

Classification Study

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Office of Film and Literature Classification
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Film and Literature Classification has recently conducted quantitative market research to better understand consumer knowledge of the symbols it uses to classify films, DVDs, videos and computer games. This study was administered online by D&M Research between Thursday 2 June and Monday 6 June.

The timing was important as it was imperative that all interviewing was completed prior to the media coverage of the new classification symbols in the Classification (Markings for Films and Computer Games) Determination 2005. This was achieved, with the initial media reports on the symbols appearing on Tuesday 7 June, the day after the official launch.

This is not the first study of this type conducted in Australia. In February 2002, AC Nielsen was commissioned to provide benchmark measures of awareness for the different classification symbols in use. In September 2002, a Newspoll study provided a measure of community attitude towards the OFLC.

This study included components from both of these studies and, although there were differences in the way the data was collected, every effort was made to maintain consistency and thereby provide a means of comparison. In this regard the recent online study has been very successful with a high level of consistency between this study and those administered in 2002.

Similar to the earlier studies the survey data has been weighted and projected to Australian Bureau of Population estimates. As a consequence we can be confident that the research reflects the opinions of all Australians aged 14 years and older.

The key findings of this research are as follows;

1. Awareness and Interpretation of Film/Video Classification Symbols

- Awareness of the classification symbols used for film, video and DVD is high.
- While awareness for the symbols is high the level of understanding for the meaning of the different symbols varies enormously. Of particular note is the uncertainty surrounding legal restrictions that apply or else the level of supervision to be provided by parents.

- Of the six film symbols, it is only the G symbol which is widely understood in the strictest sense.
- The PG symbol is most commonly interpreted literally as 'Parental Guidance'. For many the qualification 'for persons under 15 years' is missed.
- Consumers are very confused about the differences between M and MA15+. In both cases almost half of all consumers interpret the symbol to mean 'Recommended for mature audiences' and this demonstrates that there is little understanding for the stricter conditions that apply to the MA15+ classification.
- Around half of all Australians understand that an R18+ classification means that it is for a restricted audience aged 18 years and over.
- Understanding of the X18+ symbol is at a lower level than R18+ but a significant proportion of the population understand the explicit content of X rated films, although 18% believe, incorrectly, that X18+ films contain violence. In both R18+ and X18+ the most common error is in the belief that the symbol indicates 'suitability' for adults aged 18+ rather than a legal restriction.
- With the exception of X18+ there is little difference in the levels of awareness observed for the different symbols across consumers of different ages. Recall of the X18+ symbol is at significantly lower levels among those aged 14-24 years than it is among older consumers.
- Overall 14-17 year olds demonstrate a lower level of understanding for the meaning of the symbols. This is typically because they think in terms of the content of the movies rather than the intended audience. Given that the statutory restrictions effect this demographic this finding is surprising.
- With the exception of MA15+ and R18+, regular cinema goers are no more aware of the classification symbols than those that never or rarely visit the cinema. This finding may be understandable given the generally high levels of awareness observed, however, it is surprising that regular cinema goers do not show a greater understanding of the meaning of any of the symbols.

2. Awareness of Computer Game Classification Symbols

- While awareness of the symbols used for computer games is higher now than in 2002, recognition of the symbols is still at much lower levels than those used for film.

- There are a number of factors that may account for the increase in awareness since 2002. It is possible that the change to the online survey methodology has contributed but other important factors that could also be expected to have increased awareness are increasing compliance with classification marking requirements by games manufacturers and the increasing use of computer games within the community.
- The G symbol has the highest awareness of all symbols, but at 64% this is well below the equivalent figure for film.
- Not surprisingly, awareness is higher among computer game players, yet surprisingly as many as 12% of those that play everyday are not aware of any classification symbols. These may be playing games that come pre-loaded with personal computers (such as Solitaire) or downloadable from other sources.
- Awareness of the computer games classification symbols is higher among the young and declines with age. This reflects the incidence of playing computer games.

3. Attitudes towards the OFLC and Classification

- Overall, community attitude to the OFLC and classification is very positive and has changed little since 2002. As public opinion would be expected to change slowly over time in this area, the fact that two surveys using different methodologies can produce such similar results enables us to be confident in the validity of the two sets of data.
- Where opinion has improved, it is typically a consequence of a shift among older people. In the study conducted in 2002 a relatively high proportion of those aged 50 years and older did not express an opinion about the OFLC, possibly due to being infrequent movie viewers and computer game players. This year older consumers were more positively disposed to the OFLC and less likely to be non-committal.
- There is almost universal recognition amongst the Australian 14+ population of the benefits of classification. Overall 94% of Australians are favourably disposed to the classification system, unchanged since 2002.
- Around three quarters of Australians agree that the OFLC has good perspective on movies for different ages and a similar proportion use the classification symbols to decide on the suitability of movies.

