Greens call for junk food ads levy

The Australian Greens have called for a levy on junk food and alcohol advertising similar to that which has applied in France since 2004.

The Greens propose that companies selling junk food or alcohol would have to choose between including health information in their advertising about their products or paying a 1.5 per cent levy.

Announcing the proposal, Greens leader Senator Bob Brown said that for the first time in a century, Australians could start living shorter lives ‘because they were carrying too much weight’ and the proposed levy was designed to combat the anticipated decline in life expectancy.

The levy could potentially raise around $4 million in revenue for a proposed Health Promotion Advertising Fund to allocate funds for health information and to replace alcohol or junk food sponsorship in community sports clubs.

http://greens.org.au/content/junk-food-and-alcohol-advertising-levy

Infants and children urgently in need of mental health services

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, the Australian Psychological Society, NIFTeY (National Investment for the Early Years), the Australian Infant, Child, Adolescent and Family Mental Health Association, the Australian Association of Infant Mental Health and the Australian Children and Adolescent Trauma, Loss and Grief Network are calling for improved mental health services for children, launching Our Children Our Future, a blueprint for infant and child mental health services in Australia.

The organisations are urging the Australian government to increase mental health funding for children (0-12 years) and invest in prevention and intervention early in life.

Why Karate Kid got a PG rating

The new Karate Kid movie had its classification lowered from M to PG by the Classification Review Board on appeal by Sony Pictures.

In last month's Editorial we said that we didn't know Sony Pictures' arguments for the lower classification and that we had not, at that date, been given access. Having made a Freedom of Information application (for what should surely be a public document) we now have Sony Pictures' (SP) basis of appeal.

In essence, SP argued that the violence was stylised rather than realistic; the acts of violence were not accompanied by blood or visible wounds other than bruises, and were not accompanied by coarse language. The bullying of Dre and the rough treatment he receives are seen to be satisfactorily resolved at the film's conclusion.

The Classification Review Board, in its Decision and Reasons, supported these arguments saying, "the violence in The Karate Kid is episodic and, given the total length of the film (140 mins), infrequent. It is heavily choreographed and stylised, and, through quick cuts and obscuring camerawork, often lacks explicit detail. The violence is also justifiably contextualised within the film's narrative, which deals with school bullying, martial arts training and a martial arts tournament .... This pageantry, as well as the lack of explicit injury detail, blood detail and weapons, and what is generally a quick recovery of competitors after injury, mean that narrative tension stems primarily from the competition and its outcomes, rather than any genuine sense of threat or menace. Ultimately, while the film features depictions of martial arts within a competitive environment, the broader context and message is clearly one that condemns bullying and senseless violence."


On the other hand, ACCM's reviewers, using a basis of reliable research, gave the view that the absence of realistic outcomes from the acts of violence (the blows to the face and body would have resulted in serious damage) would be misleading to young viewers. The violence was done by children and was imitable. In our view, violence done in a context of bullying and martial arts training, and an absence of a sense of threat or menace, should not be considered as mitigating factors in a film directed at the young, and made accessible to them via the PG classification.

Roll on an evidence-based review of the classification system!

Schwarzenegger vs. violent games

In April small screen we reported on the US Supreme Court agreement to consider reinstating California’s ban on the sale or rental of violent video games to minors, a law that the US Circuit Court of Appeals threw out last year on the grounds that it violated the constitutional rights of minors.

In the amicus curiae brief filed to the Supreme Court this month, the State of California makes its argument about why it should be a crime to sell a child a very violent game. Much of the brief is about the research on violent video game effects and it was authored and endorsed by a host of prominent researchers in this field.

The conclusion to the document reads in part "The scientific debate about whether exposure to media violence causes increases in aggressive behavior is over................ Society has a direct, rational and compelling reason in marginally restricting a minor's access to violent video games(P27)"


Packaging Boyhood: Saving our sons from superheroes, slackers, and other media stereotypes

Sharon Lamb, Lyn Mikel Brown, Mark Tappan
St Martins Press NY

Boys are besieged by images and messages from marketers and the media that encourage slacking over studying; competition over teamwork; power over empowerment; and being cool over being oneself.

