

Leveraging Basic Formal Ontology (BFO) by Allotrope Foundation Ontology (AFO) to Achieve Data Interoperability

AF Product Team



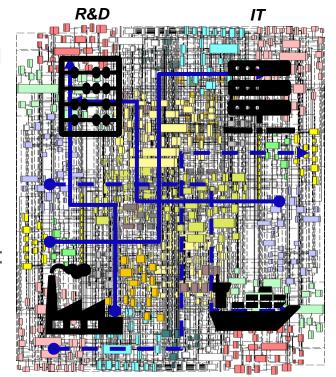
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BFO Primer* Basic Formal Ontology



Why Ontology? The Problem and the Solution

- "Large organizations" are complicated...
- Most data is modeled in Relational Models and stored in tables in relational DB
- To extract meaningful information, you need to query data across tables, across domains and resolve which tables to join
- Can NOT query these tables without a deep knowledge of the tables and their relationships:
 - No common and UNIVERSAL vocabulary/lexicon/terminology
 - Navigating between the different information systems can become complex and not scalable



Manufacturing

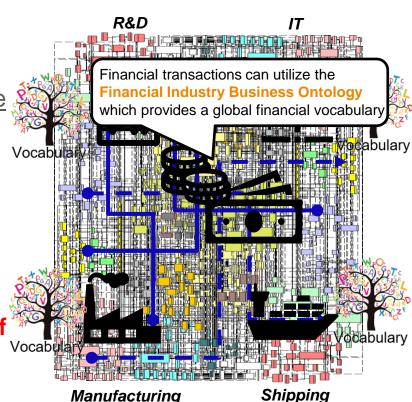
Shipping



Why Ontology? The Problem and the Solution

- This is where ontology can come to the "rescue". It provides a controlled way, meaning controlled vocabulary, to organize knowledge and navigate between domains
- So what is an ontology?
 - No exact definition
 - ≈ Computable lexicon
 - ≈ Dictionary that can be used by both computers

 and human being
 - ≈ Representation of categories in reality
- Ontology = Representation of the type of entities in a given domain and the relations between them.





Why Ontology? The Problem and the Solution

Interoperability:

 Ontologies promote interoperability across heterogeneous data systems

Stability:

 We create an ontology by exploiting the relative stability of our own natural language (English is stable, unlike a changing code/software that can be easily changed)

Extendibility:

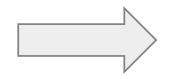
Ontologies are easily extendible
 (English is stable and extendable)



Phone in English is a phone









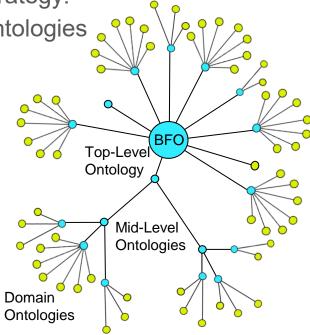


OBO Foundry Approach: Hub and Spokes

The OBO (Open Biological and Biomedical Ontology) Foundry is building its ontologies using the "Hub and Spokes" strategy: **BFO** is the "hub", at the top and it is extended as the ontologies •

are getting built (the spokes, immediately from *BFO*)

- Why **BFO**?
 - Very small
 - Modular approach
 - Evolves carefully
 - Provides a Domain neutral top-level ontology
 - o Active user forum, large user base
 - Well documented
 - Trained personnel with portable expertise

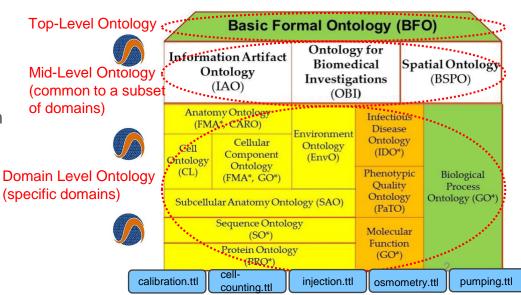




OBO Foundry Approach: Modularity

- Modularity is achieved vertically and horizontally
- It reduces the "mapping" needs
- At the domain level we get the division of authority and labor
 - SMEs are in charge on the domain ontology
 - SMEs are working within their domain
- Ownership by experts
- User discoverability
- Growing incrementality

OBO Foundry "hub and spokes" strategy for developing interoperable ontology modules



AFO adds a set of domains

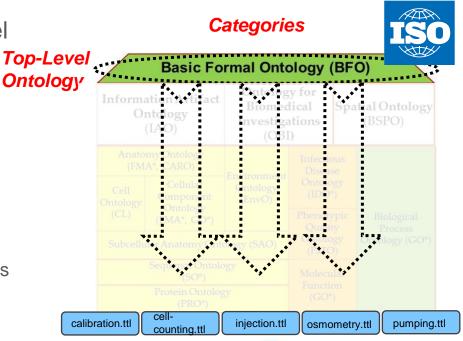


BFO: Top-Level Ontologies (TLO) ISO 21838-1

BFO evolved into an ISO/IEC standard 21838, Information technology, Top-Level Ontologies (TLO), July 2019.

It defines:

- Top Level Ontology
 - Ontology that is created to represent categories that are shared across a maximally broad range of domains
- Category
 - General *class* or *type* that is shared across many *domains* and is represented by a *domain*-neutral term









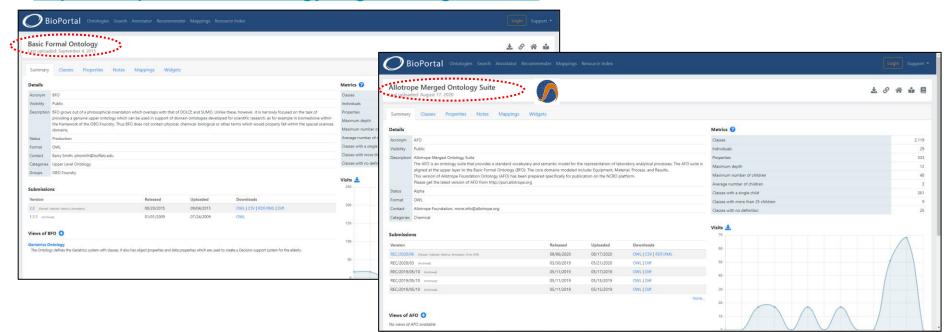


BFO and AFO on BioPortal (Ontology Lookup Service)

the National Center for Biomedical Ontology

https://bioportal.bioontology.org/ontologies/BFO

https://bioportal.bioontology.org/ontologies/AFO





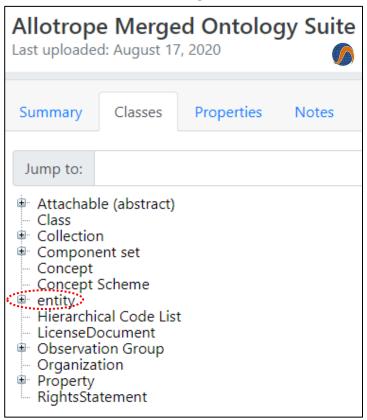
BFO: The Top

- BFO provides a hierarchy which can be used to categorize anything into several high-level categories
- entity is at the top of the hierarchy
- OWL (the WEB Ontology) places thing at the top of the hierarchy
- Practically, everything is an entity