- Those most likely to use classification symbols are females, those aged 35 years and older and people who are married. Those least likely to use the symbols are males and young people.

4. Awareness of and Attitudes Towards Consumer Advice

- More than 9 in 10 Australians find consumer advice useful.
- Most people are familiar with the phrases used in the consumer advice announcements. The most common source of awareness is TV programs (99%), followed by TV/videos (72%), movies being shown at the cinema (50%), and computer games (33%).
- The ranking of the different media reflects their usage. TV is the media that most people would regularly use and therefore be familiar with and computer games has the lowest level of use of the different media.
- While regular game players are more likely to have seen consumer advice on computer games than non or infrequent players, it is of note that about half of the most active players claim not to have seen consumer advice on the case of a computer game.
- The most common source of awareness of consumer advice information at the cinema is on trailers for forthcoming movies (65%). This is followed by ads in newspapers (51%), and reviews in newspapers and magazines (44%).
- Given the absence (in the case of cinema trailers) or lack of prominence for consumer advice in the past, the places identified by survey respondents reflect where they would 'expect it to appear'. It is also highly likely that consumers are confused about the consumer advice and classification information (for example the classification description).
- Understandably, the highest levels of awareness for consumer advice are observed among the more active consumers of the different media. Hence, recall of consumer advice on the cases of DVDs, videos and computers is highest among those aged 14-24 years.

1. Research Background

The OFLC commissioned consumer research in order to determine the level of knowledge and understanding that currently exists in the Australian community in relation to classification information. This is not the first study of this type conducted in Australia.

In February 2002, AC Nielsen was commissioned to provide benchmark measures of awareness for the different classification symbols in use. In September 2002, a Newspoll study provided a measure of community attitude towards the OFLC.

It was the intention of this study to build on this knowledge and to update the information prior to the launch of new classification symbols which were launched on Monday 6 June. The insights gained from this research will also be used in a number of practical ways;

- Provide a new benchmark measure for the new classification symbols
- Provide more information on the users of the classification system
- Provide information on the awareness and usefulness of consumer advice
- Provide direction and focus for educational efforts

2. Research Objectives

The key objectives of the research were to measure;

- Awareness of film/video classification symbols
- Interpretation of the film/video symbols
- Awareness of computer game classification symbols
- Attitude towards the OFLC and classification
 - Usefulness of classification symbols
 - Ability of OFLC to decide on film classification for different audiences
 - Use of classification symbols when choosing movies/computer games
 - Role of the OFLC
- Awareness and usefulness of consumer advice
- Media consumption

Standard demographics for analysis purposes include sex, age, work status, household income and residential area.

3. Research Design and Methodology

3.1 Overview

A national consumer survey was conducted online by D&M Research. Interviewing commenced on Thursday 2 June and was completed on Monday 6 June. The sample comprised 1,002 respondents aged 14 years and older distributed throughout Australia, including both capital city and non-capital cities.

3.2 Sample Design

All contacts for this study were sourced from a permission-based panel. A selection of panel members were invited to participate in the research and paid a small incentive once they had completed the questionnaire successfully.

The composition of the sample was controlled by means of a quota system. These quotas set strict limits on the residential area, sex and age of respondents to ensure that the final sample reflected the Australian adult population.

3.3 Questionnaire

A structured self-completion questionnaire was used to administer the survey questions. Visual stimulus was also used to accurately determine awareness for the different classification symbols. Copies of the questionnaire and classification symbols used are appended to this report.

3.4 Fieldwork and Analysis

The questionnaire was self-administered. D&M Research employ a series of logic checks to ensure the validity of the data.

All data was processed in the Sydney office of Galaxy Research. Output is in the form of computer tabulations.

3.5 Weighting Factors and Projections

To reflect the Australian population distribution the data was post-weighted to the most recent Australian Bureau of Statistics estimate on the basis of the age, sex and area. As a consequence, we can be confident that the findings of the research reflect the opinions of all 15,965,000 Australians aged 14 years and older.

	Sample (1002) %	Weighted Sample (15,965,000) %
<i>Sex:</i>		
Male	50	49
Female	50	51
<i>Age:</i>		
14 to 17 years	7	7
18 to 24 years	12	11
25 to 34 years	18	18
35 to 49 years	27	28
50+ years	36	36

Table 1: Weighting Factors

3.6 Comparison to Previous Studies

In order to ensure comparability between different consumer surveys it is necessary to maintain consistency in all aspects of the study design. Of particular importance in this regard is methodology, sample composition and questionnaire content. In 2002 the AC Nielsen study was administered by means of a door to door omnibus. Unfortunately, this methodology is no longer available and therefore an alternative had to be sought.

The methodology to be adopted would need to allow visual images to be displayed, must enable the study to be administered for a reasonable cost and, very importantly, must permit replication with a high degree of reliability in the future. The methodology which best met this criteria was online.

The composition of the sample was controlled by a quota system and the data was subsequently weighted to Australian Bureau of Statistics population estimates. This approach is entirely consistent with that used in previous studies.

Every effort was made in the questionnaire design to maintain consistency with previous studies and thereby ensure comparability. For the most part this has been successful.

There are some instances where the self-completion questionnaire rather than interviewer administered methodology has resulted in differences in the way questions were answered and coded. This is of particular note for the understanding of the symbols questions.

In the face to face study conducted in 2002 the interviewer asked the question of meaning for each symbol and the response was recorded according to a pre-determined code list. While the respondent may not have used the exact words in the code list, the interviewer decided which of the available codes best fit the response given. In all cases, the response was distilled into a single answer code.

For the most recent study it would not have been possible to use a code list for the responses as this would have been read by the respondent during the course of completing the questionnaire and this would have provided a very different measure to the 'unprompted' question used in the past. To overcome this, respondents were invited to respond 'in their own words'. The responses given are probably little different to those verbalised in the past, the only difference is that on this occasion all of the response has been captured.

These responses have been reviewed and coded into like groups. The basis for each code frame was the code list used in 2002, but this has been added to as required to reflect the answers given. Many of the responses include elements from two or more of the established codes and where this occurs all of the information was captured as codes. This has resulted in many respondents having multiple responses for the understanding questions rather than the forced single response in the past. This provides a better understanding of the true knowledge within the community and will enable better targeting of future education campaigns.

4 Sample Profile

4.1 Demographic Profile

The weighted sample is representative of the Australian 14+ population.

BASE: Weighted Sample (15,965,000)	%
Sex: Male	49
Female	51
Age: 14 to 17 years	7
18 to 24 years	11
25 to 34 years	18
35 to 49 years	28
50+ years	36
<i>Households with children:</i> Yes	45
No	55
<i>Occupation:</i> White	57
Blue	43
<i>Residential Area:</i> Sydney	21
Rest of New South Wales / ACT	14
Melbourne	18
Rest of Victoria	7
Brisbane	9
Rest of Queensland	11
Adelaide	6
Rest of South Australia	2
Perth	7
Rest of Western Australia	3
All Tasmania	2

Table 2: Demographic Profile

This profile is very similar to the demographic profile in the 2002 study.

4.2 Entertainment Media Behaviour

Overall, the profile of media consumption from the latest survey is very similar to that obtained in 2002. Hence, respondents not only have a similar demographic profile to the earlier study but they also demonstrate similar use of the different entertainment media. This convergence of the data on several independent variables enables us to be confident in the reliability of the two studies.

4.2.1 Frequency of Going to the Cinema to Watch Movies

The regularity of going to the movies and watching DVDs demonstrates remarkable similarities between the most recent study and the one administered in 2002. In 2002, 30% of the 14+ population went to the movies once a month or more and in the most recent study the comparable figure is 28%.

	February 2002 %	June 2005 %
Once a week or more	3	2
2-3 times a month	11	9
Once a month	16	17
Every 2-3 months	22	25
Less often	33	38
Never	16	9

Table 3: Frequency Watch Movies at Cinema

4.2.2 Frequency of Watching Videos/DVD's

In 2002, 30% of the 14+ population watched a video or DVD once a week or more in the latest study the figure was found to be 29%. There is a difference in terms of using videos or DVDs 2-3 times a month, with a significantly higher incidence in 2005 than was observed in the previous study. This difference may reflect the different samples or it could indicate that this particular media has become more popular following the increasing penetration of DVD players in Australian households.

	February 2002 %	June 2005 %
Once a week or more	30	29
2-3 times a month	16	27
Once a month	14	14
Every 2-3 months	10	14
Less often	17	13
Never	13	3

Table 4: Frequency Watch Videos/DVDs

4.2.3 Frequency of Playing Computer Games

The pattern of playing computer games is quite different between the two studies, possibly reflecting a shift or just the different methodologies adopted. The fact that it was necessary for respondents to be computer users this year in order to complete the questionnaire has possibly resulted in a more computer savvy sample.

	February 2002 %	June 2005 %
Everyday	5	10
Several times a week	7	15
Once a week	5	8
2-3 times a month	6	10
Less often	14	23
Never	62	34

Table 5: Frequency Play Computer Games

As would be expected, interest in playing computer games varies significantly by age. Computer games are most popular among the young with 21% of those aged 14-17 years playing computer games everyday and only 9% within this age group never playing.

Overall, 14-17 year olds comprise just 7% of the 14+ population but account for 11% of those that play computer games at least once a week. While this indicates that there are many young active computer game players it is of note that 89% of those that play computer games on a weekly basis are aged 18 years and older.

However, 14-17 year olds are more likely than older consumers to play computer games everyday and the proportion that never play computer games increases gradually with age. Among those aged 18-49 years a majority do play computer games from time to time and it is only among those aged 50 years and older that more than half never play.

Frequency Play	Total %	14-17 %	18-24 %	25-34 %	35-49 %	50+ %
Everyday	10	21	12	11	9	6
At least once a week	23	32	35	30	25	12
Less Often	33	38	42	35	36	28
Never	34	9	11	23	31	53
Average number of hours played	8.9	9.4	9.2	9.8	8.6	8.0

Table 6: Frequency Play Computer Games by Age

Further to this, the research suggests a similar pattern of usage among old and young players. On average a 14-17 year old will spend 9.4 hours per week playing computer games and this is little different to the average of 8.9 hours for all players.

Overall, the most popular games that people like to play are reported by them to be classified G, with this type of game particularly popular among those aged 50 years and older. In contrast, players aged 14-24 years are more likely to favour M and MA15+ games.

Classification	Total %	14-17 %	18-24 %	25-34 %	35-49 %	50+ %
G	38	13	18	33	41	67
G8+	15	19	17	21	16	2
M	18	29	37	14	17	2
MA15+	10	17	15	10	9	6
Don't know	19	21	13	22	18	22

Table 7: Computer Game Classification by Age

There is a tendency for regular players of games to be male and players of games with an M or MA15+ classification are much more likely to be male. Among those computer game players that currently have a favourite game which is rated M or MA15+, 71% are male.

Players of M and MA15+ games are also likely to be young with almost half (47%) of players of these games aged 14-24 years.

The high proportion where the classification of the game is not known would be attributed to the prevalence of so-called 'mini-games', either pre-loaded on PCs or down-loaded from other sources.

	Population %	Play Computer Games Once a Week %	M / MA15+ Player %
<i>Sex:</i>			
Male	49	58	71
Female	51	42	29
<i>Age:</i>			
14 to 17 years	7	11	20
18 to 24 years	11	17	27
25 to 34 years	18	23	21
35 to 49 years	28	28	22
50+ years	36	21	10

Table 8: Profile of Computer Game Players

5 Main Findings

5.1 Awareness of Film/Video Classification Symbols

Awareness of the symbols used to classify film is very high. Virtually all people aged 14 years and over are familiar with the classification system. This finding is similar to the study conducted in 2002 in which 97% acknowledged awareness of some component of the classification system.

It is likely that the difference between the two studies is a consequence of some inconsistency in interviewing rather than any shift in awareness. The reason for this conclusion is that the 3% of respondents that claimed to be not aware of any symbols in 2002 represents a small proportion of respondents overall, but half of these were from interviews administered in Sydney. In contrast, interviewees in Brisbane and the whole of Tasmania found no respondents that were not aware of any of the symbols. This suggests that there is virtually universal awareness of the symbols today, as there was in 2002.






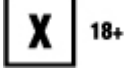
	February 2002 %	June 2005 %
	94	97
	93	99
	93	93
	88	93
	86	86
	61	53
None	3	*

Table 9: Awareness of Film/Video Classification Symbols. * Less than 0.5%

G and PG

There is virtually universal awareness for symbols such as G and PG. In both cases this result represents a significant increase on the figure obtained in 2002.

In 2002, among respondents aged 14-54 years awareness for G was 97% and the corresponding figure for PG was 98%. In contrast, awareness among those aged 55 years and older was 87% for G and 83% for PG. Hence, awareness of the classification symbols dropped markedly among older respondents.

In the most recent study awareness among those aged 14-49 years was little different to the 14-54 year olds in 2002. The big difference was that in 2005 awareness among those aged 50 years and older was at levels consistent with the younger respondents rather than being significantly lower.

