Creator Economy Attribution Without Platform Intermediaries

by Nick Clark | Published March 27, 2026 | PDF

A creator's proof of authorship exists in platform databases they do not control. YouTube, Instagram, and Spotify maintain attribution records that can be altered, disputed, or deleted at the platform's discretion. Content anchoring provides attribution derived from the structural identity of the content itself, enabling creators to prove authorship independently of any platform, registry, or intermediary. The attribution travels with the content because it is computed from the content.

The attribution problem in the creator economy

Attribution in the creator economy is a platform service, not a creator right. A photographer's authorship of an image is recorded in the platform's database when they upload it. If the image is downloaded and re-uploaded by someone else on a different platform, the attribution chain breaks. The original

creator's proof of authorship depends on the original platform's records, which the creator does not control and may not be able to access in a dispute.

This creates a power asymmetry. Platforms control the attribution infrastructure that creators depend on for income. A content ID dispute on YouTube, a copyright claim on Instagram, or a rights dispute on a stock photography site is adjudicated by the platform using records the platform controls. The creator's proof of authorship is only as strong as the platform's willingness to maintain and defend it.

For creators whose content is used in AI training datasets, the attribution problem is even more acute. Their work may appear in training data without any attribution link back to the original creator. No platform database tracks which training examples originated from which creator's work, because the content was transformed beyond the metadata tracking chain.

Why blockchain-based attribution does not solve this

NFTs and on-chain provenance registries address the permanence problem: once an attribution record is on the blockchain, it cannot be altered. But they do not address the binding problem. An NFT proves that someone registered a claim to a piece of content at a specific time. It does not prove that the registrant created the content. The first person to mint an NFT of a photograph is not necessarily the photographer.

On-chain attribution also requires voluntary adoption. Every creator must register every piece of content on the blockchain for the system to work. Content that is not registered has no on-chain provenance. The system creates a registry, but it does not create a structural link between the content and its creator.

How content anchoring addresses this

Content anchoring derives a unique identity from the structural entropy of the content itself. When a photographer captures an image, the image has a measurable entropy signature determined by the physical process of light capture: sensor characteristics, optical properties, scene complexity. This signature is computable from any copy of the image, regardless of format conversion, compression, or distribution channel.

The creator establishes attribution by computing the content anchor at the point of creation and linking it to their identity. This is not a metadata attachment that can be stripped. It is a structural relationship between the content's measurable properties and the creator's verified identity. Any future copy of the content produces the same anchor and resolves to the same creator attribution.

Composite lineage tracking handles derivative works. When a creator builds on another creator's work, the resulting content carries anchors for both the original and the derivative. The contribution of each creator is structurally traceable through the entropy relationships between the original and derivative content.

For AI training governance, content anchoring enables rights-grade attribution. Before content enters a training pipeline, its anchor can be computed and checked against the creator attribution registry. Content that is not rights-cleared for training is identified and excluded at the structural level, not through metadata that may have been stripped.

What implementation looks like

A creator platform deploying content anchoring computes entropy signatures at the point of upload and links them to the creator's verified identity. These anchors persist independently of the platform. If the creator moves to a different platform, their attribution travels with their content because it is derivable from the content itself.

For stock photography services, content anchoring enables cross-platform rights verification. A buyer can verify that a photograph is rights-cleared by computing its anchor and checking attribution, regardless of which platform is selling it. The verification does not depend on the selling platform's database.

For music creators, content anchoring provides attribution that survives sampling, remixing, and format conversion. A sample used in a new track carries the original creator's attribution through the structural lineage chain. Royalty attribution becomes a structural property of the content rather than a database entry that must be manually maintained.

Content Anchoring All 21 steps →

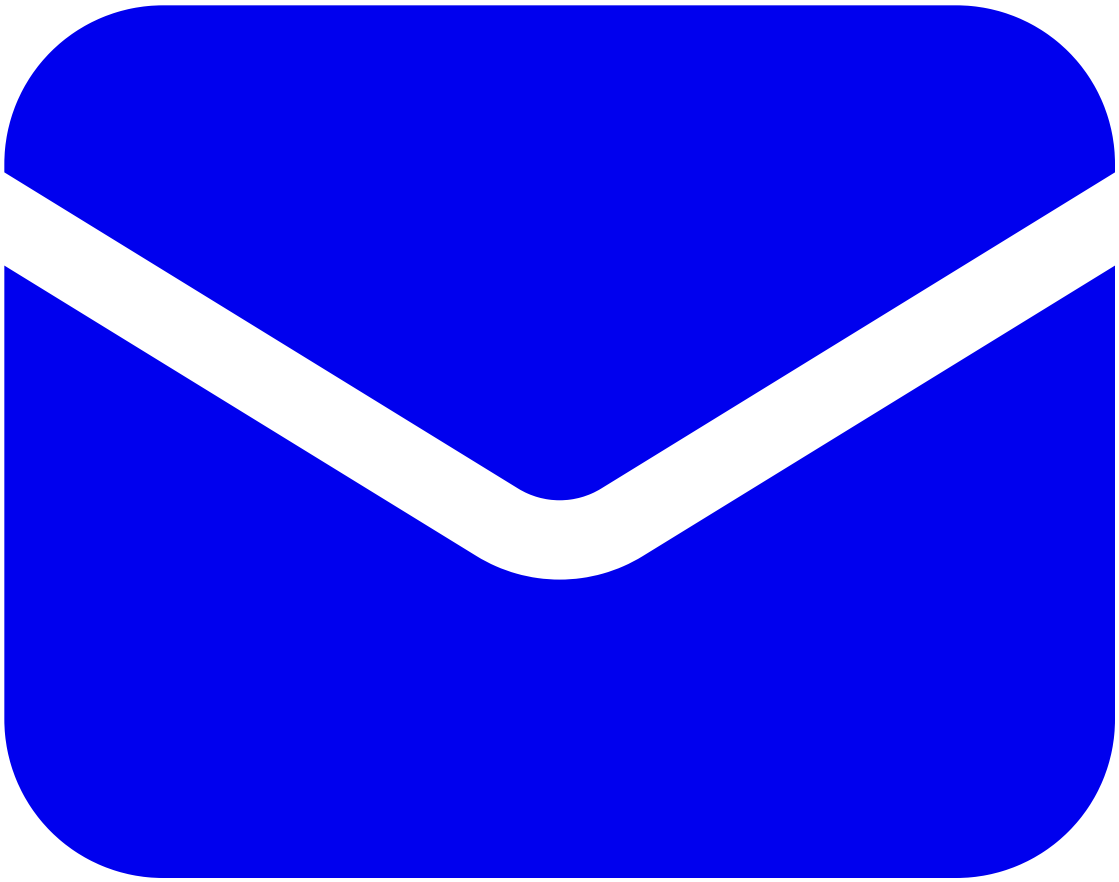
Computable identity for media. Provenance from structural entropy.

Patent
US 63/808,372 · provisional
Primary Technical Disclosure
○ Content Anchoring: Computable Identity for Media That Changes
Secondary Technical
○ Multi-Axis Entropy Vector Extraction: Nine Dimensions of Structural Content Identity○ Quadrant Decomposition: Spatial Sub-Region Fingerprinting for Partial Similarity Detection○ 320-Bit UID Construction: Multi-Segment Hashing for Negligible Collision Probability○ Structure Signature: Background-Invariant Matching Through Gradient-Only Descriptors○ Constellation Signature: Geometry-Invariant Matching Across Crop, Scale, and Occlusion○ Five-Band Entropy Classification: Content Routing by Structural Complexity○ Entropy Saturation-Governed Cache Eviction: UID Density Replacing Static TTL○ Multi-Root Composite Lineage Graphs: Provenance Through Entropy Vector Similarity○ Multi-Modal Content Identity: Unified Pipeline Across Image, Audio, Text, and Video○ Rights-Grade Pre-Release Admissibility: Policy Evaluation Before Content Commitment○ Training Corpus Governance: Verifiable Lineage From Training Data to Model○ Consultation Event Logging: Deterministic Records of Every Generation Reference○ Model Output Provenance Fingerprint: Structural Proximity Without Model Access○ Creator Attribution and Compensation Routing: Payment From Consultation Lineage○ Adversarial Robustness and Deepfake Detection: Content Identity as Detection Substrate○ Client-Side Execution Architecture: Privacy-Preserving Entropy Computation on Device○ UID Resolution Query Protocol: Distributed Lookup Across Anchor Node Networks○ Orientation Canonicalization: Rotation-Invariant Processing Through Gradient Normalization○ Cross-Band Resolution Pathfinding: Traversal Between Entropy Bands Under Mutation
Applications (General)

○ Rights-Grade Generative AI: How to Pay Creators, Exclude Forbidden Content, and Prevent Infringement Before Release○ Deepfake Detection Through Structural Provenance● Creator Economy Attribution Without Platform Intermediaries○ Content Anchoring for Journalism Verification○ Content Anchoring for Academic Research Integrity○ Content Anchoring for Legal Evidence Chains○ Content Anchoring for Insurance Claims Evidence○ Content Anchoring for Real Estate Documentation○ Content Anchoring for Art Authentication
Applications (Specific)
○ C2PA Attaches Provenance to Content. The Content Itself Has No Identity.○ Google SynthID Watermarks AI Output. Watermarks Are Not Identity.○ Shutterstock Tracks Licensed Media. The Media Itself Cannot Prove Its Own Identity.○ Spotify Tracks Every Stream. The Music Itself Has No Computable Identity.○ Getty Images Built the World's Largest Licensed Image Library. Image Identity Still Depends on Metadata.○ Adobe Stock Integrates Licensed Content Into Creative Workflows. Content Identity Is Still External.○ YouTube Content ID Matches Audio and Video. The Content Has No Intrinsic Identity.○ Audible Magic Identifies Audio Content. The Audio Has No Self-Identifying Properties.○ Digimarc Embeds Invisible Watermarks. The Watermark Is Added, Not Intrinsic.○ Irdeto Protects Digital Content Through DRM. The Protection Is Applied, Not Intrinsic.
Content Anchoring overview →
AQ
deterministic
autonomy

Legal

Last updated: 2026-03-03



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