The authors scrutinize cartoons, videogames, movies, and more for stereotypes that marketers and the media sell boys about what it means to be a boy. They also offer advice to parents about how to talk with their sons about these troubling images, and provide parents with tools to help their sons resist these messages.

http://packagingboyhood.com/
Clips ‘n’ Cuts
small screen no. 266 July 2010

Gamers need long pants, not ill-fitting SquarePants

The nation needs to grow up and introduce an R18+ classification for a booming sector

PETER BEATTIE

was naturally interested in the basketball final, but I was even more interested in the event at the Convention Centre. While about 15,000 fans were watching Kobe and Paul Pierce duke it out at Staples, more than 40,000 gathered across the road for E3, the Electronic Entertainment Expo.

E3 is an annual trade show for the computer and video games industry and it’s where game developers and publishers show off their upcoming games and present new hardware.

Everyone from Microsoft/ Xbox and Sega-The Creative Assembly to THQ Studio Australia were there.

The Convention Centre was packed but not with as might be expected, children. If you were younger than 17 you were banned. Nevertheless, the place was humming with a noisy smorgasbord of the latest innovations on display.

The enthusiasm of this vibrant industry was on full show and Australia was there in force.

You might be surprised to learn that THQ has two studios in Australia: the largest, in Brisbane, employs about 90 people and has a strong internal technology group. The studio is now building titles on sixth and seventh-generation video game consoles. It has most recently shipped Avatar: the Last Airbender on Sony PlayStation 3, Wii, and Xbox 360.

They also did SpongeBob SquarePants: Lights, Camera, PANTS if you don’t know what all that means don’t worry about it, your children will.

Sega-The Creative Assembly has 70 staff in Brisbane’s Fortitude Valley and are a respected group of game developers. They are working on a high-profile game based on the most popular sports franchise in the world.

I talked to industry representatives from across the world and, frankly, I was mildly embarrassed for Australia. As a proud Australian that is a rare feeling for me.

I was repeatedly asked by the export participants: “Why is Australia the only Western country without an adult classification for video games?”

The Australians in the industry complained of poll after poll in Australia by media organisations such as News Limited and Channel 7’s Sunrise showing that over 90 per cent of respondents believe Australia should introduce an R18+ rating for video games.

R18+ rating for video games. The video games industry is now a $76.3 billion annual global industry and last year Australians spent $2bn on video games. As a source of entertainment, video games are a global industry spending music and movies and cannot any longer be ignored by governments.

The industry will only continue to grow, and rapidly. When you consider the growing number of Australians who depend on the gaming industry for their livelihood, its continued health is not a trivial issue.

On May 7 the Australian Minister for Home Affairs, Brendan O’Connor, said that 60,000 submissions had been received on the issue of video classification, “an overwhelming response”, and 98 per cent of those supported an R18+ classification for games.

“Censorship ministers [across Australia] have not yet made a decision on whether or not an R18+ classification for computer games should be introduced and have requested further analysis of community and expert views.”

So why are politicians running scared of the R18+ rating? It’s not as if it’s a new concept. It’s been guiding consumer choice in movies for years.

It is all to do with an argument about what is the best way to protect children, and so it should be. Let’s look at who is the typical gamer. He or she is usually a 34-year-old with a university degree.

However, almost 70 per cent of the population play video games to some extent. A large percentage of these are under 17 years of age.

However, the highest classification rating for video games in Australia is a MA15+, which bans sales of so-rated videos to players under 15.

As a result, Australia is one of the few countries in the world that has so far refused to introduce an R18+ rating.

The argument from those opposed to an R18+ rating is that not having this classification will keep the nasty videos out of the country. How naive.

There is no Berlin Wall around Australia, and video games are imported by mail order, downloaded or pirated. Anyone who owns a computer knows how easy it is to download games. And remember, the average age of gamers is 34.

We have to be realistic.

Being a parent is tough when it comes to supervising what games kids play on their computer, but providing a classification of R18+ gives parents more information, to guide their choices and keep their children away from games with excessive violence, inappropriate language or sexually explicit material. It will empower parents.

We’ve done it with movies for years. In a way, we do it with the labelling of food products. More information helps consumers avoid the things they want to avoid.

There’s no difference here. Introducing an R18+ classification for video games in Australia is not a no-brainer.

It is the only way we will regulate the ever-changing computer and video games industry.

And how is Australia going to catch up to the rest of the world on this issue?

Well, the attorneys-general from each state need to agree. Until now most have agreed, except the attorney-general in South Australia.

With Michael Atkinson having retired from that post at the recent state election, South Australian Premier Mike Rann and his new Attorney-General, John Rau (and the bureaucrats who advise him), have a real opportunity to support a sensible change that will be good for parents, good for kids, and good for a booming new industry employing lots of Australians. It’s time to make an R18+ classification for video games a reality.

The Weekend Australian, 3-4 July 2010

TV’s social side

“YOUR life revolves around that television”, my parents lamented when I was a child. But their negative assessment, like Damon Young’s — “Too much screen time means our lives lack dimension” (Comment, 28/7) — is obsolete in an age when we multitask, multifocus and multifariously communicate.

In the mid-20th century, “idiot boxes” were designed to replace fireplaces. They won central position within lounge rooms, around which people gathered, relaxed and communicated. I visited friends during MasterChef’s two grand finals. We cooked dinner, talked and laughed, then watched the show while we ate and laughed. It was an enjoyable interaction revolving around television.

Jessie Angwin, Richmond

The Age, 29 July 2010
Concerned parents won’t find a hell of a lot of guidance about what to see in film ratings alone.

Web warnings overblown

“GOOGLE is not making us stupid, PowerPoint is not destroying literature, and the internet is not really changing our brains,” write Christopher Chabris and Daniel Simons in the Los Angeles Times. But what they may well be doing is “making us smarter than we really are, and that’s a dangerous thing.” Contrary to writers such as Nicholas Carr, who claim the internet is leading to “the thinning of our thoughts”, Chabris and Simons argue that the brain’s wiring is determined by genetic programs and biochemical interactions that do most of their work long before a child discovers Facebook and Twitter. “We build ‘new skills that build on our existing capacities without fundamentally changing them’. Rather, they argue, any danger from the internet is “not from the information itself, or from how it could rewire our brains, but from the way we think about our own knowledge and abilities”. In other words, the internet can make us over-confident.”

The Australian, 29 July 2010

Chill con carnage

MASTERCHEF has been great family viewing — except for the advertisements for other Ten shows. On any given night, our kids are exposed to strangulation, decapitation, rape, murder, paedophilia and adultery. I want to see vegetables being chopped up, not body parts.

Hatilda Heristanidis, Malvern East
The Age Green Guide, 1 July 2010

Rise in calls to experts about child-on-child sex abuse

NATASHA ROBINSON

CHILD protection advocates are being inundated by phone calls from schools, preschools and childcare centres desperate for advice on how to handle sexually abusive behaviour in children.

Responding to an Australian Crime Commission report that lifted the lid on a culture of ‘con’ fusion, denial and non-disclosure of sexual and sexually abusive behaviour in children, the Australian Childhood Foundation said there had been a tenfold increase in demand for its therapeutic services.

The foundation runs a program in Victoria for children aged between seven and 12 years who exhibit problem sexual behaviour, in which social workers and psychologists work with the families and carers of the children.

Ten years ago, when the program started, it was attracting about 10 referrals a year. Now it attracts more than 50.

The ACC report estimated that between 40 per cent and 90 per cent of sexual offending against children was committed by other children, and called for a drastic increase in therapeutic services for young people displaying sexually aggressive behaviour.

The Australian Childhood Foundation chief executive Joe Tucci said: “We’ve had an increase in number, but even more importantly we’ve had an increase in the severity of the behaviour.”

The children referred who are doing penetrating acts against other children, using objects — it’s quite serious behaviour."

He said that in about 50 per cent of cases, children had been sexually abused themselves. But in the other half, children had suffered family trauma or exposure to sexually explicit images.

The child protection lobby group Bravehearts is also alarmed at the increase in sexually aggressive behaviour in children.

“We’ve been getting a lot more phone calls, exponentially, from across Australia, calling for our assistance dealing with kids perpetrating against other children,” said Bravehearts founder Hetty Johnston.

“I am terrified for these kids, and for the whole next generation. It has become normal in daycare and at primary school,” Ms Johnston said children were inundated with sexually explicit images and content on the media. “Kids are growing up in an X-rated society,” she said.

“There’s no safe place, kids anywhere where they are not going to be bombarded with adult sex.”

“It’s in the music, it’s on the TV, it’s on their phones — it is inescapable. And it’s having an effect.”

“There needs to be a strong response from the government, but also from the whole community.”

The Australian, 27 July 2010
Chance to seize the day on internet filter

Andrew Colley

AUSTRALIAN ISPs have been handed a golden opportunity to see off Labor’s controversial mandatory internet censorship laws, but it is in danger of slipping away in a fog of industry uncertainty.

For three years, the internet lobby has been fighting a losing battle to stop the laws, which would require them to put filters in place that would, in theory, block illegal internet content. Last week, the federal government delayed the legislation and gave ISPs an opportunity to work within a voluntary filtering scheme adopted by Optus, Telstra and Primus.

However, the voluntary filter scheme rather has fractured the stage.

Phen Conroy last week announced that the legislation would be delayed while the government reviewed the classification board’s RC category, and he welcomed undertakings by Optus, Telstra and Primus to voluntarily block child abuse material in the interim.

This put the move off to a good start, with Optus, Primus and Telstra representing about 70 per cent of the broadband market.

But Australia’s third-largest ISP, iNet (900,000 subscribers), says it wants more detail before it will commit to the scheme. Australia’s next-largest internet provider, TPG, says it will only deploy filtering if required by law.

“We prefer to leave highly sensitive decisions such as blacklists and censorship and filtering to the political process. Our position remains that, if the political process leads to a requirement that ISPs implement some form of filtering system, we would comply with that requirement,” TPG spokesman Tony Moffatt said.

Top 10 Adelaide-based Internode (120,000 subscribers) has also refused to block the government’s list. Internode’s regulatory chief, John Lindsay, said: “It covers a tiny proportion of the content that would need to be blocked for it to be effective and has already been shown to contain URLa of legal content that Australians would expect to access.”

Seven-owned wireless broadband provider Vivid Wireless will also seek more information before commenting. “We are going in ignorance as to what Telstra, Primus and Optus are doing before we’ll make any decisions,” a Vivid Wireless spokesman said.

Private industry sources are beginning to admit that ISPs should have begun co-operating with the government earlier, rather than arguing that the filter was happening in developed countries like New Zealand, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, the UK, Italy, and Germany.

“We want to allow our actions to speak for themselves and hopefully there will be some recognition across all parties and states of what we’ve done.”

The internet lobby’s members had been fixing the prospect of laws that would require them to block access to internet sites containing content refused classification (RC) in Australia, including child pornography, rape depictions and crime and terrorism promotion.

Last week, the government gave signs there had been breakthroughs in behind-the-scenes negotiations with Australia’s major ISPs and that it may accept an industry-wide voluntary filtering scheme narrowly focused on child abuse material.

Communications Minister Stephen Conroy also said the previous agreement was technically infeasible. “They didn’t make it easy for the government. They peppered it with all sorts of amendments that would make it difficult to implement,” he said.

It was understood iNet had been involved in negotiations up until last week.

Senator Conroy claimed that the company supported the filter. Michael Malone to lash out at the government and withdraw from further engagement over the filter issue. “The proposed filter is fundamentally flawed, it will not achieve its stated purpose and simply will not work,” Mr Malone said at the time.

The Australian, 13 July 2010

Heads Up

Edited by Greg Callaghan

What’s up with girls?

SOCIETY

Weekend Australian Magazine, 10-11 July 2010

A report by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare found that young women now smoke at rates equal to or higher than males, binge-drink at similar rates and are closing the gap in using illicit drugs.

Despite all this, and our more open, tolerant society, it doesn’t appear that teenagers today are any more willing to discuss their sexual and romantic troubles than they were 20 years ago, although girls are slightly more communicative than boys, according to a report in the Journal of Adolescence.

