



# WJEC GCSE Media Studies, Unit 2, Section B

## Contemporary Hollywood Film – Industry Case Study: The Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU)

“Marvel Worldwide, Inc. is a subsidiary of Marvel Entertainment LLC, itself a wholly-owned subsidiary of The Walt Disney Company. Marvel is one of the world’s largest character-based entertainment firms, with a library of 8,000 characters featured in a variety of media over seventy years. Marvel is described as utilizing ‘its character franchises in entertainment, licensing and publishing.’”  
Businessmodelzoo.com



- There are **23 films** so far in the *MCU*. The first film was *Iron Man* (2008).
- *Disney* acquired *Marvel Studios* in 2009 for \$4 billion.
- With the launch of the *Disney+* streaming service, *Marvel Studios* can now expand into television series – an example of **transmedia** storytelling.
- *MCU* films are scheduled in phases. So far there have been 3 phases. Phase 4 will include sequels, new heroes and television series.

The *MCU* is the **highest grossing film franchise** of all time. “The secret seems to be finding the right balance between creating innovative films and retaining enough continuity to make them all recognizably part of a coherent family.” Harvard Business Review

The individual directors of each *MCU* film have a certain degree of creative control, although they have to conform to the overall studio strategy to ensure consistent branding and a coherent diegetic universe.



The 5 most successful *MCU* films are:

- *Avengers: Endgame* (\$858.4 million)
- *Black Panther* (\$700.1 million)
- *Avengers: Infinity War* (\$678.8 million)
- *The Avengers* (\$623.4 million)
- *Avengers: Age of Ultron* (\$459 million)

(Forbes online)



**Kevin Feige** is the president of *Marvel Studios* and *Marvel*’s chief creative officer. He has “overall creative direction of *Marvel*’s storytelling and content creation across mediums, including publishing, film, TV, and animation” (*Hollywood Reporter Online*). He is an example of a Hollywood franchise auteur.

**Martin Scorsese’s criticism of the *MCU* and Franchise cinema:**

*In the past 20 years, as we all know, the movie business has changed on all fronts. But the most ominous change has happened stealthily and under cover of night: the gradual but steady elimination of risk. Many films today are perfect products manufactured for immediate consumption. Many of them are well made by teams of talented individuals. All the same, they lack something essential to cinema: the unifying vision of an individual artist.*