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Q1:

Improving key elements. The existing framework for other media contains reasonable definitions for each classification.

Q2:

To inform all consumers as to the content within the products they purchase. Inform a parent what's in the game she's buying for her child, or the daughter who's buying a DVD for her dad. It should not be to regulate access to content to the extent that content is banned.

Q3:

Content delivered over the Internet should be handled differently. As the publication states, it's harder to authenticate the age of the consumer accessing the content. However, Australia's classification system should still only apply to content hosted within Australia (or by Australian content providers). Any content provided by other countries should be allowed to have their own classification system, and consumers should be given the choice whether to acquire the content via Australian means or via the foreign host, and the choice to accept the foreign classification over the Australian. After all, the classification system at the content's point of origin should be given precedence over an external (in this case Australia) framework.

Q4:

Perhaps. Complaints can be made by genuinely concerned consumers, or they can be made maliciously by companies looking to delay or disrupt the content in question. Perhaps a lenient classification initially, and a thorough classification (with appropriate indication in the rating that this has happened) upon substantial, justified complaints.

Q5:

Potential impact is a bit too subjective. Given how diverse the population is, there's bound to be people offended and impacted by content that would otherwise seem benign. The danger is also to classify content thinking "but what if a child sees this?" That's the point of a classification system: to say what content is within the product and indicate a recommendation for the age of the consumer. In public places (cinemas) this can be enforced, as it is already, to prohibit consumers too young to view certain content, but should not restrict access in private domains for those who take the classification into account and still decide to acquire it.

As for children's content, it should be classified across all media, in the sense that consumers should be notified about the content, but not restricted. For instance, readers of the Twilight series of books ranged from under 10s to 50s. While the first three books may have contained some violence and some mature themes, the fourth book contains sexual content and pregnancy. Parents buying these books for their kids rely on bookstore staff to tell them this (if they themselves know about that series). Perhaps classifying children's book content would be good.

Q6:

Probably not. Content should be classified fairly and equally across providers. To permit lenience for larger publishers or distributors is unfair on smaller businesses that would probably benefit from less hassle getting content classified.

Q7:

Access to content should never be restricted unless the content is of an illegal nature. Simply "offensive to some" is not a good enough excuse to restrict access. Adults should have access to all content, given they have the opportunity to decide for themselves if the content is appropriate for them. Children, perhaps, but that falls into the way MA15+ content is already treated, which seems to work fine.

Q8:

Classified sure (can never have too much information for consumers) but not regulated. Telling consumers what they're buying is never a problem, though telling them that they CAN'T buy something is pretty bad.

Q9:

Probably not. Say that audience grows to a "significant" size. Will content suddenly be classified? And if the audience shrinks, will classification end too? Better to keep it fair and consistent, so consumers can learn that they can find classification info as easily as nutrition info on foods.

Q10:

All content should be classified for informational purposes, but without restricted access based on that classification when content will be accessed at home. As for public presentations, it should be up to the people organising the presentation to restrict the access based on the classification.

Q11:

Is it physical consumable media? If yes, then the content should be classified for informational purposes only. Is it online? Then probably not. The Internet has made information so freely accessible and has helped a lot of people gain insight and education that they couldn't have achieved offline. This content should NOT be classified, given the Internet is not owned by any one government. In the case of the Internet, users and their guardians should regulate access based on their own experience and needs.

Q12:

Access to online content should not be controlled. The Internet is a free space, and one of its most important virtues is that no matter where you are in the world, you can access something. I don't think it's the government's place to restrict access to the Internet. Regulation should happen at the household/business level, not government.

Q13:

By better parenting? It's not the government's responsibility to monitor children's access online. As the Issues Paper states, it's very hard to determine the age of an online user, so controlling children's access should be done properly: either the parents/guardians monitor Internet usage, or monitoring software is installed by parents/guardians to enforce their selected rules.

Q14:

I think it works pretty well now. The black plastic seems to obfuscate the magazines nicely. Just make sure stores selling them actually restrict access to those of correct age (as with alcohol and cigarettes).

Q15:

All media, I think. I can't think of a reason where classification information should not be included to advise consumers.

Q16:

Government agencies should create, update and support the classification system, based on constant feedback from users and industry bodies.

Industry bodies should classify the content (not the government) for users and respond to user feedback.

Users are able to take the classification into account when considering the acquisition of the content.

Q17:

Very much so. Industry bodies are effectively the subject matter experts, and they know the content better than the government can. They will also maintain better contact with users than the government will.

Q18:

Industry should be able to classify anything they want. User complaints could be the stimulus for a government review and reclassification. For the most part, it's the industry body that will better understand the content.

Q19:

For sure! Independent media companies find it hard enough to get content released already, especially games companies.

Q20:

The fact that there's R18+ and X18+ for film, but games lack both. Also, the fact that RC material is inconsistent (how can a game be RC for using graffiti as a gameplay mechanic, while incredibly violent movies such as American History X and Saw are allowed?)

Q21:

Classification categories seem to cover all areas pretty well. Perhaps M15+ is a bit redundant, and usually refers to content that seems to be more like M12+.

Q22:

Video games should receive R18+ and, if required, X18+. There should be NO discrimination in content. If live-action X18+ content is allowed, then virtual computer generated X18+ content should not be RC.

Q23:

Yep, it can only help to consolidate and simplify the classification criteria across media.

Q24:

Online is a different story. I don't think the government has any right to filter or censor any content online. Leave it to households to manage their Internet connections. If children need to be protected from content on the Internet, the parents or guardians are responsible. We don't have government appointed guards walking children to and from school to protect from strangers, or government nutritionists reviewing and approving every meal cooked for children in their homes: this is no different. Leave parenting to parents.

Q25:

Even if it did, I don't think anything online should be censored. There's a lot of crap online (whether it's illegal or not), and it's up to users to be smart about how they browse.

Q26:

In Australia, yes. For the most part, it seems like the states are usually consistent in other areas. TV ads educated the nation on the current classification system, so that works. Also, signs at retail outlets, cinemas... anywhere the content is distributed, there should be literature to inform about the system.

Q27:

I like the sound of the alternative schemes described in sections 139 and 140 of the Issues Paper.

Q28:

I don't know.

Q29:

Just make it fair, consistent, and allow consumers to question classification. If something is RC, and it's appealed, maybe ask consumers for input.

Other comments:

I've had my eye on the games industry in Australia for a few years now and every year games get RC for strange reasons. The new Mortal Kombat was RC recently for violence... yet other games make it to MA15+ with more violence, and films depict live-action violence that's much worse. A few years ago, a game called "Getting Up: Contents Under Pressure" encouraged gamers to graffiti for points. Violent? No, but still RC. It's not hard to remember countless films that feature characters tagging walls, but there's this idea that interactivity always leads to imitation.

The main issue I've seen with the classification system is that without an R18+ or X18+ rating for games, there's just no room for adult content (be this high violence, or simply sexual references/course language/mature themes). Not all games are for children, and the classification system should reflect that. How are games to evolve and push the boundaries of what can be achieved if content is continually and inconsistently knocked back and RC. Film was allowed to push boundaries, but games are discarded as "for children" and constricted by a misfitting classification system.

As for classifying and regulating online content, I think this is a bad idea. The Internet should be free, unbound. If there's content on there that's illegal, fine: pursue the offending hosts and prosecute if it turns out to be correct. But leave censorship to those who pay for their Internet service. The government has no place censoring content online, ESPECIALLY if its hosted outside Australia.