

CI 2069 A Day

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Q1:

Improving key elements of the existing framework should be the focus of this inquiry. A new framework could be seen as unnecessary red tape. The existing framework works soundly, except when considering the classification of more mature content. The classification of mature content is not suitable at the moment, particularly considering the median age of consumers is within the mature age group.

Q2:

The primary objectives of a national classification scheme should be to ensure that there are sufficient levels of classification for all content, including content for mature consumers across all media. The current framework serves to classify items for all age groups except for mature consumers (particularly video games), and rectifying this issue should be included in the primary objectives. At the current time, some content has been omitted from the market solely due to the fact that it cannot be adequately classified. Ensuring that there are adequate classifications for all content also helps protect the young from mature content, by restricting purchase or access. An R18+ rating for video games should be made a priority given the quickly rising nature of this industry.

Q3:

No, content should carry the same classification across any platform.

Q4:

No, all content should be classified. This ensures that consumers are fully informed of the choices they are making by consuming this content. This helps to ensure that mature content is only consumed by mature consumers. However classifying all content can only work if there are classification ratings that cover all content, which is not the case in the current framework.

Q5:

All content should be classified, regardless of impact. However, there should be classification levels for high impact content so that consumers still have access to this, if they choose to, and have proven their age. Children's classification should exist across all media, as it will help parents make a better decision on what content their children will be consuming.

Q6:

No, all material should be classified. Preferential treatment should not be given to certain producers or distributors to exclude themselves from classification.

Q7:

Yes. Even though artwork provokes different interpretation between consumers, there should still be classification to provide consumer advice. This will ensure that youth are not exposed to mature content in artwork.

Q8:

Yes, it is important to provide consumer advice for music and audio as well as video media. Music already advises if there is explicit language present on the recording, however advice on the themes contained within would also be beneficial.

Q9:

No, it should not. If classification is fair and conducted across the board, this is a moot point.

Q10:

No, all content should be classified. If there is no classification for private screening content, the chance is presented that parents may buy unsuitable content for their children.

Q11:

None, I believe all content should be classified, albeit fairly and with a classification rating for mature content.

Q12:

Online passports for content, Net Nanny programs, Age Filtering.

Q13:

The best way for children's access to potentially inappropriate content to be better controlled is by more attention from parents. This will be achieved by better informing parents. If parents involve themselves in their child's activities and ensure they know what their children are doing, they will be able to control the content being accessed. With better classification, parents will also be more aware on what they should be allowing their children to access.

Q14:

There should be stricter enforcement of age verification on purchases of mature content. If retailers understand they must verify the age on purchases of mature content, or face penalties, it will control access to this content.

Q15:

All content should have classification markings. Classification should serve as a tool to inform the consumer of what to expect in the content. With adequately explained classification (for example, classifying content as MA15+ and justifying this classification by mentioning that there will be high level of violence), then there would be no need for any other warnings or advice.

Q16:

I believe that the government and industry bodies should co-operate to develop classification that can adequately inform customers as well as ensuring that there are classification ratings that will apply to all content, without excluding some content from classification, as the current system does.

Furthermore, government agencies should enforce that age verification is being undertaken before allowing access to mature classified content. The role of users in the regulation of content is to be responsible for the content in their possession, and take reasonable care that this content will not be accessed by those unsuitable to access it.

Q17:

I believe it would be more effective, as the industry has a more informed view on the needs of the classification system. Furthermore, if the industry is affiliated with the classification system, they have more incentive to ensure that it is undertaken correctly, as responsibility would fall on them for failures in the system.

Q18:

All content should be classified. Some content will obviously be straightforward in its classification, such as children's television programming.

Q19:

Subsidising classification should be considered for some genres. Straightforward commercial ventures such as wide-release cinema, television, music and video games should not be subsidised (however the cost of classification should not be so high as to make release of content unfeasible). Artistic content such as artwork, books and independent film should be eligible for funding, as should all Australian content, even if it is released as a commercial venture (such as Australian film, video games developed in Australia, music developed/recorded in Australia). This will help strengthen the Australian entertainment industry and possibly provide incentive for international projects to be undertaken in Australia, thus boosting our economy.

Q20:

I believe that the M and MA15+ classifications are confusing. There is not widespread understanding on the difference between these two categories. Also, given that PG and M are both categories that do not restrict access (a 14 year old can still purchase M rated content without age verification), there is possibly confusion in regards to these categories. More explanation should be given on exactly how much of a certain type of content each category may contain before moving up to the next one (for example how much violence can be present in PG classified film before it becomes M and so on).

Q21:

There is a need for a category for more mature content than MA15+ for all content (Obviously film classification already allows this). At the current time, some content is refused classification because it cannot reasonably be classified as MA15+. An 18+ rating for video games is long overdue and has been adopted in many other Western Countries with cultures similar to our own. It is unacceptable that content for adult consumers is banned because it cannot conform to an MA15+ rating. It also means that some content is shoe-horned into an MA15+ rating when it really belongs in an R18+ rating, thus exposing the content to 15 year olds, for which the content may be unsuitable.

Furthermore, if the M rating is only a recommendation/informatory category (sale/access of M rated content is not restricted to consumers 15 or over), then consideration should be made as to whether this could be merged with the PG rating, albeit with more descriptive information on what the content contains. Parental guidance should be present for all content that their children are watching until they are 15+ and can access MA content (and in some households, I imagine, even then guidance will be present until the child is an adult in the eyes of the law).

Q22:

Criteria of classification should be explained more thoroughly and this information should be widely available and/or easily accessed. Enforcing the display of criteria at relevant retailers would be a good idea to maintain consistency (for example a poster explaining criteria/guidelines for each category at electronics retailers that sell DVDs and games would increase awareness and consistency).

The same markings should be used across the board. The long-standing shape markings for G, PG, M, etc should remain, with the possibility of colour being introduced. There should also be more space

assigned for classification markings on content, so that more information on the actual type of content within that category is present in the product.

Q23:

Yes, there should not be multiple types of legislation to deal with the subject of classification of content, as this can confuse consumers.

Q24:

The only content which should be prohibited online is that content which is illegal to produce or possess, such as child pornography, snuff films etc.

Q25:

No, as some items in the current RC category are present because they could not be suitably classified as MA15+. If there was a suitable R18+ category across all media, then perhaps the remaining content would be within the scope of what should be prohibited online, but this is pending the effectiveness of any new category for 18+ classification.

Q26:

Yes, classification should be consistent across state and territory borders. Otherwise there is chance for content to be illegally viewed in some states that would be allowed in other states, causing confusion to consumers. It should be made clear to consumers that classification is a federal responsibility that applies to the entire country. This should be included on information that is displayed at retailers to build awareness.

Q27:

There is too much indecision in the current scheme. The Attorneys-General have failed to come to consensus on the issue of classification and this could be attributed to some members pushing their own agenda, rather than providing for the needs of their constituents. I believe that the current scheme could exist with amendments. If the Attorneys-General were only obligated to reach a majority decision rather than consensus I believe action could be taken more quickly to provide the country with decisions it needs. Otherwise, the states and territories should have no direct input on decisions and it should be made Federally.

Q28:

If there is no agreement among states then yes. Currently there is too much politicking between the states which is just causing action to be delayed.

Q29:

I have mentioned above the ways in which I think the framework might be improved.

Other comments: