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Q1:

Developing a new framework: the old one does not deal well with newer forms of media. In particular, you can't treat every form of media as if it were "a film at the cinema" or "a magazine at the newagent".

Q2:

Providing accurate information about the content and possible risks of any material. In particular, it should protect children from unsuitable material, while allowing adults to access the material they find useful/enjoyable. Not everyone is a child, and (for example) the average age of gamers in Australia is nearly 30.

Q3:

It should, so that classification accurately addresses the nature of that platform. It should consider both the advantages and disadvantages of that platform, and the demographic of its users. It should consider how the platform presents and modifies material, and how classification can make it easier for that platform's users to make an informed choice.

Q4:

No. Relying on complaints is like judging our politicians by how many people dislike them. (Result: we probably wouldn't have any politicians.) Content should be classified because it is available, so that people are informed.

Q5:

Yes. Children are not able to make an independent choice, nor are they aware of the effect material can have on them. Parents can't be everywhere 24/7, nor do they know everything. Help them out by providing accurate information.

Q6:

If possible, all material should be classified, but it makes sense to give priority to material affecting the greatest number of people, especially children. For example, we should immediately rectify the error of shoe-horning very violent and sexualized game titles into the MA15+ category. Anywhere else in the world, those titles are R18+. We need a comparable category, making it clear to parents that this material is most definitely not suitable for children.

Q7:

Without individually categorizing each artwork, we could request that art galleries etc. place a warning in the entry hall and in advertising if the material may be unsuitable for children. You just need to think about how material may affect people: for example, just as online text has "spoiler warnings" (if it gives away plot information) or "trigger warnings" (if it can affect people traumatized by rape), art displays could have warnings about possibly distressing or unsuitable content. (This would probably increase their revenue, so I doubt if they would mind.)

Q8:

Yes. Material taken in by ear, especially when doing something else physically, can bypass your in-brain content filters. Musical or voice-tonal reinforcement makes this a stronger experience than simply concentrating your eyes on the words. This material is just as deserving of classification as written books or movies.

Q9:

It should affect priority. Ultimately, we should try to provide accurate classification information for as much material as possible. Material affecting children should have especial priority.

Q10:

No.

Q11:

Is its effect well-understood? Let's not dive in before we understand how a medium works, nor should we apply a method from another medium if it is not suitable. We need to consider both the medium and the audience.

Q12:

Parental Controls. Publicize the fact that these are now available on all computing platforms. All the yells for a "filter" disregarded the fact that we already had a wide range of filters available. Make sure people know how to use these filters, including kiosk programs for young children. Make sure schools etc. have enough funding to protect their students (this means a qualified IT worker who can stay one step ahead of the script kiddies). Put the time and money into making sure every facility (and home) catering to children has the information and resources necessary to manage content. Filtering at user-level is much more effective than filtering higher up the pipe.

And if you're talking about child porn, I don't think you'll find the ISPs resist a voluntary filter. They're just worried you're going to extend it to information about safe drug use, voluntary euthanasia and abortion. But surely no government would be so stupid. These are valid topics for discussion, and areas where people need to know what their options are.

Q13:

Parental Controls (and kiosk software for very young children). There's also bound to be parental-monitoring software out there. If there isn't anything sufficiently simple, fund someone to write it. This means software which keeps track of browser logs, P2P, chat etc. When my kids were growing up, I did all that manually. All parents need is simple monitoring software, which they could set to send a daily report, alerts if a specific activity occurred, and which made it viable for them to inform their children that yes, they could and were monitoring them online. I also strongly advise parents retain ownership of mobile phones and their accounts, setting up the phones with step-by-step guides so they have control and monitoring access from the start. Try messing with this, kid, and you lose access to the phone.

Q14:

This is difficult, because there aren't central access points (like electronic devices). My nine-year-old son's friend brought his older brother's pornographic magazines to school. These weren't even the "standard" fare: they were really hard-core stuff. He came home and told me, but by then the damage was done. I suggest serious penalties for people who allow children to gain access to sexually explicit content. It fits the definition of child abuse, in my opinion. If the penalties are publicized (and, for

example, a lockbox is suggested? damned if I know what people do with this stuff), then people may be motivated to do more than just stuff the material under their bed.

Q15:

1. When it is accessible by children.
2. When it is sold to anyone.
3. When it affects a sufficiently large audience (social scientists can probably suggest a threshold size).

Q16:

Users can give feedback on particular material, and use responsibly the information you supply. They can certainly object to a ruling, and you should pay attention to that objection. Users have more time with the material than you do, and often they know more about the platform.

Industry bodies should provide specialist information. However, there is an important rôle for independent bodies (like the EFA), commenters like the ABC Good Game show and online tech/gamer sites (e.g. the Escapist): these people rarely have any axe to grind, and have the best interests of the user in mind. (Any conflicting interests should be declared.) Industry bodies have useful information, but they definitely have an axe to grind. Mind the blade.