The possible reasons for this difference could be;

- The older respondents in 2002 were atypical being less aware of classification symbols than older people generally.
- The older respondents in 2005 are atypical being more aware of classification symbols than older people generally.

Both of these options are possible and the reality will lie somewhere between the two. This need not be a problem because overall the results are generally consistent between the two studies.

M and MA15+

Recognition for both M and MA15+ symbols is 93%. For M this is identical to the 2002 study but for MA15+ this represents an increase from the 88% observed in the earlier study. However, there is a great deal of confusion between these two symbols and while awareness is high understanding is low. As a consequence, the increase in awareness for MA15+ has not translated into an improvement in understanding.

Awareness of the MA15+ symbol is slightly higher among younger consumers than those aged 35 years and older. This difference may also be observed among regular versus infrequent cinema goers, with those that visit the cinema most often, who are also typically young, demonstrating the highest level of recognition.

In contrast, the G, PG and M symbols do not show significant variation in levels of recognition between the old and the young, or regular versus infrequent cinema goers.

R18+

Awareness for R18+ is unchanged at 86% since 2002. Consistent with the study conducted in 2002, awareness is highest among respondents aged 18-49 years, and lower among the old and the young.

There is a small variation in awareness among regular and infrequent cinema goers with familiarity with the R18+ symbol slightly higher among regular cinema goers. This small variation is also observed among regular versus infrequent viewers of videos and DVDs.

X18+

There has been a decline in awareness for the X18+ symbol, from 61% in 2002 to 53% in the most recent study. This decline has been observed across people of different gender, ages and areas.

One possibility for the decline may be observed in the finding that in 2002 when asked of the meaning of the X18+ symbol a relatively high 12% confessed to not really knowing. In the most recent study the comparable figure is only 3%. If this is factored in then there is no statistical difference between the proportion claiming knowledge of the X18+ symbol between the two time periods.

The other possibility is the significant difference in awareness between young and old people. In 2002, awareness of the X18+ symbol was 39% among those aged 14-17 years and 63% among those aged 18 years and older.

In the most recent study awareness is relatively low at 35-36% among both 14-17 and 18-24 year olds. If the symbol has been rarely used in recent years it would be perfectly understandable that those with the least exposure to the symbol would have the lowest level of awareness.

While awareness of the X18+ symbol shows little variation across regular and infrequent cinema goers, which makes sense given that X18+ films are not shown in cinemas, there is slightly higher recognition (58%), among regular video/DVD viewers than among those that rarely or never watch videos or DVDs.

5.2 Consumer Interpretation of Symbols

Respondents that indicated they were aware of each symbol were asked to provide a brief description of their understanding of the symbol. In order to analyse these responses it was necessary to establish code frames to group like responses. The starting point for all code frames was the code lists used by interviewers in the 2002 study.

An initial review of the verbatim responses confirmed that most of the codes used in 2002 were still relevant but that it was also necessary to create some additional codes to better capture some of the responses given. In the review of the responses some were a neat fit with a single code in the list while others included two or more themes. In these cases all the elements were allocated code numbers.

This coding system permitted the responses to be classified into the following groups;

Classification	Definition
Strictly correct	Where a respondent recalled all criteria for a particular classification description
Conceptually correct	Where the response was not strictly correct but it was clear that the respondent had a conceptual understanding of the classification description
Incorrect	Where the description included errors

G Classification

Of the six film symbols, it is only the G symbol which is widely understood in the strictest sense. Three quarters of all Australians understand that G refers to general exhibition.

Where there is any misunderstanding it is in the belief that the G symbol indicates that it is a movie for children, which is not always the case. The two groups most likely to interpret G to mean children's movies are 14-17 year olds and 35-49 year olds, these represent recent kids and people of the age to be parents of young children.






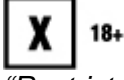
	June 2005 %
 <p><i>"For general exhibition/admission"</i> Strictly correct Conceptually correct Incorrect</p>	<p>75 22 3</p>
 <p><i>"Parental guidance recommended for persons under 15 years"</i> Strictly correct Conceptually correct Incorrect</p>	<p>5 62 33</p>
 <p><i>"Recommended for mature audiences 15 years and over"</i> Strictly correct Conceptually correct Incorrect</p>	<p>4 54 42</p>
 <p><i>"Persons under the age of 15 years must be accompanied by parent or adult guardian"</i> Strictly correct Conceptually correct Incorrect</p>	<p>2 1 97</p>
 <p><i>"Restricted to adults aged 18 years and over"</i> Strictly correct Conceptually correct Incorrect</p>	<p>48 16 37</p>
 <p><i>"Restricted to adults aged 18 years and over"</i> Strictly correct Conceptually correct Knowledge of content only Incorrect</p>	<p>16 18 13 52</p>

Table 10: Consumer Interpretation of Symbols

PG Classification

Only 5% of those aware of the PG symbol can recall all elements of the classification description, namely;

- Parental guidance
- Recommended
- For people under 15 years

More commonly PG is interpreted literally as 'Parental Guidance'. More than two thirds consider the PG symbol in this way.

It is interesting to note that while those aged 14-17 years are most likely to interpret this symbol completely correctly, this group also has the highest proportion (60%), that interpret the symbol incorrectly. This demonstrates that within this group there are a few young people with a good understanding of the PG classification symbol but a significantly greater number with a very poor understanding.

A common error, for both the young and old, is the belief that children need to be supervised or accompanied by a parent to watch a PG movie.

M Classification

The M definition includes three elements;

- Recommended
- For mature audiences
- 15 years and over

Only 4% of those aware of the symbol can recall all three elements although more than half mentioned two of the elements. This would suggest that few are aware of the strict meaning of the M symbol but a significant proportion (54%) have some conceptual understanding for the symbol.

Overall, 42% of those aware of the M symbol have an incorrect understanding of classification description. Misunderstanding is highest among those aged 14-17 years. This is typically because these young people think more of the symbol as defining the content of the film rather than the audience.

MA15+ Classification

The MA15+ classification is complex and has a number of elements. There is no absolute restriction, however:

- Persons under 15
- Must be accompanied
- By a parent or adult guardian

In addition, the material is unsuitable for persons under 15 years.

Understanding of the MA15+ classification symbol is almost non-existent. Only 2% of those who claim to be familiar with the symbol are able to recall its strict definition and 1% have a conceptual understanding. For the most part the responses volunteered for this question were very similar to the M symbol and this is demonstrated in the table below which lists the most frequently volunteered responses.

	M %	MA15+ %
Recommended for mature audiences 15 years and over ¹	5	1
Recommended for mature audiences/ for mature 15+	45	47
Mature audiences/ certain level of maturity	18	6
Not suitable for children under 15 years	5	2
Mention of 15+ (not use words mature/ recommended)	17	8
Must be/ strictly for/ only for 15+	7	17
Contains violence/ horror/ strong language/ sex scenes	12	14
Persons under 15 years must be accompanied by a parent or adult guardian ²	0	3

Table 11: M and MA15+ Comparison

¹ Correct for M

² Correct for MA15+

Only 5% correctly recalled all three elements of the M classification, ‘Recommended for mature audiences 15 years and over’. Only 3% correctly recalled all elements of the MA15+ classification, ‘Persons under 15 years must be accompanied by a parent or adult guardian’.

In both cases almost half interpret the symbol to mean ‘Recommended for mature audiences’ and there is little understanding of the ‘accompanied’ and legally restrictive elements of MA15+. A significant proportion erroneously consider MA15+ to involve an absolute restriction on under 15s.

The very low level of understanding for the MA15+ symbol may be observed among all demographic groups and is not affected by frequency go to the movies or watch videos/DVDs.

R18+ Classification

Around half of those aware of the R18+ symbol understand it to mean that it is for a restricted audience aged 18 years and over. A further 16% understand the concept of the symbol. The most common error is the belief that the symbol indicates ‘suitability’ for adults aged 18+ rather than a legal restriction.

While overall 37% of the population have an incorrect interpretation of the R18+ symbol, the figure is 47% among those aged 14-17 years. Again, this is primarily due to young people describing the content of R18+ films rather than the intended audience.

While awareness of the R18+ symbol is slightly higher among those that visit the cinema most often these people have no greater understanding of the meaning of the symbol than infrequent cinema goers.

X18+ Classification

A majority of those aware of the X18+ symbol (52%) have an incorrect understanding of the classification. Only 16% of those aware of the symbol can recall the strict definition of the X18+ classification symbol, although a significant proportion understand the concept of the symbol or the content of such films.

Among those that do not know the meaning of the X18+ symbol the most common error, similar to R18+, is the reference to ‘suitability’ for adults aged 18+ rather than a

legal restriction. There is also a significant proportion, 18%, that are of the incorrect opinion that X18+ movies contain violence.

Consistent with the findings for the R18+ symbol, the group with the highest level of awareness for the symbol, in this instance, regular video/DVD viewers, demonstrate no greater understanding of the meaning of the symbol than other consumers.

5.2.1 Consumer Interpretation Comparison

Given the different question formats between the 2002 and 2005 study and the way in which the responses were recorded and analysed, direct comparison is difficult. Despite these differences, the key findings between the two studies are very similar, namely;

- There is a high level of understanding for the G symbol
- PG is widely interpreted as Parental Guidance
- There is widespread confusion about the difference between M and MA15+ symbols
- Correct understanding of MA15+ remains almost non-existent
- A majority of consumers have an understanding of the meaning of the R18+ symbol
- While knowledge of the X18+ symbol is at a lower level, a significant proportion have an understanding of the type of material that will be included in a film classified in this way

5.3 Awareness of Computer Game Classification Symbols

There is significant difference in the levels of awareness for the classification symbols used for computer games between the 2002 study and the most recent study. The factors that have contributed to this difference are;

- Change to the questionnaire format. In 2005 the respondents were asked awareness for the four symbols; G, G8+, M and MA15+. In 2002 eight symbols were included, with a large and small option for each of the ones used this year
- Increasing use of computer games within the community
- Increasing compliance by game manufacturers
- The online methodology that would have resulted in a sample of more computer savvy respondents than in 2002

It is difficult to quantify the influence of each of these factors but it is certainly true that regular gamers are much more aware of the classification symbols than non-players.





	February 2002 %	June 2005 %
	28	64
	20	42
	25	55
	20	47
None	Not available	31

Table 12: Awareness of Computer Game Classification Symbols

Awareness of the computer games classification symbols is higher among the young and declines with age. Typically 7 or 8 in 10 of those aged 14-17 years are aware of each of the different symbols, and only 8% within this age range are not aware of any. Among those aged 50 years and older recall of the different symbols is more likely to be in the range 3 to 4 in 10 and 43% are not aware of any.

This decline in awareness with age is consistent with the incidence of playing computer games.

Predictably, awareness of the symbols is highest among those that play computer games the most, however, it is of note that 12% of those that play everyday are not aware of any of the classification symbols. These may be playing games that come pre-loaded with personal computers or downloadable from other sources, such as solitaire.

Parents are more likely to be familiar with the classification scheme than non-parents. This finding is consistent with the 2002 study.

5.4 Attitudes Towards the OFLC and Classification

This component of the study was based on a battery of attitudinal statements originally included on a Newspoll Omnibus in 2002. For the latest study the wording used was consistent with the earlier questionnaire although the means of administering the survey was now online rather than telephone omnibus.

Despite this difference, in an area such as this where attitudes would be expected to change relatively slowly over time, the two surveys demonstrate a high degree of consistency and this enables us to be confident in the validity of the two sets of data.

Where changes are noted these are modest in scope and suggest a more favourable response to the OFLC.

5.4.1 The OFLC Has Good Perspective on Movies for Different Ages

While the community overwhelmingly believe that the OFLC has good perspective on movies for different ages there is a significant minority, 22%, that do not believe that this is the case. Consistent with the study administered in 2002 these are typically males.

	September 2002 %	June 2005 %
Strongly Agree	34	25
Somewhat Agree	38	51
Agree	72	76
Somewhat Disagree	11	17
Strongly Disagree	8	5
Disagree	19	22
Neither	9	2

Table 13: OFLC Has Good Perspective on Movies for Different Ages

Overall, there has been an increase in positive sentiment from 72% in 2002 and this is a consequence of a significant shift in opinion among older consumers. In the 2002 study a relatively high proportion of those aged 50 years and older did not express an opinion about the OFLC, possibly due to being infrequent movie viewers and computer game players.

This year older consumers were more positively disposed to the OFLC and less likely to be non-committal. The consequence of this change, which could relate to the sample or the methodology as much as to a shift in consumer attitudes, has resulted in an increase overall.

5.4.2 Use Classification Symbols to Decide on Suitability of Movies

Three quarters of Australians use the classification symbols to decide on the suitability of movies. Again, the more positive result in 2005 is a consequence of older consumers being less likely to be non-committal than was observed in the 2002 study, and a corresponding increase in agreement with this statement from 67% to 85% among those aged 50 years and over.

Those most likely to use the symbols are females, those aged 35 years and older and people who are married. These people tend to be relatively infrequent cinema goers.

Those least likely to use the symbols are males and young people with almost half of those aged 14-17 years claiming not to use the classification symbols. These findings are consistent with the survey result in 2002.

