

CI 1969 J Martin

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Q1:

The present framework is clearly broken in its current state. A classification scheme that *refuses* to classify some work due to the nature of the material is simply unworkable. It is, at its core, anti-competitive and frequently has the opposite results that it strives to take. Additionally, it discriminates directly against certain ideals that, while perhaps not forming the majority opinion, still oppresses a valid portion of the population.

The current framework advocates 'restricted access' system that is such an abysmal failure that it has the opposite affect of perversely advertising the product, providing far more exposure than it would otherwise receive. Ultimately, if the goal of the current censorship framework is to provide unlimited positive endorsements for the products it bans, it is a complete success.

An example of this is the latest Mortal Kombat game in the franchise. There are about 8 in the entire series, and in the past week I have had four separate friends who had each separately imported copies of Mortal Kombat (because the present classification system refuses to classify the title in this country) inviting me over to play it because apparently it had been banned. Considering they didn't have the rest of the series, I think this falls flat in the face of a complete failure to restrict a product, not that it was an issue, because the product in question, that had been banned for being too 'graphic' was, not surprisingly, incredibly unrealistic, pointing to the fact that the current classification framework is so incredibly broken it appears to almost be an anti-censorship framework.

Q2:

The classification scheme should be about

- * providing as close a guideline as possible to the material its covering with a goal of no material 'unclassifiable'. B

- * protect minors from adult content

- * and to inform, and ONLY inform, parents and other adults as to the nature of the content they are considering exposing themselves to.

Any kind of restriction above the consenting age has repeatedly proven to be an spectacular failure. The risk of abuse of content restriction is far too dangerous to be considered in any context.

Q3:

Platform is important for classification. Typically, prolific broadcast technologies such as television, radio and printed advertising that reach vast quantities of the population should be classified in order to allow viewers who do not have access to the material's synopsis to make an on-the-spot decision.

Broad classification beyond that is cost-prohibitive in the information age. Not only does Australia not have the resources, but it means that products that do make it into the country through major channels (ie, major movie distributors, major software distributors etc) are uncompetitive. As an example, a CD in Australia costs \$35 as opposed to the same piece of plastic in the US for \$16. Reasons sighted? High regioning expenses, largely attributed to reclassification over a smaller market. Another example sighting the same reasons, the software industry where a Nintendo Super Mario sells for \$100 in Australia as opposed to \$50 in the US. With such an incredibly uncompetitive climate for media purchases, Australians clearly can't afford to classify all the content they must be exposed to.

Q4:

Material that has been classified should bear the classification. As the result of a complaint, a content source should be classified, and if outside of Australia, be provided as part of an advisory service to Australians as well as a notification to the publisher that they will be required to distribute with an official classification from then on for that product. Beyond that, the classification committee does not necessarily need to find new and existing content to reclassify without a specific request.

Q5:

Content marketed specifically towards children should always carry a classification. That said, content marketed specifically towards children will typically be produced with very high acceptance standards anyway. Again, classifying against all media is cost-prohibitive. Content producers need to accept their own responsibility for correctly classifying their own children content, with broadcast and advertised content still being the only media with a compulsory classification.

Non-advertised/broadcast media self-classifies through word of mouth and editorials.

Q6:

The primary, and really only, goal for classification is to classify broadcast and advertised media (so market position is a factor). That is, if the content is going out of its way to advertise itself through a channel that is not directly solicited (say on a bill board, on a TV ad, not on a Google adsense link or an Internet web page that you have visited). Beyond this, content producers should be classifying their own works.

Q7:

Outdoor artwork, like a printed billboard, should clearly have a classification, the idea of it being installed without some consumer advisory seems a little silly to begin with. Private galleries are able to classify their own works. Private galleries advertised on TV, advertising art exhibits should carry a classification if it differs from the general classification for the gallery, which it would display otherwise in the television advertisement.

Q8:

music advertised through broadcast media or public advertising should carry a classification. Beyond that audio producers should be self regulating their content.

Q9:

No, only the avenues through which the content is made available should influence whether the content is classified.

Q10:

A book can be accessed at home or in public, it does not alter whether classification of the book is necessary. If the book is being read aloud in public, then classification should apply as the media has become broadcast. The same book read aloud in a private dwelling does not broadcast the media.

Q11:

All of the factors have already been raised.

