

CI 1347 R Keogh Hunt

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Q1:

A new framework should be developed, as the pace of content generation has increased exponentially in the last decade that having a central classification board to review everything is ridiculous. Not only that but there should only be two or three classifications at the most to simplify things.

Q2:

To provide people who have sensitive eyes and ears a way to decide if they will be offended by material before they see or hear it, or probably more importantly whether they are happy for their children to see it. Most adults, even if they are easily offended, are mature and intelligent enough to accept that being offended can and will happen in any free society. The only exceptions to this would be the extremist religious fanatics who comprise a small minority of society, and should not be allowed to restrict societies freedoms. Most people I know don't even look at ratings anymore, as it is usually easy to tell who content is targeted at.

Q3:

Yes. There are technical limitations on classifying material in certain mediums such as the Internet. In contrast, movies are relatively straightforward to classify, as they take a long time to develop, and are released in a highly controlled manner due to the barriers to entry to the cinema oligopoly. The Internet should be classified using a voluntary self rating style system, ideally with some methods of peer review of the self imposed ratings. Fundamentally, the Internet has bought an unheralded amount of freedom to produce and distribute content, and this freedom should not be destroyed by arcane 1900's style legislation. Simultaneously, existing distribution channels should have their classification burdens relaxed to allow greater artistic expression to compete with this new medium. Classification should in general not be mandatory, as consistent enforcement is no longer feasible. This still allows parents who wish to choose material that has been deliberately produced for children and has been classified as G or PG to make use of the ratings, while the rest of us are unencumbered as we don't look at them anyway.

Q4:

All content should be allowed to be produced without any rating at all. If producers of content aimed at sensitive eyes/ears want to have their content purchased by concerned parents they will need to get a G or PG rating.

Q5:

The potential impact of content is what determines the classification. It should not affect whether it is classified, that should be up to the producer wanting to gain acceptance of concerned parents.

If producers are wanting to gain acceptance from concerned parents on new media, they will want to get classifications.

Q6:

No. Again, if content producers want parents to allow their children to see material they will voluntarily get it classified. Anything outside the classifications should be considered unclassified and treated by concerned parents as such.

Q7:

No.

Q8:

Yes they should be classified under the same voluntary scheme.

Q9:

No.

Q10:

No. Other laws exist (such as public decency) affect what can be displayed in public. People should be allowed to consume whatever legal content they wish in their own homes.

Q11:

Q12:

A voluntary classification scheme would be most appropriate. Additionally, many methods of peer review are possible to ensure that poorly classified material is identified quickly and efficiently. These include site inbuilt ratings and review mechanisms (ie youtube), or third party ratings systems which are already also very common. There should be very little interference by the classification scheme, except to provide legal remedies for serious cases of abuse.

Q13:

Why does this material need to be controlled? This is a poorly worded question, heavily weighted in the favour of the fear mongers. There is no way of completely controlling people, children included. Control measures such as censorship or filtering will be quickly and easily circumvented, and children particularly will want to find out what is being hidden from them. These kinds of techniques actually work against the protection ideals that the control measures are seeking to achieve.

Q14:

They are already too hard to get. I used to be able to buy them from the local servo, which was great. Now I don't contribute that money to the economy in that facet as it is freely available on the Internet. Again, this question is worded poorly in favour of more expensive, draconian laws that will not achieve social progress.

Q15:

When content producers feel that it will assist consumers to choose their content.

Q16:

Government agencies should provide a formal method of classification for those content producers that want an official rating. The legislature should also implement laws to allow prosecution of those who deliberately attempt to foist unsuitable content on sensitive eyes by self labelling as G or PG. Some form of governmental co-operation with existing online ratings systems to try and get a consistent, open playing field in this arena.

Industry bodies should be encouraging content producers who produce G or PG content to obtain official ratings to ensure a good supply of trusted sites for parents to choose from.

Users should be responsible for aiding in the ongoing self classification by using the (to be developed) online peer rating and review systems where they feel necessary.

The greatest advantage to using a trustworthy peer rating and review system is that ratings are then truly democratic, and allow for changes in social conscience by providing a flexible, adaptable system.

Q17:

Absolutely. And taking this concept to the furthest extent by bringing in content users to assist with the rating and review process would ultimately provide true democracy in classification.

Q18:

It should be optional that industry can classify, or even not classify material. Obviously, self classification would be held in lower regard than official classification in terms of trustworthiness. Additionally, systems can be implemented whereby private organisations may be certified and licensed to perform classification tasks. These industry bodies would then be paid for by content producers allowing them to expedite classification; creating a new industry, and minimize the expenses the government has borne in this area.

Q19:

In order to remove the barriers to entry for small independents, the government should remove mandatory classification. This would give small independants the ability to legally release material without the cost or delays involved.

Q20:

Not really. There are too many, and three would be all that is necessary.

Q21:

There should only be three categories really; for children, mature, and adult. Children should be 12 and under, mature 13 and older, and adult 18 and older. Only material that falls into the adult category should have legal restrictions on its sale.

Q22:

Q23:

I havent read these documents, however consolidating is usually a good idea.

Q24:

None.

Q25:

No. No content should be prohibited by classifications. There are laws in place to find and prosecute people breaking the law, and this doesn't change with classification. These same laws also allow law enforcement to remove illegal content.

Q26:

Within reason. There are advantages to having less restrictive places in the country, as this allows for differences in social standards to be accomodated. With this in mind, it is preferable to introduce more open classification than more restrictive, as generally society will appreciate greater freedom. Taking the freedoms that are enjoyed in some states or territories away through more restrictive classification will inevitably incite more community resentment of the new system.

Q27:

I have provided sufficient information with my other answers to encourage debate among the lawyers and politicians who would be best at answering this, as I am not a lawyer or a politician.

Q28:

Only providing that the Commonwealth does not take away any freedoms that are currently enjoyed in any state or territory. Restrictions should be eased in most instances.

Q29:

Remove the censorship rights from the classification board to Refuse Classification. This is undemocratic, and is the sort of thing that happens in places like China. We are Australians, and we are supposed to be a free and democratic nation. Allowing the classification board the right to prevent freedom of speech or artistic expression fundamentally violates the basic rights this country stands for.

Other comments: