

CI 132 A Kay

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Q1:

A new and platform agnostic classification approach would be the ideal solution, judging content based purely on its own merits without thought to the media its presented in. After all, a graphic murder is the same in any media whether it be printed, interactive or purely visual. As a compromise solution, the standardisation of classification to the same model used in video would be faster, cheaper and as informative. I'd really suggest dumping the M or MA ratings, however, one of them is the regulatory equivalent of an appendix

Q2:

To provide the data necessary for customers to make an informed and reasoned decision on their purchases. It is, after all, called classification rather than restriction. Give the people what they need to know and trust them to make their own decisions from there, some will get it wrong but thats the catch with freedom of choice, sometimes people make the wrong one.

Q3:

No. As I stated earlier in this submission, graphic content is graphic content regardless of how it is detailed.

Q4:

No, that removes the uniform nature that provides the true value in a classification system. If some things can be released unrated until someone complains, its not unreasonable to suspect that a lot of inappropriate media will get into the hands of children. After all if the latest gory horror movie hasn't got a rating, its far easier for unscrupulous stores to sell to anyone who asks for it even if its obvious that its not suitable.

The only way a system of this nature would work is making classification a far simpler process, companies submit a recommended rating for their product, the review board skims over it to see if anything stands out and if not then its released with the recommendation but if there is a complaint its brought back for a full review. That might end up being more economical but it has the potential for abuse when the kind of people who are offended when the sun sets without asking permission realise that they can temporarily disrupt something they object to by lodging a complaint. The only counter to that would be to make the complaint system detailed and involved enough that the troublemaker loses patience and decides that its easier to shout at talkback radio and say that society is going to the dogs.

Q5:

Not whether it should be classified but definitely in HOW it should be classified. After all a cartoonish gun fight is radically different to a gritty mafia execution but again for the sake of uniformity, both must

be classified

Q6:

Absolutely not, that is simply discrimination. Even if it is for the best of reasons like letting mobile game developers sell their products without having to go through the expensive and laborious classification process, it is still applying different standards to groups that need to be equal

Q7:

I was under the impression that art was traditionally a non classifiable subject. There really needs to be a well defined line where classification stops and things like art & live performance is probably a good place to put the line

Q8:

It would be a nice thing for consistency's sake to be able to apply it to music as well but beyond "caution: explicit lyrics" I'm not sure what value there would be

Q9:

No, again that would just create a different rule for groups who should be equal

Q10:

There should probably be some restrictions to prevent accidental underage exposure to clearly adult oriented public events but thats not really a classification issue

Q11:

Q12:

The only really effective methods for controlling online content would be through a large scale IP & domain name blacklist implemented at the ISP level or the mandatory introduction of an online identity & access system that uses a persons login and permits or denies access based on their age. Neither method is even remotely practical, the former is far too easy to defeat with basic networking knowledge and the latter is a major step in the direction of an orwellian police state (and would also grind the internet to a halt because everything would have to go through a few single chokepoints for the system to be remotely effective)

Q13:

Parenting. Monitoring and teaching children is the whole point of being a parent and is certainly beyond the scope of the classification board. A form of opt in newsletter to inform parents about security and privacy concerns would be an excellent idea but again out of the classification board's scope

Q14:

I've never really seen a problem with the system as it stands so I can't really suggest any improvements.

Q15:

If content has been rated then it should always display the classification notice.

Q16:

The suggestion I made earlier involving producer recommended ratings balanced by a complaints & review system would be the ideal. The producer gives an honest appraisal of their product and details the target market, the OFLC quickly scan through the content to verify that it appears to conform to the producer recommendation and should there be a complaint that is upheld, the producer is charged a substantial fine

Q17:

To a degree, as stated in the previous question it would require checks & balances to ensure full compliance. Most of the industries would be responsible but there does need to be a legal presence like the OFLC to monitor the process.

Q18:

Q19:

That would be an ideal situation if practical. The development of new local talent is ultimately more valuable than a single classification fee

Q20:

For the most part the only confusion I've encountered is "Why haven't we got an R18+ for games when we have one for films?" which perfectly illustrates the need for consistent uniform ratings and "Just what IS the difference between M15 & MA15+ anyway?" which shows that giving 2 classifications the same age rating is a bit daft.

Q21:

Under the current system the addition of a game R18 is essential, its bad enough that importing games is vastly cheaper than local store prices but if content is censored as well then there's no reason at all to buy them locally, its making the country a laughing stock, its letting inappropriately graphic content in under MA15 and its costing local retailers business. There is simply no logical reason to not have it.

As for merging, the M & MA. I hate to harp on about it but one of them is useless. It would probably be most cost effective to simply replace MA15+ with R18+ and call it a day

Q22:

Q23:

Q24:

None. Clearly there needs to be thought given to illegal content but I think that monitoring without blocking is a better approach, it allows the criminal to think they've gotten away with it and the police to track and apprehend them.

Q25:

No, at present the RC classification is too broad and accounts for content that is clearly in bad taste but not actively illegal. Extending existing classification prohibitions into the online arena is imposing a moral judgement over content rather than merely advising the user as to its contents.

Q26:

It is critical that there is a national uniform standard so people can pick up a DVD on holiday and know that the rating can be trusted to be informative and not coloured by local prejudices where a more conservative state would rate something higher because they object to it more.

Q27:

For the most part the current system works well, the only standout was the rather farcical situation where the south Australian attorney general was able to singlehandedly disrupt a series of classification debates because of the need for a unanimous decision. That definitely needs to change, a 2/3 majority would be a far better approach, requiring a significant majority without any major power imbalances

Q28:

It would be wise to still involve the states in an advisory capacity but I think the need for a consistent system would require a commonwealth headed approach.

Q29:

Probably the most important one is to make the guidelines for classification extremely clear to minimise personal bias. As an example there was an incident where a game was nearly refused classification because it contained morphine as a medical treatment that minimised the damage the character took for a short time. This was, as I recall (and it has been years so I may be remembering wrong), the main reason for the potential RC because the reviewer saw the real world drug giving a fictional benefit but the producers got the game through by changing the name of the drug. This really makes very little sense

Other comments: