Public Opinion and the BBFC Guidelines 2009

An independent report for the BBFC

June 2009

Goldstone Perl Research

Slesenger Research

BERNICE HARDIE
MARKET RESEARCH

Contents

Introduction

The BBFC's vision statement commits us to regulating moving image content 'in a manner which maintains the support and confidence of the industry and the public' and we understand that this involves responding to changes in public attitudes over time. We are acutely aware that the creative industries we regulate play an important role in the lives of both children and adults, and a significant role in the economy. We believe that robust and independent regulation, which meets the needs of the public in general, and parents in particular, is in the long term interests of both the industry and society.

That is why, for the third time in 10 years, we once again commissioned a major public consultation exercise to ensure that the criteria we use to classify material is in line with the expectations of the UK public. The consultation was conducted by a team of well respected and independent researchers, using a mix of quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The researchers have set out the results and their conclusions in this comprehensive report and their findings guided the redrafting of the new BBFC Classification Guidelines which are also published today.

DAVID COOKE, BBFC Director
23 June 2009
.

Executive Summary

The main finding of this research is that there is a great deal of public support for the BBFC and for the principle of classifying films. Whilst respondents do not always agree with *every* classification decision, on the whole the BBFC are thought to be doing a difficult job well. Respondents recognised that the film viewing public represent a diverse group and felt that it would be nigh on impossible to please 'all the people, all the time'. Even decisions that had attracted the most negative publicity and criticism received more public support than condemnation. Overall, the BBFC are felt to be classifying films in line with public opinion:

o On 99% of recent film and DVD viewing occasions, there was agreement with the BBFC classification of films and DVDs seen.

o Even among BBFC website visitors - who are heavier film viewers and, as a result, more knowledgeable and opinionated in their views on films - there was agreement with BBFC classifications on 91% of film and DVD viewing occasions.

o On 90% of recent video game playing occasions, there was agreement with the BBFC classification of video games played or purchased

o Respondents who disagreed with a classification of a film or DVD they had seen recently were always in the minority. This minority was usually very small (10% or less in most cases) and even the classification which attracted the most criticism (The Dark Knight) was actually supported by 69% of those who had seen the work (30% thought it too low, 1% too high).

There was also strong support for the principle that adults should be free to choose their own entertainment, within the law, and the concept of censorship was therefore rejected. The classification, combined with consumer advice was thought to be helpful, enabling a viewer to make a more informed decision about film selection.

80% of film viewers find the BBFC Consumer Advice provided on DVD packs to be useful and parents of primary school aged kids are the most appreciative of this information with 85% rating it as useful. The concept of the Parents BBFC website and the Extended

Consumer Advice it features was of interest to those interviewed in the focus groups who thought that it would be useful to have additional information about the classification decision and issues. Whilst there is widespread appreciation of the Parents BBFC website with 85% of website visitors finding this information useful, only a minority of the potential key target audience (10% of parents) are aware of this advice service.

The classifications categories were well understood overall although 'Uc' was not widely recognised or when explained, desired. There is still some misunderstanding about '12A', especially amongst those who do not have children at this age group. However, 74% of the sample understand that this classification means that content is not generally suitable for under 12s.

Parents of younger children recognise that they are mostly in control of film viewing and selection but feel that as independence grows, film classification becomes increasingly important. Two concerns dominated the focus group discussions; that children mature and develop very differently and that adolescents / young teenagers represent a very vulnerable group. These concerns may underpin the finding that whilst over three quarters of recent film viewers 'always' or 'usually' agree with '12A' or '15' classification, this is lower than for the other categories. Although parents accept that young teenagers often enjoy scary films, there is a concern that very frequent or sustained tension or horror may be unpalatable for this age group.

Respondents in the focus groups were asked what the BBFC should look at when classifying film and it was interesting to see how closely these answers correlated with the Guidelines' key classification areas. Upon further discussion and analysis, the Guidelines were thought to mirror public attitudes on the traditional areas – language, violence, sex, drugs and imitable technique. Recommendations about tightening the link between the public and examiner response revolved around issues of execution, for example language and how best to express the ideas. Overall, the Guidelines were thought to be reflective of public attitudes.

Whilst the Guidelines currently include issues such as tone and racism / bigotry, respondents felt that these areas needed to be flagged and discussed in a more overt way. The subtleties of tone could transcend more traditional classification areas such as violence

or horror and, given its potential impact on the viewing experience, was thought to demand a separate heading.

Likewise the Guidelines needed to acknowledge that violence was not always mitigated by fantasy and that realism within fantasy could be a problem for a younger audience. Highlighting the differences between visual and verbal references was thought to be another important area and something that the Guidelines needed to acknowledge. A sexual or sadistic dimension to violence was thought to increase its impact and also needed to be taken into account when classifying film.

Respondents were adept at highlighting the key classification issues and discussing their concerns, however they also recognised the importance of both context and frequency. The use of the very strongest language at '15' was a concern and the word 'cunt' provoked an almost visceral response, with many arguing that it was unacceptable at any category. However, respondents understood that much depended on context and frequency and a 'throw away', non-directional, one off use of the word was thought to be acceptable at '15'. Likewise there was an acceptance of clear images of real sex at '18' in non-porn works, provided that they were justified by context.

Smoking was never spontaneously raised as a classification issue and when prompted, there was no support for raising classifications on this basis.

Many respondents talked about the occasional dissonance in mood and tone between a trailer and feature film and how seeing a trailer for a horror film before a romance – even at the same classification – could be both unexpected and unwanted. There was a great deal of support for making more cautious decisions on adverts and trailers, but a willingness to accept potentially more shocking content (within limits) in charity or public information adverts where the message needed to create impact and cut through.

Video games were also covered by the research. 73% of Gamers agreed with the BBFC classification of games played recently and of those who disagree, the main complaint - by a margin of four to one - was that the classification was too high rather than too low.

The researchers

Bernice Hardie is an independent Market Research Consultant with over 25 years experience of designing and implementing quantitative communications evaluation and policy research.

Bernice specialised in marketing and market research as part of her honours degree in Management Sciences at Aston Business School, and worked for the British Steel Corporation before starting her research career at the then Unilever owned Research International.

While at Research International, Bernice worked across a range of consumer, b2b and international markets before becoming Director of the Advertising and Media Group, where she was responsible for developing the agency's proprietary advertising pre-testing service, as well as bespoke international tracking programmes for clients such as Sony, Kodak and Heinz.

Bernice founded her own market research consultancy in 1993 to allow her to work more closely with clients across a broader range of business issues.

Bernice is a Full Member of the Market Research Society and one of the founding members of the MRS's Independent Consultants Group.

Nicky Goldstone is an independent qualitative market researcher with over 20 qualitative years' research experience.

After a degree from Manchester University in Social Sciences, Nicky began her market research career as a Graduate Trainee at The Harris Research Centre specialising in social and political research. Nicky then joined the UK's leading qualitative agency The Research Business to develop her understanding of qualitative consumer research.

During her last five years at The Research Business, Nicky had particular responsibility for children, NPD and brand development research.

She established Goldstone Perl Research in 1993. The company's philosophy is to offer high quality qualitative research, working in partnership with a select number of blue chip clients. Current clients include Nickelodeon, LEGO, Hit Entertainment, e – skills, Action Aid and Boots the Chemist.

Deborah Slesenger has worked in qualitative research for more than 20 years, most of which as an independent market researcher. Deborah was a Science teacher before joining The Research Business as a Graduate Trainee specialising in Youth research and gaining wide experience in qualitative consumer research. Deborah then joined Context Research where she focussed on social and medical research.

Deborah established Slesenger Research in 2000 and has worked extensively for clients within Government, Media, Cosmetics, Pharmaceuticals and Retail.

Methodology and Sample Characteristics

Qualitative Methodology

The main aim of the qualitative research was to review the current guidelines, explore the key classification issues, and to suggest how the Guidelines could be revised.

One of the challenges of the research was that some members of the public were not as close to the issues as others. They may not even have been aware that there is consistent thinking or Guidelines behind the classifications or may not have even the most basic understanding of the differences between the classifications themselves. Traditionally those who have the most to say about the Guidelines are parents who are often very grateful users. Even those – specifically younger people and empty nesters – who claim not to use film classification themselves recognise that it has an important role to play.

Taking the public as a whole, some had more to say about film classification than others and some found themselves thinking seriously about classification perhaps for the first time.

The BBFC also highlighted the problems associated with classifying South Asian films. The broader cultural context for violence in family films in particular needed to be understood and it was important that the BBFC understood the concerns and attitudes of this ethnic group and also understood how the broader sample viewed Bollywood films as well.

The research approach needed to take account of the **breadth** of information required – looking at key issues across the classifications themselves. In addition to this, some of the question areas highlighted by the BBFC demanded a more **in**-**depth** understanding and approach. In order to cover all the issues across the sample, it was decided that each group would be an 'expert' in one of the key areas outlined as follows:

- Young children   'Uc' /'U'/ 'PG' issues
- Drugs   Illegal / anti-social behaviour/ accessibility / positive messages
- Sex   nudity / implied / titillation / real sex

- Violence   imitable / visual versus psychological / real versus fantasy / sadism / censorship
- Tone   psychological horror versus visual / tension / threat
- Language   bleeping / gestures / multiple uses / very strong
- Consumer Advice   specific terms / language
- Trailers   impact / classification issues
- Bigotry   racism /homophobia/ sexism
- Games   same or different classification to film
- Bollywood   audience expectations versus common standards

Respondents were all pre-placed with films and / or games prior to the focus group. This exercise enabled participants to think about the issues before the research and also enabled them to put question areas into some sort of context. Each focus group was pre-placed with up to six hours of stimulus material. (See Appendix 4 for a full list).

All respondents filled in a pre group questionnaire, commenting on classifications in general, eliciting thoughts about classification areas, appropriateness of decisions, usage of classifications and so on. In addition, they were asked to comment on the classification and consumer advice of the stimulus material as well.

Twenty six group discussions were conducted in total. These were split according to:

- Lifestage

- Age of children

- Socio - economic class

- Region

- Ethnicity

All respondents were interested in films and DVDs and were watching at home or at the cinema. Most respondents were parents of gamers or gamers themselves.

Each group discussion lasted for two hours and comprised eight – nine respondents.

A decision was made to conduct a pilot stage of research before the main fieldwork period in order to allow the team:

- To check the group timings and discussion area
- To see whether the stimulus material was working in the most effective way
- To enable the team to make changes to the sample

In addition, four group discussions were conducted at the end of the main project. Again, this offered the research team the opportunity to change the discussion areas or to focus on specific questions still unanswered by the main body of the groups.

Qualitative Methodology: particular considerations

The team's understanding about how best to research games' classification evolved during the research process. Whilst games had been pre-placed along with films/TV programmes in the main qualitative study, findings proved to be rather inconsistent and this approach had clearly not been effective. To explore consumer attitudes to games classification, a number of games were pre-placed with respondents, along with films (see Appendix 4), to play either on their own and/or with family members prior to attending a group discussion.

In the majority of instances, respondents struggled with this games task. As non-gamers they did not have the necessary skills to play the games. Even getting passed the first level was an onerous task. As a result, few had experienced playing a game in the way that their children do. Consequently, discussing issues relevant to the guidelines was more difficult than we had expected.

Respondents however, were able to discuss and articulate their general opinions about games, the decision process involved in games purchase as well as observations of their child's play and involvement with games.

After the main study of qualitative and quantitative research had been completed, to further

our understanding of games, a separate smaller qualitative project was undertaken with a revised methodology and research approach.

The aim of this project was to ensure respondents had an opportunity to play and experience games, so that they were equipped to give an informed view of games classification and the role of consumer advice.

To achieve this, respondents were pre-placed with a pre-recorded DVD of games clips illustrating various aspects of the games content and differing levels of play. Clips included a range of games covering all classifications from 'U' through to '18' (see Appendix 4). Having viewed the clips, respondents completed a short questionnaire focussing on the classification of each game, its relevance and whether or not they agreed with the classification given.

As part of the group discussion respondents had the opportunity to play games and were aided with this by games examiners who helped with the necessary manual skills and directed them through parts of the game. As a result, respondents were able to explore a greater breadth of material than they would otherwise have achieved on their own and experienced games more in the way players do.

The pre-group task together with the games play in the groups was effective stimulus prompting a more informed discussion about BBFC Guidelines and game classification.

Qualitative Research Sample

Group No	Profile	Class	Area
1	Men with children 3 – 10	BC1	Wales
2	Women with children 3 – 10	BC1	Manchester
3	Women with children 3 – 10	C2D	Midlands
4	Men with children 5 – 12	C2D	South (Pilot)
5	women with children 5 – 12	BC1	South (Pilot)
6	Women with children 5 – 12	BC1	Scotland
7	Women with children 5 – 12	BC1	Wales
8	Men with children 5 – 12	C2D	South

9	Men with children 5 – 12	C2D	South
10	Women with children 9 – 16	C2D	South (Pilot)
11	Men with children 9 – 16	BC1	South (Pilot)
12	Mixed sex, empty nesters	C2D	Midlands
13	Women with children 9 – 16	BC1	Scotland
14	Men with children 9 – 16	C2D	Wales
15	Men with children 9 – 16	BC1	South
16	Men with children 12 – 18	C2D	Manchester
17	Mixed – empty nesters	BC1	South
18	Men aged 18 – 30	C2D	Scotland
19	Women aged 18 – 30	BC1	Manchester
20	Women with children 12 – 18	BC1	Midlands
21	Women with children 8 – 16	BC1C2	Midlands
	South Asian		(Bollywood)
22	Men with children 8 – 16	BC1C2	Midlands
	South Asian		(Bollywood)
23	Men and women with children		
	10 – 16, non gaming	BC1	South (Games)
24	Men with children		
	10 – 16, non gaming	BC1	Midlands(Games)
25	Women with children		
	10 – 16, non gaming	C2D	South (Games)
26	Gamers aged 18 – 35	C2D	Midlands(Games)

Whilst the groups were homogenous in terms of class and lifestage, respondents did not respond to the Guidelines in the same way. Broadly speaking, those interviewed fell into three typologies and this more than anything else, underpinned their responses to the Guidelines.

The Analysts were those who thought about each film and worked hard to understand the issues. Significantly, this group were able to separate the ideas from their expression and did not become encumbered by semantics. They were able to understand the thinking

behind the Guidelines. Typically articulate, media literate and often middle class, these respondents used their broader knowledge of film to help provide context for the issues.

The Acceptors looked for broad principles and ideas when reviewing the Guidelines and did not over analyse language or meaning. They were more trusting and less cynical respondents overall and were able to separate their own feelings from what they thought the public would think. These respondents were more likely to be BC1, women with children.

The third group, **the Reactors**, struggled with the research task as they reacted to specific words and terms in the Guidelines and could not move on from this response to an assessment of the outcomes the words and terms would produce in terms of classification decisions. Considerable moderator input was required to help them to understand the issues. These respondents were typically, but not always, fathers of younger children and C2D.

> "I don't really understand the differences between these words."

> "The sentence was too long. Certain words take over like suicide and hanging."

> "I was just so shocked when I read that word that I didn't read the rest of the sentence."

Quantitative Methodology

The quantitative phase of this project comprised over 8700 interviews across the UK, gathering views from a representatively diverse sample of adults.

While targeting the general public was paramount in this phase of the project, it was also necessary to take into account that significant proportions of the general public (i.e. those who do not go to the cinema/watch DVDs or play video games) would be unable to express informed views on the effectiveness of the BBFC and its guidelines.

To overcome this potential misrepresentation, the survey methodology not only gathered

the views of the general public, but also specifically targeted key sub-groups that were more likely to have experience of the guidelines themselves. ie those who watch films and DVDs; those who play BBFC classified video games; those who may even have referred to the guidelines in the past.

In order to provide the ideal mix of '*general public*' and '*knowledgeable audience*' opinion on BBFC classifications, the following samples were targeted:

- a nationally representative sample of the UK adult population
- a national sample of recent viewers of films/DVDs ie those familiar with film/DVD classifications
- a sample of visitors to the BBFC website i.e. those more likely to be interested in and familiar with the BBFC guidelines. This website sample also provided the most effective means of recruiting recent video game players.

Target Audience	THE GENERAL PUBLIC	RECENT FILM VIEWERS	BBFC WEBSITE VISITORS (RECENT GAME PLAYERS)
Survey Tool	In-home CAPI omnibus	In-home survey	On-line survey
Recruitment criteria	Adults aged 16+, nationally representative of the UK population	Adults aged 16+ who have watched a recently released film/DVD in past four weeks	Visitors (aged 16+) to BBFC websites, during a three month consultation period
Sample controls	Random location recruitment, with quotas on age, gender within working status and region (see appendix for further details)	Nationally representative quotas set by region (142 sampling points), with guideline quotas on age, gender, social class and ethnicity	Self-selecting sample
Guidelines Evaluation Basis (See appendix 3 for full q'aire)	Extent and frequency of disagreement with film classifications in general and with specific classification levels usually watched.	Extent and frequency of disagreement with film classifications in general and with specific classification levels usually watched PLUS Disagreement with specified list of recently released films seen/games played in the past four weeks	
Fieldwork	Interviews conducted by GfK between January 12TH and 21st 2009	Interviews conducted by the New Fieldwork Company between January 5th and 25th 2009	Market Cells scripted survey on BBFC website, ran from January 15th to April 15th 2009

The general public sample was accessed as part of a regular weekly national omnibus run by GfK. Eleven questions were inserted as part of the computer assisted personal interviews conducted in randomly selected homes within specified enumeration districts.

The film viewers sample was recruited door to door, and interviewed in-home, using a pen and paper questionnaire that averaged 15 - 20 minutes for completion.

Eligibility for the film viewers sample was based on having watched at least one of a selected list of recently released films and DVDs in the past four weeks (see appendix 1a for full list of films and DVDs covered).

The web survey ran as a pop-up link on all BBFC website pages for a three month period. Visitors to the site were invited to participate in the survey provided that they were aged 16+. The survey took approximately 10-15 minutes to complete, depending on whether or not the respondent was a video game player/purchaser.

Both the omnibus and film viewer surveys were conducted by IQCS (Interviewer Quality Control Scheme) trained interviewers.

A total number of 8,796 interviews were completed across the three key audiences targeted.

The largest sample achieved was among BBFC website visitors – a total of 4,590 respondents, with 3,685 of these respondents also qualifying as video games players/purchasers/renters ('Gamers').

3,102 interviews were conducted with the general public and 1,104 interviews with adults aged 16+ who had watched at least one of a list of recently released films and DVDs in the past four weeks.

The survey interview focused on measuring the following factors, as indicators of the effectiveness of the BBFC guidelines:

- frequency of disagreement with classifications in general and for specific classification categories usually viewed
- opinion on overall effectiveness of the BBFC in providing reliable film classifications and advice for consumers
- awareness and usefulness of consumer advice provided by the BBFC
- whether respondent had ever visited the BBFC website or made a complaint to the BBFC.

The 'film viewers' and web surveys also focused on identifying the effectiveness of the guidelines in practice, by measuring:

- the extent of disagreement with specific classifications (from a list of recently released films and DVDs watched in the past four weeks – see appendix 1a for details).
- whether specific classifications disagreed with by viewers, were considered to be too high or too low.