But perhaps the most sobering survey is one of 3000 teenagers in the US, which reported that two-thirds of girls believed alcohol or drugs could help them cope with their problems.
For the voice of Cinderella, the magic is continuing, long after the ball

Ilene Woods provided the voice, both speaking and singing, for the title character in Walt Disney's classic 1950 animated feature Cinderella.

Woods was a busy 18-year-old singer on radio in 1948 when, as a favour to two songwriter friends, Jerry Livingston and Mack David, she recorded a demo of a few songs the pair had written for Walt Disney's upcoming animated feature.

"Two days later, Walt called. He wanted me to come over and have an interview," Woods later recalled, "I met and talked for a while, and he said 'How would you like to be Cinderella?'"

At the time, Woods was unaware that more than 300 singers had auditioned to be the voice of Cinderella. Her demo recording led to her taking part in a significant piece of Disney history.

"From then on, as she was fond of saying, she never hesitated "to do a favour for a friend."

She enjoyed working at the Disney studio. "Walt would sit down at the table with us at meals, and we would discuss the movie together."

radio show The Breakfast Club, and then moved Los Angeles and became a featured performer on The Letterbox Village Store with Jack Carson. She also did guest spots on the Jack Benny, Bing Crosby and Bob Hope radio shows.

During World War II, Woods went on a celebrity-studded War Bond Tour with Paul Whiteman and the Army Air Forces Orchestra. She also sang for President Franklin D. Roosevelt in New York, and for President Harry Truman.

Woods was spokesperson for the United Cerebral Palsy telethons for many years. After moving to California in 1972, she retired from show business, with the exception of doing an occasional Disney show.

When asked in a 2006 interview what the best thing was about having been Cinderella, she said "Oh, I love the idea that after I'm gone, children will still be hearing my voice."

Irene Woods is survived by her husband of 47 years, Ed Shaughnessy, their son, a daughter from her first marriage and three grandchildren.

Dennis McLellan
Los Angeles Times
Sydney Morning Herald, 12 July 2010

Conroy shelves net filter as election looms

Controversial plans to filter the internet have been shelved by the Gillard government for at least two years as it clears the decks for the forthcoming federal election.

Facing a strong backlash against the policy, Communications Minister Stephen Conroy yesterday ordered a year-long review into content that has been refused classification.

He said legislation for the filter would not be introduced until the review was completed.

And a spokeswoman for Senator Conroy said the filter — which was a 2009 Labor election promise — would not be implemented until 12 months after the legislation was passed.

While Senator Conroy insisted the government's resolve to introduce a mandatory internet filter had not changed, the opposition said the delay was "a humiliating backtrack."

The delay comes after a fierce anti-filter campaign from activist organisation GetUp and criticism from internet companies such as Google, and the US government.

They have warned that the filter will not be effective, could slow the internet and would set a dangerous precedent for web censorship.

Green senator Scott Ludlam said it was clear the government did not have the stomach to debate the filter during the election campaign.

"I think what it is doing is giving the government time and a bit of a get-out clause to have an evidence-based policy," he said.

Senator Ludlam said the filter, which has been strongly supported by church groups, would not remove child pornography from the internet, most of which was traded on peer-to-peer networks rather than on live websites.

"(It will not take) a single image off the web, won't lead to a single prosecution and it won't lead to any of this material being taken down," he said.

Google Australia and New Zealand managing director Karim Temsamani said he was pleased the government had taken account of "genuine concerns" about refused-classification content.

"While our position on the government's proposed filter has not changed, we welcome the recommendations to conduct a review of the RC classification," Mr Tensamani said.

"Our primary concern has always been that the scope of the proposed filter is far too broad. It goes way beyond child sexual abuse material and would block access to important online information for all Australians."

The review was announced as one of Australia's largest internet service providers — Telstra, Optus and Primus — agreed to block a list of child abuse websites compiled by the Australian Communications and Media Authority.

Senator Conroy said the government's commitment to force ISPs to filter refused-classification content from the internet had not wavered.

