Queensland University of Technology
Faculty of Information Technology

ITN 330: Information Issues and Values
(Dr. N. Meyers)

Report on Selected Information Technology Issue:
Australia's Computer Games Classification System

by

Anthony John Larme

© 6 April 2001

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In recent years, it has become increasingly apparent that a country's economic survival as a so-called First World nation depends largely upon its ability to fully engage itself in the new global information economy. Those nations which cannot or will not do this, for whatever reason, are liable to find themselves ridiculed and left behind by those who are not afraid to embrace technological change and are confident to use it to its potential for the benefit of all their citizens. Regretfully, Australia is one country whose governments have not been able to properly embrace these changes despite comparable countries, for example the USA and the UK, taking quite the opposite view.

Australia's harsh computer games classification system is symptomatic of the larger problem of Government unwillingness to treat information technology with the respect it deserves. Government fear of the alleged effects of computer games is linked to the larger issues of fear of much Internet content that in turn leads back to the main issue of disrespect for new technologies. If the smallest symptom is treated and computer games are classified more reasonably, then relaxation of Internet and other forms of information technology over-regulation must surely follow. This can only be beneficial to the Australian economy and those involved in the IT industry in particular.

The Federal Government, in particular, must listen to its own ABS's and OFLC's findings on the non-threatening nature of computer games, as well as similar information from academics, computer games magazines, and free speech advocates. The Government and its supporters on computer games classification issues must realise that their moral panic over new technologies is unjustified and that a turnaround in policy is vital in the interests of social cohesion, economic improvement, and the advancement of national pride. This report was written in the pursuit of these worthy objectives.

CONTENTS

HOW TO IMPROVE AUSTRALIA'S COMPUTER GAMES CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

1 Introduction

Australians have long accepted the need to regulate the distribution of visual entertainment products. As a result, all films (including videos) and computer games made available for sale or hire to the Australian public are required by law to be classified by the Federal Government's Office of Film and Literature Classification (OFLC). The OFLC examines these products and assigns each a rating that proclaims that product's suitability for certain age groups as well as some indication as to the reason for the rating, be it for violent or sexual content, or other controversial matter.

Classification guidelines for computer games differ significantly from those for the older media of film. Designed around the assumption that most, if not all, adults do not play computer games and know much less about computers than children and, as such, cannot properly supervise family access to computer games, they are deliberately more severe and intolerant in most areas of classification concern - sexual content in particular. These guidelines do not in any way reflect the realities of computer gamer demographics and look ill conceived and naïve when compared to more reasonable computer games classification systems in place overseas.

The guidelines reflect poorly on Australia's already tarnished reputation in the regulation of computer technologies, particularly with regard to the Internet. Improvements that reflect reality are an urgent requirement if we are to fully embrace the new global information economy and its associated economic benefits. With a reasonable computer games classification system in place, reasoned and viable changes to Internet regulation will presumably follow.

1.1 Scope of report

This report focuses on the origins and workings of the Australian computer games classification system, but makes references to the games classification systems of other countries where required to illuminate relevant aspects of the local situation. It details the views of both the proponents and the detractors of the current system and the importance of this issue economically and politically. Much of the following discussion is guided by the sociological theories of moral crisis and moral panic that are quite applicable to official reaction against computer games.

1.2 Significance of report

As the reader will have undoubtedly surmised, this report takes the view that the current system of computer games classification in Australia is unduly harsh. As a result, urgent changes are needed to ensure that this system takes into account the realities of the situation as revealed through several recent findings as to the exact nature of computer games and their players. Those who support the current system may not like any of the proposed changes, but they are all justified according to reliable evidence, so hopefully these people may change their views and accept a scheme that is fair and profitable to all.

1.3 Definition of key terms

Readers who are unfamiliar with this issue of information technology should study the following mini-glossary carefully. All definitions are the author's own, devised through his considerable personal experience in these matters unless noted otherwise:

- *Classification*. To place items or products into predefined categories to allow for ease of regulation. Assigning ratings to computer games is one example of this process.

- *Computer games*. Games played on a personal computer. These entertainment computer programs are set in imaginary worlds or imitations of the real world and present players with problems to overcome using persistence and skill.

- *Guidelines*. This common term is used here solely to indicate the classification guidelines used by the OFLC when assessing computer games or films. There are separate and highly distinct guidelines for each entertainment medium. All guidelines carefully detail exactly what is and is not permitted in each rating.

- *Moral crisis*. This is a sociological term for the perception of a rapid decline in traditional values that clashes with a partial acceptance of new values (Victor, 1993).

- *Moral crusader*. Someone who seeks to restore traditional morals by suppressing the production and distribution of what they perceive to be the source of moral upheaval within the community (Victor, 1993).

- *Moral panic*. This is another sociological term. It refers to the usual consequence of an environment of moral crisis. In short, a new activity enjoyed by young people alarms many of the traditional controllers of society (parents, politicians, and clergy) and an inter-generational conflict ensues with the former group looking to the new and different future and the latter seeking to restore the order and predictability of the past (Cohen, 1972).

- *OFLC* (Office of Film and Literature Classification). A Federal Government agency located within the Attorney General's Department that is responsible for classifying all films (including videos) and computer games made available for sale or hire to the public in Australia. These products are assigned ratings according to their suitability to certain age groups and many are additionally provided with consumer advice giving a very brief summary of the reasons for the rating.

- *Ratings*. For computer games (in order of severity, least severe first) = G (all ages), G 8+, M 15+, MA 15+, RC (Refused Classification). For film = G, PG, M 15+, MA 15 +, R 18+, X 18+ (video only), RC.

- *Senate Committee*. This term refers to the now defunct Senate Select Committee on Community Standards Relevant to the Supply of Services Utilising Electronic Technologies. In 1993 and 1994, this Committee was central to the process of instituting Australia's current computer games classification system.

1.4 Information sources

Information sources used to compile this report are wide and varied. They range from academic articles and monographs, to Australian Government publications, to Internet World Wide Web pages, and personal correspondence. No one source could possibly detail this issue to the depth that it requires, so such an assortment of references can be expected. As the author has had years of personal experience in the matters covered in this report, his own knowledge also plays a significant part in its production and presentation.

1.5 Limitations

Computer games classification issues are complex. It is not possible to adequately explore them all within the word limit constraints of this report. What is presented here can be only be a well-constructed summary. While the author does possess firm views in regard to pointing out the inadequacies and subsequent need for change to the current Australian computer games classification system, both sides of the argument will be given a hearing, but the side taken by the author will be conclusively shown to be the correct one.

*

2 Scope of Issue

The subsections that follow under this heading will alert the reader to the entire scope of issue of the classification of computer games in Australia.

2.1 Background

Although computer games have been played in this country since at least the 1980s, it was only in the 1990s that people began to consider the idea of classifying these

increasingly popular and realistic products. In May of 1993, Labor Senator Margaret Reynolds, horrified by the realistic computer game *Night Trap*, began to actively campaign for a system to regulate these products (Carbon, 1993). By October, her Senate Committee released a highly critical report on computer games based largely on anecdotal evidence and conjecture - the *Report on Video and Computer Games and Classification Issues* - that firmly recommended their harsher regulation than for film.

A further report by the Senate Committee in 1994 - the *Report on Overseas Sourced Audiotex Services, Video and Computer Games, R-Rated Material on Pay TV* - reiterated many of its earlier findings on computer games. Both sides of the House of Representatives praised the new *Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Bill* as rightly following all the Senate Committee's recommendations (Commonwealth, 1994). Newly developed computer games classification guidelines banned almost all forms of sex and nudity in computer games available in Australia (Durkin & Aisbett, 1999).

The following year, the new *Classification Act* came into force and allowed Federal classification decisions to be rigorously enforced at the State level such as by Queensland's *Classification of Computer Games and Images (Interim) Act*. The first major, popular game from overseas, *Phantasmagoria*, was Refused Classification and thus banned to all Australians. Similar decisions that prevented all Australians from accessing popular computer games from overseas were soon to follow.

All actions taken by Australian governments to regulate the sale and distribution of computer games were inspired by universal agreement with two key recommendations that arose from the Senate Committee's 1993 *Report*:

Recommendation number six on page vi stated:

> Having regard to the extra sensory intensity involved in the playing of interactive games and the implications of long-term effects on users, the Committee recommends that stricter criteria for classification than those applying to equivalent film and video classifications be set by [classification] authorities…

Recommendation number four on page v supported number six by proclaiming:

> The Committee is concerned that the level of technology involved with the use of … computer games means that many parents do not necessarily have the competency to ensure adequate parental guidance. Therefore the Committee recommends that material of an 'R' equivalent category be refused classification. The Committee also recommends that if an 'X' equivalent classification is considered it should not be adopted for … computer games material...

In other words, it was heavily implied that children are the only players of computer games (or at least comprise the vast majority of players), and that parents do not play them, and, in fact, have very low computer competency. As a compounding factor to lead to harsh regulation, computer games were deemed to be of greater impact on users due to their "extra-sensory intensity" in comparison to film.

Resulting from these beliefs were the OFLC's 1994 computer games classification guidelines which remain in force today. Aside from allowing for significantly fewer ratings than for film, they most notably exclude all non-medical instances of sex or nudity (real or simulated, whether using animated figures or real human actors, and regardless of context or plot requirements) from computer games made available in this country (Durkin & Aisbett, 1999). This is in stark contrast to the far more liberal attitude taken under the film classification guidelines which allow for such material from as low as the PG or M 15+ ratings (OFLC, 1999).

It is on sexual grounds, according to the OFLC's online database at http://203.41.245.34/boss/public/prodsearch.asp, that the significant majority of computer games have been refused classification, and thus effectively banned to everyone, in Australia. As a further point of contrast, from the author's personal experiences, all the obviously non-pornographic computer games banned in Australia are or have been permitted for sale in both the USA and the UK under these

respective nations' own computer games classification systems which allow for games to be marketed to late teenagers and adults and thus contain material that does depict some form of simulated sex and nudity (BBFC, 2001; ESRB 2001). These foreign countries are clearly not excessively concerned with such material.

2.2 Stakeholders

Throughout all these developments, the following groups have been instrumental in supporting Government positions on the computer games classification issue:

- Conservative politicians. Elected representatives in this category can be found on both sides of Australian politics – in the Federal and State parliaments (Commonwealth, 1994; LAQ, 1995b). Computer games regulation is a topic that engages almost every politician towards a conservative, even reactionary viewpoint. Exceptionally prominent figures include Senators Margaret Reynolds (Labor) and John Tierney (Liberal) (Senate Committee, 1993, 1994).

- Religious groups. Typically, these Christian groups view electronic media, especially its newer varieties, as promoting irreligious ideals and a general lowering of moral standards in the community, especially among children. Specific examples of such organizations include the Catholic Women's League and the Festival of Light (Balnaves 1996; Phillips, 1996). Apparently, no non-Christian group has taken a public position on computer games classification issues.

- Young Media Australia (YMA). This strong activist group promotes the protection of children from media influences that may, in their opinions, cause them any form of distress, harm, or confusion (Biggins, 1996). They frequently make submissions to relevant Government inquiries and usually make a highly favourable, positive impression on the usually sympathetic politicians (Senate Committee, 1997). Their influence is also considerable, as their head, Barbara Biggins, is also the head of the OFLC's Classification Review Board. YMA members continue to fully support the recommendations of the Senate Committee in 1993, ignoring the plentiful evidence to support the opposite position that has arisen since that date (Stewart, 2001). No other non-

government supporter of the status quo comes close to attaining the influence of Young Media Australia.

All three major groups in this category have in common a desire to do what they think is right to protect children from new technologies that they believe threaten their well-being.

Their opponents take a conflicting view and argue for a broader and more tolerant computer games classification regime that reflects the actual demographics and other realities of the nature and use of this entertainment medium:

- Computer games magazines. The two most prominent Australian computer games magazines, *Hyper* and *PC PowerPlay*, have long argued for a fairer computer games classification system (some examples out of dozens are: Hyper, 1995 [*Phantasmagoria* banned] and 2000 [Violence in video games]; PC PowerPlay, 1996 [Bloody games!]).

- Internet free speech advocates. These include Electronic Frontiers Australia and some of its most prominent members such as Irene Graham. At their Web pages, they promote a fairer computer games classification system as part of their larger aims to support and expand online freedoms (EFA, 2001; Graham, 2000).

- OFLC. It may at first seem ironic that one Government agency is opposed to its peers, but it is a fact that most of these people, through their classification work on several thousand products, have much more actual practical experience in studying electronic entertainment, including computer games, than anyone else in this country. They know very well that many adults play computer games, that they can protect their children adequately without excessive Government intervention, and that there is no evidence that computer games need to be regulated more harshly than films (Culpitt & Stockbridge 1996; Durkin 1995; Durkin & Aisbett 1999).

In this category, all three major groups base their arguments on scientific evidence that refutes the positions of their opponents. Additionally, the first two groups hold the ideals of freedom of speech in particularly high regard to the extent of advocating the loosening of classification restrictions. Curiously, Australian computer games distributors have generally remained in the background of this issue, perhaps content

with the profits they make on the games they are permitted to sell and not willing to make too much fuss in the interest of regulatory, and therefore profit margin, stability.

2.3 Current Factors Creating Issue

The computer games classification issue continues to be a pressing matter as the following factors clearly illustrate:

2.3.1 The imminent review of the guidelines for the classification of computer games.

- According to OFLC Director Des Clark (2001), this review will take place in the "near future", and "advertisements calling for submissions will shortly be placed in national newspapers".

- From the author's long-standing knowledge of Australian computer games classification issues, he is aware that this review has been persistently announced but later postponed since early 1996, much to the irritation of the current scheme's detractors.

- Comments made by Clark earlier this year (Stewart, 2001), imply that, this time, the review will take place as scheduled. The Director seems empathetic that the games classification ratings system needs to be broadened to include material for older consumers as this form of technology has overlapped with film, video, DVD, and the Internet (Stewart, 2001). Apparently, a consistent and logical ratings scheme must be developed soon in the interests of the adaptability of this country's visual media classification system to new and converging media. As an example, it is interesting to note that the 1998 cd-rom computer game *Tender Loving Care* was refused classification, while the DVD version of the same game that covered exactly the same storyline and sexual scenes was rated as a film and received only an MA 15+ film rating despite the latter having far clearer picture and sound quality (Melloy, 2000).

- Already, YMA has protested any relaxation or expansion of the current games ratings system, promoting their usual (and now discredited) arguments of adult

ignorance and subsequent need for child protection via heavy Government regulation (Stewart, 2001). For similar reasons, Federal Government officials are said to be wary of any finding for lesser regulation (Stewart, 2001).

2.3.2 Australia's shame in the eyes of the world for its harsh regulatory stance on information technologies.

- It is very easy to find evidence of this factor, and not just on the Websites of the Internet free speech advocates mentioned above. Foreign sites can readily say more or less the same such as where Australian IT Minister Senator Richard Alston is portrayed as a new technology hating Luddite (McCarthy, 2001).

- The dramatic and continuing decline of the Australian dollar against most other currencies, particularly the US dollar, in the past year has regularly been blamed on this country's persistent refusal to embrace all aspects of the new global information economy to the degree desired by wealthy overseas investors (Clausen, 2001; Dickins, 2001; Economist, 2000; Gottliebsen, 2000).

- Overseas Websites for US and UK organizations that can be compared with Australia's OFLC can readily be seen to provide the details of alternative regulatory systems for computer games that clearly allow for content prohibited in Australia (BBFC, 2001; ESRB 2001). Additionally, in the experience of the author, overseas information technology – including computer gaming – Websites such as Cnet.com and GamesMania.com periodically publish stories on games classification systems around the world and single out Australia as having one of the harshest.

2.3.3 Persistent statistical and academic study findings that the premises behind the current computer games classification system are false.

There are far too many relevant statistics and studies to summarise here, but some of the major findings are:

- Adults play computer games. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (1998), "44 per cent of adults frequently [use] a home computer to play games". A recent OFLC study (Durkin & Aisbett, 1999) formally recognised that adults

play computer games and deserve to be able to buy games aimed at their age group.   Finally, countries with which Australia likes to compare itself and owes much to politically and culturally, namely the US and the UK, have both had computer games classification systems that recognise that adults play computer games for many years (BBFC, 2001; ESRB, 2001).

- Adults can readily supervise their children's use of computer games. As a very large percentage of adults actually play computer games themselves, it stands to reason that they know enough about the technology to supervise their children. The academic research supports this conclusion (Culpitt & Stockbridge 1996; Durkin & Aisbett, 1999).   In fact, Australian adults are nowhere near as afraid and as ignorant of technology as those who persist in supporting harsh regulation suppose, with 66 per cent using a computer in the past year and 50 percent accessing the Internet during that same period (10 per cent of adults were sufficiently proficient and comfortable to order goods through the Internet) (ABS, 2001).   This is not to say that some parents might not have difficulty supervising their children's use of computer games, but such people are in a small minority and the current games classification system is in fact overkill in dealing with this situation.

- There has been no evidence that computer games' allegedly extra sensory nature has caused any degree of violence, aggression, or distress to anyone – children or adults – to the extent that severe regulation is required (Durkin & Aisbett, 1999).

*

3 Theoretical Perspectives Helpful in Explicating Issue

Here are the theoretical perspectives the author of this report has found useful in his examination and analysis of the computer games classification issue.   While they have been used and applied to what has been written above, they are presented here in greater detail:

3.1 Moral crisis, panic, and crusades

Contemporary Western societies are currently experiencing a period of rapid technological and social change resulting in moral crisis (Victor, 1993). Value conflicts between old and new ideals, particularly (but not exclusively) the duty to fulfil one's own needs against one's duty to others, have ensured widespread adult guilt over the perceived neglect of their children (Victor, 1993). The ensuing guilt has led to a transferral of anxieties towards the over-protection of children in the form of a moral panic (Cohen, 1972; Victor, 1993). In common with the traditional form of a moral panic (Cohen, 1972), the controversy over the classification of computer games has seen some traditional pillars of society such as politicians and some parents reacting in the fashion of moral crusaders (Victor, 1993) against a new form of entertainment popular among the young (while perhaps half computer game players are adults, the rest are children and there is no doubt among either side of the issue that children are voracious consumers of computer games). A common feature to all three aspects of morality is that such actions stigmatise certain groups and/or certain products, often without much scientific basis or ultimate success, as a means of avoiding confronting and dealing with deeper problems in society (Cohen, 1972; Victor, 1993). After all, it is easier to push for and maintain heavy regulation of popular new technology, even in the face of plentiful reliable opposing evidence, than it is to deal with complex social, political, and economic issues that are ultimately the true motivators of harsh classificatory regimes.

3.2 Protection and control

According to Catharine Lumby (1997, p. 45), "offers of protection…are…linked to offers to control". She applies this theory to the Australian Government's harsh regulation of the electronic media, computer games included (Lumby, 1997). Another Australian author, Michael Pollak (1990), asserts that media classification and regulation battles are really fights over power. Indeed, Australia has a long history of over-protective Governments that sought to control their people with significant regulation of the entertainment media (Pollak, 1990). In relation to computer games

(and the Internet), it appears the governments of Australia are implying that they are afraid of the potential power of their computer literate constituents, including children. They harshly regulate new technology such as computer games as a scapegoat measure to avoid making tough, but necessary decisions that will enable this country to better embrace the new global information economy.

3.3 Free speech

Finally, but by no means the least important, is the theory of free speech. This fundamental human right was first enshrined politically by the framers of the US Constitution in the late eighteenth century and has since become an inspiration to seekers of freedom worldwide. More recently, article 19 of the 1948 United Nations' *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* asserted that all people have the right to freedom of speech, expression, and to search for and acquire information. Both documents show that some limitations to this right are required in the interests of the normal functioning of civilised society, and free speech advocates do not dispute this. It is an issue of where one draws the line with regulation, and free speech advocates draw this line around a far smaller collection of contentious material than do their opponents such as those who support the current computer games classification system.

*

4 Conclusions

The issue of computer games classification is linked to the more prominent issue of Internet content and access regulation, which, in turn, is a reflection on how Australian governments and those organizations that tend to support them and be supported by them unwisely manage information technology in the era of the global information economy. If the harsh regulation of computer games is lifted and made consistent with the similar medium of film, more tolerant policies towards the Internet and the information economy are sure to follow. These matters concern adults as well

as children to a significant degree, so it is important that governments realise this and promote sensible policies as a result.

Computer games classification as it stands today in Australia is built on shaky ground. The relevant guidelines and the governments, politicians, and child protection and religious advocate groups who support them are mistaken in their assertion that their harsh regime is in any way justified. Scientific evidence and theories related to morality, control, and free speech have proven that it is time that computer games be

classified with fewer restrictions than they have in the past and that, ideally, they be classified as films which they so often resemble in terms of both their broad demographic appeal and content.

*

5 Recommendations

In view of all the factors surrounding the classification of computer games issue, and in light of the discussion and conclusions mentioned in this report, six suitable policy recommendations are listed below. Unlike the recommendations of the discredited Senate Committee, they support the promotion of this comparatively new and popular expression of information technology while taking into account some genuine concerns that the content of some products may not be entirely suitable for all age groups. These recommendations should be followed and implemented immediately.

Australia's computer games classification system may be improved by:

1. The removal of all references and implications in all Australian legislation and associated documentation related to the classification of computer games that adults do not play or have a right to play these consumer products.

2. The removal of the separate classification guidelines that currently apply only to computer games.

Additionally, this report calls for:

3. Classification of computer games to be performed in an identical way to the classification of films as they are no more psychologically harmful or have any less widespread appeal than that older form of popular entertainment.

4. Games rated MA 15+, R 18+, and X 18+ under the new classification system to be restricted by law to persons over a certain age. Thus, R 18+ and X 18+ type games will not be banned to everyone as they are now.

5. A review of the classification decisions for all computer games that have been classified RC to date with a view to reclassification.

6. No further regulations of a restrictive nature to be imposed on computer games without extensive computer gaming community consultation and approval plus conclusive support from a wide range of reliable relevant academic studies and statistics.

Finally, on a broader scale, Australians, regardless of their age or role in society, must realise that we cannot isolate ourselves from the rest of the world with regard to new technologies lest we fall behind both economically and socially. The author commends this report to the governments of Australia for immediate action via the implementation of all its recommendations and requests that its underlying principles also be followed in matters of Internet regulation.

***

REFERENCES

Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS]. (1998, November 2). *8146.0 More detailed analysis of the use of information technology in the home* [Media Release]. Retrieved March 30, 2001, from the World Wide Web: http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs%40.nsf/5e3ac7411e37881aca2568b0007af d16/85b30360653cd967ca2568a9001362c4!OpenDocument&Highlight=0,co mputer,games

Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS]. (2001, February 16). *8147.0 Use of the Internet by householders, Australia* [Media Release]. Retrieved March 30, 2001, from the World Wide Web: http://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs@.nsf/lookupMF/NT000088A6

Balnaves, J. (1996). *Catholic Women's League, Archdiocese of Canberra and Coulburn* [sic]. *Submission to the Committee of Ministers on the Portrayal of Violence*. Canberra: Catholic Women's League.

Biggins, B. (1996). *Young Media Australia. Submission to the Committee of Ministers on the Portrayal of Violence*. Adelaide: Young Media Australia.

Bloody games! Sex, violence and videogames. (1996, November). *PC PowerPlay*, pp. 24-29.

British Board of Film Classification [BBFC]. (2001, March 16). *British Board of Film Classification - Policy*. Retrieved April 4, 2001, from the World Wide Web: http://www.bbfc.co.uk/website/Guidelin.nsf/Guidelines?OpenFrameset

Carbon, D. (1993, May 29). Senator urges ban on violent computer play. *Courier Mail*, p. 9.

Clark, D. (2001, March 29). Letter to Anthony Larme. Sydney: Office of Film and Literature Classification. [Available via FOI Act from the OFLC]

Clausen, L. (2001, April 9). Bolting the cybergates. *Time*, p. 63.