In addition, the web survey included similar questions for video game classifications, for those respondents who had either purchased/hired/played or watched others playing recently released video games (see appendix 1b for the list of games assessed).

Quantitative Methodology: particular considerations

The primary objective of this phase of the project was to provide reliable and robust data that clearly indicates whether or not the BBFC guidelines are effective in their role i.e. resulting in classifications that reflect public opinion on age appropriate viewing.

At the outset of this project, the intention was to gather views on the written guidelines document from all respondents.

It became clear however, following the initial qualitative phases of research, that reviewing the guidelines within a structured, interviewer administered or self-completion questionnaire would prove to be, at best difficult, and at worse misleading.

While most members of the general public are familiar with the BBFC and its classifications, few are aware of, or interested in paying detailed attention to, the written guidelines behind these classifications.

When evaluating the guidelines document at the qualitative phase of this research project, there was a need to repeatedly clarify the guidelines for respondents, in order to obtain genuine and considered responses.

It was evident that:

- some respondents found the necessarily detailed wording and nuances of the written guidelines difficult to understand without explanation

- the perceived appropriateness of guideline recommendations could not be determined without a clear film context or specific scene example as a basis for deciding age relevance

- there was a reflex tendency, among parents of younger children in particular, to take offence to and reject <u>any</u> aspect of the guidelines that referred to 'sex' or 'violence', without reading the detail of the reference. This 'reflex' response often conflicted with the respondent's assessment of the suitability of content they had actually viewed.

As the quality and reliability of responses around the guidelines is of key importance, a number of pilot interviews were undertaken to establish if and how the guidelines might best be evaluated in the quantitative phase of this project.

A demographically diverse range of respondents were recruited to a central hall location and the survey questionnaire, including a section where respondents were asked to read and comment on the written guidelines, was administered under observation.

The conclusion from the pilot was that forced exposure to the written guidelines in a structured quantitative interview would not yield reliable feedback.

Respondents struggled to understand the guidelines' relevance and meaning without a film context or detailed explanation (e.g. elements of the guidelines were rejected as inappropriate when read out of context, but then when reviewed within a film context, were considered to be totally acceptable).

For this reason, it was concluded that the quantitative phase of the project should not include forced exposure to the written guidelines.

Therefore a number of alternative questions were developed as a basis for evaluating the effectiveness of the guidelines in practice. These questions focused on viewers' opinions on the classification of recently viewed films i.e. on levels of satisfaction with the output of the guidelines.

The data produced from these questions allowed for calculation of the number of viewing occasions for recently released films and DVDs, and from this, the proportion of viewing occasions that resulted in respondents finding classifications to be inappropriate i.e. how often the BBFC gets classifications 'right' or 'wrong' in relation to public opinion. This measure proved to be a far more useful and relevant basis for evaluating the effectiveness of the guidelines than any feedback based on an isolated critique of the written guideline content itself.

Quantitative Research Sample Characteristics

The demographic profile and film viewing habits of the three target samples is outlined below.

Chart 1

Profile Sample Audiences

General Population — Recent Film Viewers — BBFC Web Visitors*

General Population:
- Gender: 51% female, 49% male
- Age: 16-24: 15, 25-34: 16, 35-44: 19, 45+: 50
- Parental status: 30% have kids
- Social class: AB: 20, C1C2: 52, DE: 28

Recent Film Viewers:
- Gender: 50% female, 50% male
- Age: 16-24: 26, 25-34: 24, 35-44: 24, 45+: 26
- Parental status: 49% have kids
- Social class: AB: 20, C1C2: 51, DE: 30

BBFC Web Visitors*:
- Gender: 23% female, 77% male (Games = 78% male)
- Age: 16-24: 40 (40%), 25-34: 26 (24%), 35-44: 23 (23%), 45+: 12 (13%) (Games =)
- Parental status: 24% have kids (Games = 24%)
- Social class: AB: 34 (34%), C1C2: 24 (25%), DE: 42 (42%) (Games =)

* Figures in brackets = Gamers sample

The 'recent film viewers' sample profile reflects the fact that fieldwork took place in January, enabling the sample to include significant numbers of young families i.e. the main audience for some of the big films released over the preceding four week Christmas period. Films and DVDs released over this period did, however, include a broad range of genres and covered the main range of classification categories from 'U' to '18'.

The general public sample is nationally representative by gender and age group, and so includes a relatively high proportion of respondents aged 45+. This age group is less likely than average to be visiting the cinema/renting DVDs and came across in our results as less knowledgeable about or interested in classifications.

In contrast, the website visitors sample is biased toward younger, male respondents (which is typical of on-line audiences), and also those from lower social grades.

Chart 2

BBFC web visitors are renting DVDs at least once a fortnight, while over half of the general public rent DVDs three times a year or less often

Q: How often do you rent or buy DVDs
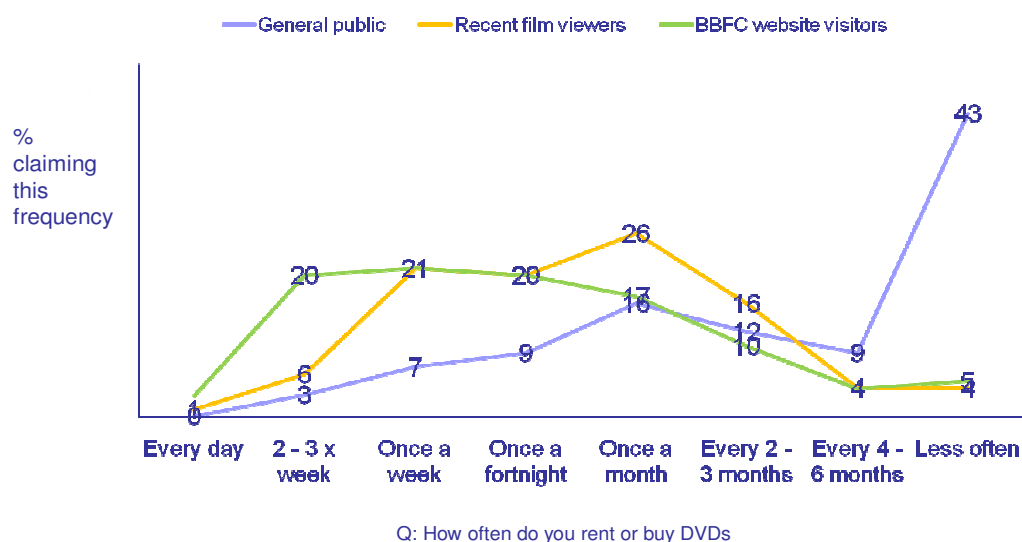
The website audience is the most avid in terms of DVD rental/purchase and cinema visiting, and as a result emerge as the most vociferous and opinionated on the subject of film classifications.

Data relating to the overall effectiveness of the BBFC and agreement with classifications in general is presented for all three samples in this report.

Specific data around agreement with the classification of individual films is based predominantly on feedback from the web sample, which provided the most statistically valid base of viewers for each film.

% claiming to ever check classifications of films/DVDs

Web visitors	79%
Film viewers	54%
General Public	55%

Those in the web visitors sample are the most likely to pay attention to film classifications and, as visitors to the BBFC website, potentially the most likely to be familiar with the Guidelines. As such the web sample represents a good (albeit potentially more critical) basis for evaluation of the appropriateness of these classifications.

Results

General Views

Attitudes to the BBFC

Respondents were pleasantly surprised to learn that films were classified according to agreed Guidelines and that these Guidelines were available to view on the BBFC website. The experience of reading the Guidelines in the group discussion led to a lively debate about to whom the guidelines were predominantly targeting. Whilst those interviewed felt that the Guidelines should be in line with public opinion, they also recognised that their main target was the BBFC Examiners and that the Guidelines' primary objective was to ensure that films were classified in a consistent way.

As previously discussed, some respondents struggled with the language and concepts of the Guidelines but the overall principles were thought to be in line with public opinion. Respondents also recognised the demands of discussing Guidelines without any context and found it helpful to refer to the films they had viewed prior to the group discussion.

> "Context is always going to be important and the frequency of things too." (Male, with children 12 – 18, BC1)

> "It's hard to discuss these ideas without a context. Really you have to say 'it depends' as it depends on so many other things." (Female, with children 5 - 15, BC1)

Likewise the film genre and positive or negative outcome of the plot had a role to play and could underpin the impact of the Guideline:

> "If there wasn't a happy ending. If it all comes good in the end, then it makes everything else more justified." (Male, with children 12 – 18, C2D)

> "I think that animation takes away from the reality of it. Children associate cartoons with not being real life which means they can get away with a bit more." (Male, with children 12 – 18, C2D)

Respondents recognised that the output of the Guidelines was the classification itself and this was a more familiar topic area.

Many were familiar with the classification certificate at the start of a film in the cinema and seeing the BBFC logo was almost a part of the viewing experience. Whilst awareness and understanding of the role of the BBFC was mixed, respondents were united in the opinion that the organisation had been going for a long time and was both independent and British.

Interestingly the BBFC was thought to be fallible and did not always get classification decisions right; however this was seen as an inevitable given the diversity of views on the subject and the credibility of the organisation was never questioned. Whilst respondents do not always agree with *every* classification decision, on the whole the BBFC were thought to be doing a difficult job well.

"They are pretty accurate and they are doing a good job." (Empty nester group, BC1)

"I think that it's a difficult job. Most people would struggle to decide what category to put these films in. I think that they get most of them right. Maybe one or two get through the net. (Woman, 18 – 30, no children, BC1)

"You only hear about them when they get it wrong." (Male, children 5 – 15, BC1)

"Obviously they will make mistakes, but it's the same in everything; everyone makes mistakes. With every film, people will have different views on it. You will never get everyone to agree on it. (Male, with children 12 – 18, C2D)

Generally yes, they are doing ok. There's an awful lot worse on TV even before the Watershed. (Woman, with children 12 – 15, BC1)

For the most part, those interviewed trusted film classification and parents in particular used film classification to help them to navigate through the myriad of decisions about a film's suitability for their child.   Overall, parents were concerned about the damage an age

inappropriate film could inflict on their child; leading to difficult questions about more mature themes, lasting anxieties and fears (that could lead to nightmares) and new and gratuitous bad language.

> "If I am buying it for me and my partner, I don't worry too much but if we are going to sit down as a family, I have to look at the certificate. There are some films out there that I wouldn't want my children watching." (Male, with children 12 – 18, C2D)

> "My lad is only 11 but he thinks he's 20. He wants to watch all sorts of things but I can say that he can't because of the classification. It's there for a reason." (Female, with children 12 – 18, BC1)

> "It just gives you an initial idea of what age group it is for. My son is 8 but he likes to see films that are for older as well. If there weren't any classifications, you wouldn't have a clue." (Female, with children 5 – 12, C2D)

Fathers were particularly sensitive to the embarrassment of watching sexual content or references with teenage offspring and used classifications and Consumer Advice to avoid this situation.

Adults choosing film for themselves also appreciated classifications and used the classifications in one of two ways; actively avoiding more violent films at '15' or '18' conversely, avoiding 'softer' films at 'PG' or '12' if they wanted to have a grittier, more adult viewing experience.

> "I think that it is important. If I see an '18', I know that it will have blood and guts or something like that. Oh God, I can't watch that!" (Woman, 18 – 30, no children, BC1)

Classifications are being referred to by the majority of recent film/DVD viewers interviewed in the quantitative research, particularly when watching with children.

Chart 3

Attention Paid to BBFC Classifications

Film/DVD Classifications

25% checked some

46% checked all films

29% did not check classifications / can't recall

Games Classifications

51% of 45+ year olds (i.e. parents check!)

18% checked some

28% checked all games

54% did not check classifications / can't recall

Q: Did you check the classification before deciding whether you/others should watch/ play them?
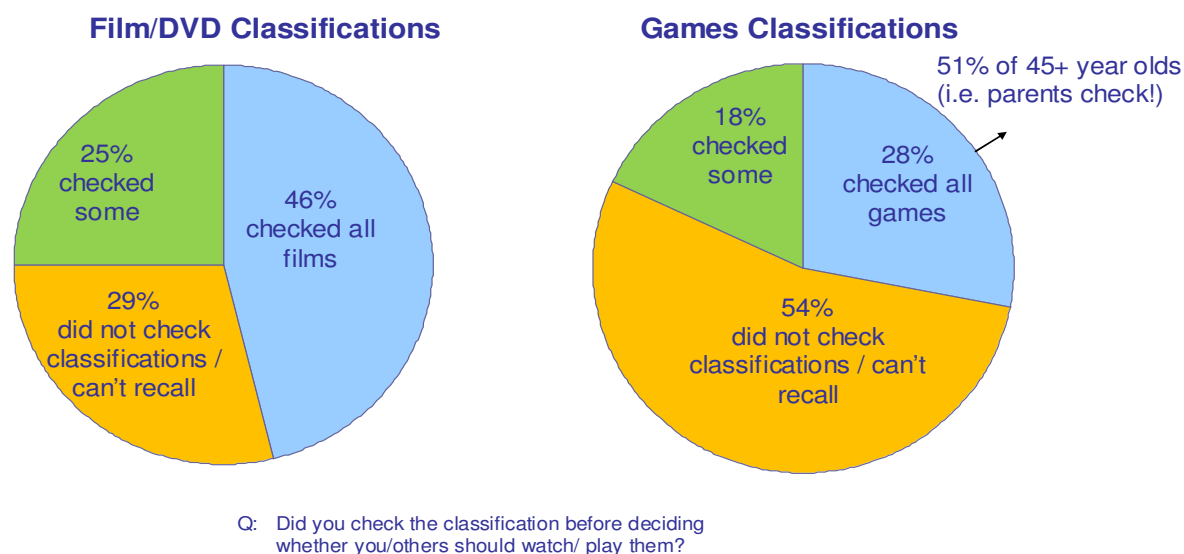
There is less claimed scrutiny of games classifications among players – even so, nearly half claim that they checked the classification of games played recently, and older respondents (i.e. parents) are much more likely to check games classifications.

Chart 4

The majority of all audiences consider the BBFC to be effective

82% rate as effective   62% rate as effective   86% rate as effective

Very effective   35   16   35

    46

Quite effective   47   51

    26

Unsure   13   6
Ineffective

Recent film viewers   **General Public**   **BBFC Website visitors**
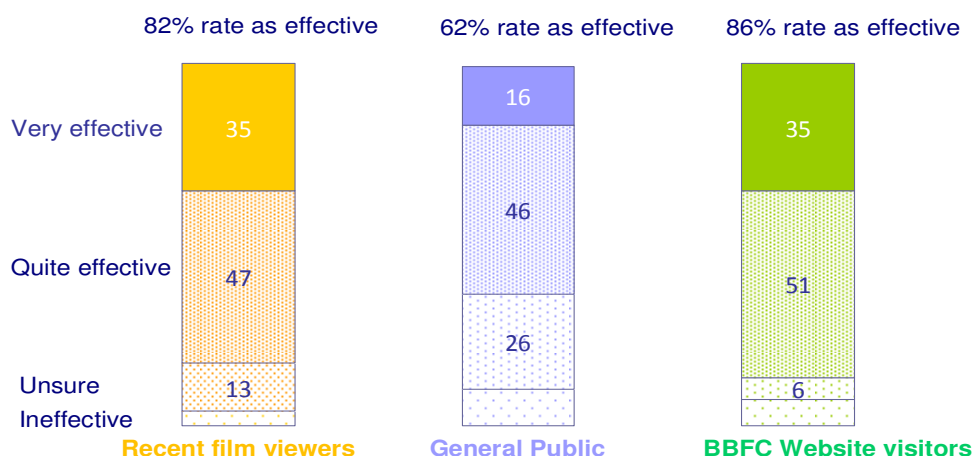
Q: Overall, how effective do you feel the BBFC is in its role of providing reliable film classifications and advice for consumers?

Despite the mixed levels of attention paid to classifications, there is widespread belief that the BBFC is effective in its role of providing reliable film classifications and advice. Most interestingly, it is the more knowledgeable sample of web visitors who are most appreciative of the BBFC's effectiveness (probably because, as visitors to the BBFC website, they are the most aware of all the information provided).

The general public are less knowledgeable about the overall effectiveness of the BBFC, and so feel less able to express either a positive or negative opinion.

Parents overall are more positive than other adults about the BBFC (76% of parents in the general public sample, rate the BBFC as effective). This is particularly true for those with children aged 6-11 (88% rate the BBFC as effective) – the age at which cinema going starts to become a more regular pass time.

When it comes to the specific area of overall agreement with film classifications in general,

responses reflect the extent of film viewing, attention paid to classifications and the types of films most viewed.

Chart 5

75%+ of audiences rarely, if ever, disagree with film classifications

Never disagree with classification

Occasionally disagree

Quite often/ Always disagree

68   24   6   **Recent film viewers**   8% disagree

38   44   13   **General Public**   18% disagree

6   69   23   **BBFC Website visitors**   25% disagree
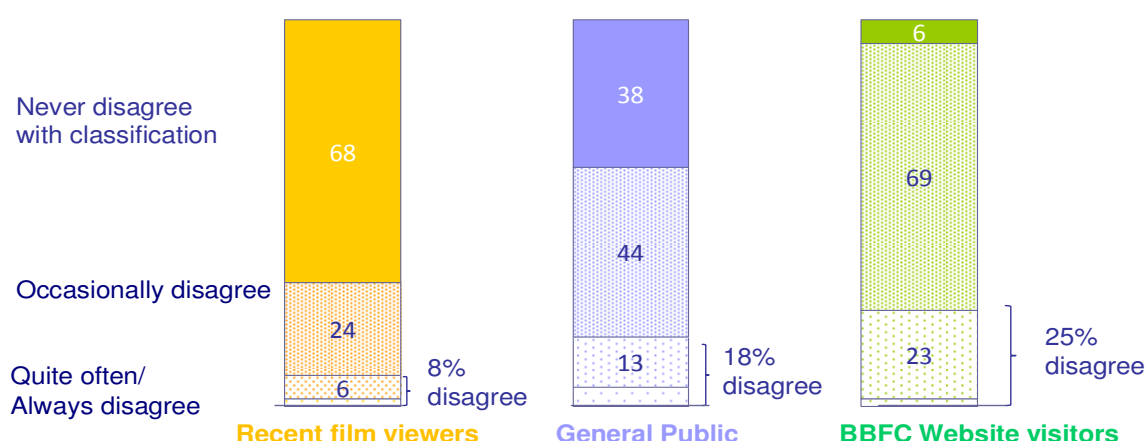
Q: How frequently have you disagreed with the classification a film has been given?

The recent film viewers sample (which includes more 'family film' viewers) are the most likely to agree with the classifications of films that they watch.

BBFC website visitors are, as might be expected, more avid film viewers, and claim to watch a wide range of classifications/film genres. As a result, this sample is more likely to express disagreement over classifications. Even among this more critical sample though, disagreement is likely to happen only occasionally.

29

Chart 6

Agreement levels appear to have improved since 2004

Never /Not very often disagree — 45

Quite often disagree — 47

Always/almost always disagree — 8%

Web Sample 2004

Never /Occasionally disagree — 75

Quite often disagree — 23

Always disagree — 2%

BBFC Website visitors 2009
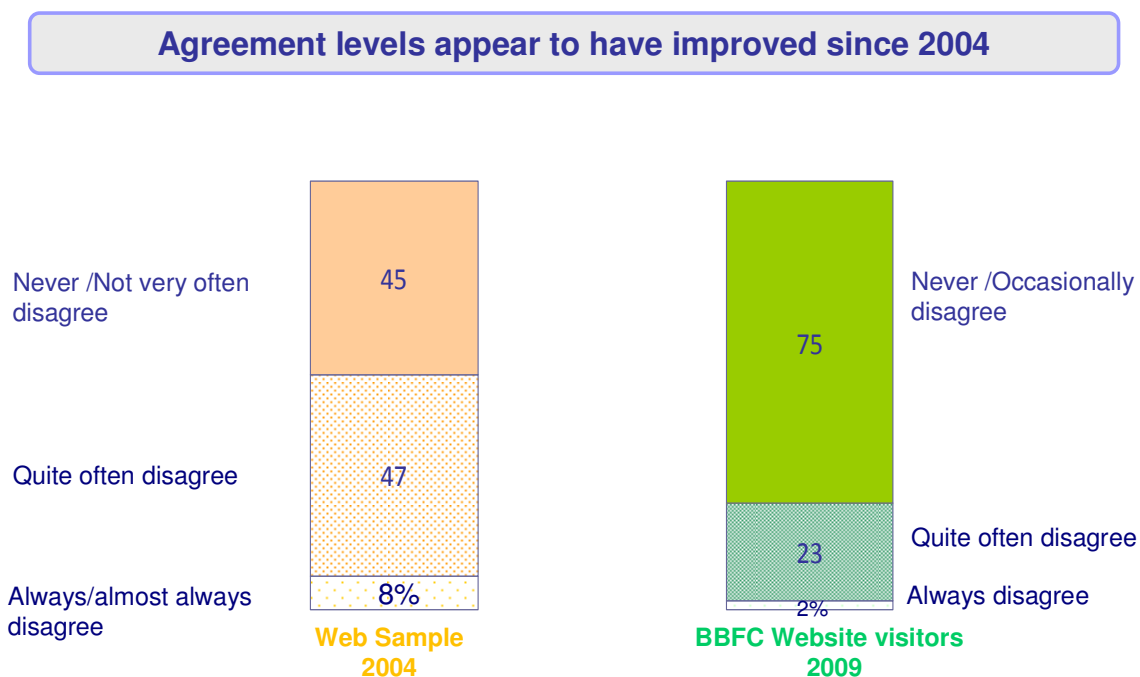
Q: How frequently have you disagreed with the classification a film has been given?

The current survey includes one question which was also asked in the previous Guidelines review research undertaken by the BBFC in 2004. Chart 6 shows the shift in agreement levels between 2004 and 2009.

While the data is showing huge improvements in agreement levels, this shift has to be treated with caution, as the response scales are slightly different (and therefore not strictly comparable). It is encouraging though, that frequent disagreement with classifications appears to have dropped from 8% in 2004 to 2% in 2009.

In addition to this overall level of agreement, it was considered important to evaluate the effectiveness of classifications within the context of specific films.

Recent film viewers and website visitors were asked whether or not they agreed with the classification of specific recently released films that they had seen in the past four weeks.

Summing all responses provided a total number of 'viewing occasions' figure, against which it was possible to calculate the proportion of film viewings that generate disagreement with classifications.

Chart 7

Classifications are agreed with in 90%+ of film viewing occasions

Disagreement
on 1%
of occasions

Disagreement
on 9%
of occasions

Classifications agreed
with for
99%
of film viewing
occasions

Classifications agreed
with for
91%
of film viewing
occasions

Recent film / DVD viewers
(3900 film viewing occasions)

BBFC website visitors
(24, 894 film viewing occasions)
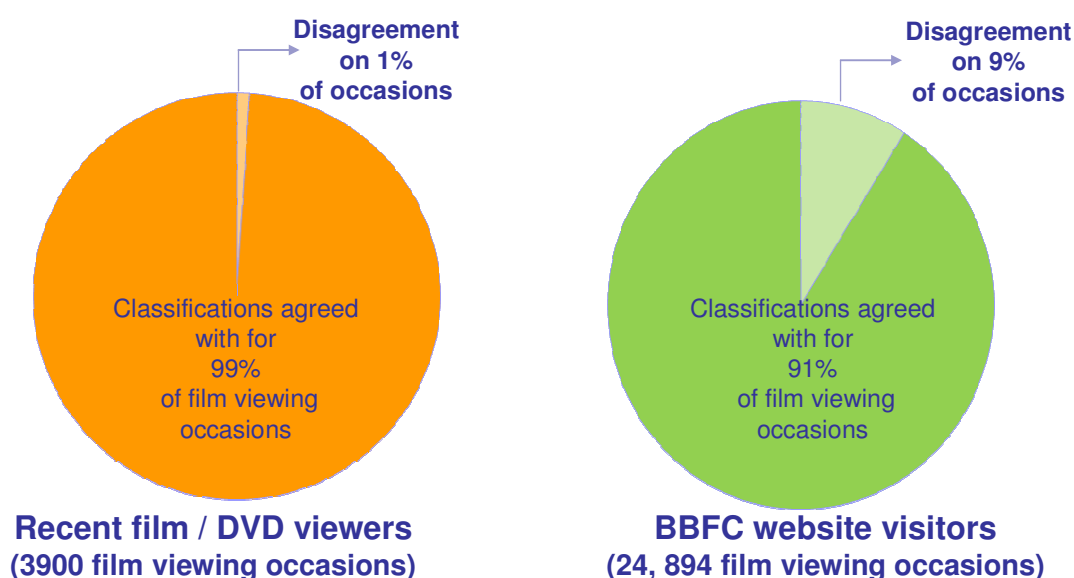
Q: Overall, did you agree with the classification of the films and
DVDs that you have seen in the past four weeks?

This analysis shows that on the vast majority of film viewing occasions, the BBFC is considered to get classifications right, ie in line with public opinion.

As most of the film viewing occasions that take place are obviously weighted toward blockbusters, it could be argued that opinions on these films biases this measure of BBFC effectiveness. However, calculation of the average of all the agreement levels reported for individual films (in other words, where the agreement level of a film watched by 70 people is given equal weight to the agreement level for a film watched by over a thousand people) shows that there is still an overall average agreement rate of 93%.

Even for the recent films that prompted complaints and media attention regarding their classification, it is clear that the majority of those interviewed who 'recently viewed' these films, had no issue with their classification.

Those who disagreed were always in the minority, usually a small minority: Only 9 out of the 115 films and DVDs assessed prompted disagreement levels of 15% or higher among recent viewers.

Overall, there were equal proportions of viewing occasions (4.5 % of the 24,894 film viewings recorded) when classifications were considered to be too high, as there were when classifications were considered to be too low.

Understanding and awareness of categories, especially Uc and 12A

Each and every group in the qualitative research was able to identify the main classification categories – 'U', 'PG', '12A'/'12', '15' and '18'.

There was limited awareness of 'Uc' even amongst parents of pre school aged children. When this category was explained, many were surprised how there could be a lower classification than 'U'. 'U' was understood as 'suitable for all' and was linked with films where nothing could upset or shock even the most sensitive viewer. The classification 'Uc' therefore added very little as it was hard to envisage a film that was more 'safe' than a 'U'.

'PG' was described as being a step up from a 'U' where the BBFC were warning parents to expect something that could potentially upset a young or sensitive viewer. Respondents knew that they had to accept responsibility too and that 'PG' referred to 'parental guidance':

> "Parental guidance. You can watch it if your parents say it's alright." (Female, 18 – 30, no children, BC1)

> "It will have something in it, like Harry Potter's 'bloody hell'." (Female, with children 5 – 12, BC1)

Likewise there was good understanding of the classifications '15' and '18' and it was clear that parents' attitudes had become more relaxed and that these classifications were also self-explanatory, leaving little room for interpretation.

> "At 15 they have learnt pretty much all they need to know." (Male, with children 12 – 18, BC1)

> "At 15 they are almost adults really." (Female, with children 12 - 15, BC1)

Whilst there was little (claimed) spontaneous awareness of 'R18', most respondents were aware of porn and that there was a category above '18' that denoted more sexually explicit works.

Most of the discussions revolved around '12A', a relatively new category for the BBFC and the public. Attitudes were mixed and comprehension also varied with some sections of the public remaining rather confused as to what a '12A' classification really meant. Interestingly '12A' 'users' – mothers with children aged 10 – 13, welcomed the thinking behind '12A' and that the BBFC were recognising that children around 12 years old matured differently, that it was the parent's responsibility to consider a film on its own merits and to assess whether it was appropriate for their child to view. The flexibility of the classification was appreciated, as was the fact that the BBFC provided clear Consumer Advice to help parents reach a decision.

> "It's asking you to question whether some of the scenes are suitable for your children and if you think they're ready to let them watch it or not." (Woman, with children 5 – 12, BC1)

Significantly, these respondents recognised the difference between a '12A' and 'PG' or '15' film and understood that a '12A' film would have 'more in it' than a 'PG'; content suitable for 12 and over but could still be seen by a more mature 10 or 11 year old, subject to an adult's approval (and presence).

> "With '12A', it's advisory. The parent is supposed to have an input into it. 12 is the advised age but if you think that your nine year old is old enough to watch it, you can

let them go and watch it." (Male, with children 12 – 18 C2D)

"12 year olds can watch on their own, younger ones have to go with an adult. If you go to the cinema regularly, it's clear." (Empty nester group, BC1)

"My daughter is of an age where I had to understand it. My wife explained it to me." (Male, children under 12, C2D)

The concept of '12A' eluded some respondents especially infrequent cinemagoers and those with very young children (under eight) presumably as they had never needed to look into this classification before. Many understood the A principle – that the child needed to be accompanied by an adult, but had lost the '12' aspect and as a result became confused as to the real difference between a '12A' and a 'PG' film. At worst, they could envisage how parents could bring a very young child into a '12A' film.

"'12A' seems to be a very broad spectrum. It is very open." (Empty nester group, BC1)

A minority of respondents were totally confused by '12A', believing that it was above a '15'. Again, these were predominantly respondents without a child in the relevant age group.

"I don't understand what the differences are. I am completely confused really." (Male, children 5 – 12, C2D)

"It doesn't make sense. What's a 'PG' then?" (Male, with children 12 – 18, BC1)

The problems associated with '12A' have been compounded by a number of high profile films where viewers have made certain false assumptions about the franchise in question - for example James Bond or Batman - or where the film marketing and merchandising has been aimed at younger children. Confused parental thinking is a poor opponent for pester power and a number of younger children had clearly been able to persuade their parents to take them to see a '12A', a decision which some parents had sometimes regretted.

The quantitative research findings also demonstrate the varying levels of overall agreement

with the appropriateness of films normally found at a particular category. The most controversial classification level is '12A'.

Chart 8

The 12/12A classification is the least likely to be agreed with

Recent film viewers   General public   BBFC web visitors

% always / usually agreeing with classification

U: 86, 80, 79
PG: 82, 72, 66
12A: 77, 59, 43
15: 78, 61, 52
18: 84, 72, 59
R18: 84, 63, 62

Classifications watched

Q: Thinking of the sorts of films you usually watch. In general, how much do you agree with the classifications they are given?

8 out of the 20 films prompting most disagreement during the fieldwork period, were '12'/'12A' classifications, and on all but two occasions viewers considered that the films concerned were classified too low.

One reason for this disagreement may be that a minority of respondents (17%) believe a '12A' classification to mean that a film is suitable for all children. This misunderstanding is more prevalent among less frequent film/DVD viewers (20%) than among frequent viewers (14%).

However, overall 74% understand that '12A' means that a film is not generally suitable for under 12s.

Consumer Advice

The classifications do not work in isolation and respondents in the qualitative research described how they looked to a number of other cues when assessing the potential viewing experience – the look and imagery of the 'packaging' (on DVD pack or on a poster), the director or cast, a brief synopsis of the story – all combine to suggest that the film will be safe and enjoyable for oneself or one's children to view (or not).

The Consumer Advice provided by the BBFC also has a part to play in this decision making process and was welcomed by those who had had occasion to use it.

> "I think that the information they give you is better than the classification. If it says 'very strong language' then you know that they will come out with everything but if it says 'strong language' then it may just be words children hear at school." (Female, with children 12 – 18, BC1)

> "On the movie box, it tells you what it is. If there are adult scenes or other things that you may not feel are suitable." (Female, with children 5 – 12, C2D)

There was limited awareness of extended Consumer Advice on the pBBFC website across the sample but the introduction of visuals of the web pages in the groups was met with an enthusiastic response. Parents felt that this level and detail of advice would be extremely useful when making decisions about '12A' in particular and thought that the BBFC should publicise this useful facility.

> "It's a great idea and really useful information. They have to advertise it though." (Female, with children, 5 – 12 C2D)

> "It's good to have more information. It can help you to say 'no' to your kids, no you can't watch it." (Male, children under 12, C2D)

The BBFC website has limited salience among the general public surveyed in the quantitative study - 18% claim to be aware of dedicated pages on the website that provide Consumer Advice on films, and 10% of parents are aware of the pBBFC site.

There are much higher levels of salience of the Consumer Advice information provided on DVD packs/film promotional materials. 80% claim to have noticed this information in the past.

When shown examples of the sort of information that appears on the BBFC website, the majority of respondents consider it and the information provided on DVD packs, to be useful. There are lower interest levels among the general public sample, because this sample includes older respondents who are less likely to be heavy web users per se and also less likely to be watching films/playing video games (and therefore interested in this sort of classification information).

Chart 9

There is an appreciation and interest in classification information

% rating as useful (darker section = % rating as very useful)
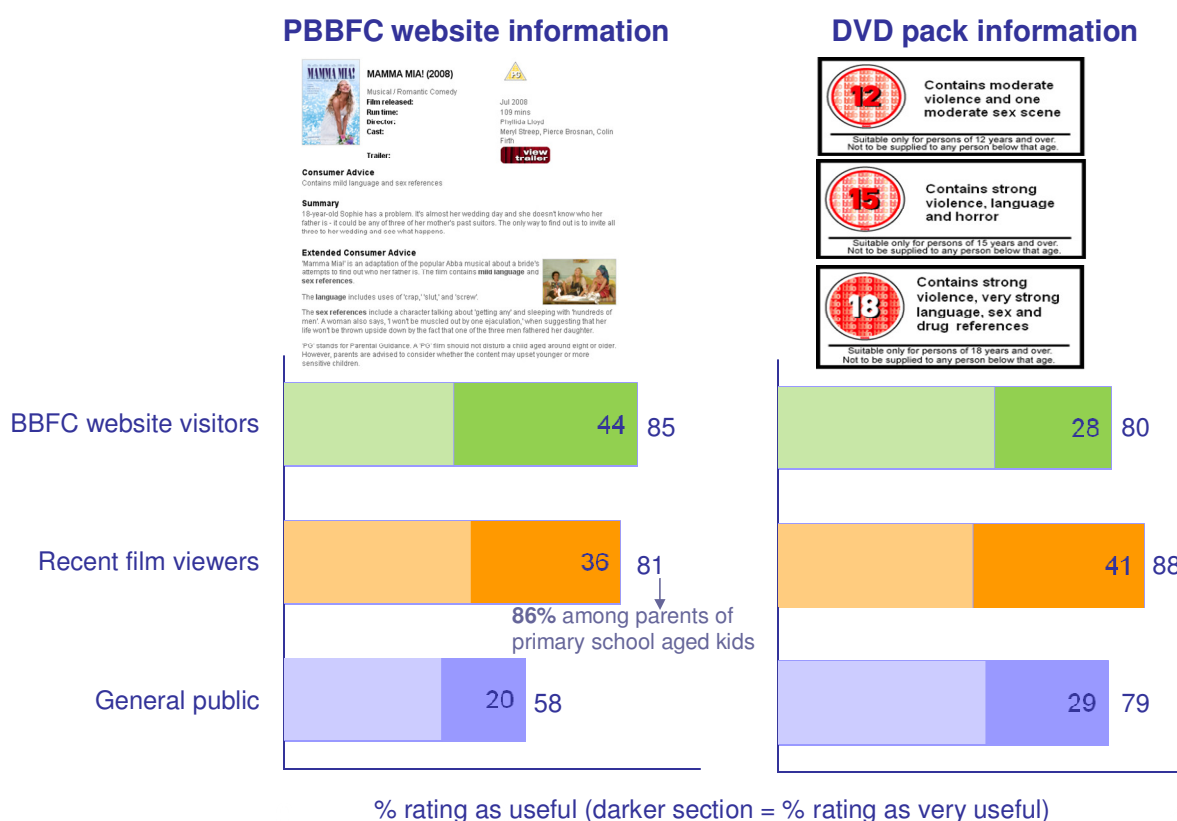
Q: How useful do you find this information?

A small proportion of respondents (3% of the general public and 6% of recent film viewers) have visited the BBFC website.

None of those interviewed among the general public had ever complained to the BBFC about a film or a game, but a small number (less than 1%) claim to have complained about a DVD in the past.

Censorship

Whilst respondents had very mixed ideas about film classification they agreed with two key principles; that films should continue to be classified and that there should be no censorship of film in a free and democratic society. In short, there was a great deal of support for the premise that adults should be free to choose their own entertainment, providing it is legal.

"The problem is that if they ban something now, you can just watch it on the Internet." (Male, with children 12 – 18, C2D)

"There shouldn't be censorship beyond 18. It is not a nanny state." (Male, with children 5 – 12, BC1)

Consumer Advice was thought to have a part to play and could be used to alert the viewer to more controversial content:

"There should be freedom of choice. As long as you are warned, you are free to make your own decisions." (Empty nester group, BC1)

"There should be no censorship at all. You've got the information on the back to show what's in the film." (Male, children under 12, C2D)

Specific Classification Issues

Overview

Respondents were asked what the BBFC should look at when classifying film and it was interesting to see how closely these answers correlated with the Guidelines' key classification areas. Upon further discussion and analysis, the Guidelines were thought to mirror public attitudes on the traditional areas – language, violence, sex, drugs and imitable technique. Recommendations about tightening the link between the public and examiner response revolved around issues of execution, for example the language used in the Guidelines and how best to express the ideas. The Guidelines themselves were essentially thought to be well thought out and reflective of public attitudes.

Whilst the Guidelines currently include issues such as tone and racism / bigotry, respondents felt that these areas needed to be flagged and discussed in a more overt way. The subtleties of tone could transcend more traditional classification areas such as violence or horror and, given its potential impact on the viewing experience, was thought to demand a separate heading.

Likewise the Guidelines needed to acknowledge that violence was not always mitigated by fantasy and that realism within fantasy could be a problem for a younger audience. Highlighting the differences between visual and verbal references was thought to be another important area and something that the Guidelines needed to acknowledge.

Interestingly, the most difficult and potentially controversial classification category was '12A'; teenagers were thought to mature very differently and respondents could also have quite diverse views about what was and was not appropriate viewing for this age group. '15' was another area of concern, partly because this was recognised as being a vulnerable age group where the peer group could lead a child astray and partly because once again, respondents had different views about how 'adult' a teenager was at this age. The Guidelines around these two key age groups were scrutinised and the BBFC was not always thought to have got it right.

