

CI 1496 S Merity

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Q1:

The existing framework should be improved with specific focus on modern technology and the complications that arise from those. There is no reasonable way to restrict the Internet, so that must be confronted.

Additionally, an improvement to the games classification system is desperately needed. Games that should be 18+ (such as Left 4 Dead 2) are slightly modified such that they are approved by the classification board. These games can now be purchased by far younger children, and the content of the game is almost not changed at all. This is almost exactly the opposite of what the system was designed for.

Q2:

Provide accurate and rapid classification of traditional media such as DVDs, movies, games, magazines and so on. Any attempt to control the Internet is doomed to fail, resulting in embarrassed for both the government of Australia and the nation as a whole.

Q3:

Yes. As someone who works in Information Technology I can guarantee that any attempt to censor or classify content on the Internet is doomed to fail. There is too much content on the Internet for any reasonable method to work, and simple methods can be used to defeat this (such as using password based websites to protect the material). Extradition laws would also prevent you pursuing anyone breaking "our" laws. If there is content on the Internet, it can also be reached trivially by proxies or other similar technology. If, say, a paedophile was after content available on the Internet, they would be able to get to it, regardless of the amount of effort Australia puts into preventing this.

As such, certain mediums, such as the Internet, are almost impossible to effectively govern or classify.

Q4:

That sounds reasonable and would simplify the process of classifying content. The system may be abused, however, if the complaint system is not properly designed.

Q5:

The potential impact is hard to measure and a completely subjective measure, so I don't think it is reasonable.

Content designed for children should likely be handled with more care.

Q6:

Certain mediums of distribution should affect classification, such as DVDs, movies, or printed publications. Whatever the decision, one must consider how independent media and content being produced on the Internet should be handled.

Q7:

Generally, no. If the content has broken any laws in the creation or display, then those laws should be applied. Censoring should not be permitted otherwise.

Q8:

Music is an expressive medium and it would be difficult to classify. Classifications for the appropriate age groups seem reasonable.

Q9:

If the content aims to be classified as appropriate for children, then additional care in classification is appropriate. Classification should be used to safeguard parents choices, however, and not to restrict content.

Q10:

No. Reasonable measures are set in place by society to prevent people watching or using inappropriate content in public places, and anyone who would chose to do so will not be affected by separate classifications for home/public.

Q11:

Classification should be a guide as to the severity of the content, not a restriction. Therefore, it should primarily be used to guide parents, that is all.

Q12:

There really isn't. I work in IT and can tell you any method attempted will be defeated almost immediately by those who aim to do so. Additionally, any "general" internet filter will produce far more problems than it would be worth. If a person wishes to have filtered internet, they can subscribe to an ISP that performs that for them or get software for their personal home computer that will do the same task.

Q13:

See previous question. If a person wishes to have filtered internet, they can subscribe to an ISP that performs that for them or get software for their personal home computer that will do the same task. Additionally, no amount of filtering can replace good parenting. If the child is not of an age to handle inappropriate content on the Internet, they should not be browsing alone. There are many threats on the Internet that the internet filter wouldn't even pretend to handle -- paedophiles targeting children will not be defeated by the Internet filter for example. If you leave your child by themselves thinking the Internet filter makes them safe, you'd be making a horrible mistake.

Q14:

Better control of the distribution channels for physical content.

Q15:

Classifications should be used to guide the purchasing choice, either indicating the severity of the content or the age appropriate nature of the content. There's a difference between me as an adult deciding I'd prefer not to see a gory film and a child attempting to purchase the same content.

Q16:

Q17:

Q18:

Pornography seems reasonable to classify automatically at 18+. Certain gore films or other severely confronting films would work as well. With most of this content, the producers would probably agree that the content is not age appropriate for other groups.

Q19:

I believe this is a reasonable request from smaller filmmakers. The same applies to people producing content online -- they should not have to handle the costs of classifying that themselves.

Q20:

Q21:

Yes, 18+ games. As mentioned previously, games meant purely for adults are being modified slightly such that they are put into the lower age ranges. This is only done as there is no 18+ classification category. This results in the exact opposite of what the classification scheme is attempting to prevent.

Q22:

Q23:

Yes, see Q21.

Q24:

None, purely as it would be impossible to prevent. See Q13.

Q25:

Q26:

Q27:

Q28:

Q29:

Other comments:

Genuine internet filtering is purely not possible from a technical viewpoint. Any reasonably IT competent person would be able to defeat the internet filter trivially if they tried. This means that any illicit activity on the internet will not be prevented. If a parent wishes to prevent access to content on the Internet, they can select an ISP that filters content for them or get the software for install on their home computer. Most importantly, parents must understand that the internet filter does not prevent many of the dangers of the internet. Predators on online chatrooms or social networking sites will not be prevented. Responsible parenting is the best solution to these problems.

Finally, games require an 18+ classification category, as otherwise games meant purely for adults end up being modified slightly such that they are put into the lower age ranges. This results in inappropriate content reaching the these lower age ranges purely as there's no way for an adult game to remain an adult game.