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Q1:

The latter; I feel as a whole the classification system is sound, however it definitely needs to be updated to reflect changing times and community standards.

Q2:

Reviewing the presence of and different between the M and MA classifications (why do we need 2 classifications that revolve around the age of 15, one a recommendation and the other a legal restriction?), and the creation of an R18+ classification for electronic entertainment, to ensure this media is treated similarly to all other forms of media, in the absence of any scientific reason it should be treated differently.

Q3:

No. Some content is similar or identical across platforms, and others such as games where interactivity is a feature, have not been conclusively shown to have any significantly different effect on the viewer/player, than other forms of media. For example, in the case of games, a recent UK study conducted by the BBFC found that games are actually LESS immersive than movies (which have a well-established and effective R18+ classification in this country), due to the interactivity required keeping the player more in touch with reality than a film in which they can become fully absorbed. Interactivity is often used as an example of why games should be treated more strictly than films, but this does not add up - the above study is one example, but it is certainly not conclusively proven either way, and so interactivity should not be used as grounds for 'discrimination' against games when it comes to the creation of an adult classification.

Q4:

This depends whether the current system of classification is retained - if the Classification Board etc remains, and continues to apply classifications to media, then no, all contents available to the public should be subject to classification, acknowledging the cost and difficulty of doing so; the possibility of extreme content slipping by 'under the radar' because nobody noticed it is of concern. However, were the industry to shift to a situation of self-regulation, then in this case classification would make more sense to only occur in the case of complaints.

Q5:

Yes, but of great significance and importance is who determines the potential impact, and how. Again using computer and video games as an example, their interactivity is often used as grounds for stricter regulation, however the idea that interactivity results in greater impact is completely unproven, and in some studies found to be invalid. Characteristic of media should only be used as grounds for control where a significant, proven link to greater impact can be shown, not alarmist speculation.

Q6:

No; a product being popular or of financial value should not determine how much it should adhere to standards.

Q7:

Classified yes, access restricted to adults yes, banned from access by anyone NO.

Q8:

Yes

Q9:

Similar to Q6, no.

Q10:

No, but restrictions on DISPLAYING certain content in public, e.g. R-rated films in the presence of children, make sense.

Q11:

Changing community standards, and the majority of public opinion, should be reflected in the classification scheme. Government bodies or individuals ignoring community views in favour of their own, or to curry favour with conservative allies, are unacceptable when democratically elected.

Q12:

Due to the inability of one country to restrict access to content hosted by another, and the variety of different means of accessing online content, it is useless and arguably fascistic to attempt to restrict access to certain material, when standards as to what is and is not acceptable, differ between individuals (excepting of course legal restrictions). Parents, individual homes etc should be able to determine what is and is not suitable in their home, using various methods at their disposal (including PERSONAL internet filtering products). Governments should be able to provide the public with access to internet filters but these MUST be opt-in, ie not mandatory. There must also be measures made to ensure sites which are blocked incorrectly can be easily and quickly unblocked, and remunerated if business is lost due to being blocked, another reason such a plan may well be unworkable anyway. Another problem with this is the aforementioned fact of there being numerous ways to access content online, and government filters such as those discussed generally only block 1 type, which is often the least commonly used or very easily worked around.

Q13:

By their parents. Children will always find a way to access things they shouldn't if they are so inclined (perfectly demonstrated by the fact that the lack of an R-rating for games has done absolutely nothing to stop children accessing such content when it can be downloaded, often illegally, from overseas, and blocking such content is impossible for reasons previously mentioned such as multiple means of access; beyond blocking EVERYTHING from overseas which is totally unworkable and dictatorial, there's just no way to do it effectively), and so for example a parent cannot control what a friend's parent allows their child to see or do, but this is again up to the parent to control (stop the child visiting

that household if inappropriate behaviour has occurred there). This is of course not always possible, but that does not mean the government has any role in or right to mandate what is appropriate for ALL children, as every family's standards etc will differ (again, this excepts illegal content, which there can obviously no argument against restricting).

Q14:

Content can be segregated from other unrestricted content, locked away and/or in separate rooms, but must still be easily perusable by adults. Provision of identification must be required at purchase, WITH SUFFICIENT ENFORCEMENT - even if games get an R-rating, there must be enforced repercussions for stores etc which break the laws, such as occur with R-rated films (cinemas penalised financially etc).

Q15:

Any time the content is available for selection of any kind, i.e. for purchase, or for viewing.

