



No. 263 April 2010

## Freedom of speech vs child protection

The US Supreme Court will decide later this year whether free speech rights are more important than helping parents keep violent material away from children.

The justices have agreed to consider reinstating California's ban on the sale or rental of violent video games to minors, a law the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco threw out last year on grounds that it violated the constitutional rights of minors.

California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, said he was pleased the high court would review the appeals court decision, saying,

*We have a responsibility to our kids and our communities to protect against the effects of games that depict ultra-violent actions, just as we already do with movies.*

California's law would have prohibited the sale or rental of violent games — those that include "killing, maiming, dismembering or sexually assaulting an image of a human being" — to anyone under 18. It also would have created strict labelling requirements for video game manufacturers.

Common Sense Media CEO and Founder James Steyer released the following statement on the U.S. Supreme Court's decision.

*We are happy with the Supreme Court's decision to look more closely at this law. The law passed in California was a major win for kids and families across the state and the country. The law helps parents make sure that ultraviolent or sexually violent video games don't fall into the hands of kids too young to handle the content. This is all about sanity, not censorship*

<http://www.common sense media.org/about-us/press-room/press-releases/supreme-court-violent-video-games>

## Australian report calls for examination of link between games and violence

The Final Report from the Queensland Legislative Assembly Law, Justice and Safety Committee Inquiry into Alcohol-Related Violence was released in March.

In examining changes in the type of violence seen in Australian society the report considers the effects of video games, saying,

*The Committee is aware of research implicating violent interactive video games in youth violence. Making a choice to brutally stab and dismember a moving image is a different experience from simply watching such an event on a screen. The Committee believes that the hypothesis that violent video games are involved in the escalation of youth violence needs further exploration*

Recommendation 2 of the final report reads

*That the Government consider strategies for determining the effect of violent video games on youth violence, including literature reviews, case studies and investigation.*

The full report can be found on the Queensland Parliament website at <http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/view/committees/documents/lcsrc/reports/Report%2074.pdf>

## Children, commercialism and the environment.

Barbara Biggins OAM  
Honorary CEO, ACCM



Among the concerns shared by many about the increasing amounts of time children spend with media is the impact of commercialism

We've long known that young children have great difficulty in coping with advertisements, as they don't understand selling intent. In recent years we have learnt from Fine and others (Nairn & Fine 2008, Fine 2007) that even older children who have increased understanding are still susceptible to the commercial messages that tell them that to be a success they have to buy this, wear that, listen to this, play with ..., watch...etc

We've learnt that education about techniques alone is not enough. Marketing typically targets portions of the brain that govern emotion rather than cognition, and while knowledge about advertising techniques can lead to skepticism about marketing, it does not necessarily affect actual consumer behavior.

So we have a situation where children are being socialised into consumption from an early age and we are unable to provide them with effective defences.

If we couple this problem with the outcome of children's increased hours with media — a lack of contact with their outside world, their physical environment — it's no wonder that some are increasingly

.....continued on P2

## Bratz, Britney and Bralettes: The sexualisation of childhood

7:30 pm to 9.45pm, Thursday 13 May 2010  
Helen Reid Hall, Walford Anglican School for Girls Inc  
316 Unley Road, Hyde Park, SA 5061

Come and hear some of Australia's best speakers on this issue.

- Michael Carr-Gregg, well known author and psychologist
- Julie Gale, founding Director of Kids Free 2B Kids
- Rita Princi, child psychologist
- Professor Elizabeth Handsley, Law, Flinders University
- Anglican Archbishop Dr. Jeffrey Driver

Tickets \$27.50

[http://www.youngmedia.org.au/mediachildren/03\\_15\\_seminars.htm](http://www.youngmedia.org.au/mediachildren/03_15_seminars.htm)



no. 263 April 2010

## small screen

Editor: Barbara Biggins OAM

Compiler: Caroline Donald

Editorial Board: Barbara Biggins,  
Jane Roberts, Judy Bundy,  
Elizabeth Handsley.

small screen is published at the beginning of each month and reports on the events of the previous month 11 issues per year (Dec/Jan double issue)

Published by

**Australian Council on  
Children and the Media  
(ACCM)**

PO Box 447

Glenelg 5045

South Australia

info@youngmedia.org.au

www.youngmedia.org.au

Tel: +61 8 8376 2111

Fax: +61 8 8376 2122

Helpline: 1800 700 357

ACCM is a national, non-profit community organisation. Its mission is to promote a quality media environment for Australian children.

No part of this publication may be reproduced without permission of the Editor.

Contributions are welcome.

ACCM's services are supported by a grant from the  
**South Australian Government**

ACCM's Web Page and Broadband access are supported by its Internet Service Provider

**Internode**

Publication and printing of *small screen* is supported by

**Nickelodeon**



continued from P1

concerned about how we will be able to engage the young with real concern about their environment and worse still, to be supportive of the changes in lifestyle and consumption patterns that will be required for environmental sustainability.

A recent article in the March 2 issue of *The Solutions Journal* by US writers Tim Kasser, Tom Crompton, Susan Linn sums up the issue like this:

*"While not typically seen as an "environmental issue," those concerned about the environment should be sobered by the increasing commercialization of childhood, as the same generation of children that is being encouraged to prioritize wealth, consumption, and possessions is the same generation that, if current trends continue, will need to drastically reduce its consumption patterns so as to prevent further global climate disruption, habitat loss, and species extinction ..."*

Further they argue that

*"By tackling the inflow of such materialistic messages, environmental organizations can work to diminish the values known to promote ecologically degrading attitudes and behaviors, as well as other personally and socially problematic outcomes."*

The authors propose that

*"if the environmental movement is to reach its goals, it must directly address the problem of materialistic values and the means by which they are encouraged in society. Of the many possible solutions that are available towards this end, we suggest that one of the most promising approaches is to reduce children's exposure to commercial marketing .... For these reasons, coalitions of civil society organizations could promote the removal of commercial messages from children's environments. One place to start would be in the home ..."*

### Screen time affects adolescent attachment

New Zealand researchers have examined the association between the amount of time that adolescents spend in front of screens (including television, video or DVD, gaming and computer use) and the quality of their attachment to parents and peers. Two groups of 14-15 year olds, one in the late 1980s and one in 2004, were surveyed for the amount of time spent in front of screens and the quality of their attachment to parents and peers. Screen time was found to be associated with poor attachment to parents and peers in both groups.

The researchers point out that given the importance of attachment to parents and peers in adolescent health and development, concern about high levels of screen time is warranted, stating that

*"With the rapid advance of screen-based options for entertainment, communication, and education, ongoing research is needed to monitor the effect that these technologies have on social development and psychological and physical well-being among adolescents"*

Richards, R et al (2010) Adolescent screen time and attachment to parents and peers, *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine*, 164,3 258-262

These are goals that this organisation and many who work with children would support. Such programs, combined with encouraging the recognition that children's development would be enhanced by increased connection with their natural environment, would be a great step forward.

The US group Alliance for Childhood, in their 2004 paper *Tech tonic: towards a new literacy of technology*, recommend that

*"we need to colour childhood green to refocus education on children's relationships with the rest of the living world"*

They argue compellingly that

*"Children's lives are increasingly filled with screen time rather than real time with nature, caring adults, the arts, and hands on work and play. Yet only real relationships, not virtual ones will inspire and protect them to protect the earth, and all that lives in it."*

Now! Who will join us in persuading the government to put some money into this initiative?

### References

Alliance for Childhood (2004) *Tech tonic: towards a new literacy of technology* <http://www.allianceforchildhood.net/projects/computers/index.htm>

Fine C (2007). Vulnerable minds? The consumer unconscious and the ethics of marketing to children. *Res Publica*.16 (1): 14-18.

Kasser, Tim; Crompton, Tom ; Linn, Susan "Children, Commercialism, and Environmental Sustainability" *The Solutions Journal* March 2 2010 [www.thesolutionsjournal.com/node/571](http://www.thesolutionsjournal.com/node/571)

Nairn A & Fine C (2008) Who's messing with my mind? The implications of dual processing models for the ethics of marketing to children. *International Journal of Marketing* 27(3): 447-470.

### Media-induced fright reactions

In recent research by US media researcher Joanne Cantor and associates a group of 219 primary school students of mean age 8.5 years were asked to report their experiences of media-induced fright, both in their own words and using forced choice items. 76% of the children were able to report a specific incidence, usually in movies seen at home or in cinemas. Often they were responding to media content that they had not chosen to watch. The most commonly mentioned content involved supernatural themes. More than one-third of the children were scared by movies rated G or PG in the US.

Frequently reported symptoms of fear included sleep disturbances and anxieties in normally non-threatening situations. Having a television in the child's bedroom was the best predictor of fright severity.

According to the researchers, their findings demonstrate the value of using open-ended questions and underscore the need for further research on prevention and coping strategies.

Cantor, J et al (2010) Descriptions of media-induced fright reactions in a sample of US elementary school children. *Journal of Children and the Media*, 4,1,1-17.

# Clips 'n' Cuts

## small screen no. 263 April 2010

### Is this what little girls are made of?

#### KICK-ASS (MA) ★★☆☆

General release (117 minutes)

Jim Schembri Reviewer

SHOOT the well-worn conventions of your standard superhero movie through the prism of media-savvy geek culture and you get *Kick-Ass*, an extremely funny, extremely violent, gloriously foul-mouthed and decidedly adult comic-book adventure that offers the most refreshing reboot of the genre since 2008's *Hancock*.

Directed with verve and frictionless pace by Matthew Vaughn (*Stardust*, *Layer Cake*), the film is a jokey thrill ride of cartoonish excess as we follow the loopy trajectory of Dave Lizewski (Aaron Johnson), a typical teen nerd who decides to make up for his shortcomings by becoming a superhero.

His initial attempt doesn't go so well and lands him in traction where selective nerve damage raises his pain threshold to near-superhero levels and metal plates reinforce his fractured skeleton. Being a dweeb, he, of course, notes the *Wolverine* parallel half a second before we do, though thankfully the film's frequent riffs on superhero lore never ferment into parody.

On his next crime-fighting venture, Dave, dressed in a self-designed suit, dispatches a gang with the aid of his new found "powers". The event is captured on a mobile phone, is promptly

uploaded to YouTube and *Kick-Ass* is born.

Thing is, the city already has two self-appointed crime fighters: Big Daddy (Nicolas Cage) and his teenage daughter Hit-Girl (Chloe Moretz in a fabulous film-stealing performance). He's an ex-cop eager to bring order to the city that claimed his wife. She's a boisterous kid who enjoys killing bad guys.

It's when *Kick-Ass* gets in over his head while dealing with a stumblebum mobster (Mark Strong) and his morally conflicted son (Christopher Mintz-Plasse) that the daddy-daughter duo enter the fray, with Hit-Girl relishing the opportunity to slice, dice and shoot her way through the film's villains.

All too predictably, a low-rent controversy has been stirred up over the film's MA15+ rating, which some groups think is too mild for a film that features a tween girl shooting, killing and saying the C-word. The fear is that the classification, which allows kids under 15 to see the film with adults, potentially exposes the film to children.

What nanny-state nonsense. The rating highlights the film's "strong violence, coarse language and sexual references" and unambiguously signals that *Kick-Ass* is not suitable for children. The suggestion that only a hard R rating can make that clear sadly highlights the need for people to take full responsibility for what their kids see.

*The Age*, 8 April 2010

### Kids hit on all fronts by junk food message

A STUDY of marketing activities aimed at children on non-broadcast media has found children are being bombarded with advertising and marketing messages for unhealthy foods.

Seventy-five per cent of all the food marketing to which children are exposed is for unhealthy food, according to Kaye Mehta, a senior research fellow in public health at South Australia's Flinders University.

The study, which is due to be released in the coming weeks, has found marketing activities targeting children are moving away from traditional broadcast media such as television to new media, including social networking websites such as Facebook. Other popular ways of appealing to children include novelty packaging, the increasing association of cartoon characters with food and promotions aimed at attracting children to a company's website.

"If you think there are a dozen marketing techniques used with TV advertising, such as the use of cartoon characters, premiums, giveaways and tie-ins with movies, there are many more techniques being used collectively on these non-broadcast media," said Ms Mehta, who also chairs the Coalition on Food Advertising to Children.

"On supermarket packaging there are still cartoons, bright graphics, prizes, competitions and giveaways, but there are also links to websites with supermarket sales, novelty packaging — so you can get yoghurts in squeezable tubes — and when you add the internet to that, the range of techniques increases yet again.

"You have advergames, where the game on a company's website is an ad... Many companies have social network sites or pages on Facebook where a child can become a fan of that company."

The study appears to defy claims made by the Australian Food and Grocery Council last month that "advertising of high-fat, sugar or salt foods on children's television has 'virtually ceased' in Australia" after the first year of the AFGC's voluntary initiative for responsible food marketing to children.

"During 2009, there were no breaches of the industry code reported to authorities and 10 companies did not directly advertise their products to children," deputy chief executive Geoffrey Annison said.

"As a result, television advertising to children of certain foods has virtually ceased during children's programs."

LARA SINCLAIR

*The Australian*, 19 April 2010

### Store retreats on bras for kids

LONDON: A British clothing retailer has been forced to stop selling bikinis with padded bras aimed at seven-year-olds.

The bikinis triggered a newspaper campaign, angered children's advocates and become a British election issue.

Critics said the swimsuit was yet another product that sexualised children and encouraged them to grow up too fast.

"It's a shame it was ever put on the shelves in the first place," Justine Roberts, founder of Mumsnet, a parenting website that attracts a large, vocal audience, said yesterday.

Primark, a popular discount chain, is not the first retailer to draw criticism for offering padded bras for kids younger than 10. But the outcry of protest is prompting a growing number of companies to pledge support for Mumsnet's "Let Girls Be Girls" campaign.

The popular online forum said such clothing indoctrinated the

idea that sexiness is the most important quality for girls and "encourages a culture in which children are viewed as sexually available".

Announcing the immediate withdrawal of the product, Primark promised to donate any profits from the item to a children's charity. The product line, it added, "sells in relatively small quantities".

The retailer acted within hours of a front-page article in *The Sun* denouncing the product as a "pedo (pedophile) bikini".

Politicians swiftly joined the clamour. "Completely disgraceful," Conservative Party leader David Cameron said of the bikini. "The sort of country I want is one where it is not just the government (that) feels outraged about the early commercialisation and sexualisation of our children, but companies should stop doing it, they should take some responsibility."

AP

*The Australian*, 16 April 2010



*The Australian*, 16 April 2010

'In hindsight, we would have declined to include the Shrek characters in such a magazine spread'

A PARAMOUNT PICTURES SPOKESMAN APOLOGISES FOR ALLOWING THE FILM'S CHARACTER TO FEATURE IN A VMA MAGAZINE PHOTO SHOOT WITH HALF-NAKED MODELS



## Like it or lump it, net won't be free of regulation

Advocates of internet freedom should get used to the idea that the web will be governed by rules

MARK DAY *The Australian*, 5 April 2010



COMMUNICATIONS Minister Stephen Conroy says the internet is "not so special" and therefore should be regulated. In the US, one of President Barack Obama's top communications advisers says there's a growing need for regulation — because the internet is so special.

Who's right? It may be a long time before we have a definitive answer, but net freedom advocates should get used to the idea that there will be more, rather than fewer, attempts to regulate the internet in the future.

It is significant that the US, restrict children's access to the worst excesses of rape, incest and bestiality. These nasties are covered in the non-net world by censorship classification laws. If content is judged to be so bad that it is refused any classification, it becomes illegal to sell that content in print, DVD or movie versions.

Conroy asks: "Why should the internet be treated differently?"

It is a valid question, but the unfortunate truth is that his answer — internet filters — can be easily bypassed. They will block nominated sites from normal access, but not from peer-to-peer networks. To my mind, the best way for parents to guard against their kids accessing porn is to establish their own filtering systems. Strickling also says the most important line of defence is "the well-informed and engaged parent or teacher". But beyond child protection, Strickling sees other needs for regulation. In a recent speech, he traces the history of the net and government policy towards it.

"The wide reach and central role that the internet plays in our society has prompted many to refer to it as an 'ecosystem'," he says. "Applying this concept could lead us to accept the idea that the

while tut-tutting about Conroy's plans to filter the internet, is at the same time considering proposals to introduce new layers of regulation. In an interview with Fairfax Canberra correspondent Tim Lester, Conroy rejected the notion that, when it comes to censorship, the net should be treated differently from other forms of media.

"Why is the internet special?" he asked. "It's just a communication and distribution platform. This argument that the internet is some mystical creation that no laws should apply to — that is a recipe for anarchy and the wild west."

"I believe in a civil society and in a civil society people behave the same way in the physical world as they behave in the virtual world."

Conroy was immediately condemned by the "hands off the net" brigade, some of whom pointed out that Australian Post and Telstra were also distribution platforms but were not censored. That ignores the fact that it is illegal to send some items through the post, and telephone conversations can be legally monitored and used to send people to jail.

"Civil society" is also at the heart of moves in the US to debate

internet is self-regulating and there is some natural order that will always emerge no matter how the system may be disturbed. From this concept some argue that policymakers should just leave the internet alone.

"In fact, 'leaving the internet alone' has been the nation's policy since it was first commercialised in the mid-1990s..."

"This was the right policy for the US in the early stages of the internet, and the right message to send to the rest of the world. But that was then and this is now."

Strickling says the internet has evolved since its earliest iterations as an economic tool and is now increasingly important as social network — the central nervous system of our information economy and society.

"We need Internet Policy 3.0," he says. "We enter this new decade recognising that we rely on the internet for essential social purposes: health, energy efficiency, and education. It's also a general engine for economic and social innovation. We must take rules more seriously if we want full participation, but we must keep the need for flexibility in mind."

Strickling describes the net as

the future role of the internet. After two decades of a policy called "net neutrality", Lawrence Strickling, a deputy secretary of commerce for communications and information attached to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, last month called for the establishment of a new set of rules to be called Internet Policy 3.0.

Strickling, who advises Obama on net-related issues, describes the internet as "an unprecedented gift to free speech".

But he says all nations that depend on the internet "face an increasingly urgent set of questions regarding the roles of the commercial sector, civil society, governments, and multi-stakeholder institutions in the very dynamic evolution of the internet."

One of the issues he highlighted was the protection of children, which is front and central to Conroy's proposals to filter the Australian internet. As I have mentioned before, I have some sympathies for this proposal because I find it hard to agree that keeping the net free and unfettered in every way, shape or form is more important than seeking to

an agglomeration of human actors; a large and growing social organisation with no natural laws to guide it and no self-regulating equilibrium point. He says there must be rules because "this cacophony of human actors" demands that there be rules or laws created to protect their interests. Users want to know that online transactions are safe; content owners want copyright protection; large enterprises want protection from hacking — and these policy tensions need to be addressed.

Strickling says his agency is this year addressing regulatory questions around the issues of privacy, child protection, cyber security, copyright and internet governance. Already the blogging world is fearing the worst: that Strickling's agenda represents the thin edge of the wedge and the real aim is to censor the web.

This is typical of the tendency of many bloggers to see conspiracies everywhere, but the fact that these issues are on the table in the nation that gave us a hands-off approach through the policy of net neutrality, suggests some significant changes may be in store.

[mday@ozemail.com.au](mailto:mday@ozemail.com.au)

Blog: [www.theaustralian.com.au](http://www.theaustralian.com.au)

## Easter cinema proves a one-choice stop for kids

MICHAEL BODEY

THE Australian cinema box office is hurtling towards another year of growth, but parents of young children can be forgiven for wondering how this can be.

Universal Pictures is promoting the Emma Thompson-penned fantasy *Nanny McPhee and the Big Bang* as "the only G-rated movie these holidays".

And the Australian Council for Children and the Media said the fact only one G-rated movie was screening these school holidays "is very disappointing for families".

ACCM vice-president Elizabeth Handsley said: "Parents with children under the age of eight who want to take them to the movies will need to be very careful with their choices."

The market for children's movies has always been problematic, said chairman of the Motion Picture Distributors Association of Australia and head of Universal, Mike Baard.

"I don't know if there's a shortage but you've got to be very tame to be a G," he said. "PG (parental guidance) seems to be the rating that most films get these days and films cost so much money, you can't just make a film for four to seven-year-olds; they have to appeal to the whole family." *Weekend Australian, 3-4 April 2010*

He cited the 2000 Thomas the Tank Engine film, *Thomas and the Magic Railroad*, with chagrin. "Wild horses couldn't drag parents to that," he said.

The PG classification is stretching to a point where the national censor, the Classification Board, took the unprecedented step last month of reminding consumers when *Alice In Wonderland* was released that "they should be aware that films classified PG may contain material which some children find confusing or upsetting".

Easter poses more problems. This week's first dramatic role by Disney sensation Miley Cyrus, *The Last Song*, carries a PG warning with advice for "mild themes, violence and coarse language".

Other Easter kids' films, *How To Train Your Dragon* and *The Spy Next Door* are rated PG.

Mr Baard said parents could be assured the June blockbuster *Toy Story 3* would be G-rated.

Nevertheless, Universal saw a gap in the market with *Nanny McPhee*.

"We wanted to stage our campaign with that line ("only G-rated movie") saying it was a fine film for kids because a G-rated film is an endorsement to parents," Mr Baard said.

## Industry prepares for 3-D onslaught on TV

PORN and sports are leading a move towards the next generation of TV as the industry gears up to take advantage of the 3-D bandwagon following Hollywood blockbuster *Avatar*, a conference in France heard last week.

There are doubts whether this will be a breakthrough year for the third dimension given the higher TV production costs involved and the new technology required to film in 3-D.

And for now, viewers will also have to wear special glasses.

"3-D is something that you can get wrong very easily and there's a lot of technology involved," Gary Donnan, senior vice president research and innovation at Technicolor France, told a conference at the MIPTV audiovisual trade show in Cannes.

Leading the charge is Britain's biggest pay-TV provider, BSkyB, owned by News Corporation (publisher of *The Australian*).

It launched its 3-D service early this month with a Manchester United-Chelsea soccer match broadcast in selected venues in Britain and this year is to unveil the new Sky 3-D channel offering movies, sport, documentaries and entertainment at no extra cost to subscribers of BSkyB's top channels and HD.

But other companies, including France's Orange Group, also are in the fray.

"Arts such as ballet are stunningly beautiful in 3D as it gives a real sense of being there," said Brian Lenz, BSkyB's director of product design and TV product development.

"3D is emotion, it is about

immersion," said Ghislaine Le Rhun, 3-D project manager at the Orange Group, now on the hunt for content for its new 3-D channel to launch next month with the Roland Garros tennis grand slam tournament.

France's Canal+ also plans to launch a dedicated 3-D channel by year's end.

Yeo Chun Cheng of Singapore's Media Development Agency, which has been very active in 3-D, said Singapore soon would launch a 3-D TV trial on free-to-air as well as cable and satellite channels.

But to get the full impact, TV fans will need 3-D sets, which are just coming on to the market as HD sets start to catch on in many countries. In Britain, for example, only 2.5 million households out of 10 million have HD sets, Chris Forrester of Rapid TV News said.

"People are only now starting to buy HD sets so are unlikely to want to switch over to the 3D-enabled sets for some time," said Thomas Hohenacker, CEO of Munich-based TV and technology company Telecast Media Group.

The need for glasses might play a negative role also. While the cardboard disposable glasses used in 3-D cinemas are inexpensive, more sophisticated models can cost up to €150 (about \$220) a pair.

The Playboy TV portfolio of channels, whose largest subscriber base is in the adult-entertainment sector with more than 10,000 hours of erotic entertainment, planned to launch in 3-D at the end of the year, said spokesman Kieran Knight.

AFP

*The Australian, 19 April 2010*

## TV's a 3D health hazard

SEAN POULTER LONDON

THE world's biggest electronics company has issued an extraordinary health warning about the dangers of watching 3D television.

Pregnant women, the elderly, children and those suffering from serious medical conditions are among a wide range of people said to be at risk, although health experts believe Samsung's lawyers are being overzealous for fear of being sued,

particularly in the United States. In Australia, 3D television is expected to be available mid-year. As with 3D films, viewers must wear special glasses to enjoy the 3D effect on a flat panel.

However, the glasses for television are battery-operated because they need to transmit an infra-red signal to synchronise with the TV, prompting the shutter lens to open and close 100 times a second.

The health warnings extend to

those who have been sleep deprived or drinking.

It highlights alarming side effects such as confusion, nausea, convulsions, altered vision, light-headedness, dizziness and involuntary movements, such as eye or muscle twitching and cramps.

Samsung says there are also concerns that those with epilepsy could be at risk of fits - as they are from strobe lighting and photographers' flashes on normal television.

*cont* Watching 3D bombards the eyes and brain with a succession of flashing images that appear for a fraction of a second. It is a new way of seeing things and so puts unusual strain on the body.

The warning has been posted on a Samsung website and appears designed to protect the manufacturer from any legal claims for compensation if people fall ill.

Health experts have expressed scepticism toward the warnings.

Other manufacturers say they have studied the health effects of 3D viewing and have decided it is safe to go ahead.

Samsung's 3D televisions are going into UK stores in the next few days with a starting price of \$2154.

The technology is being driven by a raft of 3D blockbuster films such as *Avatar*.

Samsung, in South Korea, is the biggest-selling technology brand in the world.

- Daily Mail

*The Advertiser, 17 April 2010*

## Loving and loathing: how society toys with its living dolls

**W**HEN I was eight years old, I decapitated Victoria Beckham. She was 30 centimetres tall, made of hard, cold plastic, with cat-eye eyeliner and platform boots. She was worth every cent of the \$15 I'd saved up for her, week after week, steadily depositing my \$2 salary to my immovable bank manager, my mum.

But within a week of ripping her out of her cardboard cell, I'd lobbed off Posh's head by running her over with my bike.

What can I say? I got that sadistic impulse — the one that makes us want to take our perfect playthings, cut off their shiny locks and mutilate them with markers.

Ten years later, and I'm still playing with dolls. The only difference is they're not 30-centimetre tall Spice Girls —

cont

vindicating pleasure when a viral message, filmed as a young girl performs sex acts in public toilets, does the rounds? Or when another girl, leaves in her hair and mud on her face, stumbles out from behind the bushes at a party to a chorus of just-audible judgments?

In her book *Living Dolls: The Return of Sexism*, Walter writes of young girls feeling pressured to have sex before they're ready, presumably to consolidate their position as a "woman of the world". But if being a woman means becoming a living doll — loved fleetingly, trashed irreparably — then I'd rather not.

Turn on the television and you've got Mel and Kochie adopting their "appropriately earnest" autocue delivery to discuss the demoralising state of young girls, in between updates on Lindsay Lohan's



ALEXANDRA PATRIKIOS

**Young women are held up as an alluring ideal, only to be torn down.**

they're what Natasha Walter terms "living dolls", picking up where Barbie, in all her primed perfection, left off.

The rules of playtime might have changed, but my modern teenage experience has got me wondering: is the moral outrage about the sexualisation of young girls just a grown-up

version of our desire to destroy dolls? Do we hold them up as an alluring status quo, only to try to ruin that which we ourselves judged as "perfect"?

Stroll into any suburban rumpus room, the story will be pretty much the same — missing limbs, shonky home haircuts and odd shoes. Stroll through a backyard house party and (bar the amputations) things aren't all that different.

Somewhere among the Carlton Draughts and broken hearts, teenage girls are vainly striving to become the sexually alluring stuff of plastic. But while we picked and pruned our dolls as children, as adolescents our subjects are no longer toys — they're our minds, our bodies and, sometimes, our better judgment.

So is that why the cafeteria juries take some kind of self-

covergirl. Mixed messages, anyone? Even the language used to talk about teenage girls is thematically inconsistent — commentators yap on about the need to empower females with greater self-esteem, but persist with the paternalistic pronoun when lamenting "what's happening to our girls".

