

= Marvel Cinematic Universe =

The Marvel Cinematic Universe ( MCU ) is an American media franchise and shared fictional universe that is centered on a series of superhero films , independently produced by Marvel Studios and based on characters that appear in publications by Marvel Comics . The franchise has expanded to include comic books , short films , and television series . The shared universe , much like the original Marvel Universe in comic books , was established by crossing over common plot elements , settings , cast , and characters . Clark Gregg has appeared the most in the franchise , portraying Phil Coulson , a character original to the MCU .

The first film released in the MCU was Iron Man ( 2008 ) , which began the first phase of films culminating in the crossover film Marvel 's The Avengers ( 2012 ) . Phase Two began with Iron Man 3 ( 2013 ) , and concluded with Ant @-@ Man ( 2015 ) . The films are currently in Phase Three , which began with the release of Captain America : Civil War ( 2016 ) . Marvel Television expanded the universe further , first to network television with Marvel 's Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. on ABC in the 2013 ? 14 television season , followed by online streaming with Marvel 's Daredevil on Netflix in 2015 , and then to cable television with Marvel 's Cloak and Dagger , which is scheduled to air in 2017 on Freeform . The MCU also includes tie @-@ in comics published by Marvel Comics , while Marvel Studios has also produced a series of direct @-@ to @-@ video short films and a viral marketing campaign for its films and the universe with the faux news program WHIH Newsfront .

The franchise has been seen as an impressive and groundbreaking success in terms of a multimedia shared universe , though critics have found that some of its films and television series have suffered in service of the wider universe . It has inspired other film and television studios with comic book character adaptation rights to attempt to create similar shared universes . The MCU has also been the focus of other media , outside of the shared universe , including attractions at Disneyland and Discovery Times Square , two television specials , guidebooks for each film , a Lego video game , and a commercial with Coca @-@ Cola .

= = Development = =

= = = Films = = =

By 2005 , Marvel Entertainment began planning to independently produce its own films and distribute them through Paramount Pictures . Previously , Marvel had co @-@ produced several superhero films with Sony Pictures Entertainment , New Line Cinema and others , including a seven @-@ year development deal with 20th Century Fox . Marvel made relatively little profit from its licensing deals with other studios and wanted to get more money out of its films while maintaining artistic control of the projects and distribution . Avi Arad , head of Marvel 's film division , was pleased with Sam Raimi 's Spider @-@ Man films at Sony , but was less pleased about others . As a result , they decided to form Marvel Studios , Hollywood 's first major independent movie studio since DreamWorks .

Arad 's second @-@ in @-@ command , Kevin Feige , realized that unlike Spider @-@ Man and the X @-@ Men , whose film rights were licensed to Sony and Fox respectively , Marvel still owned the rights to the core members of The Avengers . Feige , a self @-@ professed fanboy , envisioned creating a shared universe just as creators Stan Lee and Jack Kirby had done with their comic books in the early 1960s . To raise capital , the studio secured funding from a seven @-@ year , \$ 525 million revolving credit facility with Merrill Lynch . Marvel 's plan was to release individual films for their main characters and then merge them together in a crossover film . Arad , who doubted the strategy yet insisted that it was his reputation that helped secure the initial financing , resigned the following year .

In 2007 , at 33 years old , Feige was named studio chief . In order to preserve its artistic integrity , Marvel Studios formed a six @-@ person creative committee with people familiar with its comic book lore that included Feige , Marvel Studios co @-@ president Louis D 'Esposito , Marvel Comics

' president of publishing Dan Buckley , Marvel 's chief creative officer Joe Quesada , writer Brian Michael Bendis , and Marvel Entertainment president Alan Fine , who oversaw the committee . Feige initially referred to the shared narrative continuity of these films as the " Marvel Cinema Universe " , but later used the term " Marvel Cinematic Universe " . Marvel has designated the Marvel Cinematic Universe as Earth @-@ 199999 within the continuity of the company 's multiverse , a collection of fictional alternate universes .

In November 2013 , Feige said that " in an ideal world " releases each year would include one film based on an existing character and one featuring a new character , saying it 's " a nice rhythm " in that format . While not always the case , as evident by the 2013 releases of Iron Man 3 and Thor : The Dark World , he said it is " certainly something to aim for . " Feige expanded on this in July 2014 , saying , " I don 't know that we 'll keep to [ that model ] every year , " but we 're doing that in 2014 and 2015 , " so I think it would be fun to continue that sort of thing . " In February 2014 , Feige stated that Marvel Studios wants to mimic the " rhythm " that the comic books have developed , by having the characters appear in their own films , and then come together , much like " a big event or crossover series , " with Avengers films acting as " big , giant linchpins . " After the reveal of multiple release dates for films through 2019 in July 2014 , Feige stated , " I think if you look at some of those dates that we 've announced , we 're going to three in a few of those years . Again , not because there 's a number cruncher telling us to go to three , do more than two pictures a year , but because of the very reason just laid out : It is about managing [ existing ] franchises , film to film , and when we have a team ready to go , why tell them to go away for four years just because we don 't have a slot ? We 'd rather find a way to keep that going . " After the titles were revealed in October 2014 , Feige said , " the studio ? s firing on all cylinders right now ... which made us comfortable for the first time ... to increase to three films a year [ in 2017 and 2018 ] instead of just two , without changing our methods . "

On expanding the characters in the universe and letting individual films breathe and work on their own , as opposed to having Avenger team @-@ ups outside of Avengers films , Feige stated , it ? s about " teaching the general movie going audience about the notion of the characters existing separately , coming together for specific events and going away and existing separately in their own worlds again . Just like comic readers have been doing for decades and decades ... People sort of are accepting that there 's just a time when they should be together and there ? s a time when they ? re not . " In April 2014 , Feige revealed that Edgar Wright 's pitch for Ant @-@ Man in 2006 helped shape the early films of the Marvel Cinematic Universe , saying , " We changed , frankly , some of the MCU to accommodate this version of Ant @-@ Man . Knowing what we wanted to do with Edgar and with Ant @-@ Man , going years and years back , helped to dictate what we did with the roster for Avengers the first time . It was a bit of both in terms of his idea for the Ant @-@ Man story influencing the birth of the MCU in the early films leading up to Avengers . "

In October 2014 , Marvel held a press event to announce the titles of their Phase Three films . The event , which drew comparisons to Apple 's Worldwide Developers Conference , was done because all the information was ready . As Feige explained , " We wanted to do this at [ San Diego ] Comic @-@ Con this year . Things were not set ... So the plan has been , since a few weeks before Comic @-@ Con when we realized we weren ? t going to be able to do everything we wanted to do , is to decide ' let 's do either something we haven ? t done in a long time , or something we 've never done . ' Which is a singular event , just to announce what we have when it 's ready . I thought that might be early August , or mid @-@ September , it ended up being [ at the end of October ] . "

In September 2015 , after Marvel Studios was integrated into The Walt Disney Studios with Feige reporting to Walt Disney Studios chairman Alan Horn instead of Marvel Entertainment CEO Isaac Perlmutter , it was reported that the studios ' creative committee would have " nominal " input on the films moving forward , though would continue to consult on Marvel Television productions , which remained under Perlmutter 's control . All key film decisions going forward will be made by Feige , D 'Esposito and Victoria Alonso . At the end of the month , on how much story is developed for future films of the universe , Feige said there are " broad stroke " though sometime " super @-@ specific things . But for the most part , in broad strokes that are broad enough and loose enough that , if through the development of four of five movies before we get to the culmination ... we still have

room to sway and to move and to go and to surprise ourselves in places that we end up . So that all the movies , hopefully when they 're finished , will feel like they 're all interconnected and meant to be and planned far ahead , but really can live and breathe enough as individual movies to be satisfying each and of themselves . " The studio also has various contingency plans for the direction of all of their films , in the event they are unable to secure a certain actor to reprise a role , or require the film rights to a character , such as was done in February 2015 with Spider @-@ Man .

In April 2016 , on moving the universe to Phase Four and reflecting on the first three , Feige said , " I think there will be a finality to moments of Phase Three , as well as new beginnings that will mark a different , a very different , a distinctively different chapter in what will someday be a complete first saga made up of three phases . " Joe Russo added , " You build things up and people enjoy the experiences you 've built up . But then you kind of reach an apex or you reach a climax , a moment where you go , ? This structure is really going to start to be repetitious if we do this again , so what do we do now ? ? So now , you deconstruct it . We ? re in the deconstruction phase with [ Captain America : ] Civil War and leading into [ Avengers : ] Infinity War , which are the culmination films . " On the potential for " superhero fatigue " , Feige stated , " This year , we ? ve got Civil War and we ? ve got Doctor Strange in November , two completely different movies . To me , and to all of Marvel Studios , that ? s what keeps it going . As long as we ? re surprising people , as long as we ? re not falling into things becoming too similar ... next year , [ Guardians of the Galaxy Vol . 2 ] , [ Spider @-@ Man : Homecoming ] , Thor : Ragnarok . Those are three totally different movies ... as long as the only shared thing is they come from the same source material and they ? ve got our Marvel logo in front of the movies . Other than that they can be very distinct . What other studios do , what other properties , nothing we can do about it . "

= = = = Distributors = = = =

Over time , the distribution rights to Marvel Studios ' films changed hands on multiple occasions . In November 2006 , Universal Pictures announced that it would distribute The Incredible Hulk , in an arrangement separate from Marvel 's 2005 deal with Paramount , which was distributing Marvel 's other films . In September 2008 , after the international success of Iron Man , Paramount signed a deal to have worldwide distribution rights for Iron Man 2 , Iron Man 3 , Thor , Captain America : The First Avenger , and The Avengers .

In late December 2009 , The Walt Disney Company purchased Marvel Entertainment for \$ 4 billion . In October 2010 , Walt Disney Studios bought the distribution rights for Marvel 's The Avengers and Iron Man 3 from Paramount Pictures , with Paramount 's logo remaining on the films , as well as for promotional material and merchandise , although Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures is the only studio credited at the end of these films . Disney has distributed all subsequent Marvel Studios films . In July 2013 , Disney purchased the distribution rights to Iron Man , Iron Man 2 , Thor and Captain America : The First Avenger from Paramount . The Incredible Hulk was not part of the deal , due to an agreement between Marvel and Universal , where Marvel owns the film rights and Universal owns the distribution rights , for this film as well as the right of first refusal to distribute future Hulk films . According to The Hollywood Reporter , a potential reason why Marvel has not bought the film distribution rights to the Hulk as they did with Paramount for the Iron Man , Thor , and Captain America films is because Universal holds the theme park rights to several Marvel characters that Disney wants for its own theme parks .

In February 2015 , Sony Pictures Entertainment and Marvel Studios announced a licensing deal that would allow Spider @-@ Man to appear in the Marvel Cinematic Universe , with the character first appearing in Captain America : Civil War . Marvel Studios also explored opportunities to integrate other characters of the Marvel Cinematic Universe into future Spider @-@ Man films financed , distributed , and controlled by Sony Pictures , with Robert Downey , Jr. the first confirmed to reprise his role as Tony Stark / Iron Man in Spider @-@ Man : Homecoming . In June 2015 , Feige clarified that the initial Sony deal does not apply to the MCU television series , as it was " very specific ... with a certain amount of back and forth allowed . "

= = = Television = = =

In June 2010 , Marvel Television was launched with Jeph Loeb as head . By July 2012 , the division had entered into discussions with ABC to create a show set in the MCU , and in August , ABC ordered a pilot for a show called S.H.I.E.L.D. , with The Avengers writer / director Joss Whedon involved . Later renamed Marvel 's Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. , the series was soon joined by several others at ABC .

Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. executive producer Jeffrey Bell stated at the show 's 2014 PaleyFest panel that the producers and the writers are able to read the screenplays for upcoming MCU films to know where the universe is heading , which allowed them to form a general plan for the show through the end of a third season . He noted that since the films have to be " big " and move " quickly through a lot of huge pieces " , it is beneficial for the films to have the television series fill in any " gaps " for them . His fellow executive producer Jed Whedon explained that each Marvel project is intended to standalone first before there is any interweaving , and noted that the series has to work with the film division and be aware of their plans so as not to interfere when introducing someone or something to the universe . Bell elaborated that this was preferable so that people who do not watch the films can still follow the series , and vice versa . Joss Whedon noted that this process " unfortunately just means the TV show gets , you know , leftovers . " He stated that , for example , the series ' creative team initially wanted to use Loki 's scepter from The Avengers but were unable due to Whedon 's plans for it in Avengers : Age of Ultron .

