

**NEWS ON
CHILDREN AND VIOLENCE
ON THE SCREEN**

PUBLISHED THREE TIMES A YEAR BY

**The UNESCO
International Clearinghouse
on Children and Violence
on the Screen, at**

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SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DISTRIBUTION:
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REGISTER AND ADDRESS CHANGES:
Pia Hepsever

**THE CLEARINGHOUSE
IS LOCATED AT NORDICOM**

NORDICOM is an organ of co-operation between the Nordic countries - Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. The overriding goal and purpose is to make the media and communication efforts undertaken in the Nordic countries known, both throughout and far beyond our part of the world.

NORDICOM uses a variety of channels - newsletters, journals, books, databases - to reach researchers, students, decision-makers, media practitioners, journalists, teachers and interested members of the general public.

NORDICOM works to establish and strengthen links between the Nordic research community and colleagues in all parts of the world, both by means of unilateral flows and by linking individual researchers, research groups and institutions.

NORDICOM also documents media trends in the Nordic countries. The joint Nordic information addresses users in Europe and further afield. The production of comparative media statistics forms the core of this service.

NORDICOM is funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers.

The UNESCO International Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on the Screen

The Nordic Information Center for Media and Communication Research (Nordicom) has set up an international clearinghouse on children and violence on the screen. The Clearinghouse receives financial support from the Government of Sweden and UNESCO.

The Clearinghouse is to contribute to and effectivize knowledge on children, young people and media violence, seen in the perspective of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The prime task is to make new knowledge and data known to prospective users all over the world.

The International Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on the Screen informs various groups of users - about

- research findings concerning children, young people and media violence,
- ongoing research on children and media violence,
- children's access to mass media and their media use,
- training and courses of study on children and the media,
- positive alternatives to media violence, and
- measures and activities which aim to limit gratuitous violence on television, in films, and in interactive media.

The object of the Clearinghouse is three-fold: to attract attention to the question of violence on the screen and its role in the lives of children and young people, to stimulate initiatives and activities to combat gratuitous violence, and to help provide a better basis for policy in the field.

The Clearinghouse is user-oriented, which means that our services are offered in response to demand and are adapted to the needs of our clients.

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We welcome researchers, policy-makers, media professionals, teachers, voluntary organisations and interested individuals to the Clearinghouse information network. As a participant you will receive our publications (in English) with the contributions of other network participants from all parts of the globe. (Participation is free of charge.)

The value of the Clearinghouse as a forum rests in the breadth of its coverage and the commitment of its participants. In short: the more relevant information we gather, and the more who contribute from all continents, the better our services.

We are interested in research related to children, young people and media violence, and in documentation of measures, activities and alternatives of relevance to this field (see the six points above).

News briefs and short articles to our newsletter, *News on Children and Violence on the Screen*, will be greatly valued, as will notices of coming and recent conferences, seminars and other events; of new publications; and of active associations and organisations with children and media in view.

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As for publications and materials in other languages than English, French, German and Spanish, we kindly ask you for complementary translations of the titles.

We look forward to hearing from you, not least regarding any requests or suggestions you may have concerning Clearinghouse services. And we hope that you will come to appreciate our efforts - as a means of making your own work known in wider circles, and as a way to keep abreast of others' work.

News
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A newsletter from
The UNESCO
International
Clearinghouse on
Children and Violence
on the Screen
at Nordicom
Göteborg University
Sweden

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The Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on the Screen and Nordicom

ULLA CARLSSON
Director Nordicom

A number of documents from UNESCO, UNICEF and international conferences on children and media stress the need to broaden and deepen our understanding of how children relate to and are effected by media violence. Hopes are expressed that greater knowledge of the impact of media violence will lead us beyond stereotyped arguments and simplistic models. Knowledge also inspires other activities to prevent and counteract violence. We need to know more if we are to take effective action against violence. Here it is a matter of keeping the users of research – decision makers, media practitioners and executives, teachers, researchers and interested voluntary and service organizations – well informed. It also means sensitizing media professionals to the rights of children. All this with the provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child firmly in mind.

Our societies are based on knowledge. Indeed, knowledge is a vital resource, fully on a par with energy, raw materials and capital. Dynamic research and education on a broad front are required to meet the challenges and problems of an increasingly international society successfully.

FRUITFUL RESEARCH and constructive public discussion are therefore greatly facilitated by the existence of an organization for documentation and information about research findings, research in progress, and activities which aim to limit detrimental violence on television, in films, and in interactive media. There is an acknowledged need for information brokers, who can interpret and satisfy the needs and desires of different groups of users. These are the functions that the term 'clearinghouse' signifies.

After the UNESCO Conference in Lund, Autumn 1995, on the subject of children and media violence, Nordicom was contacted and asked to participate in the establishment of a Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on the Screen. We were interested and we received financial support from the Swedish Government and UNESCO to set up and operate the Clearinghouse.

NORDICOM, the Nordic Information Center for Media and Communication Research, founded as an organ of Nordic co-operation over twenty years ago by the Nordic Council of Ministers, works in both national and international arenas. Information about current research activities and research findings in the Nordic countries – Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden – is spread among the Nordic research community as well as to policy-makers, media practitioners, journalists, information officers, students, teachers and interested members of the general public through a variety of channels.

Nordicom publishes periodicals, books, catalogues of current research, surveys of literature, statistical compendia, bibliographies, offers on line services from its database, and so forth.

Nordicom works to keep research colleagues and media professionals in other countries abreast of Nordic research in the field and maintains links between Nordic and international research bodies and institutions. Our journal, *the Nordicom Review*, reaches 1. 400 subscribers in more than 120 countries in all parts of the world.

Nordicom also monitors developments in the media sector throughout the Nordic region. This joint Nordic information service will serve users in the Nordic countries as well as in Europe and other parts of the world. The core of this effort is the generation of comparative Nordic media statistics. Nordicom is party to several collaborative projects relating to the media and cultural policy in Europe.

This is the framework in which Nordicom will undertake the responsibilities which an international clearinghouse on children and violence on the screen entails.

A FUNDAMENTAL STARTING POINT for Nordicom's work to build up the Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on the Screen will be the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Convention provides the perspective in which violence should be considered. Research findings on children and media violence to date appear to harbour some contradictions, and the Convention would appear to be an excellent tool for establishing conceptual clarity in this area of study.

The prime focus will rest on what might be called 'problematic' violence, that serves as a model for solving conflicts or establishing the perpetrator's power, control of status, for giving vent to frustrations and anger, and violence as cult.

Crucial to the success of the kind of clearinghouse outlined here is the establishment of fruitful partnerships with relevant researchers and research institutions and the identification of instrumental user-groups. The Clearinghouse should have the character of a 'network center'.

The sum total of Clearinghouse documentation activities will form the basis for the publication of a yearbook and a small newsletter. The yearbook may consist of a thematic section with articles on a given subject, and a section of standard format featuring notices of new literature, statistics, media education, surveys of measures and legislation, and constructive alternatives to violence. The newsletter, now introducing the first issue, will provide information of a topical nature.

The Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on the Screen will be user-oriented, which is to say that the

The Clearinghouse...

services it offers will meet existing demand and be adopted to the need of its users. Users' interests and needs are the focal point, the primus motor.

The Clearinghouse informs these various groups of users – researchers, policy-makers, media professionals, teachers, voluntary organizations and interested individuals – about

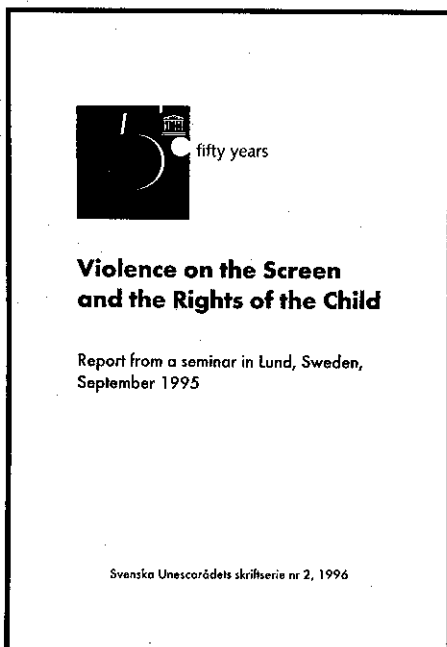
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- measures and activities which aim to limit gratuitous violence on television, in films, and in interactive media.

By way of conclusion, we might summarize Nordicom's ambitions in this work as follows:

The Clearinghouse is to contribute to and effectivize knowledge on children, young people and media violence, seen in the perspective of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Our prime task is to make new knowledge known to prospective users all over the world. Cumulative knowledge is prerequisite to both fruitful research and constructive policy and practice in an age when the economic and cultural importance of the media already looms large and continues to grow day by day.

It is our hope that the Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on the Screen will become the 'hub' of a global network dealing with the question of media violence and its role in the lives of children and young people, stimulating initiatives and activities which aim to limit gratuitous violence, and providing a better basis for policy in the field. Such a forum of ideas could contribute to find the attainable common ground for relevant measures and activities.

CB



To order the English report from the seminar *Violence on the Screen and the Rights of the Child*, held in Lund, Sweden, September 1995, **please contact:**

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The report is free of charge!

Prelude to the Clearinghouse

NILS GUNNAR NILSSON

Representative of Sweden

on the Executive Board of UNESCO

Two phenomena in the late 1980s and early 1990s caught many people's attention: the explosion in number of television channels and, already as a mathematical consequence of formula one in TV entertainment, an explosion of instances showing violence on the screen. Not only affecting adults with a free choice and a more clear idea about the difference between fiction and reality, but also kids, even in very early ages, totally unprepared for the images thrown upon them.

The concern was also felt among some chairpersons of national UNESCO commissions, who asked media representatives of their commissions to look into the phenomena, as professionals.

THAT'S WHY SOME OF US met in Hamburg in the early summer of 1993 with the purpose to plan a brainstorming session with media professionals, and perhaps some media researchers, in order to at least start a discussion.

We were invited by our Swiss colleague to the EBU (European Broadcasting Union) headquarters in Geneva, where we met in the Autumn of 1993. As one of our guests we had invited Jo Groebel, professor of mass communication at the University of Utrecht, who had recently published an article in *Die Zeit*, where he with a very catchy parallel summarized his research findings. In the 60s and 70s we dumped poisonous trash into the rivers and in the sea - and thought we had gotten rid of it. But no, it turned up again, but not where we expected it. Perhaps the same can happen with the trash we dump into the minds of our children?

Somebody mentioned already in Geneva, more or less as a question and very much en passant, if not the Convention on the Rights of the Child could be of some relevance in this context. The question wasn't answered, but I kept it in my mind.

We decided to have a follow up-seminar outside Stockholm, inviting programme setters and programme buyers and people dealing with ethic codes, to come and bring with them concrete examples of difficult sequences, where artistic considerations collides with protectionist instincts. Where do you draw the line in a certain programme? And does the official guidelines bring any help?

THE SEMINAR was in a way a brutal experience for many of us. One of the participants, newly appointed head of the news department of one of the Czech TV channels and with a background as a war correspondent, made a comment which remains in my memory: "Nobody who is playing with violence as a way of entertainment should be allowed to do that without having an experience of war. Real war."

Representatives from eight European TV channels attended the seminar, which was organized by Helena Sandblad, veteran of child and youth programming at

Swedish Television. Already the initiative to invite to such a seminar, we were told, started discussions in the various TV houses on the amount of violence on the screen and the responsibility by those who are deciding what's on the screen. A third step, an invitation to a big international conference on the subject, was in the air.

That conference took place in the old university town of Lund in southern Sweden in September 1995. We choose very deliberately the theme "Violence on the Screen and the Rights of the Child". Many meetings and seminars on the topic of violence in the media had already taken place, and why another one? A global consensus on what to do about it was anyhow impossible to reach.

WE LOOKED THE OTHER WAY AROUND. There is already an UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, an international law signed by most UN member states. Is this Convention also applicable on the new media environment where today's children live? What does it mean that a child has the right to be protected not only from physical damage but also from mental?

That was what we wanted people from all sectors of the media world to discuss. The conference was organized by the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO in co-operation with UNESCO and UNICEF and brought together 130 participants from more than 20 countries. A report from the conference is available in English, (see page 2).

Rapporteur at the conference was the Swedish minister of culture at that time, Margot Wallström, who in her final remarks underlined the need to create a clearinghouse as a permanent follow up to the conference - and her government's willingness to share the financial burden for such a clearinghouse.

Now this clearinghouse is established at Nordicom, and those of us who are still very much involved in the theme of the conference, Violence on the Screen and the Rights of the Child, and at the same time are familiar with the effectiveness in which Nordicom is run, are deeply satisfied with this connection. The three steps of seminars were just a prelude to the UNESCO International Clearinghouse; now the real story begins!

Our Creative Diversity, UNESCO, 1995, is a report by the World Commission on Culture and Development, established by the United Nations and UNESCO and led by Javier Pérez de Cuéllar. The document presents a programme of action with the purpose of influencing the international political agenda and actively engaging individuals, groups, organisations and states.

A number of areas are pointed out in the report. One chapter is devoted to children and young people, another to mass media. Violence on television - and in electronic games, computers, home videos and on the Internet - is discussed in relation to measures that further the rights of the child.

Introduction

CECILIA VON FEILITZEN

Scientific Co-ordinator, The Clearinghouse

The subject of children, young people and media violence has been on the agenda for decades. Today, with more and more visual electronic and digitalized media that are transnational and outside national control – and, as a consequence, more and more violent representations in our cultural environment – there is considerable anxiety about the influences of screen violence among many parties and in many nations. Quite often there is also some resignation about what to do about it, especially on a national level.

At the same time, the media situation varies widely in different parts of the world. Just to mention one example: Whereas children in high income countries are referred to as a multimedia generation, half of the world's children still do not have access to television in their homes, and the lack of books is overwhelming. How can media be a resource for education and democratic participation, if parts of the world live beside the communication revolution? And when there are television sets, the share of imported material on national television is often considered too high.

It is therefore important to raise the topic of children and media to a global plane. It is even more important in relation to the fact that around half of the world's population consists of children and young people.

The Clearinghouse aims at creating better conditions for a global dialogue on the subject of children and violence on the screen, by collating, generating and effectivizing knowledge in the field.

The main part of this introductory issue of the newsletter, where the Clearinghouse is presented, gives examples of other global and regional activities concerning children and media. Some activities have been going on for a long time.

During the 1990's, however, the global activities focusing on children and media have intensified into a notable interna-

tional movement. This movement, which mostly has the purpose of defending children's interests, can be regarded as a direct answer to the spread of satellite television, Internet, etc., beyond national borders and influence.

Sometimes it is a critical counter-movement, sometimes it is made up of efforts to establish platforms for discussions between media professionals, politicians, children, parents, teachers, and various child advocacy groups. This whole movement points to a growing global awareness of children and their media situation.

The examples in this newsletter show that there are many ways of standing up for children, trying to ameliorate their media conditions and counter-act the resignation concerning what to do about gratuitous media violence and other problems experienced with the media.

The examples bear, among other things, reference to parts of the work of UN, UNESCO and UNICEF, and to regional guidelines on media violence agreed upon by politicians or by the media themselves. Other examples are meetings and declarations to promote children's access to television, as well as better production conditions for, and diversity and quality in, children's programming. Still other examples are conferences and seminars, among researchers, media practitioners or regulators, on children and media generally, on media violence, and on media education to facilitate children's competence. There are also examples of various kinds of international associations and organisations that have children's rights, child and media research, or programmes and films for children in view.

We hope that future issues of the newsletter can present more similar activity – national, too – but also that they can highlight research results and facts that are of importance to and do something for children, and where children's voices are heard.

THE INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S DAY OF BROADCASTING

In December this year, on Sunday 14, during the sixth International Children's Day of Broadcasting (ICDB), more than 2,000 broadcasters in over 170 countries, will dedicate a day to children's issues and children's participation. The Convention on the Rights of the Child states that children have the right to express their views, and to obtain information, regardless of frontiers. ICDB, a joint initiative of UNICEF and the International Council of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, enables broadcasters to take part in making this right a reality, to tune in to kids.

The following examples from ICDB 1996, show some of the events that took place around the world:

In Thailand, the Prime Minister talked to young reporters on ITV about children's problems. ITV will follow up on the Day by having children produce their own programme each Saturday;

Mexico's Multivision TV Station truly captured the spirit of ICDB, calling it's day, "Children Take Over the Station";

In Mali, where FM radio has become extremely popular, almost 120 hours were reserved to broadcasting for and by children;

In Namibia and South Africa there was a live TV link between the two countries, in which children spoke to one another on the air;

In Liberia, 65 children worked as broadcasters at three stations. They then took over the radio stations for a week, focusing on the peace process and on relevant issues such as child soldiers and street children.

This and other information can be found on the UNICEF Web site: <http://www.unicef.org/icdb/index.html>

For information, please contact:
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The Media and the Convention of the Rights of the Child

THOMAS HAMMARBERG

Vice-chairman

UN Committee of the Rights of the Child

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child from 1989, valid for children below the age of eighteen, is now formally endorsed by all countries but three. It contains four basic principles to guide political decision-making affecting the child.

First, it stipulates that such decisions should be taken *with the best interests of the child* as a primary consideration. The *opinions of children themselves* should be heard. Not only their survival but also *their development* should be ensured. Finally, there should be *no discrimination* between children; each child should be able to enjoy his/her rights.

These principles, with their crucial dimensions of both participation and protection, are reflected in the substantive articles of the Convention. Of these, one in particular — article 17 — deals with the child and the media. Many other articles are also highly relevant for the media, for example article 13.

THE UN COMMITTEE on the Rights of the Child met on 7 October 1996 for a general discussion on the issue of "the child and the media". The Committee had invited representatives of United Nations organs, bodies and specialized agencies, other competent bodies, including non-governmental organizations, media representatives, research and academic organizations and children, to contribute to the discussions and provide expert advice.

By way of introduction, the Committee expressed the view that, as with human rights in general, the press and other media have essential functions in promoting and protecting the fundamental rights of the child and in helping to make reality of the principles and standards of the Convention. The Committee also expressed the view that the media could play a pivotal role in monitoring the actual realization of the rights of the child.

Special reference was made to the "image" of the child given by the media, which can either create and convey respect for children and young people or spread prejudices and stereotypes which may have a negative influence on public opinion and politicians. Reference was also made to the protection of the privacy of the child by the media, in reporting about, for instance, involvement in criminal activities, sexual abuse or family problems, and to the protection of children against information that may have negative and harmful impact on them, primarily programmes containing brutal violence and pornography. Finally, reference was made to the role of the media in offering children the possibility to express themselves.

(Continuing overleaf...)

THE UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

ARTICLE 17

States Parties recognize the important function performed by the mass media and shall ensure that the child has access to information and material from a diversity of national and international sources, especially those aimed at the promotion of his or her social, spiritual and moral well-being and physical and mental health. To this end, States Parties shall:

- (a) Encourage the mass media to disseminate information and material of social and cultural benefit to the child and in accordance with the spirit of article 29;
- (b) Encourage international co-operation in the production, exchange and dissemination of such information and material from a diversity of cultural, national and international sources;
- (c) Encourage the production and dissemination of children's books;
- (d) Encourage the mass media to have particular regard to the linguistic needs of the child who belongs to a minority group or who is indigenous;
- (e) Encourage the development of appropriate guidelines for the protection of the child from information and material injurious to his or her well-being, bearing in mind the provisions of articles 13 and 18.

ARTICLE 13

1. The child shall have the right to freedom of expression this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice.
2. The exercise of this right may be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary:
 - (a) For respect of the rights or reputations of others; or
 - (b) For the protection of national security or of public order (*ordre public*), or of public health or morals.

THE COMMITTEE IDENTIFIED three main areas to be considered during the debate:

• **Child Participation in the Media**

In short, the discussion here centred around the importance of children participating not just as commentators, but at all levels of the information and media production process. Therefore, adequate mechanisms must be developed to enable the child to participate. Not only the media as such but also parents and professionals working with and for children must help children to make their voices heard.

Among many other things mentioned, the potential positive impact of technology for children's rights was underlined, as well as the importance of their access also to all traditional media.

• **Protection of the Child against Harmful Influences through the Media**

It was said, that States should take concrete measures to encourage the media to disseminate information and material of social and cultural benefit to the child, as called for in article 17(a). The clear identification of harmful influences in media was considered essential, as well as the need to raise, through school and other fora, the awareness of children on how to tackle media issues in a critical and constructive manner.

Also, a better balance ought to be reached in the media between concern for protection and accurate reflection of the real world. A better balance is needed, too, regarding cultural diversity and gender bias. It was recognized that freedom of expression was not incompatible with the strong prohibition of material injurious to the child's well-being. Specific reference was also made to Internet, for example, the idea to develop in all countries hot-lines where Internet users can transmit information on existing harmful sites.

• **Respect for the Integrity of the Child in Media Reporting**

In short, it was stressed that media play an essential role in the promotion and protection of human rights in general, and should be particularly vigilant in trying to safeguard the integrity of the child. For example, media must take into account the best interests of the child when children are sources of information, as in interviews or simulations with child victims of violence and abuse. Reference was also made to the most common stereotypes in media reporting about children, such as the "violent teen-ager" or the misrepresentation of children from specific groups.

ON THE BASIS OF THE DISCUSSIONS on the three areas and in my capacity as rapporteur of the meeting, I formulated the following recommendations:

1. Child Media: A dossier should be compiled on positive and practical experiences of active child participation in media, like 'Children's Express'¹⁾ in the United Kingdom and the United States.

¹⁾ A news agency where child reporters provide information aimed at children.

2. Child Forum within Internet: The UNICEF-initiated 'Voices of Youth' at the World Wide Web should be further promoted and advertised as a positive facility for international discussion on important issues between young people.

3. Active Child Libraries: The experience of dynamic child libraries, or child departments within public libraries, should be documented and disseminated.

4. Media Education: Knowledge about media, their impact and functioning should be taught in schools at all levels. Students should be enabled to relate to and use the media in a participatory manner as well as to learn how to decode media messages, including in the advertising. Good experiences in some countries should be made available to others.

5. State Support to Media for Children: There is a need for budgetary support to ensure the production and dissemination of children's books, magazines and papers; music, theatre and other artistic expressions for children as well as child oriented films and videos. Assistance through international co-operation should also support media and art for children.

6. Constructive Agreements with Media Companies to Protect Children against Harmful Influences: Facts should be gathered about various attempts of voluntary agreements with media companies on positive measures such as not broadcasting violent programmes during certain hours, clear presentations before programmes about their content and the development of technical devices — like 'V-chips' — to help consumers to block out certain types of programmes. Likewise, experiences of voluntary ethical standards and mechanisms to encourage respect for them should be assembled and evaluated; this should include an analysis of the effectiveness of existing Codes of Conduct, professional guidelines, Press Councils, Broadcast Councils, Press Ombudsmen and similar bodies.

7. Comprehensive National Plans of Action to Empower Parents in the Media Market: Governments should initiate a national discussion on means to promote positive alternatives to the negative tendencies in the media market, to encourage media knowledge and support parents in their role as guides to their children when relating with electronic and other media. An international workshop should be organized to promote a discussion on this approach.

8. Advice on Implementation of article 17 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child: A study should be conducted with the purpose of developing advice to governments on how they could encourage the development of 'guidelines for the protection of the child from information and material injurious to his or her well-being'. Such a study should also serve the purpose of assisting the Committee on the Rights of the Child in drafting a General Comment on article 17.

9. Specific Guidelines for Reporting on Child Abuse: To encourage further discussions in the news rooms and within the media community as a whole guidelines should be drafted by relevant journalist bodies on how to report on abuse of children and at the same time protect the dignity of the children involved. Special emphasis should be placed on the issue of not exposing the identity of the child.

10. Handbook Material for Journalist Education on Child Rights: Material should be produced to assist journalist and media schools on child rights standards, established procedures for child rights monitoring, existing international, regional and national institutions working with children as well as basic aspects of child development. The manual planned by the United Nations Centre for Human Rights as a tool for journalist education on human rights should be widely disseminated when produced.

11. Network for Media Watchgroups: The positive experiences of media watchgroups in various countries should be further encouraged and 'good ideas' transferred between countries. The purpose is to give media consumers a voice in the discussion on media ethics and children. A focal point for exchanges should be established.

12. Service to 'Child Rights Correspondents': Interested journalists should be invited to sign in to a list of 'Child Rights Correspondents'. They should receive regular information about important child issues, interesting reports by others and be seen as media advisers to the international child rights community.

A WORKING GROUP met on April, 14, 1997 to consider constructive ways of ensuring implementation of the twelve recommendations and other proposals made during the discussion. Authorities, organizations and individuals are welcome with further suggestions to Paolo David, Centre for Human Rights, United Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Schweiz.

CHILD PORNOGRAPHY ON THE NET

Pedophiles exchange written material, pictures and videos on the net. They plan their weekend meetings in Europe and the U.S., or visit the porn-shops that trade in child pornography on the net itself.

In connection with the first World Congress Against Sexual Exploitation of Children held in Stockholm at the end of August 1996, The Norwegian Ombudsman for Children, and Save the Children Norway, initiated a project with the aim of identifying pedophile networks: systems, methods, codes and ways of communication used by criminals involved in the sexual exploitation of children.

Intensive investigation undertaken by professional computer-hackers revealed organised trading in child pornography on the net, and special sites containing information on sex tours and meetings. In one chat group we found hard core amateur child pornography, showing girls and boys between the age of eight and 12 being raped repeatedly by adults of both sexes.

The mass media, i.e. radio, television, newspapers and magazines, has traditionally been controlled by national laws and barriers. The Internet presents us with new challenges. How do you combat documented child abuse in the form of pictures and text, circulating on the Internet, while retaining the principle of free flow of information? New and international guidelines need to be drawn up and implemented to facilitate a certain conduct on the net.

Everyone using the net can report or give information about web-sites, ftp-servers, chat channels, etc., relating to child pornography or pedophile activity by sending e-mails to children@risk.sn.no.

In the struggle against the pedophile community we would appreciate any piece of information regarding child pornography or networks used by child abusers on the net. We will pass on to the Norwegian police, who co-operate with Interpol, substantiated information that can bring us closer to the day when commercial and sexual exploitation of children will come to an end. All correspondents are guaranteed anonymity, if they so desire.

The international community must decide quickly, whether NGOs or UN-bodies should carry the responsibility

of cleaning up the net. Once this has been decided the body should take steps to co-ordinate an international response to this international issue, which cannot be tackled by individual groups or nations alone.

The world is growing increasingly aware of the presence of pedophiles, and as proposed at the World Congress in Stockholm, Save the Children and the Ombudsman for Children in Norway have agreed on establishing an International Focal Point located at Save the Children's office in Oslo.

IN SHORT, THE MAIN OBJECTIVES OF THE FOCAL POINT ARE:

- Monitoring child pornography and pedophile activities on the Internet.
- Networking activities: initiate a co-operation between NGOs, academic institutions, police authorities, and other professional partners related to this topic. This network will represent a powerful resource pool as an instrument for action.
- Information gathering through use of the e-mail hot line children@risk.sn.no and the Focal Point web site at the *Children's House in Cyberspace* located at, http://childhouse.uio.no/redd_barna On this site you can also find a discussion room for the networking partners.
- An international panel or task force to develop a frame work of action based on information and experiences of the Focal Point's activities.
- In co-operation with some of the main software manufacturers, organise a world congress on how to reduce child pornography and pedophile activities on the net. The congress will be staged on the net itself.
- Information service towards the media.

TROND WAAGE, Ombudsman for Children, Norway
JEANETTE AASLI, Save the Children, Norway

European Media Measures under Consideration

ANNA CELSING
Free-lance Journalist, Belgium

Since the early 1990s children in Europe have, in principle, been protected against exposure to gratuitous violence on television by two pieces of European legislation, the European Convention on Transfrontier Television and the EU Television without Frontiers Directive. In recent years, however, media development and events such as the pedophile murders in Belgium, revealing the use of the Internet to disseminate child pornography, have increased political pressure to take additional measures to protect minors against abuse and exposure to media content considered harmful to their development.

IN THE EUROPEAN UNION several initiatives are under way. On April 16, 1997 a revision of the television directive came to an end when the European Parliament and the Council finally reached an agreement on a few controversial issues, among these the so-called "V-chip" amendment proposed by Parliament.

If accepted, this amendment would have required broadcasters to encode all their programmes on the basis of a common classification system, and every television sold or leased would have had to be fitted with a mechanism ("violence-chip") enabling parents to filter out programmes they do not want their children to see. But neither the Commission nor the Council supported the amendment, regarding legislation on this issue as premature, particularly as the system has been abandoned in those places in Europe where it has been tested. In the end Parliament settled for a text urging the Commission to carry out an investigation into the possible advantages and drawbacks of measures facilitating parent control. The study shall take into account experience gained in the field in and beyond Europe, as well as the views of interested parties such as producers and media specialists.

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT also proposed that programmes that are likely to impair the physical, mental or moral development of minors should be preceded by an acoustic warning or identified by a visual symbol throughout their duration. This amendment was accepted by the Council already in its common position of June 11, 1996, which also included a new article obliging the Commission to attach particular importance to the application of the rules on the protection of minors and human dignity in its periodic report on the application of

the directive. The final text of the revised television directive will be published as soon as it has been formally adopted by the European Parliament and the Council, most likely in June 1997. Member states will then have 18 months for its transfer into national law.

TELEVISION BEING BUT ONE OF THE MEDIA in which children may encounter violent and other potentially harmful materials, there has been a growing concern in the European Union about new outlets for such content and the Council has urged the Commission to propose measures. In October 1996 the Commission presented two documents on this matter: a Green Paper on the Protection of Minors and Human Dignity in Audio-visual and Information Services (COM(96)483) and a so-called 'communication' on Illegal and harmful content on the Internet (COM(96)487).

In these documents the Commission emphasizes the need to distinguish between illegal material, such as child pornography, and other types of content, such as ordinary pornography or material containing violence, which is legal but may be harmful to children.

ILLEGAL MATERIAL falls under existing laws and can be punished accordingly. Given the international character of the new media and the fact that criminal law only operates within national borders, the Commission recommends that the EU Member States define certain minimum common standards in their legislation in order to avoid loopholes. In addition, increased co-operation in the field of justice and

home affairs is essential, writes the Commission, also noting the need to discuss these problems in international fora such as the OECD, the World Trade Organisation and the United Nations.

The Commission stresses that issues of liability of Internet access providers and host service providers need to be examined and self-regulation encouraged. More authoritarian methods, such as blocking all direct access to the Internet combined with blacklisting of documents, are "inconceivable for Europe as it would severely interfere with the freedom of the individual and its political traditions", writes the Commission.

With regard to content that is legal but may be harmful to children, the Commission points out that the rules in the EU Member States vary greatly and reflect differ-

THE EUROPEAN CONVENTION ON TRANSFRONTIER TELEVISION

ARTICLE 7

Responsibilities of the broadcaster

1. All items of programme services, as concerns their presentation and content, shall respect the dignity of the human being and the fundamental rights of others.

In particular, they shall not:

- a. be indecent and in particular contain pornography;
- b. give undue prominence to violence or be likely to incite to racial hatred.

2. All items of programme services which are likely to impair the physical, mental or moral development of children and adolescents shall not be scheduled when, because of the time of transmission and reception, they are likely to watch them.

3. The broadcaster shall ensure that news fairly presents facts and events and encourage the free formation of opinions.

ences in cultural and moral standards. Europe, however, has a basis for a common approach in article 10 of the European Convention of Human Rights which guarantees the right to freedom of expression. This right can be subject to certain limitations for specified reasons, including the protection of health or morals and the prevention of crime, but only if the measure meets a real social need and is not disproportionate in the restrictions it imposes. For this purpose the European Court of Human Rights has developed a test of proportionality, which the Commission recommends. The Commission also emphasises the importance of media education and writes that it intends to support national awareness actions for parents and teachers.

THESE PROPOSALS HAVE BEEN DISCUSSED in several fora, including a meeting of European tele-communications ministers in November 1996 where most of the actions proposed were supported. At a consultative meeting with representatives of national administrations in February 1997, it was stressed that self-regulation should be a fundamental element given time to prove itself before considering other types of intervention, particularly of a regulatory nature.

Similar reactions were voiced when a European Parliament report on the Commission proposals was presented in April this year. Regulatory measures should be avoided in order not to infringe upon the freedom of expression and the protection of privacy. As for illegal material on the Internet, Europol should be given powers to monitor the Internet and take measures to remove, for instance, pedophile material. Control of access to potentially harmful but legal content should mainly be up to the individual, particularly parents, according to the European Parliament Commission on Civil Liberties and Internal Affairs.

THE PROTECTION OF MINORS with regard to media content has also been discussed in the Economic and Social Committee of the European Communities (ECOSOC). In February 1996 the Committee issued a so-called 'opinion' calling for a European cultural policy for children (CES 250/96) in which it writes that it "is appalled by the increasing violence and bad language on TV affecting children's perception and development". It recommended that the rules in the EU television directive be integrated with a "preventive and more positive approach", including encouragement of television companies to show quality programmes and creating state institutions in each Member State charged with evaluating and rewarding excellence in children's television. The ECOSOC also urges socio-professional organizations to take meas-

ures against TV companies which broadcast violence oriented TV programmes for children and young people.

THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE, too, is considering new measures. At a ministerial conference in Prague in December 1994, the ministers responsible for media policy requested the Committee of Ministers to prepare possible guidelines on the portrayal of violence in the media. As a result a Council recommendation - a politically, but not legally binding measure - on the portrayal of violence in the electronic media has been drafted.

The draft recommendation emphasises the commitment to the fundamental right to freedom of expression as guaranteed by the European Convention on human rights. Therefore the primary responsibility with respect to the gratuitous portrayal of violence lies with those responsible for the content of the media. The states only bear subsidiary responsibility, it is underlined. It is recommended that the media establish codes of conduct and internal guidelines with regard to such material. But

parents and teachers must also assume responsibility, for example by stimulating children and adolescents to develop a critical attitude to such programmes.

As for state measures, the draft recommendation mentions promoting the establishment of independent regulatory authorities, the possibility of including certain obligations concerning the portrayal of violence among the licensing conditions for broadcasters, and the promotion of research on such programming and the effects they may have. In addition, the state should share responsibility for media education with those responsible for the content and other sectors of society. Presently the Council of Europe itself is examining the possibility of launching an action plan on electronic media education.

The recommendation on the portrayal of violence may be adopted at a meeting in June. At the moment, however, one country - Sweden - is not willing to accept the recommendation, being opposed to the idea of regulating media content and having stringent domestic laws on the freedom of speech.

The need for young people to adopt a critical approach to the media, in particular to the cinema, was also discussed at a Council of Europe meeting in October 1996. Continent-wide distribution of important films would enable young people to learn to select quality works, said ministers of culture from the 39 European member states taking part in the meeting. In addition, school curricula and teacher training should include courses on the cinema, ministers urged.

THE EU TELEVISION WITHOUT FRONTIERS' DIRECTIVE

ARTICLE 22

Member States shall take appropriate measures to ensure that television broadcasts by broadcasters under their jurisdiction do not include programmes which might seriously impair the physical, mental or moral development of minors, in particular those that involve pornography or gratuitous violence. This provision shall extend to other programmes which are likely to impair the physical, mental or moral development of minors, except where it is ensured, by selecting the time of the broadcast or by any technical measure, that minors in the area of transmission will not normally hear or see such broadcasts. Member States shall also ensure that broadcasts do not contain any incitement to hatred on grounds of race, sex, religion or nationality.

Also, the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) have guidelines for programmes dealing with the portrayal of violence. The full text of these guidelines is reproduced on pages 10-11.

THE EUROPEAN BROADCASTING UNION'S GUIDELINES

FOR PROGRAMMES WHEN DEALING WITH THE PORTRAYAL OF VIOLENCE

1. WATERSHED

Programme-makers and schedulers should always take into account the transmission time of their programme when considering matters of content.

Scenes of violence may well make a programme inappropriate for an early placing because of its unsuitability for viewing by children.

In order to avoid any confusion in this matter by the viewing public in general, and parents in particular, there should be a clearly understood watershed at an appropriate time during evening viewing, before which all programmes should be suitable for audiences consisting of a high proportion of children. Parents must accept that responsibility for what their children watch after the watershed lies in large measure with them.

2. NEWS AND FACTUAL PROGRAMMES

News and information broadcasts have of necessity to deal on a daily basis with social conflicts in which violence can be a part. The audience should not, and cannot, be protected from this everyday occurrence. Actual violence is acceptable in news programmes as broadcasters have a duty to show factual violence in the world, but the negativity of such acts should be stressed.

News should and will shock viewers at times. With some news stories a sense of shock is part of a full human understanding of what has happened, but care should be taken never to discomfort viewers gratuitously by over-indulgence. The more often viewers are shocked, the more it will take to shock them.

One person's shock is another person's news or art. Thus, a decision in this field means striking a balance between the current social consensus on what is acceptable and the broadcaster's duty to reflect reality as he or she sees it.

In particular, the human dignity of the victim as well as those also affected must not be offended and their personal rights must be respected. Violence in factual programmes should not be so prominent or commonplace as to become sanitized. The public cannot be shielded from the violence which happens daily in the world, but it must be portrayed in the most sensitive way possible.

The degree of violence in news programmes must be essential to the integrity of the programme; care should be taken in the choice of material depending on the time of day at which bulletins are broadcast.

3. FICTIONAL AND ENTERTAINMENT PROGRAMMES

Television drama must be able to reflect important issues truthfully, and violence is part of both nature and society. Drama on television involves the collaboration of many different skills and creative talents. In any collaboration there must be editorial judgement.

Since conflict and its associated violence are somewhat ingrained human traits, they are often made the central component in fictional and entertainment programmes. What is crucial is that the reasons for the existence of violence in the treatment should be portrayed in a plausible manner and violence should not be used in a purely unprovoked manner to entertain and as a way of maximizing the audience.

Gratuitous violence must be proscribed. The more intense the violence, the greater should be the distancing from reality. The aim should be how little violence is necessary without undue dramatic compromise.

The effects of portraying violence are heavily dependent on the form this presentation takes and the dramatic context. Particular care must therefore be taken with realistic presentations with which the viewer may more easily identify. Details of violence and aggressive behaviour which invite imitation should be avoided.

Portrayals which trivialize, or indeed glorify, the use of violence, whether physical or psychological, and which present violence as a means of overcoming conflicts, should also be avoided at all costs. It is important that in addition to the causes of violence their destructive consequences should also be shown, and that the use of violence as a way of solving problems should be portrayed critically. Not all violence is physical. Non-physical violence can also be upsetting and shocking, especially to children. This is an important area where particular care should be taken, as is the portrayal of sadistic violence.

Scheduling of fictional and entertainment programmes containing violent scenes is important and adequate warning must be given.

4. PROGRAMME ACQUISITIONS

Acquired programmes should conform to normal editorial policy.

Violence in distant settings can be relatively less shocking, disturbing or liable to dangerous imitation.

Broadcasters, however, are committed to the vigilant exercise of control; acquisitions should be abandoned if they are incapable of being adapted or edited to conform to guidelines.

Broadcasters will need to ensure the right to edit overtly violent acquisitions before transmission.

Accurate description in promotional material is essential.

5. PROGRAMMES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Children and young people can be particularly sensitive to violence and brutality. Generally speaking, those rules valid for the totality of the public should be applied in a much stricter manner at times when the audience is more particularly made up of children and adolescents.

Programmes aimed at children should treat the portrayal of violence, both physical and non-physical, with particular caution. Special care should be exercised and careful scheduling is necessary.

In programme choices, programmes should be preferred which propound a positive attitude to life, human values, and non-violence.

Young children do not fully understand the subtleties of good and bad and will readily commit themselves to one side in a conflict. Violence as an easy way of resolving conflict should be avoided. Care should be taken with domestic violence, both physical and verbal. The danger of imitation should always be borne in mind.

When portraying conflicts and violence it should be taken into account that young children are less able to perceive television programmes in their entirety than adults, that they align themselves much more powerfully to individual, visual surface appeal and only gradually become able to differentiate between central and peripheral aspects. Children identify with characters on an emotional level more readily than adults and the corresponding reactions such as fear are stronger and last longer.

The same rules apply to fantasy as to realistic dramas. Care should be taken not to cause anxiety and undesirable tension nor to incite aggressive behaviour.

In news reports, attention should be given to the likely impact, particularly on children viewing alone, of coverage of violence and its consequences.

Programme-makers should clearly understand that moral attitudes and values only emerge gradually throughout childhood, so children and young people are easier to influence than adults.

Programmes should take care therefore not to undermine the moral development of minors.

6. PROGRAMME TRAILS AND SIGNPOSTING

Programmes containing scenes of violence may be required to be preceded by a detailed warning announcement, but overuse of warnings can render them ineffective. They should not be used as disclaimers against the programmes that follow.

Prudence must be exercised in respect of promotional material and the transmission time of a trail must always be borne in mind.

Trails should honestly reflect the type of programmes being trailed.

Violence as a means of promotion of programmes should not be permitted. Taking violent scenes arbitrarily out of context may shock viewers unfairly.

It may be legitimate to let viewers know if the film or programme being trailed does contain violent scenes, but there is a fine line between effective description and exploitative come-on.

7. ADVERTISING

Advertising should not use violence as a means to sell a product nor as an incitement to violent behaviour. Since children up to a certain age are far less able than adults to recognize the intentions of advertising, and to judge it critically, they are therefore open to influence to a greater extent. Advertising should not exploit the weaknesses of young consumers by using either fear or violence.

→ **The European Convention on Transfrontier Television.**

<http://neon.coe.fr/eng/legaltxt/132e.htm>

The EU Television without Frontiers' Directive.

<http://europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg10/avpolicy/twf/160497en.html>

The Green Paper on the Protection of Minors and Human Dignity in Audiovisual and Information Services

(COM(96) 483).

<http://europa.eu.int/en/record/green/gp9610/protoc.htm>

Communication on Illegal and Harmful Content on the Internet
(COM(96) 487).

<http://europa.eu.int/en/record/legal/index.htm>

The Sense of the Bratislava Resolution

The Bratislava Resolution outlines the minimum requirements for a worthy film and television production for children. It addresses the nature of programme content, describing what good quality production can and must be. It also insists on the support which is necessary if workers are to have the freedom and the resources to produce and distribute this material.

THREE DAYS OF INFORMAL TALKS in Slovakia among children's media professionals gave birth to the Bratislava Resolution in 1994. The International Centre of Films for Children and Young People (Centre International du Film pour l'Enfance et la Jeunesse; CIFEJ) had invited heads of children's programming from Eastern European television stations to meet and find ways of dealing with the down-turn of national production for kids, following the formation of the new democracies.

The buzz of the market economy was in the air, but it had only brought an onslaught of importation to the East. National budgets were disappearing both for film and television production. This was leading to widespread unemployment among animators, decorators, writers and directors who, previously, had made some of the richest and most interesting films and programmes for children in the world.

Through all the discussions, participants — no matter where they came from — agreed on many issues:

- Small children need to hear stories told in their own languages, reflecting people they know in places that look like home. This builds a sense of identity and comfort.
- Children should be protected from images of certain kinds of violence and abuse which too often crop up in production which aim to entertain through shock and action.
- Children should not be treated as consumers, a captive audience to whom to sell things.

PRODUCTION FOR CHILDREN motivated by their best interests and general well-being will not be produced by the market economy. This has long been axiomatic in western democracies where public broadcasting takes over the task of making stimulating, entertaining and appropriate shows for kids. In these same countries, film funds either provide money for feature films or non-exploitative features are seldom made. The problem was how to structure a society so that the welfare of the kids became a priority. This question was especially important for the countries of Eastern Europe as transitions brought restructuring to the public agencies like television stations and state-run film funds.

THE SENSE OF THE BRATISLAVA RESOLUTION is that children are the responsibility of each nation, that the market economy would not create balanced programming for kids to grow up on. Adequate funds had to be made available to producers and creators to work in production for children. Yet these funds would only follow from a political will to care for the media needs of the children.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child, which all nations but Somalia, The Cook Islands and the United States have ratified, makes these rights manifest.

IN THE BRATISLAVA DISCUSSIONS, it became clear that the children would need to have spokespeople to remind governments of their obligations. The people who could speak out might belong to writers' unions, to producers' associations, to film institutes or be television programmers. But those who wished to work for children needed to be bolstered by a structure through which to open and sustain the dialogue with politicians and governments. The Resolution was an attempt to define and motivate this structure.

CONNIE TADROS

*Executive Director
CIFEJ*

*International Centre of Films
for Children and Young People*

(For address: See page 23)

MANY THANKS TO ALL CONTRIBUTORS!

News briefs and short articles to *News on Children and Violence on the Screen*, are greatly valued, as are notices of coming and recent conferences, seminars and other events; of new publications; and of active associations and organisations with children and media in view.

DEADLINE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS
TO THE AUTUMN ISSUE IS
SEPTEMBER 15, 1997.

BRATISLAVA RESOLUTION

Soon, Mankind will enter the Third Millennium. The cinema will celebrate its 100th anniversary. Television is a little bit younger.

As we reach the crossroads of the year 2000, the importance of children's film continues to grow, as does the need for children to see these films. We can know that.

We live and will live, people from North and South, East and West, in a changing and dynamic world. Mankind will reach new heights in knowledge and in achievement. Children, who are our hope for the future, have the right to benefit from these general developments.

As specialists in children's cinema and television, we appreciate that the increasing impact of film, television and other media on our children demands more specific care and action with an aim to achieving better quality in the lives of the young people.

Good quality films and television programmes for children can and must carry positive fundamental human values. These will help and support the development of a personal conscience in young people, and add new dimensions to their basic social behaviour and to their knowledge of the world.

Good quality children's films and television programmes can and must encourage the process of creative thinking, of deciding and of acting in full liberty in order that children can build their own personalities and their future.

Good quality children's films and television programmes can and must reveal and stress the basic values of each people and of each nation, according to their traditions, the social and cultural backgrounds upon which they are founded, and the national identity of each country. At the same time, these nations must share these values with others in a general harvest of human spirituality.

Good quality children's films can also travel across borders, playing a leading role in the building of the world of tomorrow, helping to define the place in which our children will live.

For all these reasons, we think that the governments, the parliaments, the national and international agencies and organizations around the world must recognize, through support of production and distribution of children's films, a duty to the future of each nation and of the entire world.

There are several ways to achieve such goals:

- stimulating increased production of children's films and television, on a national level, by raising and investing more funds
- building a support system for wider and better distribution of those children's films whose artistic and educational values are more important than their commercial aspects
- encouraging the use on a large scale of production for children in schools and in other educational institutions and activities
- supporting the spread of quality children's screenings in all social areas
- financing and developing the education and training of specialists – scriptwriters, directors and others – of children's production
- stimulating and financing scientific research about the reaction of children to the media, and about the way they use media for their specific needs
- helping national and international professional organizations and associations dealing with the issues surrounding children's film and television to achieve and develop their activities.

We are sure that the governments, the parliaments, the national and international agencies and organizations are aware that supporting children's film and television production will serve the interests of each people, of each country, and will contribute to the building of a better world, one in which we would like to live in at the threshold of the Third Millennium. Never forget that any little thing done for children now is an investment in the future.

The above resolution was adopted by the assembly, on the occasion of a gathering of producers, broadcasters and others interested in production for children, and in sharing experiences, East and West. Over 70 participants came from 30 countries. The meeting was called by CIFEJ, hosted by the Biennale of Animation, and held in Bratislava from 23-25 November 1994.

The First World Summit on Television and Children

The first World Summit on Television and Children was held in Melbourne, Australia, in March 1995. 637 delegates, from 71 countries, attended this landmark event which was hosted by the Australian Children's Television Foundation (the ACTF).

THE IDEA FOR THE WORLD SUMMIT grew out of a Round Table meeting hosted by PRIX JEUNESSE in May 1993. At that meeting it became clear that programming for children was changing and under threat in a variety of ways and could no longer remain purely a domestic issue for most nations if it was to survive with the values and objectives that professionals in the industry believe should apply to children's programs.

In Australia people had fought for and persuaded successive governments that it was important to preserve Australian programs for Australian children through regulation and subsidy in various forms. So the ACTF therefore took on the challenge to host the first World Summit.

THE OBJECTIVES of the first World Summit were:

- to achieve a greater understanding of developments in children's television around the world;
- to raise the status of children's programming;
- to draw the attention of key players in broadcasting the importance of issues relating to children;
- to agree on a charter of guiding principles in children's television;
- to ensure the provision of programs for children will be guaranteed as the communications revolution proceeds;
- to assist the developing world to provide opportunities for children's programming in the future.

THE DISCUSSIONS at the first World Summit have spawned a range of initiatives of ongoing importance:

Several other regional and global summits on Children and the Media have been or shall be held (see page 15, 30, 31).

The International Research Forum was established (see page 21). The Forum met in Paris in April 1997 (see page 17).

Significant progress towards agreement on the Children's Charter was made and the Charter now has world-wide acceptance.

A number of bursaries for producers in developing countries were offered by Channel 4 in the United Kingdom, the ACTF and Fox Children's Network in the USA.

This indicates that a global movement of like-minded professionals will continue to discuss the issues, seek answers and develop solutions in to the next century. Children's television is now on the international agenda in a big way.

PATRICIA EDGAR

Director

Australian Children's Television Foundation

(For address, see page 24)

THE CHILDREN'S TELEVISION CHARTER

1. Children should have programmes of high quality which are made specifically for them, and which do not exploit them. These programmes, in addition to entertaining, should allow children to develop physically, mentally and socially to their fullest potential.
2. Children should hear, see and express themselves, their culture, their language and their life experiences, through television programmes which affirm their sense of self, community and place.
3. Children's programmes should promote an awareness and appreciation of other cultures in parallel with the child's own cultural background.
4. Children's programmes should be wide-ranging in genre and content, but should not include gratuitous scenes of violence and sex.
5. Children's programmes should be aired in regular slots at times when children are available to view, and/or distributed via other widely accessible media or technologies.
6. Sufficient funds must be made available to make these programmes to the highest possible standards.
7. Governments, production, distribution and funding organisations should recognize both the importance and vulnerability of indigenous children's television, and take steps to support and protect it.

May 29, 1995

The Asian Summit on Child Rights and the Media

There are concerns that the immense influences of mass media have not been sufficiently harnessed to impart the positive values of Asian culture to children or to contribute to their development. There are also questions of whether media ethics are needed to protect children from harmful information. The Convention on the Rights of the Child addresses these issues and seeks the active involvement of the media as a major partner in promoting children's rights to survival, development, protection and participation.

THE ASIAN SUMMIT on Child Rights and the Media was held from 2 to 5 July 1996 in Manila, the Philippines. The major organising members include the Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC), the Philippine Children's Television Foundation, Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union, the Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC), Philippines and the United Nations Children's Fund.

The Summit was hosted by the Government of the Philippines and the Council for the Welfare of Children. It was sponsored by Hoso-Bunka Foundation, Friedrich Ebert Philippines, Canadian High Commission and other various organisations.

THE GOALS OF THE SUMMIT WERE:

- ✦ To strengthen national commitment to the need for an information society in Asia supportive of the rights of children as articulated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- ✦ To familiarise decision makers and practitioners in media with the needs and interests of children.
- ✦ To mobilise and encourage the media and communication industries to develop quality national and locally-produced programmes and products for children.
- ✦ To improve co-ordination and strengthen networks for exchange of information, ideas and programme materials between sectors involved in communication programmes, government and interest groups.
- ✦ To seek endorsement of the Children's Television Charter by national and regional policy makers and broadcasters.

Issues examined at the Summit were: child rights and the media; influence of media; access to media; promoting cultural diversity; children's media; media and values: issues of portrayal; media education.

Delegates to the Summit - including ministers and senior officials of Asian governments, journalists, media executives, educators and child rights advocates from 16 countries - adopted the Asian Declaration on Child Rights and the Media.

THE DECLARATION seeks to re-affirm their commitment to ensure implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child as ratified in their countries; acknowledge the development role, responsibility and power of all forms of media to inform, entertain, educate and influence; and to recognise their potential for children and for social change. The declaration resolves to take necessary action that the interest of children will be protected and promoted. (The full text of the declaration is reproduced on the next page).

A copy of the report of the Asian Summit can be obtained at a charge.

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The Southern African Developing Countries' Summit on Children and Broadcasting

This Summit was held on 31 May 1996 in Johannesburg. The idea for a regional (SADC plus Kenya) forum grew from discussions about how to make the Children's Television Charter emanating from the First World Summit in 1995 in Melbourne more relevant and applicable to Africa, and how to prepare for future representation at broader gatherings such as the Second World Summit in 1998 in London.

A report on the SADC Summit is available, and further information can be sought from,

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(Source: Newsletter No. 3, December 1996, from International Research Forum (IRF) on Television and Children, Australian Broadcasting Authority)

ASIAN DECLARATION ON CHILD RIGHTS AND THE MEDIA (MANILA)

We, Ministers of Information, Education, Welfare and Social Development from 27 countries of Asia, Senior Officials representing the various governments, executives, researchers, practitioners and professionals from various streams of media, non-government organisations, advocacy groups and concerned individuals gathered in Manila for the Asian Summit on Child Rights and the Media:

re-affirming our commitment to ensure implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) as ratified in our countries;

acknowledging the developmental role, responsibility and power of all forms of media to inform, entertain, educate and influence; and,

recognising their potential for children and for social change.

NOW, THEREFORE, RESOLVE THAT ALL MEDIA FOR OR ABOUT CHILDREN SHOULD:

protect and respect the diverse cultural heritage of Asian societies;

be accessible to **all** children;

provide for the girl child and counter the widespread discrimination against the girl child; and,

provide for children with special needs; children in especially difficult circumstances, children of indigenous communities and children in situations of armed conflict.

RESOLVE ALSO, THAT ALL MEDIA ABOUT CHILDREN SHOULD:

adopt policies that are consistent with the principles of non-discrimination and the best interests of all children; raise awareness and mobilise all sectors of society to ensure the survival, development, protection and participation of all children;

address all forms of economic, commercial and sexual exploitation and abuse of children in the region and ensure that such efforts do not violate their rights, particularly their right to privacy;

protect children from material which glorifies violence, sex, horror and conflict; and,

promote positive values and not perpetuate discrimination and stereotypes.

RESOLVE FURTHER, THAT ALL MEDIA FOR CHILDREN SHOULD:

be of high quality, made especially for them, and do not exploit them;

support their physical, mental, social, moral and spiritual development;

enable children to hear, see and express themselves, their culture, their languages and their life experiences through media which affirm their sense of self and community, while promoting an awareness and appreciation of other cultures;

be wide-ranging in genre and content, but not include gratuitous scenes of violence and sex; and,

be accessible to them at times when they need and can use it.

RESOLVE FINALLY, THAT GOVERNMENTS, MEDIA, NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS, THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND OTHER LOCAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES SHOULD:

provide media education for children and families to develop their critical understanding of all media forms;

provide opportunities for children in creating media and to express themselves on a wide range of issues relating to their needs and interests;

provide sufficient funds and resources to ensure access to and enable the production and dissemination of high quality materials for and about children as well as capacity building for media practitioners so that they could perform their role as developmental agencies;

promote regional and international co-operation through the sharing of research, expertise and exchange of materials and programmes, networking among governments, non-government organisations, media organisations, educational institutions, advocacy groups and other agencies;

provide incentives for excellence through awards at regional and national levels;

provide co-ordinated monitoring mechanisms and encourage self-regulation at regional and national levels to ensure the implementation of this Declaration; and,

convene as early as possible broad national multi-sectoral consultations to develop action plans, including professional guidelines consistent with this Declaration.

ADOPTED, 5 July 1996

Asian Summit on Child Rights and the Media, Manila

First International Forum for Child and Media Researchers held in Paris

A MEETING OF RESEARCHERS AMONG THE PARTICIPANTS at the First World Summit on Television and Children in Melbourne in 1995, resulting in the IRF (see page 21), brought to light the need for researchers from all over the world to exchange experiences and evaluate the state of their work in terms of theories, methods and results. Therefore, a small network in France, GRREM (Group de Recherche sur la Relation Enfants/Médias; Research Group on the Relationship between Children and the Media), organised an international forum for researchers, *Youth and Media – Tomorrow*, April 21-25, 1997, in Paris.

Elisabeth Auclair, chair of GRREM, was responsible for this Paris Forum in co-operation with an international scientific committee. UNESCO undertook patronage of the Forum, which was supported by France Télévision and others under a sponsoring committee presided over by France's Supervisory Broadcasting Council (Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel; CSA). The Forum was open also to media professionals, protagonists from the educational field, and policy makers.

THE RESEARCH PRESENTED at this unique event – the first large international meeting ever for researchers active within the field of children and media – was composed according to proposals submitted in advance by the participants, as well as to the Forum objectives, and an endeavour to achieve a balanced representation of different parts of the world.

For the alternately 350 participants from nearly 40 countries mornings were devoted to plenary sessions, and afternoons to parallel workshops, on daily themes as 'Beyond media effects?', 'Media and social concerns', 'The why and how of future research', and, not least, 'Media education, media literacy'. There were also posters presenting research projects and related activities in short, as well as round tables with discussions between media professionals, policy makers and researchers.

All in all, projects and topics dealt with a wide range of children's and young people's relations to traditional and new media and displayed in an interesting way how research, as a tool of elucidating life and contributing to practices and policies, varies in different cultures and social contexts.

THE FOLLOWING WORDS by Elisabeth Auclair from the last of four special chronicles leading up to the Forum, give a sense of its aim and direction:

– It is important to remind ourselves of the text of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by

all the countries represented at this Forum. It should act as a guide to our thinking, since in its preamble it states that children are people and affirms the need to hear them, listen to them and respond to them.

– Rather than remain content with talking in terms of protection and legislation, would it not be more worthwhile – in the light of information provided by researchers – to seek to discover what positive role the media might play in children's educational development? Could the media not contribute to giving them landmarks and opening doors?

– Above all, there will be (at the Forum) the question of getting to know better what children and young people are making of the media that surround them, and of discovering how we as adults can help them find their way through the proliferation of information sources to which they have access.

A REPORT CONSISTING of papers and posters presented at the Forum will be available on computer disc.

The intensive week clearly demonstrated the need of further similar research meetings, and immediately after the Forum the international scientific committee started a discussion on how to realise the next one.

CECILIA VON FEILITZEN
Scientific Co-ordinator

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Violence in the Media – Prospects for Change

OVER 3.000 SCHOLARLY STUDIES performed on the relationship between violence on television and in other media and the development of aggression in viewers, served as the background and central theme of the international conference "Violence in the Media. Prospects for Change" held on October 3-4 1994 in New York and sponsored by St. John's University. So did also the increasing violence in U.S. society, above all among youth and in schools.

An eloquent illustration of this was the electric sign advertisement on Times Square showing the number of fire-arms (about 220 million) in the USA and the amount of murders and manslaughter committed with these weapons, as well as detailed information about the last committed murder.

Other International Meetings...

CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS were mainly Americans, but represented also, for example, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, Israel, South Africa, Sweden and the United Kingdom. They were researchers from a variety of disciplines, government officials, media professionals, and representatives of organisations and interest groups who were working to generate public opinion on violent media representations.

Three members of Congress from New York, and a British member of Parliament, opened the conference by urging everybody to combat violent representations, but with various accentuation on which role legislation or other regulation should have. The most sharp contribution was made by George Gerbner, retired media professor and Dean at the University of Pennsylvania: a fiery appeal against letting constitutional objections prevent efforts. He maintained that *the export* of U.S. violent films to a great degree has stimulated an increase in violent media output.

THE MAIN PART of the conference was devoted to a broad range of research. Topics were, for example, fictional and realistic violence on television, and in film, music videos, video games, and virtual reality; influences of media violence on children, young people, women, and other groups in the form of fright and anxiety, aggression, and desensitisation toward violence; as well as influence on moral development; fantasy; self-image, sexual violence, political violence and peace. The attraction of media violence was also dealt with, as were the roles of viewers' identification, parents, school, and community.

SYSTEMS OF REGULATION and self-regulation in several countries were presented. Strong lobby organisations argued, on basis of research results and other experience, for regulation and other measures that could limit the flow of media violence. Representatives of academic jurisprudence claimed that the U.S. Constitution (First Amendment) did not constitute any obstacle to intervention against harmful media violence. However, the American Civil Liberties Union and other lobby organisations, including certain U.S. media representatives, maintained that so was the case.

Consequently, the prospect for self-regulation within the industry appeared vague, and with that the prospects of diminished influence on program markets in other countries – violent films are a profitable U.S. export product.

CECILIA VON FEILITZEN
Scientific Co-ordinator
based on a report by

JENS CAVALLIN,
Principal Secretary
Ministry of Culture, SWEDEN

Non-violence, Tolerance and Television

COINCIDING WITH THE 125TH anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, the prophet on non-violence and tolerance, an international roundtable on *Non-violence, Tolerance and Television*, was organised in New Dehli, April 1, 1994, by UNESCO, the International Programme for Development of Communication (IPDC) and the Indian Government. Many member states of UNESCO had earlier raised the issue of violence in television programmes, with several delegates insisting that UNESCO must not keep silent about this problem. While the issue of violence in the media has been discussed since the advent of them, it takes on added meaning with the ready availability of new communication technologies, accelerating the effects of violence on modern as well as traditional societies.

The roundtable was restricted to a number of broadcasting professionals in order to analyse the problems and put forward solutions in a practical way. Individual viewpoints expressed in the roundtable take primacy but are also summarised in concise form in the report: *Non-violence, Tolerance and Television*. Report of the Chairman to the Intergovernmental Council of the International Programme for the Development of Communication, UNESCO, 1994. The report also includes a paper on TV violence in Asia.

CB

Polish-Swedish Seminar 1996 Media Violence on Polish Agenda 1997

IN EARLY 1996 A FILM FESTIVAL AND SEMINAR on the theme, "Sex and Violence in the Media – Films for Young People?" was held in Warsaw. The effect of the seminar (or lack thereof) suggests that the time was not yet ripe. Today, however, the tide of debate runs high.

Why the difference? In the year between then and now the Poles have had to face news of a series of acts of brutal violence committed by young people. Children in their early teens have murdered other teenagers or passers-by. The murders – fatal beatings – occurred in a number of widely scattered Polish cities. No motives were apparent. These events have shocked Polish society, and young people in several cities have filled the streets in forceful demonstrations against the violence committed by their own age-group.

RECENTLY, FILM DIRECTOR Andrzej Wajda entered into the debate. His vehement demand for setting limits to the media violence gave rise to a debate – pro and con Wajda himself. Once famed for his liberalism, Wajda's

words aroused chilling memories of the days when state censors sought to control all manner of public expression.

Roughly eight years have passed since the fall of dictatorship in Poland, a country of some 40 million people. The following explosion of entertainment produced by transnational media interests filled a long-suffered void. In the space of a few years, American film accounted for 90-100 per cent of the films screened in Warsaw cinemas. This wave of films brought previously censored violence, which also entered into Polish homes via TV and filled booksellers' shelves and tobacconists' racks.

THE POWERFUL CATHOLIC CHURCH concentrated its attention on the increasing variety of media portrayals characterized by sexual open-mindedness and frankness. It was at this juncture that I, in the capacity of Cultural Attaché at the Swedish Embassy, decided to raise the issue of sex and violence in the media. Thanks to the enthusiastic collaboration of Suzanne Båge, cinematographic expert at the Swedish Institute, and the staff of the Swedish Film Institute, a programme featuring a series of ten youth films and a seminar was put together. The films illustrated a variety of ways of dealing with sex and violence in the media, taking their point of departure in Swedish policy, which is, rather, restrictive in the case of violence, but quite open about sex.

Some of Poland's leading cultural and scientific figures were engaged to take part in the seminar, which also attracted Polish television coverage. But suddenly, the arrangers ran into a major obstacle. The Church wanted no part of a debate on sex and violence in the media, and devout Poles were admonished not to attend the films or attend/take part in the seminar. Under such circumstances, no school wanted/dared to get involved in the screenings.

AT THE SEMINAR the Polish and Swedish experts seemed to talk past one another. A Swedish research specialist on children, youth and media violence, summarized what research has to say on the subject. Two other Swedish participants described their work with film as a tool to help teenagers solve emotional and other problems. A representative of the Swedish Film Institute lectured to film clips on how portrayals of children in films for juvenile audiences have changed since the 1940s.

The Polish participants, who were mainly psychologists and not media researchers, expressed their conviction that the significance of media violence is little or non-existent. According to them, parental attitude is the most decisive factor with regard to how children and youth develop, and it must be the responsibility of parents, not the media, to bring up the children.

IN LATE SUMMER OF 1995, Execution, a macabre film which shows more than thirty authentic executions, topped the charts among rental videos in Poland. The same time the following year, the first of a series of spectacular and brutal youth murders had been committed.

After young people all over the country demonstrated their disgust, a debate on media violence took off this past Winter.

Now the discussion is in full swing, and it is important to follow the course it takes. And to see that it is followed up with contacts – between institutions, organizations and individuals, and among policy-makers.

MIKA LARSSON

Journalist

and

Formerly Cultural Attaché,
The Swedish Embassy, POLAND



Screen Violence

An Issue for International Co-operation among Film Regulators

SINCE THE MID-EIGHTIES the film regulators, or film censors, have met each fourth year at international conferences to debate internal issues and problems for this very specific group of professionals. These conferences have mostly been held in London, with participants from all the continents. Since the media situation is changing drastically all over the world, topics that used to be of national concern are now more or less international. Violence in the media is undoubtedly an international problem.

When the fourth international conference was held in September 1996 in London the topic was "Screen Violence". About one hundred delegates took part during five days of lecturing and intensive debates.

National surveys on the nature and dimensions of TV violence were presented: one from Germany, one from the United Kingdom and two from the United States. Of the American studies, one is a project of three years, still going on. The effects of media violence were also reported on, as were studies about the attraction of violent movies.

Another theme was sexual violence and violence to women. A study on sexual violence in mainstream films was presented, and an additional study concluded that the social and ethnic backgrounds of the audience are of utmost importance for the influence film violence exerts on women.

One day of the conference treated the new media, computer games and the Internet. There were demonstrations of what can be found on the Internet and different systems of selfregulation were discussed.

The last day dealt with various systems of classification and consumer information for film, video, and television. Media education as an important tool for the

Other International Meetings...

future was discussed, with different models and ideas in focus. Finally, the importance of more research in the field of violence on the screen was underlined.

IT LOOKS AS IF THE TOPIC OF VIOLENCE on the screen is now on the agenda of further international conferences. As the internationalization of the media sector is increasing, the task of how to handle the problem – with legislation, producer responsibility, consumer advice, media education and research – will be an issue for international co-operation in the future.

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Media Education Research Section of IAMCR

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR MASS COMMUNICATION RESEARCH (IAMCR) is a large international professional organisation in the field of communication research. Established in 1957, the Association has over 2,300 members in some 70 countries.

Every two years IAMCR holds a General Assembly and Scientific Conference. Each of these events attracts between 300 and 600 members from more than 40 countries. (Smaller topical conferences are organised in between these bi-annual general conferences. In 1997, the topical conference takes place in Oaxaca, Mexico, on July 3-6.)

Much of the activity of IAMCR is carried out in its various sections and working groups. One section focuses on Media Education Research. President of this section is Birgitte Tufte, Denmark.

The 20th General Assembly and Scientific Conference of IAMCR, *Shifting Centres*, took place on August 18-22, 1996, in Sydney, Australia.

The following papers were on the programme of the Media Education Research Section:

SESSION I

Media Autonomy (Critical Autonomy) and Media Competence, *Mag. Susanne Krucsay*, Austria.

Trends and Differences in America and Canadian Media Education, *Gina Bailey*, Association of Media Literacy, Toronto, Canada.

Media Education Research and the Concept of Critical Thinking, *Jaques Piette* and *Luc Giroux*, University of Sherbrooke, Canada.

The Emerging Media Scenario in India: Challenges for Media Education, *Keval J. Kumar*, University of Poona, India.

Educational Media: Theory and Practice in India, *Ila Joshi*, Gujarat University, Ahmedabad.

SESSION II

Curricular Innovation and Mass Media, *Maria Luisa Sevillano Garcia* and *Donaciano Bartolome Crespo*, Universidad Nacional De Educacion A Distancia, Spain.

Convergence & Techno-Culture: Implications for Media Studies, *Carmen Luke*, University of Queensland, Australia.

Using Electronic Networks in Teaching International Communication, *Dina Iordanova*, University of Texas, Austin, USA.

If We Didn't Mention "Media" Wouldn't It Be Easier? Some Thoughts about How to Move Media Education from the Fringe, *Jeanne Prinsloo*, University of Natal, South Africa.

The New Liberal Art of the Information Age in the United States, *George Thottam*, Iona College, USA.

SESSION III

Analysis of the Brazilian Social Communication Courses: A Search in Report on the Curriculum Identity, *Lucilene Cury*, Brazil.

The Education and Training of Interviewers at Communication Studies at Roskilde University, *Jan Krag Jacobsen*, Roskilde University, Denmark.

Fairy Tale in Medialand, *Svetlana Bezdhanov Gostimir*, University of Belgrade.

Identity: Presentation of a Media Education Video on the Construction of Selfhood, *K P Jayasankar* and *Anjali Monteiro*, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, India.

Children and Product Comprehensibility, Interpretation, and Credibility of Television Commercials, *Florence Chioma Nwachuku*, University of Lagos, Nigeria.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON IAMCR, see Web site: <http://auvm.american.edu/~mowlana/frame17.htm>

POLICING THE INTERNET

Combating pornography and violence on the Internet – a European approach,

was an international conference held on 13-14 February 1997 in London, organised by the Association of London Government. Topics were, among others, possibilities of technically and legally controlling the net, co-operation from the police, and national and international policy for the future.

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International Research Forum on Television and Children

THE INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH FORUM (IRF) on Television and Children is an initiative of the Australian Broadcasting Authority (ABA) emerging from the World Summit on Television and Children held in Melbourne in March 1995 (see page 14)

The IRF provides an international forum for promoting awareness of the need for research into children and the media, stimulating research as an aid to policy making, exchanging information, and encouraging collaboration on research into children and television.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE IRF continues to grow with more than 500 members from over 45 countries. The newsletter is available free of charge to all members of the IRF. Participation in the IRF is invited from organisations and individuals involved in the regulation of children's television, promoting or conducting research into children and television, and children's television program makers.

The primary mechanism for IRF members to share information is the bi-annual newsletter. Three issues have been produced to date - November 1995, June 1996 and December 1996. The next issue is due in June this year and will include reports on upcoming events and conferences, changes or developments in the area of children's programming regulation, and major research projects with international significance.

IRF members are invited to provide details of research projects which they have completed or are undertaking and these are updated in each issue. Members are also invited to submit articles in any area of relevance to research on children and media.

A copy of the IRF membership list is mailed to all members with each issue of the newsletter. The membership list includes the name and organisational affiliation of each member, as well as their contact details and research interests (where supplied). The list is provided with the aim of enabling members to contact each other directly where there are common research interests and requests for further information.

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CRIN

CHILD RIGHTS INFORMATION NETWORK (CRIN) is a global network of children's rights organisations promoting effective exchange of information concerning children and their rights.

Accessing quality information about children and their lives is a great challenge, not least because of the invisibility of children in decision and policy making, formal data collection, research and analysis. Yet there is a wealth of knowledge, understanding and documentation about the lives of children in non-governmental organisations, UN agencies such as UNICEF, academic institutions and individual researchers.

Operational since January 1996, the network has launched a number of projects:

- ◆ a newsletter (3-4 issues per year) sign-posting its readers to publications, meetings, Internet web sites on children's rights as well as project updates and profiles of members.
- ◆ a database of member organisations, detailing their activities, information resources, research and publications. The database is available on CRIN's web site and will be published as a paper directory.
- ◆ a Web site will become an essential Internet resource on children's rights, holding hard information and providing links to other sites (<http://www.childhub.ch/webpub/crhome>).
- ◆ an electronic mailing list, used by CRIN members to post news, announce events, workshops and meetings and pose questions to others tackling children's rights issues.
- ◆ an information service on children's rights.

CRIN IS ALSO DEVELOPING a training and capacity building project to address the training needed to document, collect, disseminate and access information on children's rights. Membership is open and free to NGOs, UN agencies, academic institutions and individuals who are committed to the implementation on the Rights of the Child; active in children's rights through programming, research, advocacy or campaigning; and last, but not least, committed to sharing information with others.

IF YOU WISH TO JOIN CRIN, please contact,
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CEM - The Cultural Environment Movement

Upon his retirement in the early 1990s, George Gerbner, professor and Dean of the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia for some 25 years, turned activist.

Gerbner, a leading authority on television research in the USA, follows a multidisciplinary approach, combining perspectives in the fields of sociology, communication theory and cultural theory. His many years of scholarship in the field have made him highly critical of media content and increasing concentration in the media sector. In 1991, Gerbner formed CEM, the Cultural Environment Movement, a coalition of concerned scholars and citizens in the USA and around the world. Some 150 independent organizations and institutions have joined.

LAST YEAR, A FOUNDING CONVENTION was held in St. Louis, Missouri, hosted by Webster University. The Convention adopted a Viewers' Declaration of Independence, a People's Communication Charter with eighteen articles, and an Agenda for Action. In form and spirit they parallel the UN Declaration of Human Rights. One of the main points of the Declaration is: *All children are endowed with the right to grow up in a cultural environment that fosters responsibility, trust, and mutuality rather than force, fear and violence.*

Improving the cultural environment of coming generations is a prime concern of the coalition, and a main point in the Agenda for Action is a project to promote media literacy and critical awareness of the media among young people. Article 11 of the Charter, "Children's rights", states young people's right to *media products that are designed to meet their needs and interests* and to foster their healthy development. The article also states the need to *protect children from harmful media products and commercial exploitation.*

GEORGE GERBNER is especially sensitive to the issue of violence. Violent content serves as a *lingua franca*, a means to sell products on the global market, irrespective of cultural boundaries. His research has established that people who are exposed to considerable amounts of media violence tend to be more fearful than others. His theory is that the media foster a culture of victims, which in the longer term creates a climate of fear, mistrust and dependence in society. Media violence does not threaten the social order, it reinforces it.

Gerbner took 'his' researchers in the Cultural Indicators project with him when he left Annenberg. They are affiliated with CEM and share its offices on the university campus.

CEM IS ONE OF SEVERAL ORGANIZATIONS with the aim of revitalizing participatory democracy in the USA. Others include the Center for Living Democracy, The Kettering Foundation, National Issues Forum Institute, and Public Agenda. They are concerned by the fact that

so many citizens seem to be overwhelmed with a feeling of powerlessness and vulnerability. To remedy this situation the groups seek to broaden the concept of democracy along the lines of the U.S. Constitution and to act on issues of importance to the citizenry. Among other things, CEM and affiliated organizations are of the opinion that media representations of conflict in terms of 'black and white' undermine people's capacity to understand complex problems such as race relations, abortion and threats to the environment.

The coalition is still in its establishment phase, and George Gerbner travels extensively to recruit new affiliates. The Board, meanwhile, includes a number of renowned scholars and debaters with expertise in environmental issues, law, the media, consumer issues, sociology and representatives of confessional organizations, civil rights organizations, ethnic minorities and the women's movement. CEM is accessible via Internet and publishes a newsletter, *The Monitor*.

MARIA JACOBSON
Member 'Allt är Möjligt',
a network of critics of the media
affiliated with CEM

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Web Site: <http://ccwf.cc.utexas.edu/~cmbg/cem>

CHILDNET INTERNATIONAL is a non-profit organisation concerned to enable children to benefit from all the changes in international communications, and to protect them from any negative influences.

Childnet is promoting the interests of Children in International Communications in the areas of research, positive projects, promoting good practice in the industry, educating and informing.

Childnet wishes to encourage positive educational and social contacts using communications systems, between children from different countries and acting as a facilitator, manager and help to find funding for such projects.

Childnet has its international headquarters in London, England, and it also operates in the USA.

This and other information can be found on the Childnet Web site: <http://www.childnet-int.org>.

Childnet can also be reached on E-mail: info@childnet-int.org

CIFEJ

THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF FILMS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (CIFEJ) is a 42 year-old international non-governmental organization whose goal is to promote excellence in films, television programmes and videos for children and young people around the world.

CIFEJ currently boasts 160 members in over 52 countries, spanning all the continents of the world. The majority of members are institutions and organizations: broadcasters, film and television producers, children's film and TV festivals, media education groups and specialized cultural groups which work directly with children and the media. Members range from the French broadcaster to street workers in Colombia, and from China's largest production studio to Sweden's smallest distributor.

TO ACCOMPLISH ITS GOALS, CIFEJ undertakes a variety of activities. A monthly newsletter links members and non-members to hard news about the milieu, and lists prizes awarded at recent festivals as well as recent productions. A yearly compendium of these productions is published in French and English and includes information on the companies responsible for the production, distribution, and broadcast of these films and programmes.

The CIFEJ Prize is awarded to exceptional productions at a selection of festivals worldwide. In the past, CIFEJ has organized international discussions, undertaken research on legislation, and acted as a lobby and spokesperson for children confronted by media. The Teen Video Stories project was developed to increase media literacy and offered children at risk in Poland, Peru, Mozambique, the Philippines and Canada the opportunity to create their own three-minute video stories.

CIFEJ IS A NETWORK. It offers the place where North and South, East and West meet, where every child carries the same weight, and where financial preoccupations do not yet set the agenda.

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PRIX JEUNESSE International and WATCH

PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONAL is a world famous and world embracing competition and festival for children's and youth's television programming held every second year.

The 17th festival 1996, including the special session "Excursion to Cyberspace", broke every record – programme submissions, participants, countries represented – since the event's inauguration in 1964. The next festival will take place on 4-10 June 1998, as usual at Bayerischer Rundfunk in Munich.

PRIX JEUNESSE also initiates and hosts other activities, as round tables, workshops, training courses and seminars for media professionals dealing with how to improve the quality of programmes for children and young people, and how to facilitate television production and co-operation between producers from various continents. PRIX JEUNESSE supports research on children and media, and has arranged seminars on various research subjects, for example violence on television.

AT PRIX JEUNESSE'S ROUND TABLE in 1993 the idea of WATCH – the World Alliance of Television for Children – was launched. This non-profit network, realised the year after and with its headquarters at the office of PRIX JEUNESSE International, includes important organisations and institutions of media practitioners.

WATCH publishes the newsletter *WATCHwords*.

The members have agreed on the following Mission Statement:

- ✓ WATCH believes in affirmative and supportive uses of high-quality television services for young people;
- ✓ WATCH is an extensive global network of organisations and colleagues that willingly share knowledge and expertise so that children might have television that respects their needs, concerns, interests and culture;
- ✓ WATCH shines a spotlight on engaging and beneficial uses of television encouraging others to learn from, and build on, these examples;
- ✓ WATCH reveals both the importance and the vulnerability of children's television, and advocates for its support and improvement.

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ACTF

THE AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN'S TELEVISION FOUNDATION (ACTF) was established in 1982 by the Ministers of Education across Australia. Its specific brief was to produce quality Australian children's television programming.

Australia has a unique children's regulatory system which not only encourages, but insists, that broadcasters screen a minimum number of hours each year of children's drama programs.

The Foundation's brief coupled with this regulatory system, has meant that large numbers of highly innovative, top-quality, children's drama programs have been produced for children over the past 15 years across an incredible range of styles and genres.

Beginning with the Winners series of eight telemovies and culminating in the recent thirteen part comedy series, *The Genie From Down Under*, the Foundation has produced over 130 hours of popular, quality programming which has sold into 96 countries and received more than 63 national and international awards, including the prestigious 1994 Prix Jeunesse and International Emmy.

Director *Patricia Edgar* has been the Executive Producer of all the Foundation's programs and was one of the prime movers in Australia in creating our current children's broadcasting regulations.

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E.C.T.C.

THE EUROPEAN CHILDREN'S TELEVISION CENTRE started to operate in 1993. The aims of the founder and director *Athina Rikaki*, and the E.C.T.C., are the restructuring of the children's television market, the continuous training of professionals and the media literacy of children. The Greek Ministry of Press and the Greek Ministry of Culture are officially supporting the development and the E.C.T.C. operations, and the official monitoring body of the activities is the Institute for the Audiovisual Media.

The E.C.T.C. is engaged in the following activities:

- A network of professionals working in the field of media education.
- An electronic audiovisual forum where youngsters around Europe express their ideas and opinions on the audiovisual products of their country.
- An electronic network (Kids' TV Net) which comprises information on the children's television industry. The objectives of *Kid's TV Net* is to facilitate selling and buying and to provide data on children's programmes.
- The E.C.T.C. provides education and training to audiovisual professionals.

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CB

THE NATIONAL TELEVISION VIOLENCE STUDY

Initiated in 1994, the *National Television Violence Study* is a three-year effort to assess violence on U.S. television. The project is funded by the National Cable Television Association (NCTA).

Researchers from four universities are involved. At the University of California, Santa Barbara, violence in entertainment programming is assessed. At the University of Texas, Austin, violence in reality-based shows is examined.

These studies are content analyses, not studies of the effects of television violence on viewers. However, "the core feature of the study of portrayals of violence on television is the use of contextual factors in determining the meaning and impact of any given portrayal. Drawing on prior research indicating that certain contextual features will have negative

effects on the viewer (rewarding violence, failing to show consequences, etc.) and others will have positive effects (non-violent punishment of the perpetrator), the researchers have carefully differentiated harmful and non-harmful portrayals, and have given a clearer picture of the prevalence of problematic televised violence than we have ever had" (Executive Summary, Volume 2, page 6).

The sample of television content is large – it consists of programs selected randomly on 23 television channels to create a composite week of content for each source. More than 3,000 programs were sampled each year.

The project comprises two more studies. At the University of Wisconsin, Madison, violence ratings and advisories used on television are investigated, including their impact on the viewing decisions of parents and children. At the

(continued)

University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, researchers examine the effectiveness of anti-violence public service announcements produced by the television industry.

THE ADMINISTRATION AND CO-ORDINATION of the *National Television Violence Study* is conducted by the Center for Communication and Social Policy at the University of California, Santa Barbara. (Till June 1996, the project was co-ordinated and administered by Mediascope, Inc.)

The project also involves the efforts of an oversight Council, comprised of representatives from 17 national organisations that are concerned with the impact of television on society.

Publications from the first year:

National Television Violence Study, Executive Summary 1994-1995 (1996), Mediascope, Inc. (56 pp).
National Television Violence Study, Volume 1 (1996), Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications, Inc. (568 pp).

Publications from the second year:

Federman, Joel (Ed) (1997) *National Television Violence Study, Volume 2, Executive Summary*, Center for Communication and Social Policy, University of California, Santa Barbara (60 pp) *National Television Violence Study, Volume 2* (1997), Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications, Inc. (561 pp).



RATINGS OF TV-PROGRAMMES - RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

CECILIA VON FEILITZEN
Scientific Co-ordinator

Many media companies, media unions, regulatory bodies or other authorities have guidelines or codes of practices, sometimes laws, for how film, television, home video, electronic games, sound recording, on-line services, etc., should present violence and other potentially problematic media content, especially with regard to children. We have in this newsletter issue given one explicit example - laws, codes and guidelines for violence on television jointly agreed upon in European countries (see page 8-11).

In June 1996, Joel Federman, Center for Communication and Social Policy, University of California, Santa Barbara, formerly at Mediascope, Inc., published a survey of media practices of the above-mentioned kind in thirty-one countries. Five countries were examined in depth: Australia, Germany, Great Britain, Sweden and the United States.

According to the report, the survey was prompted by growing public demand for, among other things, a rating system for U.S. television. Such a demand is fueled by increasing public concern, both in the United States and abroad, regarding the potentially harmful effects of media violence. Politicians, entertainment industry leaders, and media advocacy groups alike have turned to media ratings as a 'middle ground' solution, somewhere between direct government censorship and not addressing the issues at all, the report says. (For reference to the report, and its recommendations for the television industry, see the next article by Laurie Trotta.)

Later, in early 1997, the broadcasting industry in the U.S. launched a rating system for television programming, visible in the form of symbols or icons on the screen. After that, the public has been invited to deliver its viewpoints to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The background is that the Telecommunications Act of 1996, signed into law by President Bill Clinton, requires all newly manufactured television

sets to be equipped with a "V-chip" from 1998 onwards. The law also empowers the FCC to create a rating system for television (required for the "V-chip" to function as a blocking device), if the television industry does not establish a viable rating system of its own.

The Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRCT) announced a deadline of September 1996 for broadcasters to launch a "V-chip"-based television classification system to help parents protect their children against excessive television violence. The broadcasting industry requested additional time, and proposed a classification system to CRCT in the end of April 1997. The new implementation date is September 1997.

France introduced a classification and rating system of TV programmes at the end of 1996. As mentioned in the article on European media measures, the possible joint European introduction of a "V-chip" has been postponed. The rating system in France, agreed upon by the television industry and the regulatory body, Audiovisual Superior Council (CSA), but put into effect by the television channels themselves, is seen as an informative tool for parents and children when choosing programmes.

Australia and New Zealand were, however, the first countries to adopt a visible co-regulated classification system for television. Broadcasters who get licences from the Australian Broadcasting System (ABA) were required according to a law in 1992 to ensure that all television programmes have a rating assigned to them. In 1993 the broadcasting industry put forward such a joint classification system. There has, however, been no decision on a "V-chip".

The following articles present research findings in connection with these classifications and rating systems.

Television Ratings Should Describe, Not Judge, Programmes

LAURIE TROTTA,
Director of Communications, Mediascope, Inc.

Joel Federmans report *Media Ratings. Design, Use and Consequences*, Mediascope, Inc., 1996 - published before TV ratings were introduced in the United States - gives the following recommendation: The television industry should adopt a rating system which informs the public about violence, sex and language in programming without judging television content. This approach would satisfy consumer needs for information while respecting freedom of expression.

Besides surveying media rating practices, the report also examines the political, economic and social impact of ratings, including the effects of ratings on audiences and entertainment industry profits. It warns that ratings such as those proposed for television should be as isolated as possible from political and economic considerations that might tend to taint the process.

THE RECOMMENDATION that ratings should be descriptive, or designed to inform consumers while minimizing judgments about content, means, among other things, allowing individuals to decide for themselves whether specific programming is suitable for their homes. "Descriptive rating is similar to food labelling, which provides information about food ingredients such as fat and sodium without commenting on who should or should not eat those ingredients", says Joel Federman. "On a television program or film, descriptive ratings would list such items as 'moderate violence' or 'brief nudity', for example, without making judgments as to its suitability for particular audiences."

DESCRIPTIVE RATINGS contrast with the more evaluative or judgmental ratings and advisories such as the 'parental discretion' labels sometimes attached to television shows and music recordings, as well as the Motion Picture Association of America's 'PG (parental guidance)-13' and 'R (restricted)' ratings. Making personal judgments about violence, sex and other social issues as the basis for ratings has several disadvantages, according to the report. The first is that such ratings may actually run the risk of attracting younger viewers instead of discouraging them. Second, evaluative ratings are less reliable as a source of information for consumers than descriptive ratings, and are often inconsistent across issues of sex, violence, and language.

TO IMPLEMENT a non-judgmental rating system, the report suggests, the television industry could create a standardized process to determine intensity levels of violence, sex, or language. A standardized approach would ensure that ratings are consistently applied and would be particularly useful in a medium such as television, where the volume of shows to be rated can exceed 2,000 per day.

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Critique of the New Rating System for United States Television

JOANNE CANTOR,
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Recently, the United States television industry began implementing a new rating system for content. This rating system was the result of a law passed in early 1996 that mandated that new televisions be manufactured with a "V-chip," which will permit parents to block objectionable content.

The law urged the television industry to develop a rating system, readable by the V-chip, that would inform parents about the types of content they may consider harmful. Under the proposed system, producers will rate their own programs. The usefulness of the V-chip to parents rests heavily on the adequacy of the rating system. According to the legislation, it is up to the Federal Com-

munications Commission to determine whether the rating system is acceptable.

The new system, referred to as "The TV Parental Guidelines", is based on the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) Ratings that have been used for U.S. movies for 28 years. Although the new system involves a separate rating system for programs that are considered to be designed for children ("TV-Y, All Children," and "TV-Y7, Directed to Older Children"), other programs are designated with one of four ratings that are very similar to the MPAA ratings: "TV-G, General Audience," "TV-PG, Parental Guidance Suggested," "TV-14, Parents Strongly Cautioned," and "TV-M, Mature Audiences Only".