Additional reporting: Frans Foo

The Weekend Australian, 10-11 July 2010
### ADVERTISING
Anon (2010)
Advertising for children’s foods “virtually ceased”.
Food Australia, Vol. 62, No. 5, Pp164

Culp, Jennifer; et al (2010)
Characteristics of food industry Web sites and “advergames” targeting children.

### COMPUTERS & INTERNET
Werner, NE; et al (2010)
Involvement in Internet aggression during early adolescence.

King, D; et al (2010)
The convergence of gambling and digital media: Implications for gambling in young people.

Chen, KC; et al (2010)
Antecedents of online game dependency: The implications of multimedia realism and uses and gratifications theory.

Ang, RP & Goh, DH (2010)
Cyberbullying among adolescents: The role of affective and cognitive empathy, and gender.
Child Psychiatry & Human Development, Vol. 41, No. 4, Pp387-397

Inyang, Imo; et al (2010)
Predictors of mobile telephone use and exposure analysis in Australian adolescents.

Kell, Billie (2010)
The adolescent’s experience of using the Internet to access health information.
Journal of Adolescent Health, Vol. 46, No. 2 (Suppl. 1), PpS43-S44

### MEDIA EFFECTS - HEALTH
Jago, R; et al (2010)
Parent and child physical activity and sedentary time: Do active parents foster active children?
BMC Public Health, Vol. 10, Ar. 194

Liu, YM; et al (2010)
Obesity among adolescents: sedentary leisure time and sleeping as determinants.
Journal of Advanced Nursing, Vol. 66, No. 6, Pp1246-1256

Gorely, T; et al (2009)
The prevalence of leisure time sedentary behavior and physical activity in adolescent boys: An ecological momentary assessment approach.
International Journal of Pediatric Obesity, Vol. 4, No. 4, Pp289-298

Fairclough, SJ; et al (2009)
Associations between children’s socioeconomic status, weight status, and sex, with screen-based sedentary behaviors and sport participation.
International Journal of Pediatric Obesity, Vol. 4, No. 4, Pp299-305

Sisson, SB; et al (2009)
International Journal of Pediatric Obesity, Vol. 4, No. 4, Pp353-359

Pagani, LS; et al (2010)
Prospective associations between early childhood television exposure and academic, psychosocial, and physical well-being by middle childhood.
Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine, Vol. 164, No. 5, Pp425-431

### MEDIA EFFECTS - EDUCATION
Richert, RA; et al (2010)
Word learning from baby videos.
Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine, Vol. 164, No. 5, Pp432-437

### MEDIA EFFECTS - PSYCHOLOGICAL
Kumari, S & Ahuja, S (2010)
Video viewing and cognitive development in preadolescents.
Social Science Computer Review, Vol. 28, No. 2, Pp170-176

Hunter, WLM; et al (2010)
Max: Concern with social skills, language and excessive TV viewing in a 3 year old.

Cheng, Shunyue; et al (2010)
Early television exposure and children’s behavioral and social outcomes at age 30 months.
Journal of Epidemiology, Vol. 20 (Suppl 2), PpS482-S489

### VIDEO & COMPUTER GAMES
Ferguson, Christopher J (2010)
Blazing angels or resident evil? Can violent video games be a force for good?
Review of General Psychology, Vol. 14, No. 2, Pp68-81 and

Vulnerability to violent video games: A review and integration of personality research.
Pp82-91

and

Kato, Pamela M (2010)
Video games in health care: Closing the gap.
Pp113-121

and

Ceranoglu, T Atilla (2010)
Video games in psychotherapy.
Pp141-146

and

Olson, Cheryl K (2010)
Children’s motivations for video game play in the context of normal development.
Pp180-187


Tahiroglu, AY; et al (2010)
Short-term effects of playing computer games on attention.
Journal of Attention Disorders, Vol. 13, No. 6, Pp668-676

Regenbogen, C; et al (2010)
The neutral processing of voluntary completed, real and virtual violent and nonviolent computer game scenarios displaying predefined actions in gamers and nongamers.
Social Neuroscience, Vol. 5, No. 2, Pp221-240

Schulzke, Marcus (2010)
Defending the morality of violent video games.
Ethics and Information Technology, Vol. 12, No. 2, Pp127-138

### VIOLENCE
Begue, L & Terestchenko, M (2010)
Does television favor violent behavior? From Natural Born Killers to The Extreme Zone.
Esprit, No. 5, Pp44-64

### CONFERENCES
AFTRS School Holiday Program
Film Editing for Teens
44a High St, Kensington SA
September 27 - 28
9.30am - 4.00pm

Are you a keen amateur filmmaker aged between 12 and 16? Would you like to add a professional touch to your films?