entity



AFO: The Top

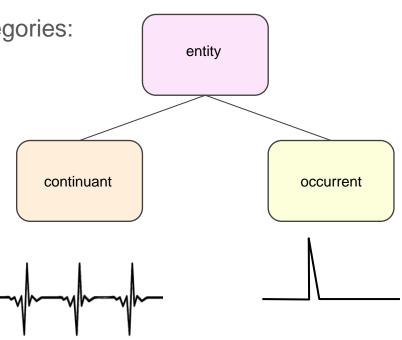


entity



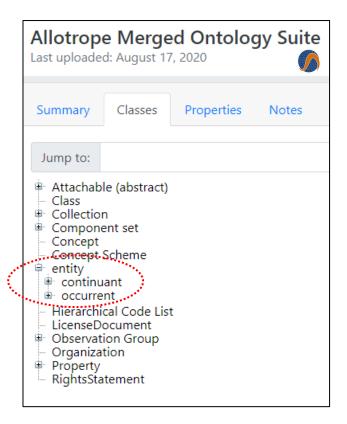
BFO: Top 2 Disjoint Categories

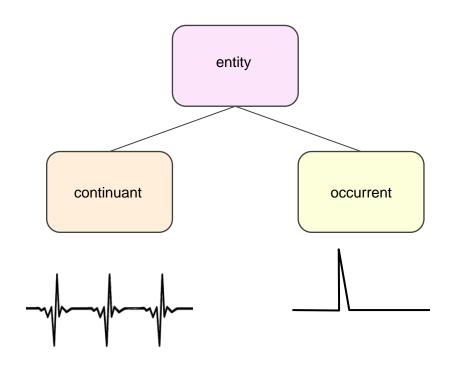
- entities are divided into two disjoint categories:
 - continuant
 - occurrent
- continuant entities (exist through time)
 - Have continuous existence in time
 - Can gain and loose parts
 - Preserve their identity through change
- occurrent entities (exist in time)
 - Have temporal parts
 - Unfold themselves phase by phase
 - Exist only in their phases/stages





AFO: Top 2 Disjoint Categories

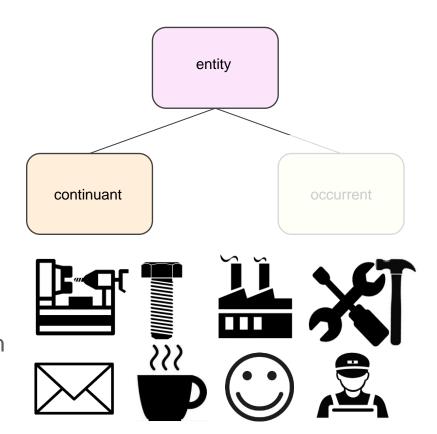






BFO: Top 2 Disjoint Categories

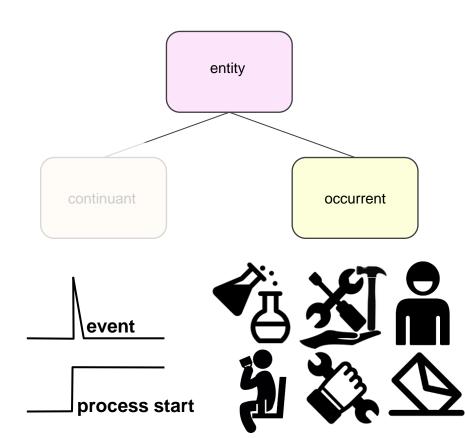
- A continuant is something that exists at an <u>instant in time</u> and it continues to exist <u>through time</u>
- Examples:
 - o a machine, a bolt, a factory, a tool, a letter
 - the smell of a coffee
 - a smile
 - o a handyman
- At any time when a *continuant* exists, so do its parts
- continuant preserve its identity through time





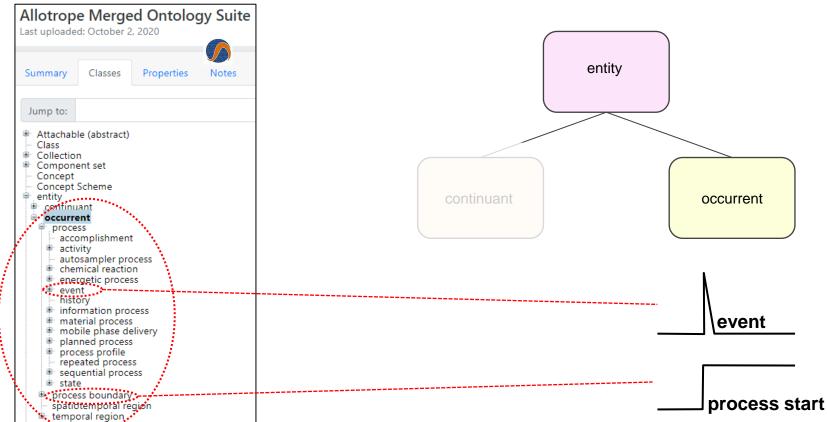
BFO: Top 2 Disjoint Categories

- occurrent is something that has temporal parts
- Examples:
 - an experiment
 - tools gathering
 - smiling
 - drinking coffee
 - fixing
 - sending a letter
- events that occur at an instant in time and processes that last through time are both occurrents





AFO: Top 2 Disjoint Categories

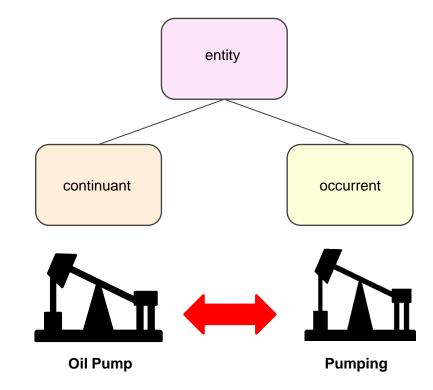


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BFO: Top 2 Disjoint Categories

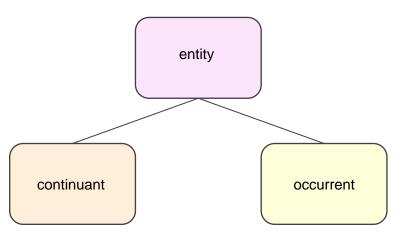
- In reality, things and processes
 exist in different ways and so we
 should keep the ontology
- Either continuant or occurrent but NOT both!

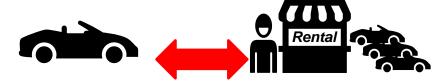




BFO: Top 2 Disjoint Categories

- They are two orthogonal, <u>complementary</u> <u>perspectives</u> in many areas:
 - continuants vs. occurrents
 - commodities vs. services (car vs. car rental)
 commodity is a *thing*, car rental is a *process*
 - stocks vs. flows (in a warehouse)
 - products vs. processes
 - anatomy vs. physiology
 - o musical instruments vs. performance





- continuants can participate in occurrents
 - A handyman participates in tools gathering



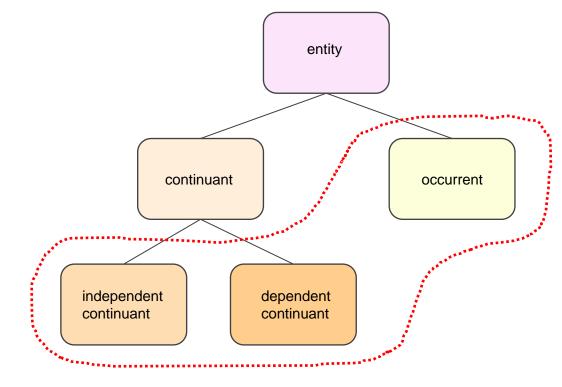




BFO: Top 3 Most General Universals (Categories)

BFO top categories

- continuant
 - independent continuantor
 - dependent continuant
- occurrent





BFO: Independent vs. Dependent Continuant

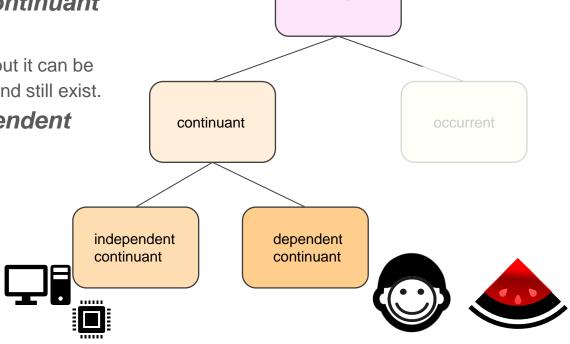
 Something that is a physical part of another entity is an *independent continuant*

Example:

 a CPU is part of a computer, but it can be detached from the computer and still exist.

This is different from a dependent continuant

- Examples:
 - a smile; you cannot detach a smile from a face
 - the red color at the center of a ripe watermelon; you cannot have it without the



entity

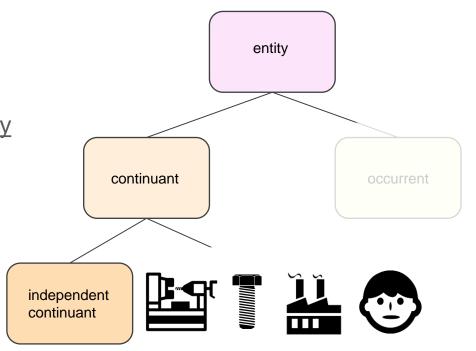
©2020 Allotrope Foundation watermelon



BFO: Independent vs. Dependent Continuant

independent continuant is an entity that can exist by itself or it is a physical part of another entity

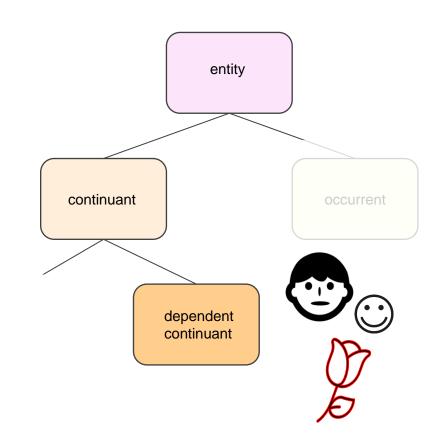
- Examples:
 - o a machine
 - a bolt
 - a factory
 - o a face





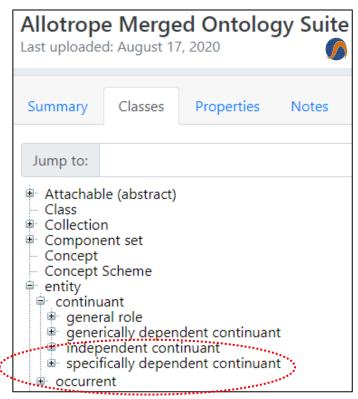
BFO: Independent vs. Dependent Continuant

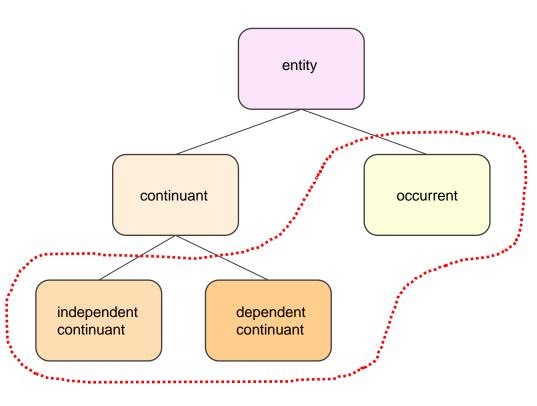
- dependent continuant can only exist in relation to another object or objects. It means that dependent continuant exists only by virtue of another entity and it is not part of the entity
- Examples:
 - o a smile
 - the color of a flower





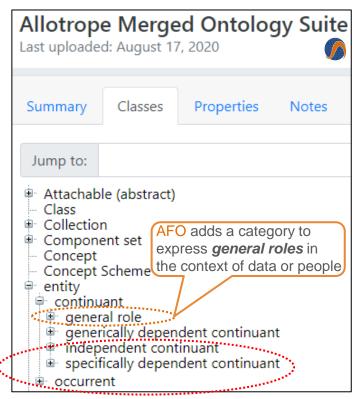
AFO: Top 3 Most General Universals (Categories)

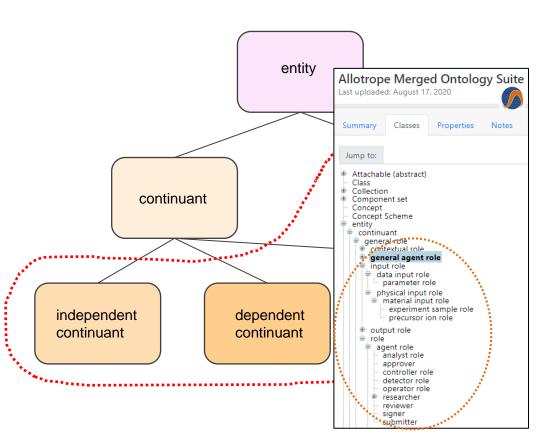






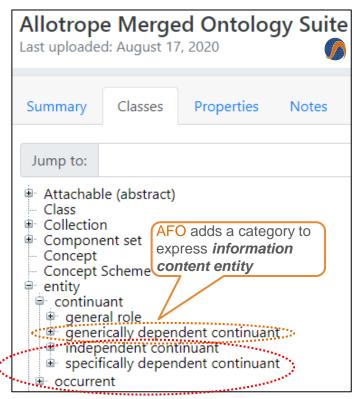
AFO: Extension of the General Universals (Categories)

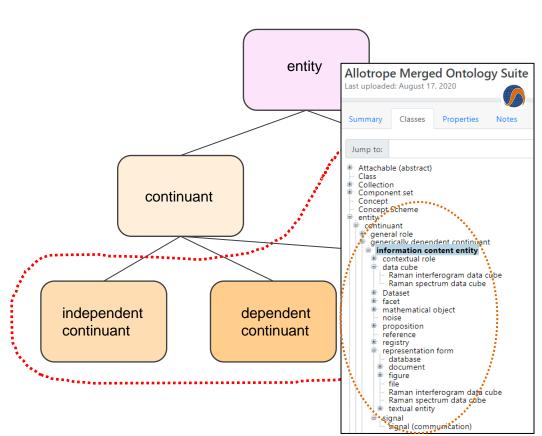






AFO: Extension of the General Universals (Categories)





