[GB] New Classification System for Downloaded Content

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The British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) is the body that classifies films and videos/DVDs. Originally established as a self-regulatory body by the film industry, it acquired statutory responsibility for videos and DVDs under the Video Recordings Act 1984. It is financed by fees charged for classification, according to a tariff approved by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Classification is carried out through ratings setting out the audience for whom viewing is appropriate (U, PG, 12A, 15, 18, R18).

Since 2008 the BBFC has been working with the video industry to provide a content labelling system for film, video and TV content supplied by internet, wireless or mobile signal and has classified over 200,000 titles available through video-on-demand, digital rental and sale, streaming, mobile platforms and connected TV. Over 200,000 certificates have now been issued for this "back catalogue" of material. All new content classified by the BBFC is given an 'online' certificate for digital distribution.

The BBFC has now developed a new classification services, known as "Watch and Rate", for material issued straight to online. This enables the Board to issue a quick and cheap certificate using the same categories as for film and video/DVD without the need for the release of an equivalent physical version. Certificates will be issued within a maximum of seven days of electronic receipt of the material by the BBFC and an express service is available at extra cost guaranteeing a decision on the day of receipt or the following day. Fees are based on a submission fee and a per minute fee, so that, for example, the fee for a 90 minute clip would be GBP 245.

The creative industries minister has welcomed the new scheme.

'Ed Vaizey welcomes new BBFC classification for downloaded content', Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 10 February 2011

http://www.culture.gov.uk/news/news_stories/7845.aspx

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