

CI 13 D Lindquist

First name: Dominicus

Last name: Lindquist

Q1:

Q2: See uploaded file if formatting makes it unreadable.

Dependent upon the condition that the existence of 'impressionable individuals' (people who cannot tell the difference between reality and fiction, or otherwise have a mental state whose stability is threatened by fiction) is scientifically confirmed, it would be to assist the carers of these individuals in selecting the entertainment material that their charge/s experience. To improve the practicality of this process by a labelling system that can be used to more quickly and easily discard the kinds of material that is likely to have a negative effect, thus allowing more time and effort to be spent examining material that is more likely to be harmless before making it available to the charge/s.

Purpose of Restriction

There are two possible reasons (that have been suggested so far) for restricting material (in any media format, and media of any function such as entertainment, information, propaganda, education, communication, etc):

- Avoiding direct/instant harm: To protect individuals who dislike the content from experiencing negative emotions in reaction to experiencing the material (in much the same way that someone who dislikes certain kinds of food or music would dislike having to consume it).

- Avoiding indirect/distant harm: To prevent psychological change that would

be detrimental to the subject or others. An example of psychological change may be disturbing a person, or receiving unexpectedly tragic (or in some other way emotionally negative) information to a point which their mind cannot handle and a change occurs in their mind (perhaps even some degree of insanity or other mental illness) that renders them either emotionally crippled so that subsequent emotional reactions (to any kind or perhaps specific kinds of stimulus) are negative or not as positive as might have otherwise been the case (reducing their quality of life), or changing their behaviour in such a way as to be more likely to be more harmful to themselves or others than would have otherwise been the case.

The first reason of preventing people from experiencing something which they dislike, like preventing people from trying a meal that they find disgusting, or listening to music that they find annoying, or a story that they find depressing, is one of unnecessary convenience – If the government is able to develop and properly enforce a system that assists people in avoiding art and content that they know they dislike, it would be an unnecessary luxury because the benefits are minor (especially considering that all normal, mentally competent people have the natural capacity and tendency to avoid such things automatically) in comparison to the sheer logistic complexity of the task. The second reason is one that has been confirmed to occur as many times and in as many ways as it has been disproved to occur. Whether or not such a concern is legitimate is currently uncertain and disputed.

In other words, either of the two purposes for restricting material (censorship) are questionable in nature, and a decision becomes particularly more questionable the more effort, resources, time and complexity goes into

the policy and enforcement of things which are claimed to be aimed at accomplishing either of these things (objectives which are of minor benefits (if any), or are attempts to solve a theoretical problem that's existence is currently heavily disputed and uncertain). Such efforts, time, resources (and often emotional fervour and 'moral' commitment) are often incredibly disproportional to the likelihood and magnitude of any resulting benefits (therefore the person's motives and / or competence are questionable). According to currently available information, the likelihood for succeeding at either is often very small, and if successful the magnitude of positive change for the quality of life for all for either objective is also minor (by comparison to the current quality of life for people). Many policies and decisions related to these issues, due to the complex nature of attempting to tackle either objective, often are accompanied by side effects and weaknesses that render the entire pursuit less worthwhile (by resource (including effort, money and time) consumption, and by detriment-to-benefit comparison of the results of the decision) than other altruistic pursuits. As such, one frequently finds (although this is obviously not a blanket rule) that the people who pursue censorship with fervour are doing so not for either of these theoretical beneficial results, but on principle (eg using their personal moral rules system to make government policy, thereby forcing everyone to adhere to their morals). For more information on the rules-based and results-based ethics, see the ethics section.

On the other hand, not restricting media could arguably also be of minor benefit in comparison to a reasonably effective restriction system (obviously for a proper decision on the issue, the total of benefits and detriments for all the restriction options need to be compared with each other, and with that of the option of having no restriction system). However, the main factor in the claim of no restrictions having minor benefit is the 'entertainment' component of the broader category of 'media'. There may only be minor detriments to censoring entertainment, but there are significant problems with restricting the flow and spread of non-fiction information, and opinion (see sections on truth above, and free speech below). If the category of 'entertainment' contained only entertainment then it may be considered of minor inconvenience to enforce restrictions (due to its effect being purely the evocation of positive emotions, because the broadness of tastes of people is generally wide enough (evidence needed) to include things that will not be censored). Unfortunately the line is blurred all too often with 'art', which can be described as media that indirectly makes a statement (expressing an opinion), raises a question or otherwise simply provokes thought and / or discussion (ie its affect is not just emotional but intellectual). Art is designed to be entertaining and/or interesting

Any psychologist will readily tell you that the age thresholds of legal 'adulthood' in western democracies is entirely arbitrary and baseless. Any policy or system enforced should be based on and supported by scientific evidence. If you are going to have restrictions of any kind, they need to be justified and based on something other than arbitrary opinion (for example if studies confirm the existence of impressionable minds then such tests could be used to determine the restrictions for actual individuals based on their mental state).

The very first step in this process, which appears unfortunately to have been entirely untouched and ignored by all western democracies, is first to conduct the necessary research and experiments to establish the existence and nature of the problem that they are trying to solve. Evidence not only needs to show us that something must be done, but it can also hint at ways in which the

nature of the problem suggests several potential solutions. We can then employ the scientific method to evaluate various systems and methods at their effectiveness in minimizing the identified problem/s.

I am not against restrictions on media - I am just saying that any public system has the responsibility of acting on evidence and not on unfounded opinions and assumptions. Don't make a decision just because it sounds good or reasonable to you.

Q3: Ideally no. But realistically the practical implications of having to classify content on certain media (like classifying individual webpages on the internet) could cost so much time and resources that the massive costs vastly outweigh any potential benefits (see answer to Q2).

Q4: That may be the most cost-to-benefit effective way to handle certain types of media or technological methods of distribution (see answer to Q2).

Q5:

Q6:

Q7:

Q8: See answer to Q3.

Q9:

The immediate question that arises is how one might be able to predict the most likely size and composition of an audience for any given artwork reliably.

If so then the relevance of this data would inform the degree of importance as to whether or not it is classified (but not how harshly it is restricted, ie a moderately violent film that would otherwise have been classified M15+ should not be rated R18+ on the basis the more people or more impressionable people are more likely to access it). This affect on the priority of its classification is due purely to the fact that it is likely that limited time and resources will limit the quantity of artworks that can be classified (there will be a limit to the pace at which the system is able to go through released content).

Q10: See answer to Q2.

Q11:

Q12:

Home network security software (such as BitDefender) that comes up with a warning before opening a page if it deems it risky to the security of the computer (eg potential for malware such as trojans and viruses), but still allows the user to continue to the page if they wish.

People are more likely to heed warnings for their security and safety than they are for their 'moral integrity' or 'appropriateness'.

In short: People will never take kindly to an external entity exerting deliberate control over their ability to pursue information and to communicate.

Due to its complex, diverse nature, people will not see the internet as a medium of entertainment, because it seamlessly crosses all boundaries between

entertainment, information research tool, and communication medium. Limiting access on the internet will always be seen in a similar light to blocking access to historical records in a library, or cutting off phone connections.

To regard and treat online content as indistinguishable from discrete and finite media such as films, games, music and books is folly. It is significantly different in how it works and how it is used (as described above).

Q13:

See answer to Q2, and answer to Q12.

First one must define 'inappropriate'. It is such a vague and nebulous concept that any parent or politician can use it for literally any purpose, to encompass any collection of things they wish.

It is subjective and personal to the point where it is meaningless.

If, however, you rephrase the problem to refer to 'harmful' instead of 'inappropriate' content, you then apply much clearer (although not perfectly clear) boundaries and increase the ability for someone to logically criticise the inclusion of certain kinds of content under this title of 'harmful'. And we then come back to the problem of needing to scientifically identify the effects of different kinds of content on minds. Show me that there is a problem first, and provide a definition and description of that problem that makes sense and is consistent with the evidence of reality, and only then can we make progress towards actually solving a problem.

Q14:

See answer to Q2.

First find out if it needs to be.

Yes - Our culture disapproves of public displays of sexuality, but is that disapproval justified, or just the traditional fallacy of ad populum?

Q15:

See answer to Q2.

When such a thing benefits those needing to make use of such information.

A 'warning' loses its meaning if it just concerns an unconfirmed cultural bogeyman. Your warnings carry their due weight when you can demonstrate you know what you are talking about.

Don't cry wolf about the effects of certain kinds of content on people.

Q16: See answer to Q2.

Q17:

I expect your factors, costs and outcomes are to some degree quantifiable?

You have the data necessary to make those calculations. Any recommendation on my part would be purely speculative.

Q18:

Q19: You are talking about a motivational mechanism. If you want to encourage small independent studios then you should make their conduct more financially viable.

Such would probably (in my personal opinion) have the effect of increasing the innovation, experimentation and diversity in the effected art industries.

From my experience the larger players in the industry tend to play it safe and make more of the same as long as it will sell.

Q20:

I haven't the means to conduct a survey to establish the understanding of the community. All I can do is speak for myself and / or provide anecdotal evidence (which I hope you are aware is next to worthless due to its unreliability and very small sample size).

The lack of an R18+ rating for games does cause me to lose confidence in the accuracy of the MA15+ category. And similarly if the R18+ category was introduced and the MA15+ dropped (as suggested by one or more attorneys general), that would cause me to doubt the reliability of the neighboring M and R categories. Having any differences between the different kinds of media needs to be justified by evidence, otherwise it doesn't make any sense to enact the policy, much less for the public to understand the meanings of the differences.

The refused classification category makes the least sense to me. See answer to Q2. None of the age limitations are logical or meaningful. If you are going to enforce limitations, prove to the public that you know what you are talking about - that you do so for a reason.

Q21:

See answer to Q2.

If you are going to have different categories, have them for justified reasons, not on the basis of opinions.

Q22: See answer to Q20.

Q23:

Q24: See answer to Q2.

Q25: No.

See answer to Q2 and Q12.

Q26: Any differences between states would logically need to be justified and based on evidence. I struggle to see how that is possible on the basis of geographical location, but perhaps there are other relevant factors that can be proven to have an effect on the functionality of the system. Perhaps you should look into it.

See answer to Q2.

Q27:

Q28:

Q29: See answer to Q2.

Other comments: