



ENTERTAINMENT SOFTWARE RATING BOARD

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NEW STUDY SHOWS PARENTS OVERWHELMINGLY AGREE WITH ESRB VIDEO GAME RATINGS

(NEW YORK) – Parents continue to overwhelmingly agree with computer and video game ratings assigned by the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) according to a study released today and conducted by leading opinion research firm Peter D. Hart Research Associates. The study shows that parents agree with the ESRB ratings 82% of the time, while another 5% of the time they think the ratings are “too strict.”

“As the ratings body for the video game industry, the ESRB’s effectiveness depends largely on how accurately its ratings reflect the attitudes of American parents. We are extremely pleased that, year after year, independent research shows such a high level of agreement with ESRB ratings among parents,” said ESRB president Patricia Vance. “It is clear from the research that ESRB game ratings continue to be extremely useful to parents, who are involved in over 80% of all purchase decisions.¹”

The study, commissioned by the ESRB, was conducted from October 14-24, 2005, and surveyed over 400 randomly selected parents of children that play video games. Each was shown video footage from 8 out of 80 randomly selected computer and video games, which were assigned one of six rating categories within the prior twelve months. Respondents were asked to choose the ESRB rating they felt was most appropriate, and then were told the actual rating that ESRB had assigned. Parents were then asked whether the rating assigned was “about right,” “too strict,” or “too lenient.” The surveys were conducted at shopping malls in 10 different regions of the United States to ensure geographic diversity.

“This is a definitive assessment of agreement with the ESRB ratings because it considers the views of those who actually interact with the ratings the most, namely parents of children that play video games,” said Jay Campbell of Peter D. Hart Research Associates. “It is especially impressive that parents’ level of agreement with the ratings is as broad as it is deep; parents of children of all ages agree that game ratings are accurate.”

The ratings assigned by ESRB are based on the feedback of independent raters who are unaffiliated with the video game industry and typically have experience with children. The ESRB annually evaluates awareness and use of the video game ratings among parents, as well as measures their agreement with the ratings assigned. These studies are conducted to make certain that ESRB serves the interests of parents, the vast majority of whom (70%)² continue to regularly use the ratings when purchasing video games.

¹ Federal Trade Commission, 2000

² Survey conducted by Peter D. Hart Research Associates in May 2005, which found that 78% of parents are aware of ESRB ratings, with 70% regularly using them when buying video games.

ESRB ratings are comprised of two parts: **rating symbols** suggest age-appropriateness for the game, and **content descriptors** indicate elements in a game that may have triggered a particular rating and/or may be of interest or concern to the consumer. ESRB currently uses over 30 content descriptors for depictions involving violence, suggestive or sexual content, profanity, gambling and controlled substances, among others. The ESRB rating categories are as follows:

- **EC** (Early Childhood Ages 3+)
- **E** (Everyone Ages 6+)
- **E10+** (Everyone Ages 10+)³
- **T** (Teen Ages 13+)
- **M** (Mature Ages 17+)
- **AO** (Adults Only Ages 18+)

Consumers can learn more about the rating system and conduct customized ratings searches by visiting the ESRB website at <http://www.esrb.org>.

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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 applies computer and video game content ratings, enforces advertising guidelines, and helps ensure responsible online privacy practices for the interactive entertainment software industry.

³ ESRB introduced the “E10+” rating category in March 2005