

CI 1451 B Grayland

First name: Benjamin

Last name: Grayland

Q1:

Primary focus should be on improving the existing framework, especially given cost and effort that would likely be required to completely replace the current model.

Q2:

1. To allow consumers to easily identify whether content features elements that they may find questionable or objectionable.
2. To provide this information so that consumers can make their own informed decisions about what content is appropriate for them or those they have a responsibility for.
3. To identify which elements should be deemed questionable or objectionable by default for those unable to make their own informed decisions (e.g. children) and have no guardian providing the decision on their behalf.
4. To restrict the provision of content in cases where it is deemed questionable or objectionable by default.

In short, provide as much detail about the content as possible while leaving the decision about whether the content is suitable to the individual wherever possible.

Q3:

I am interpreting this question to be asking whether particular platforms/mediums might be more influential than others - for example, does an violent scene in a novel have more or less impact than an interactive violent scene in a video game?

Personally, I have always found literature to be far more influential upon my thinking than any other media. We are also yet to see a revolution, humanitarian movement or a genocide started by a video game - I don't think video games have reached sufficient sophistication to carry such messages effectively.

Given the objectives I outlined above, I think that the form of the content (e.g. visual interactive, visual, audio, textual, textual interactive, etc.) should be identified with the nature of the content (foul language, violent imagery, etc.) to allow consumers to make their own decisions.

Q4:

It would reduce the amount of work required by a classification panel, but would mean that unclassified and potentially objectionable content would be released to the public. If the classification info box (or whatever method is used to convey classification) conveyed that the material was unclassified, then I would support classification after complaint.

Q5:

I believe potential impact is too subjective to discern and depends heavily on the individual. I noted above that I felt literature had a greater impact on me than other media.

I think the nature of the content should determine the classification in cases where a 'questionable or objectionable by default' classification (see 3. in Q2) was being applied, and not the form of the content. That is, if a book is given a particular classification for containing violent imagery, a music track or video game containing violent imagery should receive the same classification.

Q6:

Yes.

This is a good reason to support classification only after complaint, as raised in Q4.

Q7:

All media should be treated equally.

Q8:

All media should be treated equally.

Q9:

As per Q6.

Q10:

No.

Q11:

I think there is no major problem with over-classification, provided it only serves the purpose of information and not restriction (excluding the scenarios identified in 3. and 4. in Q2).

Perhaps looking to other countries for indications of controversial material should serve to identify material that should be considered for classification (though it should in no way influence the actual classification made).

Q12:

For those that wish to have their content restricted (i.e. parents with young children, schools, public terminals) - they should make use of filter software. I don't believe internet access should be filtered at the source (i.e. on the way into Australia): false positive identification of restricted material should not be acceptable. I don't believe any internet content should be restricted unless it breaches Australian law (child pornography being a good example). Beyond laws like these, the choice of which content to access should belong to the consumer, using classification as a guide.

Q13:

See comments above. I believe that development of better filter software is the best way to do this. Software that can take advantage of crowdsourcing to identify objectionable or questionable content is the only current feasible means - there is simply too much content to review and classify everything.

Guardians who have made use of the filter software should be permitted to override individual restrictions (i.e. if the community identifies something as objectionable, but a parent believes that it is suitable for their child to view).

I believe something along these lines would allow large amounts of content to be classified (if in broad strokes), and still permit individual liberties.

Q14:

I suspect that the vast majority (over 99%) of such material will become digital eventually, so could be handled as per my answer to Q13.

For the rest, I believe current methods (classification and restriction of sale) are sufficient. If people are providing such material to minors any other person unable to make their own informed decisions about content, and they are not the minor or other person's guardian, then they should be prosecuted.

Q15:

At all times (either advising the classification details, or that the material is unclassified).

Physical content: on the surface/outer layer/cover/packaging.

Digital content: top left of image or document, at the beginning of a video or audio track.

Q16:

Government agencies should provide classification information and restrict access for those unable to make their own informed decisions.

All industry bodies should be encouraged to cooperate with government and volunteer content for classification, though this should be optional.

Users should exercise their judgement in consuming content or providing content to others, and should understand that unclassified does not mean 'free of objectionable or questionable material'.

Q17:

This could work as an additional type of classification - giving three levels: unclassified, creator classified and government classified, with successive levels overriding any others.

Creator classification would probably reduce complaints and reduce effort required for government classification.

Q18:

Personally, I am happy with existing classification with the following exceptions:

I think that form (audio vs. textual vs. interactive) should not play a part in determining classification level, and only nature of content should determine the level. Form should be provided as part of the classification information however, so consumers can make subjective decisions based on it (e.g. a video game with a violent cutscene should be at the same level as a video game with violent interactive elements, but the classification information should make clear that one contains animated violence and the other has interactive violence).

I would not like to see any content restricted to those able to make their own informed decisions (excluding where the content breaches law).

Q19:

Subsidise where creator has provided their own classification.

Subsidise where industry or individual is receiving government grants.

Subsidise where industry or individual is independent or making small profits.

Q20:

No comment.

Q21:

Perhaps just colour and alphabetical or numerical codes for each type of content that has been classified. E.g. if the classification identified violent imagery and foul language, provide red and brown marks with numerical codes to convey the extent or level of the imagery/language.

Q22:

Separate form of content from nature of content and level of content and design markings for each item within those categories. Add these together (e.g. interactive + violent + low might be a symbol for interactive, colour for violent and number for low) to make a recognisable mark that could be used across different mediums easily (i.e. change symbol for interactive when it is a film that contains low amounts of violent imagery).

Q23:

I am not familiar with these and wish I had the time to read them in depth. I hope that my other comments allow you to guess what I might say. :)

Q24:

Any content in which individuals were hurt/abused specifically for the creation of that content (i.e. child pornography, misogynistic or androgynistic pornography, animal torture). This would still permit news articles, for example, on such topics to be accessed.

Q25:

Remove video games from this - content should determine prohibition, not medium.

Q26:

Classification should be determined at national level.

Q27:

No comment.

Q28:

No comment.

Q29:

No comment.

Other comments:

I believe I am capable of making my own decisions about what media I consume. I don't watch a lot of violent movies or though I play video games, I prefer those that are non-violent. That said, if the material did not cause harm to others to create (as I mentioned in Q24) and the consumer is deemed capable of making their own informed decisions, then they should be able to enjoy such content.

Will violent movies and music and games make people violent? I don't think so. I think the factors behind violence or other inappropriate behaviour are far more complex than we like to admit, and we cling to censorship as a safety blanket.

If you don't give people a chance to exercise their own judgement, how will they learn?

Thanks for reading, feel free to contact me about anything I've written.