

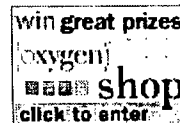
File: Children +
redm

To: Ann O'Leary
From: Ian Quinn
Re: Parents and Teens on the Internet

I checked the sites that you suggested and conducted a couple of searches on my own. Here is what I found:

- Of the sites you recommended, each had some 'useful' content. Oxygen.com had some article specifically for teens, but largely directed surfers toward the site's chat rooms and advertisers, (where would we be without Double Click?). parentsoup.com is the apparently a portion of the larger ivillage.com umbrella. This site's parents section, like the Oxygen site, focused on younger cohorts. Still, the teen section provided cursory articles, but with a stronger emphasis on the chat rooms.
- My searches turned up many links to the parentsoup.com site from other umbrella sites. I also turned up the talkcity.com site that was exclusively comprised of chat rooms.

1 sampling of topics on Oxygen



You are here: [Oxygen](#) > [Moms Online](#) > [Hot Tips](#) > [Parenting Older Kids Tips - Moms Online](#)



Help & Info
Newsletter
Site Map

Hot Tips



By Moms, For Moms

Parenting Older Kids Tips - Moms Online

I'm Pregnant!
Ages & Stages
Job Wise
Home Space
As a Family
Mom to Mom
Dare I Say It?

[A Dose of Self-Help - Moms Online](#)
[A Promise is a Promise - Moms Online](#)
[Birth Control Insights - Moms Online](#)
[Bracing for an Empty Nest](#)
[Celebrate Grades -- Don't Pay! - Moms Online](#)
[Celebrating Womanhood - Moms Online](#)
[Choose Your Battles Carefully! - Moms Online](#)
[Communication is the Key - Moms Online](#)
[Consequences Are Healthy - Moms Online](#)
[Curfews & Partying - Moms Online](#)
[Embracing Educational Opportunities](#)
[Encourage Interests & Activities - Moms Online](#)
[Good Old-Fashioned Advice - Moms Online](#)
[Know Their Friends - Moms Online](#)
[Let them Resolve Injustices - Moms Online](#)
[Limit Nagging, Gain Respect - Moms Online](#)
[Listen, Think, and Decide - Moms Online](#)
[Longer Ropes & Unconditional Love](#)
[Maintaining Grades: A Commitment - Moms Online](#)
[Make-Up Expertise for Teen Girls](#)
[Monitoring Curfews - Moms Online](#)
[Morals & Peer Pressure](#)
[Oh, the Things You Can Learn! - Moms Online](#)
[Open the Lines of Communication - Moms Online](#)
[Open-Door Curfews - Moms Online](#)
[Owning a Car - Moms Online](#)
[Privileges Are Just That! - Moms Online](#)
[Require a Driving Log - Moms Online](#)
[Respect for Cars, Cash & Property - Moms Online](#)
[Write Letters to Resolve Differences](#)

file: unknown Zaky Nypke



Parental Media Guide

[About Us](#)

[News](#)

The movie, electronic game, music, cable and broadcast television industries have each voluntarily developed clear and informative parental advisory systems to provide families with advance information on the content of entertainment products. This site provides "one-stop shopping" to each of these parental advisory systems.

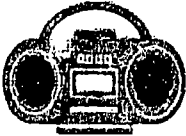


[Television](#)



[Classification and Rating
Administration \(CARA\): Reasons
for Movie Ratings
\(Home page\)](#)
[CARA: Ratings Guide
\(What the categories mean\)](#)

[The TV Parental Guidelines
\(Home page\)](#)
[The Guidelines
\(Full version\)](#)



[Recording Industry Association
of America: Parental Advisory
\(Home page\)](#)
[Parental Advisory FAQ
\(Frequently Asked Questions\)](#)



[The Entertainment Software
Rating Board
\(Home page\)](#)
[ESRB: Rating Categories
\(What the categories mean\)](#)

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Questions? Contact us at:
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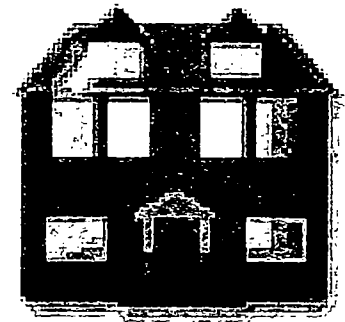
1. **One Stop Shopping** – all the information parents need to make smart choices about their children's entertainment... in one place.
2. **Easy access** – anticipating the technological limitations of many families, www.parentalguide.org was designed to load quickly and easily over the kinds of modems used in most homes. No frustrating waits for unnecessarily complex technology.
3. **Handicap accessible** – the www.parentalguide.org Web site is "Bobby Approved" for handicap access. "Bobby" is a seal of approval developed by the Center for Applied Special Technology (www.cast.org/bobby/). "Bobby" analyzes Web pages for their accessibility to people with disabilities.



www.parentalguide.org

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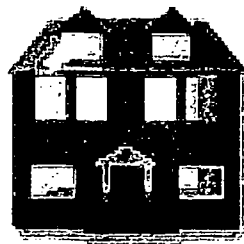


**The information you
need to know about
parental media
advisory systems.**

ONLINE PARENTAL MEDIA GUIDE

Today's families have many entertainment choices available to them. There are well-known parental guideline systems in place for movies, records, television and video games that offer parents and caregivers advance, cautionary information so they can better supervise their family's entertainment choices.

With this Web site, www.parentalguide.org, the entertainment industry has come together to provide a central resource for parents and caregivers seeking more information about these guidelines.



MOVIES

Classification and Rating
Administration
www.filmratings.com

TELEVISION

TV Parental Guidelines
www.tvguidelines.org

CD'S AND RECORDS

Recording Industry of America –
Parental Advisory
www.riaa.com/Parents-Advisory-1.cfm

COMPUTER, VIDEO AND INTERNET GAMES

Entertainment Software Rating Board
www.esrb.org

WWW.PARENTALGUIDE.ORG SITE SPONSORS

Interactive Digital Software
Association

www.idsa.com

Motion Picture Association
of America

www.mpaa.org

National Association of
Broadcasters

www.nab.org

National Cable Television
Association

www.ncta.com

Recording Industry
Association of America

www.riaa.com

information@parentalguide.org

I applaud the media and entertainment industry for announcing that they have answered my Administration's call to action to develop a one-stop web site for parents to learn more about how to monitor and better understand their children's interaction with the media. Hillary challenged the industry to develop this web site as part of the White House Conference on Teenagers to give parents more and better information about how to use the current media rating systems and parent advisory guidelines voluntarily put in place by the movie, television, music, and computer/video game industries. This step of universal information for parents is a positive first step in tools for parents to better decide what is appropriate and not appropriate for their children to be exposed to in the media. Hillary and I will continue to call on the industry to take the next step of voluntarily creating a uniform rating system that would apply to movies, television, music, and video games.

The parental media guide can be found at www.parentalguide.org. This web site was jointly developed and produced by the Motion Picture Association of America, the National Cable Television Association, the National Association of Broadcasters, and the Recording Industry Association of America.

File: children +
media

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April 28, 2000

Ms. Ann O'Leary
Special Assistant to the President
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to the First Lady
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

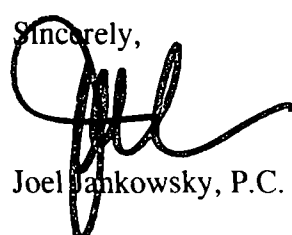
Dear Ann:

Thanks for talking to me the other day regarding the upcoming White House conference on teens.

Per our discussion, attached please find the House debate on the "Wamp-Stupak" amendment during the consideration to the Juvenile Justice bill. Obviously, the "Noes" have the better-reasoned arguments.

Thanks again.

Thanks!

Sincerely,

Joel Jankowsky, P.C.

Enclosure

this, removes all of the rhetoric on both sides and all of the efforts to point blame, and is an investment in real science.

I hope that the NIH study would review the methodologies and the formulas that have been used by the different researchers, study the different conclusions and different statistical models that could be developed from those formulas. And I think questions that have not even been asked before by private researchers, the questions and the relevance of neighborhood violence and what kind of role that plays in terms of family, in terms of the commission of violence, family situations and their relationship to the root causes of violence, all these things, are a matter for investigation, not anecdote, empirical studies, science, not rhetoric.

I urge the adoption of the amendment.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Madam Chairman, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN).

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

There is one point I hope that the Surgeon General's study does include, because there is an interesting question out here, the issue of depiction of violence through the media and the commission of violent acts, and the distribution of that same media throughout the world, and the existence of a lower violence rate in many other countries and what are the relationships and what are the reasons.

I think this would be worth pursuing, too, because this becomes a part of the debate on the whole question of media violence and its contribution to violence in our society.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Madam Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I will conclude by saying that I think the point of the gentleman is well-taken, and I think the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) and I will try to ask the Surgeon General to include that in this.

I hope anybody in the media who is watching will realize how serious Congress is about finding out the source of a lot of our problems so that we do not have these problems in the future. And if people in the media and the entertainment industry and other industries that have depicted violence and sexual explicitness on television and in the movies in the years past, if they would just of their own initiative start addressing this problem, it might eliminate some of the action that Congress might have to take in the future.

Madam Chairman, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY).

Mr. MARKEY. Madam Chairman, thank the gentleman very much for yielding.

Again, I want to thank him so much for all the work which he has done. I want to thank Tamara Fucile on my

staff for all the excellent work she has done as well in helping to put all this together.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Madam Chairman, I want to thank Matt on my staff for all the work he has done as well.

Madam Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY).

The question was taken; and the Chairman pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Chairman, I demand a recorded vote, and pending that, I make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 209, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. It is now in order to consider Amendment No. 35 printed in Part A of House Report 106-186.

AMENDMENT NO. 35 OFFERED BY MR. WAMP

Mr. WAMP. Madam Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Part A Amendment No. 35 offered by Mr. WAMP:

At the end of the bill insert the following:
SEC. 3. SYSTEM FOR LABELING VIOLENT CONTENT IN AUDIO AND VISUAL MEDIA PRODUCTS.

(b) LABELING OF AUDIO AND VISUAL MEDIA PRODUCTS.—The Fair Packaging and Labeling Act is amended by adding at the end the following:

“LABELING OF AUDIO AND VISUAL MEDIA PRODUCTS

“SEC. 14. (a) It is the policy of Congress, and the purpose of this section, to provide for the establishment, use, and enforcement of a consistent and comprehensive system for labeling violent content in audio and visual media products (including labeling of such products in the advertisements for such products), whereby—

“(1) the public may be adequately informed of—

“(A) the nature, context, and intensity of depictions of violence in audio and visual media products; and

“(B) matters needed to judge the appropriateness of the purchase, viewing, listening to, use, or other consumption of audio and visual media products containing violent content by minors of various ages; and

“(2) the public may be assured of—

“(A) the accuracy and consistency of the system in labeling the nature, context, and intensity of depictions of violence in audio and visual media products; and

“(B) the accuracy and consistency of the system in providing information on matters needed to judge the appropriateness of the purchase, viewing, listening to, use, or other consumption of audio and visual media products containing violent content by minors of various ages.

“(b)(1) Manufacturers and producers of interactive video game products and serv-

ices, video program products, motion picture products, and sound recording products may submit to the Federal Trade Commission a joint proposal for a system for labeling the violent content in interactive video game products and services, video program products, motion picture products, and sound recording products.

“(2) The proposal under this subsection should, to the maximum extent practicable, meet the requirements set forth in subsection (c).

“(3)(A) The antitrust laws shall not apply to any joint discussion, consideration, review, action, or agreement between or among manufacturers and producers referred to in paragraph (1) for purposes of developing a joint proposal for a system for labeling referred to in that paragraph.

“(B) For purposes of this paragraph, the term ‘antitrust laws’ has the meaning given such term in the first section of the Clayton Act (15 U.S.C. 12) and includes section 5 of the Federal Trade Commission Act (15 U.S.C. 45).

“(c) A system for labeling the violent content in interactive video game products and services, video program products, motion picture products, and sound recording products under this section shall meet the following requirements:

“(1) The label of a product or service shall consist of a single label which—

“(A) takes into account the nature, context, and intensity of the depictions of violence in the product or service; and

“(B) assesses the totality of all depictions of violence in the product or service.

“(2) The label of a product or service shall specify a minimum age in years for the purchase, viewing, listening to, use, or consumption of the product or service in light of the totality of all depictions of violence in the product or service.

“(3) The format of the label for products and services shall—

“(A) incorporate each label provided for under paragraphs (1) and (2);

“(B) include a symbol or icon, and written text; and

“(C) be identical for each given label provided under paragraphs (1) and (2), regardless of the type of product or service involved.

“(4) In the case of a product or service sold in a box, carton, sleeve, or other container, the label shall appear on the box, carton, sleeve, or container in a conspicuous manner.

“(5) In the case of a product or service that is intended to be viewed, the label shall—

“(A) appear before the commencement of the product or service;

“(B) appear in both visual and audio form; and

“(C) appear in visual form for at least five seconds.

“(6) Any advertisement for a product or service shall include a label of the product or service in accordance with the applicable provisions of this subsection.

“(d)(1)(A) If the manufacturers and producers referred to in subsection (b) submit to the Federal Trade Commission a proposal for a labeling system referred to in that subsection not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this section, the Commission shall review the labeling system contained in the proposal to determine whether the labeling system meets the requirements set forth in subsection (c) in a manner that addresses fully the purposes set forth in subsection (a).

“(B) Not later than 180 days after commencing a review of the proposal for a labeling system under subparagraph (A), the Commission shall issue a labeling system for purposes of this section. The labeling system issued under this subparagraph may include

such modifications of the proposal as the Commission considers appropriate in order to assure that the labeling system meets the requirements set forth in subsection (c) in a manner that addresses fully the purposes set forth in subsection (a).

"(2)(A) If the manufacturers and producers referred to in subsection (b) do not submit to the Commission a proposal for a labeling system referred to in that subsection within the time provided under paragraph (1)(A), the Commission shall prescribe regulations to establish a labeling system for purposes of this section that meets the requirements set forth in subsection (c).

"(B) Any regulations under subparagraph (A) shall be prescribed not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this section.

"(e) Commencing one year after the date of the enactment of this section, a person may not manufacture or produce for sale or distribution in commerce, package for sale or distribution in commerce, or sell or distribute in commerce any interactive video game product or service, video program product, motion picture product, or sound recording product unless the product or service bears a label in accordance with the labeling system issued or prescribed by the Federal Trade Commission under subsection (d) which—

"(1) is appropriate for the nature, context, and intensity of the depictions of violence in the product or service; and

"(2) specifies an appropriate minimum age in years for purchasers and consumers of the product or service.

"(f) Commencing one year after the date of the enactment of this section, a person may not sell in commerce an interactive video game product or service, video program product, motion picture product, or sound recording product to an individual whose age in years is less than the age specified as the minimum age in years for a purchaser and consumer of the product or service, as the case may be, under the labeling system issued or prescribed by the Federal Trade Commission under subsection (d).

"(g) The Federal Trade Commission shall have the authority to receive and investigate allegations that an interactive video game product or service, video program product, motion picture product, or sound recording product does not bear a label under the labeling system issued or prescribed by the Commission under subsection (d) that is appropriate for the product or service, as the case may be, given the nature, context, and intensity of the depictions of violence in the product or service.

"(h) Any person who violates subsection (e) or (f) shall be subject to a civil penalty in an amount not to exceed \$10,000 for each such violation. In the case of an interactive video game product or service, video program product, motion picture product, or sound recording product determined to violate subsection (e), each day from the date of the commencement of sale or distribution of the product or service, as the case may be, to the date of the determination of the violation shall constitute a separate violation of subsection (e), and all such violations shall be aggregated together for purposes of determining the total liability of the manufacturer or producer of the product or service, as the case may be, for such violations under that subsection.

Mr. WAMP. Madam Chairman, I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK), the prime sponsor on the Democratic side of this amendment, be granted 10 minutes' time in support of this amendment and that he be able to yield time to Members in support of this amendment.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Tennessee?

There was no objection.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 209, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. WAMP) will control 10 minutes, and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK) will control 10 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. WAMP).

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Madam Chairman, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. The gentleman will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Madam Chairman, are either one of these gentlemen opposed to the amendment?

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. The Chair has not recognized opposition time at this point.

Mr. WAMP. Madam Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Chairman, this act will create a consistent and comprehensive system for labeling violent content in audio and visual media products, including the labeling of products in the advertisements.

The system will consist of a single label that will inform consumers of the nature, context, intensity of violent content, and age appropriateness of such products. The label will specify a minimum age in years for the purchase, viewing, listening to, use, or consumption of the product or service. The label will also include an icon or symbol with written text in plain view of the consumer. In the case of video or motion picture programs, the label will appear at the beginning of the program and last for at least 5 seconds.

The act waives antitrust laws, and the industries are given 6 months to work together in developing a standardized product labeling system. The proposal is subject to modification and final approval by the Federal Trade Commission.

In the occasion manufacturers do not submit a labeling system at the appropriate time, the Federal Trade Commission will devise regulations on its own to establish the labeling system.

The act bans domestic sale or commercial distribution of unlabeled products after 1 year in the event that these things are not met. Further, retailers are required to enforce label restrictions on such products and are subject to a fine of up to \$10,000 for failure to do so. Manufacturers and producers who violate the labeling system will be subject to these fines each day for every day the product is in the marketing place.

So my colleagues may ask, why is this necessary? We have heard testimony today that there have been almost a thousand studies since 1971 clearly showing that the violence in mass media products such as video games, movies, CDs is now so out-

rageous that it is having a desensitization effect, a conditioning effect on the young people of America. And this violence is so prolific that young people who cannot differentiate between fantasy and reality are effectively sitting at video games serving as simulators with killing, splattering, exit wounds.

The promotion is now so outrageous that all we are asking for is not to ban these products, but to have a uniform labeling system, much like we have on food safety products, much like we have on cigarettes, where a label will show a responsible parent what is necessary to make an informed judgment about whether to buy this product or take this product home.

I submitted earlier that Lieutenant Colonel Dave Grossman, in a book called "On Killing Provocatively," shows that the desensitization of human beings today, the act of killing happens over time by desensitization. These magazines' media products clearly are causing this to happen to our children, and pointed to the fact that our soldiers even in war are not inclined to naturally kill each other, that typically species do not kill each other. Even rattlesnakes do not kill each other and humans do not kill each other naturally.

We are asking at this defining moment, what is causing our children to kill each other? What evil is manifesting itself when our children will show up in places like Columbine and actually pull the trigger and kill each other?

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I would suggest that one of the primary factors is this desensitization that in large part the mass media, and I know their motives are not such but the fact is it is happening where these video games are having such an adverse effect.

Our soldiers in World War II, only 15 to 20 percent according to studies would actually kill each other, would kill the enemy when they were faced with an enemy. So they took the bull's eye off the firing range and they put a human figure so that the desensitization would begin to happen. They tried to break soldiers down so that they would ultimately pull the trigger. By the Korean War we got that figure up to 40 percent. By the Vietnam War, technology set in and it got up to 90 percent, so that the soldiers would actually pull the trigger, because it is not human, it is not natural for us to kill each other but they are desensitized, much like a pilot is desensitized through simulation for flight training, much like a driver learns how to drive through simulators. Video games have that same effect on small children. This is a catastrophic thing clearly in our society that we need to do something about. These video games need to at least be labeled.

With that, I look forward to a healthy and honorable debate here.

Madam Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore (Mrs. EMERSON). Does any Member seek time in opposition?

Mr. CONYERS. Yes. I do, Madam Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. The gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) is recognized for 20 minutes.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

This is an interesting concept here in which we now move the government into the labeling system business and we will now have an all-controlling, omnipotent Federal Trade Commission which will now be directly responsible for the labeling system for video games, movie and sound packages having violent content.

I hope everybody is thinking about what this is going to do in terms of the relationship of the government to commerce in the United States. The Federal Trade Commission has its hands full now. Outside of the Antitrust Division of the Department of Justice, it is the only antitrust division that we have, FTC. So it is with some reluctance that I indicate to my dear friend the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK) that this goes a little bit beyond the pale in terms of its overreach. What we are doing is creating a politburo that will move much of the entertainment industry to Washington, D.C. and I think we want to stop and think a minute about what we are doing.

We had an interesting hearing on May 13 on youth and violence. One of the great ideas, and I am not sure if the authors of this amendment are aware, which came out of it was the notion that there ought to be one kind of labeling system for all the entertainment industry. It was advanced by a media critic. It made a lot of sense. At the panel was Jack Valenti himself, representing the movie industry. It is, I think, under active consideration.

What we find is the problem here, instead of trying to see if the entertainment industry will move on our recommendations, is that here we have decided that they are not or they will not or they cannot and we will now do it for them by commanding the Federal Trade Commission to promulgate a government labeling system. This kind of parallels the Hyde amendment that was rejected yesterday. It is a little bit more tailored. But it still is constitutionally suspect because of the vagueness.

Not defining what violence means means that we will be in the courts for quite a long period of time. It is overbroad because it would apply to historical programs and restrict the dissemination of facts. It also may be considered not exactly necessary because the covered industries are using labels and, as I have suggested, they are moving toward even improving them. We have a problem with the V-chip, but I understand from the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK) that there may be an amendment that can correct it.

With regard to whether the amendment is premature or not, we are assuming that the entertainment products with violence are automatically harmful to youth and we impose a costly and burdensome labeling system. Might it not be better to wait for the definitive evidence of such links before imposing an intrusive government regulation system? Under the Markey amendment just passed, we decided to have the Surgeon General conduct a study. In another arena we have NIH conducting a study.

So without trying to punt on this, there is the unambiguous scientific evidence that really needs to be brought to bear. I am hopeful that we will consider this with great care.

Madam Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. STUPAK. Madam Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

My good friend the ranking Democrat on the Committee on the Judiciary has raised a couple of issues I would like to respond to.

Government is already into labeling. This is a label amendment. Government is into labeling. Let me explain. Let us say this is video. Let us say this is music. Let us say this is TV. Let us say this is movies. We have four different packages here and government labels every one of these packages. Everything we consume physically, government labels. On the back of every one of these packages is nutritional facts. It came from the FDA. Every one of them.

What we are saying is whether you are a movie, you are going to have a uniform, consistent standard label so we as consumers, before we consume it, we know what it is. Every one of them, nutritional facts. Every one of them, nutritional facts. Every one of them, nutritional facts. That is what we are asking the entertainment industry to do.

It is suggested that we should wait. For over 30 years the movie industry has been putting forth ratings. They are never the same. They constantly change. There is no enforcement. We have been waiting for over 30 years. Why 30 years ago did they bring up a rating system? Because study after study shows violence, constantly depicted, starting at age 8 makes the impression upon people that it is okay to do what you are seeing on television or what you are listening to in music or what you are seeing in the interactive video games, whatever it may be. In fact, this amendment amends government's Fair Packaging and Labeling Act. That is what we are asking to do in this bill. Government has been labeling and telling us what to do.

What we are asking for, music, video, interactive, television, give us the same, consistent, uniform label. And we let industry determine it. For the first 6 months industry will determine it. As the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) points out, the Federal

Trade Commission, FTC, has a right to oversee it. So it is uniform, it is consistent. Yes, we put financial penalties in there if they do not do it, if the producers and distributors do not do it. Why? Because we have been waiting over 30 years.

Madam Chairman, today I am offering my amendment with the gentleman from Tennessee to establish a standardized product, to put a violence labeling system for interactive video games, video programs, motion pictures and music. This is to inform and have a uniform and consistent labeling system which will be a valuable tool before I purchase a video game or music for my sons or let them go to a movie.

I want to thank the gentleman from Tennessee for his hard work on this. It is fair to say we must thank in the other body Senators LIEBERMAN and MCCAIN for their tireless effort in this same area. What we are saying here, we require that the manufacturers of products, whatever they are, put forth a uniform label which tells us what is the nature of the movie, or the music, what is the context, what is the intensity, what is the intensity of the violent content and the age appropriateness for these products.

It requires industry to work together, all of them, music, video games, videos, television, to work together to develop a standardized product. And if they cannot, the FTC is going to do it for them.

The amendment bans domestic sale and commercial distribution of unlabeled products after a year. There are already several different rating systems. Just like these packages, each one is packaged differently. That is what the current ratings system is in this country. We say let us put a uniform label, nutrition facts, nutrition for our mind and for our reviewing. That is what we are asking for, create a uniform and consistent labeling system so every parent and every consumer in this country can identify the product's content.

As I indicated, we have the nutritional labels so a consumer understands what is contained in a product he is about to consume. Why should parents and consumers of video games, movies, television and music not know what is the product before they buy them? We need to provide product information to parents and consumers about the violent content of these products to increase our ability to make informed decisions before we give the products to our children. Ultimately, parents have the responsibility to determine what is suitable for their children, to play on their VCR or what game to play, what to listen to and what to watch. However in this increasingly digital age, parents need to be more informed to make educated decisions and let us make it simple, so they know what it is through this labeling, a uniform, consistent label, not ratings but label throughout all of industry so we do not have to go to the

music CD and look at one thing and try to figure out what it says and go to the video, and see something else in interactive video games.

I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on the Wamp-Stupak amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

REQUEST TO MODIFY AMENDMENT NO. 35
OFFERED BY MR. WAMP

Mr. WAMP. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to modify the amendment and to explain the modification relative to the V-chip.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Tennessee?

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Chairman, I object.

The CHAIRMAN. Objection is heard.

Mr. WAMP. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume. What the modification would simply do after consultation with anyone that is concerned about the V-chip issue is to clearly establish with language in the amendment that the V-chip is not affected in any way, shape or form. There is no relationship to this amendment and the V-chip. The labeling system does not even mention V-chip technology. The product label does not interfere with the V-chip in any way. If anything, it provides a supplement to parents who cannot afford to purchase a new television set or set-top box in order to block V-chip programming. The V-chip is a rating system. The Wamp-Stupak amendment is a plain English labeling system. Parents really want common sense English language product content information and no one should be afraid of this particular amendment. As a matter of fact, relative to the V-chip, this is the same bill that was made in order as an amendment that was dropped in the Senate with bipartisan cosponsors, Senator McCain and Senator Lieberman, an original cosponsor, Senator Conrad, who was the author of the V-chip legislation in the Senate. It has support from Senator Lott, the majority leader, strong bipartisan support. All the fearmongering about this would affect the V-chip is unjustified.

I really regret that someone objected to our reasonable efforts to make sure in this amendment that their needs were met. They are the ones that asked that we be considerate. We were attempting to do so.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. Hunter).

□ 1300

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Chairman, I want to thank the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. Stupak) and the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. Wamp) for this long-needed legislation.

It is interesting to me to watch two of my friends, the gentlemen from Hollywood, California (Mr. Waxman) and (Mr. Berman), who have long been real champions of labeling cigarettes with those warning labels, those hazardous-

to-your-health labels, and I am sure they think that is a very good idea.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. HUNTER. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Chairman, the Constitution, as far as I know, does not say, Congress shall pass no law abridging the manufacture, the marketing, the distribution or the sale of potato chips or cigarettes.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Chairman, reclaiming my time, and just to respond to my friend, there is no constitutional problem with having a label on the movie *Natural Born Killers* which says to parents, "This product contains graphic and intense depictions of violence in the context of criminal activity. This product is inappropriate for consumption by minors under 17 years of age." In fact, that is an exercise of free speech, that is not an inhibition of free speech.

Mr. Chairman, parents are raising their children in a very dangerous world today with respect to the media and Hollywood and the entertainment industry. In the old days, Roy Rogers, when he was the biggest star in the world for children, never did anything to frustrate parents with respect to their goals of raising children who are honest, who are wholesome, and who have values. They did not have to explain why Roy Rogers did something that was horrible or unusual and that they should not follow.

I was looking at this billboard for *Natural Born Killers*. This stars people, Woody Harrelson, Juliette Lewis, Robert Downey, Jr., and Tommy Lee Jones, who millions of children throughout the world say, I really like her, or I really like him, and they have developed an affection and an admiration for those people. They have not learned to disassociate what those people do on the screen with the person themselves.

What this does for parents, for parents who are so busy today, often having several jobs, very often the mother and the father both working, many times raising children in single families, this gives them some information. This is supposed to be the information age. This tells them that something is graphic violence or graphic sex, and it allows that mom who is walking out the door whose child is going to go with another child somewhere to watch a movie, it enables them to make a decision and say either you can go or you cannot go.

This Wamp-Stupak legislation empowers parents, and the one thing that we have been afraid to do, apparently because of the enormous pressure and the enormous power of Hollywood, is empower parents. That is what we must do, and if this legislation passes, it will accrue to the benefit of every family in America.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Chairman, I begin by apologizing to the now long list of Members that want to speak in opposition to the amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. Waxman), the ranking member of the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight.

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

As the author of the legislation that required food labeling of nutritional information on products, I want to tell my colleagues why this is not the same kind of area where government ought to be involved.

I think we have to be very, very careful when government is going to be involved in intruding itself in the expression of ideas. Do we really want the same label to be on Schindler's List that we would have on *Natural Born Killers*? Do we want to put a chilling effect on entertainment, on literature, on creativity? I think it is inappropriate for government to do this sort of thing, and I thought it was inappropriate for the V-chip, and it never seems to satisfy people, because there seems to be this great desire to move from one label to the next label to start government censorship, and that is precisely the kind of thing that government ought to restrain itself from doing.

I would hope we would vote against this amendment.

The CHAIRMAN. The Chair would inform the Committee that the time of the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. Wamp) has expired. The gentleman from Michigan (Mr. Conyers) has 13 minutes remaining; the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. Stupak) has 4 minutes remaining.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. McCollum), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Crime of the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. McCOLLUM. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Reluctantly, I have to oppose this amendment. I believe that there are a number of reasons why this is not a good idea. I think, first of all, we have to recognize that all of us believe in labeling. I think every one of the movies that comes out, all of the television shows and so forth should have a label. But that is being done already in a system that is not perfect, but is being done by the industry groups involved.

This legislation, though, would come in and say one size fits all. It would require all of these industry groups to be together on a format, or the FTC would impose a format on them. What is good for country music certainly is not necessarily the same thing that we want for a video game. We have a country music song labeled in the same category with *Doom*, a violent and graphic game, and that would be totally inappropriate.

I would also think that we would require by this the rerating of hundreds of thousands of existing movies and television programs and so forth, and

that is an enormous task and a very expensive one.

Last but not least, I do not think the proposal is constitutional, unfortunately, and I know it will be discussed a lot more later. The reality is that we have a free speech question here, and if there is not an obscenity standard or something like that, there is no way we can label constitutionally by Congress.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN), a ranking subcommittee member of the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Chairman, I want to reemphasize the point that if we could analogize movies and music and books and television to potato chips and cigarettes, there would be no constitutional impediment whatsoever to government mandating of a rating system, but we cannot. The first amendment is very specific in its protection here.

In the V-chip legislation that we will hear more about later, there were no criminal penalties. There was a voluntary rating system developed by an industry, enforced by an industry, connected to a technology to make it meaningful.

With respect to the voluntary ratings system in the motion picture industry, with the recent decision of the National Association of Theater Owners, we will now find effective enforcement of a very effective rating system. I urge that this well-intentioned, but unconstitutional proposal be rejected.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. TAUZIN).

(Mr. TAUZIN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TAUZIN. Mr. Chairman, a couple of years ago when ratings for television were discussed and V-chips were discussed, there were bills to do this. For government to step in and establish rating systems, we did the wise thing then, and I ask my colleagues to do the wise thing today. Reject the notion of government ratings.

We took our committee on telecom to Peoria. We took with us Eddie Fritz, we took with us Jack Valenti, the representatives of the movie, cable and the television industries, and we let them meet with parents in Peoria. We let parents talk directly to the industry. Out of it came an industry-agreed-upon ratings system for television that is going to work with the V-chip.

There are ratings right now on video games, ratings on movies. For government to step in and mandate a system would not only offend first amendment rights, it would disturb a very healthy process already going forward with industry and parents and communities around America to set up ratings that we can understand and work with.

The last thing we need to do is have government rerating all that stuff, government interfering with the first

amendment in our society. We need more parents to pay attention to what industry is doing to tell them what is in movies, books and videos.

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Just in response to the last speaker, I just want to say if it worked so well in television, why is not NBC doing the same system? They are not.

Mr. TAUZIN. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. STUPAK. I yield to the gentleman from Louisiana.

Mr. TAUZIN. Mr. Chairman, NBC has its own rating system.

Mr. STUPAK. Oh, really? They do not.

Mr. TAUZIN. Mr. Chairman, if the gentleman will yield, NBC was the one network who felt they were under too much government pressure to adopt a rating system others agreed to. They adopted their own rating systems.

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Chairman, reclaiming my time, this is the point. If everyone has their own rating system, why can we not put a label so it is consistent, whether it is NBC, CBS, ABC, FX, video games, whatever?

Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WELDON).

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of the amendment, and I am particularly pleased with the feature calling for a uniform system of ratings for video games.

While some media companies have taken action to address this problem, such as Disney, which has removed violent video games from their theme parks, there are many companies that, I believe, are going in the opposite direction, such as the manufacturer of the video game Duke Nukem, advertised on the Internet with the teaser quote: Learn what you can do with pipe bombs, unquote.

The players of this game not only learn to shoot people, but in particular, they learn to shoot women and doing other things that I cannot even speak of on the floor of the House of Representatives.

I do not believe that we can rely on industry to police itself in this arena and that action is necessary, and it is for that reason that I rise in strong support of the amendment.

Mr. WAMP. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent that the debate be extended by 10 minutes, equally divided, 5 minutes on each side. There are just too many people that need to speak. I know that the House is pressed for time today and that it may be midnight before we finish tonight, but could we please ask the Chair and ask the Members to grant 10 minutes, 5 minutes on each side.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. WAMP) that he be granted an additional 5 minutes and that the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) be granted an additional 5 minutes?

There was no objection.

Mr. WAMP. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF).

(Mr. WOLF asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Chairman, I rise in very strong support of this amendment. As a father of five children and as a grandfather, we all know that content labeling is not working. Just watch the television or see a movie and try to figure out PG, PG 13, R ratings. It is not working. We know that the industry will not regulate itself.

I was one of the Republicans that broke with my party several years ago in support of the V-chip. I remember one Member said the answer is for parents to take care of it, and it is. But there are some people that cannot do it. There are some people whose children are home alone. There are some people that need help. It is violent content. Every Member should look at the video, Doom. Every Member should read the article about "Killology" that the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. WAMP) sent around.

This amendment is a good idea. This makes a lot of sense. Sometimes what concerns me is that the powerful interests, the lobbyists that control some of these issues can mislead and say whatever and get us to postpone and postpone.

The Wamp-Stupak amendment will help parents, and, even more importantly, I believe it will save a lot of lives. I strongly urge all Members on both sides to support this amendment by an overwhelming vote.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY).

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Chairman, I have to oppose this amendment as it is drafted, as it is being debated out here on the floor. No matter how many times the proponents say as it is drafted that this does not affect the V-chip, the plain language of the amendment says the opposite. Its purpose, "is the labeling of violent content in visual media products." That is what the V-chip does. We won that vote 3 years ago, and then the industry voluntarily, working with parents' groups, constructed a rating system that every parents' group in America supports.

Now, if this amendment is adopted, it jeopardizes that system. A whole new system would have to be constructed under this amendment.

There are going to be 26 million TV sets purchased in America over the next year with a V-chip in it, and 26 million the year after, and 26 million the year after that, all with the ratings system built in that parents support. If this amendment is adopted, it jeopardizes that, because a whole new system would be put in place and potentially jeopardize all of these new TV sets which will not have a ratings system that is in conformity with something that the government sets up.

So that is why the National Association of Elementary School Principals,

the American Psychological Association, the Center for Media Education, all of them endorse the V-chip and the system that we now have in place.

□ 1315

It is voluntary. It is being built into TV sets today. It works. Parents want it.

If there is some other new system people want to set up, we will go off and try to do that. But for the 6 hours a day the TV sets are on in America, millions of young parents are buying these TV sets. We should not have a new system. This one works. Vote no on the Wamp amendment.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to yield 1½ minutes to my friend, the gentleman from California (Mr. CAMPBELL).

Mr. CAMPBELL. I thank my good friend for yielding time to me.

Mr. Chairman, the difference between this label and the label on potato chips is that this label has the government judging expressive content, not MSG content—expressive content and ideas. Those are protected under the First Amendment in ways that MSG content are not.

The way this bill was drafted is very dangerous. It says that the FTC is supposed to determine a system appropriate for the nature, context, and intensity of the depictions of violence. Regarding context, consider that Full Metal Jacket and Apocalypse Now were violent films about Vietnam. Saving Private Ryan was a violent film about the Second World War. The Federal Trade Commission is asked to comment about violence in context. If we support the war, perhaps the violence is appropriate. If we do not, perhaps the violence is inappropriate. We see why the First Amendment deals with expressive content differently than MSG content.

Lastly, there is a drafting error. The bill has no maximum to the minimum age; let me repeat, no maximum to the minimum age. Turn to page 7 of the bill. A person "may not sell, in commerce * * * product to an individual whose age in years is less than the age specified as the minimum age * * * for a purchaser * * * of the product * * * under the labeling system * * * prescribed by the Federal Trade Commission under subsection (d)."

There is nothing in (d) saying "minor" or "minority." There is a reference to "minor" in A, the findings section, but that only applies to when the industry does its own labeling. There is thus a huge loophole in this bill of an unconstitutional nature—adult access can be limited.

Let me simply conclude that the bill was poorly drafted, and infringes the First Amendment.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. TAUSCHER).

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the Wamp amendment. We all agree that children should not be exposed to music and movies that depict violence or sexual images. But the answer is not to overregulate industries that are already making positive efforts to police themselves.

The motion picture industry has a well-established rating system for warning parents about the content of movies. The television networks have recently begun a similar rating practice. Parents are increasingly making use of the V-chip to keep harmful material away from their kids, and virtually every major recording company complies with voluntary label warnings on their recording that contain material that is inappropriate for children.

Establishing a labeling system with the muscle of the Federal government at the regulatory helm is not the way to help parents protect their kids. Instead, we should continue to work constructively with the entertainment industry to improve ways for parents to limit their children's exposure to harmful material.

Our number one priority must be to protect our children and empower parents. The Wamp amendment provides the wrong approach. I urge my colleagues to vote no on this amendment.

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. ROEMER).

(Mr. ROEMER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ROEMER. Mr. Chairman, this is a complicated debate, and I know technology is complicated to the Members in this body. But what we are in effect debating today is that we tell our families across America the sodium content in a bag of pretzels, and we will label that. Why should we not label a video game called Sin that teaches, that rewards, that glorifies, showing our children hour after hour after hour on the computer how to destroy people; minute after minute, hour after hour, week after week?

This is Sin. I have played it. I have pulled it down and looked at it. The more people you kill and shoot, the better one's score.

Mr. Chairman, I understand the argument of the gentleman from California (Mr. CAMPBELL) about movies. Movies may desensitize us to violence, and I think that, quite frankly, the amendment of the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. WAMP) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK) needs to be improved in that area.

But video games do not desensitize us to it, they glorify it. They reward it. They teach our young people, shoot them again and I will give you 150 more points. And if you shoot their head off, I will give you more points.

This is something that our parents and our families simply need a label on. We are not telling them, have the government take the industry over. We are telling Members in this amend-

ment, try to work together to come up with a voluntary labeling warning for our families.

Some of our parents do not know too much about these games yet. These are new. This industry now on the Internet is a \$300 billion industry and growing, and we want to promote the Internet. The Internet has valuable education, resource, and teaching tools, but it also has some dangers.

What we are saying, Mr. Chairman is, maybe Members did not vote for the Hyde amendment yesterday, which went too far.

The CHAIRMAN. The time of the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. ROEMER) has expired.

Mr. ROEMER. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to give both sides 1 additional minute.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Indiana?

There was no objection.

The CHAIRMAN. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK).

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Indiana.

Mr. ROEMER. Mr. Chairman, if Members voted against, as I did, the Hyde amendment yesterday, which goes to the heart of our First Amendment and our freedoms, and if Members intend to vote for the amendment of the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) which says let us study this and hopefully do something about it in 5 or 6 or 7 years, and Members may have some qualms about this particular amendment and the way it is drafted, however, it starts to address a growing problem in America about the glorification and the teaching and the instruction of violence to our youngest people.

We just say, if we can label pretzels and salt content, let us just warn with the label, in a voluntary way, with our industry working together, about the violent content of our video games today.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FOLEY).

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Chairman, let me just speak for a moment in objection to the Wamp amendment. The gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. WAMP) is a wonderful father. I see his son Wesley here all the time, and I know he is concerned for his children, and reasonably so.

But there are labels. This is a label that is on records. There are labels on video games. This one is gauged Teen, and it is larger than the Microsoft logo. They have descriptions entirely appropriate to tell what is in this game: Comic mission, animated violence, real violence, informational, use of drugs, use of tobacco, alcohol, gambling, strong language, animated blood, realistic blood, suggestive themes, mature sexual themes.

They do that. They voluntarily do it by category. That is video games.

Videos, R-rated. Another video, PG-13. There are ratings. The very Members that I got elected with in 1994 that wanted to shrink the size of the Federal Government now want to give added responsibility to the FTC and give them more work to do.

I respectfully request that parents get more involved. These video games just do not show up in their homes in the bedrooms while their children play them, they buy them. They get them at the malls. The parents need to join them in their pursuit and purchase of these games.

We could certainly make a lot of commentary today about violence, and I agree, there are some terrible products out there and there are some terrible shows out there. But I suggest that the Americans can vote with their wallets. America can vote with its pocketbook and say no more shows like Jerry Springer. Let us reduce the ratings of those shows so advertisers no longer advertise and it is taken off the air.

But we should allow this system to work as it is in place. It is working.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. ESHOO).

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

Mr. Chairman, I rise today in opposition to this amendment. I think it is deeply, deeply flawed. I am not going to reiterate what has been pointed out by my colleagues that have gone to the heart of the flaws of the amendment.

What I would like to do with my remaining time is to do just a very brief congressional classroom sort of history here. How did we arrive here and begin debating what we are debating? There was a bill that was being sent over from the Senate. It was said by the Speaker that he wanted to bring about something that was reasonable on gun control. I think that this is a bob and weave effort, because the bills have been separated out.

What happened in Littleton and on other high school campuses is really engraved in an inextricable way in the Americans' conscience: That is, America's children running outside of their schools with their hands over their heads because there were students inside of those institutions, inside of those classrooms, that were holding guns to the heads of other students.

So the target in my view, today and in our arguments, in our debates, is what we are going to do about guns. The American people and parents across this country did not ask the Members of Congress to come here and trample on First Amendment rights. They want us to do what the Congress can and should do, and that is stay with the target and control and do something about guns going into our children's hands.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON), Chair of the Committee on Government Reform.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Chairman, I thank my colleague for yielding time to me.

Mr. Chairman, let me first start off by saying we are all concerned about the violence that has taken place in places like Littleton. We are all trying to find out the causes and effects of those acts of violence.

Many of us believe that one of the major causes is the garbage that our children consume. That is why the V-chip was passed a few short years ago.

After the V-chip, and I want to say that I am sure my colleagues, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. WAMP) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK) are well-intentioned, and I know we all agree that we have to do something about the violent content we see in the things our kids are consuming.

The fact of the matter is we passed a V-chip a couple of years ago, 3 years ago, and just yesterday we had a news conference where RCA, the Thompson Company, has just produced 200,000 sets with the V-chip in them. There are going to be millions of those sets produced in the next year. People are buying those sets with the intention of blocking out objectionable material they do not want their children to see.

This legislation would hamper those people being able to do that because the parent groups, working with the industry, have worked out a rating system that has been agreed to. They are going to be able to block out that objectionable material. All of that may go out the window if we come up with a new system with labeling involved and everything else, and a lot of these industry people may back out.

What does that mean? The people that bought those TV sets will not be able to block out that objectionable material because there is going to be a new rating system that is not agreed to. That is what we are concerned about.

I think everybody in this body, everybody in the other body, wants to make sure that we stop the horrible things that are happening in this country, the violence and the things our kids are consuming that is really causing a lot of that. But the way to do it is to do it in a different way than we are talking about today. We should not be doing anything that is going to impede the progress of the V-chip and blocking out of objectionable material, which this would do. If we are going to do it, let us do it a different way.

□ 1330

I tried working with the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. WAMP) last night, and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) to try to come up with a compromise. We were not able to work it out in that short period of time but we will continue to work with them to try to block objectionable material in the future, but let us not mess with the V-chip or the current system we have.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLEY).

Mr. DOOLEY of California. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to this amendment. I think all of us are trying to strike a balance. We are trying to strike a balance between protecting our children and at the same time protecting our first amendment and protecting the Constitution.

I oppose this amendment because I do not think we have achieved that balance that is going to allow us to achieve both objectives.

I come to this conclusion because what we are trying to do is something that I think is almost impossible, by asking people who are manufacturing records and motion pictures or video games to come together and try to identify one standard that can determine what is something that is very nebulous in terms of what is too violent for our children, what age should children be able to view this material without suffering any undue harm; and it even goes beyond that in infringing upon our constitutional rights because it will inevitably result in the Federal Government setting that standard, which I fear can be characterized as nothing other than censorship.

We need to indeed try to protect our children from violent depictions, but I also think that we have to come to grips, as I think I have with my own family, that that is a responsibility of myself and my wife. I have two daughters who are now in high school, a senior and a sophomore. I admit that they probably have seen violent depictions, but it did not encourage them to go out and murder people or commit acts of violence because they had been embedded with the values which are important to my family and to our community and knew how to respond to that.

I do not think that we need to have our Congress putting in place crutches that are not as important as our families becoming stronger and spending the time with their children to ensure that they embrace the values of all of us.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. GORDON).

Mr. GORDON. Mr. Chairman, there was a time when it seemed that the TV and the radio were guests in our homes. Now sometimes I think they are intruders, bringing in messages that sometimes undermine the values that we want to impart to our kids. So I fully understand the frustration of my good friends from Tennessee and Michigan that really was the origin, I think, of this well-intentioned amendment.

However, I am afraid that it is going to be counterproductive to our effort to really give parents the tools to get control of these electronics in their home. There was lots of work, compromise, many hours put in to bringing the V-chip legislation to a reality. Now, in just two weeks V-chip televisions are going to be available on the market for parents so they can get control in their

own homes. For that reason, I encourage my colleagues to give this legislation, the V-chip legislation and these TVs, a chance to work and to allow parents to have those tools in their homes.

For that reason, I reluctantly oppose this amendment but understand my good friends' frustrations and hope that we can bring their frustrations and this other work together to give parents more tools. This is just the wrong way to do it.

Mr. WAMP. Mr. Chairman, I reserve the right to close.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) has the right to close as a member of the committee defending the committee position.

The gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. WAMP) has 3½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) has 3 minutes remaining.

Mr. WAMP. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK).

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. WAMP) for yielding me this time.

I would like to bring up two points. We offered an amendment to take care of the V-chip technology, the bogus argument that is being made. Our amendment said it would be absolutely clear that there can be no interoperability requirement with the V-chip requirement. In other words, we want to work with the V-chip and by standardizing the label it will be easier. We offered the amendment. They objected because it is the only ground they could object on the value of our amendment and what we are doing here today.

This is not a rating argument. So then the other argument they brought up is, well, it is a first amendment right. The courts have constantly ruled, and we checked with CRS, although not binding they certainly give us legal guidance and they said there is a compelling State interest to protect the welfare of children.

Government has that right to protect children when there is a compelling state interest. Much like tobacco, much like alcohol, it extends to commercial media products. That is why this is not unconstitutional. That is why it is not in violation of the first amendment. It will not violate the V-chip. Those are bogus arguments. We had the amendments to correct those concerns. They refused to allow us to offer it.

Mr. WAMP. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Chairman, there are some labels. Most of them are stickers. They come right off on the label. They are not on the product itself. When one takes the package off, they are gone. Some do; some do not. We just ask for a uniform labeling system.

I find it extraordinary that most of the people that are opposing this today are from the State of California or they have some vested interest in legislation that might compete with this.

I do not think so. We have made that clear. But I am not going to defend the entertainment industry because I do think, as Ted Turner said 2 weeks ago, there is a responsibility in the mass media to decrease the amount of violence and this is a common-sense approach to that problem.

One of my predecessors in this House, Estes Kefauver, in 1954, he held hearings in the Senate on whether or not comic books contributed to juvenile delinquency. Today, the comic books of the nineties are video games, folks, and the juvenile delinquents of the 1990s can oftentimes be found behind the barrel of a gun.

These products should be labeled, uniform labeling. It makes common sense. They are going to say free speech.

These are products. This is not art and expression. These video games are a product of market research. Open up one of those PC magazines and see how someone can download the blood splattering. It is gross. It is awful.

Our kids are being filled in the head with poison. We label the food that is bad for them but we are not going to label the poison that goes in their head with a common-sense labeling? This does not violate first amendment rights. Good gracious. It just says, be responsible as an industry. Children are killing children.

I have had enough of it. I am going to side with parents today. I am going to side with children today; not some big special interest with a bunch of money that has been working all week to kill good common-sense legislation.

The family groups have come out today in support of this amendment. Responsible people would support this common-sense approach. I ask my colleagues not to vote with the big fat cats and the special interests. Vote with parents that need to make informed decisions, need to just be able to look. It is the same thing we do with food. It is the same thing we do with cigarettes. Some of the people that have opposed us today wanted the labeling on cigarettes, but what about brutal violence that clearly contributes to the rise in youth violence and killing in America today? It is unequivocal. Nearly a thousand studies document it.

Is the House going to respond or is the House going to sweep this under the rug? I urge support for the Wamp-Stupak amendment.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I only wish that my friend the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK) had brought this to the House Committee on the Judiciary where we could have had the kind of discussion that probably would have been more helpful. I hope that we do. This deserves a hearing. The subject is not going away, regardless of the outcome and disposition of the measure today.

I must say, I am looking at a series of Supreme Court decisions that make

two things clear. One, mandatory labeling will be viewed by the Court to constitute a system of unconstitutional prior restraints, the very type most disfavored under the first amendment, and I have three cases to cite.

Secondly, the prior restraints, like mandatory labeling, are viewed as censorship and, as such, and a couple more Supreme Court cases, it will not work.

I wish I could say something different. So I want to make sure that we appreciate the constitutional question and the impracticability of an amendment that would cost billions of dollars for the Federal Government to administer and would probably be pretty difficult to enforce.

This proposal will create a fairly large size bureaucracy and enforce a labeling system for all audio and visual media products. It would create an agency that would be tasked with reviewing over 600 motion pictures every year, at least 500 videos and digital video disks that come into the marketplace, and thousands of sound recordings released each year.

Believe me, this is not a subject matter that can be legislated from the floor of the House of Representatives in a committee setting. We need to refer this to the Committee on the Judiciary and any other appropriate committee, and then bring it forward. I would be delighted and I continue my commitment to work on a workable and effective resolution of the labeling problem in the entertainment industry.

Unfortunately, this solution I cannot support.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Chairman, I rise to oppose this amendment.

Let me first say that I applaud the intentions of my colleagues in offering this amendment. I share their concern about excess violent programming and the effect it has on our children. I also agree with them that parents should have more information and not be confused about the meaning of various rating systems between TV, movies, video games and music.

However, as a strong proponent of the V-chip, I am opposed to this amendment.

This amendment could easily destroy the rating system that the entertainment industry negotiated with parents groups to work with the V-chip. The V-chip allows parents to control the programming viewed by their children. It works with the TV Parental guidelines developed by the television industry and child advocacy groups.

If the TV ratings system is changed, parents will find that they can no longer block violent programming on their TV sets.

Because of the very problems that the authors of this legislation are concerned about, Congress passed the V-chip law in 1996. This law requires TV manufacturers to meet a deadline of incorporating the V-chip into 50 percent of TV's sold in America in the next two weeks. They are on track to not only do this but to also comply with the 100 percent V-chip deadline of January 1, 2000.

If the government steps in to mandate a new rating system after these various industries have begun labeling their products on a voluntary basis, all the progress that has been made to date would be erased.

The historic V-chip rating system agreement was reached between the National PTA, the American Academy of Pediatricians, the Center for Media Education, the American Psychological Association, the National Association of Elementary School Principals and the Motion Picture Association, the National Cable Television Association and the National Association of Broadcasters.

When we passed the V-chip, we agreed to forbear further legislation in this area until it was given time to work. This amendment would undo all of this progress. I urge my colleagues to oppose it.

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. WAMP).

The question was taken; and the Chairman announced that the noes appeared to have it.

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The CHAIRMAN. This is a 17-minute vote and will be followed by one 5-minute vote on amendment No. 34 offered by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY).

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 161, noes 266, not voting 7, as follows:

[Roll No. 224]

AYES—161

Aderholt	Gutknecht	Radanovich
Bachus	Hall (OH)	Ramstad
Barcia	Hall (TX)	Regula
Bartlett	Hansen	Riley
Bass	Hayes	Rodriguez
Bateman	Hayworth	Roemer
Bereuter	Hefley	Rogers
Berry	Hill (IN)	Rothman
Bilbray	Hill (MT)	Roukema
Bilirakis	Hilleary	Ryun (KS)
Blagojevich	Holden	Salmon
Blunt	Horn	Saxton
Boehlert	Hunter	Sessions
Brady (TX)	Hyde	Shadegg
Bryant	Jenkins	Shays
Burr	Jones (NC)	Shimkus
Callahan	Kaptur	Shows
Cannon	Kelly	Shuster
Cardin	King (NY)	Slatsky
Castle	Kleczka	Skeen
Chamberliss	LaHood	Skelton
Chenoweth	Largent	Smith (MI)
Coburn	LaTourette	Smith (TX)
Collins	Leach	Souder
Combest	Lewis (KY)	Spence
Cook	Lipinski	Stabenow
Costello	LoBiondo	Stearns
Crane	Lucas (KY)	Stenholm
Cubin	Lucas (OK)	Stupak
Danner	Luther	Talent
Deal	Maloney (CT)	Tancredo
DeFazio	Mascara	Taylor (MS)
DeLay	McCarthy (NY)	Taylor (NC)
DeMint	McHugh	Thompson (CA)
Dickey	McIntosh	Thornberry
Doyle	McIntyre	Tiahrt
Duncan	Mica	Traffant
Ehlers	Miller, Gary	Turner
Emerson	Minge	Visclosky
Etheridge	Myrick	Vitter
Everett	Norwood	Walsh
Ewing	Nussle	Wamp
Fletcher	Obey	Watkins
Forbes	Ortiz	Watts (OK)
Franks (NJ)	Pascarell	Weldon (FL)
Frelinghuysen	Peterson (MN)	Weldon (PA)
Gekas	Peterson (PA)	Wicker
Gilchrest	Pickering	Wilson
Goode	Pitts	Wise
Goodling	Pomeroy	Wolf
Graham	Porter	Woolsey
Granger	Price (NC)	Young (AK)
Green (WI)	Pryce (OH)	Young (FL)
Greenwood		

NOES—266

Abercrombie	Gejdenson	Morella
Ackerman	Gephardt	Murtha
Allen	Gibbons	Nadler
Andrews	Gillmor	Napolitano
Archer	Gilman	Neal
Armey	Gonzalez	Nethercutt
Baird	Goodlatte	Ney
Baker	Gordon	Northup
Baldacci	Goss	Oberstar
Baldwin	Green (TX)	Olver
Ballenger	Gutierrez	Ose
Barr	Hastings (FL)	Owens
Barrett (NE)	Hastings (WA)	Oxley
Barrett (WI)	Herger	Packard
Barton	Hilliard	Pallone
Becerra	Hinchey	Pastor
Bentsen	Hinojosa	Paul
Berkley	Hobson	Payne
Berman	Hoeffel	Pease
Biggert	Hoekestra	Pelosi
Bishop	Hooey	Petri
Bliley	Hostettler	Phelps
Blumenauer	Hoyer	Pickett
Boehner	Hulshof	Pombo
Bonior	Hutchinson	Portman
Bono	Inslee	Quinn
Borski	Isakson	Rangel
Boswell	Istook	Reyes
Boucher	Jackson (IL)	Reynolds
Boyd	Jackson-Lee	Rivers
Brady (PA)	(TX)	Rogan
Brown (FL)	Jefferson	Rohrabacher
Brown (OH)	John	Ros-Lehtinen
Burton	Johnson (CT)	Roybal-Allard
Buyer	Johnson, E. B.	Royce
Calvert	Johnson, Sam	Rush
Camp	Jones (OH)	Ryan (WI)
Campbell	Kanjorski	Sabo
Canady	Kasich	Sanchez
Capps	Kennedy	Sanders
Capuano	Kildee	Sandlin
Chabot	Kilpatrick	Sanford
Clay	Kind (WI)	Sawyer
Clayton	Kingston	Scarborough
Clement	Klink	Schaffer
Clyburn	Knollenberg	Schakowsky
Coble	Kolbe	Scott
Condit	Kucinich	Sensenbrenner
Conyers	Kuykendall	Serrano
Cooksey	LaFalce	Shaw
Cox	Lampson	Sherman
Coyne	Lantos	Sherwood
Cramer	Larson	Simpson
Crowley	Latham	Slaughter
Cummings	Lazio	Smith (WA)
Cunningham	Lee	Snyder
Davis (FL)	Levin	Spratt
Davis (IL)	Lewis (CA)	Stark
Davis (VA)	Lewis (GA)	Strickland
DeGette	Linder	Stump
DeLauro	Loftgren	Sununu
Deutch	Lowey	Sweeney
Dicks	Maloney (NY)	Tanner
Dingell	Manzullo	Tauscher
Dixon	Markey	Taurin
Doggett	Martinez	Terry
Dooley	Matsui	Thompson (MS)
Doolittle	McCarthy (MO)	Thune
Dreier	McCollum	Thurman
Dunn	McCrery	Vento
Edwards	McDermott	Walden
Ehrlich	McGovern	Walters
Engel	McInnis	Watt (NC)
English	McKeon	Waxman
Eshoo	McKinney	Weiner
Evans	McNulty	Weller
Farr	Meehan	Wexler
Fattah	Meek (FL)	Weygand
Filer	Meeks (NY)	Whitfield
Foley	Menendez	Wu
Ford	Metcalf	Wynn
Fossella	Millerder-	
Fowler	McDonald	
Frank (MA)	Miller (FL)	
Frost	Miller, George	
Galleghy	Mink	
Ganske	Moakley	
	Moore	
	Moran (KS)	
	Moran (VA)	

NOT VOTING—7

Brown (CA)	Mollohan	Thomas
Carson	Rahall	
Houghton	Smith (NJ)	

□ 1404

Messrs. JENKINS, ETHERIDGE, COOK, WISE, COSTELLO, BOEHLERT, FORBES, and HAYWORTH changed their vote from "no" to "aye."

Mr. Herger and Mr. Gutierrez changed their vote from "aye" to "no." So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to House Resolution 209, the Chair announces that he will reduce to a minimum of 5 minutes the period of time within which a vote by electronic device will be taken on subsequent amendments on which the Chair has postponed further proceedings.

AMENDMENT NO. 34 OFFERED BY MR. MARKEY

The CHAIRMAN. The pending business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the ayes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The CHAIRMAN. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The CHAIRMAN. This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 417, noes 9, not voting 8, as follows:

[Roll No. 225]

AYES—417

Abercrombie	Brown (FL)	Davis (VA)
Ackerman	Brown (OH)	Deal
Aderholt	Bryant	DeFazio
Allen	Burr	DeGette
Andrews	Burton	DeLauro
Archer	Buyer	DeLay
Armey	Callahan	DeMint
Bachus	Calvert	Deutsch
Baird	Camp	Diaz-Balart
Baker	Campbell	Dickey
Baldacci	Canady	Dicks
Baldwin	Cannon	Dingell
Ballenger	Capps	Dixon
Barcia	Capuano	Doggett
Barrett (NE)	Cardin	Dooley
Barrett (WI)	Castle	Doolittle
Bartlett	Chabot	Doyle
Barton	Chamberliss	Dreier
Bass	Chenoweth	Duncan
Bateman	Clay	Dunn
Becerra	Clayton	Edwards
Bentsen	Clement	Ehlers
Bereuter	Clyburn	Ehrlich
Berman	Coble	Emerson
Berry	Coburn	Engel
Biggert	Collins	English
Bilbray	Combest	Eshoo
Bilirakis	Condit	Etheridge
Bishop	Conyers	Evans
Blagojevich	Cook	Everett
Bliley	Cooksey	Ewing
Blumenauer	Costello	Farr
Blunt	Cox	Fattah
Boehlert	Coyne	Filer
Boehner	Cramer	Fletcher
Bonior	Crane	Foley
Bono	Crowley	Forbes
Borski	Cubin	Ford
Boswell	Cummings	Fossella
Boucher	Cunningham	Fowler
Boyd	Danner	Frank (MA)
Brady (PA)	Davis (FL)	Franks (NJ)
Brady (TX)	Davis (IL)	

file:Miller+media

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

For release: May 25, 2000

Contacts: Dan Gerstein (Lieberman), 202-224-0414
Pia Pialorsi (McCain), 202-224-1251
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Senators Call on FCC to Look at Declining Programming Standards of Broadcast Television *McCain, Lieberman, Byrd, Brownback question whether licensees are serving public interest with glut of sex and vulgarity*

WASHINGTON - Pointing to the steadily declining standards of television and the consequences for American society, four prominent Senators today urged the FCC to reconsider whether local broadcast stations are meeting their legal obligations to serve the public interest.

The four lawmakers - Commerce Committee Chairman John McCain (R-AZ), Governmental Affairs Committee Ranking Member Joe Lieberman (D-CT), Appropriations Committee Ranking Member Robert Byrd (D-WV), and Commerce Member Sam Brownback (R-KS) - sent a detailed letter to the FCC documenting the dramatic increase in graphic sexual depictions and vulgar dialogue in network and syndicated programming over the last several years.

The letter goes on to cite a range of evidence indicating that this rising tide of sex and vulgarity represents a real threat to children, contributing to the disturbing number of pre-teens engaging in sexual activity and the ongoing epidemics of teen pregnancy and sexually-transmitted diseases.

The Senators said they are particularly troubled by the denials and excuses they have routinely heard from many broadcasters when confronted with the rising concerns of parents about this problem. The industry's indifference raises real questions about the commitment of broadcasters to serving the public interest, the Senators said.

"The license they receive is a legally-binding contract, an especially important one given television's immense influence on our children and our culture. And much to our dismay, the evidence presented in this letter strongly suggests that many licensees, along with their network parents, are breaching this public trust, and harming rather than serving the public interest," they wrote.

"Consequently, we feel that the time has come for the Commission to engage in a broad reexamination of the public interest standard and the license renewal process, to determine if in fact the broadcasters are serving 'the public interest, convenience and necessity,' and whether the standard of service we expect of broadcasters needs to be clarified."

The FCC is currently conducting a formal inquiry into the public interest obligations for digital television licenses. McCain, Lieberman, Byrd, and Brownback asked the agency to use this process to look at the implications of declining programming standards and specifically to consider the merits of resurrecting a voluntary code of conduct to better protect the public interest.

"Ultimately it is the responsibility of the Congress... to implement any significant change in the public interest obligations of broadcasters in this area by statute," they wrote. "But we hope the Commission's inquiry will help begin that process, by gathering information and providing recommendations, and ideally engage the television industry in an honest dialogue about its legal and societal responsibilities."

The full text of the letter is available online at <http://lieberman.senate.gov>

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Shopping<http://www.calendarlive.com/tvent/200005>*Full Story on - line***4 Senators Assail TV Broadcasters in FCC Letter**

Television: McCain, colleagues cite depictions of violence and sex. They ask agency to consider whether public-interest standards need to be clarified.

By JANE HALL, Special to The Times

WASHINGTON--Decrying the "rapidly declining standards of broadcast television" through a "rising tide of glorified violence and increasingly explicit sexual content," four U.S. senators are asking the Federal Communications Commission to consider whether broadcasters are serving the public interest with the TV shows they put on the air.

The group--which includes Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), chairman of the Senate committee that regulates television; and Sen. Joseph I. Lieberman (D-Conn.), a frequent critic of television content--has written a letter to FCC Chairman William E. Kennard calling on the FCC to reexamine the public-interest standard and the license-renewal process for broadcasters. The intent of the letter, the senators said, is to encourage the FCC to revisit the ways in which the agency determines whether broadcasters are meeting their mandate to serve the public interest and whether those standards need to be clarified.

The letter, which will be released today, is also signed by Sens. Robert C. Byrd (D-W.Va.) and Sam Brownback (R-Kan.).

The FCC is considering what changes, if any, should be made in the public-interest obligations required of broadcasters as they convert to digital television. Under the Telecommunications Act of 1996, Congress gave broadcasters the rights to additional digital-channel spectrum space, an asset estimated to be worth as much as \$70 billion, for free.

FCC officials said Wednesday that Kennard had received and was reviewing the letter and that the agency may hold a public hearing on all of the issues--including the senators' proposals--sometime this summer.

For TV broadcasters, this represents yet another Washington initiative to regulate their content. The industry's voluntary parental guidelines code, which is now used on all TV programming, has been in place for several years.

The 1996 Telecommunications Act also mandated availability of the V-chip, a device allowing parents to block out objectionable programming. Still, widespread use of the technology has thus far failed to materialize, with a recent survey indicating 40% of parents have never heard of it--a finding some TV executives took as evidence of the modest public appetite for the issue.

Nevertheless, Lieberman, who is spearheading this effort--argues that



~~Parental~~

Re: Children's Media

Fy f -
HAYE

WAM! – SPONSORED CHILDREN'S CHARTER ON ELECTRONIC MEDIA EXAMPLES OF SIGNATORIES

Capital Hill Tour:

- Attorney General Janet Reno
- Secretary of Education Richard Riley
- FCC Chairman William Kennard
- FCC Commissioner Susan Ness
- Senator Conrad Burns (R-MT)
- Senator Joe Lieberman (D-CT)
- Senator John McCain (R-AZ)

Cable Industry Leaders:

- John J. Sie, Chairman & CEO of Starz Encore Media Group
- Leo J. Hindery, Jr., President of Tele-Communications, Inc.
- Herb Scannell, President of Nickelodeon
- Jim Robbins, President & CEO of Cox Communication
- Betty Cohen, President of Cartoon Network
- Barry Rosenblum, President of Time Warner Cable of New York City
- Megan R. Hookey, Managing Director of Cable in the Classroom
- ✱ ▪ Judith McHale, President & COO Discovery Communications

COLORADO PTA BULLETIN



Children First: Hand in Hand for All Children

March/April 2000

Dear PTA Member:

Colorado PTA members have been active advocates for children this year! It was a pleasure to meet several of you and learn about your actions to help children at our Legislative Conference in February. PTA members participated that same evening in an event co-sponsored by WAM!America's Kidz Network and Colorado PTA to focus on working together to bring positive change for the safety of our schools and our children.

As part of that event, I was honored to sign, on behalf of Colorado PTA, *The Children's Charter on Electronic Media*, a document created by youngsters from around the world. It's essentially a kids' Bill of Rights calling for quality, noncommercial, less violent TV. Two of the co-authors, WAMBassadors Erin May and Megan Kiernan, both from Colorado, presented the charter. I encourage you to distribute and sign copies at your meetings. You will find a printable version on the Colorado PTA's web site, <http://www.copta.org> or you may contact the Colorado PTA office for a copy. Join us at Convention, April 27 - 29, meet the WAMBassadors, and view their National PTA Public Service Announcement



WAMBassadors Erin May & Meg Kiernan, and WAM! VP Midge Pierce look on as Colorado PTA President Jody Townsend signs the Children's Charter for Electronic Media. (Photo courtesy Starz/Encore Media Group LLC)

inviting adults to take an active part in children's lives.

Visit our expanded web site, <http://www.copta.org> and view Colorado PTA's Position Statement on Governor Owens' Educational Reform Bill, SB186. Print out a copy of *Where We Stand*, Colorado PTA members' Position Statements and Resolutions that guide our activities at the State Legislature at <http://www.copta.org/leginfo.html>. There is also a link to National PTA's legislative activities as well as those at the Colorado Legislature. Our goal is to provide resources to keep you informed of those events that affect children. Join us at Convention to learn more about National and Colorado issues and advocating through technology. If you do not have access to the Internet or are unable to view documents mentioned, please contact the PTA Office to receive your copy.

Colorado PTA has partnered with Evesta.com to provide free Internet access through FreeNSafe.com to all of our PTA members. Visit our Sponsors page, <http://www.copta.org/sponsors> to download the software, join us at Convention for a free CD, or contact the PTA office for more information. Through National PTA's partnership with Family Education Network, all units in good standing may receive a free web site and every PTA member may receive a free email account. I encourage you to take advantage of these opportunities. You will find a link on our web site on our Sponsors page that will direct you to the correct location. Family Education Network will attend Convention and demonstrate how to create a web site and how to use their email. Our goal is to bring tools to assist you in your efforts to work for children. You've told us that you need to have access

Remember:

Membership reports can be turned in at any time. Make sure your PTA unit is in good standing with Colorado PTA & National PTA by sending your report and dues TODAY!

to technology and want to be able to use it more effectively and we've listened.

It's clear that by working together we can begin to exercise positive change. The power of association is the result of many voices – the public legislative side that has a duty to pass strong laws favoring the safety of our schools and youngsters, corporate generosity that services the public good and the tireless work of PTA volunteers that are the backbone of a healthy, cooperative society. I encourage you with this call to action: interact with your children, your neighbors, your community and your schools so that together we can all make a difference.

I want to thank each and every one of you for your efforts on behalf of all children. As PTA members, we create a world for all children when we stand tall and speak out for every child; support parents as they raise and protect their children; and as we partner with the community to shape tomorrow's leaders.

See you at Convention!

Jody Townsend
President

Colorado PTA

www.copta.org

7859 West 38th Avenue • Wheat Ridge Colorado 80033 • 303-420-7820 • 1-888-225-8234

Legislative Conference draws record attendance

In February, Colorado PTA members convened at the State Capitol in record setting numbers. 111 Legislative Conference attendees met with elected officials to discuss such important issues as school finance, safety and violence prevention, parent involvement, and class size reduction.

General Assembly members meeting with PTA included:

Representatives Keller, Mitchell, Paschall, Tochrop, Windels, Berry, Scott, Smith, Witwer, McKay, Fairbank, Pfiffner, Gordon, Gotlieb, Grossman, Mace, Dean, Decker, Hefley, May, Sinclair, Allen, Clapp, Hagedorn, Nunez, Kaufman, Lee, and Swenson; and Senators Arnold, Congrove, Perlmutter, Sullivan, Teck, Anderson, Feeley, Hernandez, Linkhart, Pascoe, Wham, Hillman, Lamborn, Tebedo, Blickensderfer, Lacy, Weddig, and Matsunaka.

Colorado PTA, through an Advocacy Grant from National PTA, awarded grants to four Colorado PTA members attending the conference from outside the Metro area.

At lunch, National PTA President Ginny Markell shared her advocacy

Markell encouraged Colorado PTA members to continue their persistent efforts on behalf of the children and youth even when success sometimes seems unreachable.

experiences from a national perspective. Markell encouraged Colorado PTA members to continue their persistent efforts on behalf of the children and youth even when success sometimes seems



Hand in Hand for Kids' Sake: Take Charge & Make Change participants (from l to r): Midge Pierce (WAM!), Maria Guajardo Lucero, (Assets for Youth), Rebecca Stevens (moderator), Ginny Markell (National PTA Pres.), Jody Townsend (Colorado PTA Pres.), Craig Cogswell (Colo. Teacher of the Year), Katie Larson (Colo. Student Council Pres.), Jay Murray (D'Evelyn Junior/Senior High School student), Joe Marino, (Columbine High School student), and Brooke Lott (Colorado Student Council).

(Photo Courtesy Starz/Encore Media Group)

unreachable.

Heather Cabot, KUSA Education Reporter, informed members about the KUSA/Denver Post special on CSAP testing (Colorado Student Assessment Program).

Afternoon workshops included presentations from Colorado PTA directors Jody Townsend (Pres.), Mary Babcock (1st VP), Mark Townsend (Leadership), and Evie Hudak (Region 2); also Bruce Archison (Colorado Children's Campaign), John Britz & Beverly Ausfahl (Colorado Education Association), Randy DeHoff (Colorado State Board of Education), and Phyllis Horney (League of Women Voters).

The 2000 Legislative Conference concluded with a special Colorado PTA/WAM! joint program Hand in Hand for Kids' Sake: Take Charge & Make Change at the Denver Public Library.

This special panel presentation was taped for later release on WAM!America's Kidz Network a Starz/Encore Media Group channel.

Panelists included National PTA President Ginny Markell, Colorado PTA President Jody Townsend, Director of the Colorado Assets for Youth Initiative Maria Guajardo Lucero, Colorado Teacher of the Year Craig Cogswell, Colorado Student Council President

Katie Larson, D'Evelyn Junior/

Senior High School student Jay Murray, Columbine High School Peer Counselor Salli Melfi, and Columbine High School student Joe Marino.

Guests heard opening remarks from Starz/Encore Media CEO John J. Sie, Colorado's Lt. Governor Joe Rogers, and Jody Townsend and Ginny Markell.

Panel discussions covered violence on television, parent involvement, how our society values its children and youth, and the increasing role teachers play in their students lives.

The WAM!/Colorado PTA event highlights the work that can be accomplished when the corporate world and the non-profit world work in tandem for change.

Colorado PTA salutes Starz/Encore Media founder and CEO John J. Sie for his leadership and willingness to devote corporate power towards effecting change for a safer society for our children and youth.

Even though WAM! is headquartered in Colorado, many cable and satellite providers do not carry this valuable programming geared towards youth ages 8-16. If you would like to receive this kid-friendly, commercial free programming at your home, contact your local cable or satellite dish provider.

Have you seen this logo?

Perhaps you've seen our new banner and logo ... here's where we've been since the first of the year: 1st VP Mary Babcock spoke at the SAFE Rally in January. Colorado PTA had a booth at the PEAK Conference for Inclusive Education and Sue Anderson, Secretary for National PTA and Immediate Past President for Colorado PTA, presented a *Building Successful Partnerships* workshop. Colorado PTA had a booth at the AllAboutKids Expo benefitting Children's Hospital. Secretary Teresa Williams represented Colorado PTA at a children's expo at the Continental Theater. Legislative Committee member Vicki Newell represented Colorado PTA at the recent Senate Bill 186 public information meeting. Jody Townsend and 2nd Vice President Dolly Handel attended the National PTA Legislative Conference in Washington DC. Next time you see the Colorado PTA Banner, stop by and say hello!



Cable in the Classroom News



<http://www.ciconline.com>

NOTEBOOK

Welcome Aboard!

Cable in the Classroom welcomes the following members: Cedar Communications of Lakewood, Wash.; Get Real Cable LLC of Blackwell, Okla.; HBCI of Winona, Minn.; and Triax Communications of Denver, Colo.

Conference Call

Stop by the Cable in the Classroom booth if you're attending these conferences:

American Association of School Administrators
New Orleans, La.
February 19-22

National Association of Secondary School Principals
New Orleans, La.
February 26-March 2

Cablevision's Media Activity Kits

Cablevision Systems Corporation has launched its Young Communicators on Assignment initiative to help middle- and high-school youths understand mass media. A series of free activity kits—each with a curriculum guide and short video—teaches kids about different aspects of the media. Currently, there are kits available on editorial writing and news reporting. Cablevision is also sponsoring a related contest for youths within its service areas. *If you live in a Cablevision service area and would like to receive an activity kit, call 1-800-522-5191. For information on the Young Communicators' Competition, visit Cablevision's Web site (<http://www.cablevision.com>).*

Children's Charter Gains Cable's Support

When 12-year-old Megan Kiernan and 11-year-old Erin May helped create the Children's Charter on Electronic Media, they had no idea their work would have such a lasting effect. During a seminar at last year's Second World Summit on Television for Children in London, the two girls worked with other kids from around the globe to write the charter: a bill of rights for quality children's TV. The 15-point document advocates that, among other things, kids' TV programming should involve children in the production process; discourage use of drugs, cigarettes, and alcohol; and not contain violence as a means to solve conflict. WAMI is sponsoring the girls on a year-long national tour to urge the television industry to work together to raise the caliber of children's TV programming.

Cable in the Classroom joins many others in the cable industry in supporting the charter. At press time, companies that have signed the document include America's Health Network, Bresnan



Children's Charter authors Megan Kiernan (center, left) and Erin May (center, right) along with WAMI and Time Warner Cable executives.

Communications, Cable in the Classroom, Cartoon Network, Century Communications, Cox Communications, Discovery Communications, Disney Channel, Harron Communications, Helicon Corp., Knowledge TV, Nickelodeon, Ovation, PrimeStar, Showtime Network, TCI, Time Warner Cable, Turner Classic Movies, WAMI, and The Weather Channel. "I want adults to do all that they can to improve children's television," says Kiernan. "I feel we really are getting somewhere and, slowly, we are making a difference."

