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Self regulating body planned for games ratings

"More needs to be done", says Margaret Hodge

by Katie Scott published on 31 July 2008

The UK government has taken significant steps towards putting into place a law-backed games ratings system.

There had been some quarrels between the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) and the games industry about who would assess video games in this country and give them a rating.

But now the government has cut to the chase, and culture minister Margaret Hodge has proposed her own measures to tighten ratings on computer games.

Hodge is considering four options, which include a system that combines the features of European ratings with UK classifications for films.

The measures would see games rated for players over age 12.

"The games market has simply outgrown the classification system, so today we are consulting on options that will make games classification useful and relevant again", Hodge said today in a statement issued by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport in London.

Among the other proposals is the creation of a self-regulating body to agree standards.

Conservative lawmaker John Whittingdale, who leads the culture committee, explained that a body could also be created to oversee internet companies' monitoring policies, and rule on complaints from users to ensure kids don't have access to unsuitable content online.

All three main political parties on the Culture,



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Media and Sports Committee of the House of Commons agreed that there is "widespread anxiety", particularly amongst parents, over sites that encourage suicide, anorexia or display paedophilia.