CI 1566 N Zeitoune

First name: Nassar
Last name: Zeitoune

Q1:
Improve on key elements of the existing framework. The existing system (age-based classification) is simple to use and understand for the average consumer and could potentially classify a wide range of audio/visual content. An enhancement may be to supplement the classification with ratings for depicted violence, sex scenes, offensive language, etc.

Q2:
To move away from the family-orientated bias present in the archaic system which requires the unanimous votes of all state censorship ministers. Ideally the process should be democratic to reflect the diverse nature and opinions of the Australian public (i.e. parts of the Australian population do not conform to the family-biased views that are present in the current decisions making process and their views and opinions should be taken into account). The process should also be transparent and fair to allow creators of content the chance to appeal a decision before the content is banned.

In addition, the goal should be to accurately classify content in accordance to defined standards. Banned content should be severely restricted to well-defined and understandable standards without breaching the human right to freedom of speech and expression. For instance, banned content could be limited when it is clear that the performer is being denied their rights or have not consented (for instance, child pornography or rape videos clearly deny the rights of the person being abused; however, paparazzi snaps of public figures would be acceptable).

Q3:
Yes and No. The internet is the only platform/technology/media that allows unrestricted access to content. There will always be a way to circumvent any system that attempts to restrict content originating from the internet because the internet is, at it's core, unrestricted and can be accessed from variety of points. It is in my opinion that attempting to classify and restrict the internet is a colossal waste of time and the onus should be on parents, teachers and child carers to provide the supervision necessary to prevent their children accessing such content. However an aide or guide could be developed to help families in understanding how to provide this supervision, and help on where to find tools to implement their own restriction scheme. In other words, efforts to classify and restrict the internet should be done on an individual basis.

For all other media that are produced, distributed and sold commercially (movies, literature, video games, music, etc), the classification system should NOT be biased to certain platforms or technologies. The classification should be based solely on the content, not the platform. Ideally, the classification scheme is based upon a common, agreed set of well-defined standards that is translatable to a wide range of audio/visual media.

Q4:

The internet is the only media that should be classified in such a way. However, care should be taken to ensure that the process follows along democratic and transparent lines. To borrow a statement from Q2, "Banned content should be severely restricted to well-defined and understandable standards without breaching the human right to freedom of speech and expression". Content should not be banned or restricted because a minority complainant finds the content offensive. It should be stressed to the community that the internet is an unrestricted platform for communicating a variety of opinions, and that users of the internet should be aware of tools that can help limit unwanted content if so desired. To again borrow a statement from Q3, "In other words, efforts to classify and restrict the internet should be done on an individual basis."

For all other media that are produced and sold commercially (movies, literature, video games, music, etc), it should be a requirement that the content is classified prior to distribution (where possible). For the classification to hold up against complaints the whole process needs to be well-defined and consistently applied to the complete spectrum of platforms/technologies/media.
Q5:
To borrow a statement from Q4, "For all other media that are produced and sold commercially (movies, literature, video games, music, etc), it should be a requirement that the content is classified prior to distribution (where possible)."

Any unclassified content (other than the internet) will lead to confusion and misinformation among consumers.
Q6:
To borrow a statement from Q4, "For all other media that are produced and sold commercially (movies, literature, video games, music, etc), it should be a requirement that the content is classified prior to distribution (where possible)."

Any bias for one type of content producer will be a disadvantage for all other types of content producers.
Q7:
To borrow a statement from Q4, "For all other media that are produced and sold commercially (movies, literature, video games, music, etc), it should be a requirement that the content is classified prior to distribution (where possible)."

In the case of art, a classification system will allow the consumer to make informed choices about whether the content displayed is suitable for them. To borrow a statement from Q2, "Banned content should be severely restricted to well-defined and understandable standards without breaching the human right to freedom of speech and expression".
Q8:
To borrow a statement from Q4, "For all other media that are produced and sold commercially (movies, literature, video games, music, etc), it should be a requirement that the content is classified prior to distribution (where possible)."

Music can be just as offensive as all other types of media. Hence it should be subjugated to the same classification scheme.

Q9:

To borrow a statement from Q4, "For all other media that are produced and sold commercially (movies, literature, video games, music, etc), it should be a requirement that the content is classified prior to distribution (where possible)."

Any bias for one type of audience will be a disadvantage for all other types of audiences. It can be perceived as a form of discrimination.

Q10:

This question should not be about classifying content based upon where it is access since most content can be accessed/performed/played/displayed anywhere. The question should be about what type of classification would be suitable for the content to be accessed/performed/played/displayed in a public place.

For instance, content classified M should not be accessible in a primary school. Content rated M or higher should be stored near the back of a store so that children with adequate parental supervision are not exposed to such content.

Q11:

This question has been answered in Q2 and this extracted statement from Q3, "Ideally, the classification scheme is based upon a common, agreed set of well-defined standards that is translatable to a wide range of audio/visual media."

Q12:

The method of control should be implemented on an individual/household/office basis. To borrow a statement from Q4, "It should be stressed to the community that the internet is an unrestricted platform for communicating a variety of opinions, and that users of the internet should be aware of tools that can help limit unwanted content if so desired. "

Q13:

Children's access to inappropriate content can be better controlled through parental supervision and methods of control implemented on an individual/household/office basis. To borrow a statement from Q3, "However an aide or guide could be developed to help families in understanding how to provide this supervision, and help on where to find tools to implement their own restriction scheme."

Q14:

It can be controlled through better enforcement of age restriction. This can be done through requiring an individual to produce an ID when purchasing restricted content, similar to how consumers currently purchase alcohol and cigarettes.

Q15:

Prior to the consumer purchasing, accessing or watching the content.

Q16:

An independent government regulatory body should perform the classification according to a democratic and transparent process.

All content producers are responsible for getting their content classified prior to distribution.

Industry bodies should inform the independent government regulatory body on how the classification scheme affects content, based on particular industry idiosyncrasies.

Users shall complain and inform the regulatory body when content is unclassified or classified inappropriately.

Q17:

No, because industry can be pressured by vocal minorities to refuse classification on otherwise unoffensive content. The whole process should be neutral, independent and consistent across all platforms.

Q18:

Newspapers and other informative media.

Books and magazines simply because there will be too many to classify. There will be some content that will need to be classified (such as sexually explicit magazines and violent graphic books).

Q19:

In the case of small, independent Australian producers of content (for instance music, films, etc), the classification cost should be subsidised.

Q20:

The classifications are understood, however the inconsistent implementation has led to confusion. This confusion is prevalent in the video games industry because of highly dubious decisions.

Q21:

At this stage I cannot see a problem, other than applying the categories across all media (for example, a R18+ rating for video games).

For books, the current "Explicit content" used in music in lieu of a proper classification category.

Q22:

The current "Explicit content" implemented by the music industry can be used in lieu of a proper classification category for a range of suitable media (books, advertising, art exhibitions, theater, web-sites).

Q23:

Yes, and it should have done so eons ago.

Q24:

To borrow a statement from Q2, "Banned content should be severely restricted to well-defined and understandable standards without breaching the human right to freedom of speech and expression. For instance, banned content could be limited when it is clear that the performer is being denied their rights or have not consented (for instance, child pornography or rape videos clearly deny the rights of the person being abused; however, paparazzi snaps of public figures would be acceptable)."

To borrow a statement from Q4, "It should be stressed to the community that the internet is an unrestricted platform for communicating a variety of opinions, and that users of the internet should be aware of tools that can help limit unwanted content if so desired. "

Q25:

No. It is unambiguous and does not provide a clear or transparent method of classifying content. What may be considered "revolting" for a minority group may be perfectly acceptable to another. To borrow a statement from Q2, "Banned content should be severely restricted to well-defined and understandable standards without breaching the human right to freedom of speech and expression."

Q26:

Yes. The state classification laws should be replaced with a consistent national scheme.

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Q28:

Yes.

Q29:

The process should also be transparent and fair to allow creators of content the chance to appeal a decision before the content is banned.

Other comments: