[IE] Public Service Broadcaster Introduces On-Screen Classification System

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Candelaria van Strien-Reney
Faculty of Law, National University of Ireland, Galway

Ireland's national public service broadcaster, RTÉ, has just introduced a system that will help television viewers to decide whether or not its programmes are suitable for children and teenagers. Pre-recorded programmes shown on RTÉ's two television stations now show a small icon in the top right-hand corner of the screen for twenty seconds at the beginning of the programmes.

There are five classifications: General Audience (GA), Children (Ch), Young Adult (YA), Parental Supervision (PS), and Mature Audience (MA). Programmes classified as "Young Adult" are aimed at teenagers and may deal with relationships, sexual activity or soft drugs. Those classified as "Parental Supervision" may deal with adult themes and be moderately violent or include the occasional use of swear words. Those classified as "Mature Audience" contain scenes of sexual activity, violence or profane speech.

While cinematic films and videos have age classifications in accordance with the provisions of the Censorship of Films Acts 1923-1992 and the Video Recordings Act 1989 respectively, broadcasters are not subject to those Acts. However, under the Broadcasting Act 2001 (see IRIS 2001-4: 9), the Broadcasting Commission of Ireland has been given responsibility to draw up Codes and Rules in relation to programming standards. These will apply to all broadcasters, including RTÉ, but they have not as yet been introduced.

"RTE will now come with a warning", The Irish Times, 19 January 2002

http://www.ireland.com/newspaper/front/2002/0119/812368684HMRTE.html

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