By contrast the issues around 'U' and 'PG' and '18' seemed clearer cut. At the lower end, films rarely challenged and the parent felt that he or she was still in control. At '18',

respondents were relaxed about the Guidelines and how film could impact an adult audience who were free to make their own decisions.

These issues will be discussed in the next section of this document.

Language

The main concerns at 'U' and 'PG' are that young children should not be exposed to new 'bad' language, beyond what they heard at home (or in the car!) The promise of 'mild bad' language at 'PG' suggested that language would be both infrequent and fairly familiar, for example 'bloody'. Respondents also envisaged that mild bad language would be mitigated by both context and storyline; for example it was deemed to be more acceptable for a villain to use bad language than a hero.

> "This seems fine – mild bad language. It suggests it's infrequent and not the f word or c word. Words like 'bloody' and words that you would hear in the street. And how it's said is important, not aggressively and without glorifying its use." (Male, with children 5 – 12, BC1)

The sexual connotation of words such as 'bitch', 'prick' or 'wanker' elevated these words to beyond mild bad language and they were felt to be unacceptable at 'PG'.

> "I would be totally shocked if my seven year old daughter heard these words. I would have to explain what it means." (Female, with children 5 – 12, C2D)

> "Words like that are simply unnecessary at this age." (Female, children 5 – 12, C2D)

Respondents were asked how they felt about bleeped bad language and whether it diminished or accentuated impact. There was a great deal of consensus that children immediate focussed on the word being mouthed, if the sound was bleeped and that bleeping therefore needed to be given as much or even more weight than verbalised words.

Likewise rude physical gestures were also a concern and their very nature – visual and easy to imitate – meant that the BBFC should take them into account when classifying a

film or DVD.

Whilst respondents felt that the average 12 year old had been exposed to his or her fair share of strong language, there was still a reluctance to accept multiple uses of strong bad language (eg 'fuck') at '12' or '12A'. As always, context was thought to have a part to play in the impact of strong bad language and a direct threat or insult (especially if accompanied by physical violence) was much more worrying than an indirect, throwaway remark.

> "It depends on the context of the film and how necessary a word is. You don't need to push bad language on a 12 year old." (Male, with children 5 – 12, BC1)

> "It depends on the context for the language. If it's not aggressive or threatening then it may be acceptable. It depends on the film but the Guidelines do cover that." (Female with children 12 – 15, BC1)

It was interesting to note how much bad language was missed during the pre group task, with respondents focussing much more on other issues such as violence or drug use when viewing the films. Whilst this does not diminish the importance of the Guidelines, it demonstrated the mitigating effects of context. One of the films, Girl in the Café, was thought to be correctly classified a '12A', despite one short scene of repeated bad language which was often missed as the protagonist was swearing to himself.

The word 'cunt' still has the power to shock and many disliked even seeing the word in the Guidelines at '15' and could not bring themselves to accept why it would be used by film – makers at all. Clearly the word 'cunt' is the last taboo for strong language and provokes a strong visceral response in many people.

> "I don't think that sort of language is ever acceptable on the screen." (Empty nester group, BC1)

> "I don't think that they have any justification for using the c word. I know they hear it, but that's no reason to have it in there." (Female, with children 12 – 18, BC1)

> "I just hate that word. I would never say it. I couldn't let that word come out of my

mouth." (Female, with children 12 – 18, BC1)

"It is definitely unacceptable." (Empty nesters group, C2D)

As a result, the word is likely to be noticed at '15' and '18' and the BBFC needs to reflect public sensitivities. The importance of context, discussed in the Guidelines, is critical and even those who were more concerned about the word could accept its use at '15' where:

- It was non confrontational, describing an emotion or feeling (such as the outburst in Touching the Void)

- There is no sexual context - (though, interestingly, the written use of the word in Atonement was accepted within the broader context of the film)

- It was infrequent (the repeated use of the word in Curb Your Enthusiasm reinforced its '18' classification)

- The word was not glamorised in any way.

Respondents agreed with the sentence 'continued aggressive use of the strongest language is unlikely to be acceptable'. Whilst they recognised that most 15 years olds would have been exposed to strong language by this age, repeated use of the strongest of words was thought to have an impact on the overall tone and feel of a film, especially if it was accompanied by violence.

Violence

'Mild violence only' and 'occasional mild threat or menace only' at 'U' is in line with what respondents expected very young children to be exposed to in film. Likewise, highlighting how moderate violence can be mitigated by its setting (eg historic, comedy or fantasy) was also thought to be helpful. On the whole, the Guidelines discussion of violence at 'U' and 'PG' was thought to be clear and respondents appreciated being able to see how violence stepped up a gear from 'U' to 'PG' – mild to moderate - and were also reassured that any

violence at 'PG' would be 'without detail.'

The thinking behind 'violence must not dwell on detail / there should be no emphasis on injuries or blood' at '12A', was appreciated and suggested that there would be a limit to seeing the impact of the violence on screen.

> "They are saying that you are not going to see it and that they won't dwell on it. That's fine." (Empty nester group, C2D)

> "That's fine. That means that you are not going to show someone's insides." (Empty nester group, C2D)

The concept of sexual violence proved to be problematic at '12A'/'12' and '15' as respondents immediately thought of a scene showing a rape. There was, therefore, some resistance to the idea of briefly / implied / discreetly indicated sexual violence at '12A' as a result. It depended on what respondents imagined the content to be. Many accepted that it could be a fleeting, verbal reference and easy for younger children to miss. However others were anxious that a child or younger teenager might pick up on sexual violence references and felt quite strongly that they did not want to embark on a discussion about this theme with their child.

> "Sexual violence is not like seeing a road accident or something which happens all the time to lots of people in the world. Sexual violence, that doesn't happen to every family so it should be implied and discreet." (Empty nester group, C2D)

> "I am uncomfortable about sexual violence the way they have it here." (Empty nester group, C2D)

> "Sexual violence is a no no. There shouldn't be any. " (Female, with children 12 – 15, BC1)

> "But it's implied. It could just be mentioned, not seen. That's ok." (Female, with children 12 – 15, BC1)

Interestingly these concerns lingered into the '15' category, and again parents were worried about 'scenes of sexual violence must be discreet and brief'. The clips shown in the groups to illustrate just how brief these moments in a film could be did little to assuage these anxieties and it was clear that sexual violence has potential to shock, irrespective of how discreetly it is handled. Respondents did accept that context can be a mitigating factor and that verbal references would be easier to dismiss than visual ones – however brief.

> "It was quick but it was such a dreadful scene to watch." (Female, with children 12 – 15, BC1)

The concept of sadistic violence at '15' was clearly an issue and there was a lot of discussion in the groups about very real concerns about knife crime and teenage violence.

> "Sadistic violence brings in a whole new dimension. Things like the occult where you challenge a completely different belief system altogether." (Female, with children 12 – 15, BC1)

> "A 15 year old is more likely to get an idea about violence from what they see and go out and do something. An 18 year old has more sense." (Female, 18 – 30, no children, BC1)

It was important that the consequences of any violence in a film was shown and that violence was not glamorised in any way for this potentially vulnerable age group. The Guidelines' discussion of 'violence may be strong but may not dwell on the infliction of pain or injury' was thought to reflect these concerns.

Horror
Once again there were few spontaneous issues at 'U' and the promise of a mild and brief / reassuring outcome was thought appropriate. Parents accepted the mitigating effects of fantasy:

> "Fantasy does distance the horror and makes it easier for parents to explain that it's not real." (Male, with children 5 – 12, BC1)

'Occasional gory moment' was thought to be a useful criterion at '12A' and conveyed that the effects of violence – blood and gore – would be kept to a minimum and would be both briefly presented and infrequent throughout a film.

There was much more discussion about 'sustained moderate threat and menace' firstly because it was not thought to do justice to the complexities of tone and secondly because the sustained nature was thought to be at odds with a potentially younger audience's threshold for psychological horror.

> "Horror doesn't explain the tension and the suspense well enough." (Female, with children 12 – 15, BC1)

> "Menace is about the person who inflicts the horror. It is not really clear what they mean." (Female, with children 12 – 15, BC1)

> "Menace doesn't cover the psychological bit at all." (Female, with children 12 – 15, BC1)

Interestingly, while respondents noted that the tone of I Am Legend had clearly contributed to its '15' classification, a number of parents felt that the BBFC had not always taken tone into account and two films in particular were discussed in this respect – Beowulf and The Dark Knight. Both were felt to be on the borderline between '12A' and '15' and whilst opinions about the actual classification did vary, it was clear that the BBFC Guidelines need to reflect feelings about a 'dark tone' within the context of 'fantasy'.

Respondents understood how the strength of the threat and menace differentiate a '15' film from a '12A' and also how the strongest gory images were acceptable only at '18' and agreed with the Guidelines' proposals.

Once again, '15' was linked with a vulnerable time of life, and parents' concerns about teenage violence in particular underpinned a strong desire to protect this age group from glamorised knife crime.   Protecting 15 year olds from 'strongest gory images' was not thought to go far enough, and respondents differentiated between a '15' and an '18' film in other ways too and felt that the BBFC needed to take the following into account when

classifying '15' films:

- The frequency of the violence / horror

- The overall level of detail

- The type of violence; whether sadistic or sexual

- The overall outcome of the film

- Real violence eg knife crime

- The overlap between horror, violence, language and drugs

Sex

Once again, there were few spontaneous concerns at 'U' and 'PG' and 'mild sexual behaviour / references', 'implied' sexual activity and 'innuendo' led parents to conclude that the level and depiction of sexual content would be unlikely to prompt any awkward feelings or discussions as it was unlikely to have much impact, or even to be noticed.

> "If it is only implied, it will go over their heads." (Male, with children 12 – 18, BC1)

> "Eight or nine year olds won't understand it. You see worse on EastEnders." (Male, with children under 12, C2D)

The sex criteria at '12A' was also thought to be helpful and respondents referenced sex education in school and appreciated that implied sexual activity in '12A' films would not go beyond this level of understanding.

The '15' classification guideline for sex prompted a lively debate. A number of respondents recognised that 15 year olds could be sexually active but were reluctant to condone this behaviour. As a result, the current Guideline was thought to be relevant, even within a potentially increasingly sexually promiscuous age and the emphasis on verbal and not visual content ('strong detail') was appreciated.

> "People under bedclothes humping away is not acceptable for 15 year olds. It's not

even legal for 15 year olds." (Female, with children 12 – 15, BC1)

"I assume that when they talk about 'without strong detail' they mean the squeak of the mattress or the moaning or the hot water bottle falling out of the bed, but not actual sex." (Empty nester group, C2D)

"At 15 they know all there is to know anyway!" (Male, children 5 – 15, BC1)

A number of focus groups were preplaced with the film '9 Songs' to help explore the issue of real sex at '18'. Some of the scenes were felt to be shocking and respondents were clear that the film's blunt Consumer Advice (referring to real sex) would be a welcomed warning. On balance, the film was thought to be a clear '18' rather than an 'R18' (to be shown in specially licensed cinemas or to be supplied in licensed sex shops only). The overall tone of the work was not thought to be that of a 'sex work' as defined by the Guidelines. The sexual content, whilst very explicit at times, was well within the overall context of the film's storyline and relationships and all agreed that the primary purpose of the film was not 'sexual arousal or stimulation'.

"In that film, it was proper sex. Should it be an 'R18'? In my opinion, it's not sexy and it's not going to arouse." (Female, no children, 18 – 30)

"I actually agree with the classification. She is no porn star let's face it. She's a bit malnourished." (Female, no children, 18 – 30)

Drugs

Parents were keen to prevent young children from being exposed to more adult themes and drugs clearly fell into this category, though drugs references which had a 'clear educational purpose' or 'anti-drug' message suitable for the audience were acceptable at 'U'.

Interestingly, the rather oblique reference to drugs (actually,'catnip') in the 'U' film Shrek 2, pre-placed with several focus groups, was missed by all children and many adults too. When prompted, it was felt to be well above children's heads and very easy for any adult to explain away.

Respondents were less clear about the Guidelines' position on drugs at 'PG'. The word 'innocuous' was not always well understood but it was hard for those who appreciated its meaning to suggest an alternative word for the BBFC to use.

> "Why is the word 'innocuous' in there? To be honest, I don't really know what that means." (Male, with children under 12, C2D)

Parents appreciated the '12A' drugs Guidelines and reinforced the importance of content which was not 'glamorised or instructional'. The reference to the frequency of drugs misuse was also helpful as a constant drug reference was thought to be tantamount to a drug theme, which was not felt to be appropriate at '12A'.

Whilst many recognised that '15' year olds were likely to have been exposed to drugs (either directly through their own experiences or via anti – drug campaigns at school), the important of taking care to not glamorise drugs in any way was conveyed effectively by: 'drug taking may be shown but the film as a while must not promote or encourage drug misuse.'

> "It should always be portrayed as being bad and it shouldn't be incidental. If you are going to address it, address it." (Male, with children 12 – 18, C2D)

> "With sex, they are going to do it anyway but with drugs you want to stop them from doing it so it is important how it is shown." (Female, 18 – 30, no children, BC1)

Once again, the BBFC was thought to be very much in line with public opinion and is right to look at films in terms of drug content and the misuse of accessible and dangerous substances.

Nudity
It was clear from respondents' discussions about nudity that it was a broad term, covering different types of nudity – frontal, back, naturalistic and sexual – and respondents also differentiated between male and female nudity. The inclusion of nudity in the Guidelines was appreciated as it gave a context for sexual references.

(Occasional) natural nudity, with no sexual context worked well at 'U' and 'PG' and respondents also understood that nudity would be allowed at '12A' but that sexual nudity would be brief and discreet.

Imitable Technique

The issues around imitable technique have clearly moved on in recent years and parents were much more concerned about imitating or glamorising knife crime, suicide pacts and anti – social behaviour in general than slapstick, violent animation having a negative impact on very young children. Once again, the impressionability of teens was acknowledged and was a real concern with respondents referencing the horrors of teen suicides in Bridgend and the 'teen knife crime' culture on the streets of the UK.

"I know friends who have kids on suicide watch so it's more important perhaps at 15 than 12." (Male, with children 12 – 15, BC1)

"My biggest concern is knives really." (Male, with children 12 – 15, BC1)

"Teenagers at 15 are at their most sensitive. Self-harming should not be shown at this age. It should only be mentioned." (Female, with children 12 – 15, BC1)

"Teenagers are full of hormones. They are unbalanced. They should not show self harming and things like that." (Male, with children 5 – 12, BC1)

There was a great deal of support for the BBFC's recognition that imitable technique deserved its own heading and the '12A'/'12' Guidelines in particular were thought to be appropriate and to the point: 'Dangerous techniques (eg combat techniques, hanging, suicide and self – harming) should not dwell on imitable detail or appear pain or harm free. Easily accessible weapons should not be glamorised'.

Tone

The importance of paying attention to tone when classifying film is a constant theme of the qualitative research. The concept of horror or menace was thought to fall short of the

subtleties and complexities of a film's tone. Specifically the tone of a film could not be measured in more traditional ways and often had very little visual violent content but could still be very impactful and disturbing, especially if it was sustained across the duration of the film.

Films were discussed in terms of how they made the viewer feel:

- 'On edge'

- 'Stays with me'

- 'Suspense'

- 'Dark'

- 'Creepy'

Interestingly, it was often hard to use fantasy to distance oneself from these very real feelings.

The film Beowulf was cited in this respect by those who had viewed it during the pre-placement exercise. The animation effect was thought to be extremely realistic and the fantasy setting did little to diminish the dramatic tension and as a result, the film could leave more sensitive viewers feeling unsettled.

> "It can feel quite real with computer animation. Animation is looking more real all the time." (Male, with children 5 – 12, BC1)

Respondents called for a more overt discussion of tone in the Guidelines and felt that this important issue should be separated from horror. Tone worked on all the viewer's senses and conveyed fear by using lighting, music and sound – often to great effect.

> "The idea is there but you don't actually see anything. There is nothing too graphic." (Female, 18 – 30, no children, BC1)

> 'It's the music and the fear of the unknown. They do need to look at it." (Empty

nester group, BC1)

"It is definitely important. With some films you don't see anything but it's still psychologically worrying." (Male, with children under 12, C2D)

Consumer Advice was recognised as having a role to play in warning a potential viewer about a dark tone. The words 'psychological threat' were thought to be useful in this respect.

"Psychological impact would be a better way of saying it. It could be a creaking door, waiting for something to happen." (Female, with children 12 – 15, BC1)

"Like with the Blair Witch Project. It was dark and had noises that got to you but it was all in your imagination. It was really scary. They do need to fit in the word 'psychological' somewhere." (Female, with children 12 – 18, BC1)

Discrimination/ Bigotry

Whilst there was a mention of racist abuse in the Guidelines (at '12A'), those interviewed in the focus group felt that the Guideline was confusing and did not go far enough. Interestingly, racism was spontaneously raised as a concern in the pre Guidelines research, conducted several months before the main study. In many respects, racism or bigotry had the same status as sexual 'bad' language; it could be extremely shocking and once again parents were keen to prevent younger children or teenagers from being exposed to these terms of abuse.

"Racist abuse isn't acceptable. End of. There is no need for it." (Empty nester groups, C2D)

"They should think about this. It's a big issue especially as we live in a multi – cultural society." (Male, children under 12, C2D)

"Why isn't racist abuse in the Guidelines? It should be." (Male, with children 5 – 12, BC1)

How to classify old works prompted a lively discussion and the almost innocent, latent racism of series such as Love Thy Neighbour was thought to present a unique classification challenge. On balance, respondents felt that societal rules and norms of the time needed to be taken into account and were mitigating factors. Likewise the references to 'nigger day' in Hairspray, set in the 60s, were rarely discussed. Within the context of the film and given the positive race messages throughout, it was easy to dismiss when prompted.

Much depended on the overall emphasis and direction. 'Spastic' – a term that was felt to be almost out of fashion in 2009 – was never noticed in the film Legally Blonde. Again, it was naturalistic within the context of the film and was also said by one of the characters as she joked about her own limitations. Saying the word in anger and to someone else would have engendered a different response.

Whilst there were mitigating factors at work, respondents recognised that Consumer Advice could have an important part to play; warning the potential audience in advance that the film contained racist abuse or bigotry.

> "I think that programmes from a while back need a special flag. It can be a 'PG' but it needs to clearly state that there are strong racial references in there." (Male, children 5 – 12, BC1)

> "It should be on the box 'contains a lot of racial material'." (Male, children 5 – 12, BC1)

> "It's what they put on the back of the pack that's important. If they warn you, that's ok." (Male, with children 5 – 15, BC1)

Trailers and Adverts

The way in which the BBFC classified trailers and adverts was also discussed and many felt that they had occasionally been caught unaware; going to see a romantic comedy at 15 and being exposed to a violent trailer of another film.

There was widespread support for having tighter rules for trailers, in recognition that the potential audience may not have chosen that film genre or that the trailer may be shown to an inappropriate audience ie children.

"They should err on the side of caution." (Empty nester group, C2D)

Whilst parents were keen to protect children from unexpectedly frightening trailers, they were more relaxed when discussing ads for alcohol, commenting that these were rarely noticed and discussed by children. Even the examples shown in the research, (the engaging Budweiser and Smirnoff Ice commercials), did not raise any spontaneous concerns as they were thought to be rather obscure and not overtly about alcohol and that they did not glamorise alcohol in any way. In addition, parents felt that children saw them drinking alcohol and that it was part and parcel of life. Interestingly, parents of impressionable teenagers were more concerned about how alcohol was portrayed. Again, not glamorising drinking was of importance.

Whilst respondents wanted the BBFC to scrutinise trailers and for the Guidelines to be tightened where appropriate, the concept of public information adverts elicited a different response and there was a consensus of opinion that these ads should reach as wide an audience as possible. The potential shock factor of these communications was thought to be an inherent part of their success, cutting through and creating impact.

"I think that when it's a public service film, it's for the greater good. It's for people to take notice. It is meant to shock people so that they pay attention and act on it. I think that it would be senseless to rate it harder. You want people to go 'ooohh', you want that reaction." (Female, 18 – 30, no children BC1)

However many respondents talked about the fine line between shock and longer term upset and felt that the principles of the Guidelines should still apply.

Realism within Fantasy
Whilst the Guidelines have traditionally explored the mitigating effects of fantasy on violence or tone, the way in which several groups responded to the pre placed films suggested that the BBFC needs to pay greater attention to the impact of real cues and

imagery within fantasy.

> "The fantasy does make it feel a bit different but the horror is still there." (Empty nester group, BC1)

> "It is more frightening because it feels more real." (Empty nester group, BC1)

For example the polar bear fight in the film Golden Compass was easy to dismiss as something that would not happen in the realms of ordinary life. The separation of the children from their parents in the same film was much harder hitting, tapping into children's very real fears about losing or being separated from their own families.

Likewise The Dark Knight was thought to be a 'high' '12A' and the presence of the knife and reference to knife crimes, combined with the dark tone of the film meant that this film was thought to have the potential to feel real to some – even within its clear, fantasy setting.

> "It wasn't a Tim Burton over the top fantasy. It seemed real." (Male, with children 12 – 18, BC1)

Verbal versus visual references

Another area for the BBFC to explore going forward is the way in which many respondents differentiated between visual and verbal references. Parents in particular acknowledged that children were much more likely to pay attention to visual cues – for example seeing a rude gesture – than verbal ones, which were deemed to be much easier to miss, particularly if they were said quickly.

This issue really came to the fore when respondents were discussing sexual violence and drugs. These topics were uncomfortable, as previously discussed, but it was interesting to note that a verbal reference was envisaged to be much more palatable than a visual one with many claiming that they did not want to see sexual violence or the mechanics of drug taking on screen, however briefly.

Views on Individual Films/DVDs

Evaluation of the appropriateness of the classification of individual films and DVDs was undertaken by both the web visitors' sample and the film viewer's sample.

The web survey ran for a longer period than the film viewers' survey and so incorporated a greater number of films and DVDs (as it was necessary to update the recent release titles shown in the survey). Film viewers were selected on the basis of having seen one of 70 recent releases, while the web sample covered 115 titles over the three month fieldwork period.

The film viewers sample mentioned having disagreement with classifications for only 14 films and DVDs from the 70 they were asked to comment on and only 50 out of our sample of over a thousand had these disagreements.

At least one BBFC Website Visitor disagreed with the classification of 102 of the 115 films and DVDs they were asked to comment upon.

Opinion of film/DVD classifications among BBFC Website Visitors

Total number of films commented on	115
.	
Most of the minority who disagree consider classification too high	46 films
Most of the minority who disagree consider classification too low	43 films
Minority who disagree have polarised opinion on classification	13 films
No disagreement expressed	13 films

As can be seen from the table above, among the minority who disagree with a classification there appears to be an equal likelihood of the classification being considered too high, as of being considered too low.

As heavier cinemagoers and DVD renters, the web viewers' sample provides more statistically robust data on individual film classifications than the film viewers' sample. While the web sample is not representative of the general public, it is arguably

representative of the more discerning critics of film classifications, and as such provides the most informed views on the appropriateness of classifications.

The following data on individual film classifications is drawn exclusively from the web sample.

The data shows that the classification of some films was more controversial than others, but that in all cases, a large majority of viewers agreed with classifications awarded.

As mentioned earlier in this report, the '12A' classification does appear to prompt more disagreement than other classifications. Most notably, The Dark Knight DVD prompts the highest level of disagreement, of all the recently released films and DVDs assessed, with 30% of the 1508 respondents viewing this DVD considering the classification to be too low.

Chart 10
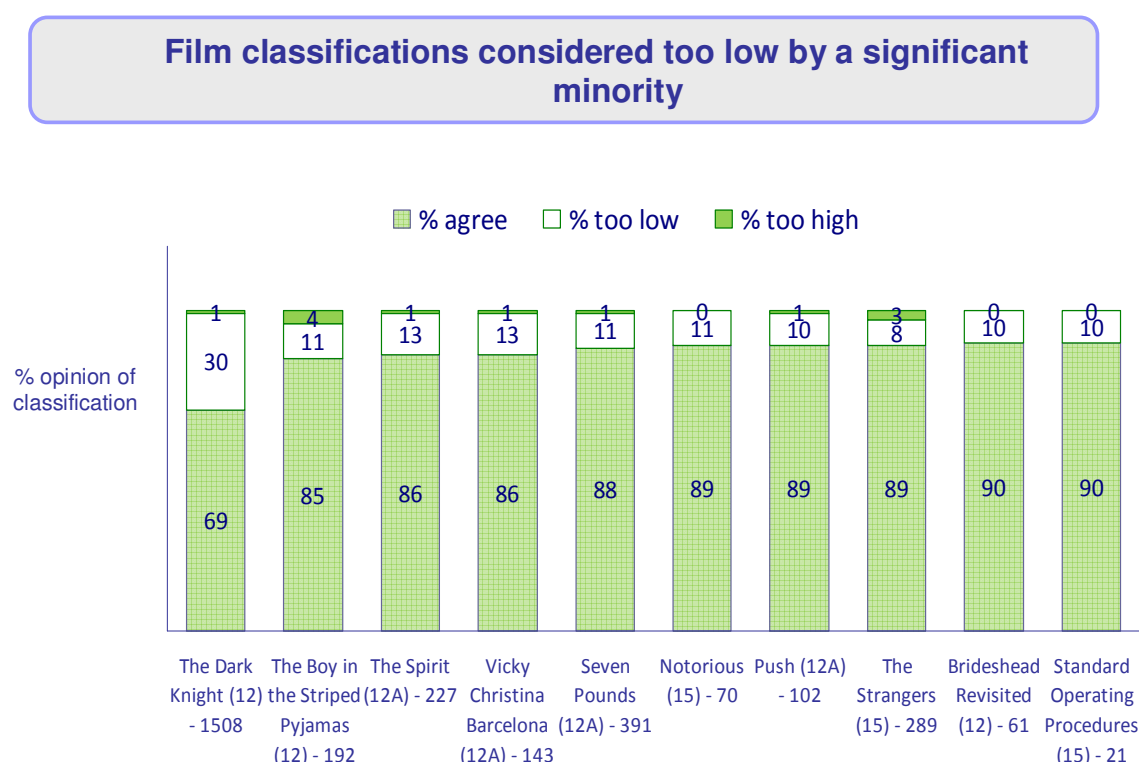
Film classifications considered too low by a significant minority

Q: Did you agree with the classification – if not, was this because you believed it was suitable for younger (i.e. classification too high) or older (i.e. classification too low) viewers
(Figures shown next to each film are the number of respondents who have watched)

It's debatable how much influence, if any, the media furore surrounding the classification of the Dark Knight will have had on these responses, which covered a period some time after

the main news stories were evident. It may be that later viewers of the film either found the reality to be less controversial than expected, or that those who might have been offended, chose not to view the film.

It's important to note however that 69% of website visitors agreed with the Dark Knight's classification, and also that among the film viewers sample, 93% of those who saw the film (232 respondents) agreed with its classification.

In fact, in most cases, disagreement levels for individual films and DVDs were low, at less than 10%.

Chart 11
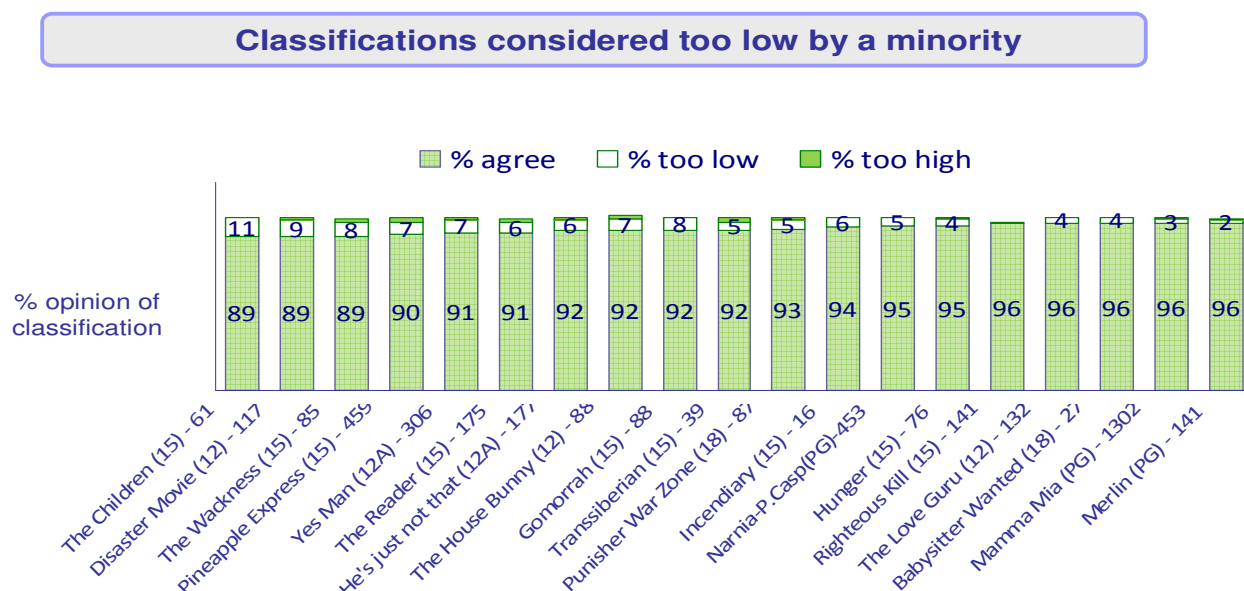
Q: Did you agree with the classification – if not, was this because you believed it was suitable for younger (i.e. classification too high) or older (i.e. classification too low) viewers
(Figures shown next to each film are the number of respondents who have watched)

Chart 12

Classification considered too high by a significant minority
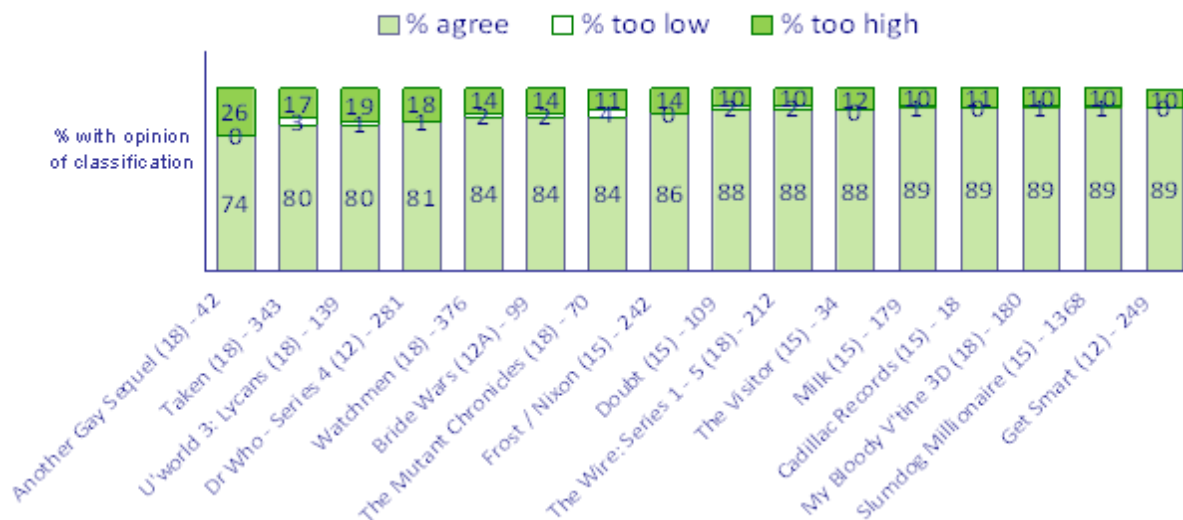
% agree   % too low   % too high

% with opinion of classification

Film	% too high	% too low	% agree
Another Gay Sequel (18) - 42	26	0	74
Taken (18) - 343	17	3	80
U'world 3: Lycans (18) - 139	19	1	80
Dr Who - Series 4 (12) - 281	18	1	81
Watchmen (18) - 376	14	2	84
Bride Wars (12A) - 99	14	2	84
The Mutant Chronicles (18) - 70	11	4	84
Frost / Nixon (15) - 242	14	1	86
Doubt (15) - 109	10	2	88
The Wire:Series 1 - 5 (18) - 212	10	2	88
The Visitor (15) - 34	12	0	88
Milk (15) - 179	10	1	89
Cadillac Records (15) - 18	11	0	89
My Bloody V'tine 3D (18) - 180	10	1	89
Slumdog Millionaire (15) - 1368	10	0	89
Get Smart (12) - 249	10	0	89

Q: Did you agree with the classification – if not, was this because you believed it was suitable for younger (i.e. classification too high) or older (i.e. classification too low) viewers
(Figures shown next to each film are the number of respondents who have watched)

Chart 13

Classification considered too high by a minority

% agree   % too low   % too high

% with opinion of classification

Film	% too high	% too low	% agree
Sec.Diary of Call Girl (18) - 117	9		88
Resident Evil:Degen (15) - 193	8		89
Che, Part Two (15) - 78	9		90
Friday the 13th (18) - 193	9		90
Transporter (15) - 372	8		90
Angus, Thongs (12) - 194	7		92
The Mummy-D. Emp. (12) - 453	6		92
Che: Part One (15) - 165	8		92
Bolt (PG) - 352	3		93
Cass (18) - 70	7		93
Stone of Destiny (12A) - 15	6		93
Madagascar:Esc 2 (PG) - 331	7		93
24: Redemption (15) - 243	6		93
Ghost Town (12) - 349	4		94
Valkyrie (12A) - 270	6		94
Defiance (15) - 191	2		94
Role Models (15) - 272	6		94
City of Men (15) - 65	4		94
The Wrestler (15) - 672	5		94
Revolutionary Road (15) - 147	1		94
Day Earth Stood Still (12A) - 382	5		94
Lakeview Terrace (15) - 159	4		94
Somers Town (12) - 126	3		94
Open Season 2 (PG) - 38	5		95
The Counterfeighters (15) - 118	5		95
Man on Wire (12) - 158	3		95
Changeling (15) - 286	5		95
Julia (15) - 21	3		95
Mum and Dad (18) - 127	4		95
Kung Fu Panda (PG) - 652	3		96

Q: Did you agree with the classification – if not, was this because you believed it was suitable for younger (i.e. classification too high) or older (i.e. classification too low) viewers
(Figures shown next to each film are the number of respondents who have watched)

58

The highest level of disagreement expressed for a film attracting a minority audience, was for Another Gay Sequel, where 11 out of 42 viewers (26%) considered the classification too high.

Opinion on the appropriateness of the Slumdog Millionaire classification is interesting, as this changed over the course of the fieldwork period, with more disagreement emerging later. This may have been influenced by the film's performance at the Oscars. It is possible that respondents may have felt a '15' classification unfairly restrictive given the popular appeal of the film following the publicity attracted at the Oscars.

When asked reasons for finding a specific classification too low, the prompted guideline area that is most likely to be mentioned as contentious, is violence.

Chart 14

'Violence' is the main reason for disagreement with recent film classifications

% selecting these (prompted) areas as reason for considering a classification too low

	Recent film viewers 49 %	BBFC website visitors 772 %
Violence	35	76
Tone	14	65
Horror effects	18	26
Imitable behaviour	16	27
Sexual references	14	16
Bad language	12	15
Inappropriate / upsetting themes	6	17
Sexual behaviour	8	12

Q: Which of the following areas did you find particularly unsuitable for the classification given to the films you disagreed with

The more knowledgeable film viewers in the web visitors sample also select tone as a key reason for disagreement. More in-depth feedback provided by web visitors suggested that they would like to see more consistent treatment of violence in classifications:

"Fantasy violence is treated as if it's quite mild, whereas it can actually be very harsh and dark, especially for a child"

"Casual violence on a fairly massive scale seems to be OK for a '15', but nudity isn't. That's absurd"

It should also be noted that there are similar levels of agreement and disagreement evident for blockbuster films as for less mainstream films. There were a number of films that prompted no disagreement at all among web visitors.

Chart 15
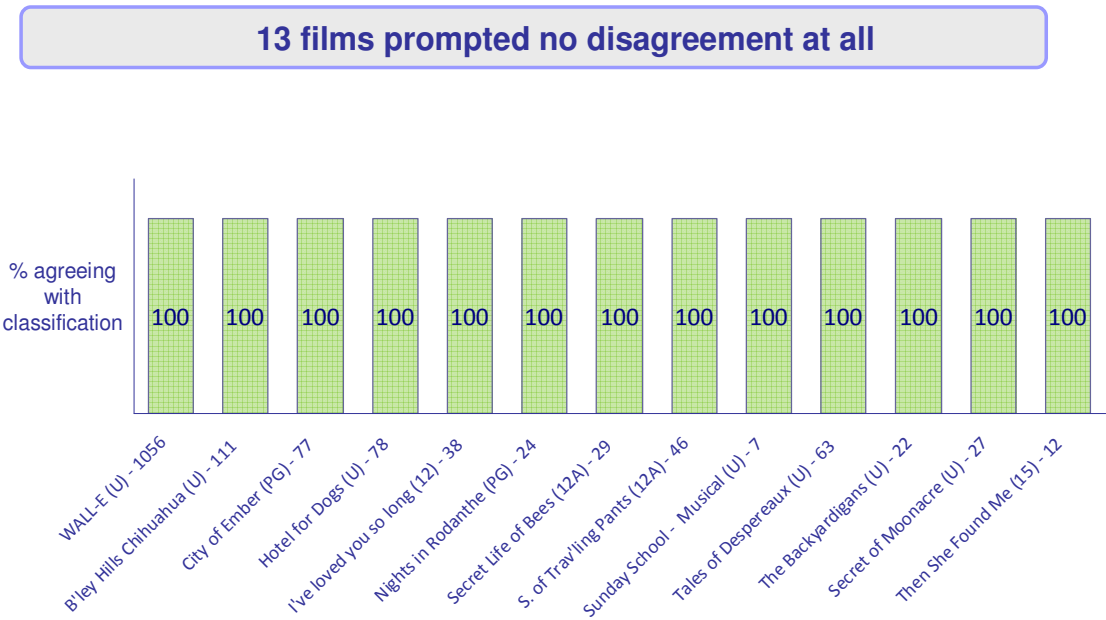
13 films prompted no disagreement at all

% agreeing with classification

| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

WALL-E (U) - 1056 | B'ley Hills Chihuahua (U) - 111 | City of Ember (PG) - 77 | Hotel for Dogs (U) - 78 | I've loved you so long (12) - 38 | Nights in Rodanthe (PG) - 24 | Secret Life of Bees (12A) - 29 | S. of Trav'ling Pants (12A) - 46 | Sunday School - Musical (U) - 7 | Tales of Despereaux (U) - 63 | The Backyardigans (U) - 22 | Secret of Moonacre (U) - 27 | Then She Found Me (15) - 12

Q: Did you agree with the classification – if not, was this because you believed it was suitable for younger (i.e. classification too high) or older (i.e. classification too low) viewers
(Figures shown next to each film are the number of respondents who have watched)

Most of the films that attracted no disagreement were classified 'U'.

A full analysis of agreement levels for all films assessed, and opinion on whether their classifications were too high or too low, is included in appendix 1a of this report.

Video Games

The appropriateness of BBFC Guidelines on video games was assessed in the same way as for film, by checking agreement levels with specific games classified by the BBFC.

The web visitors sample was considered to be the most appropriate method of accessing the target audience of game players. Web visitors completing the main film/DVD survey were asked supplementary questions on games.

To be eligible for interview as 'Gamers', respondents had to have played or observed in the past four weeks, one of the 30 recently released video games classified by the BBFC (across all platforms) selected for evaluation (see appendix 1b).

The majority of Gamers (77%) claim that, overall, they tend to agree with the BBFC classifications given to games that they have played or watched recently.

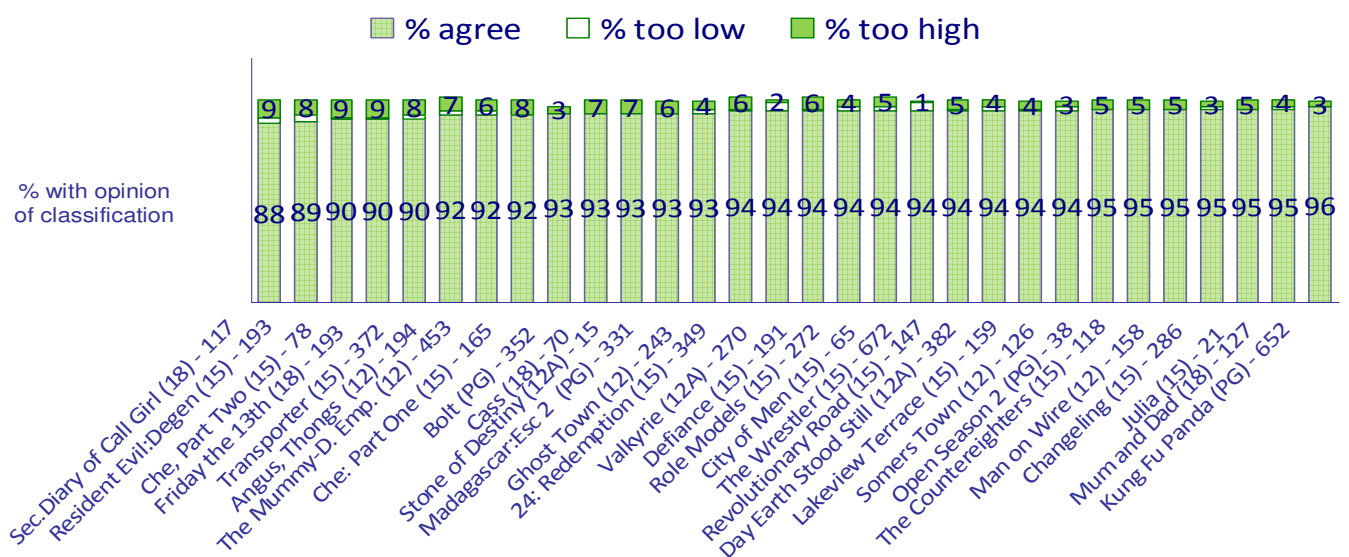When analysed on the basis of overall game playing occasions (i.e. the number of respondents who claim to have played/observed each game, totalled across the sample), it's only in 10% of cases that Gamers disagree with a BBFC classification.

Chart 16

Classifications are agreed with on most game playing occasions

8% of classifications considered too high

2% of classifications considered too low

Classifications agreed with in 90% of game playing occasions

Gamers among BBFC website visitors

(12,307 game playing occasions)
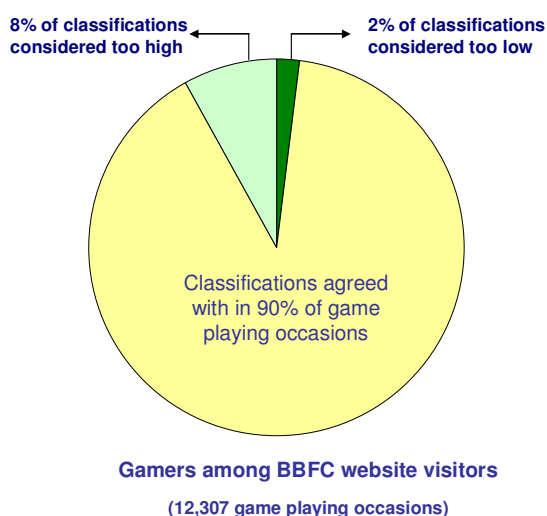
Q: Overall, did you agree with the classification of the games that you have played/seen in the past four weeks?

When analysing agreement levels across individual games, it is clear again that only a minority disagree with any BBFC classifications.

Chart 17

Disagreement with classifications is expressed by 10% or fewer gamers in most cases

% agree   % too low   % too high

% disagreeing with classification

Game	% too high / too low	% agree
Rise of the Argonauts (18) - 14	21 / 0	79
Resistance 2 (18) - 328	17 / 2	81
Lips (12) - 150	19 / 0	81
G.Hero World Tour (12) - 945	18 / 0	82
WWE S'down v Raw 2009 (15) - 258	15 / 1	84
Left 4 Dead (18) - 565	14 / 1	85
Far Cry 2 (18) - 245	14 / 0	86
Fable II (15) - 509	12 / 1	87
M.Kombat vs. DC (15) - 237	11 / 2	87
Fallout 3 (18) - 866	11 / 1	88
Gears of War 2 (18) - 715	8 / 1	91
Civilization : Revolution (PG) - 137	7 / 2	91
Sega M.Drive Ult. (PG) - 95	8 / 0	92
Street Fighter IV (12) - 187	6 / 2	92
Grand Theft Auto IV (18) - 968	7 / 1	92
S.Wars:Force Unleashed (12) - 636	8 / 1	92
F.E.A.R. 2 - Project Origin (18) - 154	7 / 0	93
House of the Dead : Overkill (18) - 79	5 / 0	95
Dead Space 2 (18) - 579	5 / 0	95
Saints Row 2 (18) - 360	4 / 1	95
Kung Fu Panda (PG) - 227	4 / 0	96
Siren Blood Curse (19) - 103	4 / 0	96
Tomb Raider - Underworld (12) - 593	3 / 1	96
The Mummy : T. of D'gon Emp. (12) - 36	3 / 0	97
Ben 10 : Alien Force (PG) - 36	3 / 0	97

Q: Did you agree with the classification – if not, was this because you believed it was suitable for younger (i.e. classification too high) or older (i.e. classification too low) viewers
(Figures shown next to each game are the number of respondents who have watched)

Rise of the Argonauts ('18') is the game that prompts the highest level of classification disagreement, but this is based on the opinion of only 14 Gamers. Guitar Hero World Tour ('12') is the mainstream game that prompts the highest level of disagreement, with nearly 1 in 5 Gamers considering the '12' classification given as too high.

While for films, there is an equal balance of minor disagreement for classifications being too high as there is for classifications being too low, for games, the over-riding view (again among the minority who disagree) is that classifications tend to be too high.

It's important to bear in mind that the audience of Gamers primarily comprises younger men, whose views on the need for protection from disturbing content may differ from those of the population as a whole.

When analysing this data demographically, it is Gamers aged 16-24 who are the more likely to express disagreement. Interestingly, those aged 45+ (more likely to be parents observing games) are less likely to disagree with any classifications.

Other data would suggest that this response from parents is a result of the fact that less scrutiny is given to game suitability, and also because of less overall awareness of detailed game content (i.e. a parent is unlikely to observe their children progressing through all levels of play for a given game, but are more likely to watch an entire film with their child).

Despite this potentially more liberal attitude toward game classification, there are a handful of games where the minority who disagreed considered the classification too low.

Chart 18
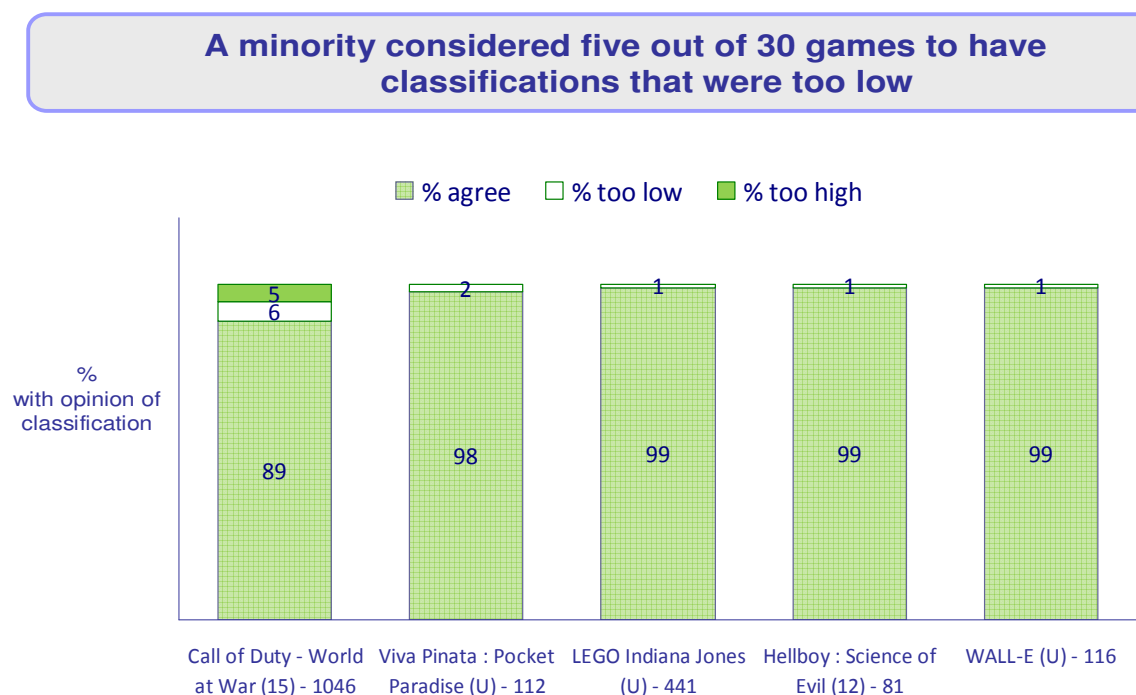
A minority considered five out of 30 games to have classifications that were too low

Q: Did you agree with the classification – if not, was this because you believed it was suitable for younger (i.e. classification too high) or older (i.e. classification too low) viewers
(Figures shown next to each film are the number of respondents who have watched)

The most controversial game in terms of classification is Call of Duty. 29% of Gamers have played/watched this game in the past four weeks, and 1 in 10 of these disagreed with its classification. Views as to whether this classification was in fact too high, or too low, were mixed. 16-24 year olds were more likely to consider the classification too high, and 25+ year olds (albeit not exclusively) were more likely to consider the classification too low.

Three games prompted no disagreement at all – these were Madagascar 2 ('U'); Shellshock 2 ('18') and So Blonde ('12').

A full analysis of agreement levels for all films assessed, and opinion on whether their classifications were too high or too low, is included in appendix 1b of this report.

Playing computer games was viewed by the majority of respondents in the qualitative research as a children's pastime and something they played either on their own, with siblings and/or friends. Unlike film that parents and children can and often watch together, either watching DVD at home or going to the cinema, games were very much seen as children's territory. This was evident when discussing the role that games play for their children:

> "I don't have a clue about the games she plays. I have no interest in them at all. I go upstairs and watch telly at home." (Female, with children 10 – 16 years, C2D)

> "He'll just go with his mates and I don't really know what they are playing on. I had to look at his games before I came along to see what he had." (Female, with children 10 – 16 years, C2D)

> "I just associate these things with kids, they are all the same age and they are all playing on – line, so I assume that they must be ok." (Female, with children 10 – 16 years, C2D)

> "The difference is that you watch films with your children, but you don't do that while they play a game." (Male, with children 10 – 16 years, C2D)

Issues and any concerns that parents expressed around games typically focussed on the length of time their children spent playing, and their compulsive and at times 'addictive' behaviour towards games. Distraction from homework and little interest in other activities resulted in some parents attempting to limit the amount of time children played on consoles.

"We do attempt to moderate usage or they will not go to bed because they are hyper." (Female, with children 10 – 16 years, BC1)

"We always want to know how long they are on it." (Male, with children 10 – 16 years, C2D)

"My 12 year old she's obsessed with them and is on morning, noon and night. She's that bad and I can't get her off. If I ban the Wii then she'll be on the computer." (Female, with children 10 – 16 years, C2D)

One respondent also expressed concern that her son's behaviour had been affected by a particular wrestling game, and he had since been prevented from playing.

"My youngest son likes wrestling. I was horrified at how violent the game is so it's banned. He is 12 and it's a '15' game, it's quite horrific. He thought he was the wrestler." (Female, with children 10 – 16 years, BC1)

Beyond this, games were felt to be a fun leisure activity that children and their peers enjoyed in the same way that parents themselves had spent time during their youth. The popularity of games was evident from the number of consoles owned per family including hand held devices as well as standard consoles.

Decision Making Process

When it comes to games children were seen to be in control of the decision process and were highly influential regarding games purchased. Parents were led by their children's requests and would also consult with them before attempting to purchase games. Games being expensive and wanting to avoid costly mistakes, parents recognised how ill equipped they were to select games their children would want to play.

"I asked my son for his Christmas list and he gave me a selection of six games to choose from and I said he could have 3. He showed me his 3 favourites and that's what I bought." (Female, with children 10 – 16 years, C2D)

"He just takes me along and I'm the purse. He chooses what he wants. I wouldn't know." (Female, with children 10 – 16 years, C2D)

"They buy the games themselves." (Male, with children 10 – 16 years, BC1)

Parents' low level involvement with games and game purchase resulted in lower awareness and interest in game classification in comparison with film. Not all were aware that games carried some type of classification. Given that parents aren't browsing shelves to purchase games, awareness of Consumer Advice also appeared low.

"I never thought they had a rating." (Female, with children 10 – 16 years, C2D)

"I just associate these things with kids so you think they are all ok, it's not for adults and don't think to look for ratings." (Female, with children 10 – 16 years, C2D)

There was also often evidence of confusion around the current rating system in which most games carry PEGI ratings rather than BBFC ratings. Respondents were unclear about whether the system applied to a child's ability rating to play and complete the game, or suitability in terms of the games content.

"I think the only time I pay attention to the age rating is thinking whether they will be able to do it." (Female, with children 10 – 16 years, C2D)

"I would look at the age that it is aimed at in terms of how hard it is to play." (Male, with children 10 – 16 years, BC1)

Overall, most children were able to have the games they wanted and asked for. Where classifications were noticed parents seemed to be very comfortable with discounting one category and often, two.   So, 11/12 year olds were reported as regularly playing '15' games and in some instances, 12/13 year olds playing '18' rated games.

"It may have an influence but I would probably go up a couple of years." (Male, with children 10 – 16 years, BC1)

"His dad will take him out and buy it for him. That's how he gets things for much older." (Female, with children 10 – 16 years, C2D)

"Call of Duty is a '15' which all my son's friends who are 11 have and are playing together online." (Female, with children 10 – 16 years, C2D)

In discounting the classification, parents typically focused on the fantasy aspect of games and argued that children understand they are not real and it is 'just a game'. Most children seemed able to cope and were not adversely affected. Moreover, they were playing at home where the impact of games is considered to be different and less strong compared with 'real' film at the cinema.

Pre – placed DVD of clips of gameplay

This was an interesting exercise and clips rated '15' and '18' prompted particularly strong reactions from all parents. They were responding to the level and detail of violence shown as well as the sinister and dark tone suggested by some of the clips. Asked whether the games had been appropriately classified, most wanted the rating to increase a level (though, as shown later, these views were revised downwards after parents experienced actually playing games).

"Generally some of the 15's should be 18's because of the extreme violence and threatening feel." (Male, with children 10 – 16 years, BC1)

"I wouldn't have imagined a computer game could be so bad." (Female, with children 10 – 16 years, C2D)

"Call of Duty was definitely an '18', not a '15'. There was torture with that initial scene." (Female, with children 10 – 16 years, C2D)

The clips focussed respondents on the content and detail of games their children were playing at home or had access to through friends. There was initial shock at some of the gruesome and violent images and the idea that fairly young children were exposed to this sort of material. Moreover the sophistication and greater realism of computer graphics was something many parents hadn't experienced and was felt to add to the sense of violence

and horror.

> "I didn't know its content. Very scary and most gruesome content I've seen for a while." (Female, with children 10 – 16 years, C2D)

> "I am so out of touch, they are horrific." (Female, with children 10 – 16 years, BC1)

> "I just thought he was playing games that were ok. He's quite sensible." (Female, with children 10 – 16 years, C2D)

There was a sense that as parents they were responsible for games their children play and hadn't been as vigilant and responsible as they perhaps ought to. Parents acknowledged that discounting of the classification, without real understanding or knowledge of the games content, had led to this situation.

> "I feel really neglectful, I ought to have paid more attention." (Female, with children 10 – 16 years, C2D)

> "I'm unaware and so ignorant of what our children are playing on." (Female, with children 10 – 16 years, C2D)

Parents discussed how their interest and better understanding of film meant they were able to make more considered and informed decisions about film and DVD's children viewed. Moreover, they recognised that they needed to be more focussed and responsible when viewing film at the cinema, compared with games that are played at home.

Playing games

Having had the opportunity to play games ranging from 'U' through to '18', parents reviewed their responses to the DVD games clips as well as their thoughts about children's games play.

The experience of playing games was widely considered to be very different from watching game clips. Significantly, the impact of violence and gore was overall felt to be less when playing games as opposed to watching clips of gameplay.

The need to focus on the controls and follow the steps and levels of the game required a great deal of concentration. Solving the puzzle, collecting points, moving to the next target and having to make quick decisions, moved the focus of players' attention away from the violence.   Also, although animation is seen as sophisticated and far superior than games they had experienced playing, graphics were described as 'not real' and seemed even less real when played as opposed to being viewed.