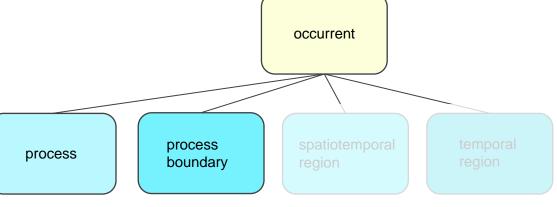


BFO: Occurrent

- An *occurrent* can be:
 - o a *process* entity
 - o a *process boundary* entity
 - a spatiotemporal region entity

or a

o **temporal region** entity



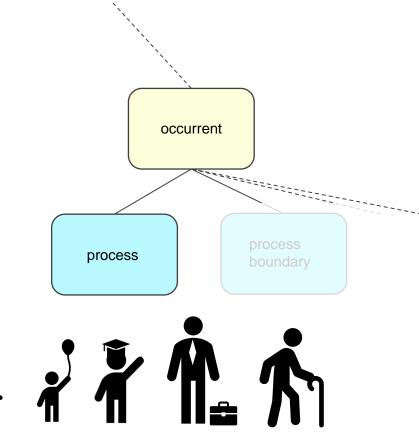


BFO: Process

 A process is something that happens over time, it has temporal parts, and it depends on a continuant.

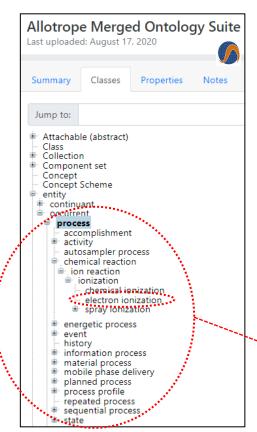
Examples:

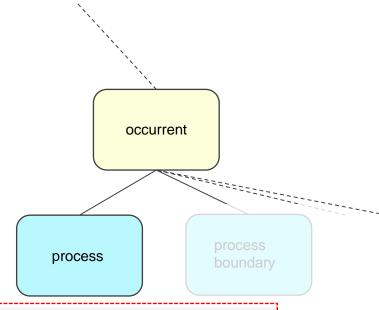
- your life has several parts such as infancy, childhood, adolescence, and adulthood, senior age and involves a continuant, which is "You".
- a trip, writing a letter, and a sample preparation in the lab are all processes

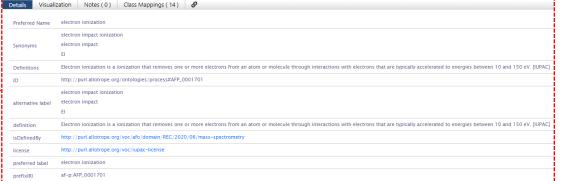




AFO: Process



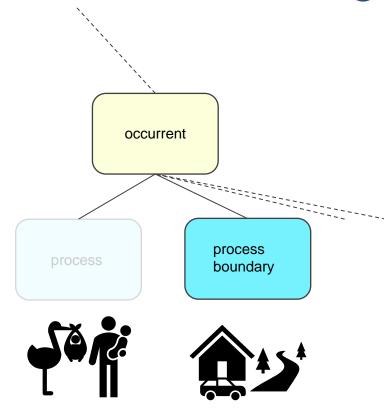






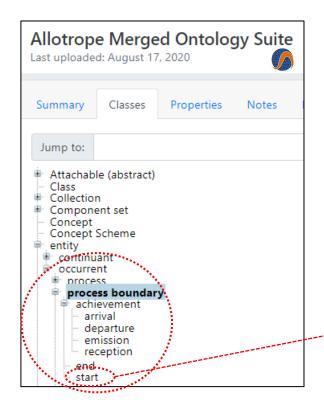
BFO: Process Boundary

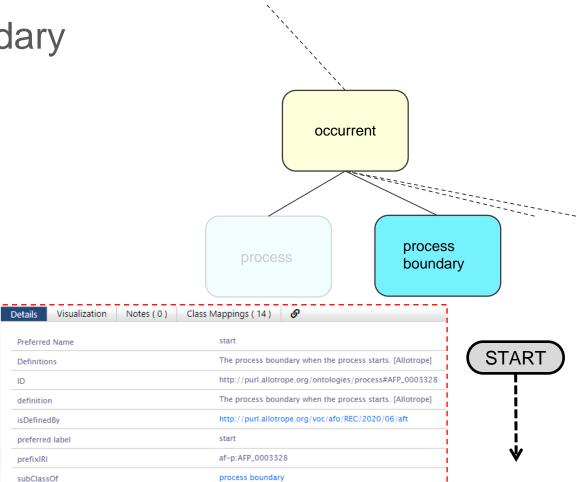
- A process boundary is the instant temporal boundary of a process,
- Examples:
 - first time eye opening of a newborn baby
 - leaving home to start a trip





AFO: Process Boundary





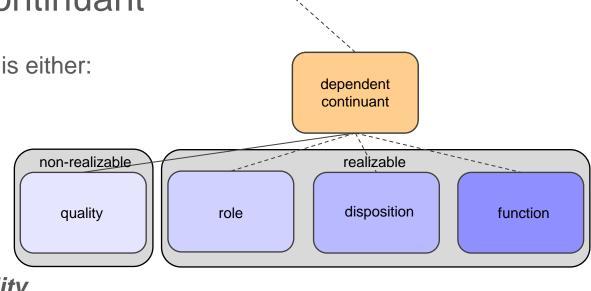


BFO: Dependent Continuant

- A dependent continuant is either:
 - a *quality* entity

or a

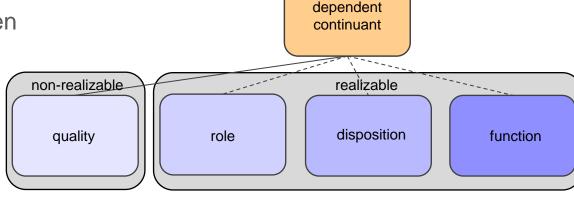
- o **realization** of
 - a role
 - a disposition
 - a function
- realizable dependent
 continuants are not quality





BFO: Realizable Dependent Continuant

- realizable = able to be achieved or made to happen
- with realizable entity the value does not need to exist and the existence can change over time
 - a screwdriver's function is realized by turning a screw
- quality is not realizable;
 - you just have temperature even it may change over time...