By October 2013 , Marvel was preparing four drama series and a miniseries , totaling 60 episodes , to present to video on demand services and cable providers , with Netflix , Amazon , and WGN America expressing interest . In November 2013 , it was announced that Disney would provide Netflix with live @-@ action series based on Daredevil , Jessica Jones , Iron Fist , and Luke Cage , leading up to a miniseries based on the Defenders . Disney CEO Bob Iger stated that Netflix was chosen to air the shows , " when Disney realized it could use the streaming service as a way to grow the popularity of the characters " . He added that , if the characters prove popular , they could become feature films . Quesada confirmed that the series are set within the MCU , and that , beyond connecting to themselves , would connect with the films and other television series .

In December 2014 , Loeb explained that " Within the Marvel universe there are thousands of heroes of all shapes and sizes , but the Avengers are here to save the universe and Daredevil is here to save the neighborhood ... It does take place in the Marvel Cinematic Universe . It ? s all connected . But that doesn 't necessarily mean that we would look up in the sky and see [ Iron Man ] . It ? s just a different part of New York that we have not yet seen in the Marvel movies . " In April 2015 , Loeb explained that " In the world of Marvel Comics , Jessica Jones , and Matt Murdock , and Danny Rand , and Luke Cage all had a previous existing relationship and all grew up on the same kind of stoop in New York . So it lent itself to a world . Does that mean these shows are going to be the same ? No . They can 't be . The characters have different issues , different problems , different feelings about them . While I don 't think they 'll be as varied , the example that I continually give is that I cannot think of two films that are more different in tone than The Winter Soldier and Guardians of the Galaxy . And yet , if you watch them back to back , they feel very Marvel . They feel very much like , ' Oh , it is still the same universe that I 'm in . ' "

In October 2014 , Feige said the opportunity " certainly " exists for characters in the Netflix series to appear in Avengers : Infinity War . In March 2015 , Loeb spoke on the ability for the Netflix series to crossover with the films and the ABC series , saying , " As it is now , in the same way that our films started out as self @-@ contained and then by the time we got to The Avengers , it became more practical for Captain America to do a little crossover into Thor 2 and for Bruce Banner to appear at the end of Iron Man 3 . We have to earn that . The audience needs to understand who all of these characters are and what the world is before you then start co @-@ mingling " . In September 2015 , Feige elaborated on the films referencing the television series , saying " I think that 's inevitable at some point ... The schedules do not always quite match up to make that possible . It 's easier for [ the shows ] . They 're more nimble and faster and produce things quicker than we do , which is one of the main reasons you see the repercussions of Winter Soldier or [ Avengers : Age of Ultron ] in

the show ... by the time we start doing a movie , they 'd be mid @-@ way through a season . By the time our movie comes out , they 'd be [ starting the next season ] . So finding the timing on that is not always easy .

While talking about Marvel potentially making comedy series , Loeb said in January 2016 that Marvel always feels humor should be a part of anything they produce , despite possibly fitting more within a darker genre , as Daredevil and Jessica Jones do , while also staying " grounded and real " . He added , " There are moments of levity that are in life that you need to bring to the table , or else it just becomes overwhelmingly oppressive ... If you 're going to [ explore comic book elements ] , it 's always a good idea to make sure that the audience is aware that , yeah , it 's funny [ too ] . " Also in January , Netflix CCO Ted Sarandos talked about the release schedule of the Marvel Netflix series , saying that they " are produced at the scale of a major film , so there are long production times and long post times . In some case , when we have character crossover , it makes it more difficult to manage production . It ? s not the goal to put out more than one or two [ each ] year ... The complex one is really The Defenders . The Defenders ' production schedule will determine a lot of the season 2 and 3 output of those shows . " He also noted on potential spin @-@ offs that " all the characters in the universe could also spin out " into their own series at some point , with Netflix ordering Marvel 's The Punisher , a spin @-@ off from Daredevil , that April .

Also in April , the ABC @-@ owned cable network Freeform announced Marvel 's Cloak and Dagger , based on the characters of the same name , with a straight @-@ to @-@ series order for 2017 . The network confirmed that the series would be " its first venture into the Marvel Cinematic Universe " , and described the show as a " superhero love story " , a premise that Variety called " a seamless fit for Freeform " given the network 's target audience of " Becomers " ( the 14 @-@ 34 age demographic ) .

= = = Other media = = =

In 2008 , the first official tie @-@ in comic was released . Quesada outlined his plan to expand the MCU into comic books , saying , " The MCU [ comics ] are going to be stories set within movie continuity . [ They are ] not necessarily direct adaptations of the movies , but maybe something that happened off screen and was mentioned in the movie ... Kevin Feige is involved with these and in some cases maybe the writers of the movies would be involved [ as well . ] " Marvel Comics worked with Brad Winderbaum , Jeremy Latcham , and Will Corona Pilgrim at Marvel Studios to decide which concepts should be carried over from the Marvel Comics Universe to the Marvel Cinematic Universe , what to show in the tie @-@ in comics , and what to leave for the films . Marvel has clarified which of the tie @-@ in comics are considered official canonical MCU stories , with the rest merely inspired by the MCU , " where we get to show off all the characters from the film in costume and in comic form . "

In August 2011 , Marvel announced a series of direct @-@ to @-@ video short films called Marvel One @-@ Shots , the name derived from the label used by Marvel Comics for their one @-@ shot comics . Co @-@ producer Brad Winderbaum said " It 's a fun way to experiment with new characters and ideas , but more importantly it 's a way for us to expand the Marvel Cinematic Universe and tell stories that live outside the plot of our features . " Each short film is designed to be a self @-@ contained story that provides more backstory for characters or events introduced in the films . In July 2012 , D 'Esposito stated that Marvel was considering the idea of introducing established characters who may not yet be ready to carry their own feature films in future One @-@ Shots , stating , " There ? s always a potential to introduce a character . We have 8 @,@ 000 of them , and they can ? t all be at the same level . So maybe there are some that are not so popular , and we introduce them [ with a short ] ? and they take off . I could see that happening . "

In March 2015 , Marvel 's Vice President of Animation Development and Production , Cort Lane , stated that animated tie @-@ ins to the MCU were " in the works " . That July , Marvel Studios partnered with Google to produce the faux news program WHIH Newsfront with Christine Everhart , a series of in @-@ universe YouTube videos serving as the center of a viral marketing campaign to promote the films and universe .

