

CI 1296 C Bennett

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Q1:

The key implementation for the classification of games would be to mirror the current classification system for other similar media, like movies and music. There already exists a classification system that addresses the concerns of society in a way that provides access only to socially acceptable material to those of various age groups. Adopting the R18+ Category to Games would mean that some games that are currently rated at MA15+ would only be available to people over 18, while opening up more adult related material to adults.

Q2:

The main aim of a national classification scheme should be to inform people about the suitability of material based not only on the age of the person but on their level of maturity. This means that classifications are a guide for parents to gauge whether they believe their children are old enough or mature enough to receive access to specific content. At point of sale it should be to restrict sale of MA15+ and R18+ from children who are under those ages, but should not be used to prevent parents from allowing their child access to material that they believe is acceptable.

Q3:

No. Whether the content is via visual, audio, or interactive media, and accessible via Computer, TV or Movie Screen, the classification system should be a level playing field. The rules that affect what classification the content will receive may rely on rules that are specific to that media (ie, containing graphic depictions of violence may not be applicable to audio content, but it should still be a part of the classification system for an MA rating for example).

Q4:

Content should be classified. This could be a self-classifying system for some types of media, and a centralised classification for others. Complaints should be addressed via a central classification board review and the classification adjusted as necessary.

Q5:

Content that is intended for children should be classified to ensure that material that is unacceptable for viewing by children is not inadvertently programmed at a time when children may be watching or listening.

Q6:

No.

Q7:

Artwork certainly could be classified, but not as a means to censor the images from being viewed. It should be used as a guide to provide parents with information about the exhibits they will be visiting in a mind to keep children from seeing images that the parents may deem are unacceptable.

Q8:

Yes.

Q9:

No, however for a small and private gathering it may be difficult to enforce classification of material. Wherever possible classification can be used to guide people who may be uncomfortable at seeing certain depictions towards content that they would be more comfortable with.

Q10:

No.

Q11:

Q12:

The only way of controlling access to online content is empowering parents to take an active role in their childrens lives. If they choose to install filtering software on their own computer and choose which content they would like to block, this provides them with the means and the choice. Any overarching restriction (like filtering) is impossible to implement at an ISP level, and is ineffective against those people who it was intended to prevent accessing the material.

Q13:

Filtering software installed on the PC at home by their parents. Parents spending more time being involved in their childrens lives. Education of parents about the use of the Internet. Education of children about inappropriate Internet use.

Q14:

Magazines are already sold in sealed bags at the News agencies and should continue to be sold as such. Purchasing these items should require a proof of age card like a drivers license or ID.

Q15:

Whenever a classification has been assigned. This will provide consumer choice in the marketplace with purchasing material that meets the expectations of the buyer.

Q16:

The roles of government and industry should be diminished, with the focus being put more on the user. In a free, democratic society, an adult must be allowed to choose what they say and write, as well as what they hear and read. Governments (and, to an extent, industry) should play a role in providing classifications so adults can make informed decisions but they should not be judging; they should not be making the decision FOR the adult

Q17:

Industry should probably be listened to much more closely (the video game industry and the pornographic magazine industry spring to mind as industries that have made clear, sensible recommendations that have been thoroughly ignored by government) but ultimately the decision must rest with a government body that can be regulated by democratic processes

Q18:

Classification of all content should be undertaken at government expense; at best, a small fee should apply to discourage spamming of applications. Being unable to afford to get something classified should not be any kind of a barrier to getting work published; there are already enough barriers in place.

Q19:

Q20:

MA15+ for games includes content that, if related to that of Cinematic releases, includes content that would probably have fallen under the R18+ category. As the rating systems do not seem to match up

it provides confusion to what content each is being rated on. Also there are quite a few games that are Refused Classification because they fail to fall into the MA15+ category for games, but would easily have been classified under an R18+ category had one existed for Games. Aligning the ratings systems across the board would make it easier for people to judge what content they are actually viewing, playing, or listening to.

Q21:

Video games should have an R18 (and possibly even an X18) classification mirroring that of moving pictures. Currently several games that should be R18 are crammed into the MA15 category, and this should be rectified (in addition to allowing many previously RC games to be classified R18).

Q22:

Music could perhaps be labelled in a way that more closely mimics that of games and videos, but I don't see this as being a source of much confusion. If the labelling is similar it should mean that it contains a certain amount of content rated at a specific level within the code. As the ratings should be closely aligned or identical across all types of media and platforms people should know what they are getting from the rating they can see on the packaging.

Q23:

Yes; classification should be as uniform across media as it can be.

Q24:

Child pornography is something that exists online and that should not be possessed or distributed by anyone. The legal framework for addressing this problem lies in criminal law, however, not censorship; funds otherwise used on pointless attempts at censorship, such as internet filtering, should be diverted to police forces who can target the actual criminals involved in such activity.

It is worth noting that Australia can only play its part in this; we can only target child pornographers on our soil, or on our servers, and to some extent assist overseas law enforcement agencies to arrest targets on their soil. Assuming that the eradication of child pornography is our goal because we are concerned for the child participants, no amount of filtering will have an effect on this - it will not stop the material from being made overseas in the first place, just from Australians watching it. And that's if we could find a way to effectively filter it, which we can't.

Q25:

No. There is much that would be now RC that is merely political dissent, and a government attempting to ban citizens from dissenting is morally reprehensible and betraying an intense fear of their electorate.

In addition, much of the pornography categorised as RC is done so for ridiculous reasons. Fetishes that are participated in consensually are branded as offensive and therefore banned; this is a value judgement the government should not be making. Depictions of female ejaculation are branded as urination; even if it were urination it would be no reason for the government to judge, but this is completely untrue, and is a recognised biological reaction to orgasm in women. Drawings of sexual activity are often refused classification; given that these are just drawings and therefore cannot have come about via harm to actual participants, this is ludicrous.

Finally, and by far the most offensively, is the censorship applied to women's bodies. Films featuring skinny, flat-chested (adult) women are often banned because they 'appear underage' - this is incredibly sexist. It is based on an ideal of femininity that is voluptuous and curvaceous; by banning such films, the classification office is subscribing to and perpetuating this sexist stereotype, and actively damaging the body images of the women who view such material. Similarly, forcing pornographic magazines to either remove or photoshop any images that show the labia minora of a woman protruding at all has led to a lot of damage to women's body images, and a huge increase in the numbers of people having vaginoplasty to make their bodies conform to this unrealistic standard.

These practises not only unnecessarily restrict the viewing habits of adults but actively damage them, in the exact kind of way that much previous "for your own good" censoring was designed to prevent.

Q26:

Consistency is key as it provides one framework within which classifications are achieved. Having less consistency increases the cost and the barriers to classification for those who wish to have their content classified (such as Independent Films).

Q27:

Where possible instead of replacing the schemes, the schemes should be brought into line by an equal classification framework. Where necessary a scheme may be replaced in order to bring it into line, and where possible a scheme may just need changes to meet the new code.

Q28:

Yes. If a classification is granted at the Federal level it should be equally accessible in all the states under that particular classification level.

Q29:

Allow content to be self-regulated at a high classification (such as R18+ for example) and have that reviewed where deemed necessary or where community complaints are lodged.

Other comments: