



ENTERTAINMENT SOFTWARE RATING BOARD

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ESRB CHANGES RATING FOR *THE ELDER SCROLLS IV: OBLIVION* FROM TEEN TO MATURE

Bethesda Softworks to Undertake Immediate Corrective Actions

NEW YORK – The Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) announced today that it has officially changed the rating assigned to the game *The Elder Scrolls® IV: Oblivion™* from T (Teen 13+) to M (Mature 17+) due to the presence of content that was not fully disclosed when the game was originally submitted to ESRB for rating. Bethesda Softworks, the developer and co-publisher of the game, will be taking immediate actions to correct the rating information on all unsold inventory, future shipments and marketing materials.

“This proactive move to change the rating once again confirms that ESRB’s first priority is to ensure that consumers have reliable, accurate information with which to make educated decisions about the games they or their children play,” said ESRB president Patricia Vance.

The pertinent content causing the change in the ESRB rating involves more detailed depictions of blood and gore than were considered in the original rating of the game (the game already carried a *Blood and Gore* content descriptor), as well as the presence in the PC version of the game of a locked-out art file that, if accessed by using an apparently unauthorized third party tool, allows the user to play the game with topless versions of female characters. The locked-out topless skin was found by ESRB to exist in a fully rendered form on the game disc, but is not accessible in the Xbox 360™ version of the game.

Upon confirmation of the presence of the previously undisclosed content through its post-release monitoring and play-testing activities, the ESRB expeditiously conducted an internal investigation and review of the original rating assigned to *Oblivion*. This process involved ESRB raters evaluating the original video materials submitted to the ESRB by Bethesda Softworks along with the newly disclosed content, resulting in the assignment of an M (Mature) rating. This discrepancy indicated that the intensity of the depictions were more consistent with a Mature rated game than one rated Teen.

Among the corrective actions that Bethesda Softworks will be promptly undertaking are:

- Immediate notification to all retailers of the change in rating, along with a request to adhere to their respective store policies not to sell the newly rated M (Mature) game to those under the age of 17, and explaining how to address consumer concerns;

- Issuance of stickers with the new rating information to all retailers and distributors to affix on the packaging of all existing unsold inventory;
- Display of the newly assigned M (Mature) rating in all future product shipments and marketing materials;
- Creation and posting of a downloadable patch that will modify the art archive, rendering the topless skin inaccessible on the PC version of the game.

“Consumers, especially parents, depend on the ESRB ratings each day, and our actions in this instance serve to demonstrate how immensely we value their trust,” continued Ms. Vance.

The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion was initially assigned a rating of T (Teen) with content descriptors for *Violence, Blood and Gore, Sexual Themes, Language* and *Use of Alcohol*. The game now carries an ESRB rating of M (Mature), and the existing PC version has an additional content descriptor for *Nudity*. In the near future, Bethesda Softworks intends to release a modified version of the PC game with the topless skin removed, which will not carry the *Nudity* content descriptor on the package.

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About Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB)

The Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) is a non-profit, self-regulatory body established in 1994 by the Entertainment Software Association (ESA). ESRB independently assigns ratings, enforces advertising guidelines, and helps ensure responsible online privacy practices for the interactive entertainment software industry.