BFO: Quality

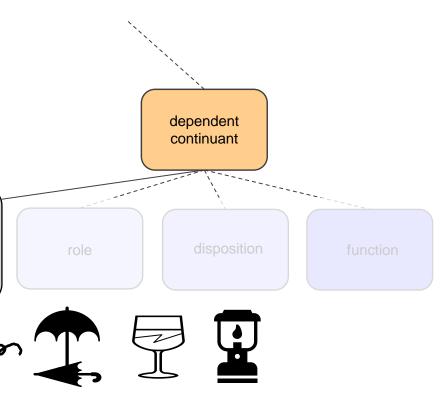
 quality is something that all objects of a particular type have for the entire time they exist

non-realizable

quality

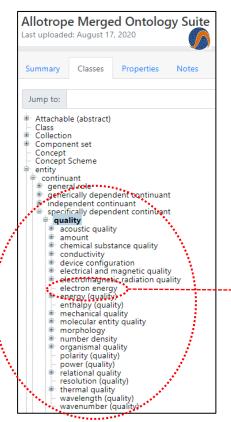
Example:

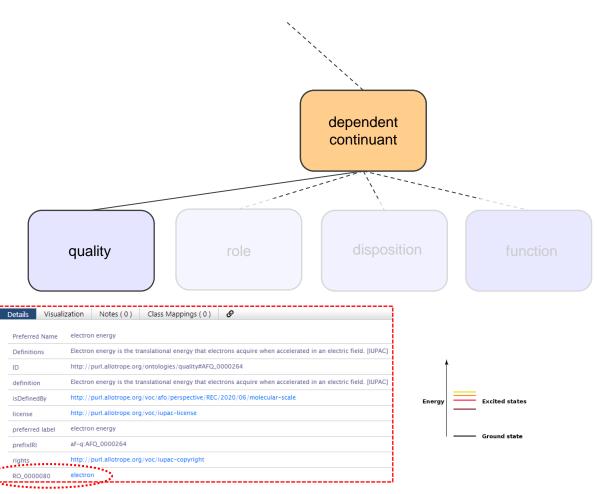
- o the mass of a bag of tea
- the shape of an umbrella
- the fragility of a glass
- the brightness of a gas lighting
- Although it may change
 - the bag of tea always has a mass and
 - the umbrella always has a shape...





AFO: Quality



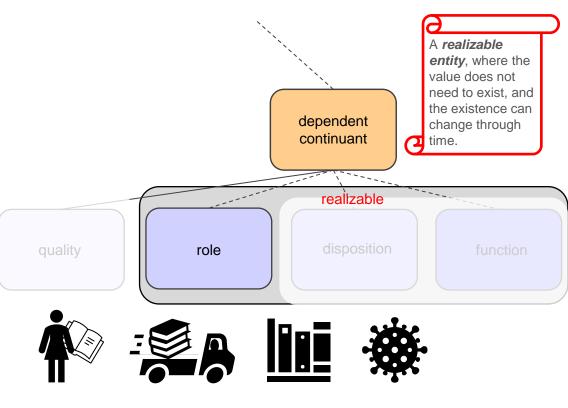




BFO: Role

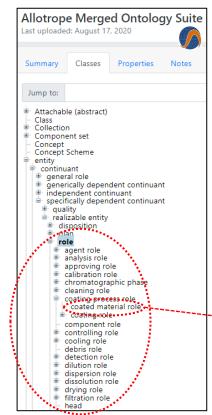
 role specifies a goal that is not necessary to the object's design but can evolve.

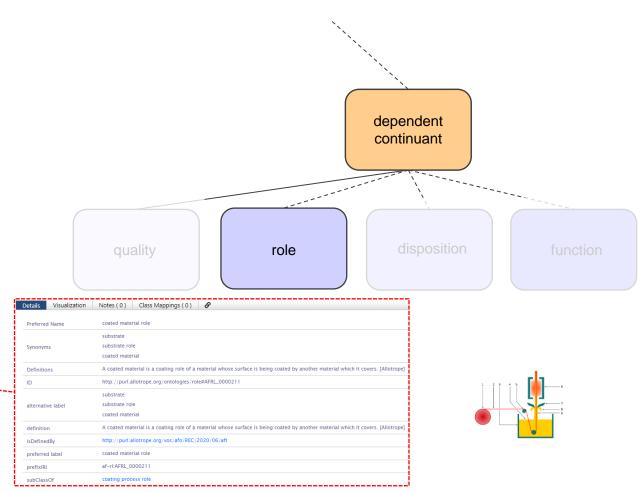
- Examples:
 - o role of being a Librarian
 - the role of delivering books
 - the role of a shelf to store books
 - the role of bacteria in causing an infection





AFO: Role

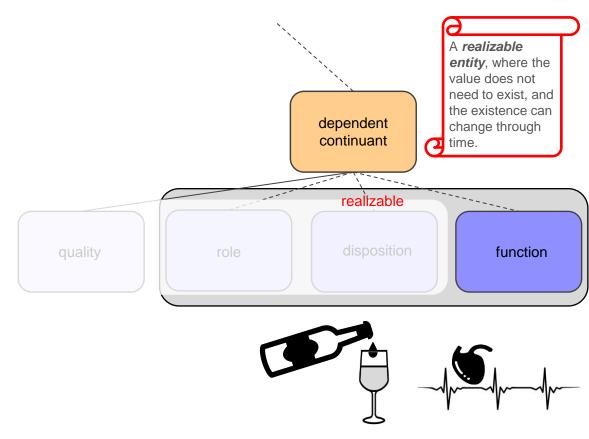






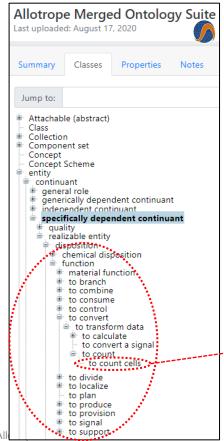
BFO: Function

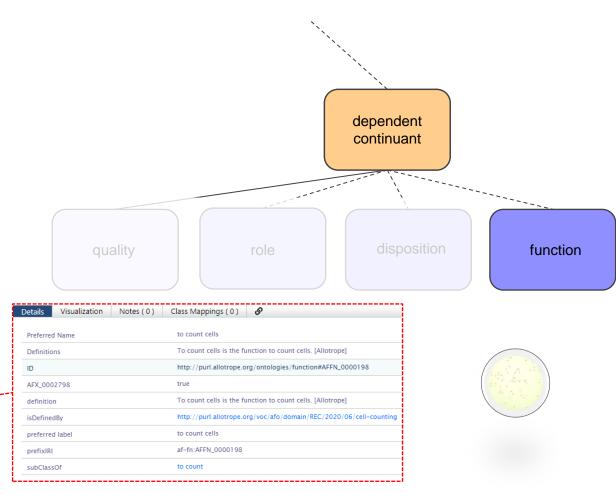
- function is a disposition that is a <u>purpose of an object</u>, either through evolution or by design
- Examples:
 - the function of a glass may be to hold a drink
 - the *function* of the heart is to pump blood





AFO: Function





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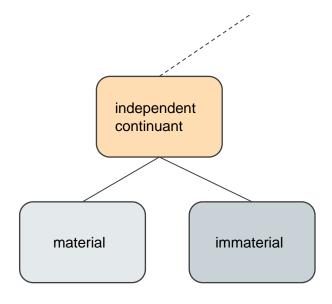


BFO: Independent Continuant

- An independent continuant is either:
 - material entity

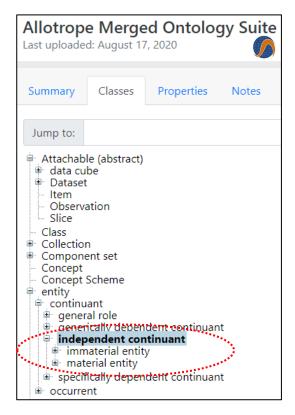
or an

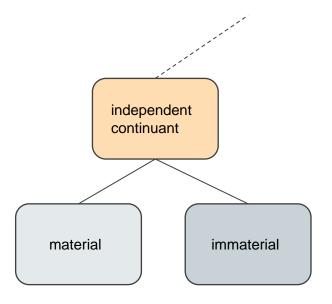
immaterial entity





AFO: Independent Continuant

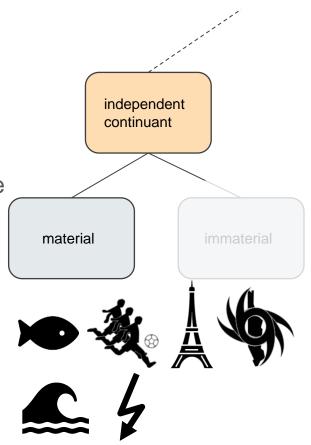






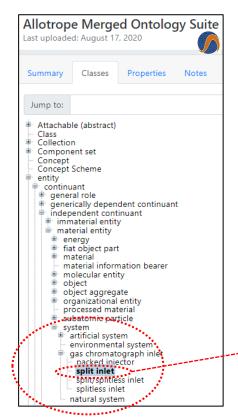
BFO: Material

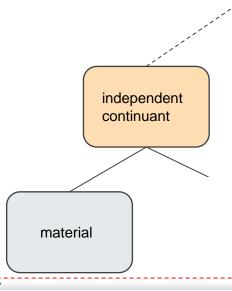
- material entity has some matter as a part
- 'matter' is intended to encompass both mass and energy
- material entity can move or localized in space
- Examples:
 - o a fish
 - o a soccer team
 - Eifel tower
 - hurricane Sandy over NYC
 - o a sea wave
 - an energy wave





AFO: Material

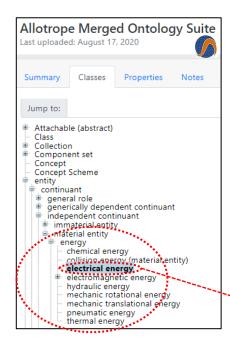


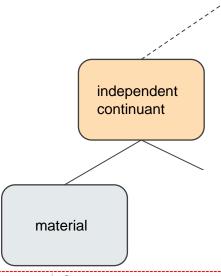


Details	Visualiza	stion Notes (0) Class Mappings (0) 🔗		
Preferred 1	Name	split inlet		
1		split injector		
Synonyms		split		
4		5		
Definitions	5	A split inlet is a gas chromatograph inlet followed by a splitter enabling the carrier gas to sweep a part of volatilized sample onto the CC column, with that remaining split/swept to waste. [Allotrope]		
ID		http://purl.allotrope.org/ontologies/equipment#AFE_0000811		
		split injector		
alternative	label	split		
1		s .		
definition		A split inlet is a gas chromatograph inlet followed by a splitter enabling the carrier gas to sweep a part of volatilized sample onto the CC column, with that remaining split/swept to waste. [Allotrope]		
isDefinedB	y	http://purl.allotrope.org/voc/afo/domain/REC/2020/06/gc		
preferred label Spli		split inlet		
prefixIRI		af-e:AFE,0000811		
subClassO	gas chromatograph inlet			



AFO: Material

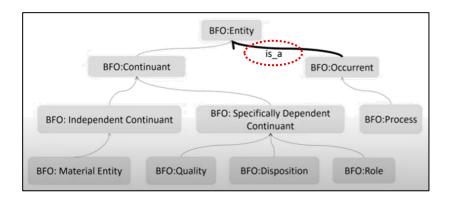


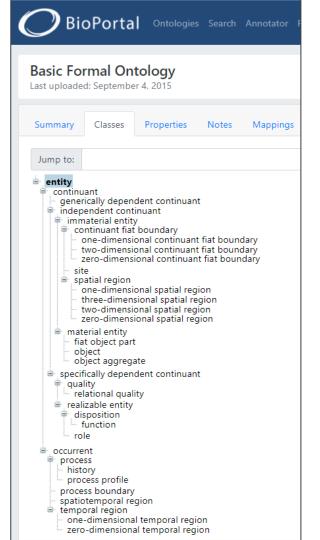


Details Visualization	tes (0) Class Mappings (2) 🔗
Preferred Name	electrical energy
Definitions	Work resulting from the flow of electrons from a negative to a positive source. [NIST]
ID	http://purl.allotrope.org/ontologies/material#AFM_0000884
AFX_0002818	true
definition	Work resulting from the flow of electrons from a negative to a positive source. [NIST]
isDefinedBy	http://purl.allotrope.org/voc/afo/REC/2020/06/aft
preferred label	electrical energy
prefixIRI	af-m:AFM_0000884
subClassOf	energy



- BFO is small
- Number of terms: 35
- 5 levels depth
- All relation are is_a relation, meaning sub type







ADF file

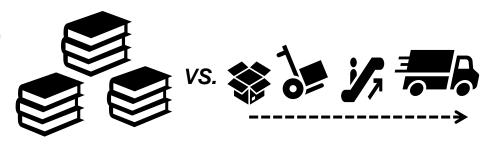
Building Ontologies with BFO



BFO: Based on Realism

- Ontologies are representation of reality
- That means that when you build an ontology you should look at the *things* in the world that the ontology suppose to be about! You should know what those *things* are like!
- We can view a fulfillment center as a
 - collection of goods (*stocks* perspective)
 or as
 - distribution of goods (*flows* perspective)





BFO: Universals and Instances

- Ontologies are representation of universals in reality
- We are using general expressions to describe the kind of *things* that the ontology represents:
 - types
 - categories
 - species
 - etc.
- universals term has instances:
 - Continent is a type; Europe is an instance of type continent
 - Continent is an ontology term. Europe is not







BFO: Universals and Instances

 Catalog is a list of the "kind of things" in the warehouse

 Inventory is a list of the instances of the "kind of thing" in a given point of time

Catalog

Continent

independent continuant

continuant

dependent continuant

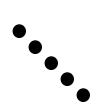
universals

occurrent









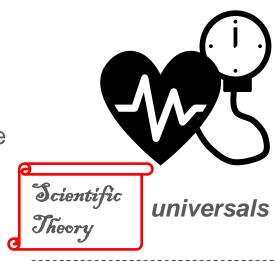






BFO: Universals and Instances

- Scientific ontologies consist of general terms
- general terms can be used to formulate scientific laws or design scientific experiments
- When we are performing a scientific experiment, we are interested in *instances*
- Scientific theories are about the *general*, *universals* (*kind*, *type*...)
- Scientific experiments are about the particular and they are performed to test the assertion of what is general
- To develop a new medication you need both:
 - The kinds of patients (this is general): Hypertension
 - Your *patients* (your instances)



