[GB] British Board of Film Classification Launches BBFC Online

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David Goldberg
deeJgee Research/Consultancy

On 21 May 2008, The British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) launched a new service, "BBFC.online". It aims to provide consumer information, thus enhancing consumer trust and confidence when choosing new media content.

The scheme applies, on a voluntary basis, the BBFC's existing eight-fold classification system to content distributed online, including "video on demand, streaming video, download-to-own and portable media devices." It is "'Platform Neutral' – it is designed to cover all forms of digital content delivery (e.g. web, set top boxes, hand-held devices and mobile phones)."

The BBFC had sought legal opinion that concluded that "works supplied by 'non-physical' means (e.g. by streaming or download) are not covered by the Video Recordings Act 1984." This implied that such works were largely unregulated.

The scheme is subscription-based, and main membership costs GBP 900 per year. Walt Disney Studios, Warner Bros, 20th Century Fox and Home Entertainment Europe have already joined the scheme. However, classification includes the "R18" category (explicit sex works). Thus, it is envisaged that adult entertainment companies will join the scheme and, in fact, Strictly Broadband has already done so.

The scheme was developed over eighteen months, in collaboration with the British Video Association, on the basis of research done by TNS World Panel (published as the "Downloading Classification Study" February 2007).

The research found (4244 respondents) that " *63% of adults (74% of parents)* are concerned about downloading video material which does not come with independent content advice and labelling. *84% of adults (91% of parents)* want to see BBFC film and DVD classification on downloadable/streaming films and other digital audiovisual content."

The scheme includes a compliance process and, in general, it "anticipates key requirements for non-linear content under the EU's Audiovisual and Media Services Directive (AVMS)."

BBFC.online

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http://www.bbfc.co.uk/bbfcOnline/bbfcOnline.php

Downloading Classification Study

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