four-axis content classification standard for narrative and creative works. It applies to any finished work regardless of how it was created — written by hand, collaboratively authored, AI-assisted, or fully generated. SHOW rates what the content contains. It is a reader and audience service, a platform tool, and a publishing standard.

SHOW is independent of production method. A human author and an AI-assisted author rate their finished work on identical terms. The standard classifies the work. It carries no implication about the creative process that produced it.

- S — Spice** Physical explicitness — on-page or on-screen intimacy and detail
- H — Heat** Emotional temperature — longing, romantic intensity, intimacy of soul
- O — OMG** Darkness of tone — heaviness, peril, grief, violence, psychological weight
- W — WTF** Transgression — taboo dynamics, wildness of content choices

Each axis is fully independent. High scores on one axis carry zero implication for any other axis.

The Four Axes

S — Spice (0–6)

Physical explicitness — on-page or on-screen intimacy and detail.

Spice classifies the explicitness of sexual content. Volume and frequency inform the upper levels; specific content types are communicated through content tags.

Level	Label	Content present
0	Untouched	Kissing only. Door fully closed.
1	Suggestive	Fade-to-black, implied intimacy.
2	Open-Door	On-page intimacy with discretion. Sensation over anatomy.
3	Explicit	Anatomically clear, multiple scenes.
4	Carnal	High-frequency explicit scenes. Intimacy is load-bearing.
5	Hardcore	Kink, BDSM, power exchange at standard intensity.
6	Saturated	Explicit intimacy is the dominant content.

H — Heat (0–5)

Emotional temperature — longing, romantic intensity, intimacy of soul.

Heat measures the temperature of romantic and emotional tension — fully independent of physical content. A story with zero Spice can carry maximum Heat. A graphic erotic novel can carry low Heat if the emotional register is cool and transactional.

Level	Label	Content present
0	Cool	Romance incidental or absent.
1	Warm	Affection, light flirtation.
2	Glowing	Attraction acknowledged. Lingering looks, first kisses.
3	Burning	Slow-burn intensity. Yearning.
4	Blazing	Vulnerable confessions, soul-bared scenes.
5	Wildfire	The relationship is the spine of the story.

O — OMG (0–5)

Darkness of tone — heaviness, peril, grief, violence, psychological weight.

OMG classifies what is emotionally and psychologically difficult in a work — the darkness a reader will be asked to sit with. OMG is fully independent of Spice. A grief memoir with no sexual content can carry OMG 5. An explicit erotic novel can carry OMG 0.

Level	Label	Content present
0	Light	Sweet, cozy, comedy, family.
1	Shaded	Mild angst, mild peril.
2	Dim	On-page violence, dark themes with restraint.
3	Dark	Captivity, stalker, trauma, MC/mafia, war.
4	Black	Transgressive, dub-con, brutality.
5	Abyssal	Extreme — content-warning gated.

W — WTF (0–10)

Transgression — taboo dynamics, wildness of content choices.

WTF measures how far a work pushes beyond reader expectations and genre conventions. High WTF scores function as a reader service — they signal that the work operates in territory where standard assumptions about narrative, morality, and resolution are suspended.

Score	Label	Content present
0–2	Vanilla	Conventional, no taboo.
3–4	Edgy	Mild transgression, age gap.
5–6	Wild	Step-relationships, captivity-coded, antihero.
7–8	Unhinged	Strong taboo, dub-con romantically framed.
9–10	Off the Rails	Non-con as central trope, extreme taboos.

Verified Explicit (R8rly Tier A)

"Verified Explicit" is a **platform certification, not an axis level**. Works carrying high-Spice content (typically Spice 5–6) may apply for R8rly Tier A certification, which verifies the classification, applies platform age-gating, and authorises the "Verified Explicit" designation alongside the R8rly Compass mark. Tier A certification is administered by the R8rly platform and is not part of the open CC BY-SA standard.

The Axis Independence Principle

Each SHOW axis measures a fully independent dimension of content. A work can be:

- S0•H5** — No sexual content, maximum romantic intensity
- S6•H0** — Fully saturated sexual content, no romantic emotion
- O5•W0** — Devastating darkness, fully conventional narrative structure
- W10•O0** — Maximum transgression, no emotional darkness

Readers, platforms, and distribution systems read each axis as its own signal. No axis modifies the meaning of any other.

Content Tags

Content tags sit beneath SHOW scores as a secondary reader service layer. Where SHOW axes give intensity levels, content tags name specific content types that readers may wish to know about before engaging with a work. Tags are applied per work, not per axis. Examples:

on-page grief · captivity dynamics · non-consensual elements · step-romance · on-page violence · suicidal ideation · addiction · forced proximity · morally grey protagonist · dark humour · religious themes · revenge arc · trauma recovery

Content tags are community-sourced and platform-curated. The SHOW Standard defines the axis framework. Tag vocabulary is maintained by the R8rly platform and open for community contribution.

Calibration Reference Set

Selected works mapped to SHOW for cross-platform consistency. All ratings are community-verified via R8rly.

Work	S	H	O	W
A Court of Thorns and Roses	2	4	3	4
Fourth Wing	3	5	2	4
Haunting Adeline	4	4	4	8
Captive in the Dark	4	3	5	8
The Notebook	1	5	2	1
Redeeming Love	1	5	4	2
All Quiet on the Western Front	0	1	5	3
American Psycho	3	1	5	10
The Road	0	2	5	4
Normal People	3	5	3	2
Twilight	1	4	2	2
Fifty Shades of Grey	4	4	2	5

SHOW and the Standard Family

SHOW is one of three companion standards published by Modern Media Mastery & LMDC:

Standard	Function	Applies to
SHOW	Content classification	Any finished work, any creation method
VEIL	Generation authorisation	AI-assisted creation sessions
SCRIPTS	Experience rating	Reader/viewer/listener experience

SHOW and VEIL share axis vocabulary. The four SHOW axes (S·H·O·W) map directly into the VEIL generation envelope, so creators working with AI tools move between classification and generation without re-learning any terminology.

SHOW is fully functional as a standalone standard. Creators and publishers with no AI generation workflow use SHOW entirely on its own.

Applying SHOW

Who rates a work: The author or publisher applies an initial SHOW rating on publication. The R8rly community verifies and may adjust ratings through a structured review process. R8rly Verified ratings carry the R8rly Compass mark.

When to rate: At publication. Ratings may be revised if content is substantially edited post-publication.

How to display:

SHOW S3·H4·O2·W5 — standard inline format

SHOW Verified S3·H4·O2·W5 — R8rly verified format with Compass mark

Platforms implementing SHOW: Any platform may implement SHOW ratings under CC BY-SA 4.0.

Attribution required. The R8rly Compass mark and "R8rly Verified" designation remain protected and require platform certification.

Versioning

Version	Date	Notes
1.0	May 2026	Initial release. Four axes.
1.1	May 2026	Calibration set expanded. Content tag framework added.
2.0	June 2026	VEIL axes separated into standalone companion standard. W scale expanded to 10. Spice scale expanded to 6. Standard family architecture formalised. Calibration set updated.
2.1	July 2026	All level vocabulary aligned with the tables published on the R8rly platform (authoritative). "Verified Explicit" clarified as R8rly Tier A platform certification, not an axis level.

Citation

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Companion standards:

The VEIL Standard v1.1 — Generative Permission (CC BY-SA 4.0)

The SCRIPTS Standard v1.0 — Experience Rating (CC BY-SA 4.0)

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The R8rly platform mark, R8rly Compass mark, and "R8rly Verified" designation remain protected and require platform certification.

Canonical source: github.com/R8rly/show · <https://r8rly.com/show>