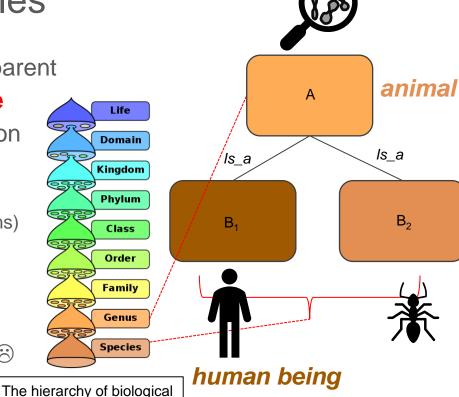






BFO: Taxonomy Traffic Rules

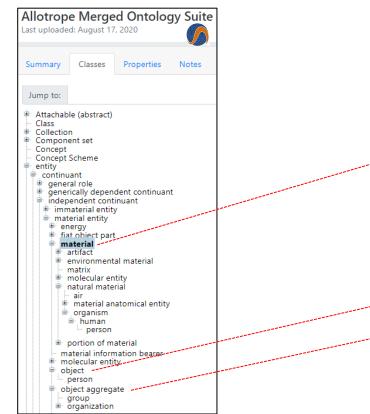
- Every term should have exactly one parent with is_a relation: Single Inheritance
- In term definition use two-part definition with the following expression:
 - \circ **B** = def. **A** which **C**s
 - A = genus (living and fossil organisms)
 - \blacksquare $B_1, B_2 \dots =$ species
 - **C** = specific difference
 - a human being = def. an animal which is rational
- If you have two parents, you are lost ☺

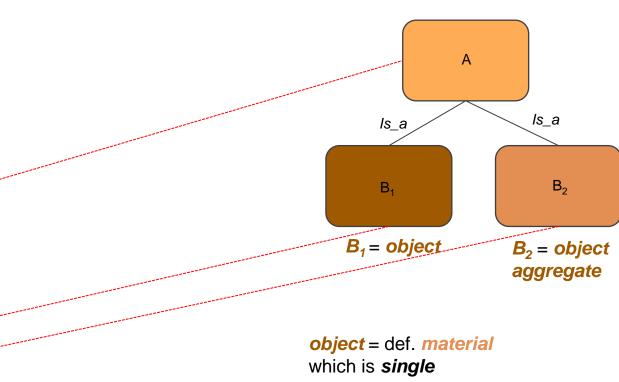


The hierarchy of biological classification's eight major taxonomic ranks.

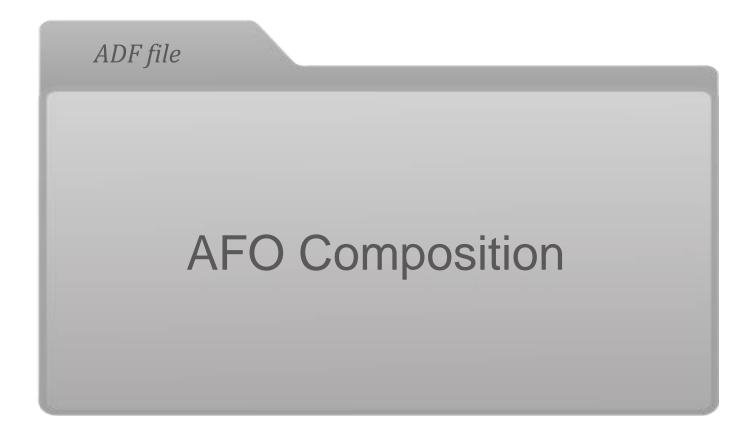


AFO: Taxonomy Traffic Rules





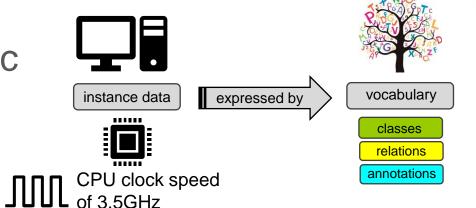






- We are using vocabulary to describe the data
- The *AFO vocabulary* contains:

 - annotations "xxxxxx"
- Example:
 - Let's describe an instance of a computer with a CPU operating at a clock speed of 3.5Ghz





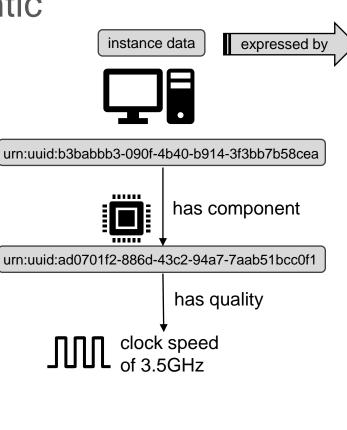
vocabulary

classes relations

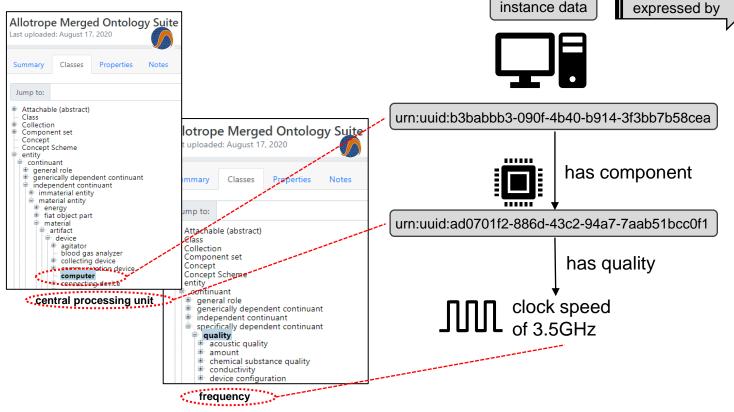
annotations

AFO: Data and Semantic

- In a simple graph model, there are two nodes representing the *computer* and the *CPU*.
 Each node has a UUID and the connection between them
- In addition there is a quality related to the CPU
- As is, this graph has minimal information
- Using the *vocabulary* we can get semantic meaning about the nodes and the connections









vocabulary

classes



vocabulary

AFO: Data and Semantic

```
### http://purl.allotrope.org/ontologies/property#AFX_0000972

af-x:AFX_0000972 rdf:type owl:ObjectProperty;

rdfs:subPropertyOf af-x:AFX_0002793;

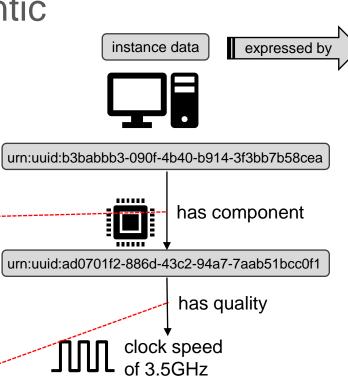
rdf:type owl:TransitiveProperty;

rdfs:domain ro:_0002577;

rdfs:range bfo:_0000040;

rdfs:isDefinedBy <a href="http://purl.allotrope.org/voc/afo/REC/2020/09/rskos:altlahel"has physical part" skos:definition "A physical object that forms a system that has as part a physical entity that is one of its components. [Allotrope]";

skos:preflabel "has component"
```





```
### http://purl.allotrope.org/ontologies/property#AFX_0000972

af-x:AFX_0000972 rdf:type owl:ObjectProperty;

rdfs:subPropertyOf af-x:AFX_0002793;

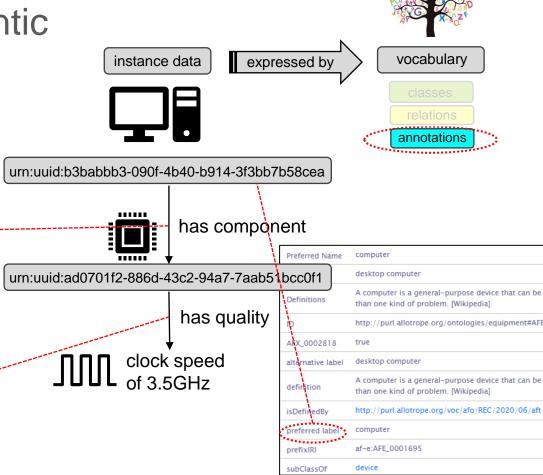
rdf:type owl:TransitiveProperty;

rdfs:domain ro:_0002577;

rdfs:range bfo:_0000040;

rdfs:isDefinedBy <a href="http://purl.allotrope.org/voc/afo/REC/2020/09/rskos:altlabel"has obveical part" skos:definition "A physical object that forms a system that has as part a physical entity that is one of its components. [Allotrope]";

skos:preflabel **mas component**
```

