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## **CTIA-THE WIRELESS ASSOCIATION® AND ESRB ANNOUNCE MOBILE APPLICATION RATING SYSTEM**

***Provides Parents and Consumers Reliable Information about Age-Appropriateness of Applications Based on Content and Context***

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – CTIA-The Wireless Association® and the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) today announced a newly-developed rating system that six mobile application storefronts will voluntarily support as part of their application submission (or onboarding) process. The CTIA Mobile Application Rating System with ESRB will utilize the well-known and trusted age rating icons that ESRB assigns to computer and video games to provide parents and consumers reliable information about the age-appropriateness of applications. Today's announcement is an extension of CTIA's 2010 *Guidelines for Application Content Classification and Rating*.

AT&T, Microsoft, Sprint, T-Mobile USA, U.S. Cellular and Verizon Wireless are the founding members of the rating system, and other storefronts have indicated their interest in joining. As technologies and build-out schedules differ by each storefront, full implementation timelines will vary; each storefront may make its own announcement on when the rating system will be available for their customers.

When developers submit their applications to a participating storefront they will be able to complete a detailed yet quick multiple choice questionnaire that is designed to assess an application's content and context with respect to its age-appropriateness. This includes violence or sexual content, language, substances, etc., as well as other elements such as a minimum age requirement, the exchange of user-generated content, the sharing of a user's location with other users of the application and the sharing of user-provided personal information with third parties. Once developers complete all answers to these questions, their applications are rated within seconds. Each rated app is issued a certificate and a unique identifying code that may be subsequently submitted to other storefronts during their respective onboarding processes, avoiding the need for developers to repeat the rating process. This means consistent ratings across participating storefronts and a convenient, cost-free process for app developers.

To ensure content disclosures were complete and the ratings assigned were appropriate, ESRB will routinely test the most popular applications and closely monitor consumer complaints. If an inappropriate rating is found to have been assigned ESRB will promptly adjust the rating and will notify the developer and the storefront(s) that have the application to ensure consumers have reliable information.



Since the project's inception, CTIA and ESRB, together with the six founding storefronts and numerous developers, worked closely to incorporate feedback to ensure the system is user-friendly while meeting the needs of consumers. There is no expiration date associated with app rating assignments and no renewal requirement. However, if subsequent updates to an app modify its content in a way that may affect its rating, it should be resubmitted.

**From U.S. Senator Kelly Ayotte (R-NH):**

"As a former attorney general and as the mother of two young children, I applaud the wireless industry's proactive efforts to provide parents with the tools they need to ensure that the mobile applications downloaded by our children are age-appropriate."

**From U.S. Senator Mark Pryor (D-AR):**

"I applaud CTIA and ESRB on this consumer-friendly initiative. It's a win-win when industry takes proactive, responsible steps to protect children from inappropriate content."

**From CTIA-The Wireless Association President and CEO Steve Largent:**

"Today's announcement is another example of our industry's continued commitment to informing parents and consumers about the content and contextual material that is available in mobile applications. CTIA is proud to have worked with the six founding storefronts, ESRB and developers to create this user-friendly and reliable mobile application rating system that will provide parents and consumers with information so they can determine what's appropriate for children. The CTIA Mobile Application Rating System is an extension of CTIA's 2010 Guidelines for App Content Classification and Ratings, which was developed with a number of organizations, including the six founding storefronts."

**From Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) President Patricia Vance:**

"Our rating system for computer and video games has been in use since 1994 and has continuously evolved to meet the needs of the highly dynamic industry it serves. Over the last several years, there has been a veritable explosion in the number and variety of devices and platforms on which to consume interactive entertainment, and mobile devices are a key driver of that growth. So we are proud to partner with the wireless industry in lending our expertise and credibility to the development of a rating system that effectively fulfills our mission of informing consumers while meeting the needs of this rapidly growing and evolving segment of the interactive market."

**From Family Online Safety Institute (FOSI) CEO Stephen Balkam:**

"In our increasingly digital world, kids can walk around with the Internet in their pockets. We applaud CTIA and ESRB for developing an easily accessible rating system that enables families to make the best decisions about the content their kids access on mobile devices. Keeping informed about mobile apps *and* holding open, honest conversations with your family is the best way to stay on top of emerging trends and experience all of the great things the Internet has to offer."

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***About CTIA-The Wireless Association®***

CTIA-The Wireless Association® ([www.ctia.org](http://www.ctia.org)) is an international organization representing the wireless communications industry. Membership in the association includes wireless carriers and their suppliers, as well as providers and manufacturers of wireless data services and products. CTIA advocates on behalf of its members at all levels of government. The association also coordinates the industry's voluntary best practices and initiatives, and sponsors the industry's leading wireless tradeshows. CTIA was founded in 1984 and is based in Washington, D.C.

***About Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB)***

The ESRB is a non-profit, self-regulatory body established in 1994 by the Entertainment Software Association (ESA). ESRB independently assigns computer and video game content ratings, enforces advertising guidelines, and helps ensure responsible online privacy practices for the interactive entertainment software industry. For more information, visit [www.esrb.org](http://www.esrb.org), [ESRB's Facebook page](#) or follow ESRB on Twitter ([@ESRBRatings](https://twitter.com/ESRBRatings)).