= = = Business practices = = =

Marvel Studios developed specific business practices to create its shared universe , including choosing filmmakers that were considered " out @-@ of @-@ left @-@ field " , given their previous work . Feige remarked , " You don 't have to have directed a big , giant visual @-@ effects movie to do a big , giant visual @-@ effects movie for us . You just have to have done something singularly sort of awesome , " adding " It 's worked out well for us when we 've taken people [ such as Jon Favreau , Joss Whedon , Kenneth Branagh , and the Russo brothers , ] that have done very , very good things . Very rarely are one of those good things a big giant blockbuster superhero movie . " When hiring directors , the studio usually has " a kernel of an idea of what we want , " which is presented to potential directors over the course of several meetings to discuss and further expand . " And if over the course of three or four or five meetings they make it way better than what we initially were spewing to them , they usually get the job , " according to Feige .

Joe and Anthony Russo discussed the specific process they went through to join Marvel for Captain America : The Winter Soldier , explaining that they met with the studio four times over two months before they were hired , during which they " kept getting more and more specific about what our vision was " , putting together " reference videos , storyboards , script pages , you name it . We did like a 30 @-@ page book that had everything that we ? d do with the character , from the theme of the movie to the tone of the film to the fighting style to what we liked about the character and what we didn 't like " . This meant that by the time they were hired they had already " figured the movie out " .

When the studio hired Kenneth Branagh and Joe Johnston to direct Thor and Captain America : The First Avenger , respectively , it made sure both directors were open to the idea of a shared universe , and that they would have to include Avengers set @-@ up scenes in their films . Joe Russo stated , " That 's the exciting component of [ incorporating references to the larger universe ] . ' What can we set up for the future ? ' You 're constantly pitching out ideas that not only affect your movie , but may have a ripple effect that affects other films ... It 's a weird sort of tapestry of writers and directors working together to create this universe that 's sort of organic . " Anthony added , " The great thing about the Marvel [ Cinematic Universe ] , just like the publishing [ arm ] , it ? s a very vast , inter @-@ connected universe , where characters will have their rise and fall , so to speak , and hand off to other characters . As the cinematic universe moves forward , you may start to see the cinematic universe adopt that same pattern , as the publishing has , where there ? s closure with some characters and new beginnings with other characters . How those hand @-@ offs are made is always part of the fun . ? Anthony also said , that in order for directors to " fit " in at Marvel , they must " understand how [ to ] take a larger story and wrangle in [ sic ] into a moment , yet keep [ it ] connected . "

On allowing directors and writers to work within Marvel 's shared universe concept , Joe Russo said , " I think the way Kevin [ Feige ] does it is there are big pieces that he knows he wants to build towards , but the way that you get there is open to interpretation and improv a little bit . That ? s defined by who gets involved with the project , the writers and directors involved in the project . " For the Russos in The Winter Soldier , they had to deal with the idea of S.H.I.E.L.D. being infiltrated by Hydra and thus subsequently falling , with Joe saying , " how we get there is all up to us . And I think why Marvel has been so successful is because it ? s been such a clear plan , that everything is interconnected and they ? re building emotional capital with each movie that you can then trade off of in the next film . " Joe later elaborated that once each film 's creative team " come up with conceptually what we want to do " for a film , then we will ask questions about whether this would interfere with a storyline in another movie . Or , what ? s going on in that film , can we pull some of that into this film ? That ? s where you start looking for the interconnectedness , but it ? s very important early on that the concept be created in a bubble because you have to protect the idea , it has to be driven by storytelling . Kevin ? s very good about just attacking each movie as they come and then figuring out what the movies are after that . Because if you get ahead of yourself two things can happen . One is you take your eye off the ball and you make a mess of a movie , and then the

second thing that would happen is then you don't get to make any more movies . So he's always in the mindset of let's just make this movie now and worry about the next movie when it comes . "

Marvel Studios also began contracting their actors for multiple films , including signing actor Samuel L. Jackson to a then " unprecedented " nine @-@ movie contract . In July 2014 , Feige said that the studio has all actors sign contracts for multiples films , with the norm being for 3 or more , and the 9 or 12 film deals " more rare " . Actor 's contracts also feature clauses that allows Marvel to use up to three minutes of an actor 's performance from one film for another , which Marvel describes as " bridging material " . At Marvel Television , actors such as Charlie Cox ( Matt Murdock / Daredevil in Daredevil ) and Adrianne Palicki ( Bobbi Morse / Mockingbird in Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. ) are contractually obliged to appear in a Marvel film if asked . In August 2014 , Vincent D 'Onofrio ( Wilson Fisk / Kingpin in Daredevil ) said , " The thing about Marvel is ... they're looking for artists that are willing to take chances and are willing to create characters , even if that character has been around for years and years in comic books , they still are depending on us to create something and take it somewhere else . "

In August 2012 , Marvel signed Joss Whedon to an exclusive contract through June 2015 for film and television . With the deal , Whedon would " contribute creatively " on Phase Two of the MCU and develop the first television series set in the universe . In March 2013 , Whedon expanded on his consulting responsibilities , saying , " I understand what Kevin [ Feige ] is going for and where he's heading , and I read the scripts and watch cuts and talk to the directors and writers and give my opinion . Occasionally there could be some writing . But I'm not trying to get in anybody's soup , I'm just trying to be helpful . " Whedon later elaborated that " Since the story has already been approved and everybody knows what we're doing with Avengers 2 , we can really lay it out . It's not like anyone's saying " well I don't know , what if I need that ? " It's like " doing this is troublesome for us , whereas doing this will actually help us . " It's a dance , but I had to do it on [ The Avengers ] too . You want to honor the events of the last movie but you don't want to be beholden to them , because some people will see Avengers [ : Age of Ultron ] who did not see any of the movies in between or even Avengers 1 . " He also found working in television and script doctoring to be " great training ground [ s ] for dealing with this ... because you're given a bunch of pieces and told to make them fit even if they don't . " For the Russo brothers and writers Christopher Markus and Stephen McFeely working on Avengers : Infinity War and Phase Three , they saw " a through line from Winter Soldier , through Civil War , right to Infinity War " , with films like Doctor Strange and Thor : Ragnarok laying groundwork for the " culmination " in Infinity War . Subsequently , they talked " to the directors and writers of the other Phase 3 movies on an almost weekly basis , to make sure everything lines up right . "

= = Feature films = =

= = Television series = =

= = Short films = =

= = Comic books = =

= = Viral marketing = =

In July 2015 , Marvel Studios and Google began a viral marketing campaign to promote Ant @-@ Man , centering on a series of in @-@ universe YouTube videos depicting a faux news program , WHIH Newsfront with Christine Everhart . The videos star Leslie Bibb as Christine Everhart ,

reprising her role from the Iron Man films , who reports on and discusses issues from the MCU . The campaign is an extension of the fictional news network WHIH World News , which is seen reporting on major events in many MCU films and television series , and returned in April 2016 as part of a similar marketing campaign for Captain America : Civil War . The videos feature a news ticker that contains multiple references and easter eggs to the wider MCU , and are supported by ongoing in @-@ universe social media posts that also reference the MCU 's characters and events . The marketing campaign has been called " one of the more well @-@ produced campaigns " as far as viral marketing goes , and " one of the canniest bits of marketing that Marvel have come up with " .