Global TV

Thanks to Falcon Cable TV, students in the greater Los Angeles area recently compared TV viewing habits with kids in other countries while also strengthening their reading, writing, social studies, and math skills. Nearly 900 third-graders from seven schools participated in the three-month project that was sponsored by Falcon and conducted with the Museum of Television & Radio in Beverly Hills, Calif. First, teachers gave museum educators input on ways the program could fulfill classroom curriculum requirements. Then, students in California and more than a dozen other countries filled out surveys. The U.S. students also interviewed family members about their international connections. At the museum, students viewed and discussed children's TV programs from around the world, participated in an art project, and listened as a storyteller shared folktales from many cultures. Finally, the third-graders and their families were invited to visit the museum for its International Children's Television Festival, during which the results of the global classroom TV survey exchange were displayed.

Tough News Topics

It's a hard decision: should uncomfortable issues in the news be discussed in the classroom? According to a national phone survey conducted last September with 300 children (ages 8 to 14) and their parents, when asked to name a recent news story, six in ten kids cited the Clinton/Lewinsky story, and 90 percent of those had heard about it on TV. In addition, The National Research Group, Inc., which conducted the survey for Nickelodeon, found that more than a third of the kids surveyed said that their teachers had talked about it in class. "When you talk about these issues—Clinton and Lewinsky, the OJ trial, the Oklahoma City bombing," says journalist Linda Ellerbee, who hosted a *Nick News: Special Edition* program on the Clinton crisis, "you are acknowledging children's intelligence and letting them know you respect their opinions. You also get the opportunity to let them know your thoughts, values, and morals. These are all good things."

—Diana Dawson contributed to this story.

React
3 Million Distributed
4.4 Million Readership



Erin May, left, and Megan Kiernan teamed up for better TV.

SHOULD-BE TV

Two teens strive to make television more tuned in to kids.

More diversity. Fewer commercials. Less senseless violence. Megan Kiernan and Erin May, both 13, have strong views on what good TV should be. As junior delegates to The Second World Summit on Television for Children, they joined more than 30 other youths in London to discuss how the TV industry could improve programming for young people.

Meg and Erin were sent to the conference in March 1998 by WAM! (What Adults Miss) America's Kidz Network, a noncommercial kids' cable network. "TV will always be a great influence," says Meg, an eighth-grader at Campus Middle School in Englewood, Colo. "It should be a more positive one."

During the summit, the group wrote The Children's Charter on Electronic Media. It states 15 "shoulds," like "all children should be treated equally on television," "children's programs should be honest and real" and "every broadcast organization should have children advising them."

"The Children's Charter is impor-

tant because kids don't have much of a voice about what's on TV," says Erin, a seventh-grader at John Burroughs School in St. Louis, Mo. "If they can't share their ideas, producers will put on whatever they feel children want to see—which may or may not be what kids want."

Now the girls are busy getting The

Children's Charter signed by everyone who could influence the industry—and they've succeeded so far with major cable companies like Time Warner, Disney and Nickleodeon, plus government officials like Attorney General Janet

Reno. "My hope is after a company signs, they'll make decisions to not air inappropriate commercials, and hire kids of diversity to host programs," Meg says.

The girls encourage all kids to have a stake in what's on the tube. They advise teens to write local stations to tell them what they think. Also, Erin says: "Don't watch a show just because it's the only thing on—turn it off. That way, the shows don't get the high ratings that keep them on."

—Nancy Vittorini

"TV will always be a great influence—it should be a more positive one."

—Megan Kiernan

you can change channels: To find out more about The Children's Charter, contact WAM! at Encore Media Group, Dept. R, 5445 DTC Parkway, Suite 600, Englewood, CO 80111 or e-mail: wam@encoremmedia.com.

National Legislative News

Parents represented at the National Education Summit

National PTA President, Ginny Markell, joined President Clinton at the National Education Summit September 30 – October 1. The Summit was convened to discuss raising academic standards and this year marked the first time parents were represented at the Summit by an organization like the PTA.

Academic Emergency Act Spells T-r-o-u-b-l-e

National PTA has come out in opposition of the Academic Emergency Act of 1999. The 5 year nationwide pilot voucher program was announced by Rep. Dick Armey (R-TX) on September 30th.

The Academic Emergency Act voucher would allow the governors of each state to declare schools in their state "academic emergencies" and request funding from the U.S. Secretary of Education.

This act:

- ♦ Is an expensive program;
- ♦ Does not provide "choice" for families with children who have disabilities or special needs;
- ♦ Does not provide funding for transportation or textbooks

For more information on vouchers, please go to <http://www.pta.org/programs/ISSvouchers.htm>.

Education Funding Levels

In the next few weeks, Congress will be deciding final funding levels for federal education programs.

Initially, Congress was considering huge cuts to Department of Education Programs but backed off due to outcry from their constituents.

National PTA is concerned with provisions in the Senate bill that will eliminate the targeting of \$1.2 billion from last year – these funds were aimed at hiring new teachers to reduce class size.

The House bill would increase funding in IDEA, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, and Impact aid – all supported by National PTA. The increases, though, are undermined by reduction, freezing, or eliminating funding for Title I, Goals 2000, class size reduction, teacher training in technology, Star Schools, and the reading initiative.

ACTION NEEDED: National PTA supports increased federal investment in education. Call your Washington, D.C. lawmakers and tell them –

Be Smart – Invest in Education

For information on other bills: <http://www.pta.org/programs/washup/asp>

For information on contacting your lawmakers: <http://congress.nw.dc.us/npta2/>

For funding information: <http://www.pta.org/programs/ISSfunding.htm>

WAM!

WAM! America's Kids Network is the first commercial-free children's channel dedicated to providing kid-friendly, socially responsible programming 24 hours a day for adolescents 8 to 16-years old. The network provides more subject specific supplemental education than any other kids programmer; after school and weekend book-based dramas; sports and adventure that promote problem-solving and consensus values; plus art, culture, music and movies that inspire and motivate.

WAM! also sponsors the national tour of WAM!Bassadors Megan Kiernan and Erin May as they travel the country seeking support for the **Children's Charter on Electronic Media** – a kid's bill of rights for quality television.

WAM!, a division of Encore Media Group, is headquartered in Englewood, Colorado. Megan is a 7th grader at Campus Middle School in Englewood, and Erin is a 6th grader at Kyffin Elementary in Jefferson County.

Working in partnership with National PTA, WAM! has produced, and will distribute to all 50 state PTA's, a PSA featuring the WAM!Bassadors call for parents to get involved in their schools and activities to state PTA's and all interested television programmers. (From WAM! press release dated 09/07/99.)

Unfortunately, unless you have satellite TV at your home, your cable provider likely does not carry WAM! (**HINT:** contact your cable provider and find out when they will start carrying WAM! for Colorado's children.)

(Continued from page 5)

family transitions from pre-school to kindergarten, and tools developed through National PTA and other sources.

The guide is designed for PTA and Head Start leaders to assist in promoting the Continuity for Success model to local units and others within the early childhood community who are interested in the concept. The NHSA will promote the guide at their conferences and conventions. A copy of the guide can be accessed online at www.pta.org after October 1, 1999. Booklets can be obtained from NHSA at (800) 637-5044 for the cost of postage and handling.

School Bus Safety Week

National School Bus Safety Week is October 17-23, 1999. In observance of this week the National PTA and Navistar International Transportation Corporation sent "Be Cool Follow the Rules" School Bus Safety Kits to all elementary local PTA units in early September. To view the materials or order additional bus safety resources, please visit National PTA web site at www.pta.org/programs/hlthwelf.htm.

Electronic Lunch

(From Healthy Kids, April/May 1999)

The latest trend in school lunches isn't sandwich wraps or healthy burritos – it's electronic menus. Hundreds of school districts are discovering the convenience of posting lunch menus on the Internet with the help of the Family Education Network (FEN).

FEN (in partnership with the PTA) is helping school district administrators across the country establish lunch menu web sites by providing free links and assistance with technical questions. Schools control the content of the Web sites, which aim to involve parents in their children's daily nutritional options.

You can take advantage of timesaving services, like the menu calendar, and decide in advance whether to pack a lunch or give your child money to buy lunch. To set up a web site for your school district, contact FEN at (617) 542-6500 or check out their web site at www.familyeducation.com.

(Continued on page 7)

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Live!
Kids'
TVLittleton
network a 1st
for children

By Diane Eicher
Denver Post Staff Writer

The country's first 24-hour, commercial-free TV network aimed at kids ages 8 to 16 originates right in our own backyard, with program hosts coming from a pool of talented local high school students.

This same network is starting a year-long anti-violence campaign that features more local kids. It has young newscasters roaming the country reporting on activities in their communities, including two Denver-area girls who snagged interviews last summer with President Clinton and Attorney General Janet Reno.

But chances are, unless you subscribe to a certain satellite TV service, you've never seen WAM! America Kids Network, which originates from the National Digital TV Center in Littleton.

It isn't carried by AT&T Cable Services (formerly TCI) or by any other cable systems in the metro area, although it can be seen in Colorado Springs and locally on the U.S. West Telco System.

WAM! is, however, seen by millions in Manhattan, Southern California, Texas, Ohio and a host of other regions.

"Cable operators do want these kinds of channels," said Marc McCarthy, a spokesman for WAM!

Little room available

Why more operators aren't carrying it is due largely to availability, he said, noting, "Most (systems) are channel-lacked." A spokesman for AT&T Cable didn't return calls about why the Denver area's largest system doesn't air WAM!

For now, the brass at WAM! — a division of Encore Media Group, based in Littleton — has to be content with its growing audience elsewhere and with the positive reaction to the network's slate of educational yet entertaining programs.

"We're beginning to get recognized, and people are seeing that what we're doing is very important," said Midge Pierce, vice president of programming.

WAM! started five years ago, the vision



The Denver Post / Rebecca McAlpin

Talent coach Jennifer Darrow, center, and director Rich Golish talk with actor Kiley Kroh, 16, on the set of WAM! TV.

of Encore chairman John Sie, who "wanted to give 'something back to the community,'" said Pierce. He proposed a commercial-free network targeting a young audience that was largely being ignored by other programmers.

"This isn't medicine... kids are attuned to broccoli TV, and they don't want it," added Pierce, referring to the nickname given to some kids' programming that meets the definition of "educational" but often unpalatable — and goes unwatched by young viewers.

One of the keys to getting kids to watch is using kids on the air. Among them are the WAM!Bassadors, including local youths Meg Kiernan, a seventh-grader at Campus Middle School in Englewood, and Erin May, a sixth-grader at Kyffin Elementary in Jefferson County.

Trip to England

Before working for WAM!, they were selected as U.S. representatives to a meeting in London on kids' TV, and came back with a copy of "The Children's Charter on Electronic Media," which they asked WAM! to support.

The network since has become a sponsor of the international group, which encourages responsible children's programming. Erin and Meg are reporters and emissaries for WAM!

Local kids also show up on camera during on-air introductions for the movies. Last weekend in the Littleton studio, a half-dozen teens horsed around a set that looks like the ideal kids' room — neon colors, school lockers painted lime green, a basketball hoop in one corner and a computer in the other.

Working with managing producer Melissa DePew, WAM! regulars Kiley Kroh from D'Evelyn High School, MacKenzie Meehan from Eaglecrest High, Jeremy Palmer from Chaparral and Sintlrel Ryder from



The Post / Rebecca McAlpin

Make-up artist Sherril Duncan tends to WAM! TV's MacKenzie Meehan, 15, before filming a movie promotional spot.

Ponderosa High tinkered with short scripts that explained the upcoming movie to viewers.

The teens improvised, did dozens of takes to cover up for the predictable giggling and flubbing, then came up with a professional product.

'Kid next door'

The teens were selected — these four have all been with the network a year or more — to be "the kid next door you could relate to and look up to, but also the kinds of kids parents want their kids to hang out with," said Pierce.

They're good students with lengthy school resumes that are exhausting just to read — band, sports, drama, volunteer work and aspirations of high-powered careers, often in the arts. And the network hopes to draw kids just like them.

Programming in blocks

WAM! programming consists of various blocks. One is the Mind Zone, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., with educational shows on social studies, science, math and personal development that are popular with home-schoolers and in schools, said Pierce.

From 3 p.m. to 5 a.m. is the Oh! Zone, offering drama, comedy, adventure, sports and technology.

Educational programming is rerun from 3 to 9 a.m., when schools can tape it free of charge.

The weekend lineup is the End Zone, with family entertainment that includes

some of the same shows that run weekdays; National Geographic specials and a WAM! original, "Mark's Web World," a Texas production that teaches responsible Internet use.

Sundays is reserved for WAM! at the Movies, with family fare such as "The Secret Garden," "Air Bud," "The War" and "The Challengers."

Between programs — when other kids' channels are running commercials — WAM! runs "interstitials," shorts that feature kids around the U.S. There's the WAM!Corps, kids volunteering in their communities; the WAM!Cam showing "ordinary kids doing things," such as a recent episode that showed a teen who coaches a sports team of mentally challenged teens; and a series from the WAM!Family Van featuring a Midwest family that sold its house and tours the country.

The network's newest civic effort is its "Generation Hope" anti-violence campaign, kicked off a couple weeks ago.

Even before Columbine, the network had started discussions with focus groups about addressing violence, but the shootings happening "here in our backyard" compelled more action, said Pierce.

"We talked to kids, who told us Columbine was a turning point for them," she said. "But they also told us they felt exploited by the event, and wanted to be part of a campaign that didn't talk at them, didn't dwell on Columbine, but showcased the positive."

The year-long effort will offer programs that address conflict resolution and problem solving. Celebrities such as athlete Eric Karros and the music group 'N Sync weigh in with admonitions to kids to work it out. Key to the project is kids' own views on how to get along.

That "own" part is what drives WAM! Kids like and want programming that's good for them, said Pierce — they just don't want to be hit over the head with it.

"They're informational sponges, and they're trying to help make sense of their world," she said. "But what they've told us is, 'Don't tell us you're giving us educational TV.'"

WAM!Bassadors and the Children's Charter on Electronic Media co-authors, from left, Eric May, 12, and Megan Kiernan, 13, of Colorado.



Cable in the Classroom News



<http://www.ciconline.org>

NOTEBOOK

Discovery's IMAX Films

Discovery Pictures' *Africa's Elephant Kingdom* and *Wildfire: Feel the Heat* are currently showing in Omni and IMAX large-format theaters around the country. A limited number of free teacher guides for grades K-8 are available by calling toll-free 1-888-892-3484. Sample lesson plans from the guides, as well as a touring schedule, are available on the Discovery Pictures Web site (<http://www.discoverypictures.com>). To download the free lesson plans, click on the *Especially for Teachers* area for each film.

Children's Charter Update

Middle-school students Megan Kiernan and Erin May were recently in Washington, D.C., to watch U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley sign the Children's Charter on Electronic Media, which urges the TV industry to work together to raise the caliber of children's TV programming. The two girls, who helped author the document at last year's Second World Summit on Television for Children, also gathered signatures at the National Cable Television Association's convention. For its sponsorship of the students' national tour, WAM! recently received a Silver Angel Award from the Excellence in Media organization.

Weather Books for Middle Schools

The Weather Channel and Simon & Schuster have released two new titles in their Simon Spotlight paperback series designed to introduce middle-school students to the wonders of weather. *Floods!* and *Tornadoes!* each contain basic meteorology information, fun facts, and full-color photographs. Each 64-page book (\$3.99) is available at bookstores across the nation.

ESPN's Gift to Schools

To celebrate Cable in the Classroom's tenth anniversary, ESPN has donated videos of ESPN2's Cable in the Classroom series *SportsFigures* to the nation's 18,000 public and private high schools. This summer, supplementary online content, including weekly contests and areas for student and teacher feedback, will be available on ESPN's Web site (<http://www.espn.com>); see the Special Section: SportsFigures area on the home page. The initiative was unveiled at a press conference held in



ESPN's George Bodenheimer (far left), NHL hockey star Adam Oates (second from left), NFL running back Jamal Anderson (second from right), and Ballou High School students Chason Holmes (center) and Zakia Johnson.

Washington, D.C., which was attended by ESPN President George Bodenheimer, Cable in the Classroom Managing Director Megan Hookey, Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, Congressman Steve Largent (R-Okla.), and professional athletes Jamal Anderson and Adam Oates, among others. On behalf of their school, students from Ballou High School in Washington, D.C., were also on hand to accept the first set of videos and corresponding lesson plans. "This ambitious project is yet another example of the cable industry's continuing contributions to the education of our youth," said Bodenheimer, "and it's a meaningful way to celebrate Cable in the Classroom's tenth anniversary." In addition to this educational gift, ESPN also awards \$30,000 annually in scholarships to college-bound high-school seniors. For the names of this year's *SportsFigures* scholarship winners, see page 17.

Kudos for CIC!

The critics have once again given Cable in the Classroom (CIC) programs two thumbs up. Prestigious George Foster Peabody Awards went to CNN for its *Cold War* series, and to Linda Ellerbee, host of Nickelodeon's *Nick News* (see listings under Social Studies: Elementary). PBS also received Peabodys for *American Masters* "Alexander Calder," *Frank Lloyd Wright* (see listings under Science: Architecture/Civil Engineering), and five other CIC programs. At the 41st New York Festival International Non-Broadcast Awards for excellence in communications media, Cartoon Network's educational public-service initiative *Animate Your World* (see listings under Personal Development: Elementary) snagged a Gold WorldMedal in the Youth Special category. *CNN Newsroom* (see listings under Social Studies: Current Events) received a Silver WorldMedal in the Young Adult Program category. Finally, CIC won a CINE Golden Eagle and a Worldfest Houston International Film Festival Gold Award for two public-service announcements.

InterMedia Helps Students Make Money Count

InterMedia Cable in the Classroom Coordinator Kay Zoretic was concerned when she overheard teens discussing their enormous credit-card debt. She turned that concern into action by working with educator Cindy Cottengim and three other teachers at Greenwood High School in Bowling Green, Ky., to develop a consumer-finance unit for students. More than 50 students learned the basics of budgeting, record keeping, saving, and debt management. Students got the chance to use their new skills at a school financial fair. Student "families" were given real-life financial issues to resolve and local businesspeople were on hand to offer advice. InterMedia created a short introductory video for the unit, developed support materials, and arranged for business representatives to attend the fair. *High-school educators in the Bowling Green area who are interested in offering this unit during the upcoming school year can contact InterMedia's Kay Zoretic at (502) 796-8204.*

Multichannel NEWS

'Tune In' Effort Draws 66 Cable Networks

By LINDA MOSS

NEW YORK — A total of 66 cable networks are participating in this year's "Tune In to Kids and Family Week 3" — which will kick off June 21 with a 30-minute special, *Just Think*, to be simulcast by about two-dozen cable channels — officials said last week.

Under the initiative, which was started in 1997, the participating cable networks have agreed to televise at least one half-hour of family, kids' and educational programming in primetime from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. on at least one day during the week of June 21 through 27.

According to the National Cable Television Association, which manages and provides the bulk of the funding for "Tune In," most networks will exceed that minimum.

At a press conference describing this year's effort, Josh Sapan, CEO of Rainbow Media Holdings Inc., said one

reason why the "Tune In" week was started was to stimulate the production of family programming.

Sapan was one of three co-chairs for this year's "Tune In," joining Nickelodeon president Herb Scannell and Fox Family Channel CEO Rich Cronin.

And as it stands now, cable networks offer more than 80 percent of all of the TV hours devoted to children, according to Scannell.

"Cable is where kids know, and parents know, they can go," he added.

Fox Family and Triase Entertainment produced *Just Think*, which will be simulcast June 21 at 7:30 p.m. That show, hosted by Fox Sports personality James Brown, focuses on the power of words, symbols and actions as they pertain to issues of multiculturalism, diversity, tolerance and race relations.

The tragic high-school killings in Littleton, Colo., were alluded to at several

points during the press conference — particularly when two 12-year-old girls, Erin May and Meg Kiernan, both reporters for the syndicated *News for Kids*, addressed the group.

May told the audience she is from Jefferson County, Colo.,

where the shootings took place.

"I believe school should be a place where safety is guaranteed," May said, questioning how the media, video games and such must have affected the teens who murdered their fellow students and then committed suicide.

May and Kiernan said they had been at the White House the day before with President Clinton, who called for the Federal Trade Commission and the Department of Justice to study whether the entertainment industry — music, video games and films — is violating its own voluntary codes and luring kids to watch and listen to violent, explicit fare.

NCTA vice president of public affairs Josie Martin pointed out that the president's call for study only pertained to the music, video-game and film industries.

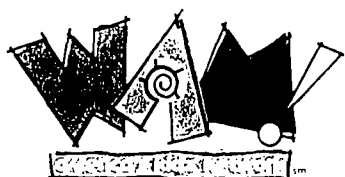
"We have not been asked to provide any information," she added.

At this time, the NCTA favors "voluntary measures" in terms of programmers policing the violence they depict in their shows, Martin said.

Martin pointed out that the association participated in the president's recent summit on entertainment and violence. MCM



THOUGHT PROVOKING: About two-dozen cable channels will simulcast *Just Think*, which will focus on the power of words, symbols and actions to affect race relations.



an **encore** network

WAM!

The surge of school violence has communities and parents concerned nationwide about the increasing influence television is having on our children.

Encore Media Group's WAM! America's Kidz Network recognizes this issue and prides itself on being part of the solution to provide quality viewing. WAM!'s commitment to listen carefully to what today's kids are saying, while still serving their entertainment, information and educational wants and needs has made it unique in the world of children's programming.

Since September, 1994, WAM! has been providing commercial-free, socially responsible programming 24 hours a day for 8- to 16-year-olds. The high quality of the programming has been applauded by parents, teachers, Congressmen, the President, FCC Commission Chair William Kennard and Commissioner Susan Ness, who hailed WAM! as a welcome "safe-viewing" zone.

The channel is 100 percent kid-driven, with kids as program hosts, advisors, reporters and WAM!bassadors. Even the weekend "WAM! At The Movies" includes film facts and history by honor-roll students who also serve as peer mentors and role models. Additionally, these teen hosts offer facts, fun and educational tidbits where other channels run commercials. The result is a channel that nurtures kids and helps them reach their full potential. WAM! is truly a world of fun as well as knowledge.

And, to ensure we deliver on our promise to make learning fun, WAM! provides award-winning after-school and weekend book-based dramas in

the "OH! Zone" like the highly acclaimed series, *Wind At My Back*, that promotes problem-solving and family values. Plus, WAM! provides music and art that inspires and motivates, as well as sports and adventures like National Geographic Television's *Tales From the Wild*, a WAM! world premiere. In our Weekend "End Zone" WAM! *At The Movies* features kid favorites like *Airbud* and *Jungle 2 Jungle*. Our "Mind Zone" provides 60 hours of subject-specific supplemental education every week—more than any other kids' programmer—including the WAM! original series, *Mark's Web World*, that teaches kids responsible use of the internet.

WAM! also sponsors "The Children's Charter on Electronic Media"—a bill of rights for quality children's television. The Charter was written by kids from around the world, including two 12-year-old WAM!bassadors, during the 1998 World Summit on Children's Television. Highpoints:

Violence for the sake of violence to solve conflict should not be promoted.

Children of all ages should have programs created just for them, and the programs should be on at times when children can watch them.

All children should be treated equally on television. This includes ages, races, disabilities and abilities, and all physical appearances.

The Charter's call to reduce unnecessary TV violence will be the core of a year-long on-air campaign to reduce school violence.

WAM! has taken children's television to a new level of entertainment

and quality, where kids can enjoy fun, informative programming that enriches their lives and enables parents to feel good about what their kids are watching.



William Shatner's *Twist in the Tale*, a U.S. premiere series on WAM!



Kid's Planet Video



Wednesday, June 2, 1999

THE DENVER POST

Colorado girls aim for the top in crusade to reduce violence

Rose Garden visit nets Reno's signature

By Charles Davant
States News Service

WASHINGTON — Powerful friends and political clout usually are the least it takes for most adults to win an invitation to hear the president make an announcement at the White House or to lobby the attorney general in person.

But two Denver-area students with neither attended an event in the Rose Garden on Tuesday and won the Clinton administration's

support for their crusade to reduce television and video game violence.

Megan Kiernan, 13, of Cherry Hills, and Erin May, 12, of Golden, are touring the country asking government officials and TV executives to sign the "children's charter on electronic media" they helped write last year at an international youth conference in London. The charter commits the signer to oppose the depiction of "violence for the sake of violence" or violence as a means to resolve conflict on TV.

They have won the backing of a dozen cable networks.

When they were invited to hear

President Clinton announce a new study of media violence in the wake of the massacre at Columbine High School, the girls saw another chance to push their agenda.

After hearing her speech, Kiernan and May cornered Attorney General Janet Reno and told her about their crusade. Moments later, they left the White House with another signature on their charter.

"We want people to realize that everyone in America is responsible for the shooting at Columbine and violence in this country because they tolerate it," said Erin, who attends Kyffin Elementary School in Golden.

EDUCATIONAL



INTEGRATING
TECHNOLOGY INTO THE
CURRICULUM

VOLUME 56
NO. 5
FEBRUARY 1999

Association for
Supervision and
Curriculum
Development

The Children's Charter

After attending a world summit on television, a group of children and adults created a charter of what children's television should be.

What do kids do when we get home from school? What do we do when it's rainy and we can't go outside? For most of us, it isn't homework. We watch television. And a lot of it. We are greatly influenced by television. And that is why I think children's television should be of high quality.

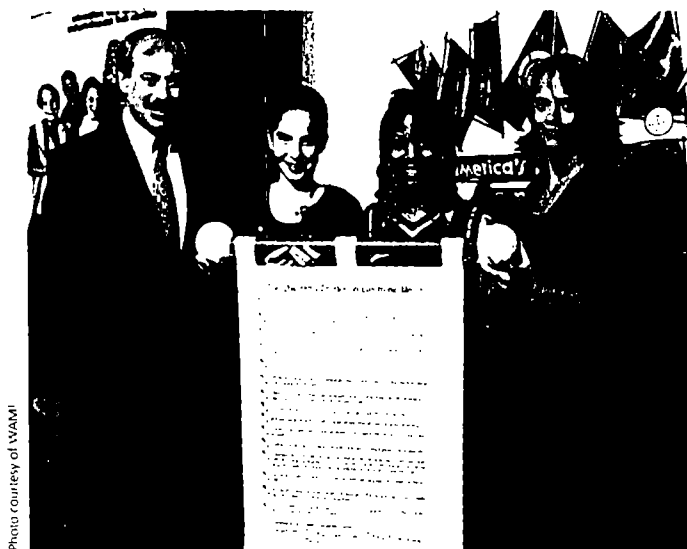
What Children's Television Should Be

Last January, Midge Pierce, the vice-president of WAM!, a noncommercial cable network, nominated me to serve as a junior delegate at the Second World Summit on Television for Children. Five hundred adult delegates and 31 junior delegates attended the summit, held in London in March 1998. The junior delegates taught seminars to the adults about what they thought children's television should be, and we created a children's charter, or bill of rights, for children's television. We decided that to make a difference in children's television, the charter needed to include the following things about what children's programming should be.

1. Respectful. TV hosts and anchors all over the world often treat kids as if we are stupid. Kids want hosts who really like kids and who respect our opinions and appreciate our intelligence. We don't like hosts and anchors who talk down to us.

2. Honest and real. Kids trust TV to tell them the truth. We also want programs that tell us what we need to know. Children need to know what is happening in our communities, our countries, and the world. Kids like shows to be factual but not boring; children's television should be entertaining, educational, and stimulating.

3. Nonviolent. The delegates pointed out that many programs promote violence for the sake of violence or use violence to solve conflicts. Although we felt that violence is not acceptable, we also recognized the difference between violence and action. Kids like programs that are exciting, but not ones with gratuitous violence. For example, the Power Rangers are not OK because whenever there is a conflict with someone else, they beat up that person instead of working out a nonviolent solution.



Meg Kiernan and Erin May (2nd and 3rd from left) display a copy of the Children's Charter with representatives from Time Warner Cable of New York City.

4. Inclusive. None of us understood why on television the kids with glasses are always nerds, the fat kids are never popular, and, maybe most important, the disabled kids are never the stars. Two junior delegates with disabilities, Abigail and Tina, helped the rest of us understand what it is like to be a kid with a disability watching TV. Often they feel left out when kids talk about TV shows at school. Kids need to see ourselves on television—our backgrounds, races, skin colors, and religions. And we need our cultures portrayed correctly.

The delegates also thought that kids should be involved in the production of children's shows. Kids watch the shows, and we know what other kids like. As the adults at the summit said, it makes good business sense to listen to your audience. The delegates thought adults could put kids on an advisory panel or a board or just ask kids our opinions in a poll.

The Wave of the Future

Television will always be a great influence in children's lives. Children get a lot of their ideas about the world from TV, so what we see on TV is important. Kids are the future world leaders. Think about how important it is to shape the ideas of the leaders of the future. Make a difference in children's television by reading and signing our charter, asking your friends who work in television to sign it, or presenting it to the TV stations in your city. The future leaders of the world need your help! ■

Author's note: For more information about the Children's Charter, please contact WAM! at Encore Media Group, 5445 DTC Parkway, Ste. 600, Englewood, CO 80111 (e-mail: wam@encoremmedia.com).

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FREEZE FRAME



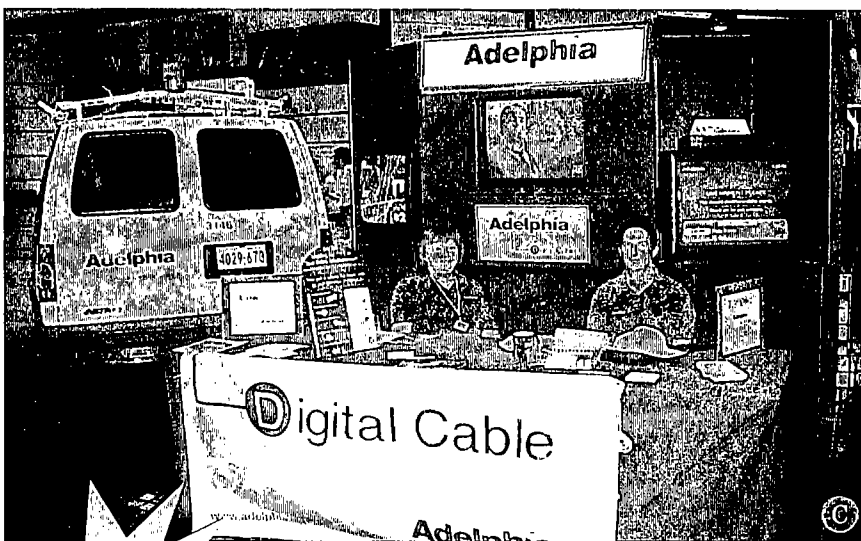
A FOOT FETISH: The Pierre Hotel in New York was the scene for the recent fourth annual QVC FFANY "Shoes on Sale" benefit for breast-cancer-research facilities. Pictured shopping for shoes are (left to right): Shell Kepler, Nurse Amy Vining on *General Hospital*; actress Della Burke; Irv Kalick, executive vice president, QVC; and Tova Borgnine.

B CHARTER FLIGHT: Time Warner Cable of New York City recently became the first cable operator to commit to support The Children's Charter on Electronic Media. The charter was presented to Time Warner of New York president Barry Rosenblum by 12-year-old "WAM! Bassadors" Erin May and Megan Kieman, representing Encore Media Group's WAM! America's Kidz Network. Pictured at Time Warner's New York office are (left to right): Fred Dressler, senior vice president, programming, Time Warner; Midge Pierce, vice president of programming, WAM!; Kieman; May; Rosenblum; and Barbara Kelly, vice president, sales and marketing, Time Warner.

C BACK UP THE TRUCK: Adelphia Communications Corp. recently hosted its second annual Home Entertainment Exposition at the Ocean County Mall in Toms River, N.J. Pictured at the MSO's "Digital Cable" booth are Adelphia's Joanne Mcsula (left) and Greg Baroni (right).

D BEIJING BOUND: Joan Franciosa, a subscriber in Cablevision Systems Corp.'s Cablevision of Hauppauge (N.Y.) system, recently won the grand prize in Comedy Central's "The Daily Show Second Anniversary Sweepstakes." Franciosa and her husband, Catello, will join 11 other grand prize winners on an eight-day trip to Beijing. Pictured are (left to right): Catello and Joan Franciosa; Joan Bocchieri Gilroy, director of public affairs, Cablevision of Hauppauge; and Anthony LoCascio, general manager, Hauppauge system.

E FUTURE TRIBE?: Fox Sports Ohio recently crowned four boys and four girls as champions of the "Cleveland Indians/Fox Sports Ohio Baseball Skills Competition," honoring them at Cleveland's Jacobs Field, home of Major League Baseball's Indians. Pictured are (left to right): Bob DiBiasio, vice president of public relations, Indians; Vincent Mihalek; Jim Lubetkin, vice president, corporate communications, University Hospitals Health System; Scott Nealon; Charles Nagy, pitcher, Indians; Tom Abbott; Steve Liverani, senior vice president and general manager, Fox Sports Ohio; and Justin Boudler.



Send your most recent press photos, with an ID and contact name and telephone number, to:

**David Cohen, Copy Chief,
Multichannel News,
245 W. 17th Street
New York, N.Y. 10011**

NOTICE SOMETHING DIFFERENT?

Freeze Frame is now in full color.

Please make sure any future submissions are in color.

PLUGS & SHRUGS



A PLUG...for HBO and the seven other cable networks that snared a combined total of 28 Emmys this year. We still miss the CableACEs, but the industry has proved it can take on the broadcasters *mano a mano* on their own turf.



A SHRUG...to the 13-member **Detroit Cable Commission**, who seem to think Comcast ought to give them free cable so they can keep a better eye on programming. Hey, while we're at it, how about free cable for all federal employees? Just send the bill to the taxpayers.



A PLUG...for BET's **Curtis Symonds**, for wondering aloud why all the cable execs and MSO chiefs who routinely come to the Walter Kaitz dinner couldn't seem to make it to NAMIC's conference this year. "We are not being treated right," he said. Fair enough...but see below.



A SHRUG...to Symonds, for wondering aloud why Kaitz was honoring **Chuck Dolan**. He's a good guy, Curtis. Relax.



A SHRUG...to **Mario Gabelli** of Gabelli Funds for his soporific luncheon speech at *Broadcasting & Cable's* Interface XII conference during "Hell Week." Instead of insights into media companies and trends in the business, Gabelli shot the breeze about baseball and whatever else popped into his head. Stick to your knitting, Mario!



A PLUG...for **Time Warner Cable's** New York City system, which hired 30 former welfare recipients as customer service reps and technicians after subsidizing a six-week training program for them. Another 15 will join next month when they complete training.



A SHRUG...to **American Movie Classics'** unclassy spin on canceling *Remember WENN*. AMC senior VP Marc Juris said that *WENN* "has not generated the kind of audience required to make the show viable." FYI Marc: *WENN* found enough viable audience for an award-winning run of 56 episodes over four seasons—and that's worth remembering.



A PLUG...for **Encore Media's WAMI** channel. **Cable in the Classroom** and several MSO/programmers for endorsing *The Children's Charter on Electronic Media*, an effort from kids attending a world TV summit in London earlier this year to improve kidvid quality. Wham, bam, thank you WAM!



A SHRUG...to analysts at **SkyForum**, who tried to gloss over the issue of those antennas DBS providers are hawking to customers who want pick up local stations. Face it, guys: Many consumers don't want to fuss with the ugly things, and often they don't work well anyway.



A SHRUG...to ESPN for reducing *NFL Primetime* from an hour to 45 minutes. No one we know wants 15 minutes less of TV's best post-game show, which gains viewers every season. Bad call, folks. But...



A PLUG for "1st & Ten," ESPN's new *Sunday Night Football* gimmick that electronically adds a yellow line across the field to show how far the



offensive team must go to keep the ball. Now how about using it for college games as well?



A PLUG...for **VH1** for its all-out support of the Muscular Dystrophy Association's Labor Day telethon, from supplying net personality **Cynthia Garrett** as a co-host to linking the show live with its holiday concert by The B-52s. But...



A SHRUG...to the telethon's producers for cribbing segments of VH1's *Pop-Up Video*, *Behind The Music* and *Storytellers*, then presenting/publicizing them as special performances just for the show.



A PLUG...for the cable industry's expansion of its High-Speed Education Connection into the public library system. Now all libraries near cable systems with Internet access will get free service and modems. The systems get good PR, the communities, a better-educated populace. You can't get more win-win than that.



FOR RELEASE FEBRUARY 2, 2000

'HAND IN HAND' LEADS NATION IN ANTI-VIOLENCE INITIATIVE

WAM! and the PTA share a common bond: 'For Kids' Sake'

Englewood, Colo. – February 2, 2000 -- The Colorado Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and WAM! America's Kidz Network (WAM) have joined forces to make a positive impact on children in their town meeting **Hand in Hand For Kids' Sake: Take Charge & Make Change** which will be held February 4, 2000 at 5:00 p.m. at the Denver Public Library Conference Center.

"In the wake of last year's horrific high school shootings in Colorado, this is an opportunity for citizens to take a leadership role in the healing process and to set an example for the rest of the nation to follow," said Midge Pierce, vice president of WAM!.

Hand in Hand for Kids' Sake is designed to address one of the most important issues of our times—the safety of our schools and the well being of our children. The event will be the culmination of a daylong session the Colorado PTA sponsors for its members at the Colorado State Legislature.

"As Coloradans, educators, parents and members of the media, we feel a profound responsibility in seeking life-saving solutions to school safety," said Jody Townsend, president of the Colorado PTA.

Colorado Lieutenant Governor Joe Rogers will provide the keynote address. National PTA President Ginny Markell will give the national parent-teacher perspective. John J. Sie, founder, chairman and CEO of Starz Encore Media Group LLC, parent company of WAM!, will present a critical media perspective and Townsend will provide background on state level solutions. Pierce will be Master of Ceremonies, introducing speakers and later, a panel of educators, policy makers and students suggesting positive solutions. Invitations are also being extended to the White House and Secretary of Education Richard Riley, a signatory of the Children's Charter on Electronic Media.

Hand in Hand For Kids' Sake begins with a reception at the Denver Public Library Conference Center. Following opening remarks by Lt. Governor Rogers, two Colorado middle school students will present the Children's Charter on Electronic Media. The Charter was co-authored by Meg Kiernan and Erin May with other students from around the world during an International Conference on Children's Television last year in London. It is essentially kids' bill of rights calling for better quality, less violent TV. Following the Charter presentation, WAM! will screen segments from its anti-violence campaign, *GENERATION HOPE: Voices for Change*, showcasing the positive contributions young people are making to curb violence in their communities. **Hand in Hand for Kids' Sake** will conclude with a panel discussion surfacing solutions from the perspective of educators, students and community leaders.

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Though this event is unique to Colorado, it carries national importance. A summary of the event will be carried by WAM! and an edited series of outcome-based public service announcements will be offered to all cable and broadcast channels for their use. Sie, whose company is financing the event, has offered to play the **Hand in Hand** footage on all Starz Encore Media's 13 premium channels nationally.

"We believe that by working together, we *can* make a difference to save our most precious resource, our children," Sie said.

WAM! is the first and only commercial-free children's cable and satellite channel dedicated entirely to providing kid-friendly, socially responsible programming 24-hours a day for adolescents 8 to 16-years old.

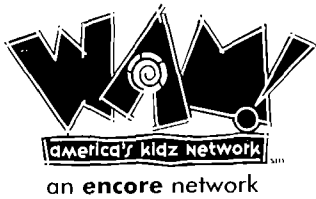
Starz Encore Media Group LLC (Starz Encore) is the largest provider of cable and satellite-delivered premium movie channels in the United States. Starz Encore owns 13 domestic channels and currently counts more than 53 million pay units. Starz Encore offerings include up to 12-channels of the Starz Encore Super PakSM and the 7-channel Encore Movie PakSM. Programming information may be found on the Web at www.encoremedia.com. Starz Encore is a wholly owned subsidiary of Liberty Media Group (NYSE: LMGa and LMGb).

The National PTA, with over 6.5 million members, is the largest volunteer child advocacy organization in the United States. PTA members advocate for improved education, health, safety and the well being of all children and youth. PTA is online at www.pta.org and www.copta.org.

#

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FOR RELEASE: September 3, 1999

WAM! AMERICA'S KIDZ NETWORK'S ANTI-VIOLENCE CAMPAIGN GENERATION HOPE: VOICES FOR CHANGE TO LAUNCH ON SEPTEMBER 12, 1999

From the epicenter of a national problem come solutions

Campaign to consist of monthly programming events plus profiles of students and activities that make positive differences

LITTLETON, Colo., August 30, 1999 – WAM! America's Kidz Network (WAM!), announced today its bold multi-year anti-violence campaign ***Generation Hope: Voices for Change*** (*Generation Hope*) will kick-off with a stop the violence rallying cry from the WAM!Kid hosts and guest celebrities on September 12, 1999 from the WAM!Central set in Littleton, Colorado. The campaign is designed to provide meaningful programming and tangible tools that kids and schools can implement in the wake of last year's rash of teen violence.

Many of the campaign elements were designed by kids from the Denver metro area over the summer. These students – strongly affected by what they called the media exploitation of last spring's Columbine tragedy – appealed to WAM! to provide positive messages and a venue for kids themselves to showcase solutions to school violence. The result is a campaign that will include original programming events, unique short form featurettes and easily duplicated anti-violence activities kids can do in their own homes and schools. Key elements will include communities across the nation raising their voices for nonviolence and a series of celebrity voices for change such as 'N Sync and Los Angeles Dodger superstar **Eric Karros**.

"The safety of our kids is the number one issue of our time," said Midge Pierce, vice president of programming for WAM!. "As kids return to school this fall, it is imperative that we empower them to feel safe in the classroom by providing problem-solving tools and conflict resolution. In fact, instilling a sense of well being in kids is critical before learning can take place."

The September 12 kickoff originates with a national call to action by the WAM!Kid hosts to commit to positive change. As a symbol of their commitment, the WAM!Kids will begin to build a "Peace Chain" from construction paper, beads, and other handy materials that can link students, schools, parents, teachers and communities together. Throughout *Generation Hope*, WAM! will solicit e-mail updates from viewers about the length of their chains - as well as the development of other links for change - across America.

At 5:00 p.m. (ET/PT) on September 26, a breakthrough hour-long special episode of the acclaimed series *Mark's Web World* will address online hate and violence. Hosted by Mark Bunting, the groundbreaking special ***Safe Surfing***, will combine the excitement and enthusiasm of Bunting's presentation style with his in-depth computer knowledge to lead kids on a cyberworld tour that will teach them responsible use of the Internet. Dr. David Walsh, founder and president of the National Institute on Media and the Family is among the experts featured in the special.

- more -

October features a landmark anti-violence marathon consisting of a five-hour programming block that will play three times each day (3:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m. ET/PT, 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. ET/PT and 1:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. ET/PT) on Friday, October 8 and Saturday, October 9. The marathon will include several series that address conflict resolution including *Speak Up Against Violence*, *The Respect Series*, *Getting In Character Series*, and *The Peacemakers Series*. All provide positive, upbeat approaches to essential issues of character development and civility.

On Friday, November 5 at 2:00 p.m. (ET/PT), WAM! will premiere two half-hour segments, "Teens Helping Teens" and "The P-Factor," from the thirteen-part series *Talk Box*. Hosted by journalist Katy Sai, the magazine format show grabs teens with relevant and important topics, and provides an honest outlet for their questions and concerns. WAM! will premiere two additional shows on Friday, November 12 at 2:00 p.m. (ET/PT), "Parents: They Just Don't Get It" and "Do The Right Thing."

In December, the critically acclaimed and award-winning WAM! original series *Kids' Planet Video* will return with *Kids' Planet Millennium*, a powerful hour-long special episode that voices the hopes and fears of kids in a changing often violent world. The magazine format show *Kids' Planet Video*, written, directed and produced by kids, will premiere 13 new half-hour shows on WAM! beginning in January 2000.

Throughout the campaign WAM! will offer short form programming that also supports the overall goal:

- Celebrity voices for change include: 'N Sync; Los Angeles Dodgers' first baseman **Eric Karros**; actor **Mark Curry** (*Armageddon*, "Hangin with Mr. Cooper"); San Diego Chargers defensive tackle **John Parrella**; actress **Kelly Williams** (*Family Matters*); actor **Anthony Harrell** (*Saved By The Bell – The New Class*); *X Games* bike stunts Gold Medalist **David Mirra**, and actress **Daniella Deutscher** (*Hang Time*).
- Community voices for change: Profiles of kids – from the Denver/Littleton/Columbine area and around the nation who are taking action to stop the violence.
- Updates on the progress of the length and links students construct for the "Peace Chain."
- Tour updates on WAM!Bassadors 13 year-old Megan Kiernan and 12 year-old Erin May's call for better quality, less violent TV through The Children's Charter on Electronic Media.
- Dissemination of National Parent Teacher Association (PTA) PSAs featuring the WAM!Bassadors call for parents to get involved in their schools and activities to state PTAs and all interested television programmers.

A division of Encore Media Group LLC (EMG), WAM! is the first commercial-free children's channel dedicated to providing kid-friendly, socially responsible programming 24-hours a day for adolescents 8 to 16-years old. The network provides more subject-specific supplemental education than any other kids programmer, after school and weekend book-based dramas, sports and adventure that promote problem-solving and consensus values, plus art, culture, music and movies that inspire and motivate. The *WAM! Mind Zone*, *After School OH! Zone* and *Weekend End Zone* feature honor-roll students as hosts. The WAM!Kids also introduce *WAM! At The Movies*, classic family movies offered every Sunday afternoon.

EMG LLC is the largest provider of cable and satellite-delivered premium movie networks in the United States, currently counting more than 50 million pay units through its ownership of 13 domestic channels, including STARZ! and its theme channels, the New Encore and thematic channels such as Mystery, Action, Love Stories, Westerns, True Stories and WAM!. Encore is a wholly owned subsidiary of Liberty Media Corporation (NYSE: LMG.A and LMG.B).

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CONTACT: Marc McCarthy Encore Media Group 303/267-5851



For Immediate Release

WAM! SPONSORS NATIONAL TOUR OF *THE CHILDREN'S CHARTER ON ELECTRONIC MEDIA*

WAM! challenges the cable industry to raise the caliber of children's TV

Englewood, CO – October 27, 1998 Encore Media Group LLC's ("EMG") WAM! America's Kidz Network ("WAM!") is sponsoring 12-year-olds Erin May and Megan Kiernan on a year-long national tour with *The Children's Charter On Electronic Media* ("The Charter"). The Charter's mission is to urge the cable, satellite and broadcast industries to work together to raise the caliber of children's television.

The Charter, essentially a kids' bill of rights for quality television, was written by kids from around the world at the Second World Summit of Television for Children in London this past March 1998. It received the Summit's official blessing on March 13 from the thousand plus attendees at the closing day general session. As United States delegates to the Summit, Erin and Megan were instrumental in *The Charter's* creation. To honor their efforts, WAM! recently designated them WAM!Bassadors for the duration of the tour.

John J. Sie, chairman and CEO of EMG and Midge Pierce, vice president of programming for WAM! became the first programmers to sign *The Charter*, doing so this past July. At a September 15 signing ceremony, Barry Rosenblum, president of Time Warner Cable of New York City became the first cable operator to commit to supporting *The Charter*. Following the Time Warner Cable ceremony, Erin and Megan made a presentation to the Cable in the Classroom board and secured written commitments from Leo Hindery, TCI; Jim Robbins, Cox; Michael Bresnan, Bresnan Communications; Ben Gallagher, Century Communications and others.

The Charter complements WAM!'s mission to harness the power of television to provide a world full of knowledge and a world full of fun. Sie and Pierce enthusiastically agreed to support Erin and Megan's efforts, while also offering a personal challenge to the cable industry to work together on behalf of our children.

"I think that we are all in agreement that high-quality children's programming is vital," said Sie. "A good educational foundation for our children is key to an economically-competitive and culturally-enlightened society as we head into the next millennium. We must all work together to make a positive contribution to our children, America's future. That's why WAM! is fully committed to supporting *The Charter*."

"For the well being of our children, it is critical that the industry listen carefully to what kids are saying they want to see," said Pierce. "We need to offer less eye candy and more brain food."

Encore Media Group LLC's ("EMG") WAM! is the only commercial-free children's channel dedicated to providing kid-friendly, socially-responsible programming 24-hours a day for adolescents 8 to 16-years old. The network provides 60 hours a week of supplemental education, after school and weekend book-based dramas, sports and adventure that promote problem-solving and consensus values, plus art, culture, music and movies that inspire and motivate. The *WAM! Mind Zone*, *After School OH! Zone* and *Weekend End Zone* feature honor-roll students as hosts. The WAM! Kids also introduce *WAM! At The Movies*, classic family movies offered every Sunday afternoon.

EMG is the largest provider of cable and satellite-delivered premium movie networks in the United States, currently counting more than 40 million pay units through its ownership of 11 domestic networks.

CONTACT: Marc C. McCarthy
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For Immediate Release

WAM! AND NATIONAL PTA TO PRODUCE A SERIES OF PSAs

Englewood, CO - October 26, 1998 WAM! America's Kidz Network ("WAM!") and National Parent Teachers Association ("PTA") will produce a series of public service announcements ("PSAs") to encourage parents to spend time at their kids' schools and take an active interest in their kids' school and after-school activities. The announcement was made today by Midge Pierce, vice president of programming for WAM!.

Key messages in the PSAs support National PTA guidelines for parent involvement, said Patty Yoxall, National PTA director of public relations. Those include encouraging parents to get to know their children's teachers, to attend parent-teacher conferences and to help with homework when it is needed.

Pierce said the PSAs will be produced in Denver using the "WAM! Central" set and will star WAM!'s honor-roll student hosts and WAM!Bassadors Erin May and Megan Kiernan. She went on to point out that the PSAs will be distributed to state and local PTA offices, the National Cable Television Association ("NCTA"), Cable in the Classroom ("CIC") and other educational associations. Pierce also acknowledged that discussions are under way with The Advertising Council to circulate the PSAs to broadcasters. Production completion and distribution is scheduled for first quarter 1999.

"The messages are unique because they express from a kids' point of view what is important about their parents' role in their education," said Pierce.

Encore Media Group LLC's ("EMG") WAM! is the only commercial-free children's channel dedicated to providing kid-friendly, socially-responsible programming 24-hours a day for adolescents 8 to 16-years old. The network provides 60 hours a week of supplemental education, award-winning series, after school and weekend book-based dramas, sports and adventure that promote problem-solving and consensus values, plus art, culture, music and movies that inspire and motivate. The *WAM! Mind Zone*, *After School OH Zone* and *Weekend End Zone* features honor-roll students as hosts. The WAM! Kids also introduce *WAM! At The Movies*, classic family movies offered every Sunday afternoon.

EMG is the largest provider of cable and satellite-delivered premium movie networks in the United States, currently counting more than 44 million pay units through its ownership of 11 domestic networks.

The National PTA, founded in 1897, is the largest volunteer child advocacy organization in the United States. Membership in the organization is open to anyone who is concerned with the education, health and welfare of children. For more information on National PTA, please call the Membership Department at (800) 307-4782, or visit National PTA's web site at www.pta.org.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEWSFLASH

TIME WARNER CABLE OF NEW YORK JOINS WAM! IN SUPPORT OF *THE CHILDREN'S CHARTER ON ELECTRONIC MEDIA*

Ceremony kicks-off WAM!-sponsored national tour of The Children's Charter

New York, NY – September 15, 1998 Barry Rosenblum, president of Time Warner Cable of New York became the first cable operator to commit - and challenge the cable industry - to support *The Children's Charter On Electronic Media* during a signing ceremony today at Time Warner Cable's New York City office. *The Children's Charter* was presented to Rosenblum by 12-year-old WAM!Bassadors and US delegates Erin May and Megan Kiernan.

Also at the ceremony, Midge Pierce, vice president of programming for WAM! America's Kidz Network ("WAM!"), announced a year-long WAM!-sponsored national tour to urge the cable, satellite and broadcast industries to work together to raise the caliber of children's television programming. *The Children's Charter* was written by kids from around the world at the Second World Summit of Television for Children in London this past March. It received the Summit's official blessing on March 13, 1998 from the thousand plus attendees at the closing day general session.

Pierce pointed out that cable offers an array of viewing options for kids, from all animals all the time, to "attitude" programming, to programming with information that helps kids be all they can be, which is the mission of WAM!. She went on to say that for the well being of our children, it is critical that the industry listen carefully to what kids are saying they want to see, and congratulated Time Warner Cable and Rosenblum for making an important decision to support *The Children's Charter* and challenge the cable industry to work together to raise the caliber of children's television programming.

Encore Media Group LLC's ("EMG") WAM! is the only commercial-free children's channel dedicated to providing kid-friendly, socially-responsible programming 24-hours a day for adolescents 8 to 16-years old. The network provides 60 hours a week of supplemental education, after school and weekend book-based dramas, sports and adventure that promote problem-solving and consensus values, plus art, culture, music and movies that inspire and motivate. *The WAM! Reel Learning School Zone, After School Entertainment Zone* and *Weekend End Zone* features honor-roll students as hosts. The WAM! Kids also introduce *WAM! At The Movies*, classic family movies offered every Sunday afternoon.

EMG is the largest provider of cable and satellite-delivered premium movie networks in the United States, currently counting more than 44 million pay units through its ownership of 11 domestic networks.

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WAM! INTRODUCES MULTI-YEAR ANTI-VIOLENCE CAMPAIGN *GENERATION HOPE: VOICES FOR CHANGE*

First Ever Kid Perspective To Solve National Problem

Littleton, Colo., June 15, 1999 – WAM! America's Kidz Network (WAM!), Encore Media Group LLC's children's channel for 8 to 16 year-olds, introduced today ***Generation Hope: Voices for Change***. The bold campaign will begin September 1999 in WAM!'s Littleton, Colorado studio with a back-to-school interactive hour-long breakthrough special featuring kids, educators and parents offering solutions to violence. The special will be offered free to broadcasters, programmers and cable operators.

Among the planned voices for change will be the hot young pop group N' Sync, Mark Bunting, host of *Mark's Web World*, and Children's Charter authors and WAM!Bassadors 13 year-old Megan Kiernan and 12 year-old Erin May.

"With the spread of violence that is affecting and infecting our kids, we must all work together to provide a solution," said John J. Sie, chairman & CEO of Encore Media Group. "WAM! has made a long-term commitment to be the preeminent information source for children. The goal of *Generation Hope* is to provide a meaningful step in instilling kids with a sense of respect for others and personal accountability."

"With the Columbine shootings literally in our metro Denver backyard, WAM! has been profoundly impacted by school violence," said Midge Pierce, vice president of programming for WAM!. "Yet our efforts to stop violence and provide a quality viewing, age-appropriate, commercial and violence-free alternative for teen and preteen viewers predates this year's horrific events. Now, from the epicenter of a national problem, comes the start of a solution: *Generation Hope: Voices for Change*. With *Generation Hope* as the platform, WAM! will work to give our kids the assurance that school is still a safe, enriching place."

To design the campaign, WAM! has been meeting with Denver area high school students most directly affected by the Columbine tragedy. The consensus of the students is that the media coverage to date has been exploitative, and that kids are not getting the information they need to effect change. In particular, the kids are calling for television to provide better role models, and positive messages that give them back the hope they feel they have lost.

- more -

Generation Hope: Voices for Change
Page 2

Generation Hope will incorporate a variety of ongoing programming and nonprogramming elements into the campaign:

- ❑ A back-to-school 60 minute interactive special.
- ❑ A series of featurettes showing kids leading the charge to stop violence in their communities.
- ❑ *Mark's Web World*, the first series to teach kids responsible use of the Internet, tackles what kids should do when they encounter on-line threats.
- ❑ Dissemination of Parent Teacher Association (PTA) PSAs calling for parents to get involved in their kids' schools and activities.
- ❑ On-going sponsorship of the Children's Charter – essentially a kids' bill of rights for quality TV - fresh from Washington, DC and a successful signing tour with:
 - Secretary of Education Richard Riley
 - Attorney General Janet Reno
 - FCC Chairman William Kennard and Commissioner Susan Ness
 - Various members of Congress including Senators Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.), Senator Conrad Burns (R-Mont.), and Congressman Edward Markey (D-Mass.)

Encore Media Group LLC's (Encore) WAM! is the first commercial-free children's channel dedicated to providing kid-friendly, socially-responsible programming 24-hours a day for adolescents 8 to 16-years old. The network provides more subject-specific supplemental education than any other kids programmer, after school and weekend book-based dramas, sports and adventure that promote problem-solving and consensus values, plus art, culture, music and movies that inspire and motivate. The *WAM! Mind Zone*, *After School OH! Zone* and *Weekend End Zone* feature honor-roll students as hosts. The WAM! Kids also introduce *WAM! At The Movies*, classic family movies offered every Sunday afternoon. Celebrity appearances on *Generation Hope: Voices for Change* are subject to change.

Encore is the largest provider of cable and satellite-delivered premium movie networks in the United States, currently counting approximately 50 million pay units through its ownership of 13 domestic networks.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEWSFLASH

WAM!'S MIDGE PIERCE CHALLENGES THE CABLE INDUSTRY TO RAISE THE CALIBER OF CHILDREN'S TV

Atlanta, GA – May 5, 1998 During the Broccoli Television – Making Kids Eat it Up! Panel today, Midge Pierce, Vice President of Programming for WAM! America's Kidz Network ("WAM!") challenged the cable industry to work together to raise the caliber of children's television programming. She exhorted the industry to offer less eye candy and more brain food.

Pierce pointed out that cable offers an array of viewing options for kids, from all animals all the time, to "attitude" programming, to programming with information that helps kids be all they can be, which is the mission of WAM!. She went on to point out that for the well being of our children, it is critical that the industry listen carefully to what kids are saying they want to see. Pierce introduced several examples of programming mandates from The Children's Charter on Programming Media that was drafted by children from 42 countries at the March 1998 World Summit on Children's Programming. WAM! participated in the conference by sending the two kid U.S. delegates.

- ◆ "Children's opinions about television and radio should be listened to and respected."
- ◆ "Children's programs should be fun, enlightening, educational, interactive and should help them develop physically and mentally."
- ◆ "Children's programs should be honest and real. Children need to know the truth about what is going on in their world."
- ◆ "Children should be able to watch shows without commercials during the programs."
- ◆ "Violence for the sake of violence or violence to solve conflict should not be promoted."
- ◆ "All children should be treated equally on television. This includes ages, races, disabilities and abilities, and all physical appearances."

Encore Media Group LLC's ("EMG") WAM! is the only commercial-free children's channel dedicated to providing kid-friendly, socially-responsible programming 24-hours a day for adolescents 8 to 16-years old. The network provides 60 hours a week of supplemental education, after school and weekend book-based dramas, sports and adventure that promote problem-solving and consensus values, plus art, culture, music and movies that inspire and motivate. The WAM! Reel Learning School Zone, After School Entertainment Zone and Weekend End Zone features honor-roll students as hosts. The WAM! Kids also introduce WAM! At The Movies, classic family movies offered every Sunday afternoon.

EMG is the largest provider of cable and satellite-delivered premium movie networks in the United States, currently counting more than 40 million pay units through its ownership of 11 domestic networks.

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For Release: September 7, 1999

Top Cabinet Members; Congressmen & Cable Industry Leaders Endorse WAM!-Sponsored *Children's Charter On Electronic Media*

WAM! Extends Support for Teen-Authored Quality Television Bill of Rights

Littleton, Colo., September 7, 1999 – Following the overwhelming industry, political and consumer support of *The Children's Charter On Electronic Media (The Charter)*, WAM! America's Kidz Network's (WAM!) announced that it will continue to sponsor the national tour of WAM!Bassadors 13 year-old Megan Kiernan and 12 year-old Erin May in their efforts to raise the caliber of children's TV. *The Charter* is essentially a kids' bill of rights for quality television.

John J. Sie, chairman and CEO of Encore Media Group LLC and Midge Pierce, vice president of programming for WAM!, became the first programmers to sign *The Charter*. Last fall Barry Rosenblum, president of Time Warner Cable of New York City, became the first cable operator to commit – and challenge the cable industry - to support *The Charter*. Since then, Erin and Megan have secured written commitments from Leo J. Hindery, Jr., AT&T Broadband; Jim Robbins, Cox; Michael Bresnan, Bresnan Communications; Benard Gallagher, Century Communications; Judith McHale, Discovery Networks; Betty Cohen, Cartoon Network; Harold Morse, Ovation; Megan Hookey, Cable in the Classroom and many others.

During a June 1999 tour stop in Washington, D.C., Megan and Erin garnered passionate support from a variety of sources on Capitol Hill. On June 2 the WAM!Bassadors were special guests of President Clinton at his anti-violence address, securing Attorney General Janet Reno's written commitment. Subsequently, presentations and signing ceremonies were held with Secretary of Education Richard Riley, FCC Chairman William Kennard and FCC Commissioner Susan Ness, Senators John McCain (R-AZ), Joe Lieberman (D-CT), Wayne Allard (R-CO) and Conrad Burns (R-MT), Congressmen Ed Markey (D-MA) and Dan Burton (R-IN), U.S. Senate Chief Counsel Cheryl Walter and Congresswoman Diane DeGette (D-CO).

"In light of the Columbine tragedy, I think we are all in agreement that high-quality children's programming is vital," said Pierce. "For the well being of our children, it is critical that Washington and our industry listen carefully to what kids are saying they want to see."

- more -

A division of Encore Media Group LLC (EMG), WAM! is the first commercial-free children's channel dedicated to providing kid-friendly, socially responsible programming 24-hours a day for adolescents 8 to 16-years old. The network provides more subject-specific supplemental education than any other kids programmer, after school and weekend book-based dramas, sports and adventure that promote problem-solving and consensus values, plus art, culture, music and movies that inspire and motivate. The *WAM! Mind Zone*, *After School OH! Zone* and *Weekend End Zone* feature honor-roll students as hosts. The WAM!Kids also introduce *WAM! At The Movies*, classic family movies offered every Sunday afternoon.

EMG is the largest provider of cable and satellite-delivered premium movie networks in the United States, currently counting more than 50 million pay units through its ownership of 13 domestic channels, including STARZ! and its theme channels, the New Encore and thematic channels such as Mystery, Action, Love Stories, Westerns, True Stories and WAM!. Encore is a wholly owned subsidiary of Liberty Media Corporation (NYSE: LMG.A and LMG.B).

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CONTACT: Marc McCarthy Encore Media Group 303/267-5851

the children's charter on electronic media

- Violence for the sake of violence or violence to solve conflict should not be promoted.
- Children of all ages should have programs created just for them, and the programs should be on at times when children can watch them.
- All children should be treated equally on television. This includes ages, races, disabilities and abilities, and all physical appearances.
- Children's programs should be fun, entertaining, educational, interactive, and should help them to develop physically and mentally.
- Children's television should discourage using drugs, cigarettes, and alcohol.
- Children's programs should be honest and real. Children need to know the truth about what is going on in the world.
- Children's opinions about television and radio should be listened to and respected.
- Children should be consulted and involved in the production of programs for children. Sometimes children can help make the programs.
- Children should have programming that includes music, sports, drama, documentaries, news and comedy.
- Children should have programs from their own country as well as programs from other countries.
- Children should be able to watch shows without commercials during the programs.
- Children's television should have presenters that respect children and don't talk down to them.
- Television producers need to make sure that all children, including children who have difficulty seeing and hearing, are able to see and hear all of the programs for children. Programs should be translated into the language of the country in which it is seen.
- All children should be able to hear and see their own language and culture on television.
- Every broadcast organization should have children advising them about children's programs, issues and rights in television.

i promise to do my best to follow this charter.

Signature/Name: _____

Title: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

National Tour Sponsored by:





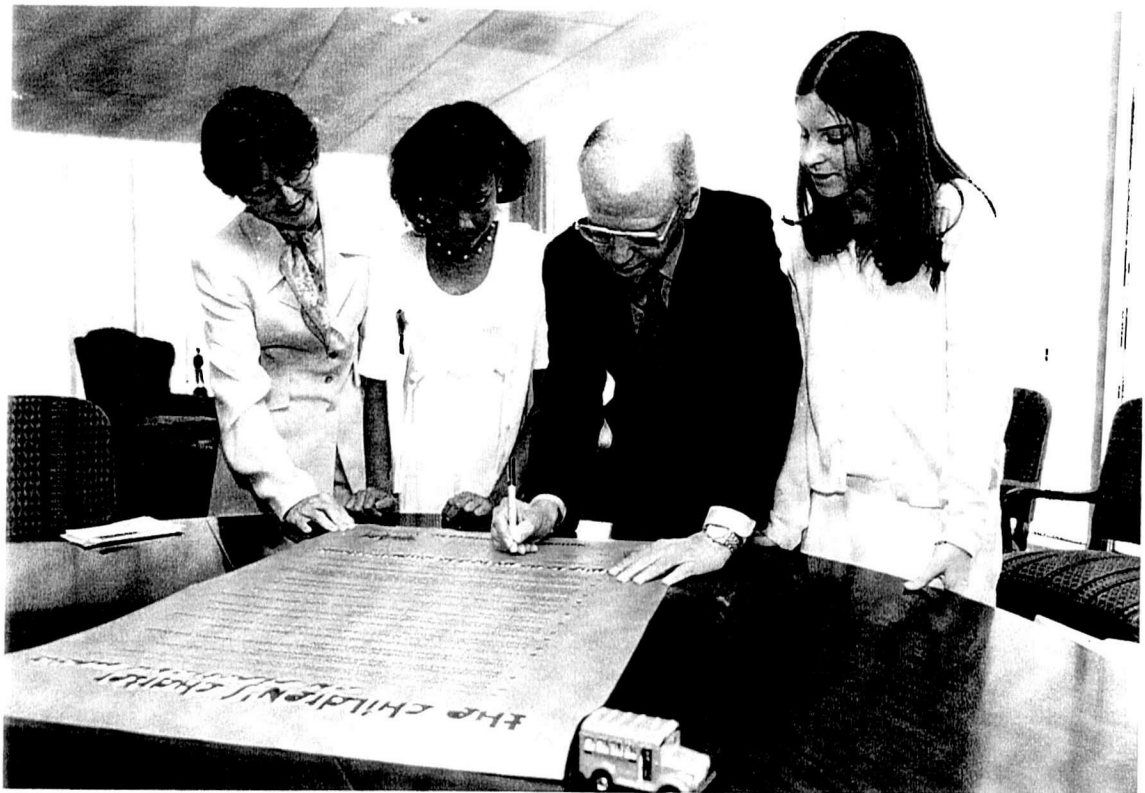
President Bill Clinton with (L to R) *The Children's Charter on Electronic Media* co-authors 12 year-old Erin May and 13 year-old Megan Kiernan in the White House Rose Garden in June 1999. Mr. Clinton earlier acknowledged the two girls and *The Charter* during his Anti-Violence address.

Attorney General Janet Reno signs *The Children's Charter on Electronic Media* while co-authors 12 year-old Erin May and 13 year-old Megan Kiernan look on. The event took place in the White House Rose Garden immediately following President Clinton's June 1999 Anti-Violence address.



(L to R) *Children's Charter* co-author 13 year-old Megan Kiernan, FCC Commissioner Susan Ness, *Children's Charter* co-author 12 year-old Erin May, Midge Pierce, vice president of programming for WAM! and Richard Waysdorf, senior counsel affiliate relations, Encore Media Group LLC during Commissioner Ness' signing of *The Children's Charter on Electronic Media* in June 1999.

(L to R) *Children's Charter* co-author 12 year-old Erin May, FCC Chairman William Kennard, *Children's Charter* co-author 13 year-old Megan Kiernan, Midge Pierce, vice president of programming for WAM! and Richard Waysdorf, senior counsel affiliate relations, Encore Media Group LLC share a private moment following Chairman Kennard's signing of *The Children's Charter on Electronic Media*.



(L to R) Midge Pierce, vice president for programming for WAM! joins co-authors 12 year-old Erin May and 13 year-old Megan Kiernan at the signing of their *Children's Charter on Electronic Media* by Secretary of Education Richard Riley in his office in Washington, DC this past June 1999.

(L to R) Co-authors 12 year-old Erin May and 13 year-old Megan Kiernan present their *Children's Charter on Electronic Media* to Secretary of Education Richard Riley in his office in Washington, DC this past June 1999.

File: unsubmitted



White House Council on Youth Violence

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1

HANDBOOK OF ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOR

Editors

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AND

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National Institute of Mental Health



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CHAPTER 18

The Effects of Media Violence on the Development of Antisocial Behavior

L. ROWELL HUESMANN, JESSICA F. MOISE, and CHERYL-LYNN PODOLSKI

CAUSES FOR CONCERN

Central to an understanding of the research on media violence and aggressive behavior and to the public concern that has surrounded the issue are two demographic trends from the second half of this century: (a) the very large increase in youth violence since the late 1940s and (b) the dramatic increase in the exposure of our youths to the mass visual media during the same period. The co-occurrence of these two trends has focused scientific, policy, and public attention on the relation between youth violence and violence in the mass media.

Of course, the co-occurrence of increases in violent behavior and increases in violence in the media might be suggestive of a relation between them, but, by itself, it would hardly qualify as evidence. Over the past four decades, however, a large body of scientific literature on the relation between media violence and violent behavior that overwhelmingly demonstrates that exposure to media violence does indeed relate to the development of violent behavior has emerged (Huesmann, 1982; Huesmann & Miller, 1994). The relations are not statistically large, but they are robust, replicable, and large enough to generate social concern (Rosenthal, 1986). The more interesting issues have now become the microscopic questions about the psychological processes that produce this relation. What are the processes? What do these processes suggest about the effects of the emerging new visual media, about who is most at risk for learning aggression from the media, and about media's role in specific forms of aggression? What do these processes suggest about how to mitigate the effects of media violence on the viewing audience?

In this chapter we review most of the empirical research relevant to understanding how violence on television, in film, in music videos, in video games, and on the news can engender violent behavior in the audience. First, though, we must set the stage by reviewing the demographic trends in violent behavior and youth exposure to media violence by summarizing the psychological theory that appears most relevant for understanding the development of individual differences in aggressive behavior, and by describing the roles that the observation of media violence might play in that development.

Increases in Violent Behavior

Crime prevention and protection from victimization have clearly become of paramount concern to the U.S. public during the last decade. According to the U.S. Department of Justice (1990), by 1990, 56% of the adult population of the United States personally feared becoming a victim of a violent crime. In late 1994, Congress passed a bill introduced by President Clinton with one of the largest increases in funding for anticrime measures in history. This most recent concern of the public and government with violent crime is the culmination of constantly growing anxiety paralleling the dramatic increase in violent crime that has occurred since the end of World War II (described in Part One of this volume). Though few other highly developed Western societies (except those beset by terrorism, drug wars, and revolutionary social upheaval, e.g., Columbia, Russia, South Africa) have violent crime rates similar to those in the United States, most such countries (excluding Japan) have also seen violent crime increases since World War II, particularly among youths (World Health Organization [WHO], 1965, 1982, 1993).

Corresponding Introduction of Mass Visual Media

The large increase in interpersonal violence in the past half-century has occurred at the same time as have the other dramatic changes in lifestyles produced by the great technological revolutions of the late 20th century. For child development, among the most notable has been the introduction of mass visual media into the everyday lives of children. When two highly salient events co-occur, it is common to hypothesize a causal relation between them; so it is not surprising that speculation about the role of media violence in stimulating violent behavior has been prevalent ever since motion pictures depicting violent acts first were distributed. With the advent in the early 1950s of television, the speculation advanced to the point of theorizing, and the first studies were initiated.

When television was introduced to the United States in the 1930s, few Americans could afford a television set and programming was limited. It was not until 1950 that television began to expand dramatically. Between 1950 and 1960, television ownership rose from less

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than 5% to more than 60% (Liebert, Sprafkin, & Davidson, 1982, p. 3). Since the 1950s, the television industry has grown tremendously and programming is now extremely pervasive in U.S. society. By 1992, 98.3% of U.S. households contained at least one television, and the average number of television sets in homes was 2.1 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1993, p. 561). It is estimated that children between the ages of 10 to 11 watch approximately 28 hours of television a week and teenagers watch about 23.5 hours a week (Comstock & Paik, 1991, p. 57). African Americans and Hispanics are reported to spend more time viewing television regardless of their social economic status (Tangney & Feshbach, 1988), and those persons of a low social economic status are often the heaviest viewers (Kubey & Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Furthermore, the increase in single parent homes and dual-working parents during the past decade has changed the environment in which the U.S. child views television. More and more often, children view television without supervision.

What is the content of the programming to which our children and youths are exposed during those 28 plus hours of weekly television viewing? Huesmann and Eron (1986) reported that in the late 1970s, about 15% of all programs in the United States could be classified as very violent. Contrary to popular belief, the percentage is about the same in most other Western countries. The absolute frequency of media violence, however, is much lower in most of these countries because far fewer programming hours are presented each week (Huesmann & Eron, 1986). More recently, Gerbner and Signorelli (1990) reported that there were five to six violent acts per hour on prime time television and 20 to 25 acts on Saturday morning children's programs. The most recent and most detailed surveys (Mediascope, 1996) show little change in these figures. For example, 57% of all programs are reported to contain violence and 33% of those violent programs were categorized as very violent, yielding an overall rate of 19% for very violent programs.

Recent Changes and Advances in Mass Visual Media

Not only has television become more widely distributed, but a number of other significant changes in mass visual media have occurred in the last two decades that have heightened concern over the potential role of the media to stimulate antisocial behavior.

During the 1970s and 1980s, cable television grew to become a part of U.S. life. With its advent, the viewing selection changed drastically. In 1980, the continental United States had 17.7 million subscribers to cable television. By 1992, that number had grown to 57.2 million. In 1992, of the 92 million households with television, 60.2% subscribed to cable television (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1993, p. 561). Cable television brought increased programming selection to U.S. households. In addition to regularly broadcast network programs, viewers could watch recycled old films and movie box office hits during all hours of the day and night. Many of these shows had greater violent content than the normal network dramas.

The spread of the videocassette recorder (VCR) has also increased the availability of violent films for viewing. Home VCR equipment boomed during the late 1980s, bringing box office entertainment into the home. In 1980, 1.1% of households with television had VCR equipment. By 1990, that number had increased to 72.5% of households with television (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1993, p. 561). It is predicted that ownership of video equipment will rise

to between 75% and 85% before leveling off (Dorr & Kunkel, 1990). These increases in the United States are paralleled by increases in other Western countries (Greenberg, Linsangan, & Soderman, 1987). Not only does VCR equipment provide a mechanism through which children can view the most violent films, it erodes the ability of society to control their exposure as well.

Another new form of entertainment that has raised concern among child advocates is the music video. Music videos entered the family home during the 1970s and became pervasive in 1981 with the introduction of MTV—an all-music video channel. Music videos are viewed primarily by 12- to 34-year-olds (Hansen & Hansen, 1990a). Viewing time has been reported at about 1 hour each weekday and about an hour and a half on Saturdays and Sundays (Hansen & Hansen, 1990a). Music videos have been frequently criticized for portraying violence, and according to a report by Huston et al. (1992), 50% of music videos contain at least one occurrence of violence. However, it remains to be studied whether the amount of graphically portrayed violence that most children observe in music videos compares with the amount they observe in dramatic films and television shows.

Advances in technology also brought an interactive form of visual entertainment—the video game—into widespread use by the end of the 1970s. By the end of the 1980s, the home video game was a regular part of almost every child's life (Provenzo, 1991). By 1985, annual industry sales were at \$100 million, and by 1990 they reached a high of \$4 billion. A CBS News report projected that 1992 sales would reach \$6 billion (Provenzo, 1991). As video games have proliferated, violent video games have become a regular part of U.S. life, particularly for boys. In a survey of 357 seventh- and eighth-grade middle-class Americans, about 67% of girls played video games at least 1 to 2 hours per week at home and about 20% played in arcades. However, 90% of boys played at home and 50% in arcades. For boys, approximately half of the preferred games were violent and only 2% were educational (Funk, 1993). In the United States, video game revenues total \$5.3 billion, about \$400 million more than is spent at the movies (Elmer-Dewitt, 1993).

These technological advances have increased concerns about the extent to which extensive presentations of violence in the visual mass media increase violence in society. Music videos couple violent acts with repetitive lyrics; cable television and video equipment allow for unlimited access to unrated violent films; video games provide graphic visual displays of violence created at the control of the player; and interactive television is on the verge of explosion into U.S. society. Given these technological advances, the potential for the mass media to influence behavior—for better or for worse—would seem to be greater than ever. But before we can explore the empirical links between violent media and violent behavior in detail, we need to review the current state of theorizing about violent behavior.

THEORIES OF VIOLENT AND AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR

There are two clear conclusions that one can draw from the research to date on the development of human aggressive behavior. First, severe aggressive behavior is most often the product of

multiple causes. Second, the best predictor of aggressive or violent behavior is previous aggressive or violent behavior.

Multiple Causes

The existing research suggests that childhood aggression is most often a product of a number of interacting factors: genetic, perinatal, physiological, familial, and learning. In fact, it seems most likely that severe antisocial aggressive behavior occurs only when there is a convergence of several of these factors. The evidence linking these factors to the development of aggressive behavior is covered in other chapters in this volume (Part Two) and is not reiterated here. What is important for the investigation of the role of media violence is that no one should expect the learning of aggression from exposure to media violence to explain more than a small percentage of the individual variation in aggressive behavior.

Continuity Over Time

Equally strong is the evidence that habitual aggressive behavior emerges in the early years and predicts later aggressive behavior. Individual differences in social behavior related to aggression (e.g., early temperament) are apparent before age 2 (Kagan, 1988). By age 6, a number of children have adopted aggressive patterns of behavior in their interactions with others (Parke & Slaby, 1983). From that point on, the extent of aggressive behavior in children tends to increase into adolescence. By age 8, children are characteristically more or less aggressive over a variety of situations, and aggression becomes a relatively stable characteristic of the individual youngster predicting adult aggression (Ensminger, Kellam, & Rubin, 1983; Farrington, 1982, 1990; Huesmann, Eron, Lefkowitz, & Walder, 1984; Loeber & Dishion, 1983; Magnusson, Duncanson, & Zetterblom, 1975; Moffitt, 1990; Olweus, 1979; Robins & Ratcliff, 1980; Spivack, 1983). The more aggressive child becomes the more aggressive adult.

The Learning of Aggression

Within this framework of multiple causes and early emergence, is there any one process that seems most important in accounting for individual differences in aggression? Yes, taken as a whole, the past 50 years of research on human aggression suggest that habitual aggressive behavior in young humans is to a great extent learned from the child's early interactions with the environment (Bandura, 1973; Berkowitz, 1974; Eron, Walder, & Lefkowitz, 1971; Huesmann et al., 1984). Although genetic and physiological factors clearly predispose some children more than others toward aggression, it is mostly children's early learning experiences that mold them into youths who behave more or less aggressively.

What are the key elements of the child's environment that mold the development of aggressive behavior? One must distinguish between instigators that may motivate or cue aggressive responses and affect behavior immediately and those components of the child's environment that mold the child's long-term responses to these stimuli and socialize the child. An environment full of deprivations, frustrations, and provocations is one in which aggression

is frequently stimulated, as the high level of aggression in our urban ghettos attests. However, the environmental elements that are most important theoretically in determining individual differences in habitual responses to deprivation, frustration, and provocation are the child's family, peers, and cultural surroundings, including the mass media. Predisposing differences in arousal level, impulsivity, and irritability may be moderated or exacerbated by the child's early learning experiences; but once habitual patterns of behavior are well learned, they become very hard to change.

Because of the malleability of behavior in young children and the relative intractability of aggressive and violent dispositions once they have been developed, it is important that theories concerning the development of habitual aggressive behavior focus on behavior in young children. What are the dimensions and parameters of the socialization processes that lead to individual differences in habitual aggressive behavior? Through what psychological processes does the influence of this early socialization process extend into adulthood? These are key issues for understanding of the long-term effects of exposure to media violence.

Cognitions as Mediators of Socialization

In recent years, a number of researchers have offered theories that implicate the child's cognitions in the learning and maintenance of aggressive habits. These models put the stress primarily on cognitive processes and the steps through which a child must proceed to react appropriately, competently, and nonaggressively to a social situation. Among the most influential of these have been the revised formulation of Bandura (1986), the neo-associationist perspective of Berkowitz (1984, 1988), and the information processing theories put forth by Huesmann (1982, 1988; Huesmann & Eron, 1984) and Dodge (1982; Crick & Dodge, 1994). All of these theorists recognize the importance of predisposing factors and emotional abnormalities in stimulating anger and impulsiveness, but they stress the role that learned cognitions can play in moderating these effects. The common theme among these dominant, current theories of aggression is that the processes through which media violence exerts its effect must involve the child's cognitions and that it is through such cognitions that early sustained exposure to media violence influences behavior throughout the life course.

DIFFERENT METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO RESEARCH ON MEDIA VIOLENCE

Before proceeding to review the empirical evidence concerning the relation between media violence and aggression, a few methodological comments are required. Four distinctly different types of studies have been undertaken to test the relation between exposure to media violence and aggressive behavior by the viewer: true-experiments performed in well-controlled but artificial settings; quasi-experiments performed in poorly controlled real-life settings; one-shot observational studies in real-life settings; and longitudinal observational studies in real-life settings. One common fatal error that many critics of the field have made (e.g., Freedman, 1984; Howitt & Cumberbatch, 1975) is to ignore one or more of these approaches and focus attacks narrowly on

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one or two approaches. Thus, Freedman (1984) completely ignores true-experiments, in which cause and effect are easily teased apart, and criticizes the field studies for not demonstrating a causal relation. Others have attacked the true-experiments for being "artificial" and ignore the real-life field studies. A second common error of critics has been to ignore age differences in aggregating results. The dominant cognitive theories all suggest that media violence should have an effect on children who are developing their habitual styles of social behavior, but these theories make many fewer clear-cut predictions about the effects of media violence on adults. The lack of a relation among a sample of adults or even teenagers should not be taken as evidence falsifying a theory about children, yet it often has.

THE EMPIRICAL RELATION BETWEEN DIFFERENT TYPES OF MEDIA VIOLENCE AND AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR

Dramatic Violence

The majority of research on the relation between exposure to violence in the media and violent behavior has focused on the effects of watching dramatic violence on television and film. Experimental studies, static observational studies, longitudinal studies, and meta-analyses all indicate that exposure to dramatic violence on television and in the movies is related to violent behavior (Huesmann & Miller, 1994).

In contrived experimental studies, children exposed to violent behavior on film or television behave more aggressively immediately afterward. Large numbers of laboratory and field experiments have demonstrated this fact over the past quarter-century (see reviews by Comstock, 1980; Geen, 1983, 1990; Geen & Thomas, 1986). The typical paradigm is that randomly selected children who are shown either a violent or a nonviolent short film are observed as they play with each other or with objects such as *Bobo* dolls (Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1961, 1963a, 1963b). The consistent finding is that children who see the violent film clip behave more aggressively immediately afterward. Just as children learn cognitive and social skills from watching people act out these skills, they learn violent behaviors from watching other people behave violently. Such results have been obtained both for aggression directed at inanimate objects (e.g., *Bobo* dolls) and for aggression directed at peers (Bjorkqvist, 1985; Josephson, 1987). In one very typical study Bjorkqvist (1985) in Finland exposed 5- to 6-year-old children to either violent or nonviolent films. These children were then observed playing together in a room by two observers who did not know which type of film each child had seen. Children who had just seen the violent film ended up being rated higher on physical aggression (hitting other children, wrestling, etc.), verbal aggression (screaming at others, threatening others), and aggression at objects (intentional destruction of toys, etc.).

The effects of violent television or films on the affective responses that mediate aggression have also been clearly demonstrated with valid experiments. For example, Bushman and Geen (1990) demonstrated that violent videotapes elicit both aggressive cognitions and higher systolic blood pressure in college students.

It is also true that in the laboratory, children can be taught to be less aggressive by being shown films with prosocial models (Eron & Huesmann, 1986; Pitkanen-Pulkkinen, 1979). These short-term effects are not limited to children but have been observed in teenagers and adults, particularly when the dependent measures reflect attitudes or opinions rather than behaviors (Malamuth & Donnerstein, 1982). In these well-controlled laboratory studies, there can be no doubt that it is the children's observation of the scenes of violence that causes the changes in behavior. Some critics would dismiss these studies completely as "artificial" approximations of life (Freedman, 1984) and focus only on field studies. But such a position is not defensible in light of the complementary nature of experimental and nonexperimental research in this area (Huesmann, Eron, Berkowitz, & Chaffee, 1991).

The demonstration of a relation between the observation of dramatic television and film violence and the commission of aggressive behavior has not been limited to the laboratory. Evidence from field studies over the past 20 years has led most reviewers to conclude that a child's current aggressiveness and the amount of television and film violence the child is regularly watching are positively related to some degree. Children who watch more violence on television and in the movies behave more violently and express beliefs more accepting of aggressive behavior (see reviews by Anderson, 1977; Chaffee, 1972; Comstock, 1980; Eysenck & Nias, 1978; Harold, 1979; Huesmann, 1982; Huesmann & Miller, 1994; Paik & Comstock, 1994; Wood, Wong, & Chachere, 1991). Clearly, this relation is robust though the effect size is not large by standards used in the measurement of intellectual abilities and varies as a function of environmental, familial, cognitive, and television programming variables. However, the relation is usually statistically significant and is substantial by the standards of personality measurements with children. Correlations of the magnitude usually obtained in the field can have real social significance (Rosenthal, 1986). Moreover, the relation is highly replicable even across researchers who disagree about the reasons (e.g., Huesmann, Lagerspetz, & Eron, 1984; Milavsky, Kessler, Stipp, & Rubens, 1982) and across countries (Huesmann & Eron, 1986). In contrast to the childhood data, significant correlations between adults' aggression and adults' concurrent violence viewing have been observed only rarely in the field.

Whereas these one-shot field studies showing a correlation between media violence viewing and aggression suggest that the causal conclusions of the experimental studies may well generalize to the real world, longitudinal studies can test the plausibility of causal hypotheses more directly. The data available from the few existing longitudinal studies do, in fact, provide additional support for the hypothesis that television violence viewing leads to the development of aggressive behavior. These longitudinal studies have employed a wide range of samples and methodologies, but all of the studies done with children seem to reveal long-term effects of exposure to television violence.

In a study initiated in 1960 on 870 youth in Columbia County, New York, Eron and his colleagues found that a boy's early childhood aggression in elementary school was statistically related to his aggressive and antisocial behavior 10 years later (after graduating from high school), even controlling for initial aggressiveness, social class, education, and other relevant variables (Eron,

Huesmann, Lefkowitz, & Walder, 1972; Lefkowitz, Eron, Walder, & Huesmann, 1977). A 22-year follow-up of these same subjects revealed that their early violence viewing also related to their adult criminality at age 30 (Huesmann, 1986).

A 3-year longitudinal study of children in five countries conducted by Huesmann and his colleagues in the late 1970s (Huesmann & Eron, 1986; Huesmann, Lagerspetz, & Eron, 1984) revealed that the television habits of children as young as first-graders also predicted subsequent childhood aggression. This was true for both boys and girls even in countries without large amounts of violent programming, such as Israel, Finland, and Poland (Huesmann & Eron, 1986). In most countries, the more aggressive children also watched more television, preferred more violent programs, identified more with aggressive characters, and perceived television violence as more like real life than did the less aggressive children. The combination of extensive exposure to violence coupled with identification with aggressive characters was a particularly potent predictor of subsequent aggression for many children. A field experiment conducted as part of this study also provided evidence that what is being learned from the observation of violence may be attitudes about aggression as much as specific behaviors. In this field experiment, aggression in a randomly selected experimental group of third-graders was reduced relative to a control group by changing their attitudes about the acceptability of the violence shown on television (Huesmann, Eron, Klein, Brice, & Fischer, 1983).

A few longitudinal studies seemed to produce results at variance with the thesis that media violence causes aggression, but closer inspection of most of these studies reveals that their results are not discrepant, but simply not strongly supportive of the thesis. (For a review, see Huesmann & Miller, 1994.) For example, NBC's longitudinal study conducted in the 1970s (Milavsky et al., 1982) actually reports regression coefficients that, although not significant, are in the predicted direction in 22 of 30 critical tests for the causal theory.

More recently, Centerwall (1989, 1992) has used aggregated population crime and media viewing data to argue that media violence is one of the major causes of increased crime rates in Western society. Using time series analyses of data from the United States, Canada, and South Africa, where television has been introduced only recently, he concludes that the introduction of television, with its associated frequent portrayal of violent acts, significantly increases interpersonal violence in a society. As discussed later in the section on news coverage, however, such conclusions must be treated judiciously because of the many threats to the validity of conclusions from quasi-experiments using aggregated population data.

Finally, one cannot complete a review of major studies on this topic without mentioning two meta-analyses that summarize findings from studies conducted over the past 30 years on media violence and aggression. Paik and Comstock (1994) calculated the obtained effect sizes for over 1,000 comparisons derived from 217 different experiments, static field studies, and longitudinal studies. After extensive analyses, they concluded that the association between exposure to television violence and antisocial and aggressive behavior is extremely robust. Furthermore, they conclude, "The data of the past decade and a half strengthens rather than

weakens the case that television violence increases aggressive and antisocial behavior" (p. 54). Wood et al. (1991) analyzed 30 comparisons in 23 studies in which the outcome variable was aggression measured in unstructured social interaction, such as a nursery school playground. They concluded that exposure to media violence significantly enhanced viewers' aggressive behavior when the findings were aggregated across studies, though the effect was not uniform across investigations.

Music Videos

The increasing popularity of several new forms of media that contain high levels of violence, such as music videos and video games, adds a new dimension to this relation between exposure to media violence and violent behavior. Content analyses of music videos have documented very high levels of violence (Baxter, Di Riemer, Landini, Leslie, & Singletary, 1985; Brown & Campbell, 1986; Caplan, 1985; Hansen & Hansen, 1989; Sherman & Dominick, 1986) and show that videos often portray antisocial behavior in a positive light (Hansen & Hansen, 1989). Although very few experimental or static observational studies have been conducted on the behavioral effects of watching violent music videos, several studies have been done on the effects they have on viewers' attitudes, finding that watching violent music videos increases viewers' acceptance and endorsement of violent behavior and attitudes (Greeson & Williams, 1986; Hansen & Hansen, 1989, 1990a). For example, Hansen and Hansen (1990a) found that after neutral music videos, subjects' evaluations of a target were more negative when the target made an obscene gesture toward the experimenter than when he did not. However, after viewing videos containing antisocial behavior, the obscene gesture did not decrease the subjects' rating of the target. Whereas these types of studies do not directly test the link between viewing and behavior, they do seem to indicate that exposure to antisocial rock music videos alters the viewers' judgments of antisocial behavior.

One genre that has garnered particular attention is that of rap music videos. As with music videos in general, little research has been done on the effects of rap music on aggressive behavior. However, two recent studies have looked at the effects of exposure to rap music videos on the attitudes of African American adolescents. One study found that exposure to nonviolent rap music videos that depict women in sexually subordinate roles increased females' acceptance of teen dating violence but had no effect on males' acceptance (Johnson, Adams, Ashburn, & Reed, 1995). A second study found that subjects exposed to violent rap music videos reported greater acceptance of the use of violence and increased probability that they would engage in violent behavior. In addition, when compared to those subjects who did not see rap music videos, in a hypothetical situation given to them after viewing the video, subjects exposed to either violent or nonviolent videos expressed a greater desire to be like the materialistic young man who uses illegal means to get what he wants than the young man in college who is aspiring to be a lawyer (Johnson, Jackson, & Gallo, 1994). These results indicate that rap music videos may, in fact, affect both male and female adolescents' attitudes toward aggressive behavior.

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Video Games

Video games also have become a focus of concern due to the high levels of violence they contain and the fact that children are active participants in the violence, rather than passive observers, as they are with television. As with music videos, video games are a fairly recent medium and as such their impact on the aggressive behavior of the players has not yet been studied extensively. However, the results of the studies that have been conducted, most of which are experimental studies done in the laboratory, seem to support the notion that observing and engaging with a medium that has violent content is related to violent behavior in the observer/player. Several studies have shown that children's aggressive play increases after playing a violent video game (Cooper & Mackie, 1986; Schute, Malouff, & Post-Gorden, 1988; Silvern & Williamson, 1987). For example, one study looked at the differences in 28 four- to six-year-old children's play before and after viewing a violent cartoon and after playing a violent video game (Silvern & Williamson, 1987). They found that children exhibited double the aggressive behavior and less prosocial behavior after playing the video game or watching the cartoon than at the baseline.

News Violence

Little research has been conducted specifically on the effects of watching violence in news coverage on behavior. From a theoretical perspective, however, there is little reason to believe that the effects on the audience of news violence should be much different from the effects of dramatic violence. True, the audience knows that the news violence is real, which might heighten its effects, but children, who are most likely to be affected by video violence, often also perceive dramatic violence (not to mention "reenactment" dramas) as "telling about life just like it is" (Huesmann & Eron, 1986). Furthermore, graphic portrayals of actual acts of violence are seldom shown in the news; rather, the story usually is reported after the fact.

Most of the investigations that have examined the effects of violent news on the audience have been time-series field studies that used aggregated population data to relate population trends to specific news events. They have yielded mixed results. On the whole, these studies support the theory of imitative suicide but provide only weak evidence for the occurrence of imitative violent crime after well-publicized violent events (Phillips, 1979, 1982; Simon, 1979; Stack, 1989). One study using monthly data from 1968 to 1980 found that publicized mass murders or suicides correlated with subsequent suicide rates, but not with subsequent homicide rates (Stack, 1989). Phillips's (1983) frequently cited finding of increases in violent crimes following televised prize fights has not been widely accepted by researchers because of methodological challenges raised by others (Baron & Reiss, 1985; see Phillips & Bollen, 1985, for a response). However, another study by Berkowitz and Macaulay (1971) reported that there was an increase in violent crimes, but not property crimes, after several high-profile murder cases in the early and mid-1960s, including the assassination of President Kennedy. The threats to the validity of the conclusions of all such time-series studies using aggregated population data are numerous. Thus, the relation between news

coverage of violent crime and violent behavior must still be considered unclear and needs to be investigated more rigorously in the future with prospective studies examining the longitudinal effects on individuals. Such research seems particularly vital as the nature of news coverage changes and the distinction between news and entertainment blurs with the increase in reality-based police shows that overrepresent the prevalence of violent crime (Oliver, 1994).

WHY IS EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE RELATED TO VIOLENT BEHAVIOR?

The previous review, although brief, revealed a preponderance of evidence indicating that exposure to dramatic media violence is predictive of increased aggressive behavior in young children. The evidence that video games and music videos have the same effect is much weaker, but it is hard to understand how television and films could have an effect and video games and music videos would not have an effect. Let us now turn to the question of what processes produce these relations. In line with our previous discussion of the current state of theorizing about aggression, we need to focus on mechanisms through which media violence directly stimulates aggressive behavior, influences the cognitions controlling aggressive behavior, and influences the emotional and arousal processes underlying aggressive behavior.

Before exploring these processes, however, let us dispense with one old theory that has plagued discussions of the role of media violence for decades, the catharsis theory developed by Freud (1933). This theory posits that watching aggression on television acts as a purging of aggressive tendencies or drive. Certainly, physically aggressive actions can reduce tension in subjects who have been frustrated (Hokanson & Burgess, 1962), but so can physical exertion that is nonaggressive. The more important fact is that there are no convincing data to indicate that watching violent acts reduces tension or the propensity of one to act aggressively (Doob & Wood, 1972). The one field study often cited as demonstrating a catharsis process (Feshbach & Singer, 1971) has methodological flaws (Huesmann et al., 1991) that the authors have recognized. As shown earlier, the majority of evidence demonstrates that violence viewing and aggression are positively related, which contradicts the catharsis hypothesis. Furthermore, studies that have examined the relation between fantasizing about aggression and aggressive behavior have shown that children who fantasize more behave more aggressively (Huesmann & Eron, 1986; Viemer & Paajanen, 1992). As an explanation of the relation between aggressive behavior and viewing violence, catharsis theory can be put to rest.

Observational Learning of Behaviors

On the basis of the accumulated evidence, it seems clear that children learn both specific aggressive behaviors and cognitions supporting more complex aggressive behaviors through observational learning. It has become an accepted tenet of developmental theory that through observational learning and vicarious reinforcements (Bandura, 1977, 1986), children develop habitual modes of behavior that are resistant to extinction. The application of observational learning to explain the acquisition of specific aggressive behaviors

that children observe in others (in person or in the media) is straightforward (Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1963a). But there are additional predictions of vicarious learning theories that also have been confirmed. For instance, it has been shown that the extent to which a child imitates an actor is greatly influenced by the reinforcements received by the actor. If the actor is seen being rewarded for aggressive behavior, the child is more likely to imitate that behavior (Bandura, 1965; Bandura et al., 1963a, 1963b; Walters, Leat, & Mezei, 1963). If the actor is punished for a behavior, that behavior is less likely to be modeled (Bandura, 1965; Walters & Parke, 1964). Other studies have indicated that the persistence of such learned behavior seems to depend on the direct reinforcements that the child receives (Bandura, 1965; Hayes, Rincovei, & Volosin, 1980). Finally, whether the child identifies with the model (Huesmann & Eron, 1986; Huesmann, Lagerspetz, & Eron, 1984) and whether the model is perceived as possessing valued characteristics also appear to influence whether a child will imitate the model (Bandura, 1977; Hicks, 1965; Neely, Heckel, & Leichtman, 1973; Nicholas, McCarter, & Heckel, 1971).

Observational Learning of Cognitions

In more recent years, a number of other theorists, drawing both on Bandura's social learning theory and cognitive psychology, have extended the concept of observational learning to argue that children also learn cognitions supporting aggressive behavior that generalize across time and situations (Huesmann, 1982, 1988; Huesmann & Eron, 1984; Huesmann & Miller, 1994). Huesmann has argued that children learn, from observing violent dramas in the media, scripts for complex aggressive behaviors, normative beliefs, attributional biases, and attitudes supporting aggression. *Scripts* are programs for behaviors and *normative beliefs* are internal self-regulating standards that filter out unacceptable behaviors (Huesmann & Guerra, 1997). Huesmann argues that both scripts and normative beliefs are learned through a process in which observational learning interacts with cognitive rehearsal of the observed material and instrumental enactive learning. The observed correlations between violence viewing, aggressive fantasizing, and aggression reflect the role of fantasizing as rehearsal (Huesmann & Eron, 1986; Viemerio & Panjanco, 1992). According to this theory, a child's observation of dramatic or real violence in childhood contributes to the construction of lasting cognitive structures that affect the child's aggressive attitudes and behavior into adulthood. These cognitive structures contribute to the perpetuation of aggressive behavior even in the face of negative consequences by providing false evaluation of the outcome of the behavior, limiting the ability to generate any alternative scripts, causing an alteration of evaluative schemas to make aggression more palatable, and arranging the environment so aggression is more acceptable (Huesmann, 1988).

A substantial body of data has accumulated indicating that media violence does, in fact, change beliefs and attitudes about violence. The more televised violence a child watches, the more accepting is the child's attitude toward aggressive behavior (Dominick & Greenberg, 1972). Equally important, the more a person watches television, the more suspicious a person is, and the greater is the person's expectancy of being involved in real violence (Gerbner & Gross, 1974, 1980). Why is this? From an infor-

Why Is Exposure to Violence Related to Violent Behavior? 187

mation processing standpoint, attitudes are attributions, rules, and explanations induced from observations of behavior. They serve as heuristics for future behavior. If a child's, or even an adult's, major exposure to social interaction occurs through television, the conception of social reality would quite naturally be based on such observations. Heavy television viewers would have more positive attitudes toward aggression because they perceive aggressive behavior to be the norm. Perhaps even the perception of what is an aggressive act changes.

Cognitive Justification Processes

The justification hypothesis posits that people who are aggressive like to watch violent television because they can then justify their own behavior as being normal (Huesmann, 1982). It involves the observational learning of attitudes, but it operates in the opposite direction from the process described earlier. According to this theory, television violence viewing does not stimulate the child's aggressiveness; it results from it. A child's own aggressive behaviors normally should elicit guilt in the child, but this guilt could be relieved if the child who has behaved aggressively watches violent television, which justifies his or her own aggressiveness.

Unfortunately, little research has been conducted to test this model. A number of psychologists have suggested that aggressiveness might be a precursor of violence viewing (e.g., Kaplan & Singer, 1976), but most of them have operated in a theoretical vacuum without any process model to explain such an effect. Unfortunately, the one experiment aimed at assaying whether aggressive behavior might be a precursor of violence viewing demonstrated only that subjects who are told to think about aggressive words choose to watch aggressive films afterward (Fenigstein, 1979). More research clearly needs to be conducted to test this theory.

Cognitive Cueing/Priming

Whereas the observational learning process explains how exposure to media violence can teach lasting aggressive habits, priming theory can account for how aggressive habits learned in other venues may be triggered by violent media displays. Berkowitz (1984) has proposed that "the aggressive idea suggested by a violent movie can 'prime' other semantically related thoughts, heightening the chances that viewers will have other aggressive ideas in this period" (p. 411). In this way, viewing an aggressive act on television activates thoughts, emotions, and even behaviors that are cognitively associated with the act. This idea of cognitive priming is useful in explaining why the observation of aggression in the media is often followed by aggressive acts that differ from the observed behavior. Many studies have demonstrated this phenomenon using television violence (Berkowitz, 1970; Berkowitz & Rogers, 1986; Worchel, 1972; Wyer & Hartwick, 1980; Wyer & Srull, 1981) and violence in music videos (Hansen & Hansen, 1990a). For example, in one study it was found that subjects who viewed slides of weapons were more willing to severely punish a target than were the subjects who viewed neutral slides (Leyens & Parke, 1975). Presumably, viewing the weapons stimulated other aggressive ideas and emotions that then affected the viewers' subsequent attitudes and behaviors.

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A related view focuses on the importance of cues in the retrieval process of aggression learned through observation. The idea of cueing is that at the time of observation the viewer encodes both the aggressiveness of the act and any relevant pieces of information in the surrounding environment (such as a particular object) that later can serve as retrieval cues. One study that demonstrated this effect was Josephson's (1987) study of schoolboy hockey players. Josephson deliberately frustrated the boys who were then shown either a violent or nonviolent television program. A walkie-talkie was used by the aggressive actor in the program and thus was predicted to act as a retrieval cue. In fact, this seemed to be the case because during a subsequent hockey game, boys were most aggressive if they had previously seen the aggressive film and the referee carried a walkie-talkie. This idea of cueing seems particularly important in reference to the effects of music videos because the audio portion of the video may serve as a cue for the aggression observed in the video, causing these aggressive acts to be retrieved when the music is heard in the future.

Emotional and Cognitive Desensitization

Cognitive desensitization refers to the idea that the more an individual is exposed to violence, the more violence will come to be seen as a normal and acceptable form of behavior. This process, in turn, will increase the person's acceptance of violent behavior, decrease the individual's emotional reaction to violence, and make it more likely that the individual will model the aggressive acts. Many studies have demonstrated this effect in both children (Drabman & Thomas, 1974; Thomas & Drabman, 1975) and adults (Linz, Donnerstein, & Penrod, 1988; Malamuth & Check, 1981).

One designates the changes in attitudes brought about by frequent violence viewing as a cognitive desensitization to violence. Similarly, there is some evidence that a real physiological desensitization can occur. In a quasi-experimental field study (Cline, Croft, & Courrier, 1973), boys who regularly watched a heavy diet of television displayed less physiological arousal in response to new scenes of violence than did control subjects. Although these results have apparently been difficult to replicate in the field, Thomas, Horton, Lippincott, and Drabman (1977) discovered similar short-term effects in laboratory studies of changes in skin conductance in response to violence. It should not be surprising that emotional and physiological responses to scenes of violence habituate as do responses to other stimuli. It is more difficult to make the case that such habituation would influence the future probability of aggressive behavior. One needs to argue that the arousal that is naturally stimulated by viewing violent behavior is unpleasant and therefore is a negative reinforcer of one's own violent behavior. Several studies do seem to support this hypothesis (Halpern, 1975; Winn, 1977).

Arousal and Excitation Transfer

On the other hand, some theorists have argued that arousal heightens the propensity of the person to behave aggressively, and television violence increases or perpetuates arousal. Studies by Geen and O'Neal (1969) and Zillmann (1971) demonstrate that increasing a

subject's general arousal increases the probability of aggressive behavior. In the typical study, a subject engages in physical activity that raises his or her heart rate and then is tested on the tendency to respond aggressively in response to provocation (Zillmann, Katcher, & Milavsky, 1972). Although there is some tendency of subjects to respond more "aggressively," for example, select stronger punishments for someone else, in this situation it is difficult to separate the arousal from the physical exertion as the cause.

This excitation transfer theory has also been used to explain how nonviolent pornography could stimulate aggressive behavior. Zillmann (1978, 1983, 1984) posited that physiological arousal produced by a sexual or other stimulus in one situation may influence aggressive behavior in another situation that is close in time. It is argued that when excitation is produced by more than one source of stimulation, the individual is unable to distinguish between the excitation produced by each source. Excitation from multiple sources is thought to be additive, so that the arousing sexual stimulus can have the effect of intensifying anger, for example. Presumably, people at higher levels of arousal are more likely to respond strongly and impulsively to provoking stimuli and therefore are more likely to behave aggressively due to this "transferred" excitation. The duration of such excitation is relatively short term (i.e., undetectable after a few hours); thus, this theory cannot be invoked to explain long-term effects of media violence.

This process of excitation transfer could also explain how the viewing of violent music videos could increase aggression. Although this idea is plausible, the results with music videos have been mixed. One study did find that the level of arousal caused by the music was strongly related to the subjects' rating of the appeal of the music video and to the strength of the emotions generated by the video (Hansen & Hansen, 1990b). These emotions were mostly positive, however, which might not affect aggressive behaviors. Nevertheless, these findings could have profound implications as music videos and video games (which have three sources of stimulation: visual, audio, and kinetic) become more prominent forms of entertainment. However, more research needs to be done to confirm an excitation effect on aggressive behavior.

WHO IS MOST AT RISK?

Whereas the research reviewed in this article provides support for the hypothesis that viewing television violence leads to the development of aggressive behavior, clearly it is not the only cause of aggressive behavior. Many other factors, both individual and societal, also contribute to its development. Of particular interest are those factors that put an individual most at risk. Research on this topic is quite scarce; however, there has been some theorizing and a small amount of empirical data that have tried to identify the societal- and individual-level factors that put some people more at risk for being affected by viewing violence in the media.

Societal-Level Risks

Much has been written about the "culture" of violence that has developed over the years in the United States (Anderson, 1990). It has been speculated that living in a culture that rewards violence

puts a child at a higher risk for being affected by the violence viewed on television, and some studies have shown this to be true. For example, our cross-national study found that kibbutz-raised children in Israel were significantly less affected by viewing television violence than were city-raised Israeli children and children in Poland, Finland, and the United States (Huesmann & Bachrach, 1988). This result may be due to the powerful group norms against aggression prevalent in the kibbutz society. Thus, television has a greater effect on the development of aggression when the aggressive behaviors learned by observing television are not countered by a norm against aggression. Similarly, the same cross-national study found that the longitudinal effects for boys are very similar in the United States and Finland, but the results for girls were not. In Finland, girls do not seem to be affected by the amount of violence they view on television (Huesmann, Lagerspetz, & Eron, 1984). This result was explained in terms of differing cultural norms in the two countries. Finnish girls may be more encouraged than Finnish boys to inhibit whatever aggressive behaviors are stimulated by television violence, whereas girls in the United States in the 1980s and 1990s are being encouraged to behave as aggressively as boys. The power of cultural norms to influence aggression has been documented in a number of other countries and cultures as well (Landau, 1984).

It also appears as if the family environment can increase or decrease an individual's propensity to be affected by viewing violence. Tangney and Feshbach (1988) found that certain family television behaviors were correlated with lower levels of aggressiveness and restlessness. These family characteristics include (a) establishment of television rules, (b) parents who engage in active discussions with children, (c) regulation/mediation of television use, and (d) lower frequency of television viewing.

Putting together these findings concerning society and family with our earlier discussion of the importance of attitudes, beliefs, attributional biases, and cognitive scripts in controlling social behavior, one can readily see how children in neighborhoods and countries beset by violence could be most at risk for being influenced by media violence. The more realistic and appropriate the depicted violent behaviors may seem, the more likely they are to have a lasting influence. The more violence and retribution are sanctioned by the family and the culture, the less possibility there is for societal and family forces to counteract the pernicious influence of media violence.

Individual-Level Risks

In addition to varying societal-level factors, some risk factors for susceptibility to media violence lie at the individual level. Many factors have been suggested as risk factors, such as neurological deficits, age, cognitive ability, ethnicity, social class, sex, personality characteristics, and mental health differences, but little empirical work has been done to test these hypotheses; and the studies that have been conducted have provided mixed results (Dorr & Kovacic, 1980).

Many of the theories used to explain why exposure to violence in the media is related to aggressive behavior posit that young children are at a higher risk for being affected by what they view on television due to their impressionability and less mature cognitive struc-

tures. However, research on age difference appears to be mixed, indicating that whereas younger children may be more susceptible to influence from television, no age is immune from influence (Dorr & Kovacic, 1980). A related factor is the differences in cognitive ability between children of the same age. It is theorized that children with greater cognitive ability are less susceptible to the effects of viewing violence on television because they realize that the images on television do not represent reality, and, in fact, children who perceive television violence as less realistic do tend to be less aggressive (Huesmann & Eron, 1986). Research on general cognitive ability has provided mixed results, however, indicating that although low intelligence scores are sometimes correlated with higher television viewing and aggression (Huesmann & Eron, 1986; Huesmann, Eron, & Yarnel, 1987), children of all cognitive abilities can be affected by exposure to violence on television (Dorr & Kovacic, 1980).

Ethnicity and social class have been of some concern in the past due to the data showing that there are differences in the amount and type of television watched by people from different social classes and of different races. Many studies have demonstrated that Blacks tend to watch more television in general than do Whites (Huston et al., 1992; Tangney & Feshbach, 1988) and more violent television in particular (Greenberg, 1974-1975). Similarly, several studies looking at differences in viewing habits by class found lower SES youths watch more television in general (Huesmann & Eron, 1986; Huston et al., 1992; Tangney & Feshbach, 1988) and more televised violence specifically (Chaffee & McLeod, 1972) than do middle and upper SES youths. Thus, whereas certain racial and economic populations may be at a higher risk because they watch more violence, there has not been much research investigating whether these populations are differentially affected by the same amount of exposure.

One factor that has been studied more extensively than others is gender. Many surveys report that boys watch more television and also more violent programs than girls. Boys also report playing more video games in general and more violent video games specifically than do girls (Funk, 1993). Finally, boys are generally more aggressive than girls (Huesmann et al., 1984). All of these initial findings have led to the hypothesis that boys may be more at risk for being affected by television violence. Earlier studies showed that boys were more affected by exposure to television violence than were girls (Eron et al., 1972); however, more recent studies seem to indicate that the development of aggression for both boys and girls is equally affected by exposure to televised violence (Bjorkqvist, 1985; Huesmann & Eron, 1986).

Finally, there has been some speculation as to whether personality differences and mental health affect one's susceptibility to violence in the media. Two early experiments found that emotionally disturbed and nondisturbed boys generally did not differ in their reactions to exposure to aggression on television (Heller & Polsky, 1976; Walters & Willows, 1968). Similarly, a study on personality, psychopathology, and video game use found no differences in personality or psychopathology for frequent versus infrequent video game players (Kestonbaum & Weinstein, 1985). Although several studies have found that "more aggressive youth were more likely than were less aggressive youth to be impacted by exposure to televised or film violence" (Dorr & Kovacic, 1980, p. 192), other studies (Huesmann, Lagerspetz, & Eron, 1984) have

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found that the strength of the longitudinal relation varied little as a function of the child's pre-existing level of aggression.

SUMMARY

The co-occurrence since World War II of increases in interpersonal violence in the United States and increases in the exposure of youths to the mass visual media has focused scientists', policy makers', and the public's attention on the possible effects of media violence on youth violence. Over the past four decades, a large body of scientific literature has emerged that overwhelmingly demonstrates that exposure to media violence does indeed relate to the development of violent behavior. The emerging theories and data suggest that multiple processes are involved, but that the most important seem to involve the observational learning of attitudes, beliefs, attributional biases, and scripts that promote aggressive behavior. Desensitization of emotional processes may also play a role in long-term effects as may a cognitive justification process in which the more aggressive children use media violence to justify their acts. At the same time, powerful shorter term effects of media violence may be engendered by excitation transfer from media violence to real life and by the tendency of media violence to cue well-learned aggressive habits. These processes would seem to place children most at-risk who already live in "a culture of violence," in which there are few norms against aggressive behavior, in which there are ethnic or nationalistic forces that support violence against dehumanized targets, and in which there is little family or educational intervention to moderate the effects of media violence. Given the robust body of literature that leads to the inevitable conclusion that viewing media violence stimulates aggressive behavior in children, future research should move beyond the simple causal issue and focus on a better understanding of the psychological processes involved and on how to inoculate children against the insidious effects of exposure to media violence.

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(2)

REVIEW ARTICLE

Children, Adolescents, and the Media: Issues and Solutions

Victor C. Strasburger, MD* and Edward Donnerstein, PhD†

I believe television is going to be the test of the modern world, and that in this new opportunity to see beyond the range of our vision we shall discover either a new and unbearable disturbance of the general peace or a saving radiance in the sky. We shall stand or fall by television.

—Author E. B. White¹

Television and other media represent one of the most important and underrecognized influences on children and adolescents' health and behavior in the 1990s. Their impact should be eliciting serious concern, not just from parents and educators but from physicians, public health advocates, and politicians as well (Fig 1). Although objections to various programming and advertising practices can exist on common sense, philosophical, aesthetic, humanistic, or public health grounds without strict scientific data,² increasing numbers of studies document that a serious problem exists.

EXPOSURE

By time criteria alone, television represents the predominant medium. Young people average 16 to 17 hours of viewing weekly, beginning as early as age 2.³ When video game and videocassette usage are added, some teenagers may spend as many as 35 to 55 hours in front of the television set.⁴ More families own a television set than a telephone.⁵

However, other media are important as well. Adolescents can spend nearly equal amounts of time listening to the radio, although music is used frequently as an accompaniment to other activities.^{4,6} More than half of all 15- to 16-year-olds had seen the majority of the most popular, recent R-rated movies in one study.⁷ In a separate study, 92% of males and 84% of females had seen or read *Playboy* or *Playgirl* by age 15.⁸ Finally, playing video games has become a favorite pastime of children and adolescents and now represents a \$7 billion per year industry.⁹ One survey of nearly 400 seventh- and eighth-grade students found that teens average 2 to 4 hours per week playing such games.¹⁰ Although not much data are available about young people's use of new technology such as the Internet, there is every reason to believe that "surfing the Net" will prove popular as well. Indeed, in one recent national survey 89% of teenagers reported using a computer, 61% "surfing

the Net," and 14% reported seeing something that they did not want their parents to know about.¹¹ By 1996, nearly five million youths had used the Internet or an on-line service from school or home.¹²

Impact

Media exert a significant displacement effect—2 to 3 hours per day spent watching television or playing video games means less physical activity, reading, and interaction with friends—but such data do not speak to cause-and-effect concerns. Likewise, content analyses can only demonstrate what the average child or adolescent will view. Even so, such analyses are disturbing when they reveal what the average American child or teenager is exposed to annually.

Violence

Young people view an estimated 10 000 acts of violence each year.¹³ Most recently, the National Television Violence Study examined nearly 10 000 hours of television programming throughout 3 years and found that 61% contains violence, with children's programming being the most violent (Fig 2).¹⁴⁻¹⁶ In addition, 26% of violent interactions involved the use of guns.¹⁶ During the 3 years of the study, none of the key indicators of violence in the media changed, despite widespread public concern.¹⁴⁻¹⁶ A recent comprehensive analysis of rock music videos of all genres demonstrated that 22.4% of all Music Television videos portrayed overt violence, 20% of all rap videos contained violence, and weapon carrying was depicted in 25% of all Music Television videos.¹⁷ Attractive role models are the aggressors in more than 80% of violent music videos.¹⁸

Sex

Each year, teenagers view nearly 15 000 sexual references, innuendoes, and jokes, of which <170 will deal with abstinence, birth control, sexually transmitted diseases, or pregnancy.¹⁹ The so-called family hour of prime time television (8 to 9 PM) contains more than 8 sexual incidents per hour, more than four times as much as in 1976.²⁰ Nearly one-third of family hour shows contain sexual references, and the incidence of vulgar language is increasing dramatically as well.²¹ The Internet offers unparalleled access to hard-core pornography with just a few keystrokes.²²

Drugs

A recent content analysis found that alcohol, tobacco, or illicit drugs are present in 70% of prime

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(Received for publication Jan 22, 1998; accepted Jun 12, 1998.)

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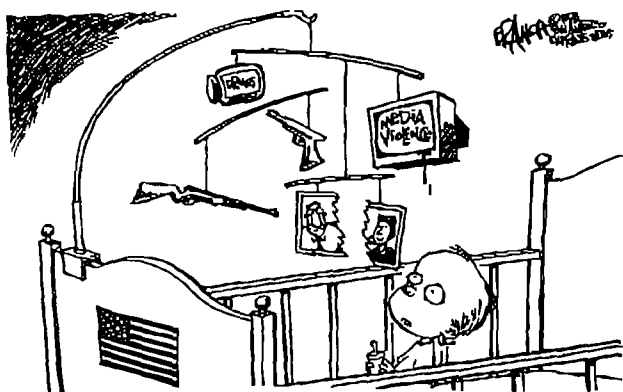


Fig 1. One political cartoonist's view of children's television. (Reprinted with permission from the San Antonio Express News.)

time network dramatic programs, 38 out of 40 top-grossing movies, and half of all music videos.²³ In another recent study, one-fourth of all Music Television videos contained alcohol or tobacco use.²⁴ Several studies document that smoking is making a comeback in Hollywood movies: a 1994 study of the 62 top-grossing films from 1960 to 1990 found that levels of smoking remained constant despite decreases in real-life and that lead characters were far more likely to smoke on screen (65%) than their real-life counterparts with similar demographic characteristics.^{25,26} Similarly, an American Lung Association study of 133 movies released in 1994 to 1995 found that 77% depicted tobacco use.²⁷

In addition to programming, young people view ~20 000 commercials each year, of which nearly 2000 are for beer and wine.²⁸ For every "just say no" or "know when to say when" public service announcement, teens will view 25 to 50 beer and wine advertisements.²⁹ Alcohol and tobacco advertisers are becoming an increasing commercial presence on the Internet as well, with more than 35 alcoholic beverages represented, homepages devoted to smoking, a Budweiser on-line radio network, interactive games, free giveaways, brand spokescharacters, and specially designed chat rooms.¹² Altogether, tobacco manufacturers spend \$6 billion per year, and alcohol manufacturers \$2 billion per year in all media, trying to entice young people into "just saying yes."^{30,31}

Data like these are alarming, but are the media actually responsible for episodes of child aggression, teen homicides, and increased rates of teenage drug use and sexual activity?³² Or, as the entertainment industry maintains, do the media merely mirror an increasingly violent, drug-oriented, and sexualized society? A close examination of the available data are essential.

WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

Violence

The research is voluminous and very clear on the relationship between media violence and real-life aggression: a cause-and-effect relationship exists.³³⁻³⁸ Such research involves detailed cross-sectional studies,³⁹⁻⁴³ naturalistic studies,^{44,45} longitudinal studies,⁴⁶⁻⁵⁰ and several meta-analyses.⁵¹⁻⁵⁴ Two government reports, the 1972 Surgeon General's Report⁵⁵

and the 1982 National Institute of Mental Health⁵⁶ report affirmed this conclusion after examining all available data. The latter stated unequivocally:⁵⁶

After 10 more years of research, the consensus among most of the research community is that violence on television does lead to aggressive behavior by children and teenagers who watch the programs. This conclusion is based on laboratory experiments and on field studies. Not all children become aggressive, of course, but the correlations between violence and aggression are positive. In magnitude, television violence is as strongly correlated with aggressive behavior as any other behavioral variable that has been measured (authors' italics). The research question has moved from asking whether or not there is an effect to seeking explanations for the effect.

Taken together, the research data are persuasive that high levels of television viewing are causally related to aggressive behavior and the acceptance of aggressive attitudes.⁵⁷ The correlations found are stable throughout time, place, and demographics.^{13,34} Added to this is the now-sizable body of research demonstrating that the more adolescents are exposed to violence or are victims of violence in their homes or communities, the more likely they are to use violence or carry weapons themselves.⁵⁸⁻⁶¹ Clearly, the witnessing of violence is an important determinant of violent behavior; and media violence represents the witnessing of violence vicariously, on the television or movie screen.

As long ago as the 1960s, laboratory experiments by Bandura et al⁶² established that young children are liable to imitate what they see on the television screen, particularly if the behavior is performed by an attractive role model and is either rewarded or goes unpunished (Bandura's social learning theory). Several longitudinal correlational studies have tracked children or adults for a period of up to 30 years and found that viewing media violence at young ages (8 years and younger) is a significant risk factor for adolescent or adult aggressive behavior or even criminal violence.^{43,45,48-50,63} Researchers have concluded that children learn their attitudes about violence at a very young age and, once learned, the attitudes tend to be life-long.⁶⁴

American media are also rife with portrayals of justified violence (eg, the "good guy" beating up the "bad guy"), which research shows is the single strongest positive reinforcer for young people.^{30,65} Not only can media violence facilitate aggressive or antisocial behavior, it may also desensitize viewers to future violence and can also increase viewers' perception that they are living in a mean and dangerous world.^{36,66} The problem is that the entertainment industry does not want to admit the connection any more than the tobacco industry will acknowledge the cause-and-effect relationship between cigarette smoking and lung cancer.⁶³

Media violence is not the sole cause of violence in society. Poverty, racism, inadequate parenting, the dissolution of the American family, individual psychological differences all may have far more impact. Studies have found that child abuse, sexual abuse, witnessing domestic violence, or witnessing community violence may all play a key role in determining who will become violent.^{58-61,67-70} But the use of violence to achieve goals or to settle conflicts is, in fact, learned behavior. Such learning occurs in social groups such as the family, peer groups, and gangs. Television and other media may function as a super peer in this respect.³²

Overall Industry Averages: Three-Year Comparisons

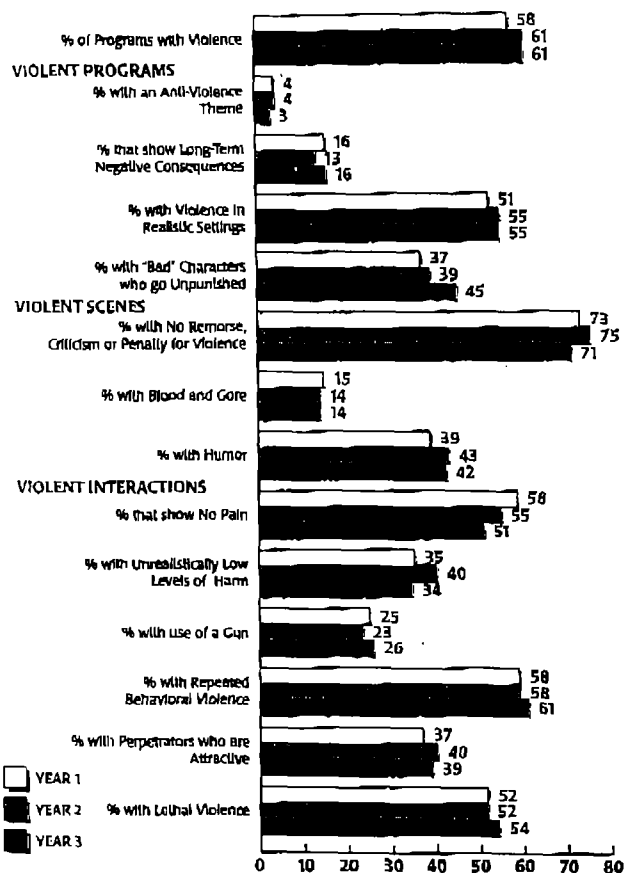


Fig 2. Overall industry averages: media violence year 1 (1995) versus years 2 and 3 (1996-1997). (Source: Federman J, ed. *National Television Violence Study*, Volume 3. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage; 1998.)

How much do media contribute to real-life violence? When 22 separate estimates of effect size were collated from various surveys, the size of the effect for media violence was estimated to be 5% to 15%.^{30,35} Given all the factors contributing to violence, to be able to isolate media violence as one factor is significant.

Guns

Homicide and suicide are the second and third leading causes of death among adolescents, and guns contribute significantly to both.⁷¹ What links adolescent homicides to American media is the glamorization of guns, which represent 26% of all violent interactions on television (Table 1).^{16,36} Although there are no specific data linking viewing gunplay in the media with actual gun-related offenses in real life, the connection seems logical, at least to one television critic:⁷²

On average, a violent crime is committed (in the US) every 17 seconds. The entertainment industry alone cannot be blamed for this, any more than guns alone, and not the people who pull their triggers, can be blamed for gun-related deaths; however the connections are inescapable. If there were fewer guns, fewer people would be shot to death; if there were fewer violent images, fewer people might be moved to seek violent solutions.

Sex

Unfortunately, the data are not nearly as clear for determining what relationship exists between early

TABLE 1. Handguns and American Youth

- The United States leads all industrialized nations in homicides, with four times the next highest rate (9.8/100 000).*
- Firearms are involved in 68% to 75% of all homicides, mostly handguns.† In California, among 15- to 19-year-olds, guns now account for 90% of all homicides.‡
- Although Americans say that they are purchasing handguns for protection, guns in the home are 43 times more likely to kill a family member than an intruder.§
- Firearm injuries are the third or fourth leading cause of accidental death among children (depending on age and region).||
- The United States is also the most heavily armed nation on earth, with as many guns as households (200 million).¶
- Half of adolescent males and nearly one-fourth of adolescent females report that they could easily obtain a handgun if they so desired.‡
- Nearly 8% of students had carried a gun to school during the 30 days before the 1995 Youth Risk Behavior Survey.**
- The sale of toy guns represents a nearly \$100 million industry.††
- One-fourth of the violent scenes on television involve use of a handgun.‡‡

* Fingerhut LA, Kleiman JC. International and interstate comparisons of homicide among young males. *JAMA*. 1990;263:3292-3295.

1993 *Demographic Yearbook*. New York: United Nations, 1995. Hennes H. A review of violence statistics among children and adolescents in the United States. *Pediatr Clin North Am*. 1998;45:269-280.

† Cohall AT and Cohall RM. "Number one with a bullet": Epidemiology and prevention of homicide among adolescents and young adults. *Adolesc Med State of the Art Rev*. 1995;6:183-197.

‡ Chu LD, Sorenson SB. Trends in California homicide, 1970 to 1993. *West J Med*. 1996;165:119-125.

§ Kellerman AL and Reay DT. Protection or peril? An analysis of firearm-related deaths in the home. *N Engl J Med*. 1986;314:1557-1560.

|| Senturia YD, Christoffel KK, Donovan M. Children's household exposure to guns: a pediatric practice-based survey. *Pediatrics*. 1994;93:469-475.

¶ Davidson OG. *Under Fire: The NRA and the Battle for Gun Control*. New York: Holt; 1993.

Callahan CM, Rivara FP. Urban high school youth and handguns: a school-based survey. *JAMA*. 1992;267:3038-3041.

** Centers for Disease Control. *Youth risk behavior surveillance—United States*, 1995. *MMWR*. 1996;44:1-56.

†† Strasburger VC. Television and adolescents: sex, drugs, rock 'n' roll. *Adolesc Med State of the Art Rev*. 1990;1:161-194.

‡‡ National Television Violence Study. *National Television Violence Study*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage; 1998.

sexual activity and a heavy diet of sexualized content.^{73,74} Although there are more than 1000 studies linking media violence to real-life violence, there are only 5 studies demonstrating any connection between media with high sexual content and changes in teenagers' sexual behavior or attitudes:

- In a study of 75 adolescent girls, half pregnant and half nonpregnant, the pregnant girls watched more soap operas before becoming pregnant and were less likely to think that their favorite soap characters would use birth control.⁷⁵
- A study of 391 junior high-school students in North Carolina found that those who selectively viewed more sexual content on television were more likely to have begun having sexual intercourse in the preceding year.⁷⁶
- A study of 326 Cleveland teenagers showed that those with a preference for Music Television had increased amounts of sexual experience in their mid-teen years.⁷⁷
- Data from the National Surveys of Children re-

TABLE 2. Sources of Sexual Information for Teenagers*

Teachers, school nurses, or classes at school	40%
Media: TV, movies, or magazines	39%
Parents	36%
Peers	27%
Brothers, sisters, or cousins	12%
MD or nurse	9%

* Adapted from: Princeton Survey Research Associates: *The 1996 Kaiser Family Foundation Survey on Teens and Sex: What They Say Teens Today Need to Know, and Who They Listen to*. Menlo Park, CA: Kaiser Family Foundation; 1996.

vealed that males who watch more television had the highest prevalence of sexual intercourse and that teens who watched television apart from their family had a rate of intercourse 3 to 6 times higher than those who viewed with their family.⁷⁸

- A 1997 pilot study found that young teenagers exposed to more soap operas and talk shows tended to have beliefs consistent with what they were viewing (eg, "married people often cheat on their husband or wife," "most of my friends have had sex with someone") (unpublished manuscript, Furno-Lamude, 1997).

Thus, for sexual activity, inferences must be drawn from the violence literature (ie, if children and teenagers can learn aggressive behavior, why shouldn't they be able to learn sexual behavior as well?).⁷⁹ In addition, the United States continues to have the highest teenage pregnancy rate in the Western world, despite the fact that American teenagers are not having sexual intercourse in greater numbers than their Western peers.^{80,81} This is an important finding that points to the absence of a societal expectation that even with early sexual initiation, birth control is a necessity. If, as data suggest, the media represent an important and effective source of sexual information for teenagers (Table 2),^{32,74} the high United States pregnancy rate could be resulting from several interrelated factors: a lack of easy access to birth control, a lack of information about birth control in sex education classes, a glut of inappropriate sexual messages in the media, and an absence of appropriate messages in the media about abstinence and the use of birth control.⁸²

Drugs

Studies indicate that the \$8 billion of advertising that tobacco and alcohol manufacturers pitch every year to the American public has a significant impact on adolescents' beliefs and attitudes about smoking and drinking and may influence their actual consumption as well. Correlational studies indicate a small but pos-

itive (+0.15 to +0.20) relationship between ad exposure and consumption.⁸³ In addition, advertising exposure seems to influence initial drinking episodes which, in turn, contribute to excessive drinking and abuse.⁸³ As long as 20 years ago, the National Science Foundation commissioned a report on the effects of advertising on children, which concluded:⁸⁴

It is clear from the available evidence that television does influence children. Research has demonstrated that children attend to and learn from commercials, and that advertising is at least moderately successful in creating positive attitudes toward and the desire for products advertised Younger viewers . . . appear to be the most vulnerable

Numerous recent studies document that children and adolescents who are exposed to greater amounts of tobacco or alcohol advertising are more likely either to use or intend to use such products.^{29,85-90} This makes intuitive sense as well, because \$8 billion a year is a lot of money to commit to advertising if it does not influence people to consume your product. Such advertising is extremely effective, especially in reaching younger audiences (Table 3).⁹¹

The evidence is strongest regarding cigarette advertising and promotions.^{85,92} In one well-publicized study, children as young as 6 years old were as likely to recognize Old Joe as the Mouseketeer logo for the Disney Channel and to associate him directly with cigarette smoking.⁹³ In addition, there is a positive correlation between advertising expenditures and brand consumption (Table 4).^{85,94} Revenues for cigarette advertising have also been shown to influence the editorial content of print media,⁹⁵ and cigarette brands popular with teens are more likely to advertise in magazines with high youth readerships.⁹⁶ A 1997 study found that one-third of teens owned cigarette promotional items, and these teens were four times more likely to be smokers.⁹⁷ Most importantly, a recent longitudinal study found that an estimated one-third of all adolescent smoking could be causally related to tobacco promotional activities.⁹⁸

For alcohol, the correlations so far have been only moderate.⁸³

The preponderance of the evidence indicates that alcohol advertising stimulates favorable predispositions, higher consumption, and greater problem drinking by young people. Nevertheless, the evidence clearly does not support the interpretation that advertising exerts a powerful, uniform, direct influence; it seems that advertising is a contributing factor that increases drinking and related problems to a modest degree rather than a major determinant.

WHAT THE RESEARCH DOES NOT SAY

As one leading researcher recently noted concerning media violence, "The scientific debate is over."⁹⁹ What remains is what, if anything, the entertainment industry will do in response to these public health concerns

TABLE 3. Are the Budweiser Frogs Effective Advertising? Commercial and Character Recall by Children 9 to 11 Years Old*

Character	Slogan or Motto	% Recall (n = 221)
Bugs Bunny	"Eh, what's up Doc?"	80%
Budweiser Frogs	"Bud-weis-er"	73%
Tony the Tiger	"They're grreat!"	57%
Smokey the Bear	"Only you can prevent forest fires."	43%
Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers	"It's morphin' time!" or "Power up!"	39%

* Adapted from Leiber L. *Commercial and Character Slogan Recall by Children Aged 9 to 11 Years: Budweiser Frogs Versus Bugs Bunny*. Berkeley, CA: Center on Alcohol Advertising; 1996.

TABLE 4. Is Cigarette Advertising Effective?*

Advertising in \$ Millions	Adolescent Brand Preference	Adult Brand Preference
1. Marlboro (\$75)	1. Marlboro (60.0%)	1. Marlboro (23.5%)
2. Camel (\$43)	2. Camel (13.3%)	2. Winston (6.7%)
3. Newport (\$35)	3. Newport (12.7%)	3. Newport (4.8%)

* Data from: Centers for Disease Control. Changes in the cigarette brand preferences of adolescent smokers—United States, 1989–1993. *MMWR*. 1994;43:577; and RW Pollay, S Siddarth, M Siegel, et al. The last straw? Cigarette advertising and realized market shares among youth and adults, 1979–1993. *J Marketing*. 1996;50:1.

and determining if such negative effects can be successfully mitigated with media education approaches.

It is entirely possible that all other potential effects will follow the same pattern and strength of these known correlations but, considerable new data are needed regarding the media's impact on teenagers' sexual behavior in particular. Does sexual content influence sexual activity, use of contraception, sexual orientation? The answers will remain unknown until longitudinal correlational studies can be performed. Furthermore, some recent research indicates that there may be considerable variation in how different teenagers view the same program, depending on their ethnicity, family background, and other characteristics.¹⁰⁰ Such findings may have special relevance for sexual portrayals and their impact on teenagers.

Other much-needed research includes: ongoing content analyses of violence, sex, and drug use in television programming, movies, and rock music videos; a longitudinal study of the effect of violent video and computer games on children's attitudes and behavior; a longitudinal study of the impact of rock music on adolescents' affective states and suicidal behavior; and studies of how children and teenagers use the Internet.

In addition, although the relationship between advertising and consumption is now well established, what is unknown is how to counteract the unhealthy aspects of advertising portrayals. At present, counter-advertising does not seem able to reach the density that mainstream advertising has, thus making it less useful as a solution.³⁰ Might teenagers be susceptible to anti-drug messages embedded creatively in mainstream programming?¹⁰¹ Will the proposed settlement with the tobacco industry, which includes a ban on cartoon characters in advertisements, have an impact on young children? Further studies are needed.

SOLUTIONS

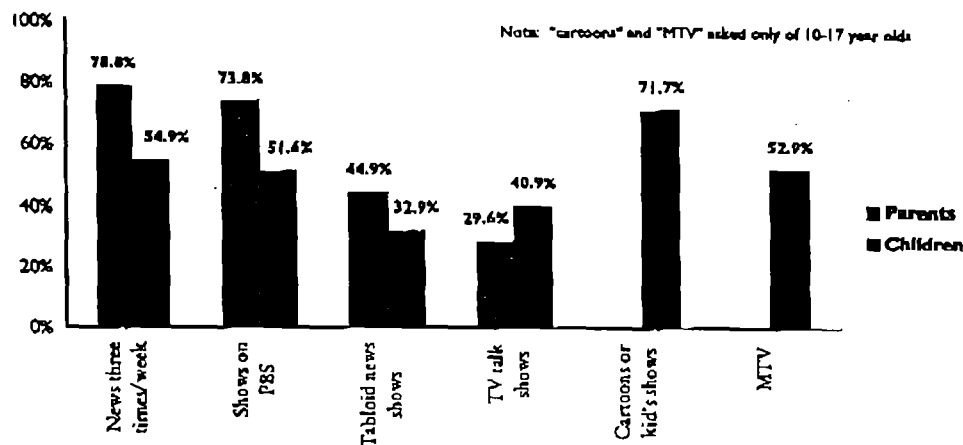
A vast body of literature now exists that attests to the power of the media to influence children's and adolescents' beliefs and, potentially, their behavior as well. Currently, American media contribute more to adverse health outcomes than to positive or prosocial ones, but it does not have to remain this way. Many solutions are available, ranging from controlling the way children view media (parent's role) to more effective office counseling and public health activism (physician's role) to regulating the media (governmental role) to improving the product itself (entertainment industry's role).

Industry spokespeople frequently claim that if parents do not like what their children see, there is an off button on the television set or the computer. Parents counter that if the programs the media produced were healthier, they would not have to worry about their impact. In fact, both groups are right: parents do need to exercise better control over which media their children use; but the entertainment industry also needs to take responsibility for the health repercussions of what they produce.

ROLE OF PARENTS

Most parents do not control the media their children or adolescents are exposed to with any consistency or regularity. Not only do parents frequently underreport the number of hours that their offspring view,³³ but also they underreport the problematic shows that they view (Fig 3).¹⁰² In addition, one-fourth of preschoolers, more than one-third of grade-schoolers, and more than half of high-school youth have television sets in their bedrooms (Fig 4).¹⁰² Two 1997 surveys, involving a total of nearly 1500 par-

Fig 3. What parents and their children watch on TV. Parents report watching national news, while their children prefer television talk shows, cartoons, kids' shows, and Music Television. (From: Stanger JD. *Television in the Home: the 1997 Survey of Parents and Children*. Philadelphia, PA: Annenberg Public Policy Center; 1997. Used with permission.)



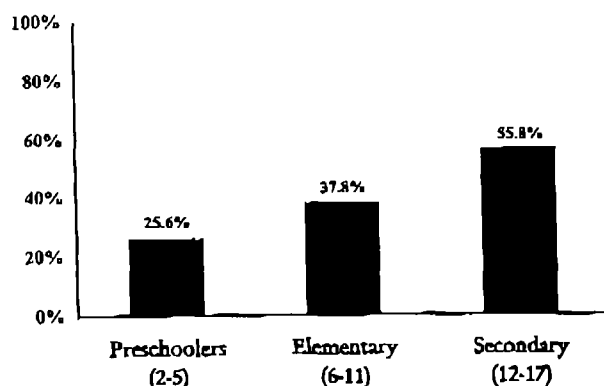


Fig. 4. TV sets in the bedroom. As children age, they are increasingly likely to have a television set in their own bedroom. (From: Stanger JD. *Television in the Home: the 1997 Survey of Parents and Children*. Philadelphia, PA: Annenberg Public Policy Center; 1997. Used with permission.)

ents, found that less than half of parents report "always watching" television with their children.^{102,103} Coviewing is thought to be an effective mechanism for mediating untoward effects of television viewing: an adult, watching a program with a child and discussing it with him or her, serves simultaneously as a values filter and a media educator (Table 5).^{30,104} However, one recent survey found that 44% of children or teenagers watch something different (usually Music Television) when they are alone than when viewing with their parents.¹⁰⁵

Despite these data, parents are apparently very concerned about the influence of television, more than all other media.^{102,106} Given the sheer quantity of hours that children spend in front of the television set, these concerns seem justified. However, other media that seem less significant quantitatively may be extremely important qualitatively: "What television suggests, movies and videos do," as one researcher notes.¹⁰⁷

According to recommendations issued by the American Academy of Pediatrics, based on a review of all available data to date, parents should:¹⁰⁸

- Limit all media use to no more than 1 to 2 hours per day.
- Monitor their children's use of the media.
- Coview television with their children.

ROLE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Given the deleterious public health effects of media on youth, it is imperative that health professionals appreciate this relatively new cultural influence on their young patients, educate parents, and advocate for improved, healthier media. Physicians who treat children or adolescents should learn to take a media history (Table 6),¹ especially when seeing patients with a history of aggressive behavior or school difficulties.³²

Educating parents can be accomplished using media education materials from a variety of organizations (Table 7). In addition, physicians can serve as role models by using television sets and videocassette recorders in their waiting rooms for educational programming only. Finally, physicians are important community resources for schools (media education programs), local television stations, and parents (Parent Teacher Asso-

TABLE 5. Five Important Ideas to Teach Children and Adolescents About Television*

1. You are smarter than what you see on your TV.
2. TV's world is not real.
3. TV teaches that some people are more important than others.
4. TV keeps doing the same things over and over again.
5. Somebody is always trying to make money with TV.

* Adapted from Davis J. Five important ideas to teach your children about TV. *Media and Values* 1992;59/60:10-14.

ciations). They can also advocate for improved media by writing to national networks, Hollywood studios, the United States Congress, and the Federal Communications Commission. They could also be instrumental in pressuring the television industry to begin broadcasting birth control advertising and urging the entertainment industry to restrict their depictions of violence and sexuality to responsible portrayals.

One role of health professionals that remains controversial is advocating for greater numbers of public service announcements to offset the deluge of tobacco and alcohol ads that young people currently see. Commercial broadcasting expends the most amount of money per minute (up to \$400 000) to produce commercials. Therefore, it is difficult to compete not only in density but also in production values.¹⁰⁹ Viewing of public service announcements can make an audience more aware of a problem, make the problem seem important, and offer further information.¹¹⁰ Such effects are intensified when other interventions are occurring simultaneously (eg, antismoking public service announcements and restrictions on smoking in public places).^{111,112} One aggressive antismoking campaign in Vermont demonstrated a 35% lower smoking rate after 4 years when radio and television ads were combined with a standard school-based program.¹¹³ However, sometimes public service announcements are used by the very industries they are targeting to deflect criticism (eg, "Know when to say when").

MEDIA ADVOCACY

Both parents and health professionals need to begin engaging vigorously in media advocacy—"the strategic use of mass media for advancing a social or public policy initiative."¹¹⁴ According to Wallack,¹¹⁵ current debates must be reframed to refocus public attention on health issues, not individuals' weaknesses. For example, tobacco manufacturers have long deflected attention by framing the debate about smoking as an issue of individual freedom. Similarly, the National Rifle Association has confused the issue of handgun control by claiming that the Constitution guarantees everyone's right to own a handgun, despite the fact that no Federal court has ever overturned a gun control law as a violation of the Second Amendment.¹¹⁶⁻¹¹⁸ Simply reclassifying guns as a consumer product would have a profound public health effect, especially because the sale and manufacture of guns is currently subject to less stringent regulations than the sale and manufacture of teddy bears.^{118,119} Successful reframing involves exposing unethical industry practices rather than trying to improve individuals' behaviors by urging them to be healthier.¹¹⁵

TABLE 6. Taking a Media History

- How many hours a day do you watch television?
- How do you decide what shows to watch? Movies?
- Where is (are) the television(s)?
- Are there any house rules regarding viewing (eg, no viewing until all homework is completed)?
- What are your favorite television programs? Movies?
- Are there rules regarding music videos? Video games?
- Who watches television with you?
- Do you surf the Internet?

* Adapted from American Medical Association. *Physician Guide to Media Violence*. Chicago, IL: American Medical Association; 1996.

ROLE OF SCHOOLS

The United States is one of the few Western nations that lacks a comprehensive, school-based media education program. Recently, Australia mandated media education for nearly every student from kindergarten through grade 12; Ontario, Canada has mandated media education for middle and high school students; and England, Scotland, and South Africa all have far more formal training programs than the United States.¹⁰⁴ A number of advocacy groups (Table 7) have devised and tested curricula that can be used in a variety of settings, but school officials often resent having to commit more time and financial resources to what they view as extra-curricular programs. Viewed in the context of protecting children and adolescents against crucial public health problems such as early sexual intercourse, interpersonal violence, and drug involvement, however, such programs take on a new urgency.

More research is needed regarding the efficacy of media education programs. Nevertheless, several curricula have been field-tested, indicating that such programs can accomplish exactly what they set out to do.¹²⁰⁻¹²⁶ One curriculum, in particular, worked to change attitudes about television violence among first and third graders as well as decreasing their own levels of aggressive behavior as rated by their peers.¹²⁷ Another recent curriculum has been shown to decrease third-graders' intention to drink alcohol.¹²⁸ Computer and video games could also be used for prosocial learning.¹²⁹

ROLE OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Although the United States was the first nation in the world to have television, it is unique in lacking any clear public policy regarding it.^{34,130} American television was established and regulated according to the Communications Act, passed by Congress in 1934. The preamble to that act states that the public owns the airwaves, which are leased to the networks to produce programming in the public's best interests (authors' italics). Because of the industry's reluctance to regulate itself, especially regarding violent content and production of educational programming for children, Congress and the Federal Communications Commission have taken an increasingly aggressive role during the past decade. The 1990 Children's Television Act required local broadcasters to produce some educational and informational programming for children. Unfortunately, broadcasters tried to cite programs like "The

TABLE 7. Organizations Interested in Media Education (Partial Listing)

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP)
3615 Wisconsin Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20016
(202) 966-7300

American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)
141 Northwest Point Blvd
Elk Grove Village, IL 60009-0927
(847) 981-5005

Center for Media Education
2120 L Street, NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20037
(202) 331-7833

Center for Media Literacy
4727 Wilshire Blvd, #403
Los Angeles, CA 90010
(800) 226-9494

Coalition for Quality Children's Media
112 W San Francisco St, Suite 305A
Santa Fe, NM 87501
(505) 989-8076

Jetsons" as educational, teaching children "what life will be like in the 21st century."¹³¹

Irritated by the industry's lack of compliance with the Children's Television Act and by continued high levels of media violence,¹³² legislators passed the Telecommunications Act of 1996, which put teeth into the 1990 Children's Television Act by requiring ratings for programs and mandating that, beginning in September, 1997, broadcasters must air 3 hours of core educational programming per week.¹³³ The Act also mandated that all television sets manufactured beginning in 1998 contain a v-chip that could be programmed by parents to filter out objectionable media violence. However, which ratings system or systems will be program-mable onto the v-chip remains a contentious issue, one that perhaps the Federal Communications Commission will ultimately have to decide.

After discussions with public advocacy groups, the television industry developed a complicated set of ratings that parallel current Motion Picture Association of America movie ratings.¹³⁴ Several problems exist with this proposed system: first, several studies show that parents prefer a more specific, content-based ratings system, not simple categories.^{135,136} Second, the current categories are not specific enough regarding content, and the contextual impact of violent or sexual references is completely ignored. For example, certain content becomes lost to the highest rating: a TV-M program with an "S" for sexual content may contain violence at a TV-14 level, but is not given a "V" for violent content. Third, parents may be tempted to place inappropriate faith in the rating "FV" for fantasy violence, even although research shows that this represents some of the most potentially detrimental programming for young children.^{15,16,137} Finally, studies document that older children and young teenagers are drawn toward the more adult ratings.¹³⁸

Despite the Federal government's traditional reluctance to regulate the entertainment industry because of

First Amendment concerns, several potential solutions are available that would make television and other media healthier for children and adolescents.

Increased Not Decreased (as Many Republicans in Congress Have Advocated) Funding for Public Television

The United States is unique in the industrialized world in spending only \$1.09 per capita for public broadcasting; the United Kingdom spends \$38.56, Canada \$32.15, and Japan \$17.71.^{104,130} With increased revenues, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting could develop its own commercial-free series of stations gearing high-quality, education programming toward individual age-groups (2 to 5 years, 5 to 9 years, 9 to 13 years, and 13 to 17 years). An annual tax on television sets (as is done in Britain) could be used to raise these revenues.^{30,37} If the future home will receive 300 to 500 different channels, shouldn't at least 5% to 10% of them be reserved for noncommercial, educational programming for young people?

Increased Funding for Research About the Effects of Media on Children and Adolescents

This might also include funding for school-based media education programs. In particular, a systematic program of research is urgently needed whose goal would be the development of formal, easily administered educational programs about media sex, drugs, and violence.¹³⁹

Creation of a Year 2002 National Institutes of Mental Health Report on Children, Adolescents, and the Media

It has now been 15 years since the last, official government compilation of all available research to that time.⁵⁶ Such reports highlight current knowledge, expose areas that warrant further investigation, and serve as valuable ammunition in the public health campaign to improve media for young people.

Stricter Regulation of Advertising That Targets Children or Adolescents

As United States Supreme Court Justice Tom Clark once said, there is no war between the Constitution and common sense.¹⁴⁰ Compelling public health interests exist in protecting at least children and adolescents against the advertising of cigarettes and alcoholic beverages. Because such advertising represents commercial speech rather than free speech, it is not automatically protected under the First Amendment.^{141,142} The Federal Trade Commission is already empowered to ban advertising that is unfair or deceptive, and both tobacco and alcohol advertising arguably fit that description.²⁸ But restricting advertising may be more feasible constitutionally than an outright ban.¹⁴³ Current proposed Federal Drug Administration rules would restrict tobacco advertising seen by children or teenagers to black-and-white text only.¹⁴⁴ New proposed legislation by Senator McCain (R-AZ) would completely eliminate tobacco advertising directed at children and, more importantly, would eliminate promotional events and advertis-

ing,¹⁴⁵ which in the past decade has constituted more than half of the \$6 billion that tobacco companies annually spend on advertising.²⁹ One significant drawback to a broadcast ban on alcohol advertising might be the elimination of effective counteradvertising.^{146,147} Two alternatives exist: either require equal amounts of public service announcements that would extoll the dangers of alcohol¹⁴⁸ or mandate that advertisements be restricted to so-called tombstone ads (ie, ads that show the product only but do not depict the qualities that the drinker might acquire). Such restrictions have been endorsed previously by the Federal Drug Administration, the Surgeon General, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Medical Association.^{28,149,150} Because it is unlikely that the density or effectiveness of public service announcements will ever reach the levels of regular commercial advertising, limiting alcohol manufacturers to tombstone ads seems far more prudent.

Increased Regulation of Educational Television by the Federal Communication Commission and of the Internet by the Federal Trade Commission

Although deregulation, not increased regulation, seems to be the current trend in Washington, children and adolescents deserve special protection from the Government. Although broadcasters complain that 3 hours of educational programming per week is burdensome, such an amount seems totally inadequate given their free use of public airwaves. All television networks and stations should be mandated to air at least 1 hour per day of educational programming for children. The United States is unique among nations in not having any such regularly scheduled programming.

Likewise, young people deserve and will need special protections while using the Internet.¹⁵¹ Development of special blocking services, proscriptive entrances to certain Web sites, and other solutions will have to be developed to shield young people from pornography, dangerous chat rooms, and other explicit material on the Internet.¹⁵² A recent White House summit (July, 1997) has begun this process with cooperation from technology industries and Internet providers.

ROLE OF THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY

Although the entertainment industry currently sees little problem with the quality of their product, the research literature and most parents would disagree. American media are the most graphically violent and sexually suggestive in the world. At present, networks, studios, and software companies have little incentive to create more educational and healthier programming. Indeed, the industry is quick to point to such exemplary works as "Shindler's List" as being prohumanitarian or "The Cosby Show" as showing strong family values, but then denies that any programming can have negative effects.¹⁵³ Unlike adults, children view television and movies as depicting the real world, with real adults interacting, and unfortunately it is a world that is rife with happy violence, unprotected and casual sex, drinking,

TABLE 8. Recommendations for the Television Industry Re: Media Violence*

- 1) Produce more programs that avoid violence. If a program does contain violence, keep the number of incidents low.
- 2) Reduce the number of high-risk portrayals of violence in children's cartoons.
- 3) Be creative in showing:
 - More violent acts being punished.
 - More short-term and long-term negative consequences of violence.
 - More alternatives to the use of violence to solve problems.
 - Less justification for violent actions.
- 4) When violence is presented, consider greater emphasis on a strong anti-violence theme.
- 5) Entertainment programs with substantial violent content should be scheduled later in the evening.
- 6) When reality programs present violent themes, programmers should present more alternatives to violence and strategies for coping with its effects to resolution.
- 7) Anti-violence psa's should be targeted to specific adolescent audiences, using narrative formats rather than celebrity endorsements.

* From: National Television Violence Study, Vol. 3, 1998.

smoking, stereotypes, and a variety of other, unhealthy images and behaviors.¹⁵⁴

One frequently heard excuse from the industry is that it is merely giving people what they want. Yet, there is significant evidence to the contrary. Gerbner¹³² compared Nielsen ratings of two samples containing more than 100 programs each—one of violent programs, the other of programs without violence. The nonviolent programs had a higher overall rating and market share. Similarly, a movie industry study found that PG-rated movies were three times more likely to gross \$100 million than R-rated films.¹⁵⁵ And public opinion polls document that as many as 80% of adults believe that entertainment violence is harmful to society.³⁰

What is needed is a virtual sea-change in attitude, from one of crass commercialism to one of respectful paternalism for the unique psychology and needs of young people. The American public is quick to criticize teenagers for their early sexual activity, drug-taking, or violent behavior; yet these youngsters are learning important behavioral cues from the media that surround them.

Ratings, v-chips, school-based media-literacy programs, even increased parental scrutiny can only accomplish so much. There is no substitute for an immediate and significant decrease in the easy violence (especially when guns are included), the casual unprotected sex, and the frequent smoking and drinking currently being beamed at American children and adolescents (Table 8).^{30,37,156} Expecting the entertainment industry to acknowledge their responsibility to the public health may be naive, but the stone wall is beginning to crumble. Children and teenagers comprise a captive audience for entertainment producers, but they also represent the next and only source of adults in American society. As such, they deserve far better than what they are being exposed to now.

