

Former ESRB Rater Details Group's Flaws

Jerry Bonner, a former employee of the ESRB, has a column in the latest issue of *EGM* detailing what he perceived as flaws in the group's rating system during his time as a full-time rater. Bonner's complaints include the typical call for a destruction of the ESRB's monopoly on game ratings, but also includes more [...]

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Bonner's complaints include the typical call for a destruction of the ESRB's monopoly on game ratings, but also includes more interesting issues like the much debated idea that the ESRB doesn't actually play the games it rates.

The raters, Bonner says, "just watch submitted videotapes or DVDs of someone else playing the game" and base the games' ratings on that.

He also points out the ESRB's typical response to this issue is that actually playing each game would simply take too much time, though the solution Bonner offers is as clever as it is simple: "Hire more people."

In the interest of fairness, *EGM* also offered space to ESRB President Patricia Vance who took issue with Bonner's comments, saying his piece contained "numerous misleading statements, factual inaccuracies, and misrepresentations."

Vance also attempts to discredit Bonner's claims by pointing out "the unique and limited nature of his six-month tenure at the ESRB," though what exactly she means by this is never detailed.

Despite Vance's issues with Bonner's qualifications, the responses she offers seem designed to diplomatically parry his claims instead of actually rectifying what Vance seems to believe are Bonner's gross misunderstandings.

The exception to her attempts at diplomatic double-speak is Vance's reply to Bonner's call for the ESRB to open its notoriously secret system to outside inspection.

"The author unfortunately also confuses our efforts to ensure the integrity and trustworthiness of the ratings system with unnecessary levels of secrecy," she says. "It is regrettable that the author does not appreciate the importance of protecting the confidentiality of the raters to avoid even the possibility of undue influence from external sources.

Ex-Game Rater Dishes the Dirt... ESRB Boss Fires Back [GamePolitics]

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