= = Recurring cast and characters = =

List indicator ( s )

This table includes characters who have appeared in multiple MCU media .

A dark grey cell indicates the character has not appeared in that medium .

A P indicates a new appearance in onscreen photographs only .

Additionally , Paul Bettany was the first actor to portray two main characters within the universe , voicing Tony Stark 's artificial intelligence J.A.R.V.I.S. in the Iron Man and Avengers films , and portraying Vision in Avengers : Age of Ultron and Captain America : Civil War . Stan Lee , creator or co @-@ creator of many of the characters seen in the MCU , has cameo appearances in all of the feature films and television series .

= = Reception = =

Jim Vorel of Herald & Review called the Marvel Cinematic Universe " complicated " and " impressive " , but said , " As more and more heroes get their own film adaptations , the overall universe becomes increasingly confusing . " Kofi Outlaw of Screen Rant stated that while The Avengers was a success , " Marvel Studios still has room to improve their approach to building a shared movie universe " . Some reviewers criticized the fact that the desire to create a shared universe led to films that did not hold as well on their own . In his review of Thor : The Dark World , Forbes critic Scott Mendelson likened the MCU to " a glorified television series " , with The Dark World being a " ' stand @-@ alone ' episode that contains little long @-@ range mythology . " Collider 's Matt Goldberg considered that while Iron Man 2 , Thor and Captain America : The First Avenger were quality productions , " they have never really been their own movies " , feeling that the plot detours to S.H.I.E.L.D. or lead @-@ ups to The Avengers dragged down the films ' narratives .

The metaphor of the MCU as " the world 's biggest TV show " was discussed again , after the release of Captain America : Civil War , by Todd VanDerWerff of Vox , who felt that film in particular highlighted Marvel 's success with the model , saying , " Viewed in complete isolation , the plot of Captain America : Civil War makes little to no sense ... [ but ] when you think about where [ Captain America ] has been in earlier Marvel films ... his leeriness about being subject to oversight makes a lot more sense . " VanDerWerff continued that when thinking about the MCU as a television series , many " common criticisms people tend to level at it take on a new context " such as complaints that the films are formulaic , lack " visual spark " , or " shoehorn in story elements " that " are necessary to set up future films " , all characteristics that " are fairly typical on television , where a director 's influence is much lower than that of the showrunner " , in this case , Feige . Comparing the films to the series Game of Thrones specifically , VanDerWerff noted that each solo film checks " in on various characters and their individual side stories , before bringing everyone together in the finale ( or , rather , an Avengers film ) " , with Guardians of the Galaxy being equivalent to the character Daenerys Targaryen ? " both separated by long distances from everybody else . " He noted that this format was an extension of early " TV @-@ like " film franchises such as Star Wars , as well as the format of the comics upon which the films are based . " I say all of this not to suggest that film franchises resembling TV series is necessarily a good trend , " VanDerWerff concluded , " For as much as I generally enjoy the Marvel movies , I 'm disheartened by the possibility that their particular form might take over the film industry ... But I also don 't think it 's the end of the world if Marvel



continues on ... there 's a reason TV has stolen so much of the cultural conversation over the past few decades . There 's something legitimately exciting about the way the medium tells stories when it 's good , and if nothing else , Marvel 's success shows the film world could learn from that . "

Following the conclusion of season one of Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. , Mary McNamara at the Los Angeles Times praised the connections between that series and the films , stating that " never before has television been literally married to film , charged with filling in the back story and creating the connective tissue of an ongoing film franchise ... [ Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. ] is now not only a very good show in its own right , it 's part of Marvel 's multiplatform city @-@ state . It faces a future of perpetual re @-@ invention , and that puts it in the exhilarating first car of television 's roller @-@ coaster ride toward possible world domination . " Terri Schwartz of Zap2it agreed with this sentiment , stating that " the fact that [ Captain America : The Winter Soldier ] so influenced the show is game @-@ changing in terms of how the mediums of film and television can be interwoven " , though " the fault there seems to be that Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. had to bide time until The Winter Soldier 's release " , which led to much criticism .

In January 2015 , Michael Doran of Newsarama and Graeme McMillan of The Hollywood Reporter had a " point @-@ counterpoint " debate in response to the first Ant @-@ Man trailer . Doran stated , " Marvel has raised the bar sooo high that as opposed to just allowing another film to finish under the [ MCU ] bar , we 're all overly and perhaps even eager to overreact to the first thing that doesn 't clear it " . McMillan responded , " at this point , Marvel 's brand is such that I 'm not sure it can offer up something like [ the trailer ] without it seeming like a crushing disappointment ... part of Marvel 's brand is that it doesn 't offer the kind of run @-@ of @-@ the @-@ mill superhero movie that you 're talking about , that it 's ... at least different enough to tweak and play with the genre somehow ... The fact that there 's such upset about this trailer being ... well , okay ... suggests to me that the audience is expecting something to knock their socks off . " Doran concluded , " That does seem to be the point here ? the expectations fans now have for everything Marvel Studios ... [ and ] Marvel is going to eventually falter . "

After seeing the portrayal of Yellowjacket in Ant @-@ Man , the antagonist of the film , McMillan noted ,

It 's hardly a secret that Marvel Studios has a bit of a problem when it comes to offering up exciting characters for their heroes to fight against ... [ their ] villains generally fall into one of two camps . There 's the Unstoppable Monster ... or there 's the Professional White Guy In A Suit With An Ego ... No matter which of the groups the above villains fall into , they share one common purpose : evil . The motivations for evil likely differ ? although , invariably , they fall under the umbrella of ' misguided belief in a greater good that doesn 't exist ' ? but that really doesn 't matter , because without fail , there will be so little time in the movie to actually properly explore those motivations , meaning that to all intents and purposes , the villain is being evil for reasons of plot necessity and little else ... The strange thing about this is that Marvel 's comic books offer a number of wonderful , colorful bad guys who could step outside the above parameters and offer an alternative to the formulaic villains audiences have gotten used to ( and arguably bored with ) ... In future movies , we can only hope [ they are ] treated in such a way that their freak flags are allowed to fly free .