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Ann this is some
additional research
on media
rating systems

KLE: Christopher Stern

LEVEL 2 - 15 OF 628 STORIES

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Daily Variety

May 03, 2000

SECTION: NEWS; Pg. 8

LENGTH: 399 words

HEADLINE: Pols call for uniform entertainment code

BYLINE: CHRISTOPHER STERN

BODY:

WASHINGTON --- Two prominent senators introduced a bill Tuesday that would ban "video games, video programs, movies and music" (but not television) unless the industries agreed to implement a one-size-fits-all rating code.

The so-called "uniform rating system" would give parents a common reference point for evaluating the content of various forms of entertainment, according to the bill's authors, Senate Commerce Committee Chairman John McCain (R-Ariz.) and Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.).

The bill would give the industries one year to come in compliance with the new code or face being banned from the marketplace.

Motion Picture Assn. of America prexy Jack Valenti blasted the proposal as an attack on industries that are protected by the First Amendment.

"Band-aiding the FTC to be the final arbiter on ratings and labels is a dangerous move toward government intrusion into freedom of speech and expression," Valenti said, adding, "Americans who honor the Bill of Rights will be dismayed by this proposed bill."

'Moral obligation'

Explaining their move, McCain said: "The producers of these products have a moral obligation to inform consumers of violent content. What this legislation does is impose a legal requirement to do so. The bill would accomplish its goal by giving the FTC power to police entertainment labels under the same laws that allow the agency to supervise cigarette labels."

Also on Tuesday, President Clinton repeated his support for a uniform ratings system for entertainment programming. During a White House conference on teenagers, Clinton said he has had trouble decoding the various rating systems. "I try to sort it all out, and it's almost like I need a dictionary."

Complex system

Two years ago the television industry implemented a relatively complex ratings code that is used in conjunction with the V-chip that is being installed

Daily Variety, May 03, 2000

in almost every new TV set sold in the United States. The rating system has different content codes for sex, violence and risque language.

However, television programming is specifically exempted from the new labeling requirements proposed by the bill. If TV had been included in the proposal, it would have rendered obsolete millions of V-chips already in homes. The V-chip is specifically programmed to work with the current TV code, and reprogramming existing sets would be extraordinarily expensive.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: May 3, 2000

LEVEL 2 - 16 OF 628 STORIES

Copyright 2000 BPI Communications, Inc.
The Hollywood Reporter

May 03, 2000

LENGTH: 712 words

HEADLINE: Clintons on ratings offensive
'Unified' system urged; task force launched to assist parents

BYLINE: Brooks Boliek

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

BODY:

During a White House conference about teenagers Tuesday, the president and first lady criticized the plethora of ratings systems that have developed for different media as a confusing mess.

"I try to sort it all out, but when I see it, it's like you need a dictionary to sort to all out," President Clinton told a packed crowd in the ornate East Room.

Hillary Rodham Clinton argued that a "unified" ratings system, an idea that she broached during her U.S. Senate campaign in New York, is necessary to help parents control their children's access to a "pop culture filled with gratuitous sex and violence."

"Parents are concerned about the movies their kids are seeing, the Web sites they're visiting and the music they listen to," she said.

The first lady announced a presidential task force to develop Internet portals that will help parents navigate the new media. She said the task force will create a Web site that will explain the various ratings systems.

"This is only a temporary step," she said. "Let's create a unified ratings system so parents can decide what's appropriate for their children to see."

Lawmakers jumped to accommodate her wishes. Sens. John McCain, R-Ariz., and Joe Lieberman, D-Conn., introduced legislation Tuesday that would require a uniform labeling system for all movies, video games and music products. It would modify the cigarette labeling law to include entertainment.

"The producers of these products have a moral obligation to inform consumers of violent content," said McCain, who chairs the Senate Commerce Committee. "What this legislation does is impose a legal requirement to do so."

Under the McCain-Lieberman bill, the entertainment industry would have six months to develop a unified violence rating system for video games, video programs, motion pictures and sound recordings. The Federal Trade Commission

would have authority to "accept, reject or modify" the system.

"A similar-type bill was overwhelmingly defeated in the House," MPAA chief Jack Valenti said. "Movies are not cigarettes, and to equate First Amendment-protected intellectual property with cigarettes is a bit bizarre. Moreover, mandating the FTC to be the final arbiter on ratings and labels is a dangerous move toward government intrusion into freedom of speech and expression. Americans who honor the Bill of Rights will be dismayed by this proposed bill."

Parents, teens, teachers, youth workers and others were invited to the daylong conference to discuss ways to raise and mentor responsible and resourceful youth.

The first lady said the proliferation of cable and satellite TV, new broadcast networks and the rise of the Internet have made it more difficult for parents to control what their children watch, hear and read than when she was a girl battling with her siblings over which show to watch on one of the three networks.

Entertainment industry executives in Washington were nonplused by the Clintons' appeal.

"I'm in full agreement with the goals of the White House conference," said Valenti, inventor of the movie and TV ratings systems. "Anything that gives parents more information and guidance to help them monitor the values of their children is something we want to be part of."

Industry executives say they have no plans to build a one-size-fits-all content ratings system.

The conference also was highlighting recent brain research that says the preteen years are as important as the first three years of life in setting patterns for adult behavior.

Scientists had believed that brain development slowed after the first few years of life _ that the brain was essentially organized by the time a child enters the first grade. The research, first published last year and then in the March issue of the journal Nature, showed that in adolescents up to age 15, there are peak growth rates in areas of the brain associated with language and associative thinking.

"Sometimes we give up on kids early and feel that they are already doomed for certain fates," said Dr. Jay Giedd, a National Institute of Mental Health child psychiatrist who worked on the research. "But from the biological perspective, there are still lots and lots of opportunities for change during the teen years."

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: May 03, 2000

LEVEL 2 - 60 OF 628 STORIES

Copyright 2000 BPI Communications, Inc.
The Hollywood Reporter

April 26, 2000

LENGTH: 821 words

HEADLINE: FTC wants a sneak peek
Federal investigators reportedly pressing
studios for marketing plans on violent films

BYLINE: David Finnigan

BODY:

and Brooks Boliek

Federal investigators are asking the major studios to turn over media and marketing plans for certain movies to determine whether the entertainment industry is peddling violent fare to young audiences, sources familiar with the probe said.

The move is part of the Federal Trade Commission's almost yearlong investigation into entertainment practices, which President Clinton ordered in the wake of the April 20, 1999, massacre at Columbine High School.

Sources said stacks of boxes of evidence have been turned over to the FTC, which launched the informal investigation into how violent entertainment is marketed to the country's youth. The probe has prompted studios, music companies, video game makers, theater-chain owners and their respective trade associations to hire at least 30 separate law firms to advise them.

FTC staffers are planning a late summer release of the report to President Clinton and Congress, though Washington sources said that release could be delayed until after the November presidential elections.

The Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention donated at least \$250,000 to its joint study with the FTC of entertainment marketing.

One source familiar with the investigation said FTC investigators have raised questions about the relationship between studios and the MPAA's voluntary ratings board. Some question if the board is too willing to modify its ratings decisions about explicit fare under pressure from the studios, which fund the MPAA. Federal officials are also concerned about exhibitors' effectiveness in enforcing ratings restrictions at theaters.

Another FTC question posed to studios' outside legal counsel focused on the advertising of R-rated movies on broadcast television, asking why more explicit fare is plugged on NBC's youth-driven sitcom "Friends" instead of ABC's older demographic-driven "20/20."

Studio executives and trade association staffers declined to discuss the probe. "I really can't talk about it," one top-level division chief said when reached this week.

Sources said the studios are responding to the FTC's requests but are delivering heavily censored documents to protect what they regard as proprietary data. Unlike a civil-liability trial, in which a judge can decide if a disputed document gets into the record, the FTC in this investigation lacks an independent mediator to decide what information must be released to the government.

The investigation is an FTC Section 6 probe, an informal investigation seeking voluntary involvement of those questioned. Last month, the Senate Commerce Committee held a hearing on video game violence that game-making industry leaders declined to attend (HR 3/22).

Although the FTC has no specific law enforcement powers, sources said a Section 6 probe can become a Section 5 formal investigation, giving the FTC the power to subpoena witnesses, assign fines to companies not in compliance with federal trade laws and reach consent agreements with those companies in which they agree to stop the problem practices.

For instance, in a 1998 court settlement, the R.J. Reynolds tobacco company agreed to stop running its highly successful "Joe Camel" cigarette campaign _ an agreement with 46 state attorneys general that was prompted partly by the FTC's 1997 complaint that RJR violated federal law with the Camel campaign. (A 1991 study had found that 91% of 6-year-olds surveyed recognized Joe Camel and knew it stood for cigarettes.)

While tobacco is federally regulated and movies, music and video games are not, a veteran of the long court fights with the tobacco industry sees parallels between how the FTC probed cigarette marketing and how the FTC now seeks an education in entertainment marketing, especially to children.

"It sounds to me like they're asking the right questions," said Richard Daynard, a law professor at Northeastern University in Boston and chairman of the Tobacco Products Liability Project, a key cigarette liability litigation group for 20 years.

Elizabeth Thoman, founder and president of the nonprofit, Los Angeles-based Center for Media Literacy, said, "The whole issue of media and violence in our culture is a very complex one, and it cannot be reduced to just issues of content or simple answers. So this whole inquiry around the marketing of violence-as-entertainment is another part of the complexity _ it broadens the inquiry by adding a new layer of questions. From a consumer point of view, it broadens the public discourse beyond issues of just content."

The FTC probe comes in a presidential election year filled with debate about media violence. A proposed Senate gun control bill would bar excessively violent movies and TV shows from shooting on federal land, and there has been a call for a National Institutes of Health study on how kids are impacted by violent music and video games.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: April 26, 2000

LEVEL 2 - 61 OF 628 STORIES

Copyright 2000 BPI Communications, Inc.
The Hollywood Reporter

April 26, 2000

LENGTH: 627 words

HEADLINE: Unified ratings plan resurfaces

BYLINE: Brooks Boliek

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

BODY:

There are indications that the Clinton administration plans to step up its pressure on the entertainment industry to develop a single content ratings system for all media.

While the topic was raised by President Clinton in his annual State of the Union Address and first lady Hillary Clinton during her Senate campaign in New York, it is likely to be resurrected as part of a White House conference on teenagers next week. A unified ratings system was also the subject of a meeting last week between MPAA chief Jack Valenti, the progenitor of the movie and television ratings systems, and Clinton's domestic policy adviser Bruce Reed.

Valenti refused to comment on the exact nature of the discussions other than to describe the meeting as "a very cordial one with Mr. Reed, where I briefed him on how the ratings systems work."

Last week's meeting and Tuesday's summit, White House Conference on Teenagers: Raising Responsible and Resourceful Youth, have raised concerns among some industry executives that they are in for another pounding in the war that pits guns against Hollywood. Reed did not return phone calls.

"This seems to be the one idea they are continuing to tout in the culture wars," one Hollywood executive said. "It's a bad idea, but they feel that it will help them in their battle on gun-control issues."

While a unified ratings system is not a topic listed on the tentative schedule released by the administration, a White House spokeswoman said, "Obviously, that will come up." A guest list for the conference was not available, but the White House announcement said it will include leading experts on raising teenagers.

The agenda for the conference calls for a discussion of the "impact of new media on youth and parenting."

Doug Lowenstein, president of the Interactive Digital Software Assn., a computer game trade organization, said a government push for a unified ratings system was "an idea in search of a problem."

Lowenstein said he had not been asked to attend the conference and was unaware if anyone from the industry had been invited.

The White House has used issue conferences in the past to build support for its proposals. Similar conferences heralded the TV ratings system and the weekly children's educational television requirement.

While the possibility that Clinton will continue to use his bully pulpit to champion a unified ratings system has some executives biting their nails, others expressed little concern. They point out that Congress defeated a similar proposal last year.

"There's no pressure," one industry official said. "It was the first time (Reed) had been briefed on it. We have no intention of changing the movie ratings system or the TV ratings system."

Although the unified ratings system proposal was defeated in Congress, history has proven that these things don't always stay dead. The proposal that brought the V-chip and the TV content ratings system were also initially defeated but went on to become law.

"You're always concerned about the president using the power of the bully pulpit to pressure the industry," an executive said.

The V-chip may end up being the entertainment industry's salvation, as it is designed to work with the TV ratings system as it is now constituted.

"You would have made useless all of the TV's using the V-chip if you changed it," one official said.

Other industry executives complain that a unified ratings system is an unnecessary intrusion into what is a constitutionally protected enterprise.

"The industries already have their ratings systems," another executive said. "Recordings are different from movies. Video games are different from television. To throw them all out for a one-size-fits-all ratings system is a mistake."

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: April 26, 2000

LEVEL 2 - 93 OF 628 STORIES

The Associated Press State & Local Wire

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April 19, 2000, Wednesday, PM cycle

SECTION: State and Regional

LENGTH: 205 words

HEADLINE: Attorney general suggests restrictions be put on sales to minors

DATELINE: CHICAGO

BODY:

Illinois Attorney General Jim Ryan is calling on retailers to refuse to sell violent video games to youths under 17.

Ryan said he will urge video makers, stores and parents to observe the Entertainment Software Rating Board system.

"It defies common sense that we would want these shockingly violent and interactive 'murder simulators' to flow freely into the hands and ultimately the minds of our young people," he said at a news conference on Tuesday.

Ryan said earlier this year that his office sent children ages 13 to 15 into 29 stores to buy games rated "M" for mature. He said not one child was refused the games, some of which show heads being blown off and blood spurting from body parts.

Calling the games "murder simulators," Ryan said he sent letters to retailers asking them to halt the sale of "M"-rated games to buyers under 17.

"Members of my staff also are researching alternative enforcement strategies if voluntary compliance is not forthcoming," the letters warn.

David Vite, president of the Illinois Retail Merchants Association, said he will encourage stores to abide by the ratings and put up warnings about violent video games. But he said enforcement ultimately lies with parents.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: April 20, 2000

LEVEL 2 - 102 OF 628 STORIES

Copyright 2000 Business Wire, Inc.
Business Wire

April 18, 2000, Tuesday

SECTION: ENTERTAINMENTWIRE

DISTRIBUTION: Entertainment Editors

LENGTH: 782 words

HEADLINE: Video Retailers Agree with Attorney General Ryan that Voluntary Enforcement of Existing Video Game Ratings System is Needed

DATELINE: LOS ANGELES, April 18, 2000

BODY:

Existing Video Industry Trade Association Program -- Pledge To Parents -- Emphasizes Parental Education & Voluntary Ratings Enforcement

The home video industry agrees with this morning's call by Attorney General Ryan for retail chains to enforce the existing video game ratings system that says "M"-rated video games may not be suitable for children under 17.

In fact, thousands of video specialty stores across the nation are already actively enforcing both movie and video game ratings systems within their stores, utilizing a program called Pledge To Parents. Video Software Dealers Association (VSDA) President Crossan "Bo" Andersen today offered the services of the home video entertainment trade association to expand this program to mass merchant retailers.

"We agree that all retailers that sell or rent video games should educate parents about the video game rating system and voluntarily enforce it," said Andersen. "We offer our help to every retailer to accomplish this."

This voluntary Pledge To Parents program, created nine years ago by Video Software Dealers Association, is designed to 1) encourage video retailers to check I.D.'s and refuse rental or sale of "M"-rated video games and "R"-rated movies to minors absent parental consent, and 2) to aid parents in making well informed entertainment choices for their children when a video or video game is rented or purchased.

The Pledge To Parents program uses the popular-with-parents movie and video game content ratings (voluntary entertainment industry systems) to prevent minors from renting or buying videos deemed inappropriate by their parents. The video stores' Pledge To Parents program provides ratings information about movies and video games and allows parents to contract with their neighborhood video store to control what types of videos and video games their children may or may not rent or buy.

Business Wire April 18, 2000, Tuesday

Recent tragic incidents of youth violence have raised the issue of the impact of violent videos and video games on our nation's youth. "Video stores have long recognized the need to be responsive to the desires of parents when family members rent and buy video products in their stores," said Andersen. "We would like to work with Attorney General Ryan as partners to expand our Pledge To Parents to all retailers, including mass merchants, that sell video games. Through parental education and voluntary enforcement of video game ratings, we can help ensure that children do not have access to video games that their parents do not want them to play."

The centerpiece of Pledge To Parents is the following pledge by retailers:

1. It is the policy of this store not to rent or sell videotapes or video games designated as "restricted" to persons under the age of 17 without parental consent, including all movies rated "R" by the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) and all video games rated "M" by the Entertainment Software Ratings Board (ESRB).

2. It is the policy of this store not to rent or sell videotapes rated "NC-17" by the MPAA or video games rated "Adults Only" by the ESRB to persons age 17 or under.

VSDA's Pledge To Parents program also provides a mechanism for allowing rentals of restricted materials to minors only when the parents have specifically authorized it. For example, many video stores are soliciting from customers written instructions regarding what types of movies and video games can be rented or purchased by family members, and what types of content they don't want their children renting. This information is kept on file within the store, and is noted at the cash register when customers rent or buy videos. For instance, a customer can limit all of his or her children, regardless of age, to video games rated "E" (Everyone: content suitable for age six and older) by the ESRB, or indicate that one child is permitted to rent "E" games while another can rent "T" (Teen: content suitable for age 13 and older). Thus, the Pledge To Parents program allows parents, if they choose, to be even more restrictive than any industry -- or government -- enforced system would be.

Adersen added, "This voluntary industry program demonstrates a commitment to the communities in which our members live. Most importantly, it supports the rights of parents to make fundamental decisions involving their children while emphasizing the need for parents to take responsibility for what their children watch and play."

Individuals with questions about the Pledge To Parents program are encouraged to contact their local video store or call VSDA at 818/385-1500.

CONTACT: VSDA
Kelli Warren, 818/385-1500 Ext. 223

URL: <http://www.businesswire.com>

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: April 19, 2000

LEVEL 2 - 106 OF 628 STORIES

Copyright 2000 CMP Media Inc.
InformationWeek

April 17, 2000

SECTION: BEHINDtheNEWS, Pg. 193, the big picture

LENGTH: 806 words

HEADLINE: Free Speech Vs. Free Markets -- Our zeal to E-commercialize the world sometimes leads otherwise strong proponents of free speech to inadvertently compromise their rights-and those of others

BYLINE: LEON A. KAPPELMAN

BODY:

It's paradoxical, but not unexpected, that the empowering technologies of the Information Age are fostering many anti-free-speech activities around the world. In these fast-paced times of both political correctness and Orwellian doublespeak, censorship is rarely referred to as such. Still, a censor by any other name would smell as foul (apologies to Mr. Shakespeare).

So whether it's called communications decency, juvenile justice, family-friendly, filtering, anti-spam, content ratings, online licensing, state secrets, or something else, it's a cause for concern. Putting content on the Internet could subject you and your company to a global patchwork of laws, regulations, policies, and cultural norms fraught with risks and penalties. The costs may not just be financial, since your reputation, time, market share, and more could also be at stake. And "content" can be no more than a link to another party's content.

Our zeal to E-commercialize the world sometimes leads otherwise strong proponents of free speech to inadvertently compromise their rights and those of others. Don't misunderstand: Children on and off the Internet need adult supervision, intellectual property rights need protection, and the genuine secrets of government and trade should be kept under wraps. But by whom, and at what price to society and human rights? Consider this:

- Anti-spam is anti-free speech. There are no laws to limit the free speech of those who fill my snail-mail box, aside from restrictions on mail fraud, child pornography, and other such activities. Why should there be special laws to keep my E-mail box free of junk mail-especially since my delete key works and my box comes with configurable filtering capabilities. Why not just stipulate truth in advertising as we do with snail mail and other solicitations, rather than forbid otherwise lawful speech if it's disseminated via E-mail lists? I detest junk mail of all kinds, but spam bans seem too slippery a slope for my First Amendment comfort.

- A censor in family-friendly clothing. Children should be protected from cyberpredators as well as content deemed objectionable by their parents. But if only the vendors of blocking software know what is filtered, we have turned parental responsibilities over to nameless parties and their computer programs

of unknown quality and reliability. Tests reveal that some of these so-called family-friendly filtering programs have error rates in excess of 66% on .edu sites and personal home pages and block the U.S. Constitution, the Bible, and information on subjects such as breast cancer and the Super Bowl. Laughable? Yes. But Utah mandates censorware in its libraries, and Congress is considering several similar proposals.

Of course, your business site could be blocked without your knowledge. And some censorware programs forward users to paid advertiser sites when pages are blocked-fertile ground for fraud and unfair trade practices.

And that's just the United States. Australia has mandated content-rating and blocking requirements. China, Cuba, Malaysia, Russia, Singapore, and Ukraine require Internet licenses-and some of these countries force Internet service providers to install user-monitoring equipment. China requires the registration of all communications software and has jailed people for sending E-mails to dissidents and for providing an E-mail list to a pro-democracy newsletter. And the United Kingdom, looking to make itself "the best place in the world for E-commerce," has created an Internet Watch Foundation to serve as its content police (www.iwf.org.uk).

Two other cross-border developments trouble me. A consortium of technology and media companies has instituted a voluntary self-rating system under the auspices of the Internet Content Rating Association (www.icra.org) by which content-censoring software could operate. And a court in Boston has issued an injunction demanding that Web servers around the world remove content critical of a censorware product called Cyber Patrol (www.ifea.net).

But free speech and free markets are not mutually exclusive. And the freedoms we take for granted in the United States don't have to be sacrificed at the altar of E-commerce. In fact, the Internet and global E-commerce provide a stupendous opportunity to further the ideals of democracy and individual freedom. Sometimes, however, those ideals get lost in the pursuit of the almighty buck-and the attempts to regulate that pursuit. It's up to all of us to make sure that the Bill of Rights is not the price we pay for that bill of lading.

Leon A. Kappelman is a professor and the associate director of the Center for Quality and Productivity at the University of North Texas. You can reach him at kappfunt.edu.

<http://www.iweek.com/>

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LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: April 15, 2000

LEVEL 2 - 129 OF 628 STORIES

Copyright 2000 Gannett Company, Inc.
USA TODAY

April 12, 2000, Wednesday, FINAL EDITION

SECTION: NEWS; Pg. 28A

LENGTH: 552 words

HEADLINE: Vulgar content on TV rises, despite industry vows, V-chip

BODY:

Two years ago, broadcasters were touting a sliver of silicon circuitry as the answer to parents' outrage over television sex and violence. To hear them tell it, the revolutionary V-chip -- implanted in TVs and combined with new program ratings -- would give parents a tool to block undesirable programs.

But neither the V-chip nor the broadcasters have lived up to that promise.

And a flurry of studies released in recent days underscores just how far the system has fallen from its goals. And just how shallow is the broadcasters' commitment to family-friendly programming.

The V-chip is designed to be used with broadcast content ratings -- such as "V" to designate violence or "S" for sex -- to allow parents to block unwanted programs. But while it has been mandated on most new TV sets since Jan. 1, the V-chip is still little-known and little-owned despite all of the political chatter. Less than 10% of parents with children age 2 to 17 own a set equipped with the chip; 39% have never heard of it, according to a survey in March by the Kaiser Family Foundation.

Given the chance to promote the V-chip's use with public service spots, three major networks have failed to do even that. Since Jan. 1, ABC, NBC and Fox combined have shown the spots only five times, according to Federal Communications Commissioner Gloria Tristani, who called the effort "plainly insufficient."

The National Association of Broadcasters defends itself by pointing to the V-chip's newness, saying a "learning curve" is required for broader use.

True. Consumers don't buy new TV sets each year, and it will take time for the V-chip to filter into homes.

Yet there's fresh evidence that broadcasters haven't been willing to wait before ratcheting up the raunchiness of their programs. In fact, a recent study shows evening television programming has become far racier in the past decade.

USA TODAY, April 12, 2000

The Parents Television Council (PTC), which looked at four weeks of programming last fall in the 8 p.m.-11 p.m. time slot, toted up 1,173 vulgarities -- nearly five per hour on six networks. The rate is five times higher than in 1989, the study found. Sexual references increased, too, to about 3.5 an hour.

The PTC may seem a bit prudish in its choice of foul language -- for instance, "hell" and "damn" are counted. But the group also found prime-time examples of "bastard," "bitch" and other language that once were not staples of family viewing.

And while violence decreased slightly since 1989, the PTC found it more sexual and graphic: a blood-smeared subway disaster on *Once and Again*, a bedroom scene in *Angel* in which a demon rises from a woman's chest and burrows into a naked man's back.

Those networks that would discuss the study questioned the PTC's "methodology."

Such nit-picking is beside the point. The industry bought into the rating and V-chip system, even promising the FCC that it would help "educate the public." Instead, broadcasters have turned up the dial on sex and foul language.

Ratings and the V-chip were a good compromise that fended off restrictions on TV content -- an alarming prospect for free speech. But bawdy programs and broken pledges are no way to make it work or keep tougher restrictions at bay.

GRAPHIC: GRAPHIC, B/W, Quin Tian, USA TODAY, Source: Parents Television Council (Bar graph)

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: April 14, 2000

LEVEL 2 - 161 OF 628 STORIES

Copyright 2000 The Korea Herald
THE KOREA HERALD

April 6, 2000, Thursday

LENGTH: 742 words

HEADLINE: Web nanny in the works; Internet ratings system to debut in Korea next year

BYLINE: By Kim Hoo-ran Staff reporter

BODY:

Next year, the wild, wild web is going to get a little tamer in Korea.

Parents here will soon have some control over what their children can access on the World Wide Web.

The Ministry of Information and Communication announced yesterday that it has begun work on establishing an Internet content rating system scheduled to go into effect in July of next year.

The rating system, to be developed by the Information and Telecommunications Ethics Board, plans to rate Internet and online service content. Sites will be ranked according to how much bad language, nudity and violence they contain. People will then be able to filter content using special software, taking the ratings into consideration.

The ministry said they are taking action in light of the growing Internet population which includes a large portion of minors, who have access to sexually explicit and extremely violent sites from around the world.

"The adolescents' ready access to pornographic sites has led to a rise in sex crimes among youths," said Koh Kwang-sup, a ministry official in charge of information protection. He explained that blocking the offensive sites at the Internet service provider (ISP) level is not a viable alternative as Netizens would fight it as a violation of freedom of expression. On the technical side, site blocking by ISPs would significantly lower access speeds and result in increased costs for service users. "The proposed system relies on the voluntary cooperation of information providers and allows users to make selections based on their values," said Koh.

While all content, both on the Internet and through online services are subject to the ratings system, news sites are exempt from the requirement. The spokesman also added that illegal sites, such as those which contain child pornography, will not be able to escape prosecution merely by giving their sites an adult rating.

For-profit domestic content providers would be required display ratings while non-profit sites will be offered incentives to display their ratings. As for

overseas content, sites with ratings will have them converted to reflect the Korean system. Those without ratings will be rated by the board. Overseas pornographic sites running in Korean will be among the first overseas content to be rated, the ministry said.

Those found in violation of the ratings display requirement would be subject to fines and criminal prosecution. ISPs could also be subject to sanctions if they are found to have been lax in fulfilling their responsibility to monitor indecent sites and remove them. "Bills for the necessary amendments to the related laws will be submitted to the upcoming parliamentary session," Koh said. The ministry said details, including the ratings system guidelines and monitoring systems, will be hammered out by August. A pilot program will be run from September to June next year before official implementation in July of next year.

The government's initiative comes at a time when there is a growing movement around the world to rate Internet content. However, unlike the attempt here, the global movement is being led by the Internet industry to preempt government regulation. Another difference is that the ratings movement overseas is more of an international effort, reflecting the worldwide nature of the Web.

Last September the Bertelsmann Foundation, a German policy research group, recommended the creation of a new international system whereby Web publishers would rate their own content and parents could then choose whether their children could have access to the material.

Closely reviewing that proposal is the Internet Content Rating Association (ICRA), an international, independent, non-profit organization which encourages Internet content providers to use the group's voluntary, self-disclosure rating systems in an effort to show that the Web is able to regulate itself. This year, ICRA is set to launch a re-vamped version of major ratings and filtering system called RSACi (Recreational Software Advisory Council on the Internet), that takes into consideration the cultural sensitivities of international users.

The current system calls on Web publishers to rate their content on a scale of 0 to 4 in four categories: sex, nudity, violence and language. Parents then decide what level of content they will allow their children to have access to and can set their Web browsers to block objectionable material.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: April 05, 2000

LEVEL 2 - 174 OF 628 STORIES

Copyright 2000 Hankook Ilbo
Korea Times

April 5, 2000, Wednesday

LENGTH: 571 words

HEADLINE: Content Rating System to Filter Harmful Sites on Web

BODY:

The Ministry of Information and Communication unveiled a package to rate Internet contents in a bid to set up a filtering channel against pornographic and other harmful materials on the Web.

The ministry cited the flood of pornographic websites and violence-ridden contents, which are exposed to the youth in Korea _ spawning a host of social problems, for the rating system.

The measure comes after the ministry assessed public opinions through several conferences, meetings with civic organizations and related online agencies.

The Internet content rating system will place a mark on specific sites, indicating the level of violence, sex and other harmful materials that could have adverse effect on minors.

Other advanced countries have similar filtering standards, offering a guide for parents and children which sites are safe for their children.

The rapid growth of the domestic Internet market is enhancing the work efficiency and providing detailed information on a variety of sectors online, but the circulation of undesirable digital contents has reached a critical point, ' a ministry spokesman said.

According to the ministry, more and more children and students are exposed to the pornographic and violence-oriented websites at PC salons and schools where faster connections are available.

While the younger generation are Internet-savvy and capable of searching the Net freely, parents and teachers have low levels of computer literacy, making the filtering process virtually impossible for them.

But the Web regulations have long been opposed by netizens who fear the infringement on freedom of speech. Korea and other countries attempted to ask Internet service providers to establish filtering programs, blocking users from accessing certain sites which slowed down the network and increased the cost of operation.

Against this backdrop, the Internet content rating sytem centers on the self-regulation of the Web materials, with the Internet and telecommunications operators freed from regulatory burdens.

Korea Times April 5, 2000, Wednesday

In addition, the ministry said the rating system allows users to scan background information about various websites _ a system which promotes self-regulation.

The target of the Internet rating will be all the materials uploaded on the domestic PC online communications and major websites. News and illegal contents will be excluded from the rating.

To set up a reliable rating system, the Information and Communication Ethics Committee, the universities, legal experts, civic organizations and private Internet outfits will jointly form a screening unit before rating the level of language, nudity and violence.

Domestic content providers will be urged to put the rating level while the monitoring groups will regularly scan the Internet to seek out illegal and harmful contents without the rating information.

Of foreign contents, Korean-language pornographic sites will be required to post the content rating system to protect domestic users.

If website operators find the rating unfair, they will be allowed to file an appeal for a correction.

A subtle part of the voluntary'' regulation is that the rating team will report the cases of illegal contents site to the prosecution for legal punishment.

Details about the rating system implementation will be out in May, before the full-fledged monitoring kicks off in August.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: April 05, 2000

LEVEL 2 - 187 OF 628 STORIES

Copyright 2000 Business Wire, Inc.
Business Wire

April 4, 2000, Tuesday

DISTRIBUTION: Business/Technology Editors

LENGTH: 660 words

HEADLINE: Committee to Help Revise International Filtering and Labeling System
to Protect Children from Harmful Internet Content

DATELINE: WASHINGTON and BRIGHTON, England, April 4, 2000

BODY:

Internet Content Rating Association Establishes Worldwide Advisory Board

The Internet Content Rating Association (ICRA) today announced that it has appointed a new advisory board that will assist the organization in revising its international filtering and labeling system that allows adults to restrict children's access to harmful Internet content. The board includes educators, policy experts and media professionals from eight different countries.

New advisory board members include:

- Francisco Martin Abreu, founder, EDUNET (Spain) - Izumi Aizu, co-founder and principal of Asia Network Research (Japan/Malaysia)

- Dr. Peng Hwa Ang, vice dean for the School of Communication Studies at Nanyang Technological University (Singapore)

- Jack Balkin, professor and founder/director of the Information Society Project at Yale Law School (United States)

- Jerry Berman, co-founder and executive director for the Center For Democracy & Technology (United States)

- Cornelius Crans, director of the Netherlands Board of Film Classification (Netherlands)

- Al MacKay, general manager for the Canadian Public Affairs Channel (Canada)

- Nana Makaula, CEO of the South African Film and Publication Board

- Dr. Dianne Martin, computer science program director for the Division of Undergraduate Education for the National Science Foundation and a professor at George Washington University (United States)

- Kenji Naemura, professor at the Graduate School of Media and Governance and faculty of Environmental Information, Keio University (Japan)

Business Wire April 4, 2000, Tuesday

- Jean Armour Polly, author of The Internet Kids & Family Yellow Pages (United States)

- Bruce Rigby, acting assistant general manager of business systems and systems support for the Department of Education, Employment and Training in the State of Victoria (Australia)

- Nigel Williams, founder and director of Childnet International (United Kingdom)

"This is an exciting time for ICRA, as we move forward to create a truly international filtering and rating system that meets the individual culture and language needs of different countries," said Stephen Balkam, executive director of ICRA. "Our new advisory board brings together distinguished people from many countries to assist us as we as we embark upon this task."

Formed in May 1999, ICRA was created to develop an internationally acceptable online content labeling system. The new global labeling system will be based on the RSACi content rating system that is already embedded in Microsoft Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator and has rated more than 130,000 Web sites. Formed with the backing of some of the world's best known Internet and communications companies, ICRA's founding members include, AOL, Bell Canada, Bertelsmann Foundation, British Telecom (BT), Cable & Wireless, Demon Internet (UK), Deutsche Telekom Online Service, Electronic Network Consortium, EuroISPA, IBM, Internet Watch Foundation, Microsoft, Novell, Software & Information Industry Association, and UUNet.

About ICRA

ICRA is an international non-profit organization, incorporated in the UK as a company limited by guarantee, with charitable purposes. ICRA's mission is to develop, implement and manage an internationally acceptable voluntary self-rating system which provides Internet users world wide with the choice to limit access to content they consider harmful, especially to children. ICRA has received the RSAC assets including the RSACi system that provides consumers with information about the level of nudity, sex, language, and violence in Web sites. To date, more than 130,000 Web sites have rated with the RSACi system, including a great number of the top 100 sites which account for 80% of the web's traffic. For more information on ICRA and the advisory board, visit www.icra.org.

CONTACT: Porter Novelli Convergence Group -- ICRA
Jennifer Riggle, 757-451-3665
jennifer.riggle@pnicg.com

URL: <http://www.businesswire.com>

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: April 5, 2000

LEVEL 1 - 53 OF 461 STORIES

Copyright 2000 The Commercial Appeal
The Commercial Appeal (Memphis, TN)

March 24, 2000, FRIDAY, FINAL EDITION

SECTION: APPEAL, Pg. F1

LENGTH: 1335 words

HEADLINE: TENN. SHOULD END VAIN EFFORT TO IMPROVE MOVIE RATINGS CODE

BYLINE: John Beifuss

BODY:

Here's one for the books.

Actually, it's been on the books for a quarter of a century but hardly anybody seems aware of it, except for theater managers and some unfortunate Tennessee teenagers.

What we're talking about is this: Tennessee apparently is the only state in the union with a law that raises the age bar for R-rated movies from 17 to 18.

A 17-year-old who goes to the Malco Majestic to see The Green Mile, for example, is out of luck unless a parent or adult guardian buys his ticket. But that teen can drive a few miles across the Mississippi line to the DeSoto Cinema 16 and purchase a ticket to the same movie with no problem.

"There are no other similar laws on the books to our knowledge anywhere else in the country, either at the state or local level," said Rich Taylor, vice president of public affairs in Washington for the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), the organization that developed and administers the movie ratings code.

"It really poses a problem for us, because by and large our patrons see the national advertising as well as the one-sheets (posters) and the newspaper ads that say '17,' and we have to tell them that Tennessee is different," said Jimmy Tashie, senior vice president for Malco Theatres Inc., which operates movie houses in Tennessee, Mississippi, Arkansas, Missouri and Kentucky. "And they ask why, and we say, well, it's just something that's on the books that we have to abide by."

Bob Zeitz, senior vice president for AJAY Theaters, which runs cinemas in Tennessee and Arkansas and is expanding into Mississippi, said signs at the box offices at the Hollywood 20 Cinema in Bartlett and the Star Cinema 12 in Memphis inform patrons that they must be 18 to buy a ticket to an R-rated movie.

According to the Classification and Ratings Administration of the MPAA, an R rating means "RESTRICTED. Under 17 Requires Accompanying Parent or Adult Guardian."

Those are the words that appear on every movie poster, television

advertisement and movie trailer that promotes an R-rated motion picture.
Some different words appear in the Tennessee code, however.

According to a state law originated in 1975, updated in 1979 and reinforced during the massive criminal code rewrite of 1989, "persons under eighteen" cannot be admitted to an R-rated movie unless "accompanied by a parent or adult guardian." Sale of such a ticket to a person 17 or younger is a "Class A misdemeanor" punishable by up to 11 months and 29 days in jail, with a fine of up to \$ 2,500.

State Rep. Steve Cohen (D-Memphis) said he has discussed this issue with movie theater owners in the past, and shares their concerns. He said he may introduce an amendment to the law during next year's session of the General Assembly because "it makes sense for our law in Tennessee to be consistent with the national standard of the motion picture industry."

One reason this law is so little known is that, until recently, older-looking teenagers sometimes were able to buy tickets to R-rated movies from inattentive cashiers even if they weren't 17 or 18.

But last year, in reaction to the possible influence of violent entertainment on the youthful killers in Littleton, Colo., and Conyers, Ga., President Clinton and the president of the National Association of Theater Owners announced a new voluntary policy in which cinemas would begin requiring photo identification before selling tickets to R-rated films to young-looking patrons.

Officials with both Malco and AJAY said they already required such IDs. Nevertheless, the publicity surrounding the Clinton-backed announcement definitely heightened awareness of the age issue.

Local news stories at the time didn't even mention the Tennessee law, however. Theater owners didn't bring it up and most reporters were unaware of it, until recent complaints from disgruntled moviegoers who have been denied admission to such films as Topsy-Turvy, the critically acclaimed biography of operetta composers Gilbert and Sullivan, and Beyond the Mat, a documentary about professional wrestling.

"We know it happens, because we hear about it at the box office," Tashie said. "It takes revenue away from us, and from Tennessee."

What upsets Taylor about the Tennessee law is that it takes a system that is intended to be a voluntary guideline for theater owners and a helpful assist for parents and not only codifies it into law but criminalizes those who ignore it.

The movie ratings system was developed in 1968 in response to the new frankness of such movies as Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf and Michelangelo Antonioni's Blowup.