Q16:

The government should play a part in assisting in the development of classification guidelines as currently occurs, if mandatory imposition of classification is retained; if industry self-regulates, the government should provide assistance and only intervene in cases where complaints or disputes about a classification arise. Industry bodies should assist and advise the government in the former situation, and adhere to industry-wide standards in the latter. Users should adhere to the classifications in either case, report violations and realise that the classifications are there for a reason.

Q17:

I believe so. This has worked for electronic entertainment media in other countries, and the co-operation of 2 large groups (ie government and industry) is in my belief more likely to result in a workable, acceptable system than just the government forcing it's often outdated classifications on rapidly evolving industry.

Q18:

All forms of content. Self-classification should require a collaborative effort, so as to ensure numerous viewpoints are adequately considered, however it is in an industry's best interest to ensure its content is only marketed to the appropriate audience lest they suffer backlash from various aggrieved consumers, let alone the government.

Q19:

In cases where the industry is considered appropriate for the government to support, such as the example mentioned (the government would generally consider it a good idea to support its film industry, so if smaller, less financially capable industries require assistance in their classification, then yes the government should provide some means of assistance if possible).

Q20:

For the most part, however as already mentioned, the M15+ and MA15+ categories have been seen from community consultation to be very confusing. Why there are 2 classifications, both revolving around age 15 (one a recommendation and the other a legal requirement) is unclear and doesn't appear to make much sense. I'm not aware of a similar system in other countries; the classifications are usually more clearly demarcated. In the aforementioned consultations, the community tends to be much clearer about how a R-rated film differs from an M-rated film, than how MA15+ differs from same. Even for a film fanatic with a decent knowledge of the classification such as myself, finds it difficult sometimes to work out why one M~ classification was applied over the other, beyond a question of degrees or severity.

The consumer information, whilst very helpful and a good idea, can also be confusing - I've seen both M15+ films and R18+ films with the only consumer information being 'Adult Themes' - how do these themes differ between two films with obviously different (due to their overall classification) content? Descriptors such as 'low level ~', 'high level' etc, can work, however these must be restricted to a particular classification, eg 'high level violence' could only ever be used as information for an R18+ film, and should never appear alongside an M15+ rating. It probably wouldn't - more likely alongside MA15+ - though the point should be obvious; if that descriptor can be used across multiple classifications, how are the public expected to understand how the content differs?

Q21:

Yes - computer games need an R18+ classification to reflect the content which has evolved and matured significantly since the inception of the current classification system, such that the media is now capable of content much more similar to other media than previously possible.

There is good reason to review the coexistence of M15+ and MA15+ classifications, though I don't consider it clear what would be a better idea. I would imagine that M15+ could be removed and MA15+ retained, meaning that the 'recommendation' classification would be removed. In reality, the PG classification basically does the same thing, ie saying that parents should review the content before allowing their child to see it. In that way we'd have G (suitable for anyone), PG (possibly suitable depending on the individual), MA15+ (only for adults 15 years and over, and legally restrictive) and R18+ (only suitable for adults 18 years and over, and legally restrictive). Ultimately I feel the US system is arguably better, so it may even be worth lowering the age of the MA classification, e.g. to 13 similar to the US PG-13 rating, such that more of the higher-level content goes into an R category.

Q22:

The colours introduced a few years ago are great, and these should be used across all media. The existence of the X category is less of an issue as it's only in NT and ACT. Whether this is extended to all states and territories is of no real consequence as far as I'm concerned, however the remainder of the spectrum (G, PG, M, MA, and R, or whatever these become if changes are made) should apply across ALL media (ie games should also have an R).

Q23:

I believe so, yes

Q24:

Anything illegal, NOT just 'refused classification', as the latter type of content can be perfectly legal.

Q25:

No, it extends too far as above, and includes legal material .

Q26:

I'm quite unsure on this one; I don't see a major issue with states and territories having their own classifications, but I believe they should required to have the minimum being the same as the federal schema - having additional ratings like X is no big deal to me as long as they follow the same visual (colours etc) and consumer information setup as the other classifications, and be clearly different to those existing classifications (which they likely would be, otherwise why use them... though that could be levelled against the whole M and MA issue too).

Q27:

I don't really feel that I can answer this, I cannot think of a better setup than we have now, accepting the need for a few arguably significant changes.

Q28:

I think that would be a good idea, in the interest of minimizing confusion.

Q29:

I believe all my suggestions have been covered already.

Other comments: