

# Our History

## 1994

ESRB founded by the [Interactive Digital Software Association](#) (IDSA was renamed Entertainment Software Association in 2004)

New ESRB rating system announced, with 5 rating categories and 17 content descriptors



## 1995

Advertising Code of Conduct created and adopted by the IDSA

ESRBI rating system established for websites, with 5 rating categories and 22 content descriptors

## 1997

Online Rating Notice established to warn consumers of user-generated content in online-enabled games and on websites

K-A (Kids to Adults) rating category changed to E (Everyone)

## 1998



First ESRB Public Service Announcements launched featuring Tiger Woods, Derek Jeter and Regis Philbin

1999

Non-pixelated versions of rating symbols introduced



Advertising Review Council established as division of ESRB to monitor compliance with industry-adopted marketing and advertising guidelines

2000

ESRB [enforcement system](#) established to impose sanctions, including points, fines and corrective actions, on companies who do not comply with ESRB rules and guidelines

2001

New target marketing guidelines for Mature-rated games introduced

[ESRB Privacy Online](#) certification service launched and sanctioned by the FTC as a “Safe Harbor” under COPPA

2002

Arthur Pober departs as ESRB’s founding president; Patricia Vance joins ESRB as its new president

2003

ESRBI rating system for websites discontinued

2005

E10+ rating category introduced for games that may be suitable for ages 10 and older



2006

ESRB increases fine up to \$1 million for non-disclosure of pertinent content

[ESRB Retail Council \(ERC\)](#) launched by ESRB and leading computer and video game retailers; “ERC Commitment to Parents” is adopted by all ERC retail members

National radio and TV PSA [campaign](#) promoting ratings awareness launched with U.S. Senators Hillary Rodham Clinton and Joseph Lieberman

ESRB launches its first PSA campaign featuring artwork by Penny Arcade

2008

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) finds eight in ten underage buyers are turned away when attempting to purchase Mature-rated games

PTA and ESRB release “Parents Guide to Video Games, Parental Controls and Online Safety”

Rating summaries are introduced along with ESRB’s mobile website

2009

ESRB Privacy Online launches E.U. Privacy Seal Certification program

The FTC’s [sixth follow-up Report to Congress](#) lauds ESRB for having “the strongest self-regulatory code” and confirms that retailers have maintained their 80% store policy compliance rate

2010

ESRB launches PSA campaigns with the [New Orleans Saints](#) and [Chicago Blackhawks](#), both of which include TV and radio ads running in their respective regions as well as in-stadium/arena

2011

The [ESRB Website Council \(EWC\)](#) is established to help ensure that game enthusiast sites post complete rating information and employ age-gates on trailers and videos for M- and AO-rated games

The FTC's [mystery shopper study](#) finds enforcement of entertainment ratings to be "highest among video game sellers" with 87% overall compliance

ESRB introduces an [automated, streamlined process](#) for assigning ratings to console downloadable games

The U.S. Supreme Court rules in [Brown v. EMA/ESA](#) that video games qualify for First Amendment protection and the sale of violent games may not be restricted by law, a landmark decision that recognized the effectiveness of the ESRB rating system

ESRB is [commissioned](#) by the CTIA, the trade association representing wireless carriers in the U.S., to develop and administer a rating system for mobile apps

ESRB launches TV, radio and in-arena PSA campaign with the [Washington Capitals](#)

2012

ESRB releases a new [print and online PSA campaign](#) featuring real-life parents and gamers and artwork by Penny Arcade

ESRB launches TV and radio PSA campaign with the [San Francisco Giants](#) with airings in AT&T Park and throughout the Bay Area during the 2012 MLB season

[Interactive Elements](#) added to ESRB ratings for digital games and apps

ESRB introduces a [digital rating service](#) to provide cost-free ratings for digitally delivered games

# 2013

The FTC announces that [video game retailers](#) continue to have the highest level of store policy enforcement as compared to other entertainment retailers with 87% overall compliance

ESRB's Safe Harbor privacy program is re-branded [ESRB Privacy Certified](#) featuring new seals and privacy resources for existing and new members



[International Age Rating Coalition \(IARC\)](#) is incorporated

# 2014

International Age Rating Coalition (IARC) begins assigning ratings to games and apps on Mozilla's Firefox Marketplace

The Australian Classification Board (ACB) becomes an IARC participating rating authority

The Nintendo eShop deploys the IARC rating system for all digitally delivered video games and apps

# 2015

Google Play deploys the IARC rating system, resulting in the display of ESRB ratings for all apps available in North America

# 2016

The Windows Store deploys the IARC rating system for all digitally delivered games and apps

# 2017

The Oculus Store [deploys](#) the IARC rating system for all VR games and apps

Republic of Korea's [Game Rating and Administration Committee \(GRAC\)](#) becomes the newest participant in the IARC rating system

2018

[ESRB begins assigning Interactive Elements](#) to physical (e.g., boxed) games, including In-Game Purchases and Users Interact

PlayStation deploys IARC on the PlayStation Store to display ESRB ratings for all digitally delivered games, including for PlayStation VR

ESRB and Penny Arcade launch their third PSA campaign, featuring both artwork and voiceover from the Penny Arcade team

2019

[Origin](#) deploys the IARC rating system for all digitally delivered games

2020

ESRB [introduces](#) *In-Game Purchases (Includes Random Items)* [Interactive Element](#)

ESRB launches [¡Vamos a Jugar!](#) (or "Let's Play" in English) to help Spanish-speaking parents and guardians learn about the ESRB rating system, parental controls, and more

Google Stadia deploys the IARC rating system for all digitally delivered video games

2021

ESRB introduces the RATING PENDING – LIKELY MATURE 17+ [notice](#) that publishers can include in advertisements and promotional materials for upcoming video games that have not yet been rated but are anticipated to be rated Mature 17+