

Protection of minors

How to regulate audiovisual content in the convergence era

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The NICAM model

- Agreement between Dutch government and audio-visual industry with the aim of protecting children from harmful content
- Government is ‘delegating’ responsibility to industry
- Industry set up and operate uniform system of content classification
- To inform consumers – parents – in a uniform and recognisable way



The NICAM model

- *Netherlands Institute for the Classification of Audiovisual Media*
- NICAM unites television, cinema, DVD, video, games and mobile phone operators
- Officially recognised by government in 2001



NICAM's objective

To inform, in a uniform way, consumers and especially parents of growing children on the possible harmfulness of audiovisual products: TV programmes, cinema films, DVDs and content available via mobile phones.



How does NICAM carry out its tasks?

- A system named ‘Kijkwijzer’ was developed
- Kijkwijzer means: *watch wiser* or *viewing guide*
- Kijkwijzer is an information system, and advice for parents, it is not censorship

The Kijkwijzer pictograms



Kijkwijzer is classification of

- Television programmes, cinema films, DVDs and mobile content
- Classification by a single system, developed by team of independent experts
- The system is an extensive questionnaire based on empirical scientific research (see www.nicam.cc for details of the system)

The classification process

- Responsibility of the suppliers: TV stations, film, DVD distributors, mobile operators
- Self coding
- By > 150 coders, trained, supported and controlled by NICAM
- Via secured on-line classification tool

Uniform pictogram information for consumers

- On TV screen, in TV guides, on Teletext, in EPGs
- On DVD, video packages
- On advertising for films
- On mobile phone screens

Extensive complaints procedure for consumers

- Anybody can report a complaint
- Independent Complaints Board
- Independent Appeals Committee
- Maximum fine € 135,000 per case

Further control measures

- NICAM check classifications (based on samples) and correct application of official rules
- Under supervision of the Broadcasting Authority
- Broadcasting Authority reports to government

NICAM's funding

2000/2003	industry 25%, government 75%
2004	industry 35%, government 65%
2005	industry 50%, government 50%

But: the industry is paying by far the most

There are two cost factors:

- NICAM institute paid by government and industry
- the internal cost for TV stations and distributors: all classification and information activities inside the member companies



Big impact on television

- Many programme titles to classify
- Two watersheds for TV: programmes rated age 12 permitted only after 20.00 hrs, programmes rated age 16 only after 22.00 hrs

Results so far

- Two surveys in June 2004:
 - over 90% of parents with growing children appreciate Kijkwijzer
 - over 70% say they are using the pictograms when it comes to making choices for their children
- April 2005 mobile phone operators joined system: 1st step



Political evaluation

- Government's official view: the Kijkwijzer system is a succes and has proved its right to exist
- In 2004 positive evaluation in parliament
- Government and parliament suggested a number of improvements to the system

Problems and pitfalls

- Not all parents use the pictograms
- However especially the lower educated do remarkably well
- Most distributors are in the system, but some are not
- Kijkwijzer is not a panacea
- It is an aid, an advisory tool for consumers and parents: no more, no less

But

- Most problems can be solved
- Full transparency is important
- Positive reception by parents has a stimulating effect
- As does international interest



International interest

- The PEGI game system is derived straight from Kijkwijzer
- Poland and Turkey wish to adopt the NICAM model
- The UK also has plans to develop a uniform system of classification



All in all, NICAM is

A form of conditional self-regulation

In which the AV industry takes responsibility
for its own products

Based on a number of agreements with the government

And the government keeps an eye on things.



NICAM's timetable

1997-1999	discussion between government - industry
1999	foundation of NICAM
2000	building of institute and system
2001	launch of system for TV
2002	application for TV, film, DVD
2004	political evaluation
2005	mobile phone operators join system
2006	study of consequences TV/Internet integration



So much for TV, Film, DVD and Mobiles...
and Games?

For the classification of games, in 2003 a specific
Europe-wide system was introduced: PEGI
(except Germany)

PEGI stands for *Pan-European Game Information*



PEGI for Games

PEGI is built and created by a platform of European experts

PEGI is a Pan-European system, modelled on the NICAM system

The owner is the Interactive Software Federation of Europe, ISFE; NICAM and the VSC are the administrator of PEGI



For more information

Surf to

www.nicam.cc

and

www.pegi.info

