

= Entertainment Software Rating Board =

The Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) is a self @-@ regulatory organization that assigns age and content ratings , enforces industry @-@ adopted advertising guidelines , and ensures responsible online privacy principles for computer and video games in the United States , nearly all of Canada , and Mexico . The ESRB was established in 1994 by the Entertainment Software Association (formerly the Interactive Digital Software Association) , in response to criticism of violent content found in video games such as Night Trap , Mortal Kombat , and other controversial video games with excessively violent or sexual content .

The board assigns ratings to games based on their content , using judgment similar to the motion picture rating systems used in many countries , using a combination of six age @-@ based levels intended to aid consumers in determining a game 's content and suitability , along with a system of " content descriptors " which detail specific types of content present in a particular game . The ESRB also maintains a code of ethics for the advertising and promotion of video games ? ensuring that marketing materials for games display their ESRB ratings information , and are targeted to appropriate audiences , and an online privacy certification program . In 2011 , the ESRB began a program for rating mobile apps in partnership with CTIA . The ESRB is also a member of the International Age Rating Coalition .

The ESRB ratings system is effectively a de facto standard because of the collective leverage of the Board and the video game industry : major console manufacturers will not license games for their systems unless they carry ESRB ratings , most retail stores enforce ESRB ratings , and also do not carry any games which are not rated by the organization . The ESRB rating system is primarily enforced on a voluntary basis by the video game and retail industry , and is not enforced under federal laws in any of the countries where it is actively used ? however , in some parts of Canada , provincial laws require retailers to enforce the ESRB ratings system , with enforcement of these laws handled by regional film ratings boards .

Due to the level of consumer and retail awareness of the ratings system , along with the organization 's efforts to ensure that retailers comply with the ratings system and that publishers comply with its marketing code , the ESRB has considered its system to be effective , and was praised by the Federal Trade Commission for being the " strongest " self @-@ regulatory organization in the entertainment sector . Despite its positive reception , the ESRB has still faced criticism from politicians and other watchdog groups for the structure of its operations , particularly in the wake of a 2005 incident that surrounded the organization 's handling of " hidden " , objectionable content in a game which could be accessed using a user @-@ created modification . Critics of the ESRB has asserted that the organization has a conflict of interest because of its ties to the video game industry , and that the ESRB does not rate certain games , such as the Grand Theft Auto series , harshly enough for their violent or sexual content in order to protect their commercial viability . Contrarily , other critics have argued that , at the same time , the ESRB rates certain games too strongly for their content , and that its influence has stifled the viability of adult @-@ oriented video games due to the board 's restrictions on how they are marketed and sold .

= = History = =

= = = Background = = =

Video games with objectionable content date back as far as 1976 ; the arcade game Death Race , an adaptation of the film Death Race 2000 , required users to run over " gremlins " with a vehicle and avoid the gravestones they leave behind . Although its graphics were relatively primitive , the game 's overall theme and the sound effects made when gremlins were killed were considered disturbing by players , prompting media attention . A developer known as Mystique became known for making sexually explicit adult video games for the Atari 2600 console , but garnered the most attention with its controversial 1982 game Custer 's Revenge , which infamously featured a crude

simulation of the rape of a Native American woman . Atari received numerous complaints about the game , and responded by trying to sue the game 's makers .

A 1983 industry crash , caused by the market being overrun with low @-@ quality products , prompted a higher degree of regulation by future console manufacturers : when the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES) was launched in the United States in 1985 , Nintendo of America instituted requirements and restrictions on third @-@ party developers , including the requirement for all games to be licensed by the company . The console itself also included a lockout chip to enforce this requirement and prevent the console from loading unlicensed games . Such leverage on developers has since become a standard practice among console makers , although Nintendo of America also had stringent content policies , frequently censoring blood , sexual content , and references to religion , tobacco and alcohol from games released on its consoles in the United States .

When asked in 1987 about the suitability of a film @-@ like rating system for video games , a representative of the Software Publishers Association said that " Adult computer software is nothing to worry about . It 's not an issue that the government wants to spend any time with ... They just got done with a big witchhunt in the music recording industry , and they got absolutely nowhere " . The association did recommend voluntary warnings for games like Leisure Suit Larry in the Land of the Lounge Lizards (1987) .

= = = Formation = = =

Video games ' progression into the 1990s brought dramatic increases in graphics and sound capabilities , and the ability to use full @-@ motion video (FMV) content in games . In the United States Senate , Democratic Senators Joe Lieberman of Connecticut and Herb Kohl of Wisconsin led hearings on video game violence and the corruption of society which began in 1992 . Two games of this era were specifically cited in the hearings for their content ; the fighting game Mortal Kombat featured realistic , digitized sprites of live @-@ action actors , blood , and the ability to use violent " fatality " moves to finish opponents , while Night Trap featured 90 minutes of FMV content , with scenes that were considered to be sexually suggestive and exploitive . Both Nintendo and Sega had differing views on objectionable content in video games ; a port of Mortal Kombat for the Super NES was censored to remove the game 's overly violent content , whereas the port for Sega consoles retained much of this content , which helped increase sales .

Sega had implemented its own voluntary ratings system , the Videogame Rating Council (VRC) , largely to rate games released for its own consoles . Mortal Kombat and Night Trap were rated " MA @-@ 13 " and " MA @-@ 17 " on Sega 's scale respectively . During the hearings , Howard Lincoln and Bill White (chairmen of Nintendo and Sega 's U.S. divisions respectively) attacked each other 's stances on objectionable content in video games ; Lincoln condemned Sega for even releasing Night Trap and felt it " simply has no place in our society " , while White argued that Sega was more responsible to consumers because they actually had a rating system in place , rather than a blanket presumption that all its games would be suitable for general audiences . Fragmentation would also develop in the classification of games ; The 3DO Company formed their own age @-@ based rating system , the 3DO Rating System , for games released on its 3DO Interactive Multiplayer , and the Recreational Software Advisory Council (RSAC) was formed for rating PC games , which used a system consisting of ratings in certain classes of objectionable content , but not ages . However , Lieberman did not believe that these systems were sufficient , and in February 1994 , threatened to propose the creation of a federal commission for regulating and rating video games .

With the threat of federal regulations , a group of major video game developers and publishers , including Acclaim Entertainment and Electronic Arts along with Nintendo and Sega , formed a political trade group known as the Interactive Digital Software Association in April 1994 , with a goal to create a self @-@ regulatory framework for assessing and rating video games . While Sega had proposed that the industry use its VRC rating system , Nintendo representatives objected to the idea because they did not want to associate themselves with the work of their main competitor ; instead , a vendor @-@ neutral rating system known as the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB)

was developed . The formation of the ESRB was officially announced to Congress on July 29 , 1994 . The ESRB was officially launched on September 16 , 1994 ; its system consisted of five age @-@ based ratings ; " Early Childhood " , " Kids to Adults " (later renamed " Everyone " in 1998) , " Teen " , " Mature " , and " Adults Only " . The ESRB would also use " descriptors " with brief explanations of the content contained in a game .

= = = Expansion and recent developments = = =

Alongside its efforts to classify video games , the ESRB also formed a division known as Entertainment Software Rating Board Interactive (ESRBi) , which rated internet content using a similar system to its video game ratings . ESRBi also notably partnered with the internet service provider America Online to integrate these ratings into its existing parental controls . ESRBi was discontinued in 2003 .

In 2002 , Dr. Arthur Pober , the original president of the ESRB , stepped down so he could focus on academics . In November 2002 , he was formally replaced by Patrica Vance , who formerly worked for The Princeton Review and The Walt Disney Company . In March 2005 , the ESRB introduced a new rating , " Everyone 10 + " , designating games with content of a relatively higher impact than those of games rated " Everyone " , but still not high enough to garner a " Teen " rating .

In response to the growth of smartphone use , in November 2011 , CTIA , a group of major U.S. companies representing the wireless industry , and ESRB announced the co @-@ development of a free , voluntary ratings process for mobile application stores . The system uses ESRB 's icons and content descriptors , along with three additional icons (" Shares Info , " " Shares Location , " and " Users Interact ") to inform users of an app 's behavior in regards to data collection and interactions with others . Verizon Wireless and T @-@ Mobile US were among the first to implement the system for their own application storefronts , and Microsoft 's Windows Phone Marketplace already supported ESRB ratings upon its introduction . ESRB president Patricia Vance explained that the partnership was intended to help broaden the ESRB 's reach into the mobile market , and that " consumers , especially parents , benefit from having a consistently applied set of ratings for games rather than a fragmented array of different systems . "

In November 2012 , the ESRB and other video game ratings boards , including PEGI , established a consortium known as the International Age Rating Coalition , which sought to design an online , questionnaire @-@ based rating process for digitally @-@ distributed video games that could generate ratings for multiple video game ratings organizations at once . The resulting ratings information is tied to a unique code , which can then be used for online storefronts to display the corresponding rating for the user 's region . On March 17 , 2015 , Google announced that Play Store would adopt and display ESRB ratings for apps in North America through the IARC system . Windows Store also implemented IARC in January 2016 . Apple 's App Store still uses its own generic age rating system and does not use the ESRB system .

= = Rating process = =

To obtain a rating for a game , a publisher submits a detailed questionnaire and a DVD containing footage of the most graphic and extreme content found in the game to the ESRB , including content related to the game 's context , storyline , reward system , unlockable and otherwise " hidden " content , and other elements that may affect its rating . They may also provide printed copies of the game 's script and lyrics from songs in the game . The footage is reviewed by a team of at least three raters , who discuss what the most appropriate and " helpful " rating for the game would be , based on the footage and details provided . Raters represent various demographics , including parents , along with casual and " hardcore " gamers . Raters were formerly hired on a part @-@ time basis , but in 2007 , ESRB transitioned to a team of seven full @-@ time raters , who all live in the New York City area .

If a publisher does not agree with the rating that they were assigned , they may edit the game and submit the revised version for a new rating ; for example , an initial cut of The Punisher was given an

AO rating due to the extremely violent nature of certain scenes contained within the game . To lessen their impact , the developer changed these scenes to be rendered in black and white : the revised cut of the game was re @-@ submitted , and received the M rating . There is also an appeals process , but it has never been used .

When the game is ready for release , the publisher sends copies of the final version of the game to the ESRB , who reviews the game 's packaging , and a random number of games they receive are play tested for more thorough review . Penalties apply to publishers who misrepresent the content of their games , including the potential for fines up to US \$ 1 million and a product recall , if deemed necessary . The ESRB typically posts rating information for new titles on its website 30 days after the rating process is complete ; in 2008 , after a number of incidents where this practice inadvertently leaked information about upcoming , unannounced games , the ESRB began to allow publishers to place embargoes on the release of ratings information until a game is officially announced .

In April 2011 , the ESRB introduced a streamlined , automated process for assigning ratings for console downloadable games as a way to address the rapidly growing volume of digitally @-@ delivered games . Rather than having raters review each product , publishers of these games complete a series of multiple @-@ choice questions that address content across relevant categories , including violence , sexual content , language , etc . The responses automatically determine the game 's rating category and content descriptors . Games rated via this process may be tested post @-@ release to ensure that content was properly disclosed . The survey @-@ based method is also used in the ESRB / CTIA and IARC rating programs for mobile apps .

= = Ratings = =

ESRB ratings are primarily identified through icons , which are displayed on the packaging and promotional materials for a game . Each icon contains a stylized alphabetical letter representing the rating . In addition to the main age @-@ based , ratings , ESRB ratings also incorporate one or more of 30 " content descriptors " which provide detailed information about the specific types and levels of objectionable content contained in a game , including categories covering different levels of violence , language , sexual content , nudity , use of alcoholic beverages or other drugs , crude and mature humor , or gambling . The full label , containing both the descriptors and rating , are typically displayed on the back of a game 's packaging . Games which incorporate online elements must display the additional disclaimer " Online Interactions Not Rated by the ESRB " , indicating that the rating only applies to the game itself , and not user @-@ generated content or communications (such as chat) that may be available within .

The appearance of the ratings icons themselves have been updated several times ; originally carrying a stylized , pixelated look , they were first updated in 1999 to carry a cleaner appearance . In 2013 , the rating icons were streamlined , with the textual name of the rating becoming black text on white , the " content rated by " tagline removed entirely , and trademark symbols moved to the bottom @-@ right corner . The changes were intended to increase their clarity at smaller sizes (such as on mobile devices) , reflecting the growth in the digital distribution of video games .

= = Enforcement = =

The ESRB rating system is enforced on a self @-@ regulatory basis by the video game and retail industries ; many American retailers refuse the sale of " Mature " -rated games to those under 17 years of age as verified by photo identification , and refuse to stock video games that have not been rated by the organization , or are rated " Adults Only " . As of May 2015 , the live streaming website Twitch.tv explicitly bans the streaming of games rated " Adults Only " .

In the United States , while there have been attempts at the state and federal level to introduce laws requiring retailers to enforce the ESRB ratings system , the Supreme Court ruled in *Brown v. Entertainment Merchants Association* that laws restricting the sale of video games to minors were unconstitutional , as the medium is considered a protected form of expression under the First

Amendment . The case involved a 2005 California law sponsored by Leland Yee which attempted to ban the sale of " violent video games " to those under 18 , defined using a variation of the Miller test that was separate from the ESRB rating . The law was not Yee 's first attempt to regulate video game sales in California ; in 2004 , he attempted to pass a law which would have required retailers to present M @-@ rated games on separate shelves from lower @-@ rated games , of at least 5 feet (60 in) from the ground . The bill was passed after it was modified to only require retailers to educate customers on the ESRB system .

In Canada , ESRB ratings are enforced under provincial laws by film ratings boards in Manitoba , New Brunswick , Nova Scotia , Ontario , and Saskatchewan . As in the U.S. , most retailers voluntarily enforce the ratings regardless . Prior to the implementation of the Film Classification Act , 2005 , which gave it the power to enforce ESRB ratings , the Ontario Film Review Board had used its own powers to classify the M @-@ rated Manhunt as a film and give it a " Restricted " rating , legally barring its sale to those under 18 .

In May 2013 , the ESRB reprimanded a distributor of the online game Wartune for using its trademarked " Adults Only " icon in its advertising without authorization or having actually been issued the rating by the board .

= = Marketing = =

The ESRB enforces guidelines that have been adopted by the video game industry in order to ensure responsible advertising and marketing practices . These include ensuring that game packaging , advertisements , and trailers properly display rating information , restricting where advertising materials for games rated " Teen " or higher can appear , forbidding publishers from " glamoriz [ing] or exploiting " a game 's rating in advertising , and requiring online marketing of games rated " Mature " or higher to be restricted to users who are appropriately aged . This allows the ESRB to restrict video game advertising " to consumers for whom the product is not rated as appropriate . " The board also forbids ratings from other organizations from being shown alongside ESRB ratings on publishers ' websites or social media outlets . A group of online gaming publications known as the ESRB Website Council operates under a similar code of conduct , which requires them to display ESRB ratings information for games that they cover , and implement systems to restrict access to audiovisual content depicting M or AO @-@ rated games to users who are appropriately aged .

In March 2013 , the ESRB eased certain restrictions on the promotion of M @-@ rated games . Firstly , trailers for games that are or are anticipated to be rated " Mature " can be cleared by the ESRB as being appropriate for " general " audiences ? similarly to the " green band " ratings issued by the MPAA for film trailers . Secondly , the board began to allow , on a case @-@ by @-@ basis depending on the target demographic of the game , M @-@ rated games to be cross @-@ promoted in the marketing materials of games with lower ratings .

= = Online privacy = =

In addition to its video game ratings operation , the ESRB also offers an online privacy program which helps websites adopt privacy policies and data usage practices which comply with relevant laws and best practices for the collection and use of personal information , and provides " Privacy Certified " seals indicating certification under the ESRB 's privacy guidelines . In June 2013 , the service was extended to mobile apps , with a particular emphasis on helping application developers comply with the then @-@ upcoming changes to the Children 's Online Privacy Protection Act .

= = Reception = =

The ESRB has considered its system to be effective , due in part to initiatives by the Board to promote enforcement and consumer awareness of the system , and efforts by retailers to prevent the sale of M @-@ rated games to minors . The Federal Trade Commission has also praised the

organization ; in 2008 , the FTC released the result of an investigation finding that only 20 % of underaged mystery shoppers were able to successfully purchase an M @-@ rated video game from a selection of retailers ? a 22 percent reduction from 2007 . By 2011 , these numbers had dropped further to only 13 % . In its 2009 Report to Congress , the FTC recognized the ESRB for having " the strongest self @-@ regulatory code " of all entertainment sectors because of its enforcement of advertising and marketing guidelines .

= = = Ratings accuracy = = =

The ESRB has often been accused of not rating certain games , such as Manhunt and the Grand Theft Auto series , harshly enough for violence and other related themes , and for lacking transparency in certain aspects of the ratings process . Critics have argued that some games only received the M rating rather than the stricter AO rating because of the commercial effects of such a rating ; console manufacturers and most retailers refuse to distribute AO @-@ rated games , dramatically affecting their commercial availability . An ESRB representative stated that the Board uses the AO rating when warranted , even due to violence , and that in most occasions , publishers would edit the game to meet the M rating to ensure wide commercial availability instead of keeping the AO rating . The film classification boards of the Canadian provinces of British Columbia and Ontario respectively classified the M @-@ rated games Soldier of Fortune and Manhunt as films due to concerns over the nature of their content , and gave them " Restricted " ratings , legally restricting their sale to adults .

There has been a correlation between the M rating and sales ; a 2007 study by Electronic Entertainment Design and Research found that M @-@ rated games " have both the highest average Metacritic scores and the highest average gross sales in the United States " , and NPD Group found that 7 of the top 20 video games of 2010 (including the # 1 game , Call of Duty : Black Ops) were M @-@ rated , even though only 5 % of games released that year carried the rating .

In 2005 , the National Institute on Media and the Family gave the Board an " F " rating for " Ratings Accuracy " on a MediaWise report card , arguing that M @-@ rated games were progressively becoming more explicit , that the AO rating was seldom @-@ used because the organization is controlled by the video game industry and that " study after study shows that ratings would be stricter if parents were doing the job . It took explicit porn to get Grand Theft Auto : San Andreas an AO rating , even though the original version , still rated M , rewards players whose on @-@ screen persona had sex with prostitutes and then killed them . We have been calling for AO ratings for the Grand Theft Auto series for years ? now it is clear why the ESRB has ignored our request . " The ESRB disputed these claims , arguing that the organization " relies on flawed research and ignores any and all conflicting evidence " , was " imposing its own narrow values and morality on the rest of the country , regardless that it has little evidence to show that parents agree with their point of view " , and did not reply to the ESRB 's request for comments following its report card in 2004 . The board also pointed out that the NIMF 's study used data from PSVRatings , a for @-@ profit competitor to the ESRB .

On the other hand , some have felt that the " Mature " rating is too broad ; video game journalist Ben Kuchera noted that Halo 3 ? a sci @-@ fi first @-@ person shooter whose level of violence was , in his opinion , comparable to a Star Wars film , had received an M rating for " Blood and Gore , " " Mild Language " and " Violence " . He argued that " having a game like Halo 3 share the same rating as Saints Row IV , which carries the ' Blood , ' Intense Violence , ' ' Partial Nudity , ' ' Sexual Content , ' ' Strong Language ' and ' Use of Drugs ' descriptors was always silly , and it weakened the thrust of the ratings system . " Likewise , he felt that the tone and content of the PG @-@ 13 rated film The Dark Knight was relatively harsher to children than that of the Saints Row series due to the latter 's light @-@ hearted tone , but still noted that " as parents we know what 's right and what isn 't for our kids , and being aware of the content they consume is a large part of our job as parents . " Halo 5 : Guardians , the most recent installment in the franchise , received a " Teen " rating instead of " Mature " . Microsoft Xbox division executive Aaron Greenberg argued that consumers had been " surprised " by the M rating on previous installments " given the style of the game and the lack of real

graphic violence and things like that " , but that the " Teen " rating would theoretically enable the game to reach a broader audience of younger players .

= = = Adults Only rating = = =

The " Adults Only " (AO) rating has attracted a negative stigma among the video game industry ? one which has been criticized for stifling the ability for developers to have creative freedom in their portrayal of certain themes in a game , at the risk of being commercially unviable due to publishers ' objections to AO @-@ rated content : AO @-@ rated games cannot be published for major video game console platforms , and most retailers do not stock AO @-@ rated games . ESRB President Patricia Vance argued that applying self @-@ censorship to ensure marketability was a compromise that is " true in every entertainment medium " , but still believed that the idea of the AO rating eventually becoming acceptable would be a good thing for the ESRB system . The stigma is primarily affected by a perception by the industry and other activists that video games are generally considered children 's products ; for example , the existence of a Wii version of Manhunt 2 was condemned by Hillary Clinton over fears that children could use the game 's motion controls to " act out each of the many graphic torture scenes and murders [in the game] . "

Attitudes towards AO @-@ rated games have also been influenced by the types of games that have received the rating ; Peter Payne , head of Peach Princess , a publisher of English translations of Japanese eroge visual novels , believed that the " Adults Only " rating had acquired a " smutty " and " tasteless " reputation since the majority of AO @-@ rated titles were either niche pornographic titles such as eroge games , or low @-@ brow adult titles such as Riana Rouge (which Polygon described as a game which had the quality of an adult movie , and " [aimed] to do nothing more than tell low @-@ brow jokes and show nude women prancing around ") and Lula 3D (whose packaging touted " Bouncin ' Boobs Technology " as a selling point) .

By contrast , the ESRB has only officially given out the AO rating for extreme violence three times : Thrill Kill , a fighting game with heavy sexual overtones , received an AO rating with content descriptors for " Animated Violence " and " Animated Blood and Gore " . After acquiring its developer Virgin Entertainment , Electronic Arts pulled Thrill Kill prior to its release due to objections over the game 's content . Manhunt 2 also received an AO rating for its extreme violence ; while the uncut version would be released exclusively for PCs , the console versions were edited to meet the M rating criteria . In January 2015 , Hatred , a controversial game whose plot centers around a character indiscriminately murdering everyone he encounters , received the rating for its extreme violence and harsh language ; one of the game 's developers disputed the rating , arguing that " its violence isn 't really that bad and this harsh language isn 't overused " , but also acknowledged the rarity of their situation .

= = = Hidden content = = =

In 2005 , members of the mod community discovered that the PC version of Grand Theft Auto : San Andreas could be modified to unlock an incomplete sex minigame known as " Hot Coffee " , which Rockstar North had decided to leave out of the final game . The discovery of the minigame caused California State Assemblyman Leland Yee to rebuke both Rockstar and the ESRB , arguing that the ESRB was not doing its job properly . US Senators Hillary Clinton and Joe Lieberman also expressed their disapproval . Rockstar initially claimed that the minigame was created by the mod community and was not a part of the original game . This was disproven when it was discovered that a third @-@ party cheat device could be used to unlock the " Hot Coffee " scenes in console versions of the game . Following an investigation , the ESRB changed its rating from M to AO , setting a precedent that games can be re @-@ rated due to the presence of pertinent content that exists on the game 's disc , even if that content is programmed to not be playable without modification or unauthorized use of a third @-@ party cheat device . Following the release of a version excluding the content , the rating was reverted to M.

In May 2006 , The Elder Scrolls IV : Oblivion had its rating changed from T to M due to " more

detailed depictions of blood and gore than were considered in the original rating " , along with a third @-@ party mod for the PC version allowing the use of topless female characters . The game 's publisher , Bethesda Softworks , decided not to re @-@ edit the game or contest the new rating , but noted that Oblivion 's content was " not typical " of games with the M rating , and that the game " does not present the central themes of violence that are common to those products . "

In the wake of these two incidents , the ESRB addressed hidden content with changes to its ratings policies in June 2006 ; publishers must disclose information surrounding all unlockable or otherwise " hidden " content in the game as part of the ratings process , and publishers can be fined up to US \$ 1 million if they are found to have misrepresented the content of their game after further reviews . In response to the aftermath of Hot Coffee and the resulting policy changes , ESRB President Patricia Vance stated that in her opinion , " there is no other industry self @-@ regulatory system willing or capable of imposing such swift and sweeping sanctions on its own members , which in this particular case resulted in the removal of a top @-@ selling product from the market and a major loss of sales . " However , several U.S. politicians , including Senator Sam Brownback , California Senator Leland Yee , and Michigan Senator Fred Upton (who was a major critic against Rockstar during the controversy) , still felt that the ESRB had " lost " its trust of consumers , believing that video game developers were taking advantage of the board 's conflict of interest with the industry to incorporate objectionable content into their products without the ESRB 's full knowledge .

In late 2006 , both Upton and Brownback tabled bills to place governmental oversight on aspects of the ESRB rating process , and make it illegal for publishers to misrepresent the playable content of a video game to a ratings board ; Upton proposed a bill known as the Video Game Decency Act , explaining that that developers had " done an end @-@ run around the process to deliver violent and pornographic material to our kids " , and that the bill would " [go] hand in hand with the mission of the industry ? s own ratings system . " Brownback proposed a bill known as the Truth in Video Game Rating Act , which would have also forced the ESRB to have full , hands @-@ on access to games instead of just video footage , and have initiated a government study on the " effectiveness " of the organization and the possibility of forming a ratings organization independent from the video game industry .