

Pohe, Pamela

From: Nicholas Atherley
Sent: Tuesday, 9 October 2012 9:29 PM
To: Legislation, Uniform
Subject: R18+ Games.

To whom it may concern.

I am a 23 turning 24 year old voter in WA, lived here all my life and have been making games as a hobby for the past 3 years. I am greatly disappointed in WA's decision to reconsider allow R18+ games. There are a lot of themes that are best explored with some degree of graphic detail, nudity or with drug references that are not dopamine-releasing purveying of filth. Some of the best films in the world have used mature elements to amplify the film's dramatic effect. Using these elements sparsely is important and some restriction of content is applicable in many cases, but the ban of all adult themes is a mistake.

Horror is a niche in film that has supported the Australian creator of the Saw series achieve financial and critical success with a limited budget. If we are to help the fledgling entertainment industry in Australia grow, we must find cultural niches that we can fill without the access to the resources that Hollywood and in the games industry case, American and Japanese publishing houses have access to. I hope you consider an R18+ rating for video games favourably.

Many games that have entered Australia have been tailored to fit an MA15+ rating as a result of any material higher being refused classification. In the case of Fallout 3, a drug named Morphine was relabeled to Med-X. Such minor changes leads me to believe the overall effect of a game being released as R18+ instead of MA15+ may not induce extra harm upon it's viewers, even if they were under the recommended age.

While I agree generally with the concept of banning certain themes and the presentation of those themes in video games, I think the mechanism by which they are delivered deserves the focus of restriction, rather than the theme it is presented with.

I can understand the need for strict control on the content on offer, but I believe our dopamine circuitry is heavily activated by video games, exploiting psychological patterns. Training our players to repeatedly search for rewards and with increasingly large rewards that only serve the purpose of finding more rewards, is an incredibly addictive and potentially damaging effect on our psyche. Many people have suffered negative health or life effects from playing too much video games, going for day(s) without sleep. This couple had their child die whilst they were playing video games: <http://www.eurogamer.net/articles/news200605wowbaby>

The addictive and destructive potential of video games is well realised, as a mechanism for escapism it is incredibly powerful, as a mechanism

for addiction it is prevalent and always accessible inside people's homes. Video games can be tools for good or bad, but the most destructive mechanisms in video games don't come from exposure to violence, nudity or drug references. They come from the addictive and repetitive mastery of a human psychology, training people to play endlessly, at the cost of portions of their life. Refusing classification to content that is above or below a certain level of graphic detail or presents unwieldy themes for children, is a smaller part of the problem, protecting children from the destructive potential of highly addictive games is more rewarding to society.

This website (among many) has a plethora of studies done on the addictive qualities of porn, gaming and the internet.

<http://www.yourbrainonporn.com/garys-research-addiction-video-game>

The mechanisms for addictive play in video games can be used for good or bad, it is a neutral element, but it is addictive to the point where game designers become the greatest addicts, creating their own fixes.

Please consider treating the addictive qualities of a video game as more of a threat to society than a lone tit or some gore.

Thank you for reading.
Nick.