Q12:

A basic advisory website. Beyond that, families must regulate their own children's Internet access. This can be done through government monitored opt in software that white-lists web sites. White-listing is the only way to be sure, and it is not possible on a large scale which means that the only control on the Internet is going to be entirely voluntary. Technological measures are beyond the scope of this and most other governments as it hopes to achieve goals that the technology that the Internet is built on is fundamentally designed to get around. It has global redundancy built in to account for net-splits and rogue foreign operators who want to try to control name servers, and unfortunately, due to the misguided efforts of the Movie and Recording Industries, the Internet is more de-centralised than ever before, with more and more content disappearing into untouchable data-clouds.

Q13:

Parents need better instruction on what applications they can get to whitelist their children's search results. Advertise software that actually allows parents to password a service on the computer to force it to proxy through a whitelist provider.

Q14:

Offline content is often self-regulated by social decency. Typically it makes people uncomfortable to be exposed to pornographic material which hurts sales. Its regulated through broadcast media and social acceptance. As I have already mentioned, restricting content only drives demand for it. Do not restrict it.

Q15:

Content should be required to display classification markings if the material has been classified. Until that time, content providers should self classify against social standards until direct classification is requested.

Q16:

Industry bodies should self-regulate, all but broadcast and advertised media. A classification body should oversee broadcast and advertised media and follow up classification requests, inform industry bodies when they are becoming lax on their classifications through frequent requests across a body of content.

Q17:

Absolutely. And with a removal of the possibility of having their content entirely restricted, Industry is more likely to honestly classify their works, rather than being penalised for it.

Q18:

Industry knows what it is producing and selling, thus many classifications for their products should be straightforward as universal classifications. For example, adult language, nudity, sex scenes, gore, as well as obvious positive classifications such as 'suitable for children'. Given the length of time the NCS has been in existence, I'm fairly certain there are a number of primary reasons classification is requested, and what people primarily find indecent if it is not labelled. Based on that database, recommendations for industry self-classification should be made.

Q19:

Frequent violators or troublemakers of the classification scheme should be fined, otherwise media requested for classification should be subsidized.

Q20:

While the existing age guidelines are a little confusing, the classification categories provide a pretty good general overview of the content itself.

Q21:

If certain titles are presently being refused classification, one can only stipulate it falls into unclassifiable categories under the current scheme, so there is probably a need to extend classification categories a little further. I would like to see categories like 'sensationalist news' or 'slanted news' classifications. Possibly 'editorial opinion news'. I consider it a fairly large oversight that classifications on broadcast television do not provide a mechanism to define clearly highly opinionated journalism from genuine news. There is a 'cult' classification, but that might not be strictly appropriate

Q22:

I would start with a matrix consisting of all of the main media analysed, then discover where each established criteria crosses over between formats, reduce redundant classifications which are likely to double-up across some media where descriptions vary slightly, and use the resulting classification symbols as the united-media-classification code. Maintain a basic look across classification table for international distributors so that they can match up their own code against our own, provide a pdf for their relevant releases for free (with an unofficial AU classification mark) so they can print them on to stickers and affix to their product for sales, or for shipping with products.

Q23:

Yes, along with Music and Audiobooks, and the Internet. We seem to have a number of highly developed media classification tools for each of these genres already, with a significant degree of cross-over. The idea that different media should carry different classification codes is a bit silly as opposed to a unified classification directory.

Q24:

Attempting to prohibit access to online content is a little bit futile given that it is impossible to find all of any object material to block it. You can block disliked websites, but interested parties can just proxy around them, or if the host likes, it can just set up proxy mirrors which work just as well.

Lets not block content and instead allow users to opt into whitelisting.

Q25:

The Refused Classification Category is a complete joke that no one is laughing at. The Refused Classification category should NOT reflect the content that is prohibited online in addition to the fact that it should not prohibit anything offline. The only place that category might apply is to broadcast or advertised media.

Q26:

The classification laws should be consistent at a national level. It should be promoted as a national initiative to relax prohibition on contested media and to reduce the cost of media ownership.

Q27:

Another cooperative scheme seems to be as good as any.

Q28:

Yes, a unified framework should obviously be the template that all states enact as it will be the template for which international interests will want to brand to.

Q29:

Other comments:

A classification system that promotes restriction and prohibition is begging to be abused. The concept of an organisation dictating what the population can and cannot see is a frightening proposal, and reminiscent of recent Egyptian riots after their government censored their Internet, and the ongoing oppression in China. I suspect, if the voting members of the classification board are indeed good, intelligent people, they will in fact realise that continuing a system of prohibition is only hurting their people, and will move to abolish the concept entirely. Thank you.