The system was and still is a voluntary way for the movie industry to stave off government restrictions on content, much like the older Comics Code Authority of the comic book industry.

Traditionally, studios submit their movies to the MPAA's ratings board, which then views the film and applies a rating based on the board's judgment of its

content.

The ratings have been modified over the years, but not by much. Currently, the guidelines include G, for general audiences (all ages); PG, "Parental Guidance Suggested," for films that "may contain some material parents might not like for their young children"; PG-13, meaning "some material may be inappropriate for pre-teenagers"; R, which "Contains some adult material . . . Parents are urged to learn more about the film before taking their young children with them"; and NC-17, "no one under 17 admitted," which Tennessee theater owners essentially have transformed into what could be called "NC-18" to comply with the state restrictions on R films.

For the most part, the MPAA system has been a success, although controversies flare up whenever a studio cuts provocative scenes from a director's film in order to earn a less restrictive rating. Last year's big stink concerned changes made by Warner Bros. to Stanley Kubrick's *Eyes Wide Shut* to win an R rating after the board initially awarded the film an NC-17 for its sexual content.

The Tennessee law no doubt was passed as an attempt to maintain some sort of higher local "standards" than those of Hollywood. Memphis in particular has a long history of censorship efforts. Not only was the city home to the notorious movie censor Lloyd T. Binford, but Memphis operated a motion picture review board that imposed its own restrictions up until the mid-1970s. Woody Allen's *Play It Again, Sam* (1972) and *Day of the Dolphin* (1973) both were raised to the status of R films by the local board.

Of course, some movie theater owners and cinema chains institute their own age policies. But Taylor said Tennessee is unique in turning such policies into law.

He said the MPAA's choice of 17 for its ratings guidelines was not arbitrary but was chosen with the counsel of education experts, child health and welfare officials, religious leaders, and so on. "You name any group involved with children, and they had input," he said. "Seventeen was chosen as a bar that seemed to be an appropriate breaking place between movies for young people and movies with adult content."

Of course, anybody who is a regular moviegoer knows that the R rating covers a lot of territory, from the juvenile humor of *Deuce Bigalow* to the knife-slashing horror of *Scream*. Some Tennessee parents no doubt are glad their 17-year-olds can't get into these movies.

Certainly, we should all be concerned about the easy access of children to violent and sexually demeaning "entertainment." But in this age of cable television, video and the Internet, all of which bring R-rated material into the homes of children of all ages, it's absurd to believe a confusing box-office restriction has in any way produced a more worthwhile crop of young adults in Tennessee than in any other state. The law should be amended to conform with the MPAA guidelines that are followed by the rest of the country.

John Beifuss can be reached at 529-2394 or by E-mail at beifuss@gomemphis.com

NOTES:

Pop Culture

LOAD-DATE: March 24, 2000

LEVEL 1 - 85 OF 461 STORIES

Copyright 2000 Knight Ridder/Tribune News Service
Knight Ridder/Tribune News Service
Knight Ridder Washington Bureau

March 22, 2000, Wednesday

SECTION: WASHINGTON DATELINE

KR-ACC-NO: K3610

LENGTH: 427 words

HEADLINE: Expert tells Senate panel enhanced video games are teaching kids violence

BYLINE: By Frank Davies

BODY:

WASHINGTON _ New, powerful video game technologies are helping teach kids how to be violent and reinforcing that behavior, a University of Miami educator Tuesday warned a Senate hearing looking into the impact of interactive games on kids.

UM professor and author Eugene Provenzo said that with rapid advances in technology, new "murder simulation" games allow adolescents to "put themselves into the virtual body of a killer in first-person shooter games." Provenzo said games such as "Doom," "Quake" and "Daikatana" are dangerous because alienated kids "learn to equate violence with style and personal empowerment."

Provenzo and other witnesses at the Senate Commerce Committee acknowledged that such games could not be banned, but called for efforts to restrict access to the most violent games, and a public awareness campaign to alert parents to their impact. "Most parents don't check on the games their kids are playing or what their ratings are," said Dr. David Walsh, president of the National Institute in Media and the Family.

Software industry representatives declined to attend the hearing, according to Sen. Sam Brownback, R-Kansas. He said their absence showed "a contempt for Congress."

But one industry leader complained that they were not consulted in time, and circulated a written statement defending the rating system for video games and discounting any links between the games and youth violence.

"There is a not a shred of evidence in the academic literature to support the allegation that a violent video game leads to aggressive behavior in real life," said Douglas Lowenstein, president of the Interactive Digital Software Association, in his statement.

Provenzo and Walsh noted that realistic, violent games are used by the military as training tools and the UM professor called them "great teaching machines."

Knight Ridder Washington Bureau March 22, 2000, Wednesday

Another witness, Sabrina Steger, said she believed that video games "definitely influenced" the boy who fired on students at a Paducah, Ky., school, killing her daughter Casey.

A 12-year-old student from North Bend, Oreg., Danielle Shimotakahara, said she saw "friends who plays these games get all excited when the blood and the body parts start flying." She is leading a petition drive in her community to force pizza parlors, bowling alleys and other businesses to get rid of the most violent games.

Sen. John Kerry, a Massachusetts Democrat, favored such a course of action. He said, "All of us are loath to make some grandiose federal reach here."

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LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

JOURNAL-CODE: WA

LOAD-DATE: March 22, 2000

LEVEL 1 - 90 OF 461 STORIES

Copyright 2000 Federal News Service, Inc.
Federal News Service

March 21, 2000, Tuesday

SECTION: PREPARED TESTIMONY

LENGTH: 1246 words

HEADLINE: PREPARED TESTIMONY OF VIDEO SOFTWARE DEALERS ASSOCIATION - VSDA
BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE AND TRANSPORTATION

BODY:

Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for allowing the Video Software Dealers Association (VSDA) to submit a statement for the record at the hearing on the impact of interactive violence on children.

We want to assure the committee that VSDA and our members are concerned about the level of youth violence in our society. While we have no expertise in the relationship between video game violence and youth violence, the home video industry believes we have a role to play in helping parents ensure that their children do not gain access to video games that the parents deem inappropriate for them. We want to share with you the actions we have taken to assist parents in this regard and enlist your involvement in this effort.

Established in 1981, the Video Software Dealers Association is a not-for-profit international trade association for the \$17 billion home entertainment industry. VSDA represents over 3,000 companies throughout the United States, Canada, and 22 other countries.

Membership comprises the full spectrum of video retailers (both independents and large chains), as well as the home video divisions of all major and independent motion picture studios, video game and multimedia producers, and other related businesses that constitute and support the home video entertainment industry.

Video game sales and rentals are an important and increasing segment of the home video industry. In 1998, the domestic home video game market generated about \$2.7 billion in software sales and about \$800 million in rental revenue.

The members of VSDA agree with the premise that the best control is parental control. As stated in the final report of the Congressional Bipartisan Working Group on Youth Violence, which was issued two weeks ago, "(p)arents and other adults responsible for the development of children should be vigilant about

Federal News Service March 21, 2000, Tuesday

protecting them from exposure to inappropriate programming". There is no better place than in a home video store for parents to control the content of the video games and movies to which their children have access. For this reason, VSDA- member retailers have taken action to aid parents in making more-informed entertainment choices for their families. We do this through a program we call "Pledge to Parents."

The centerpiece of Pledge to Parents, established by VSDA in 1991, is a commitment by participating retailers:

1. Not to rent or sell videotapes or video games designated as "restricted" to persons under 17 without parental consent, including all movies rated "R" by the Motion Picture Association of America and all video games rated "M" by the Entertainment Software Rating Board.
2. Not to rent or sell videotapes rated "NC- 17" by the Motion Picture Association of America or video games rated "Adults Only" by the Entertainment Software Rating Board to persons aged 17 or under.

In addition, as part of the Pledge to Parents program, many retailers solicit from customers written instructions regarding what types of video games and movies can be rented or purchased by family members. For instance, a customer can limit all of his or her children, regardless of age, to videos rated "E" (Everyone: content suitable for age six and older) by the Entertainment Software Rating Board, or indicate that one child is permitted to rent "E" games while another can rent "T" (Teen: content suitable for age 13 and older). Thus, our voluntary system allows parents, if they so choose, to be even more restrictive than any industry- or government-enforced system would be.

In 1999, we updated our Pledge to Parents materials and provided the revised kit, at no cost, to each retail member of VSDA. We have also offered to provide the materials at cost to any other video retailer that requests them.

Each Pledge to Parents kit contains the following: - Customer Flyer and Parental Consent Form - These materials provide information about the Pledge to Parents program and allow customers to indicate their restrictions or authorizations on video and video game rentals and sales by their family members. Terminal-Topper Sign - This sign, to be displayed near the cash register, draws customers' attention to Pledge to Parents and the retailer's ratings enforcement policy. ID Check Sign - We encourage retailers to post this sign, which indicates that IDs will be checked when appropriate, throughout their store and remind customers of the retailer's voluntary ratings enforcement policy. Video Game Ratings Poster and Brochures - The poster and brochures are designed to help customers make informed decisions concerning their children's video game rentals. MPAA Theatrical-Size Ratings Poster - This poster provides customers with movie ratings information to further assist them with their selection of movies.

We have encouraged our members to make maximum use of the Pledge to Parents materials and provide ratings and content information to customers of all ages. We also have strongly urged our members to check IDs whenever appropriate. We are pleased to report that the response to this program from our members has been extremely positive.

As part of the relaunch of Pledge to Parents, we conducted a substantial

Federal News Service March 21, 2000, Tuesday

public outreach campaign that reached millions of consumers through television, radio, newspapers, and the Internet. The purpose of this campaign was to make parents aware of the resources available to them in video stores.

And we think parents are taking this message to heart. By and large, parents appear to be making good choices for their children's game playing and movie viewing. According to VSDA's VidTrac for the week ending March 12, 2000, all of the 10 top renting video games, and 21 of the top 25, were rated "E" or "R."

The voluntary Pledge to Parents program demonstrates our industry's commitment to the communities in which we live. Video stores and their employees are part of the neighborhoods where they are located. They often know their customers by name. They know what is acceptable and what is not acceptable in their communities. They take pride in the entertainment they bring into people's homes. And they realize that their reputations and livelihoods are on the line every time they sell or rent a video game or movie. Video retailers would not put their businesses at risk by providing to children games that their parents don't want them to have.

Finally, we must keep in mind that, in addressing the issue of violence in American society, the government cannot infringe the constitutional rights of video retailers and consumers or of parents to raise their families as they see fit. Ultimately the responsibility for raising children lies with their parents, not the government and certainly not video store clerks.

Recognizing this, the Bipartisan Working Group on Youth Violence recommended that members of Congress meet with the entertainment industry to learn more about entertainment ratings systems and how to communicate information about the ratings systems to parents. We would be pleased to work with you to implement this recommendation.

The nation's video stores are doing their part to make sure that America's children are not exposed to violent video games without their parents' consent. Home video provides parents with the greatest control of their children's electronic game playing. Voluntary programs, such as VSDA's Pledge to Parents, are the best way to help parents exercise that control.

Thank you.

END

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: March 22, 2000

LEVEL 1 - 127 OF 461 STORIES

Copyright 2000 Chattanooga Publishing Company
Chattanooga Times / Chattanooga Free Press

March 14, 2000, Tuesday

SECTION: NEWS; Pg. A1

LENGTH: 981 words

HEADLINE: Violent Games Are Target of Rating Bill;

Video Game Action Subject of Concern

BYLINE: BOB GARY JR. Staff Writer

BODY:

Decapitation, dismemberment, bloodshed and grotesque cruelty.

All are available in video games at a store near you.

Best-selling games that stand "hip-deep in the gory offal" of their competitors, according to one Internet review. "No-holds-barred" death matches with bloodthirsty competitors. And games featuring weapons that Midway, a marketer, boasts will "slash and bludgeon beyond imagination!"

Aaron West, assistant manager of K B Toys at Hamilton Place mall, said he pays close attention to how many video games he sells.

But if a bill before the Tennessee General Assembly becomes law, he'll have to worry about who's buying those games as well. The bill would make it a crime to sell or rent a graphically violent video game to a minor.

Clerks in stores selling video games and arcade attendants would be responsible for carding their customers, much like their counterparts who sell beer at convenience stores or tickets at movie theaters, said Sen. Jeff Miller, R-Cleveland, a co-sponsor of the bill.

A separate bill would establish a state body responsible for developing and implementing a state rating system for video games.

"We don't want to do away with the games," Sen. Miller said. "It's a free country. Manufacturers have the right to make them, and there's certainly a market for them.

"But those who would criticize this effort should look at these games and see how realistic they are. They dull our sensitivities to the sanctity of life."

If the bill passes, it could raise other problems, one being a First Amendment violation, said Hedy Weinberg, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union in Tennessee.

"Parents need to be more involved in making decisions on what's appropriate

for their kids," Ms. Weinberg said. "This is giving government a decision-making power that should be within the purview of the parent."

The bill would make a first offense a Class B misdemeanor, punishable by up to six months in jail and/or a \$500 fine. A second or subsequent offense would be a Class A misdemeanor, punishable by up to 11 months and 29 days in jail and/or a \$2,500 fine.

"I'd have to be worried about that," Mr. West said.

Violence in video games is not new.

The National Institute on Media and the Family's 1999 Video and Computer Game Report Card notes that as early as 1976 there were calls to ban violent games such as "Death Race" -- tame by today's standards -- and in 1994 the video gaming industry set a voluntary rating system intended to keep "adult games" out of the hands of children.

A 1998 study reviewed 33 popular video games and found 80 percent had aggression or violence as part of the play. A 1996 survey of fourth graders found half their favorite games contained fantasy or human violence.

Psychologists have found harmful effects from television and film violence and suspect there might be similar results from ultraviolent video game playing: increased aggression, desensitization to pain and suffering in others and a belief that the real world is as mean and dangerous as it is in the games.

"I do think that there needs to be control," said Jill Boscaino of North Chattanooga, whose son, Drew, has been an avid game player for about six years. "Video games are our biggest issue and his only hobby. Many of them are really violent, and it bothers me."

According to his mom, Drew and his friends spend their weekends playing games.

"Sometimes they aren't really that violent. All the horror games are rated 'Mature,' " Drew said. "I'm not really attracted to the ones where creatures explode."

The state legislation defines "graphic violence" as any depiction of decapitation, bloodshed, dismemberment or grotesque cruelty.

Sen. Miller said enforcement of the bills would be a problem. He said stores that sell and rent such games should put safeguards in place voluntarily.

Keeping track of who buys what can be difficult, Mr. West said.

"There are so many people buying games -- and you're not really sure who for -- at Christmas," he said. "We have a lot of temporary help around the holidays. But there's got to be accountability and responsibility at some level."

Douglas Lowenstein, president of the Interactive Digital Software Association, said his group has established the Entertainment Software Rating Board, to which video game manufacturers submit games to be rated. Going through the board is not compulsory, but "virtually no major retailers will carry an

unrated game," he said.

Bill Stone of Tullahoma, owner of Fun Tunnel arcade at Northgate Mall, said the Amusement and Music Operators Association has established a Coin Operated Video Game Parental Advisory System. He belongs to the group.

"Through use of a color-coded, traffic-light approach, even young children are able, following instructions from their parents, to make responsible game-playing decisions," Mr. Stone said.

That system has been endorsed by the National PTA and the National Institute on Media and the Family, he said.

U.S. Rep. Zach Wamp, R-Tenn., said the video industry's lack of a single, uniform rating system is a problem. The state bills are similar to an amendment he and Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., unsuccessfully tried to add to the 1999 Juvenile Justice bill.

"It's encouraging to me that the state would take action," Rep. Wamp said. He said parents need to know when videos and games contain graphic violence.

The Interactive Digital Software group and the ACLU say the bills fly in the face of the First Amendment's protection of free speech.

"Since Columbine, we've been flooded with a number of initiatives to try and ensure a tragedy like that never occurs again," Ms. Weinberg said. "Rating videos or penalizing merchandisers who rent or sell them is not going to solve the problem."

(Staff writer Mike O'Neal contributed to this report.)

GRAPHIC: Staff Photo by Juliette Coughlin A video game rating system has been in effect for about four years to inform consumers about game content. Game Force store manager Dan Barnett says he pays attention to the labels: Not only does he refuse to sell "Mature" and "Teen" rated games to young children, he won't let them try them out in the store.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: March 17, 2000

LEVEL 1 - 174 OF 461 STORIES

Copyright 2000 BPI Communications, Inc.
The Hollywood Reporter

March 08, 2000

LENGTH: 522 words

HEADLINE: In defense of rating system
Valenti defends MPAA guidelines against harsh media attack

BYLINE: Anita M. Busch

DATELINE: LAS VEGAS

BODY:

The MPAA ratings system came under relentless attack Tuesday morning in what was the most confrontational news conference ever held between MPAA president and CEO Jack Valenti and the entertainment media invited to his annual breakfast at ShoWest.

In his state-of-the-industry speech at ShoWest 2000 _ and for the first time since he began addressing this convention _ Valenti referred to the difficult time he had with the press, saying reporters were "hurling spears dipped in (poison)."

His breakfast meeting with the media _ in which he traditionally reveals highlights of his upcoming ShoWest speech _ ended up centering on whether the rating system should be revised. Some journalists asked whether there should be another rating _ possibly an A rating as Chicago Sun-Times film critic Roger Ebert suggests _ that would save the NC-17 for pornographic films.

Stanley Kubrick's "Eyes Wide Shut," which Warner Bros. trimmed to shrug off its NC-17 rating, took center stage in the debate about reassessing the ratings system. "Eyes Wide Shut" was edited and changed to garner an R rating from the MPAA's ratings board.

Valenti and newly named National Association of Theatre Owners president John Fithian vigorously defended the ratings system, which has been in use for 32 years.

Valenti reminded the group that the ratings system is voluntary. "When a director signs a contract with a studio to deliver a film with an R rating, no one makes him sign the contract," he said.

He noted that some people use the NC-17 as a marketing tool for publicity purposes.

"I've been told by numerous filmmakers that the screen is freer than it's ever been," Valenti said.

Many of Valenti and Fithian's comments in the early morning news conference mirrored their comments on the subject in their speeches before ShoWest attendees.

Fithian said that "with our freedom comes responsibility, a responsibility to respect and enforce a voluntary ratings system."

"The voluntary ratings system has served as our collective shield against government censorship for decades," Fithian said during his first speech to ShoWest attendees. "I'm a true believer in the First Amendment but will fight tooth and nail against any attempt by government to tell us what movies we can and cannot show in our theaters."

Both Valenti and Fithian disagreed with journalists who suggested changes in the ratings process. Fithian strongly opposed the idea of using the NC-17 for pornographic films only, saying that the current system "offers parents valuable information."

Fithian said that 76% of parents with kids under 13 find the current ratings system very useful or useful. Only 21% of the 2,300 interviewed for the MPAA's annual moviegoer survey found it not useful. "Some politicians would kill their own kids to have an approval rating that high," Valenti joked.

However, that did not stop journalists' criticism and questions in the early morning session. Valenti said that it's a niche argument coming from the film industry. "I have never received a letter from a parent that said 'I wish we had more NC-17 movies,' " he said.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: March 08, 2000

LEVEL 1 - 199 OF 461 STORIES

Copyright 2000 The Atlanta Constitution
The Atlanta Journal and Constitution

March 3, 2000, Friday, Home Edition

SECTION: Features; Pg. 3G

LENGTH: 370 words

HEADLINE: TV NEWS & NOTES: V-chip, rating not being widely used, FCC says

BYLINE: From staff and wire reports

SOURCE: CONSTITUTION

BODY:

The v-chip and the TV rating system are not dead, although they face some "tough hurdles," the chairman of President Clinton's V-Chip Task Force said Thursday at Emory University.

Gloria Tristani, a Federal Communications Commission member, said some networks --- she singled out ABC and NBC --- are not running enough public service announcements about the v-chip and the ratings system to alert parents. She also said very few newspapers run the listings (TV-G, TV-14, etc.) because of a perception that the public doesn't care.

"It's going to be a slow and gradual process, and we should not listen to the naysayers who are willing to pronounce it dead," said Tristani during a panel, "Confronting Media Violence."

The v-chip has been installed in all TV sets sold since Jan. 1. It allows parents --- with a special remote control --- to program their TVs to block certain programs, program types of entire channels. Although nearly all entertainment shows run the ratings, polls indicate few parents are using the ratings system.

--- Phil Kloer

After Kathie Lee

"Live With Regis & Kathie Lee" producers are considering using guest co-hosts for an extended period after Kathie Lee Gifford leaves, hoping a permanent co-host emerges. In the past, the producers have called on Carol Burnett, Suzanne Somers and Marilu Henner, among others, to sub for a vacationing Gifford. (Next week, Howie Mandel will sub for Philbin.)

Since Gifford's announcement Tuesday that she was leaving the show in July, Art Moore, executive in charge of "Live," says at least 15 agents have called to pitch their candidates for the job.

Appearing this week on "The View," Gifford offered more on her leaving "Live."

"They're lying about my kids," she said of the tabloids. "They have basically printed that Cody (age 10) is this monster of a human being. That I've made him into this monster. And that Miss Cassidy (who's 7), because she was in a fashion show with me . . . After that they said I was making her into the next JonBenet Ramsey. That was it for me."

Gifford said she's keeping her kids out of the spotlight for a while. "For the time being, I really am," she said.

--- From news services

LOAD-DATE: March 3, 2000

LEVEL 1 - 235 OF 461 STORIES

Copyright 2000 The Tennessean
The Tennessean

February 28, 2000, Monday CITY EDITION

SECTION: NEWS, Pg. 1A

LENGTH: 601 words

HEADLINE: VIDEOS;;
LAWMAKERS PUSH BILL TO KEEP VIOLENT VIDEO GAMES OUT OF MINORS' HANDS

BYLINE: DUREN CHEEK STAFF WRITER

BODY:

When a child blasts the head off a realistic human figure in a video game and then laughs about it, there's something wrong with that picture.

So say two Republican lawmakers who are fighting to keep violent videos out of the hands of minors.

Sen. Jeff Miller and Rep. Dwayne Bunch, both lawyers from Cleveland in southeast Tennessee, have filed legislation that could lead to the state setting up its own rating system for video and audio media and to make it a crime to sell violent material to minors.

"I don't believe we can seriously argue the fact that this virtual violence that we find on some of these video games dulls our sensitivity to the sanctity of life," Miller says.

"If you get used to chopping somebody's head off, or shooting their head off, and seeing that and laughing about it, it doesn't take a big leap to say that person is not well grounded, and they don't have a value system that distinguishes right from wrong."

The legislation states some video games "contain graphic and repeated scenes of violence, which include decapitation, bloodshed, dismemberment, killing and death by the use of lethal weapons or hand-to-hand combat."

It further states repeated exposure to graphic violence and participation in interactive video games may contribute to violent behavior of our youth and desensitizes them to acts of violence.

The Motion Picture Association of America and IDSA, an organization representing entertainment software companies, say the bills would lead to violation of the constitutional guarantee of free speech.

They claim video games are a form of expression and are protected by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

The U.S. Supreme Court has held that while obscenity is not protected by the First Amendment, virtually all other portrayals of behavior are, the

organizations say.

Miller and Bunch say the legislation was brought to them by Third District Congressman Zach Wamp of Chattanooga.

"They tried to put it on the juvenile justice bill last year in Congress, and it failed," Bunch said, so Wamp wants to make it a state issue.

The legislation calls for the establishment, use and enforcement of a "consistent and comprehensive system for labeling violent content in audio and visual media products."

Manufacturers, producers, sellers and other providers would submit labeling suggestions to the legislature's joint committee on Children and Youth and the Department of Children's Services.

People who sell or rent to a minor video games that contain scenes of graphic violence would be guilty of a Class B misdemeanor, punishable by up to six months in jail and/or a \$ 500 fine.

Second and subsequent offenses would be punishable by up to 11 months, 29 days in jail and/or a \$ 2,500 fine.

"The basic thing is we don't allow our minors into movies because of violent content," Miller says. "We say minors are not permitted to go there without being accompanied by an adult. It only makes sense that we do the same with audio."

Bunch, father of two children, said he wants to know what he is buying for them, what their grandparents are buying for them or what they are buying with their allowance.

"I know of no other way than a simple warning saying this contains decapitation or this contains realistic killing, things of that nature," he said.

"When you buy a loaf of bread, it tells you what's in a loaf of bread. If you buy a video, shouldn't you know what's in your video?"

Duren Cheek covers state government for The Tennessean. He can be reached at 726-4889 or e-mail Durencheekfaol.com

LOAD-DATE: March 1, 2000

LEVEL 1 - 278 OF 461 STORIES

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BILLBOARD

February 19, 2000

LENGTH: 686 words

HEADLINE: FTC May Demand Info On Mktg. Policies - Trade Commission's Velvet Glove Study Could Carry A Big Stick

BYLINE: BY BILL HOLLAND

BODY:

WASHINGTON, D.C-The head of the ongoing federal probe of the entertainment industry's impact on violence by children characterizes it as a "study" but warns that if the industries don't cooperate and provide information voluntarily, they could be subpoenaed.

The study by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) was initiated by President Clinton last June, following the Columbine High School shootings. The FTC is conducting the study; the DOJ role is limited to providing partial funding (Billboard, June 12, 1999).

Mary Engle, FTC assistant director, enforcement, Bureau of Consumer Protection, and the head of the staff study, downplays the agency's tough-guy role but says that that stance could change.

"Yes, it definitely is a study; it's not a law-enforcement investigation or anything like that," she says. The purpose is "to look at the self-regulatory systems that the industries already have in place-the movies, the music recordings, the video games-in terms of their having parental advisory or labeling rating systems, and whether their marketing to kids is rated as 'specific content' or 'mature' or 'R' or whatever it is."

A source at the Recording Industry Assn. of America (RIAA), however, says there are concerns within the industry about the "attitude" that the investigators are taking and characterizes the investigators as having "presumptions" in conversations with the source.

"There is some serious concern about the attitude of this investigation and the possible outcome," says the source. "There's an upfront presumption that 'music is bad for teenagers.' It's a mind-set that's hard to work with."

Engle says the study is not being undertaken "with the intention of saying, 'Well, you've done this, and now we're going to sue you for it.' We're not alleging that what they're doing is violating Federal Trade Commission acts or

anything like that."

As to the debate over existing ratings systems employed by the RIAA, the Motion Picture Assn. of America, and video game manufacturers, Engle says, "I think what we'll do is report on the kinds of suggestions that people are making. There are certainly some people who think that it would be better if there were one uniform system for all three [industries], and there are definitely good arguments on the other side of that too. So I think we will present the criticisms of the existing systems that are being made, but we're not going to be trying to be the arbiter."

As to early industry concerns that the FTC investigation could include subpoena power, Engle says the study's "not exactly like that, because it's not a law-enforcement investigation. But we are going to be asking them for documents and information on how their games or movies or records are marketed. That's the only way we can determine how they are marketed."

"There's some information that is publicly available, but a lot of it will be the company records. So we're going to ask for that, and we're asking for them to provide it voluntarily," she says. "We're not going to be issuing subpoenas right off the bat," she adds. "If, down the road, people refuse to provide us with any information, then [FTC] Chairman [Robert Pitovsky] has indicated we're willing to go for a compulsory process, but we're not there yet."

The RIAA source says, "The threat of compulsion treads on some serious First Amendment issues."

Engle also says the FTC has just begun to request documents from labels and has been held up because of a red-tape issue with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), which requires agencies conducting noncriminal investigations to comply with the Paperwork Reduction Act.

"The concern [at OMB] was that government agencies should not just go willy-nilly collecting information without some oversight," she says.

Engle says the FTC is planning to complete and deliver its report to the White House "probably" before summer. "It depends on the reaction of the companies-if they decide to fight, then it could be sooner," she says.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: February 22, 2000

LEVEL 1 - 314 OF 461 STORIES

Copyright 2000 PR Newswire Association, Inc.
PR Newswire

February 14, 2000, Monday

SECTION: fFINANCIAL NEWS

DISTRIBUTION: TO BUSINESS, TECHNOLOGY AND FAMILY EDITORS

LENGTH: 822 words

HEADLINE: Revolutionary TV Remote for Kids Offers Parents a Simple and Affordable Alternative to V-Chip;
Breakthrough Kid-Friendly Weemote(TM) Unveiled at Toy Fair 2000 Hailed By Parents, Kids

DATELINE: NEW YORK, Feb. 14

BODY:

Toy Fair 2000, Booth 4233 -- In response to parents' demands for an inexpensive and simple way to protect their children from violent and inappropriate television programs, Fobis Technologies has unveiled the weemote (TM), a television remote control for kids. This revolutionary remote device offers parents an easy-to-use and cost-effective alternative to the V-Chip.

The weemote puts the ability to filter and screen TV viewing into the hands of individual parents. It offers a no-nonsense way to protect children from disturbing content through easy programming of the remote, allowing access to only select channels. The device ensures surfing to only those stations with kid-friendly content.

Despite the July 1, 1999 ruling from the Federal Communications Commission mandating that manufacturers include a V-chip in half of their televisions this year with screens that are 13 inches or larger, the controversial V-Chip solution, according to industry groups, has few users today. The rating system has been labeled confusing to parents by both advocacy groups and President Clinton in his most recent State of the Union address who called the ratings approach "too numerous, diverse and confusing to be really useful to parents."

"Existing parental control devices have proved complicated and challenging for parents. The market is ripe for alternative products that are less complex and more user-friendly to filter television content," said Jay Srivatsa, senior analyst, at Dataquest, a San Jose, CA-based market research firm.

Unlike other parental control options available on the market today, the weemote is the first that is actually designed with kids in mind and used by kids. Other solutions see parents handing the complex 'adult' remote over to their children to use. The weemote solution is affordable and simple, offering concerned parents a way to monitor programming without upgrading their TV set or sifting through complicated instruction manuals.

The weemote offers parents individual choice, in contrast with V-Chip technology and its associated ratings system, which takes the selection of program rating outside of parents' hands. In addition, TV ratings are not mandatory for all networks to use. Because the weemote allows individual parents to use their own judgement and common sense, it has been embraced by parents and groups alike."

PR Newswire February 14, 2000, Monday

"It offers security in that the children will be watching what they should be watching even while I'm hanging laundry on the line," said Cindy Merritt, a Connecticut mother of three. "It alleviates arguments because there are only five choices so it is easier for my three kids to agree what to watch. Plus it is one of the simplest manuals I've ever seen for an electronic gadget.

"Every mother I know wants one right now. I sincerely expect it to be on every parent wish list, grandparent wish list, baby shower gift list and birthday wish list."

"I really love my weemote. It's too bad for mom and dad though, because they can't watch the news or any boring stuff they like!" said Eli, the 8-year-old son of the inventor, and the kid who inspired the whole concept.

Added the inventor's other son Kamal, 4: "I have all my buttons set for Nick Jr. so I can watch Little Bear."

"This started a short time ago when my wife and I spent weeks looking for a solution like the weemote. We soon discovered there were no solutions on the market that offered the same simple, affordable, no-nonsense approach to this important problem," said John Stephen, president and inventor of the weemote. "weemote delivers a fun and easy solution for parents and kids alike. Most importantly, the kids love to have their own remote control, making this parental control method actually useful and not frustrating."

Availability and Pricing

The suggested retail price is \$29.95 (U.S.). For inquiries about retail opportunities, please contact John Stephen at Fobis Technologies; e-mail jstephenffobis.com

About Fobis Technologies

Fobis Technologies Inc. designs and develops gadgets for real life. The founders, John Stephen, president, and Bruce Lundeen, vice-president, bring more than five decades of high-tech development and sales experience to Fobis. But most importantly, they are real parents who have kids who watch television. Founded in 1997 in Miami, Florida, with research and development headquartered in Fremont, CA, Fobis is poised to change the way children view television and alter the way networks schedule programming for young people.

SOURCE Fobis Technologies

CONTACT: Emily Derouin Communications, 416-494-9286, or emily-derouin@hotmail.com; or John Stephen of Fobis Technologies, 305-253-8387, or fax 305-574-7747, or infoffobis.com

URL: <http://www.prnewswire.com>

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: February 15, 2000

LEVEL 1 - 420 OF 461 STORIES

Copyright 2000 BPI Communications, Inc.
The Hollywood Reporter

February 01, 2000

LENGTH: 381 words

HEADLINE: Industry rips Clinton plan
Plea for uniform ratings system met by widespread dismay

BYLINE: Jill Carroll

BODY:

and Cynthia Littleton

President Clinton's State of the Union call for a uniform ratings system for all children's entertainment met with confusion and dismay by many in the entertainment industry.

Some thought that Clinton's comments were only to boost his wife's campaign for the U.S. Senate in New York. Hillary Rodham Clinton first raised the idea of overhauling the ratings system in a stump speech last month.

The head of the National Association of Broadcasters worries that a new system would confuse parents, the opposite of the result Clinton said he wants. What's more, the V-chip technology installed in new TV sets under the 1996 Telecommunications Act may not be easily adapted to a new coding system, hence the heated debate three years ago over the design of the current TV ratings system.

"With millions of V-chip equipped television sets in the marketplace, it would be unfortunate for parents and families to be asked to adapt to a new system of program guidelines," NAB president and CEO Edward Fritts said in a statement. Hilary Rosen, CEO of the Recording Industry Association of America, went on record last month criticizing the first lady's "one-size-fits-all" approach (HR 12/23).

In his farewell State of the Union address Thursday, Clinton praised the industry for rating TV programs, movies and Internet and video games but said he believes the ratings are too confusing. "I now ask the industry to accept the first lady's challenge to develop a single, voluntary rating system for all children's entertainment, one that is easier for parents to understand and enforce."

MPAA chief Jack Valenti said the president was ill-advised. "Parents like what we're doing, and I don't want to confuse them with something else. If anybody at the White House had done their homework, they wouldn't have done it," he said. "I think the president just got bad information from his staff because it will be impossible to have a uniform rating."

White House aides did give some network lobbyists advance notice that Clinton would raise the uniform ratings proposal in his address. The networks' Washington reps have been monitoring the FCC for official requests for rule-making or hearings on the matter since the first lady floated the idea last month.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: February 01, 2000

LEVEL 1 - 421 OF 461 STORIES

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The New York Post

February 1, 2000, Tuesday

SECTION: All Editions; Pg. 051

LENGTH: 370 words

HEADLINE: RATINGS DON'T MAKE GRADE WITH H'WOOD

BYLINE: STEFAN C. FRIEDMAN

BODY:

PRESIDENT Clinton's proposed new universal rating system for children's television, movies, music and video games is landing like a lead balloon among some Tinseltown types.

Hollywood ratings honcho and top lobbyist Jack Valenti came out swinging, blasting Clinton for failing to check with the entertainment industry before pitching the rating system during his State of the Union speech last Thursday.

In his address, Clinton called for the industry to embrace his wife's proposal for "a single, voluntary rating system for all children's entertainment, one that is easier for parents to understand and enforce." But Valenti, president of the Motion Picture Association of America, which assigns film ratings, said the plan "can't work."

Valenti noted there are 2,000 hours a day of TV, 1,000 new video games every year and 7,000 new music albums.

"To have one panel that's going to apply subjective judgments to this is simply an impossible achievement," he told the Washington Post.

Edward Fritts, president of the National Association of Broadcasters, said the proposal won't work with V-chips -- which allow parents to program which shows their kids can watch, based upon ratings.

"With millions of V-chip-equipped television sets in the marketplace, it would be unfortunate for parents and families to be asked to adapt to a new system of program guidelines," Fritts said in a statement.

Hillary Rodham Clinton came up with the idea of the voluntary system and petitioned her husband to pitch the idea.

Hillary Clinton's spokeswoman, Toby Graff, said yesterday that the first lady thinks "parents are having a hard time with the ratings system as it currently exists, and want to find a way to make it easier."

Graff said the first lady wants the industry to try to set some kind of universal standards.

A bill proposed last year -- called the Media Violence Rating Act of 1999 -- would force the entertainment industry to apply stricter standards, but the new proposal is not part of that bill.

"Mrs. Clinton feels this should be voluntary and should not have to be implemented by the federal government," said Graff.

GRAPHIC: MPAA head Jack Valenti with President Clinton in 1996.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: February 1, 2000

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The Hollywood Reporter

January 31, 2000

LENGTH: 535 words

HEADLINE: No industry applause for Clinton's ratings call
He seeks uniform system to protect kids
Jack Valenti response on page 36.

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BODY:

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President Clinton's State of the Union call for a uniform ratings system for all children's entertainment met with confusion and dismay by many in the entertainment industry.

Some thought that Clinton's comments were only to boost his wife's campaign for the U.S. Senate in New York. Hillary Rodham Clinton first raised the idea of overhauling the ratings system in a stump speech last month.

The head of the National Association of Broadcasters worries that a new system would confuse parents, the opposite of the result Clinton said he wants. What's more, the V-chip technology installed in new TV sets under the 1996 Telecommunications Act may not be easily adapted to a new coding system, hence the heated debate three years ago over the design of the current TV ratings system.

"With millions of V-chip equipped television sets in the marketplace, it would be unfortunate for parents and families to be asked to adapt to a new system of program guidelines," NAB president and CEO Edward Fritts said in a statement. Hilary Rosen, CEO of the Recording Industry Association of America, went on record last month criticizing the first lady's "one-size-fits-all" approach (HR 12/23).

In his farewell State of the Union address Thursday, Clinton praised the industry for rating TV programs, movies and Internet and video games but said he believes the ratings are too confusing. "I now ask the industry to accept the first lady's challenge to develop a single, voluntary rating system for all children's entertainment, one that is easier for parents to understand and enforce."

MPAA chief Jack Valenti said the president was ill-advised. "Parents like what we're doing, and I don't want to confuse them with something else. If anybody at the White House had done their homework, they wouldn't have done it," he said. "I think the president just got bad information from his staff because it will be impossible to have a uniform rating."

White House aides did give some network lobbyists advance notice that Clinton would raise the uniform ratings proposal in his address. The networks' Washington reps have been monitoring the FCC for official requests for rule-making or hearings on the matter since the first lady floated the idea last month.

While industry lobbyists were quick to react last week, representatives for the major TV networks declined to comment on the matter Friday _ in part because many key executives were either ensconced in storm-battered Atlanta for Sunday's Super Bowl game or returning from the NATPE convention in New Orleans.

Privately, some network executives were dismayed to see the content ratings issue stirred up again, as many felt the industry had done its part to implement a detailed system in 1996 and 1997. Moreover, many are skeptical about whether viewers truly pay much attention to the ratings, based on the low volume of feedback that flows into the standards and practices divisions.

"We never hear about these ratings from anyone that isn't part of the cottage industry" of Beltway-based media watchdog/advocacy groups, according to one senior network lobbyist.

Jill Carroll is a reporter for States News Service.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: January 31, 2000