Following the release of Jessica Jones , David Priest at c | net wrote about how the series rescues " Marvel from itself ... Jessica Jones takes big steps forward in terms of theme , craft and diversity . It 's a good story first , and a superhero show second . And for the first time , the MCU seems like it matters . Our culture needs stories like this . Here 's hoping Marvel keeps them coming . " For Paul Tassi and Erik Kain of Forbes , watching the series made them question the MCU , with Kain feeling that the " morally complex , violent , dark world of Jessica Jones has no place in the MCU ... right now , the MCU is holding back shows like Jessica Jones and Daredevil , while those shows are contributing absolutely nothing to the MCU . " Tassi went so far as to wonder what " the point of the Marvel Cinematic Universe " is , lamenting the lack of major crossovers in the franchise since the Winter Soldier reveal on Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. , and saying that Jessica Jones is " so far removed from the world of The Avengers , it might as well not be in the same universe at all ... [ I ] really don 't understand the point of [ the MCU ] if they 're going to keep everything within it separated off in these little boxes " . Conversely , Eric Francisco of Inverse called Jessica Jones 's lack of overt

connections to the MCU " the show 's chief advantage . Besides demonstrating how physically wide open the MCU 's scope really is , Jessica Jones also proves the MCU 's thematic durability . "

In April 2016 , Marvel Studios revealed that Alfre Woodard would appear in Captain America : Civil War , having already been cast as Mariah Dillard in Luke Cage the previous year . This " raised hopes that Marvel could be uniting its film and Netflix universes " , with " one of the first and strongest connections " between the two . However , Civil War writers Christopher Markus and Stephen McFeely revealed that Woodard would instead be portraying Miriam Sharpe in the film , explaining that she had been cast on the suggestion of Robert Downey , Jr . , and they had not learnt of her casting in Luke Cage until afterwards . This was not the first instance of actors being cast in multiple roles in the MCU , but this casting was called more " significant " , and seen by many as a " disappointing " indication of " the growing divide " and " lack of more satisfying cooperation " between Marvel Studios and Marvel Television following the September 2015 corporate reshuffling of Marvel Entertainment .

= = Cultural impact = =

In September 2014 , the University of Baltimore announced a course beginning in the 2015 spring semester revolving around the Marvel Cinematic Universe , to be taught by Arnold T. Blumberg . " Media Genres : Media Marvels " examines " how Marvel 's series of interconnected films and television shows , plus related media and comic book sources and Joseph Campbell 's monomyth of the ' hero 's journey ' , offer important insights into modern culture " as well as Marvel 's efforts " to establish a viable universe of plotlines , characters , and backstories . "

= = = Other studios = = =

After the release of The Avengers in May 2012 , Tom Russo of Boston.com noted that aside from the occasional " novelty " such as Aliens vs. Predator ( 2004 ) , the idea of a shared universe was virtually unheard of in Hollywood . Since that time , the shared universe model created by Marvel Studios has begun to be replicated by other film studios that held rights to other comic book characters . In April 2014 , Tuna Amobi , a media analyst for Standard & Poor 's Equity Research Services , stated that in the previous three to five years , Hollywood studios began planning " megafranchises " for years to come , opposed to working one blockbuster at a time . Amobi added , " A lot of these superhero characters were just being left there to gather dust . Disney has proved that this [ approach and genre ] can be a gold mine . " However , with additional studios now " playing the megafranchise game " , Doug Creutz , media analyst for Cowen and Company , feels the allure will eventually die for audiences : " If Marvel 's going to make two or three films a year , and Warner Brothers is going to do at least a film every year , and Sony 's going to do a film every year , and Fox [ is ] going to do a film every year , can everyone do well in that scenario ? I 'm not sure they can . "

= = = DC Entertainment and Warner Bros. = = =

In October 2012 , following its legal victory over Joe Shuster 's estate for the rights to Superman , Warner Bros. announced that it planned to move ahead with its long @-@ awaited Justice League film , uniting such DC Comics superheroes as Batman , Superman , and Wonder Woman . The company was expected to take the opposite approach to Marvel , releasing individual films for the characters after they have appeared in a team @-@ up film . The release of Man of Steel in 2013 was intended to be the start of a new shared universe for DC , " laying the groundwork for the future slate of films based on DC Comics . " In 2014 , Warner Bros. announced that slate of films , similarly to Disney and Marvel claiming dates for films years in advance . That year , DC CCO Geoff Johns stated that the television series Arrow and The Flash were set in a separate universe from the new film one , later clarifying that " We look at it as the multiverse . We have our TV universe and our film universe , but they all co @-@ exist . For us , creatively , it 's about allowing everyone to make the

best possible product , to tell the best story , to do the best world . Everyone has a vision and you really want to let the visions shine through ... It 's just a different approach [ to Marvel 's ] . "

Discussing the apparent failure of the cinematic universe 's first team @-@ up film , Batman v Superman : Dawn of Justice , to establish a successful equivalent to the MCU , Todd VanDerWerff noted that where the MCU has a television @-@ like " showrunner " in Feige , " the visionary behind Marvel 's entire slate " , the DCEU has director Zack Snyder , whose DC films " seemingly start from the assumption that people have come not to see an individual story but a long series of teasers for other ones . It 's like he knows what he needs to do but can 't focus on the task at hand . TV certainly isn 't immune to that problem , but shows that get caught up in high @-@ concept premises and big @-@ picture thinking before doing the necessary legwork to establish characters and their relationships tend to be canceled . " Subsequently , in May 2016 , Warner Bros. gave oversight of the DCEU to Johns and executive Jon Berg in an attempt to " unify the disparate elements of the DC movies " and emulate Marvel 's success . The two were made producers on the Justice League films , on top of Johns ' involvement in several " solo " films , such as the post @-@ production process of Suicide Squad or the writing process of a standalone Batman film .

