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Q1:

A federal framework would be preferable to the current system requiring a unanimous vote for changes to the classification system, however improving some elements of the current system would go a long way. Such changes would include adding an R18+ rating for games and removing the requirement for a unanimous vote to make changes.

Q2:

To provide consistent, understandable advice on content across all forms of media without limiting appropriately aged consumers access to otherwise legal content.

Q3:

Platform should not affect ratings, nor should it affect access by appropriately aged persons. Video games are a perfect example. Current generation consoles provide parents with perhaps the best method of restricting access by children to higher rated content with parental codes able to be enabled restricting access to certain content. Ratings data coded into the software are crucial to this technology. All the more reason an R18+ rating would perhaps be safer on console games than films.

Q4:

Q5:

Q6:

No. Even a film or game of low market distribution has the potential to impact viewers. Also it would be quite difficult to determine potential market share prior to release.

Q7:

Q8:

Too much music today can be downloaded from overseas websites and online stores, making classification of music an expensive and potentially futile endeavour. The music industry could instead be lobbied to self regulate and add ratings advice coding to future downloads, allowing development of music software with parental controls, similar to those currently including on gaming consoles and foxtel set top boxes.

Q9:

No, see Q6.

Q10:

No.

Q11:

Q12:

Parental supervision. This can not be understated. You wouldn't let your children play in the street unsupervised, so why let them use the internet unsupervised knowing full well what is accessible. Software filtering should also be made available, with education on filtering and supervision provided to parents and caregivers when children begin school.

Q13:

See Q12.

Q14:

By strict policing of resellers of the content. Heavy penalties for sale of this content to minors would surely act as a deterrent to resellers.

Q15:

Permanently marked on packaging as is current practice.

Q16:

Government roles should be limited to providing classification guidelines, advice and education. It should definitely not extend to blanket censorship of content that is deemed inappropriate only for certain groups.

Q17:

Potentially.

Q18:

This would likely still require some level of government control, perhaps less in depth than current procedures, to prevent inappropriate content "slipping through the cracks."

Q19:

Subsidising small independent films and games would be beneficial to the industries and perhaps allow a greater variety of content to make it to consumers. It would also likely encourage small developers to seek classification rather than proceed with underground releases.

Q20:

The MA15+ rating for video games is inappropriate as it stands as many games rated for persons 18 years and older in other countries are shoehorned into our MA15+ category.

Q21:

An R18+ rating should be introduced for video games. This would move many games that are inappropriate for younger gamers from the MA15+ category, while still allowing adult gamers to play games as they were intended by the developers, and as is legal in most western countries.

Q22:

An R18+ ratings for video games would bring games in line with movies, removing confusion and allowing content intended specifically for adult gamers, noting the average age of gamers in Australia is now in the thirties.

Q23:

Yes. The criteria should be standardised so ratings across all media forms have similar guidelines and one can choose a film or game in a certain rating and expect similar content.

Q24:

Whilst access to certain illegal/refused classification content should be prohibited I don't believe it is the governments role to filter this content with a blanket filter. Software filtering provided to individuals or an "opt in" filter would be a better alternative.

Q25:

Yes

Q26:

Consistency is important, noting the ease of movement between states, however the current system requiring a unanimous vote from all Attorneys General for changes to the classification system can

not accurately reflect the democratic views of the general public. A majority rule on classification matters would be preferable.

Q27:

A federal system with input from all states, with decisions made by majority votes.

Q28:

Yes.

Q29:

Other comments:

I am 31 years old and have been playing video games for most of my life. There are games specifically targeted to adult audiences that are perfectly legal and rated R18+ in nearly all western countries, whilst in Australia they are either refused classification or shoehorned into the MA15+ category. The result is that some games don't get released in Australia, leading to piracy of overseas versions, other games are modified from their original format, giving Australian gamers a lesser adult experience, and finally, some games that are inappropriate for young gamers are available to children under 18 years old.

An R18+ for video games really is long overdue in Australia. I've written this submission as I read that there have only been 80 or so submissions so far and the majority are opposed to the rating, seeking government intervention for child protection. I firmly believe the people MOST responsible for child protection are their parents or caregivers. Far too many people today seek to blame someone else when their children are exposed to something inappropriate. The television and computer/games console are poor babysitters, and even poorer replacements for good parenting.

There is no substitute for parental supervision of children's activities. It is the parents role to educate and expose their children to content as they see fit. It is the governments role to classify the content and provide the best possible advice to parents so they can make these decisions. It is too easy to expect the government to ban everything you don't want your children to see. It makes for lazy parenting. That said, some form of software filtering should definitely be available to parents from the government for home computers. Parental controls already exist on games consoles. The most important thing that can provided to parents now is education. The perfect time to provide this is when children start school. Prior to this their use of computer has likely been limited and supervised, however they are reaching the age where they will begin to use them more and more. Schools are the perfect place for teachers with an understanding of current technologies to provide parents with basic advice for limiting access to inappropriate content. It wouldn't take long. A demonstration of how to use parental controls and filters on computers and consoles would be fairly simple for most parents with children reaching school age now. They could also provide documentation provided by the government, and government assistance should be made available to parents who do not have the skills to implement controls.

It's about time to provide us ratings consistency across media platforms, and allow adult gamers to play games as they were intended; for adults.