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Q1:
Improve the existing framework and remove the inconsistency which currently exists between the classifications available for video games and that of television and movies.

Q2:
To clearly communicate the nature of any controversial and/or mature themes which may be contained within any form of media (television, movies, computer games both PC and console) to potential viewers and/or their families/guardians so that they can make informed decisions about the influences which they choose to expose themselves to. This should go hand-in-hand with guidelines associating each classification with recommended ages at which a typical person is likely to have reached an adequate level of maturity regarding the themes in question.

Q3:
Definitely not. Communications protocols should not be judged based upon individual instances of their use. Phones, roads, and Internet protocols can all be used for either positive or negative applications. There is nothing inherently 'bad' about particular protocols; only 'bad' uses for them. In particular, the idea that the BitTorrent protocol somehow promotes piracy is erroneous and based on ignorance of the facts. It is simply a protocol which is very effective at distributing information which is popular. This is why it is now used in many software update processes, where the same information (the update) must be propagated to a large number of users within a relatively short space of time. To do so with more conventional HTTP or FTP protocols would be far less efficient, resulting in a large amount of redundant bandwidth usage as well as being much slower than a peer to peer protocol such as BitTorrent. One notable exception to this may be the TOR network, which is generally only used by people who are either suffering paranoia, or seeking to engage in shady or illegal online practices.

Q4:
In some limited distribution cases the overhead involved in classifying the content may not be warranted. Wherever the material is to be made available to the general public on a large scale it should be classified appropriately.

Q5:
Since it is the classification process which assesses the potential impact it is necessary to engage this process in any case. Otherwise, who is making the decision about what the potential impact may be? Perhaps the classification process could be short-circuited in some cases once the material is deemed to be of a nature which has minimal potential for harm (maybe based on the total exclusion of particular mature themes, such as is usually the case for material aimed at children), however the only way to ascertain this consistently is by engaging the classification process.

Q6:
No, with the possible exception of media organisations large enough to alleviate the workload of the main body responsible for classification by completing part of the classification process themselves,

through collaboration. If this were to occur, these third-party processes would need to be reviewed periodically by representatives of the official classification body.

Q7:

Yes. All media which is to be widely available should be consistently classified. The notion that certain media can be labelled 'artwork' and be exempt from this process is arbitrary and dangerous. Some forms of media will be far easier to classify however, such as might be the case for a given painting.

Q8:

Yes. As noted above, all forms of media should be consistently classified. Some classifications may only apply to particular mediums, but this is no reason to apply inconsistent treatment to different forms of communication.

Q9:

Yes. As mentioned previously, in some cases where the accessibility of material is restricted to a clearly defined audience, the classification process may be a waste of resources. Examples of this may include industry training videos, material produced as educational exercises, and internal corporate training and promotional videos.

Q10:

No. The mechanism of media delivery should not have any impact on the classification of the material being delivered. A movie will contain the same themes regardless of whether I watch it at the cinema, at home rental, or stream it from the Internet.

Q11:

The commercial nature of the operation producing the material. All material produced for sale (either directly or indirectly) to the general public for profit should be subject to the classification process. This is because the financial motive is more likely to encourage the inclusion of risqué content known to be attractive to the target demographic. When material is produced for altruistic motives there is less pressure to include controversial or offensive themes, and in fact the opposite is sometimes true (they generally do not wish to shock their audience through the portrayal of excessive violence or sex).

Q12:

Any attempt to restrict access to content will only be effective for the non-technical masses. The nature of the Internet is such that there is no clean way of doing this. ISP level filters and DNS poisoning go part of the way, but nothing can prevent savvy users from bypassing these constraints (you can easily resolve through an alternative DNS in another country, or tunnel through a proxy to avoid ISP filters). If such censorship is implemented I can see the TOR network gaining rapid popularity in Australia. The Chinese firewall works because they don't know any better, and despite this enormous number of Chinese still use TOR everyday. In the case of Australia where our culture has become accustomed to unfettered Internet access, I see a significant risk of revolt if too much is restricted too quickly. Almost all Australians have a 'geek friend' who will quickly introduce them to services like TOR in the event that they feel they are being restricted unreasonably.

Q13:

The same way a childs' access to anything in the world should be controlled; through responsible parenting. It is the parents responsibility to monitor their childs' influences, whether they be delivered through television, books, music, art galleries, or computers. Consistent classifications across all

forms of media will assist parents in making informed decisions about what they allow their children to watch. There are also plenty of software solutions which parents can install on their home computers to assist with restricting their families use of the Internet.

Q14:

Magazines which objectify women should not be publicly visible in places frequented by children as they often are, such as through poster-sized covers in news agencies featuring semi naked women and sexually discriminatory text. These influences can easily distort a childs' understanding of appropriate gender rolls in society.

Q15:

Whenever it has been classified. Where mature themes are indicated a warning should be included advising the consumer of a recommended maturity level indicated by age.

Q16:

Regardless of how classification efforts may be shared amongst government agencies and industry bodies, the government agencies should always retain control of the processes. Private industry cannot be trusted to maintain adequate classification procedures, for reasons including those outlined in my answer to Q11.

Q17:

Perhaps, though as already noted these processes must remain subject to strict review by the government agency responsible.

Q18:

I would suggest none. Where this may be the case for any given content, it cannot be ascertained with any level of transparency unless the classification process is engaged. As mentioned earlier, the classification process could be cut short in these situations where the likely classification is truly obvious and straightforward, however the process would still need to begin for this to be verified.

Q19:

Where the cost of classification would be significantly disproportionate to the cost of producing the material some sort of subsidy would be appropriate. These expenses could of course be offset by the fees charged for classification of more profitable enterprises.

Q20:

The complete lack of parity between the classifications for video games as opposed to that for television and movies is both misleading and stupid. Once classifications across all forms of media are standardised, this confusion will alleviate over time.

Q21:

Existing categories need to be clarified and re-defined to remove ambiguity. Other than that they should provide an adequate basis on which to standardise.

Q22:

The same markings should be employed consistently across all forms of media. It is stupid to apply different rules to one form of audio/visual content (such as a movie) as opposed to another form of audio/visual content (such as a video game).

Q23:

Definitely. There is no good reason why a single classification scheme could not be made to accommodate any and all forms of media (both those which currently exist and future formats).

Q24:

N/A. For reasons outlined earlier, prohibiting content is a largely pointless exercise and will fail to have the desired effect.

Q25:

N/A

Q26:

Yes. Members of the general public should not be expected to retain a working understanding of multiple classification systems in order to monitor their families exposure to various content. This should definitely be standardised nationally, and ideally should be based upon internationally recognised standards to provide wider understanding.

Q27:

A single, consolidated, national scheme which remains consistent across all forms of media.

Q28:

No, only because we would then be at the mercy of Commonwealth decision making processes, which may fail to address the concerns with Australias' current classification scheme.

Q29:

Specific categories for content themes (sex, drugs, etc) could be made to be finer grained. Even something like a sliding scale system (which could be visualised both spatially as a bar and colour coded, or indicated numerically) would reveal far more than the course qualifiers currently employed. It would be nice to know relatively how much course language is contained beyond simply 'frequent' or 'strong' descriptors.

Other comments:

There must be parity across all forms of media. If you are not going to include an R18+ classification for video games, then you should remove the equivalent classification from being available for movies. In any case, it should be consistent. I think it is probably antiquated thinking which associates gaming with childs' play which is responsible for the current state of affairs, however given that this thinking is clearly wrong (the average age of an Australian gamer is approaching mid 30's now) this arbitrary lack of consistency needs to be addressed.