Welsh government warns about mobiles

A leaflet issued to secondary school children by the Welsh Government suggests that children should send texts, rather than use their mobile phones for chatting, to minimise exposure to radio signals.

The Assembly Government said the guidelines had been issued to guard against possible problems in the future.

Tony Jewell, the chief medical officer for Wales, said:

“Protecting the health of the young people of Wales is a priority, and although current research indicates that using mobile phones does not appear to cause health problems, more work is still to be done. We don’t expect young people to stop using mobile phones all together, but there are a few simple steps they can take to protect their health for the future. It is always better to be safe than sorry.”


Computers don’t make children smart

A recent study of more than 150,000 students from grades five to eight in North Carolina showed that those from disadvantaged families got lower scores once the Internet arrived at home. Duke University researchers compared children’s reading and maths scores before and after they acquired a home computer and compared those scores to those of children who never acquired a home computer. The study can be found at:


Commenting on the research, media education researcher Professor Renee Hobbs from Temple University said that “while some people may assume that the computer is a research tool, used for exploring the world, keeping up with current events and learning new things, in many families, people lack the knowledge and skills to use it for these purposes.”

According to Professor Hobbs, “Parents’ behavior and attitudes toward technology are a critical factor in predicting a child’s experience with various media.”

http://www.philly.com/dailynews/opinion/20100719_Temple_professor_Renee_Hobbs_A_computer_doesn_t_make_kids_smart.html

TV overload?

“Televisions are breeding faster than Australian households” according to Melissa Singer writing for The Age. Australian households own an average of 2.4 televisions and the figure is expected to rise to 3.1, while the size of the average household is likely to shrink to 2.4 people by next year.

Last year, Australians bought 2.7 million televisions, with the sale of units larger than 40 inches recording a 75% growth. It appears that flat screen TVs are being updated more regularly than their predecessors - about every five years rather than every ten.


A selection of children’s programs screened on TV during the period

ABC 1
Zoey 101; Lizzie McGuire; I.N.K. Invisible Network of Kids; Arthur; Timmy Time;
Grandpa in my Pocket; Sesame Street; Play School; Help I’m a Teenage Outlaw; dirtworld; Deadly 60; Gawayn.

ABC 2
The Wot Wots; Poko; Manon; Zoo Lane; Wiggly Waffle; Baby Antonio’s Circus; Postman Pat; Franny’s Feet; Bob the Builder; Martin Morning; Microscopic Milton; Pororo the Little Penguin; Humph.

ABC 3
Grossology; Bolts and Blip; Shaun the Sheep; The Twisted Whiskers Show; Dead Gorgeous; Jeopardy; The Latest Buzz; Serious Andes; Prank Patrol; Dance Academy; Oggy and the Cockroaches; Spliced!

SEVEN
Raggs; It’s Academic; The Emperor’s New School; Saturday Disney.

NINE
Go Diego! Go!; Dora the Explorer; Hi-5; Pyramid; Cybershack; Skippy.

TEN
Toasted TV; Sumo Mouse; Scope; K-9; Puzzle Play; Totally Wild.

NICKELODEON
Drake & Josh; Life with Derek; True Jackson, VP; The Naked Brothers Band; The Amanda Show; Sorry, I’ve got no Head; Pop It!; Sarah Jane Adventures; Britannia High; Shreducation; Avatar: The Last Airbender; iCarly.

DISNEY CHANNEL
Wizards of Waverly Place; Phineas and Ferb; Kim Possible; The Suite Life on Deck; A Kind of Magic; Sonny with a Chance; Zeke and Luther; Family Biz; Double Trouble.