



Are PG-13 films becoming the new default for kids' movies?

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Help stop real-life violence

‘Classification system must change to address constant glamorising of violence’

“The message that ‘violence works and violence wins’ is embedded in many computer games and films played or seen by children and teens, and is causing them harm” says Prof Elizabeth Handsley, President of the Australian Council on Children and the Media (ACCM). “Our classification system provides easy access to images of glamorised violence, that is violence performed by heroes in a good cause, where the violent actions are justified, rewarded and applauded. The evidence is that such ongoing exposure raises the risks of the use of aggression to solve conflict.” She continued: “In the context of the incidence of violence in our society, especially domestic violence, a government that is serious about wanting to modify the cultural attitudes of children about the use of violence will act now to reduce exposure to glamorised violence.” ACCM has lodged its submission to the federal government’s Review of



CAPTION: How an Australian age-based classification system could look.

Classification Regulation. It is calling for a classification system that is evidence-based and which takes account of reliable research about which images and depictions have adverse impacts on children at which stages of their development (with violent actions, and images of horror, mutilation or destruction being of greatest concern). ACCM’s surveys of parents show that they want more information about the suitability of films and games for their younger children (absent from the present system) to prevent harms such as the development

of sleep disturbances, and ongoing fears and anxieties from scary images. ACCM’s submission is wide ranging and includes recommendations for

- An age- based classification system (with The Netherlands’ Kijkwijzer system as a model)
- A new element of Horror/Scariness to be introduced separate from element of Violence
- The application of one set of classification categories



(symbols) to a wide range of film and interactive content

- The continuation of separate guidelines for films and for games, with additional classification elements for games to cover their different risks (such as gambling)
- The use of automated systems only if the embedded classification system is evidence based and capable of objective judgements
- The establishment of a Classification office to oversee and evaluate a national system, receive all complaints and to review classification decisions.

[Read our submission here](#)

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editorial

One size does not always fit all

BARBARA
BIGGINS
CHIEF EXECUTIVE, ACCM



BRIDGET Fair, chief executive officer of the free-to-air TV industry body Free TV Australia, gained quite a bit of coverage with her media release of February 25 titled *Free TV Broadcasters welcome greater harmonisation of classification rules* ([link here](#)). In this Ms Fair (inset, below) says: "Free TV supports updating the classification framework to ensure it is operating effectively in the modern media landscape.

"While the system for television is working well, the huge amount of digital content now being consumed means existing processes just can't classify online content fast enough," Ms Fair says.

"We support changes to enable the existing well-understood classification markings to apply to all media content.

"In particular, the regulatory framework should allow content delivered on catch-up services including 7Plus, 9Now and 10 Play to be classified under the Television Classification Guidelines in the same way as broadcast content."

However, Ms Fair says the body doesn't necessarily support the suggestion to split the existing PG classification into two categories.

"The existing classification markings are longstanding and have a high-level of consumer awareness," Ms Fair says.

"Classification categories are not shoe sizes. The reason they work so well is that they



Are PG-13 films becoming the new default for kids' movies?

VALERIE JONES
DESERET NEWS, US

DISNEY'S live-action "Mulan" hits theaters next month, and it's coming with some noticeable changes. The wise-cracking dragon Mushu and the many musical numbers from the beloved 1998 film are gone in this

reboot. But one of the biggest changes of all is the US PG-13 rating. "Mulan" is the first of Disney's live-action remakes (a long list that so far includes everything from "The Lion King" to "Aladdin" to "Dumbo") to be rated PG-13. The rating is for "sequences of violence," which isn't too surprising since it's a movie

support parents to make the right decisions based on consumer advice and their children's individual needs." ACCM agrees with the need for classification to be applied to a much wider range of media than at present, and hence supports the need for an automated system to enable this.

We also recognise that the longstanding classification symbols are very familiar to Australian audiences.

We strongly disagree, however, that they work well and support parents' decisions.

ACCM's experience and feedback from parents tell a different story.

The symbol PG is certainly well recognised, but does not enable parents to make age-appropriate choices for their children, particularly for those in early childhood. Parents need and want more classification categories under the age of 15 years.

To replace PG and M with 5+, 9+ and 12+ is to simply equip parents with better tools to protect their children from harm from inappropriate content.

To liken that to providing "shoesizes" seems to us to be taking a very cavalier attitude to child protection.

One could say that the present system is like putting a young child in teenage size wellington boots and expecting them to walk well.

Let's learn from The Netherlands with its 20 year old system of 6+, 9+, 12+, and 16+, and which this year added in two more classifications 14+ and 18+. They've certainly gone for fractional fittings!

Submissions to the Review have now closed. Neville Stevens, who has carriage of the review, is due to report in April.

Let's hope he produces well-fitting boots that are made for safer walking. ■

about war.

But this marks a turn for Disney, as the company's darker and more violent remakes (think Tim Burton's "Alice in Wonderland" or the recent "Maleficent: Mistress of Evil") have still managed to stay in PG territory.