= = = = 20th Century Fox = = = =

In November 2012 , 20th Century Fox announced plans to create their own shared universe , consisting of Marvel properties that it holds the rights to including the Fantastic Four and X @-@ Men , with the hiring of Mark Millar as supervising producer . Millar said , " Fox are thinking , ' We 're sitting on some really awesome things here . There is another side of the Marvel Universe . Let 's try and get some cohesiveness going . ' So they brought me in to oversee that really . To meet with the writers and directors to suggest new ways we could take this stuff and new properties that could spin out of it . " X @-@ Men : Days of Future Past , released in 2014 , was Fox 's first step towards expanding their stable of Marvel properties and creating this universe , ahead of the release of a Fantastic Four reboot film the next year . However , in May 2014 , Days of Future Past and Fantastic Four screenwriter Simon Kinberg stated that the latter film would not take place in the same universe as the X @-@ Men films , explaining that " none of the X @-@ Men movies have acknowledged the notion of a sort of superhero team ? the Fantastic Four . And the Fantastic Four acquire powers , so for them to live in a world where mutants are prevalent is kind of complicated , because you 're like , ' Oh , you 're just a mutant . ' Like , ' What 's so fantastic about you ? ' ... they live in discrete universes . " In July 2015 , X @-@ Men director Bryan Singer said that there was still potential for a crossover between the X @-@ Men and Fantastic Four franchises , if reaction to Fantastic Four and X @-@ Men : Apocalypse warranted it .

Feeling that Singer 's efforts in Apocalypse to establish a larger world , similar to the MCU , did not meet the standards established by Marvel , VanDerWerff noted that unlike Feige 's ability to serve as " pseudo @-@ showrunner " , Singer is instead " steeped in film and the way movie stories have always been told " , so " when it comes time to have Apocalypse dovetail with story threads from the earlier X @-@ Men : First Class ( which was directed by someone else entirely ) , both Singer 's direction and Simon Kinberg 's script rely on hackneyed devices and clumsy storytelling " , indicating a lack of " the kind of big @-@ picture thinking this sort of mega franchise requires " .

= = = = Sony Pictures = = = =

In November 2013 , Sony Pictures Entertainment Co @-@ Chairman Amy Pascal announced that the studio intended to expand their universe created within the Marc Webb Amazing Spider @-@ Man series , with spin @-@ off adventures for supporting characters , in an attempt to replicate Marvel and Disney 's model . The next month , Sony announced Venom and Sinister Six films , both set in the Amazing Spider @-@ Man universe . With this announcement , IGN stated that the spin @-@ offs are " the latest example of what we can refer to as " the Avengers effect " in Hollywood , as studios work to build interlocking movie universes . " Sony chose not to replicate the Marvel Studios model of introducing individual characters first before bringing them together in a team @-@

up film , instead making the Spider @-@ Man adversaries the stars of future films . However , in February 2015 , Sony Pictures and Marvel Studios announced that the Spider @-@ Man franchise would be retooled , with a new film co @-@ produced by Feige and Pascal being released in July 2017 , and the character being integrated into the MCU . Sony Pictures would continue to finance , distribute , own , and have final creative control of the Spider @-@ Man films . With this announcement , sequels to The Amazing Spider @-@ Man 2 were canceled , and by November 2015 the Venom and Sinister Six films , as well as spin @-@ offs based on female characters in the Spider @-@ Man universe , were no longer moving forward . By March 2016 , the Venom film had itself been retooled , to start its own franchise unrelated to the MCU Spider @-@ Man .

After Sony canceled their shared universe plans and started sharing the Spider @-@ Man character with Marvel Studios , multiple critics discussed their failure at replicating the MCU . Scott Meslow of The Week noted the perceived flaws of the first Amazing Spider @-@ Man film , outside of its lead performances , and how the sequel " doubles down on all the missteps of the original while adding a few of its own . ? We now have a textbook example of how not to reboot a superhero franchise , and if Sony and Marvel are wise , they 'll take virtually all those lessons to heart as they chart Spider @-@ Man 's next course . " Scott Mendelson noted that The Amazing Spider @-@ Man 2 " was sold as less a sequel to The Amazing Spider @-@ Man than a backdoor pilot for Spider @-@ Man vs. the Sinister Six . ? Had Sony stuck with the original plan of a scaled @-@ down superhero franchise , one that really was rooted in romantic drama , they would have at least stuck out in a crowded field of superhero franchises . When every superhero film is now going bigger , Amazing Spider @-@ Man could have distinguished itself by going small and intimate . " This would have saved Sony " a boatload of money " , and potentially reversed the film 's relative financial failure .

= = Outside media = =

= = = Live attractions = = =

After the acquisition by Disney in 2009 , Marvel films began to be marketed at the Innoventions attraction in Tomorrowland at Disneyland . For Iron Man 3 , the exhibit , entitled Iron Man Tech Presented by Stark Industries , features the same armor display that was shown at the 2012 San Diego Comic @-@ Con , with the Marks I @-@ VII and the new Mark XLII . In addition , there is a simulator game , titled " Become Iron Man , " that uses Kinect @-@ like technology to allow the viewer to be encased in an animated Mark XLII armor and take part in a series of " tests , ? in which you fire repulsor rays and fly through Tony Stark 's workshop . The game is guided by J.A.R.V.I.S. , who is voiced again by Paul Bettany . The exhibit also has smaller displays that include helmets and chest pieces from the earlier films and the gauntlet and boot from an action sequence in Iron Man 3 . The exhibit for Thor : The Dark World is called Thor : Treasures of Asgard , and features displays of Asgardian relics and transports guests to Odin 's throne room , where they are greeted by Thor . Captain America : The Winter Soldier 's exhibit , Captain America : The Living Legend and Symbol of Courage , features a meet and greet experience . At San Diego Comic @-@ Con 2016 , it was revealed that the Tower of Terror at Disney California Adventure would be replaced by a new attraction , Guardians of the Galaxy - Mission : Breakout ! . Chris Pratt , Zoe Saldana , Dave Bautista and Benicio del Toro all filmed exclusive footage for the attraction , reprising their roles as Peter Quill / Star @-@ Lord , Gamora , Drax and Taneleer Tivan / The Collector , respectively .

= = = Avengers S.T.A.T.I.O.N. = = =

In May 2014 , the Avengers S.T.A.T.I.O.N. ( Scientific Training and Tactical Intelligence Operative Network ) exhibit opened at the Discovery Times Square center . The exhibit features replica set pieces , as well as actual props from the films , mixed with interactive technology and information , crafted through a partnership with NASA and other scientists . Titus Welliver also provides a "

debrief " to visitors , reprising his role as S.H.I.E.L.D. agent Felix Blake . Created by Victory Hill Exhibits , Avengers S.T.A.T.I.O.N. cost \$ 7 @. @ 5 million to create , and ran through early September 2015 .

The exhibit also opened in Korea at the War Memorial of Korea in April 2015 , in Paris at Esplanade de La Défense a year later , and in Las Vegas at the Treasure Island Hotel and Casino in June 2016 . The Las Vegas version of the exhibit featured updated character details and corresponding science to incorporate the Marvel films that have released since the original exhibit in New York . Additionally , the Las Vegas version features Colbie Smulders reprising her role as Maria Hill to " debrief " visitors , replacing Welliver .

== = Television specials == =

== = Marvel Studios : Assembling a Universe ( 2014 ) == =

On March 18 , 2014 , ABC aired a one @-@ hour television special titled Marvel Studios : Assembling a Universe , which documented the history of Marvel Studios and the development of the Marvel Cinematic Universe , and included exclusive interviews and behind @-@ the @-@ scenes footage from all of the films , One @-@ Shots and Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. , and sneak peeks of Avengers : Age of Ultron , Captain America : The Winter Soldier , Guardians of the Galaxy , unaired episodes of Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. , and Ant @-@ Man . Brian Lowry of Variety felt the special , " contains a pretty interesting business and creative story . While it might all make sense in hindsight , there was appreciable audacity in Marvel ? s plan to release five loosely connected movies from the same hero @-@ filled world , beginning with the cinematically unproven Iron Man and culminating with superhero team The Avengers . As such , this fast @-@ moving hour qualifies as more than just a cut @-@ and @-@ paste job from electronic press kits , although there ? s an element of that , certainly . " The special was released on September 9 , 2014 on the home media for Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. season 1 .

== = Marvel 75 Years : From Pulp to Pop ! ( 2014 ) == =

In September 2014 , Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. executive producer Jeffrey Bell stated that in order to meet production demands and avoid having to air repeat episodes , ABC would likely air a Marvel special in place of a regular installment at some point during the first ten episodes of Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. ' s second season . In October , the special was revealed to be Marvel 75 Years : From Pulp to Pop ! , which was hosted by Emily VanCamp , who portrays Agent 13 in Captain America : The Winter Soldier , and aired on November 4 , 2014 . The special features behind the scenes footage from Avengers : Age of Ultron and Ant @-@ Man , as well as footage from the Agent Carter television series previously screened at New York Comic @-@ Con. Brian Lowry of Variety felt an hour for the special did not " do the topic justice " adding , " For anyone who has seen more than one Marvel movie but would shrug perplexedly at the mention of Jack Kirby or Steve Ditko , Marvel 75 Years : From Pulp To Pop ! should probably be required viewing . Fun , fast @-@ paced and encompassing many of the company ? s highlights along with a few lowlights , it ? s a solid primer on Marvel ? s history , while weaving in inevitable self @-@ promotion and synergistic plugs . " Eric Goldman of IGN also wished the special had been longer , adding , " Understandably , the more you already know about Marvel , the less you 'll be surprised by Marvel 75 Years : From Pulp to Pop ! , but it 's important to remember who this special is really made for ? a mainstream audience who have embraced the Marvel characters , via the hugely successful movies , in a way no one could have imagined . "

== = Books == =

In September 2015 , Marvel announced the Guidebook to the Marvel Cinematic Universe , named

as a nod to the Official Handbook of the Marvel Universe . Each guidebook is compiled by Mike O'Sullivan and the Official Handbook of the Marvel Universe team , with cover art from Mike Del Mundo and Pascal Campion , and features facts about the MCU films , film @-@ to @-@ comic comparisons , and production stills . Guidebook to the Marvel Cinematic Universe : Marvel 's Iron Man , Guidebook to the Marvel Cinematic Universe : Marvel 's Incredible Hulk / Marvel 's Iron Man 2 , Guidebook to the Marvel Cinematic Universe : Marvel 's Thor , and Guidebook to the Marvel Cinematic Universe : Marvel 's Captain America : The First Avenger released each month from October 2015 to January 2016 , respectively .

= = = Lego Marvel 's Avengers = = =

The video game Lego Marvel 's Avengers is centered on events from The Avengers and Avengers : Age of Ultron , with the game 's developer , TT Games , reordering scenes from both films to make a cohesive story . The game also features content from Captain America : The First Avenger , Iron Man 3 , Thor : The Dark World and Captain America : The Winter Soldier , as well as additional references to other MCU properties , locations and characters . TT Games uses lines of dialogue directly from the films in the game ( thus having many actors reprise their roles ) , with Hayley Atwell , Clark Gregg , Colbie Smulders and Ashley Johnson recording new material specifically for the game as their characters Peggy Carter , Phil Coulson , Maria Hill and Beth , the waitress in The Avengers , respectively . Downloadable content ( DLC ) for the game , exclusive initially for the PlayStation 3 and PlayStation 4 , adds content and characters from Ant @-@ Man and Captain America : Civil War . Additional DLC features content for Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. The Ant @-@ Man DLC features Michael Peña reprising his role as Luis , recording new dialogue that acts as a narration of the level , while Ming @-@ Na Wen reprised her role as Melinda May with new dialogue in the Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. DLC . Lego Marvel 's Avengers released on a variety of video game platforms on January 26 , 2016 .

= = = A Mini Marvel = = =

In February 2016 , a commercial for Coca @-@ Cola mini cans aired during Super Bowl 50 . A Mini Marvel was created by Wieden + Kennedy for Coca @-@ Cola through a partnership with Marvel , and was directed by the Russo brothers . In the ad , Ant @-@ Man ( voiced by Paul Rudd , reprising his role ) and the Hulk first fight , and then bond , over a Coke mini can . Luma Pictures provided visual effects for the spot , having worked previously with the two characters in MCU films . For the Hulk , Luma redefined its previous muscular system and simulation process to create and render the character , while Ant @-@ Man received new motion capture . The Super Bowl campaign extended to " limited @-@ edition Coke mini cans [ six packs ] that are emblazoned with images of Marvel characters , including Hulk , Ant @-@ Man , Black Widow , [ Falcon , Iron Man ] and Captain America . " Consumers had the opportunity to purchase the cans by finding hidden clues in the commercial , though " if the program goes well , Coke will consider making the cans available in stores . " The ad had the third most social media activity of all the film @-@ related trailers that aired during the game .