

Filtering game madness

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Filtering Games Madness

Communications Minister Senator Conroy's recent remarks that the filter will block gaming websites that feature adult games just highlights how broken our existing censorship scheme is.

Conroy now states that he only wants to mandatorily block sites that feature material that would be refused classification. It almost sounds reasonable BUT this would mean that any site that sells or advertises computer games that have been refused classification would have to be mandatorily blocked.

I had a quick look on Amazon and they stock the games Sexy Poker, Fallout 3, Reservoir Dogs and Dark Sector, all of which have been refused classification in Australia. While they are refused classification here they don't even get a parental warning on Amazon!

To further illustrate the madness Reservoir Dogs the film is quite legal but the game is not. The film Ultimate Poker Babes is absolutely legal but the game Sexy Poker is not. I even noticed that we have banned a game called Spin the Bottle - Adults Only! But as far as know it is still legal to play it with a real bottle.

The classification variances also extend to publications and films. What is legal in a publication may not be in a film. For example Japan Bondage is a legal category 2 publication but the film Bondage Japan Part 1 is refused classification.

The filter exposes these anomalies. According to Senator Conroy a site showing reservoir dogs the film is okay but a site selling reservoir dogs the game is so bad that it must be mandatorily blocked to protect Australians. A site showing the art of Japanese rope tying in photos will be legal but a site showing a film of the same content will not!

While we all know the filter is a very bad idea it is time to bring our classification scheme into the 21st century and allow adults to decide what they view and in what format.

Currently we have a complicated and inconsistent scheme with two adult categories for films (R and X), two for publications (Category 1 and category 2) and none for computer games. How about we have one classification for all adult material regardless of the format?