Government should simply apply the classification and enforce any non-compliance. Government does not spend enough time with this material to have any other rôle, unless we want to fund a Department of Playing Games and Panting at Pornography All Day.

Q17:

No. Industry will cheat, inevitably. Take their information, but check it against what you see, and what users say. You will actually get volunteers for test groups (e.g. through ABC's Good Game program) and feedback.

Q18:

A cup of coffee? Even then, they would argue about whose coffee was best. Industry can suggest a classification, but they are not sufficiently independent to ensure good judgment. In many cases, their interests are diametrically opposed to those of the child or adult content viewer/user.

Q19:

You mean content providers currently pay for classification? Isn't that a conflict of interest? Levy content providers and use the amount to assess all content. Levy larger producers per viewer/user hour, and have an umbrella levy for smaller producers. Associations or groups of smaller producers could combine to cover a general levy.

Q20:

PG and MA. Kids argue that they're "old enough" or "mature enough" for these contents, even when they're clearly not as old as stated. Parents often give in. Just put an age on the label. Since we're used to G, PG etc., phase it out gradually by making the letter smaller but the age larger and more emphasized. Eventually, just shift to ages. (e.g. G1 = Any age or 0+, G2 = 5+, PG = 12+, M = 15+ and R = 18+).

Q21:

We need a (R)18+ category for computer games. The Senate enquiry had overwhelmingly support for this rating, and yet again it has been shelved because the State Attorney Generals always seem to include someone who wants the publicity of blocking it. Currently, very violent and sexualized games

are shoe-horned into the MA15+ category (in any other country, they are rated R18+), and "banned" games are simply bought overseas. Give games an accurate classification, so people know what they're dealing with. Also, stop our gaming dollars going overseas.

Q22:

Have a consistent classification (e.g. 0+, 5+, 12+, 15+, 18+) and apply it to all material. It's simply a matter of assessing the age at which this material would be suitable, i.e. the age at which the user/viewer can usually make an informed judgment of the content.

Q23:

Yes. It's just material: they aren't different species.

Q24:

Nothing can be entirely prohibited online, as even the Chinese government's massive and continuing investment has shown. However, if what you're asking is where we should target the most protection: child exploitation material

For the rest, with adequate information, and regulation of exploitative industries like gambling, adults can make up their own minds. Don't try to censor the information people exchange. I imagine the AFP would agree: drive people underground and it's just harder to catch them. And for heaven's sake, stop giving in to the Terrorists Under the Bed furphy. We've already done ourselves way too much harm over Bush's crusade. Treat people decently, and most of the time they will do the same in return.

Q25:

No. Games for adults should be available to adults. Information about voluntary euthanasia and safe drug use should be available to adults. Political content or discussion should never be censored. Protect children by filtering child exploitation material and classifying content. Don't treat adults as though they were children.

Q26:

Yes. Confusion between different jurisdictions is counter-productive. Why not have a national classification scheme to which the States contribute? Make it embarrassing and expensive for an individual State to give in to its fundamental religious naggars and classify material differently from the national scheme. Promote the national scheme to the States as a way to save money and time (it will), and promote it to the punters as simpler and easier to understand. You may have to make sure the States understand that this is their combined effort, with Commonwealth assistance, not The Sky Falling.

Q27:

We have a cooperative scheme, and it works this badly? *sigh*

Let's introduce a National Classification Scheme. Simplify the process, cut out the people who want to work it for influence or publicity, and integrate existing efforts. I know, easier said than done. I don't have a recipe for dealing with whiny polities.

Q28:

Yes. We move around a lot more nowadays, more things cross State boundaries. It is inefficient to have State limits on content classification.

Q29:

Set up a feedback process online, where requests and information can be logged and integrated quickly. The classification process currently is opaque to the general population. Make it clear how the process works, how you can help, and how you can redress what you may see as inaccurate information. Make sure the turnaround is quick, and that the website documents communication in an easily-accessed manner. Have case studies linked from the main page.

Other comments:

Classification should be about providing accurate information, not about limiting what adults can access. Protect the children by making sure parents know what's in the material, and by providing consistent resources and information for parents and institutions, but don't treat us all like children. Adults learn and grow through contact with a wide variety of information, and it's often the most challenging material which provides the greatest growth.

As we keep hoping everyone learnt from Prohibition, don't try to ban things most people want. This includes adult games and access to information on choice about their own bodies (safe drug use, abortion and contraception, and voluntary euthanasia).

Please, DON'T try to "control the Internet". The Internet is a dynamic medium: billions of tiny pipes going in every direction instead of a single large pipe you can regulate. Give people the information to handle this medium themselves. Don't drive that democratization underground and create a whole generation of pissed-off users.