Cohen, S. (1972). *Folk devils and moral panics*. London: Mac Gibbon and Kee.

Commonwealth of Australia [Commonwealth]. (1994) *Parliamentary debates (Hansard). 1994. House of Representatives. First session of the thirty-seventh parliament (fifth period). 23 August to 8 December 1994*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.

Commonwealth of Australia [Commonwealth]. (1995). *Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.

Cupitt, M., & Stockbridge, S. (1996). *Families and electronic entertainment*. Sydney: Australian Broadcasting Authority / Office of Film and Literature Classification.

Dickins, J. (2001, March 23). PM told to cut tax for the rich. *Courier Mail*, p. 1.

Durkin, K. (1995). *Computer games: their effects on young people – a review*. Sydney: Office of Film and Literature Classification.

Durkin, K., & Aisbett, K. (1999). *Computer games and Australians today*. Sydney: Office of Film and Literature Classification.

Economist. (2000, September 12). Tyranny of distanced. *The Australian*, p. 22.

Electronic Frontiers Australia [EFA]. (2001, January 27). *Other censorship resources*. Retrieved March 29, 2001, from the World Wide Web: http://www.efa.org.au/Issues/Censor/cens4.html

Entertainment Software Ratings Board [ESRB]. (2001). *About ratings and descriptors*. Retrieved March 30, 2001, from the World Wide Web: http://www.esrb.org/esrb_about.asp

Gottliebsen, R. (2000, September 12). Forget GST, it's the new economy, stupid. *The Australian*, p. 22.

Graham, I. (2000, April 22). *The state of censorship: Fact, fallacy and urban myths*. Retrieved March 29, 2001, from the World Wide Web: http://libertus.net/censor/fallacies.html

Legislative Assembly of Queensland [LAQ]. (1995a) *Classification of Computer Games and Images (Interim) Act 1995*. Brisbane: Legislative Assembly of Queensland.

Legislative Assembly Queensland [LAQ]. (1995b) *Weekly Hansard. First session of the forty-seventh parliament. No. 35*. Brisbane: Legislative Assembly Queensland.

Lumby, C. (1997). Panic attacks: old fears in a new media area. *Media International Australia, 85,* 40-46.

McCarthy, K. (2001, March 28). *This man must be the biggest Luddite in history. The Register*. Retrieved March 30, 2001, from the World Wide Web: http://www.theregister.co.uk/content/6/17941.html

Melloy, N. (2000, June 1). New to DVD. *Courier Mail – What's on*, p. 5.

Office of Film and Literature Classification [OFLC]. (1999). *Guidelines for the classification of films and videotapes*. Canberra: OFLC.

Phantasmagoria banned. (1995, October). *Hyper*, pp. 5-8.

Phillips, R. (1996). *Submission to the Committee of Ministers on the Portrayal of Violence*. Adelaide: Festival of Light.

Pollak, M. (1990). *Sense and censorship: commentaries on censorship violence in Australia*. Balgowlah, NSW: Reed Books.

Senate Select Committee on Community Standards Relevant to the Supply of Services Utilising Electronic Technologies [Senate Committee]. (1993). *Report on video and computer games and classification issues*. Canberra: Senate Committee.

Senate Select Committee on Community Standards Relevant to the Supply of Services Utilising Electronic Technologies [Senate Committee]. (1994). *Report on overseas sourced audiotex services, video and computer games, r-rated material on pay tv*. Canberra: Senate Committee.

Senate Select Committee on Community Standards Relevant to the Supply of Services Utilising Electronic Technologies [Senate Committee]. (1997). *Report on the portrayal of violence in the electronic media*. Canberra: Senate Committee.

Stewart, C. (2001, January 27). *Plans for r-rated computer games*. *The Australian* [On-Line]. Retrieved January 27, 2001, from the World Wide Web: http://www.theaustralian.com.au/common/story_page/0,4511,1651662%255E 2702,00.html

United Nations, Department of Public Information [UN]. (1988). *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. New York: United Nations.

Victor, J. S. (1993). *Satanic panic: the creation of a contemporary legend*. Chicago: Open Court.

Violence in video games. (2000, July). *Hyper*, pp. 14-19.

***