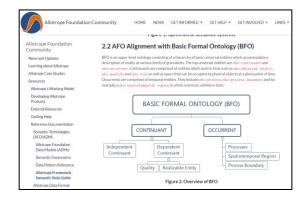




AFO: Best Practice

https://community.allotrope.org/resources/reference/semantic/style_guide/afo_style_guide/

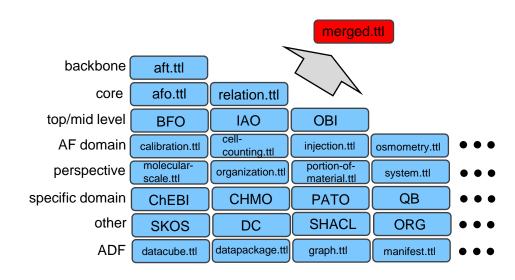
- Defined by the Allotrope style guide
- AFO follows best practices for ontology design
 - Applying top level ontology
 - Ensures compatibility with other ontologies
 - Single inheritance principle
 - One parent class for each term
 - Prevents ambiguity
 - Easily modularized
 - Low computation when implementing logical reasoning
 - Consistency
 - Avoiding errors
 - Satisfiability
 - All classes can be instantiated
 - Modularization
 - reuse





AFO: merged.ttl – A Suite of Ontologies

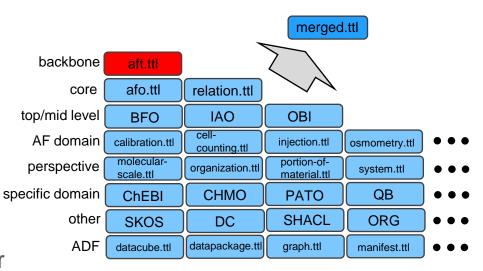
- AFO is a hierarchy of terms
- AFO can be serialized using text format such as TURTLE syntax (.ttl)
- merged.ttl is AFO suite of ontologies





AFO: aft.ttl – Allotrope Foundation Taxonomy (.ttl)

- AFT is the backbone of AFO
- AFT aligns with BFO
- AFT is a hierarchy of universals and Allotrope classes
- Hierarchy of *is_a*:
 - rdfs:subClassOf
- No relations
- Each term has a unique identifier
- Mandatory annotation:
 - single skos:prefLabel
 - single skos:definition
- terms must follow the Allotrope style guide

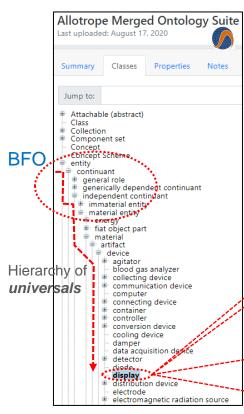


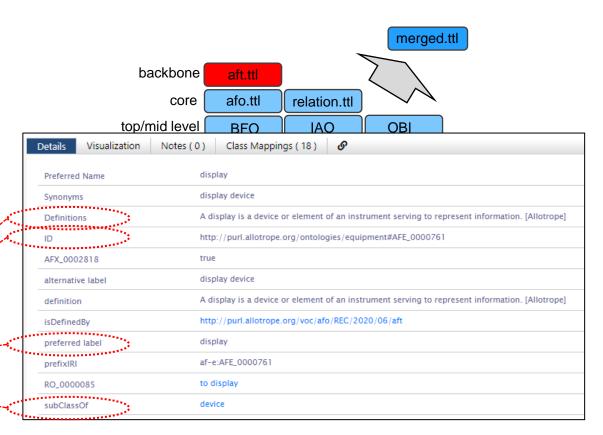
Taxonomy is a hierarchy of linked terms by subtype relations and denoting types:

- universals,
- classes,
- primitives



AFO: aft.ttl – Allotrope Foundation Taxonomy (.ttl)

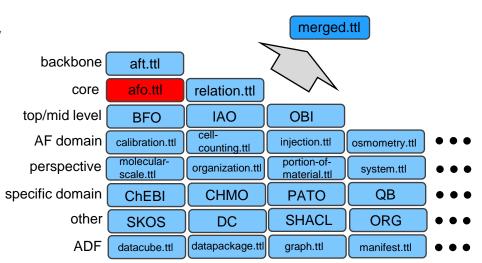






AFO: afo.ttl - Allotrope Foundation Ontology (.ttl)

- afo.ttl contains the core ontology of Allotrope
- AFO
 - adds relations (other than is_a)
 - adds logical expression
 - contains defined classes
 - Imports aft.ttl



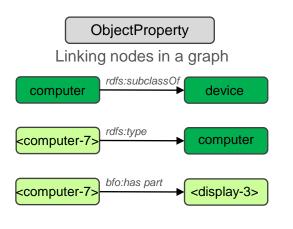
Ontology is a representational artifact, consisting of

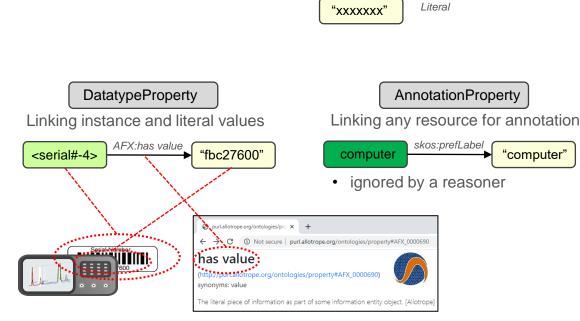
- taxonomy as proper part, whose representations are intended to designate some combination of
 - universals,
 - defined classes (collection of individuals, grouped together)
 - and certain relations between them



AFO: afo.ttl - Allotrope Foundation Ontology (.ttl)

- afo.ttl adds several different types of relations for linking Classes, Instances and Literals:
 - owl:ObjectProperty
 - owl:DatatypeProperty
 - owl:AnnotationPrperty





XXXXXX

<XXXXXXX>

Class

Instance

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AF: AF Ontology Development Lifecycle

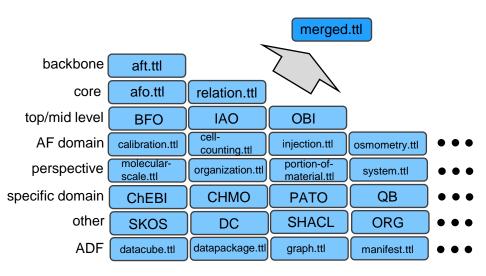
AFO source repository can be found at: https://gitlab.com/allotrope/afo



AFO QA tools can be found at:

https://gitlab.com/allotrope-open-source/allotrope-devops





ADF file

Thanks for your attention!

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