ESRB ENTERTAINMENT SOFTWARE RATING BOARD

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ABOUT ESRB

The Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) is the non-profit, self-regulatory body that assigns ratings for video games and apps so parents can make informed choices. The ESRB rating system encompasses guidance about age-appropriateness, content, and interactive elements. As part of its self-regulatory role for the video game industry the ESRB also enforces industry-adopted advertising guidelines and helps ensure responsible web and mobile privacy practices under its Privacy Certified program. ESRB was established in 1994 by the Entertainment Software Association (ESA).

MISSION

To empower consumers, especially parents, with guidance that allows them to make informed decisions about the age-appropriateness and suitability of video games and apps while holding the video game industry accountable for responsible marketing practices.

PHILOSOPHY

The ESRB rating system was devised after consulting a wide range of child development and academic experts, analyzing other rating systems and, most importantly, listening to parents. ESRB found that what consumers really want in a rating system is both age-based rating categories as well as concise, impartial information regarding content. Parents felt strongly that a rating system should inform and suggest, not prohibit, and should reflect the product overall rather than quantifying every instance of potentially objectionable content.

Today consumers play games on a variety of platforms and devices, and parental concerns go well beyond content to include other interactive elements like user interactions or the sharing of a user's location and personal information. In fact, parents today tend to place equal importance on guidance about interactive elements as they do about the specific content in a game.

With this philosophy in mind, the ESRB administers a three-part rating system that includes Rating Categories to suggest age-appropriateness, Content Descriptors to indicate what type of content may have triggered the rating and/or may be of interest or concern to the consumer, and Interactive Elements, which advise about user interactions and the sharing of personal information or location. The result is a rating system that is widely adopted by game publishers, supported by retailers, and which is consistently described by parents and opinion leaders as the best entertainment rating system in the US.

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Find the latest ESRB news, announcements and press releases.

Education & Outreach

Learn about ESRB consumer outreach initiatives and the "OK to Play?" PSA campaign.

Parent Resources

Find tips on choosing video games and explore other online resources.

Frequently Asked Questions

Get answers to some of the most frequently asked questions.

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ESRB Rating Process

Learn how the ESRB assigns ratings to video games and mobile apps.

Rating Category Breakdown

See a percentage breakdown, by category, of ratings assigned by ESRB.

Consumer Research

Check the latest research on parental awareness and use of ESRB ratings.

ESRB History

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Patricia E. Vance, ESRB President

See a professional bio for ESRB President Patricia E. Vance.

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