	September 2002 %	June 2005 %
Strongly Agree	46	41
Somewhat Agree	25	35
Agree	71	76
Somewhat Disagree	13	10
Strongly Disagree	9	9
Disagree	22	19
Neither	7	5

Table 14: Use Classification Symbols to Decide on Suitability of Movies

5.4.3 The Office of Film and Literature Classification Plays an Important Role

Nine in 10 Australians agree that the OFLC plays an important role in providing classification advice on movies and computer games. An improvement on the

corresponding figure in 2002 and principally a consequence of a change in response amongst older consumers.

	September 2002 %	June 2005 %
Strongly Agree	50	51
Somewhat Agree	35	39
Agree	85	90
Somewhat Disagree	5	6
Strongly Disagree	4	2
Disagree	9	8
Neither	6	2

Table 15: The OFLC Plays an Important Role

5.4.4 Useful to Have Classification Symbol For Movies and Computer Games

Australians overwhelmingly believe that it is useful to have classification symbols. Overall, 94% agree that the system is useful, unchanged since 2002. Of these, around 7 in 10 strongly agree the classification symbols are useful.

Young people do not express quite the same enthusiasm for classification symbols. Among 14-17 year olds, while a solid 90% agree the symbols are useful, only 42% strongly agree with this sentiment.

	September 2002 %	June 2005 %
Strongly Agree	77	71
Somewhat Agree	17	23
Agree	94	94
Somewhat Disagree	1	3
Strongly Disagree	2	2
Disagree	3	5
Neither	3	1

Table 16: Useful to Have Classification Symbols for Movies and Computer Games

5.5 Awareness of Consumer Advice

Location Seen/ Heard Consumer Advice	June 2005 %
On TV	99
At movie/ cinema	50
On DVD/ movie case	72
On Computer Game Case	33

Table 17: Awareness of Consumer Advice

Most people are familiar with the phrases used in the consumer advice announcements. The most common source of awareness is TV programs, 99%, followed by TV/videos, 72%, movies being shown at the cinema, 50%, and computer games, 33%.

The ranking of the different media reflects their usage. TV is the media that most people would regularly use and therefore be familiar with and computer games has the lowest level of use of the different media.

Understandably, the highest levels of awareness for consumer advice are observed among the more active consumers of the different media. Hence, recall of consumer advice on the cases of DVDs, videos and computers is highest among those aged 14-24 years.

There is a significant difference in awareness of consumer advice on computer games between players and non-players, but it is of note that even among those that play computer games several times a week only about half are aware of the consumer advice phrases on the case.

Somewhat surprisingly, however, there is little difference in awareness for the movie consumer advice between regular and infrequent movie goers. So we can deduce from this that additional visits to the cinema do not necessarily result in increased awareness. This would suggest that the consumer advice announcements are not obvious at the cinema.

5.5.1 Places Seen Consumer Advice For Movie at the Cinema

Places Seen Consumer Advice For Movie at the Cinema	June 2005 %
Outdoor Billboard	20
Posters	38
Ads in Newspaper	51
Some Other printed Material	5
The Internet	32
Reviews in a Newspaper or Magazine	44
On a Trailer at the Cinema	65
Elsewhere at the Cinema	4
None of these/ Unsure	11

Table 18: Places Seen Consumer Advice for Movie at the Cinema

The most common source of awareness of consumer advice information at the cinema is on trailers for forthcoming movies, 65%. This is followed by ads in newspapers, 51%, and reviews in newspapers and magazines, 44%.

These findings are somewhat surprising given the absence in cinema trailers and lack of prominence given to consumer advice in the past. However, it is clear that the places identified are the ones that notices such as consumer advice would 'be expected to appear'. It is also highly likely that consumers are confused about the consumer advice and classification information.

It is also of note that while regular movie goers have seen consumer advice in more places than infrequent movie goers, the difference is not of sufficient magnitude to suggest that this information is being given prominence where it is used.

5.5.2 Opinion of Consumer Advice

More than 9 in 10 Australians find consumer advice to be useful. This comprises 46% that consider it very useful and a further 48% that rate it useful. Females and older people are more likely than males and young people to find consumer advice very useful.

Opinion of Consumer Advice	June 2005 %
Very Useful	46
Useful	48
Not Useful	6

Table 19: Opinion of Consumer Advice

6. Conclusions

- Awareness of the various classification symbols is high but the level of understanding for the different symbols varies enormously.
- There is potential to improve community understanding for all classification symbols.
- Of particular note are the M and MA15+, with little understanding of the 'accompanied' and legally restrictive elements of MA15+.
- Consumer advice is popular within the community and it would be expected that its broader use would be well received.
- Community attitude to the OFLC and classification is very positive and has changed little since 2002.