CI 1234 Michael F

I'd like to open up with some criticism about this entire process. It is
extremely one sided. Many questions are worded in some language that uses
English words but doesn't appear to be English that any normal person uses,
making the accessibility of the questionnaire very poor.
And I'm a native English speaker.

You use Facebook and Twitter like that means "you've told the whole world".
While it is admirable that ALRC has taken these steps, the reality of the
situation is that you haven't. I only heard about this today after after
ABC's article commenting on the extremely one-sided nature of responses to the
questionnaire was reposted on several international tech news sites today.

I would suggest in future that the ALRC would take into account public
response to these sorts of issues, and directly engage people to participate
in the review process. This means reaching out to all the communities that
have been highly vocal on the subject and mentioning "yes, we have a review of
this in process, you can submit stuff at [link]". There have been numerous
petitions for classification review and on internet censorship, and contacting
the authors of these petitions would also help.

This review should have hit the news two months ago when it was released.
Instead it has hit this week, in the last week of submissions, and you're
going to get a flood of these responses.

I further question why you require a postal address? The submission is
handled online. Ask for people's postal codes at most, if you want to get
some idea of the geographic distribution of participants.

Anyway, to get into the questions:

1: In this Inquiry, should the ALRC focus on developing a new framework for
classification, or improving key elements of the existing framework?

The Inquiry should improve key elements of the existing framework.
Australia's classification system is fairly good already, though it has not
been updated to take in to account changes in media.

For example, a film is not held to the same classification rules as a video
game, and video game classifications in Australia currently assume the average
age of people playing them is 15.

2: What should be the primary objectives of a national classification scheme?
What content should be classified and regulated?

The national classification scheme should inform consumers of content about
the impact of media.

Media made available for sale in Australia (that is, from Australia, to
Australians, or exhibited for a fee such as in the case of theatres) should be

subject to classification, however classification should be made accessible to everyone.

Content sold outside of Australia may voluntarily provide Australian ratings if they exist, but should not restrict the content based on those rules. The import of goods for sale that aren't classified in Australia should be allowed freely, except in the case where the content is illegal.

Independent film and video game developers should have access to the classification system in a lot easier (cheaper) fashion than they do already. Currently it is quite expensive to have media classified by the OFLC, and these barriers to entry should be greatly reduced.

Content which is made available at no charge should not be regulated by the classification system. However, a framework should be released such that people exhibiting content may be able to engage in voluntary self-assessment of their content, and provide consumer advice. Someone exhibiting such content may also implement age-restriction policies (such as disallowing minors from entering the premises).

The classification system should provide consumer advice allowing consumers to make informed purchasing decisions. Parents should take responsibility for what their children see.

3. Should the technology or platform used to access content affect whether content should be classified, and, if so, why?

Yes. Content which is hosted for sale from a platform outside of Australia should *optionally* inform consumers of the local classifications.

4. Should some content only be required to be classified if the content has been the subject of a complaint?

No.

5. Should the potential impact of content affect whether it should be classified? Should content designed for children be classified across all media?

See answer to question 2. Proper parenting restricts children's access to content that is inappropriate for them.

6. Should the size or market position of particular content producers and distributors, or the potential mass market reach of the material, affect whether content should be classified?

See answer to question 2.

7. Should some artworks be required to be classified before exhibition for the purpose of restricting access or providing consumer advice?

See answer to question 1 and 2. Content should be treated equally regardless of medium.

8. Should music and other sound recordings (such as audio books) be classified or regulated in the same way as other content?

See answer to question 1 and 2. Content should be treated equally regardless of medium.

9. Should the potential size and composition of the audience affect whether content should be classified?

See answer to question 1 and 2. (No)

10. Should the fact that content is accessed in public or at home affect whether it should be classified?

See answer to question 1 and 2. (No)

11. In addition to the factors considered above, what other factors should influence whether content should be classified?

None.

12. What are the most effective methods of controlling access to online content, access to which would be restricted under the National Classification Scheme?

Proper parenting.

13. How can children's access to potentially inappropriate content be better controlled online?

The reality of the situation is that kids are smart. If they want to see something, they'll be determined to see it any way they possibly can. The majority of filtering software is trivial to bypass (even the kind that is installed on your computer), and is simply an excuse for lazy parenting.

It is very easy to monitor what children do online and make them behave.
Put the computer in an open, main living area of the house (rather than their bedroom). Make sure what is on screen is viewable from a large distance.

It's about time that parents took responsibility for their own children rather than burdening everyone else and expecting the government to look after them.

14. How can access to restricted offline content, such as sexually explicit magazines, be better controlled?

It can't more than it already is.

There are already laws preventing minors from purchasing such literature.
Everyone has a older sibling or cousin, or has a friend with one who can get
access to such material.

Parental responsibility would restrict this activity. It should be also up to
parents whether they want them to view such material. People are have
hormones and urges before they're 18 -- puberty starts before then!

15. When should content be required to display classification markings,
warnings or consumer advice?

At the time of purchase, and at the start of the presentation.

In the case of physical media, this would incorporate a classification logo on
the media itself, as well as any casing, as it is done now.

Who should classify and regulate content? In what circumstances should the
Government subsidise the classification of content? For example, should the
classification of small independent films be subsidised?

Addressed above.

23. Should the classification criteria in the Classification (Publications,
Films and Computer Games) Act 1995 (Cth), National Classification Code,
Guidelines for the Classification of Publications and Guidelines for the
Classification of Films and Computer Games be consolidated?

Yes. All media format rules should be consistent. At the moment a large
amount of adults-only video games are made available to minors because the
limit of rating is MA15+.

24. Access to what content, if any, should be entirely prohibited online?

Classification rules shouldn't prohibit any content. However, other laws
(such as those prohibiting child pornography) should restrict such content.
Such laws are outside of the scope of the classification system.

If money is to be spent on this, it should be going after the producers and
consumers of this content directly, rather than trying to "protect"
everyone else from it. The fact is, you'll only "stumble" across it if you're
looking for it, and those dealing in it use networks that aren't filterable or
traceable by Sen. Conroy's proposed filtering scheme.

25. Does the current scope of the Refused Classification (RC) category reflect
the content that should be prohibited online?

No. Classification rules should take the form of "consumer advice".

26. Is consistency of state and territory classification laws important, and, if so, how should it be promoted?

Yes. Pornography should be legal to be sold in all states and territories of Australia, instead of just in Canberra.

29. In what other ways might the framework for the classification of media content in Australia be improved?

I'd like to draw the ALRC's attention to the wide gap in standards that young people hold on the internet, and conservative Christian lobby groups hold.

I think it's important that the conservative groups understand that the majority of stuff they complain about, only they make a fuss about, and when they do, they increase exposure of the content drastically.

They should reflect on some of the content in their own holy book (bible), which condones killing non-believers, rape, prostitution, murder, etc. though is not classified or banned. It is those same themes that these people find in media that they call to be banned.

It's very important to remember that classifications should only serve as consumer advice, first and foremost. It should prevent sale of content to minors. However it should not restrict access to adults.
Let other laws ban the real nastiness, and don't let Refused Classification mean "it's banned", as it infringes on freedom of speech.

In the end, you can't stop the signal. The government would be wasting time and my tax dollars in doing so, and further encourage poor parenting. If someone wants filtered internet, let them buy a filtering software -- but I don't want it.

I can already trivially bypass any filter that the government puts up.
The software is out there already, and already in use by many people in dictatorships. Let us not join the ranks of PRC and North Korea.

Thanks,

Michael