

CI 1119 P Fletcher

First name: Peter

Last name: Fletcher

Q1:

Improving existing framework

Q2:

Providing information to assist parents to decide if media is appropriate for their children

Q3:

Yes. I see two reasons why different technologies should be treated differently. Firstly, different technologies are accessible in different ways. For example, cinema movies can easily be restricted, whereas Internet content cannot easily be restricted. Secondly, the volume of cinema content is small, and the barrier to entry is high, so that classification of cinema content seems like a good idea.

However, the volume of Internet content is large, and the barrier to entry is small, so that it does not make sense to classify all Internet content.

Q4:

Complaints should be one aspect of the process, but I do not think that all content should be classifiable. Examples of material which perhaps would be silly to classify are ephemeral comments on a website, the personal views of individuals, news footage, and political speech.

Q5:

It would be nice to have a list of content deemed acceptable for children of various ages.

Q6:

Yes.

Q7:

I do not believe that classification should be necessary for works to be shown, although marking such material explicitly as "unclassified" would allow people to make their own choices. An optional classification process should allow an exhibition to be marked as suitable for children of different age groups.

Q8:

I believe that it should be possible to have such material optionally classified as suitable for children of different age groups. In general, where material is not marketed to children, I do not believe that classification should be mandatory.

Q9:

I do not believe that it is helpful to classify content that is likely to reach only a small number of people. Indeed, because of the Streisand effect, any attempt to classify offensive material as "unclassifiable", or "adults only", is likely to raise its profile and greatly increase its potential audience.

Q10:

There should be safeguards to prevent offensive material being shown in public. People should be allowed to make up their own minds as to what they want to see at home.

Q11:

Q12:

An optional whitelist could prevent access by minors of inappropriate material while online. If such a whitelist could be enabled by a simple "tick a box" form at an ISP's webpage, it might be used by some people.

Q13:

A whitelist would allow concerned parents to block access to their children of inappropriate material. However, not all parents would want to see such a scheme as mandatory.

Q14:

I believe the current restrictions are adequate.

Q15:

When such material is both likely to offend children, and marketed towards children, such as story-based drama, movies, books which are both marketed to children and containing sexual and/or violent material.

Q16:

These organizations should arrange for the protection of children from offensive material where parents wish this to occur. Industry bodies should be allowed to self-regulate in general, but if this is not effective, then government agencies should impose regulation. Users should have the means to have their grievances addressed by the regulating body, with the body having the power to enforce sanctions in some circumstances (such as for content which is publically accessible). In all cases, complaints should be addressed, with clearly state reasons for action, or the lack of it. Ideally members of the public should participate in any regulatory body.

Q17:

Perhaps this model should be trialled, with feedback from the public used to gauge its success.

Q18:

Q19:

I do not believe that classification should be used as a means to raise revenue. By charging according to the likely number of viewers of a film, makers of small films could be subsidized by the makers of big budget movies.

Q20:

Yes, generally, although the separation of potentially-violent "R" rated material from "NVE", which may not contain any violence, seems confusing and arbitrary.

Q21:

The separation of erotica from adults-only material seems arbitrary and silly. I believe the two categories should be merged, and the limitations on NVE removed.

Q22:

I believe that the movie classifications could be suitable for all classified media.

Q23:

Q24:

I do not believe that any content should be prohibited to adults.

If material is related to criminal acts, then these acts should be prosecuted.

Q25:

No, RC includes political speech, erotica which potentially involves violence, and information about suicide. Such material should be available to adults. It is not the job of government to restrict the freedom of adults to read and view material.

Q26:

I do not believe that unifying laws would be appropriate while such a draconian censorship regime remains in place in much of Australia.

Q27:

Q28:

Not while it is likely to include heavy-handed censorship.

Q29:

I believe that classification of media content should be evidence-based, and err on the side of freedom.

Other comments:

Censorship of material available to adults is a national embarrassment, and should not be tolerated in a free society.

While there has been much discussion of "community standards" with respect to censorship and classification, there seems to have been little attention paid to evidence-based approaches, which generally do not show any relationship between exposure to RC material and crime. Indeed, many studies show a negative correlation between the availability of pornography and sexual assault.

Nobody would deny that many parents wish to restrict the access of minors to violent and sexual material, and such means should be made available to all families wishing to do so.

However, I cannot see any reason to restrict the access of adults to any and all material they wish to consume, except as a means by which the more puritanical members of our society get to impose their will on others.

Even in cases where criminally abhorrent material is made available, it would be better if such material were kept in the open until such time as any perpetrators could be tracked down by law enforcement and charged for any associated criminal acts.

No mention has been made of civil liberties in these questions, and that is revealing. It is obvious that if classification, or lack of it, was used as a means of censorship, then it would be open to abuse by any future government of Australia to restrict civil liberties and silence discussion of relevant issues. I believe that this risk of this occurring should outweigh any squeamishness about adults having a prurient interest.