



ENTERTAINMENT SOFTWARE RATING BOARD

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 18, 2011

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ESRB INTRODUCES NEW RATING PROCESS FOR CONSOLE DOWNLOADABLE VIDEO GAMES

*Video Game Rating Board Positioning Itself for the Future with
Scalable Content Rating Process*

NEW YORK, NY –The Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) today announced it is introducing a new streamlined rating process for games that will only be sold and downloaded through console and handheld storefronts such as Microsoft Xbox LIVE[®] Arcade, Nintendo Wii[®] or DSi[™] Shop and Sony PlayStation[®] Store. These games will receive the same recognizable ESRB ratings via a process whose efficiency and ease of use provides the scalability necessary to address the steady increase of games delivered digitally across an ever-expanding multitude of new devices and outlets.

Starting today, publishers of these downloadable games will complete a different submission form than is used for all other games. The new form contains a series of multiple choice questions designed to assess content across all relevant categories, such as violence, sexual content and language, among others. The questions also address important contextual factors such as the game's realism and visual style, its incentives (i.e., whether a certain action is meant to be avoided or results in failure), the player's perspective (i.e., omniscient, distant or third person vs. immersed, close-up or first person), and more. The responses provided determine the game's rating, which is issued to the publisher as soon as a DVD reflecting all disclosed content is received by ESRB. All other types of games will continue to undergo the traditional rating process, which involves completion of a more open-ended questionnaire and review of a content DVD by a minimum of three raters who reach consensus on the appropriate rating.

"The ESRB rating process that has been in use since 1994 was devised before the explosion in the number of digitally delivered games and devices on which to play them. These games, many of which tend to be casual in nature, are being produced in increasing numbers, by thousands of developers, and generally at lower costs," said ESRB president Patricia Vance. "This new rating process considers the very same elements weighed by our raters. The biggest difference is in our ability to scale this system as necessary while keeping our services affordable and accessible."

All games rated via this new process will be tested by ESRB staff shortly after they are made publicly available to verify that disclosure was complete and accurate. In the event that content was not fully disclosed during this process, the rating displayed in the console or handheld store will be promptly corrected. In egregious cases of nondisclosure – which include a deliberate effort to misinform the ESRB – the game and

all of its promotional materials will be removed from the store through which it is being sold, pending its resubmission to ESRB.

“Our rating system is widely considered to be among the most effective in the world, and ESRB continues to be an exemplary model of self-regulation,” continued Vance. “We serve a rapidly growing and evolving industry, and it is incumbent upon us to continually adapt along with it. This new process for downloadable games helps position ESRB for a future that promises an ever-expanding market for games while allowing us to continue empowering parents with the ability to determine which ones are OK for their children to play.”

About the ESRB Rating System

The ESRB video game ratings consist of two parts. Rating symbols on the front of every game package sold at retail provide an age recommendation. On the back, next to the rating, are content descriptors that provide information about content in the game that may have triggered the rating or may be of interest or concern to parents.



In 2008 the ESRB announced the availability of “[rating summaries](#),” a supplementary source of information that give parents a detailed yet brief and straightforward description of exactly the kind of content they would want to know about when choosing a game for their child. Parents can look up a game’s rating summary right from the store using a free mobile app (www.esrb.org/mobile), mobile website (m.esrb.org), or may get information on games before heading to the store by searching ESRB’s website at www.esrb.org. Games rated via the new streamlined process will not receive rating summaries.

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.