[Read full story here](#)

SMART TOYS

Children at play: Thoughts about the impact of networked toys in the game of life and the role of law

Gasper, U
INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF INFORMATION ETHICS DEC 2018 VL 27 4-30

[Abstract here](#)

PRIVACY

How families with young children are solving the dilemma between privacy and protection by building trust-A portrait from Portugal

Dias, P; Brito, R
JOURNAL OF CHILDREN AND MEDIA NOV 2019

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ADVERTISING

Attentional bias for food cues in advertising among overweight and hungry children: An explorative experimental study

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JUUL on Twitter: analyzing tweets about use of a new nicotine delivery system

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What arguments and from whom are most influential in shaping public health policy: thematic content analysis of responses to a public consultation on the regulation of television food advertising to children in the UK

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SCREEN USE

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Time spent watching television impacts on body mass index in youth with obesity, but only in those with shortest sleep duration

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Effects of excessive screen time on neurodevelopment, learning, memory, mental health, and neurodegeneration: a scoping review

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Type of screen time moderates effects on outcomes in 4013 children: evidence from the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children

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Association between screen media use and academic performance among children and adolescents a systematic

review and meta-analysis

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"But first let me take a selfie": U.S. adolescent girls' selfie activities, self-objectification, imaginary audience beliefs, and appearance concerns

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#(Me)too much? The role of sexualizing online media in adolescents' resistance towards the metoo-movement and acceptance of rape myths

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GAMBLING

Gambling involvement and problem gambling correlates among European adolescents: results from the European Network for Addictive Behavior study

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SMART PHONES

Mobile phone addiction among children and adolescents a systematic review

Sahu, M; Gandhi, S; Sharma, MK
JOURNAL OF ADDICTIONS NURSING OCT-DEC 2019 VL 30 (4) 261-268

[Abstract here](#)

The new ways kids app makers are monetizing

US | KIDSCREEN

Dark clouds are starting to roll over the app stores, as the US Federal Trade Commission (FTC) rains down on the digital kids space like never before.

While many are familiar with the FTC/ New York Attorney General's landmark US\$170-million fine against YouTube in 2019, this may just be the beginning of what is about to be a monsoon of penalties many in the industry are not prepared for.

Yet despite the risk of penalties, predatory methods are still the most effective way to make money online, which is why most developers continue to employ them.

"Gaming apps tend to be the worst because they use both manipulative purchasing techniques and illegal data collection," says Josh Golin, executive director at Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood (CCFC).

"It's not uncommon to see apps with multiple offenses."

To tackle this issue, developers who don't believe the reward is worth the risk are coming up with different ways to monetize, ditching what's worked in the adult app space in the past.

[Read more](#)

A future for the world's children? A World Health Organisation/UNICEF/ Lancet commission

US | THE LANCET

Prompted by the end of the Millennium Development Goal era, with its focus on child survival, a Lancet Commission to place children's health and wellbeing at the centre of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was formed in 2018.

The Commission was co-chaired by Helen Clark, former Prime Minister of New Zealand and former Administrator of the UN Development Programme, and Dr Awa Coll-Seck, Minister of State in Senegal. The Commission aimed to consider the ways in which governments, medical professionals, and society as a whole can accelerate progress on child health and wellbeing strategies in the

context of the SDGs.

Immunisation, antibiotics, antenatal and delivery care, and good quality health systems are of course essential, but we urgently need a broader plan to accelerate progress in areas previously neglected, such as early years development, adolescent health, and disability, and the development of a coherent narrative to guide our work across sectors.

More immediately, we must respond to environmental and existential threats, which jeopardise the future for children on this planet. We require a holistic view of the child, defined here as a person aged 0–18 years old, whose wellbeing is at the centre of humanity.

This report puts marketing of unhealthy food squarely in the frame for the rise in childhood obesity.

The report condemns the advertising of unhealthy foods aimed at children which it says is fueling the childhood obesity crisis. The number of obese children and adolescents increased from 11 million in 1975 to 124 million in 2016 – an 11-fold increase.

[Read more](#)

E-cigarettes, vaping and teens: do parents know the dangers?

AUS | RCH CHILD HEALTH POLL

Australian parents are calling for tougher restrictions on e-cigarettes in an effort to reduce uptake in teens, as research shows half of parents support a total ban on the supply, sale and use of all products in Australia.

The poll found the majority of parents (73 per cent) are concerned their teen might try e-cigarettes yet more than half of parents (57 per cent) have never discussed e-cigarette use or vaping with their teen.

Poll Director, Paediatrician Dr Anthea Rhodes, said "The health harms of e-cigarettes are real. These products contain a multitude of toxins and chemicals, and they are still new so the full extent of their potential harm is not yet known."

[Read more](#)

UK's 5G network well within safety limits, Ofcom tests find

UK | BBC TECHNOLOGY

The first UK safety tests of 5G base stations has found radiation levels are at "tiny fractions" of safe limits.

The rollout of ultra-fast 5G mobile connectivity has sparked some fears the new transmission masts could be dangerous to humans. But Ofcom, the UK regulator, found no identifiable risks in its first tests since 5G technology was deployed.

The highest result they found for the 5G band was 0.039% of the recommended exposure limit.

[Read more](#)

Book tackles questions parents have about media violence

US | IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Making sense of all the research and debate over media's risks and benefits can be time-consuming and overwhelming for many parents trying to decide what's best for their child.

The authors of a new book, "Game On! Sensible Answers about Video Games and Media Violence," know this from their own experience as parents, but also from the many questions they get as researchers in the field of media violence. That's why they decided to write a book – which reads more like a dictionary or reference guide – to present the research in a way that helps parents make informed decisions. The authors say the Q&A format is well-suited for anyone who wants clear answers and guidance.

[Read more](#)

Lobbyists say Classification Board 'approved movies depicting child rape'

AUS | COLLECTIVE SHOUT

Collective Shout has called for an overhaul of Australia's classification system and a review of recent Classification Board determinations following discovery of illegal animated child sexual abuse material depicting child rape, abuse and exploitation which the Board classified as suitable for audiences as young as 15 - in some cases even younger.