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Q1:

Absolutely. In regards to classification of interactive digital entertainment such as video games, the rating system lacks the <R> rating we see on a global scale for such items, which is already prevalent in our own country when rating other forms of entertainment such as movies.

The current lack of this rating means yet to be rated material must be reviewed and deemed if it is acceptable to be "downrated" to <MA15+> - which is the highest or Most Adult rating we currently have in australia for video games.

What this means is, in effect, rather than trying to effectively and safely project a rating system which keeps adult content in the hands of mature adults, it is in fact filtering down content which can only be hypothesized to be perceived as "not offensive enough" to be banned, into the hands of younger 15+ year old gamers, when in fact the material should only be sold to those aged 18 years and older.

The creation of an <R> rating for video games would allow us to sensibly and effectively classify content for adult gamers which is currently available to a generation much younger than it was intended for.

Q2:

I would stipulate that the primary objective of any classification scheme is to inform the buyer what to expect when considering making a purchase. This goes not only for children trying to buy adult material, but for adults buying games for their children. With a clear <R> rating on the title the responsibility is placed on the parent to monitor their childs gaming tastes. The primary objective is to make the consumer aware of what they are purchasing, and to keep

Q3:

No. Technology is the digital equivalent of a plate. It simply serves up content the consumer asks for. The software running on this technology could be used to affect content displayed, but ultimately it should be made clear and simple for the consumer to choose what classification content they are viewing.

TV stations have a clear rating system before every show with symbols such as A for adult themes, V for violence, N for nudity, etc.

If such a scheme was adopted for say, digital broadcast media on australia hosted websites, the consumer would be completely aware of what they are viewing.

Q4:

Content made subject to complain should surely be looked at with greater discern for the reaction it is producing from people viewing it, but so long as it has a relevant rating the consumer is ultimately responsible for what images and sounds they expose themselves to.

There is a wide and vast range of media available to people from their TV, Library, Computer, and beyond.

Nobody is spoilt for choice these days. Nobody is forced to watch offensive material. But what offends is completely relative. To impose a blanket classification on content simply because it has recieved complaint would be unfair. It should be reviewed and classified in the same manner as all material.

Q5:

The potential impact should be considered, yes.

While it's considered harmless for children to watch cartoons of coyotes chasing road runners and falling off cliffs, getting blown up, shot with rockets, run over by cars, and hurt in innumerable ways, it should be considered wether it's okay for a child to be participating in an interactive form of entertainment such as a video game, where they are actively causing such action to happen to another player.

Certainly, there is a light-hearted nature in such example, but the point remains.

Passive entertainment and active entertainment need to be classified regarding the impact it can have on the consumer keeping in mind that in one medium they are watching, and in the other they are participating; they are actively chosing the medium to go a certain way.

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Other comments:

Thank you for giving people the time to express their opinions on these matters.

I hope you will seriously consider my points.

If you would like to discuss the digital classification issue further please don't hesitate to contact me at the above email address.

Kind regards,

Simon Kopp.