"It's not a case of randomly killing people, you are focussing on the people and where you are going." (Female, with children 10 – 16 years, C2D)

"You're just concentrating on what you have to do and you don't even hear the language as much." (Female, with children 10 – 16 years, C2D)

"I think the more competent you become, the less involved you get with the violence as you want to play the game and get to the next level." (Male, with children 10 – 16 years, BC1)

Considering the classifications once more, parents all felt that on the whole these were appropriate and correct for the games they had been playing.

"The clips were a totally different experience to playing the game.   Most of the clips were '18', but the games were '15'." (Male, with children 10 – 16 years, BC1)

"Having played Call of Duty it was much more how a '15' should be. It wasn't nearly as sadistic as the clip suggested." (Female, with children 10 – 16 years, BC1)

Gamers were aware of games classification but felt that they were not relevant to them as they were over 18.   They did, however, recognise that games' classification had an important role for parents with children. In contrast to parents who tended to over classify once they had viewed the games' clips, gamers were broadly in agreement with games' ratings, or on occasion even felt these were too stringent.   Gamers confirmed the experience of playing games was different to watching video of games' highlights, and their perceptions and views of playing games was more akin to parents' experiences of playing

games in the group discussions.

Having discussed the games play and classification in more detail some interesting observations and issues emerged which parents felt may be important for examiners to take into consideration when classifying game:

- Experienced players like their children have excellent manual skills and as less focus on this is needed when playing, they raise the possibility that the impact of violence could potentially be greater

  "I think the more you play the better you get at the violence." (Male, with children 10 – 16 years, BC1)

  "Playing does desensitize you. You concentrate on the game and not the violence, but as you get better you may see it more." (Male, with children 10 – 16 years, BC1)

- The prolonged exposure to games as a result of lengthy periods that children spend playing, was also felt to potentially increase the impact of violence children experienced

- It is violence in games both visual and implied, which causes the most concern to parents. If this is ongoing throughout the game and increasing in severity at higher levels, it was suggested that greater consideration should be given to the effect on players

- In games where the player is in control and influencing how a game unfolds, parents queried how this may potentially increase involvement, and again the impact of violence could be greater

  "They need to take on board that children become the characters. Like in Call of Duty you can get trigger happy. It depends on the individuals." (Female, with children 10 – 16 years, BC1)

"You watch film but you are in the game playing, so the criteria should be more severe." (Male, with children 10 – 16 years, BC1)

- Inclusion of film footage, used at various points in a game, was considered specific material that ought to be taken in to account when classifying games. This footage was seen as more 'real' than computer animation, and consequently possibly resulting in increasing the sense of violence felt by the viewer

"I felt I was in a film with Call of Duty and the clips made it more real." (Female, with children 10 – 16 years, BC1)

Classifying Games

All respondents were asked whether games classifications ought to be based on the same rules as film/DVD classifications - should there be one set of Guidelines for film, DVDs and games?

Having one set of rules to be applied both to film and games was considered generally an appropriate and correct approach for games classification to adopt.

BBFC was seen as a credible, trustworthy and reliable organisation and their experience in classifying film, (focusing on issues including violence, language, drugs, sex and so on) would be equally relevant to classifying games.

Respondents described how they are familiar with film ratings and have an understanding of what to expect from each classification in terms of content and suitability for key age groups. Using the same ratings for games as film immediately communicates relevant information to consumers. Similarly, Consumer Advice for games as with film was well understood, relevant and welcomed by all.

Separate or different rules for games classification were viewed negatively. As well as being difficult for respondents to consider what would be inherently different between the two sets of Guidelines, such an approach was likely to cause a good deal of confusion

among consumers.

The inclusion of Guidelines text discussing games in the revised Guidelines was welcomed by respondents. As this covered issues and concerns raised by parents, it suggested to them that the BBFC were taking classification of games seriously, recognising potential differences between film and games.

Respondents were introduced to pBBFC where they would be able to access more information about game classification. This was viewed positively and interest was shown amongst some respondents for the site to be referenced along side Consumer Advice.

Overall it was felt that games classification could be readily managed alongside film using the same Guidelines. Respondents pointed to issues that had been raised in the discussions concerning game play, use of real film, and player control, all of which to a greater or lesser extent could they believed impact on the level and sense of violence experienced. They were keen for the BBFC to take this in to account when classifying games, and if appropriate to adopt a more stringent approach.

Appendix 1a

Views On Individual Film And DVD Classifications

	Seen film	% agreed with	% consider too high	% considered too low
Beverley Hills Chihuahua (U)	111	100%	0%	0%
Hotel for Dogs (U)	78	100%	0%	0%
City of Ember (PG)	77	100%	0%	0%
Tales of Despereaux (U)	63	100%	0%	0%
Sisterhood of the Travelling Pants (12A)	46	100%	0%	0%
I've Loved You So Long (12)	38	100%	0%	0%
Secret Life of Bees (12A)	29	100%	0%	0%
The Secret of Moonacre (U)	27	100%	0%	0%
Nights in Rodanthe (PG)	24	100%	0%	0%
The Backyardigans (U)	22	100%	0%	0%
Then She Found Me (15)	12	100%	0%	0%
Sunday School - the Musical (U)	7	100%	0%	0%
WALL-E (U)	1056	100%	0%	0%
Camp Rock (U)	143	99%	0%	1%
Space Chimps (U)	92	99%	0%	1%
Inkheart (PG)	155	99%	0%	1%
High School Musical 3 (U)	316	98%	0%	2%
Miss Pettigrew Lives for a Day (PG)	42	98%	2%	0%
Scar 3D (18)	41	98%	2%	0%
New in Town (12A)	35	97%	3%	0%
The Forbidden Kingdom (12)	168	97%	1%	2%
The Young Victoria (PG)	67	97%	1%	1%
What Just Happened? (15)	67	97%	3%	0%
Australia (12A)	218	97%	1%	2%
Bedtime Stories (PG)	123	97%	2%	1%
The Pink Panther 2 (PG)	91	97%	1%	2%
Confessions of a Shopaholic (PG)	150	97%	1%	2%

	Seen film	% agreed with	% consider too high	% considered too low
Merlin (PG)	141	96%	1%	2%
Mamma Mia (PG)	1302	96%	1%	3%
Saw V (18)	336	96%	2%	1%
Babysitter Wanted (18)	27	96%	0%	4%
The Love Guru (12)	132	96%	0%	4%
Righteous Kill (15)	141	96%	1%	4%
Kung Fu Panda (PG)	652	96%	4%	0%
Four Christmases (12A)	171	95%	3%	2%
Mum and Dad (18)	127	95%	4%	1%
Rachel Getting Married (15)	63	95%	3%	2%
Julia (15)	21	95%	5%	0%
Changeling (15)	286	95%	3%	1%
Man on Wire (12)	158	95%	5%	0%
Twilight (12A)	354	95%	3%	2%
The Counterfeiters (15)	118	95%	5%	0%
Hunger (15)	76	95%	1%	4%
Open Season 2 (PG)	38	95%	5%	0%
Narnia – Prince Caspian (PG)	453	95%	0%	5%
Somers Town (12)	126	94%	3%	2%
Lakeview Terrace (15)	159	94%	4%	1%
The Day the Earth Stood still (12A)	382	94%	4%	2%
Revolutionary Road (15)	147	94%	5%	1%
The Wrestler (15)	672	94%	2%	4%
City of Men (15)	65	94%	5%	2%
Role Models (15)	272	94%	4%	2%
Britannia High (PG)	80	94%	4%	3%
Incendiary (15)	16	94%	0%	6%
Defiance (15)	191	94%	6%	1%
Hellboy 2 – The Golden Army (12)	795	94%	3%	3%
Valkyrie (12A)	270	94%	2%	4%

	Seen film	% agreed with	% consider too high	% considered too low
24: Redemption (15)	349	94%	6%	1%
Ghost Town (12)	243	93%	4%	2%
Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa (PG)	331	93%	6%	0%
Stone of Destiny (12A)	15	93%	7%	0%
Burn After Reading (15)	349	93%	3%	4%
Punisher War Zone (18)	87	93%	2%	5%
Cass (18)	70	93%	7%	0%
Hancock (12)	763	93%	3%	4%
Bolt (PG)	352	93%	7%	0%
Curious Case of Benjamin Button (12A)	419	93%	3%	4%
Transsiberian (15)	39	92%	3%	5%
Che: Part One (15)	165	92%	8%	0%
Gomorrah (15)	88	92%	0%	8%
The International (15)	85	92%	5%	3%
The House Bunny (12)	123	92%	2%	7%
Mummy–Tomb of Dragon Emperor (12)	453	92%	6%	2%
Angus, Thongs & Perfect Snogging (12)	194	92%	7%	2%
He's Just Not That into You (12A)	177	92%	2%	6%
The Reader (15)	175	91%	2%	6%
Yes Man (12A)	306	91%	2%	7%
Standard Operating Procedures (15)	21	90%	0%	10%
Transporter (15)	372	90%	8%	2%
Brideshead Revisited (12)	61	90%	0%	10%
Friday the 13th (18)	193	90%	9%	1%
Little Britain USA (15)	389	90%	5%	5%
Pineapple Express (15)	459	90%	3%	7%
Che, Part Two (15)	78	90%	9%	1%
The Wackness (15)	85	89%	2%	8%
The Strangers (15)	289	89%	3%	8%
Push (12A)	102	89%	1%	10%
Get Smart (12)	249	89%	10%	0%

	Seen film	% agreed with	% consider too high	% considered too low
Slumdog Millionaire (15)	1368	89%	10%	1%
My Bloody Valentine 3-D (18)	180	89%	10%	1%
Disaster Movie (12)	117	89%	2%	9%
Cadillac Records (15)	18	89%	11%	0%
Milk (15)	179	89%	10%	1%
Resident evil: Degeneration (15)	193	89%	8%	3%
Notorious (15)	70	89%	0%	11%
The Children (15)	61	89%	0%	11%
The Visitor (15)	34	88%	12%	0%
Thick As Thieves (15)	17	88%	6%	6%
The Wire: Series 1 – 5 (18)	212	88%	10%	2%
Seven Pounds (12A)	391	88%	1%	11%
Doubt (15)	109	88%	10%	2%
The Secret Diary of a Call Girl (18)	117	88%	9%	3%
Picture This! (12)	16	88%	6%	6%
Vicky Christina Barcelona (12A)	143	86%	1%	13%
The Spirit (12A)	227	86%	1%	13%
Frost/ Nixon (15)	242	86%	14%	0%
The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas (12)	192	85%	4%	11%
The Mutant Chronicles (18)	70	84%	11%	4%
Bride Wars (12A)	99	84%	14%	2%
Watchmen (18)	376	84%	14%	2%
Dr Who – Series 4 (12)	281	81%	18%	1%
Underworld 3: Rise of the Lycans (18)	139	80%	19%	1%
Taken (18)	343	80%	17%	3%
Another Gay Sequel (18)	42	74%	26%	0%
The Dark Knight (12)	1508	69%	1%	30%

Appendix 1b

Views On Individual Video Game Classifications

	No.who have played/ watched	Agreed %	Too high %	Too low %
Madagascar 2: Escape To Africa (U) - Multiple	58	100%	0%	0%
Shellshock 2: Blood Ties (18) - Xbox 360, Sony PS3, PC	24	100%	0%	0%
So Blonde (12) - PC	4	100%	0%	0%
WALL-E (U) - Multiple	116	99%	0%	1%
Hellboy: Science Of Evil (12) - Xbox 360, Sony PS3, Sony PSP	81	99%	0%	1%
LEGO Indiana Jones (U) - Multiple	441	99%	0%	1%
Viva Pinata: Pocket Paradise (U) - Nintendo DS	112	98%	0%	2%
Samba De Amigo (U) - Nintendo Wii	41	98%	1%	1%
Ben 10: Alien Force (PG) - Multiple	36	97%	3%	0%
The Mummy: Tomb Of The Dragon Emperor (12) - Nintendo Wii, Sony PS2	36	97%	3%	0%
Tomb Raider – Underworld (12) - Multiple	593	96%	3%	1%
Kung Fu Panda (PG) - Multiple	227	96%	4%	0%
Siren Blood Curse (18) - Sony PS3	103	96%	4%	0%
Dead Space (18) - 360, Sony PS3, PC	579	95%	5%	0%
Saints Row 2 (18) - Xbox 360, Sony PS3	360	95%	4%	1%
House Of The Dead: Overkill (18) - Nintendo Wii	79	95%	5%	0%
50 Cent: Blood On The Sand (18) - Xbox 360, Sony PS3	38	95%	3%	3%
Alone In The Dark (15) - Multiple	275	94%	3%	3%
Quantum Of Solace (12) - Multiple	403	93%	3%	4%
Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway (15) - Xbox 360, Sony PS3, PC	226	93%	4%	3%
F.E.A.R. 2 - Project Origin (18) - Xbox 360, Sony PS3, PC	154	93%	7%	0%
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed (12) - Multiple	636	92%	8%	1%
Grand Theft Auto IV (PC version) (18) - PC	968	92%	7%	1%
Street Fighter IV (12) - Xbox 360, Sony PS3	187	92%	6%	2%
Soul Calibur IV (12) - Xbox 360, Sony PS3	434	92%	5%	3%

	Number who have played/ watched	Agreed %	Too high %	Too low %
Sega Mega Drive Ultimate Collection (PG) - Xbox 360, Sony PS3	95	92%	8%	0%
Civilization: Revolution (PG) - Xbox 360, Sony PS3	137	91%	7%	2%
Gears Of War 2 (18) - Xbox 360	715	91%	8%	1%
Call Of Duty - World At War (15) - Multiple	1046	89%	5%	6%
Fallout 3 (18) - Xbox 360, Sony PS3, PC	866	88%	11%	1%
Mortal Kombat vs. DC Universe (15) - Xbox 360, Sony PS3	237	87%	11%	2%
Fable II (15) - Xbox 360	509	87%	12%	1%
Far Cry 2 (18) - Xbox 360, Sony PS3, PC	245	86%	14%	0%
Left 4 Dead (18) - Xbox 360, Sony PS3, PC	565	85%	14%	1%
WWE Smackdown vs. Raw 2009 (15) - Multiple	258	84%	15%	1%
Guitar Hero World Tour (12) - Multiple	945	82%	18%	0%
Resistance 2 (18) - Sony PS3	328	81%	17%	2%
Lips (12) - Xbox 360	150	81%	19%	0%

Appendix 2 – Methodology

GfK NOP Random Location Omnibus Sample Design

The GfK NOP Random Location Omnibus employs a quota sample of individuals with randomly selected sampling points. The sample design is essentially a 3-stage design, sampling first parliamentary constituencies, then output areas within those selected constituencies and finally respondents within the output areas. The sample is based on 175 sampling points.

The selection of Parliamentary Constituencies

The first-stage sampling units for the survey are parliamentary constituencies, selected in the following way. The 644* parliamentary constituencies of The United Kingdom are classified into the Register General's ten Standard Regions. In Scotland, a further classification was by the new Strathclyde Region and the rest of Scotland. In Wales, the South East was classified separately from the rest of Wales. Within each Standard Region, constituencies are classified into four urban/rural types as follows:

1. ***Metropolitan County***

    Those constituencies that lie completely within the area of the eight Metropolitan Counties of the United Kingdom. It is appreciated that such areas now technically do not exist but they are still convenient building blocks for sample design.

    In the case of the North West Standard Region, which contains two Metropolitan Counties, the constituencies of the Greater Manchester MC were classified and listed separately from those of the Merseyside MC. Similarly, for the Yorkshire and Humberside Standard Region, the constituencies of the South Yorkshire MC were listed separately from those of the West Yorkshire MC.

    In Greater London, constituencies north of the river Thames were listed

separately from those south of the river. These were further sub-divided into east and west for each side of the river.

* For practical reasons, two constituencies (Orkney and Shetland, and Western Isles) are not included in the sampling frame from which constituencies are selected.

2. ***Other 100% Urban***

    All urban constituencies, other than Metropolitan County constituencies, in which the population density was greater than 7 persons per hectare.

3. ***Mixed Urban/Rural***

    Constituencies, consisting of a mixture of urban and rural local authority areas, in which the population was greater than 1.5 and <u>less</u> than 7 persons per hectare.

4. ***Rural***

    Constituencies, consisting of a mixture of urban and rural local authority areas, in which the population density was <u>less</u> than 1.5 persons per hectare.

Within each of the resultant 46 cells, as a final stratification, constituencies are listed in order of the percentage of people resident in households whose head is in socio-economic Groups 1, 2, 3, 4 or 13 (approximates to Social Grades A&B).

When all the constituencies have been listed in the above way, the electorate of each constituency is entered on the list and a cumulative total of electors by constituency is formed. The selection is done in the following way. From the file of constituencies, a sample of 175 must be drawn. To draw this sample, the following procedure is undertaken. The total number of cumulative electors (N) on the list is divided by 175 and a random number between 1 and N/175 is selected.

This random number identifies an elector, in the cumulative total of electors, and the constituency this elector is in becomes the first selected constituency in the sample. To obtain the other 174 constituencies, the sampling interval N/175 is added on 174 times to the initial random number. This produces 175 cells all containing N/175 electors. Within

each cell a random number between 1 and N/175 is selected. This random number identifies an elector, in the cumulative total of electors for that cell, and the constituency this elector is in is selected. This procedure is repeated for all 175 cells. Thus a sample of 175 constituencies is produced.

The Selection of Output Areas

Within each selected constituency, an output area is selected for each wave of the Omnibus. These output areas are selected at random, but with some stratification control so that the sample of areas drawn is representative of the sample of constituencies and therefore of the United Kingdom in demographic terms. The variables used for stratification are essentially age, sex, social class, and geodemographic profile (Mosaic classification). Once the areas have been selected, the profile of the aggregated set of areas is checked against the national profile to ensure that is representative. Each area is a small area, containing in average around 150 households. Each output area is therefore homogenous, with the people living within it being fairly similar in social grade terms.

Therefore, when quotas are set for interviewing within each output area, the variables we control for are age and sex within working status. No quota is set for social grade, as the selection of areas ensures that the sample is balanced in this respect.

This procedure is repeated for each wave of the Omnibus, producing a different sample of areas for each week of fieldwork.

The Selection of respondents

For each selected output area, a list of all residential addresses is produced. This listing is taken from the Postal Address File, which is a listing of all addresses within the United Kingdom, and is updated monthly. The interviewer uses this list to identify the households at which they can interview. Overleaf is an example of a typical output area address listing. 12 people are interviewed within each area.

In addition to the address listing for an output area, the interviewer is also given a quota sheet, which determines what sort of people they must interview. Each interviewer must interview 12 people within an output area, and the quotas are different for each area in order to reflect the demographic profile of that area.

The quotas are set in terms of age and sex within working status. No quota is set for social class, as the selection of output areas ensures that the sample is balanced in this respect.

Appendix 3 – Questionnaire

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey. The questionnaire should take no more than 10 minutes to complete.