We bemoan the impossible standards imposed upon young girls, but consistently fail to offer a viable alternative — we love to point the finger at the Bratz dolls to satisfy our taste for public moralising, but can't seem to put our finger on just what our public morals are.

And, by all means, step one should be the cathartic disposal of all such dolls.

I heartily endorse starting with Mrs Beckham.

Alexandra Patrikios is studying journalism at RMIT.

*The Age*, 22 April 2010



drunken stumbles. Pop into the nearest servo, and you'll find Sarah Murdoch in her non-airbrushed glory on *Women's Weekly*, neatly propped up against a plastic-fantastic Zoo



RUTH OSTROW

### Power of words

**T**HE OTHER MORNING I was teasing my partner while my teenage daughter was asleep on the couch. I was rattling his cage, taunting that putting sugar in his coffee ruined the taste.

"Real connoisseurs don't put sugar in," I was saying, when my daughter lifted her head from the pillow and said, "Dude, slap that bitch down!"

Slap that bitch down? We both opened our mouths in shock. She explained that that's just what kids say. It comes from the lingo of rap songs they all listen to, where women are referred to as "bitch" or "ho" (whore) and men are "ma nigger" or "You skanky man ho". These words are often used with irony — taking back power over racial and gender slurs — and in many cases with friendly affection.

And the words have entered colloquial English, as explained in the Urban Dictionary online. "I'll give it to you 'til you can't take no mo'. And treat you like a funky ass, skanky ass ho," my daughter sings happily. It rolls off her tongue as if it were "Love is in the air..."

There's a world in which mothers are MILFs, a term of endearment denoting mothers I would like to know biblically, and friends are muthaf..kers. Against the backdrop of this real-

### Anyone from the age of 12 up is exposed to a new form of language which encompasses the rawness of the street

ity, brutal as it may seem to those who grew up with the Beatles and were shocked by the erotic implications of *Norwegian Wood*, is the media outcry following President Obama's historic healthcare reform speech because Joe Biden whispered the f-word.

I know there's a generation gap but this is ridiculous, with anyone from the age of 12 up being exposed to a new form of language which encompasses the rawness of the street; the rage; the ethnic and environmental tensions of our era. This controversy has got young people blogging. "Like what?"

News and political commentators only show themselves to be dated and out of touch by even reporting such a piece of nothing. Worse, they render themselves irrelevant to the people who are tomorrow's movers and shakers.

As rapper Michael Franti sings about US politicians: "I don't give a f..k who they screwing in private, I just wanna know who they screwing in public," as an indictment against doing deals with gun and cigarette companies, and multinationals who destroy the planet.

In other words, a message from Gen Youth: Don't hold back language or sex, hold back guns and gas emissions. Yo Michael! Slap those bitches 'n' bros down.

ruth@ruthostrow.com

*Weekend Australian*, 10-11 April 2010

## CYBER UPDATE – FACEBOOK RULES

We had a great response to our cyberbullying article, *Sticks And Stones And Mobile Phones*, which appeared in the autumn issue.

Parents were keen to learn more about the appropriate age for children to join Facebook.

The Facebook safety guidelines, state that: "children under 13 years old are not permitted access to Facebook. In addition, parents of children aged 13 and

older should consider whether their child should be supervised while using Facebook. Facebook strongly urges parents to talk to their children about the dangers they may encounter online and to make sure their children are using Facebook in a safe manner. Parents may want to install monitoring software on home computers if they are concerned about what their children are

doing online. Children must know that they should report any inappropriate or offensive Facebook content to their parents and to Facebook using the tools made available through the site. Parents should always remind their children to follow the important safety tips listed on this page when using Facebook."

**For more cybersafety information, visit: [www.cybersmart.gov.au](http://www.cybersmart.gov.au)**

## NEW PUBLICATIONS

## ADVERTISING

Bakir, A & Vitell, SJ (2010)  
**The ethics of food advertising targeted toward children: Parental viewpoint.**  
*Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 91, No. 2, Pp299-311

Jones, SC & Reid, A (2010)  
**Children's magazines: Reading resources or food marketing tools?**  
*Public Health Nutrition*, Vol. 13, No. 3, Pp393-399

Brookes, F & Kelly, P (2010)  
**Dolly girls: Tweenies as artifacts of consumption.**  
*Journal of Youth Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 6, Pp599-613

Andronikidis, AI; Lambrianidou, M (2010)  
**Children's understanding of television advertising: A grounded theory approach.**  
*Psychology & Marketing*, Vol. 27, No. 4, Pp299-322

## COMPUTERS &amp; INTERNET

Pornari, CD & Wood, J (2010)  
**Peer and cyber aggression in secondary school students: The role of moral disengagement, hostile attribution bias, and outcome expectancies.**  
*Aggressive Behavior*, Vol. 36, No. 2, Pp81-94

West, A; Lewis, J; Currie, P (2010)  
**Students' Facebook 'friends': Public and private spheres.**  
*Journal of Youth Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 6, Pp615-627

van den Eijnden, RJJM; et al (2010)  
**Compulsive Internet use among adolescents: Bidirectional parent-child relationships.**  
*Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, Vol. 38, No. 1, Pp77-89

Pujazon-Zazik, M & Park, MJ (2010)  
**To tweet or not to tweet: Gender differences and potential positive and negative health outcomes of adolescents' social Internet use.**  
*American Journal of Mens Health*, Vol. 4, No. 1, Pp77-85

Spears, B; et al (2010)  
**Behind the scenes and screens insights into the human dimension of covert and cyberbullying.**  
*Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 217, No. 4, Pp189-196

Holt, TJ; et al (2010)  
**Considering the pedophile subculture online.**  
*Sexual Abuse-A Journal of Research and Treatment*, Vol. 22, No. 1, Pp3-24

Fawcner, SG; et al (2010)  
**Adolescent girls' energy expenditure during dance simulation active computer gaming.**  
*Journal of Sports Sciences*, Vol. 28, No. 1, Pp61-65

Chen, HP; et al (2010)  
**The influence of an educational computer game on children's cultural identities.**  
*Educational Technology & Society*, Vol. 13, No. 1, Pp94-105

## MEDIA EFFECTS - HEALTH

Zimmerman, FJ & Bell, JF (2010)  
**Associations of television content type and obesity in children.**  
*American Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 100, No. 2, Pp334-340

Escobar-Chaves, SL; et al (2010)  
**The fun families study: Intervention to reduce children's TV viewing.**  
*Obesity*, Vol. 18, Suppl. 1, PpS99-S101

Harris, JL & Bargh, JA (2010)  
**Television viewing and unhealthy diet: Implications for children and media interventions.**  
*Health Communication*, Vol. 24, No. 7, Pp660-673

Freisling, H; et al (2010)  
**Mass media nutrition information sources and associations with fruit and vegetable consumption among adolescents.**  
*Public Health Nutrition*, Vol. 13, No. 2, Pp269-275

## MEDIA EFFECTS - SOCIAL

Foster, EM & Watkins, S (2010)  
**The value of reanalysis: TV viewing and attention problems.**  
*Child Development*, Vol. 81, No. 1, Pp368-375

Barr, R; et al (2010)  
**Infant and early childhood exposure to adult-directed and child-directed television programming.**  
*Developmental Psychology*, Vol. 56, No. 1, Pp21-48

Granich, J; et al (2010)  
**Understanding children's sedentary behavior: A qualitative study of the family home environment.**  
*Health Education Research*, Vol. 25, No. 2, Pp199-210

## VIDEO GAMES

Lim, S & Reeves, B (2010)  
**Computer agents verses avatars: Responses to interactive game characters controlled by a computer or other player.**  
*International Journal of Human-Computer*

*Studies*, Vol. 68, No. 1-2, Pp57-68

Padilla-Walker, LM; et al (2010)  
**More than just a game: video game and Internet use during emerging adulthood.**  
*Journal of Youth & Adolescence*, Vol. 39, No. 2, Pp103-113

Porter, G; et al (2010)  
**Recognizing problem video game use.**  
*Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol. 44, No. 2, Pp129-134

Krcmar, M & Lachlan, K (2010)  
**Aggressive outcomes and videogame play: The role of length of play and the mechanisms at work.**  
*Pp249-267*  
**and**  
Ravaja, N (2010)  
**The psychophysiology of digital gaming: The effect of a non co-located opponent.**  
*Media Psychology*, Vol. 12, No. 3, Pp268-294

Lim, S & Reeves, B (2010)  
**Being in the game: Effects of avatar choice and point of view on psychophysiological responses during play.**  
*Media Psychology*, Vol. 12, No. 4, Pp348-370

Hartmann, T & Vorderer, P (2010)  
**It's okay to shoot a character: Moral disengagement in violent video games.**  
*Journal of Communication*, Vol. 60, No. 1, Pp94-119

## VIOLENCE

Kupchik, A & Bracy, NL (2010)  
**The news media on school crime and violence constructing dangerousness and fuelling fear.**  
*Youth Violence & Juvenile Justice*, Vol. 7, No. 2, Pp136-155

Reynolds, BM & Repetti, RL (2010)  
**Teenage girls' perceptions of the functions of relationally aggressive behaviors.**  
*Psychology in the Schools*, Vol. 47, No. 3, Pp282-296

## CONFERENCES

**World Summit on Media  
for Children and Youth**

**14-18 June 2010  
Karlstad, Sweden**

**<http://www.wskarlstad2010.se/>**