SQ1   Have you personally watched any of the following recently released films or DVDs in the past four weeks? **MARK ALL MENTIONED.**

Recently released films	*Seen*		*Recently released DVDs*	*Seen*
01	Beverley Hills Chihuahua(U)		41	WALL-E (U)	
02	Tales of Despereaux (U)		42	Camp Rock (U)	
03	Mamma Mia (PG)		43	Space Chimps (U)	
04	Madagascar:Esc.2Africa (PG)		44	Britannia High (PG)	
05	Bedtime Stories (PG)		45	Narnia – Prince Caspian	
06	Inkheart (PG)		46	Kung Fu Panda (PG)	
07	Stone of Destiny (12A)		47	Mamma Mia! (PG)	
08	The Spirit (12A)		48	Merlin (PG)	
09	Secret Life of Bees (12A)		49	The Love Guru (12)	
10	Four Christmases (12A)		50	Disaster Movie (12)	
11	Day Earth Stood still (12A)		51	The Wackness (12)	
12	Twilight (12A)		52	Man on Wire (12)	
13	Seven Pounds (12A)		53	Somers Town (12)	
14	Australia (12A)		54	Hellboy 2 – The Golden Army (12)	
15	Yes Man (12A)		55	Hancock (12)	
16	S'hood of the Travelling Pants		56	Dr Who – Series 4 (12)	
17	Bride Wars (12A)		57	The Forbidden Kingdom (12)	
18	Defiance (15)		58	Angus,Thongs & Perfect Snog. (12)	
19	Role Models (15)		59	The Dark Knight (12)	
20	Transporter (15)		60	Mummy – Tomb of the D.Emperor	
21	Changeling (15)		61	The Strangers (15)	
22	Slumdog Millionaire (15)		62	Pineapple Express (15)	
23	Lakeview Terrace (15)		63	Little Britain USA (15)	

24	What Just Happened? (15)		64	Standard Op'ing Procedures (15)	
25	The Children (15)		65	24: Redemption (15)	
26	The Wrestler (15)		66	Resident evil: Degeneration (15)	
27	Che: Part One (15)		67	The Counterfeiters (15)	
28	The Reader (15)		68	Cass (18)	
29	Julia (15)		69	Another Gay Sequel (18)	
30	Mum and Dad (18)		70	The Wire: Series 1 – 5 (18)	

Have not seen any recently released films or DVDs *99* ⟶ **CLOSE**

SQ2 As you may know, films and DVDs carry classification ratings. Which of the following classifications of films and DVDs do you usually watch nowadays, either on your own or with children? **MARK ALL MENTIONED**

U 1

PG.. 2

12/12A 3

15.. 4

18.. 5

R18 6

ATTENTION PAID TO CLASSIFICATIONS

Q1a To what extent do you usually refer to classifications before deciding whether to watch a film or DVD, either on your own or with children? **ONE CODE**

I always check the classification of films 1

I usually only check classifications on films if I'm going to be watching with children
(IF RESPONDENT SELECTS THIS ANSWER, CHECK AND CODE BY THE AGE OF THE <u>OLDEST</u> CHILD INVOLVED):

aged 5 or under 2

aged 8 or under 3

aged 12 or under .... 4 → Q1b

aged 15 or under 5

aged 18 or under 6

I sometimes check classifications on films when I'm watching without children 7

I never check classifications on films .... 8 → Q2a

Q1b **ASK ALL MENTIONING A RECENTLY RELEASED FILM AT SQ1, OTHERS TO Q1c**

For the films that you have watched recently at the cinema, did you actually check their classification before deciding whether or not to see them? **ONE CODE BELOW**

Q1c **ASK ALL MENTIONING A RECENTLY RELEASED DVD AT SQ1, OTHERS TO Q1d**

And did you check the classification of DVDs, either when renting or buying, or when the film was originally in the cinema? **ONE CODE**

	Q1b Cinema	Q1c DVD
Checked classification on all films seen recently	1	1
Checked classification on some of the films seen recently	2	2
Did not check classification on any of the films seen recently	3	3
Can't recall	4	4

Q1d **ASK ALL WHO CHECK CLASSIFICATIONS (CODES 1 – 7 AT Q1a OR CODES 1 – 2 AT 1b/1c). OTHERSTO Q2a.**

Where do you normally check for the classification of a film you are considering watching? **MARK ALL MENTIONED**

Film Posters	1
Film reviews	2
Cinema listings in newspapers	3
Cinema information lines	4
Cinema billboards	5
T.V. or radio advertising	6
On-line - film or cinema website	7
On-line - BBFC website	8
On-line – DVD rental website	9
Friends/others who have seen the film	10
DVD pack	11
Other (specify)	12

....

AGREEMENT WITH CLASSIFICATIONS

Q2a **ASK ALL**

How frequently have you disagreed with the classification a film or DVD has been given? **ONE CODE.**

Always 1
Quite often 2
Occasionally 3
Never 4

Q2b Overall, did you agree with the classification(s) given to the film(s) and/ DVD(s) that you have seen in the past four weeks? **ONE CODE.**

Can't recall... 1
Yes, totally agreed with all classifications .... 2 ➤GO TO Q4
Yes, mainly agreed with all classifications 3
Disagreed with one or two classifications .... 4 ➤GO TO Q3a
Disagreed with quite a few classifications.................. 5

Q3a **ASK THOSE WHO DISAGREED WITH A CLASSIFICATION, OTHERS TO Q4**

Which films or DVDs did you most disagree with the classification of? **RECORD MAXIMUM OF 3 FILMS DISAGREED WITH IN BOXES BELOW.**

Q3b **ASK FOR FILM CLASSIFICATIONS DISAGREED WITH AT Q3a. OTHERS TO Q4**

And was this because you believed this film was suitable for children younger than the certificate suggested, for older children or should have been restricted to adults only? **RECORD IN SECOND SET OF COLUMNS BELOW**

Q3a Write in code of film/DVD disagreed with	**Q3b** Considered suitable for		
	Younger	Older	Adults only
	1	2	3
	1	2	3
	1	2	3

Q3c **ASK THOSE WHO SAY CODE 2 OR 3 FOR ANY FILM OR DVD AT Q3b, OTHERS TO Q4**

Which of the following areas did you find particularly unsuitable for the classification given to the(se) film(s)? **MARK ALL MENTIONED FOR ALL FILMS DISAGREED WITH**

Bad language 1

Racist or homophobic language or behaviour............ 2

Nudity.. 3

Sexual references 4

Sexual behaviour 5

Violence 6

Sexual violence.. 7

Unacceptable behaviour that others may copy 8

Dangerous behaviour that others may copy 9

Horror effects in the film... 10

Reference to illegal drugs 11

Use of illegal drugs 12

Inclusion of themes or issues that are upsetting or
 inappropriate (e.g. domestic violence) 13

The tone of the film (e.g. dark & threatening; crude) 14

Other factors (specify).. 15

UNDERSTANDING OF CLASSIFICATIONS

Q4 As far as you know, what does a 12A classification at the cinema mean, in terms of who a film is suitable for? **ONE CODE**

Suitable for children aged 12 and above, but
 parents can take younger children if they choose to . 1
Suitable for <u>all</u> children, provided accompanied........ 2
Not suitable for any child under the age of 12   3
Not sure/can't say 4

OPINION OF CLASSIFICATIONS

Q5a   Thinking of the sorts of films you usually watch, <u>in general</u> how much do you agree with the classifications they are given? **ROTATE ORDER OF ASKING <u>FOR EACH CLASSIFICATION MENTIONED AT SQ2.</u> ONE CODE IN EACH COLUMN**

	U	PG	12	15	18	R18
I often disagree and find this classification inappropriate						
I occasionally disagree and find this classification inappropriate						
I never really notice or pay attention to this classification						
I usually agree that this classification is appropriate						
I always agree that this classification is appropriate						

Q5b **ASK THOSE DISAGREEING WITH ANY CLASSIFICATION AT Q5a, OTHERS TO Q6**

What mainly makes you disagree with classifications? **RECORD IN FULL**

As you may know, films are classified in this country by the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) **(PROMPT WITH CLASSIFICATION SCREEN SHOT, CONSUMER ADVICE AND SYMBOLS)**

Q6   Overall, how effective do you feel the BBFC is in its role of providing reliable film classifications and advice for consumers? **ONE CODE**

Very effective 1
Quite effective 2
Unsure 3
Not very effective 4
Not at all effective 5

AWARENESS AND INTEREST IN FURTHER ADVICE

Q7   **ASK ONLY THOSE NOT DIRECTED FROM THE BBFC WEB PAGES SHOWN BELOW, OTHERS TO Q8**
Are you aware that you can find out more about the classifications given to films via ….

	Yes	No
…Dedicated pages on the British Board of Film Classification website that provide consumer advice on films	1	2
…A separate website for parents called pbbfc	1	2

Q8   **ASK ALL. SHOW WEB PAGE EXAMPLES**
These are examples of the information that appears on the pbbfc website. How useful is this information for you? **ONE CODE**

Very useful... 1
Quite useful.. 2
Unsure 3
Not very useful... 4
Not at all useful.. 5

Q9a **SHOW CONSUMER ADVICE EXAMPLE**

Have you ever noticed this Consumer Advice that appears on the back of DVDs, or on promotional material for films? **ONE CODE**

Yes...1 ⟶ Q9b

No ....2 ⟶ Q10

Q9b **ASK THOSE WHO NOTICE CONSUMER ADVICE (CODE 1 AT Q9a), OTHERS TO Q10**

How useful do you find this information? **MARK ONE CODE**

Very useful.. 1

Quite useful.. 2

Unsure 3

Not very useful... 4

Not at all useful 5

Never look at it... 6

Q10 **ASK ALL**

Have you ever…

	Yes	No
Visited the BBFC website	1	2
Complained to the BBFC about:		
a film classification	1	2
a DVD classification	1	2
a Video game classification	1	2

Q11   Would you be interested in seeing more detailed information about <u>why</u> films have been given a certain classification, if the information were available on a website? **ONE CODE.**

No interest at all 1

Current information is sufficient 2

Yes, interested via website 3

Yes interested but not via website 4

Can't say 5

VIDEO GAME CLASSIFICATION

As you may know, some video games are also classified by the British Board of Film Classification

Q12   Have you ever purchased or rented video games either for yourself, a friend or family member? **ONE CODE**

Yes...1 ⟶ CONTINUE

No ....2 ⟶ PROFILE

Q13   Have you played or watched others playing any of the following recently released video games in the past four weeks? **MARK ALL MENTIONED**.

Viva Pinata: Pocket Paradise (U)................................ 1
WALL-E (U) 2
LEGO Indiana Jones (U)... 3
Madagascar 2: Escape To Africa (U) 4
Samba De Amigo (U)... 5
Kung Fu Panda (PG) 6
Civilization: Revolution (PG) 7
Lips (12)... 8
Guitar Hero World Tour (12) 9
Hellboy: Science Of Evil (12) 10
Quantum Of Solace (12) 11
So Blonde (12)... 12
Soul Calibur IV (12)... 13
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed (12) 14   ⟶Q14
The Mummy: Tomb Of The Dragon Emperor (12) .. 15
Tomb Raider – Underworld (12) 16
Mortal Kombat vs. DC Universe (15) 17
Alone In The Dark (15).. 18
WWE Smackdown vs. Raw 2009 (15) 19
Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway (15) 20
Call Of Duty - World At War (15)............................... 21
Fable II (15) 22
Fallout 3 (18)... 23
Gears Of War 2 (18) 24
Grand Theft Auto IV (PC version) (18)..................... 25
Left 4 Dead (18).. 26
Resistance 2 (18).. 27
Saints Row 2 (18) 28
Siren Blood Curse (18) 29
Dead Space (18).. 30
None played/watched .... 31 ⟶ SKIP TO Q17

93

Q14 **ASK ALL WHO PLAYED/WATCHED A GAME AT Q13, OTHERS TO Q17**

And did you check the classification of these games before deciding whether you, or others, should play them? **ONE CODE**

Checked classification on all games 1

Checked classification on some of the games 2

Did not check classification on any of the games 3

Can't recall 4

Q15 **SHOW GAMES LIST TO REMIND RESPONDENT OF GAMES PLAYED AND CLASSIFICATIONS**

Overall, did you agree with the classifications given to the games that you have played or watched recently**? ONE CODE**

Can't recall 1

Yes, totally agreed with all classifications .... 2 ➔ GO TO Q17

Yes, mainly agreed with all classifications 3

Disagreed with one or two classifications .... 4 ➔ TO Q16a

Disagreed with quite a few classifications 5

Q16a **ASK THOSE WHO DISAGREED WITH A CLASSIFICATION, OTHERS TO Q17**

Which game(s) did you disagree with the classification of? **MARK ALL MENTIONED IN FIRST COLUMN BELOW**

IF MORE THAN 3 GAMES MENTIONED, SAY: Can you please select the three games that you most disagreed with the classification of?

Q16b **ASK FOR GAME CLASSIFICATIONS DISAGREED WITH AT Q16a. OTHERS TO**
Q17

And was this because you believed the game was suitable for children younger than
the classification suggested, for older children or should have been restricted to
adults only? **RECORD IN SECOND SET OF COLUMNS BELOW**

	Q16a	Q16b		
	Disagreed	Considered suitable for		
	with classification	Younger	Older	Adults only
	....................................1............ ….. ….. .. 1……..…2………....3			
	...............................2...................…….....1…....... ….2……………3			
	..............................3.........……………..……1…`……..2……………3			

Q17 **ASK ALL VIDEO GAME PURCHASERS/RENTERS**

Overall, how effective do you feel the BBFC is in its role of providing reliable video
game classifications and advice for consumers? **ONE CODE**

Very effective 1
Quite effective 2
Unsure 3
Not very effective 4
Not at all effective 5

Q18a How frequently, on average, do you rent or buy DVDs to watch at home? **ONE CODE.**

Q18b How often do you go to the cinema nowadays?

Q18c How often do you rent or buy video games to play at home?

	Q18a DVD	Q18b CINEMA	Q18c GAMES
Every day	1	1	1
2-3 times a week	2	2	2
Once a week	3	3	3
Once a fortnight	4	4	4
Once a month	5	5	5
Once every two to three months	6	6	6
Once every 4-6 months	7	7	7
Less often	8	8	8
Never	9	9	9

PROFILE QUESTIONS

Occupation of CWE:
Qualifications
Type of organisation:

P1 Social Class

A - Higher Manager.......... ….1

B - Int Mngr 2

C1 - Jr Mngr/Prof 3

C2 - Skilled Manual...............4

D - Semi Skilled 5

E - Unemployed/State pension6

P2 Gender

Male 1

Female 2

P3 Age

Under 16 ....1→ **CLOSE**
16-18........................... 2
19-24........................... 3
25-34........................... 4
35-44........................... 5
45-54........................... 6
55-64........................... 7
65+............................. 8

P4 Parental Status (multi code possible)

Parent of child under 18.   1

Grandparent of child under 18   2

No children/grandchildren under 18   3 SKIP P5

P5 Age of children/Grand children

Under 5 1
6-8............................. 2
9-11........................... 3
12-15......................... 4
16-18......................... 5
Over 18 6

P6 Religious affiliation

Are you <u>actively practising</u> in any religion?

No 1
IF YES: Which religion is that
Christian................................2
Muslim 3
Jewish...................................4
Hindu 5
Buddhist................................6
Sikh.......................................7
Other religion 8
Refused.................................9

P7 Cultural background

White British/Irish 1

Mixed 2

Asian or Asian British...........3

Black or Black British 4

Chinese or Chinese British....5

Other ethnic group 6

Refused.................................7

P8 Location

North 1

Yorks and Humber 2

East Midlands 3

East Anglia............................4

G.L.C 5

South East (Excl. GLC).........6

South West 7

Wales....................................8

West Midlands 9

North West 10

Scotland..............................11

Northern Ireland..................12

P9 OPTIONAL QUESTION: Sexual orientation

Which of the following best describes how you think of yourself?

Heterosexual ("straight") 1

Gay 2

Lesbian 3

Bisexual 4

Transsexual 5

Can't choose 6

Appendix 4

Material viewed by focus group respondents prior to attending group

Group 1

      In the Night Garden – Hello Makka Pakka!

      Tracey Beaker, Episode 6

      Shrek 2

      Finding Nemo

      Ice Age 2 (video game)

Group 2

      In the Night Garden – Hello Makka Pakka!

      Tracey Beaker, Episode 6

      Shrek 2

      Grange Hill – Episode 9

      The Little House on the Prairie – Blind Journey, Part 1

      Ice Age 2 (video game)

Group 3

      Tracey Beaker, Episode 6

      Grange Hill – Episode 9

      The Little House on the Prairie – Blind Journey, Part 1

      Shrek 2

      Finding Nemo

Group 4

      The Golden Compass

      Stardust

      Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix (video game)

      The Simpsons Game (video game)

Group 5

Hairspray

Son of Rambo

Legally Blonde

Group 6

The Golden Compass

Stardust

Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix (video game)

The Simpsons Game (video game)

Group 7

Hairspray

Son of Rambow

Love Thy Neighbour – Series 1, Episode 2

Grange Hill – Episode 9

Group 8

Hairspray

Son of Rambow

Love Thy Neighbour – Series 1, Episode 2

Grange Hill – Episode 9

Group 9

Legally Blonde

Stardust

Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix (video game)

The Simpsons Game (video game)

Group 10

Beowulf

Casino Royale

I am Legend

Tomb Raider Anniversary (video game)

Group 11

I now pronounce you Chuck and Larry

Love Thy Neighbour

Meet the Spartans

The Girl in the Cafe

Group 12

Jannat

Casino Royale

I Am Legend

Group 13

I Now Pronounce You Chuck and Larry

Love Thy Neighbour – Series 1, Episode 2

Meet The Spartans

The Girl In The Café

Group 14

Love Thy Neighbour – Series 1, Episode 2

The Girl In The Café

Jannat

Tomb Raider Anniversary (video game)

Little Britain: The Video Game (video game)

Group 15

I Now Pronounce You Chuck and Larry

Beowulf

Meet The Spartans

Little Britain: The Video Game (video game)

Group 16

This is England

30 Days of Night

Candy

Fahrenheit (video game) or Canis Canem Edit / Bully (video game)

Group 17

This is England

30 Days of Night

Curb Your Enthusiasm [Beloved Aunt]

Jewels

Resistance:Fall of Man (video game) or Fahrenheit (video game)

Group 18

Jewels

Nine Songs

Jimmy Carr In Concert

Good Luck Chuck

Fahrenheit (video game) or Canis Canem Edit / Bully (video game)

Group 19

Jewels

Nine Songs

Jimmy Carr In Concert

Good Luck Chuck

Resistance – Fall of Man (video game) or Fahrenheit (video game)

Group 20

Curb Your Enthusiasm [Beloved Aunt]

Jimmy Carr In Concert

Candy

This is England

Groups 21 and 22

    Jannat

    Bachke Rehna Baba

    Out of Time

Groups 23 – 26 (specialist video games groups)

All respondents viewed a DVD containing approximately 4 minutes of actual gameplay from each of the following games

<u>U</u>

Wall-E

Lego Indiana Jones

<u>PG</u>

The Golden Compass

The Chronicles Of Narnia - Prince Caspian

<u>12</u>

Star Wars - The Force Unleashed

Little Britain

Quantum Of Solace

<u>15</u>

Mortal Kombat Vs Dc Universe

Assassin's Creed

Call Of Duty - World At War

Alone In The Dark

<u>18</u>

Resident Evil 5
Grand Theft Auto Iv
Bioshock
Condemned 2