THE NEW RATING SYSTEM has been roundly criticized by most mental health, medical, and child advocacy groups, who argue for a rating system that indicates the content of individual programs rather than giving a recommendation of the age of the child who should see it. As a researcher of the psychological impact of television on children, and one who has been investigating television ratings intensively for three years, I agree with the criticisms of the new rating system, and I base these criticisms on the following research findings:

FIRST, the TV Parental Guidelines are the opposite of what parents want. Five independent national surveys have shown that parents do not want age-based ratings that fail to specify the content of individual shows. In "landslide" proportions, parents prefer a rating system that provides information on the level of violent and sexual content in a program, similar to a system currently used on the premium cable channels HBO and Showtime, over one that provides a recommendation as to the age of the child who should see it, as exemplified in the MPAA Ratings and the new TV system.

SECOND, the TV Parental Guidelines fail to convey critical content information that parents need in order to limit their children's access to programs they consider harmful. Surveys indicate that different parents feel differently about the impact of televised violence vs. sex vs. coarse language on their children. If the highly similar MPAA ratings are any indication, a rating such as TV-PG will not give parents advance notice of the type of content to expect in a program.

Analyses of movies rated by the MPAA over the past two years show that the rating of PG indicates a wide diversity of content types. For example, 26% of the movies rated PG had neither violence nor sex, but only adult language, and another 18% had neither violence, sex, nor adult language. This diversity and lack of specificity of content in PG-rated movies suggests that the content of a program rated TV-PG will be totally unpredictable. The TV rating system tells parents a program may contain sex, violence, language, or something else, but it will not tell them which of these it contains.

THIRD, the TV Parental Guidelines are expected to increase, rather than reduce children's exposure to harmful programming. In research we conducted for the National Television Violence Study, the MPAA ratings of "PG-13: Parents Strongly Cautioned," and "R: Restricted" made many children more eager to see a movie, and the "G: General Audiences" rating made them much less interested. In contrast, content labels such as "mild violence" and "graphic violence," and the advisory "contains some violent content" did not make children more interested in a program.

IN SUMMARY, the new TV rating system is the opposite of what parents overwhelmingly want; it fails to disclose information about the content of specific programs that parents need; and rather than discouraging child-

ren's viewing, it is apt to lure children to the programs we are trying to shield them from. In short, research shows that the new ratings not only are not helpful, they are a good deal worse than no rating system at all. The research also shows that content labels are superior to age guidelines on all three counts. I hope that the Federal Communications Commission will agree with parents, researchers, and child advocates, and declare the new rating system unacceptable. I also urge other countries to heed the findings of research and provide their viewers with content labels rather than age-based ratings.

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Optimism in France

CECILIA VON FEELITZEN
Scientific Co-ordinator

"In French surveys, more than eight TV viewers out of ten have declared that they find television programmes too violent. We have tried to find a solution where we both protect children and young people, and at the same time, the independence of the broadcasters."

So said Hervé Bourges, president of the French regulatory body, Audiovisual Superior Council (Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel; CSA) at a round table for regulators at the Forum "Youth and Media – Tomorrow", 21-25 April 1997, in Paris (see page 17). His speech contained, among other things, the following information:

THE SOLUTION ADOPTED by the CSA – after many talks with broadcasters, public authorities, and representatives of family and TV viewer associations, and after a detailed study of foreign systems – is regarded as naturally fitting into the legal framework and, as well, into the French tradition of freedom of speech. CSA has, thus, chosen to favour self-regulation on the part of broadcasters, on the one hand, and public information on the other.

Film ratings have existed in France for a long time. This principle has now been extended to television, for protecting young viewers and as an educational tool for the audience.

THE TELEVISION INDUSTRY, that is, the national channels France 2 and France 3, and the private channels M6 and TF1 (all non-encrypted), have agreed to classify the programmes into five categories:

- I. programmes for the whole audience – these can be broadcast at any time and have no visible icons;
- II. programmes containing certain scenes which could be harmful to young viewers – these programmes shall not be broadcast during time blocks reserved for children's programming, and are marked with a *green circle*;
- III. films not allowed for children under 12 years of age, and programmes that could be harmful to young viewers because of, for example, repeated physical or mental violence – these films shall be broadcast after 22.00, and are marked with an *orange triangle*;
- IV. films not allowed for children under 16 years of age, and erotic or very violent programmes that could seriously harm the physical, mental or moral development of young people – these films shall be broadcast after 22.30, and are marked with a *red square*;
- V. programmes with pornography or extreme violence that could seriously harm the physical, mental or moral development of young

people – these programmes are not allowed on non-encrypted channels and can only be transmitted on encrypted channels between midnight and 5 o'clock in the morning.

This rating system has been implemented since 18 November 1996 (for the private TF1 and M6 since 1 January 1997).

THE FIRST SURVEYS in the middle of January 1997 indicated that the majority of persons interviewed, and especially parents with young children, were acquainted with the symbol system. Most viewers also found the system useful. Another survey performed in March 1997 with young viewers, showed that most of them appreciated the symbols.

The analysis of the first audience figures is quite eloquent, according to Mr Bourges: over the first three months of the implementation of the rating signs, the presence of children and teenagers in front of the television set in the early evening decreased for programmes marked with green circles or orange triangles. The decrease was in the order of one third of the child audience, both among 4-10-year-olds and 11-14-year-olds, for all channels in question. The only exception was for 11-14-year-olds and France 3, where the film "Jaws" had been broadcast. As relatively few programmes on France 2 and France 3 had an orange triangle during the period, this film raised the average.

The analysis also showed that the private channels, particularly M6, had broadcast the lion's share of the programmes marked with icons, and that about 80 per cent of the programmes with green circles and orange triangles were of non-European (read, American) origin. For programmes marked with a red square the proportion was the reverse; they mostly consisted of erotic French and European films on channel M6.

The analysis further revealed that programmes with icons were seldom transmitted during the daytime.

Generally, not more than 15 per cent of the classifications were debatable, Mr Bourges said. They mainly concerned police series broadcast during daytime, and action films classified for the whole audience, i.e. without a symbol, which could have been attributed a green circle. There is a continuous discussion between the Council and the industry about the classifications.

IN SUM, record to date of the new rating system for television programmes in France seem to be cause for optimism. It remains to be seen if audience trends will last, or become more clear, or if it is a question of a novelty effect. It will also be interesting to hear about more detailed analyses for different programme types and for different groups of children.

Audience Reactions to Classification Systems - The Australian Experience

MARGARET CUPITT,
Senior Research Officer and
DANIEL JENKINSON, Senior Research Officer
Australian Broadcasting Authority

The television, video and computer games industries in Australia have operated under government regulated and co-regulated systems of classification for many years.¹⁾ These systems assist the community to select material for themselves and to assist adults who want to protect young people in their care from certain material which they judge to be unsuitable.

During 1995, the Australian Broadcasting Authority (ABA) commissioned two national studies that included an examination of community awareness and use of the classification systems.

One of these studies, *Families and electronic entertainment*, was conducted jointly with the Office of Film and Literature Classification and covered the respective media interests of each agency (television, video and computer/video games). This unique study identified how young people spend their time, parental concerns about electronic entertainment and household rules and routines. The sample for this Australia-wide study was 743 parents matched with 743 children and teenagers (8 to 17 years of age).

THE STUDY FOUND active supervision by parents, which included setting rules about doing homework, and restricting exposure to television programs, videos and games with certain classifications.

Eighty-two per cent of parents said they had rules about *when* television could be watched by young people, and 79 per cent had rules about *what* could be watched on television. Seventy-five per cent of parents had rules about *when* computer/video games could be played, and 56 per cent had rules about *what* games could be played. A majority of parents also said they had rules about video.

Many parents said they used the classification systems. Out of those parents who reported having rules about what young people could watch, 28 per cent said their child was not allowed to watch M classified programs on television, and 30 per cent said they weren't allowed to watch MA classified programs.²⁾

The rules about content that were mostly reported by parents included not being allowed to watch too much violence or fighting (47 per cent) and not too much sex, kissing or nudity (41 per cent).³⁾

The content rules relevant to computer/video game play were similar to television, but most rules were generally mentioned by a smaller proportion of parents. Fourteen per cent of parents said their child was not allowed to play either M or MA classified games.

THE ABOVE FINDINGS may not fully represent the proportion of parents and guardians in Australia who actually use the classification symbols. It should be noted that the questions about rules were asked in an open-ended way and some parents may not have mentioned

the classifications specifically. It is possible that parents who did not allow violent or sexual content also used the classifications, especially given that consumer advice is provided with each classification indicating the level of sex and violence in television programs.

There is also a need to understand other aspects of the Australian regulatory framework, in particular, the Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice which regulate most aspects of program content including the classification of programs.

One important feature of the code is that it specifies the times at which programs are broadcast on television. In addition, provisions in the code require broadcasters to take into account the likely composition of the audience, particularly the number of children likely to be watching at particular times of the day. M classified programs cannot be broadcast before 8.30 p.m. and MA classified programs cannot be broadcast before 9.00 p.m. In the *Families and electronic entertainment* study, 12 per cent of parents said their child was not allowed to watch television after a set bedtime.

THE NATURE OF CLASSIFICATION USE in Australia by parents and guardians depend on the age of the child in question. For instance, 52 per cent of parents of children aged 8 years said their child was not allowed to watch M classified television programs, while seventeen per cent said they had the same rule for teenagers aged 17 years. The younger the child, the more rules were reported by parents and young people.

In general, reports about household rules for media use declined markedly for teenagers aged 15 years and over. This reflects the 15 year age threshold used in the classification systems for television, and film and video (represented by the M and MA classification symbols).

In the *Families and electronic entertainment* study, young people were asked the same questions as parents about the rules that applied in their household. When the responses were matched, there was a high level of consistency, but, it was also found that parents tended to report more rules than young people. For instance, for the rule about not being allowed to watch MA classified television programs, the child and parent in 76 per cent of households gave consistent responses about whether this rule was in place, in 18 per cent of households parents said the rule existed when the child did not, and in 6 per cent of households young people said the rule existed and the parent did not. The discrepancy may be due to young people wanting others to see them as relatively free from their parent's influence.

On the other hand, the parents in the survey may have wanted to be seen as 'good' parents who frequently apply rules. The study also supported the idea that young people were not fully aware of all the monitoring

Ratings of TV-Programmes...

behaviours of parents. It is not possible from this research to determine the reasons for discrepancies, but it is probably reasonable to assume that each had an impact and the actual level of supervision lies somewhere between parent and child reports.

THE SECOND STUDY COMMISSIONED by the Australian Broadcasting Authority in 1995 monitored the effectiveness of the Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice by specifically looking at community awareness and use of the television classification system.

The research consisted of an Australia-wide survey with 1,159 respondents aged 14 years and over. Findings showed that 81 per cent of respondents could recall one or more of the classification symbols. More women claimed they used the classification advice than men to decide if a child should watch a program on television (60 per cent of women compared to 48 per cent of men).

Eighty-five per cent of respondents demonstrated a reasonable understanding of the purpose and intention of the M classification for television. Fewer respondents understood the purpose and intention of the MA classification with 76 per cent demonstrating a reasonable understanding. The majority of respondents (86 per cent) had noticed oral or written consumer advice given at the start of television programs informing them about the level of sex, violence, coarse language and adult themes a program would contain. Approximately 80 per cent of respondents said that consumer advice was either 'very useful' or 'somewhat useful'.

BOTH STUDIES HAVE SHOWN that the classification systems for television, video and computer games are important to the Australian community, particularly to adults responsible for the care of young people. (15 May 1997).

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Notes

¹ Australia has had classification systems for television for 40 years. Since 1992, the Australian Broadcasting Authority has co-regulated the classification system through the Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice which relies primarily on self-regulation. The film/video and computer game industries are required to submit material to the Office of Film and Literature Classification for classification before they can be shown or sold. Film and video classification systems have been in place for 13 years, while the computer games classification system commenced in 1994.

² The M classification for television is 'recommended for viewing only by persons aged 15 years or over because of the matter it contains, or of the way this matter is treated'. The MA classification is 'suitable for viewing only by persons aged 15 years or over because of the intensity and/or frequency of violence, sexual depictions, or coarse language, or because violence is central to the theme'. While the classification symbols are largely consistent for television (P, C, G, PG, M, MA), film and video (G, PG, M, MA, R, X) and computer/video games (G, G8, M, MA), their meaning does vary for each different medium.

³ Percentages for household rules about content add to more than 100 per cent because of multiple responses to the question.

References

Australian Broadcasting Authority (1996), *You say: A review of audience concerns about Australia's broadcast media*, Sydney.

Cupitt, M. & Stockbridge, S. (1996), *Families and electronic entertainment*, Monograph 6, Australian Broadcasting Authority, Sydney.

COMING EVENTS

The All African Summit

THE ALL AFRICAN SUMMIT ON MEDIA FOR CHILDREN, earlier announced to take place in Mauritius, July 21-27, 1997, is postponed, probably to December 1997. At the Summit, relevant issues regarding the quality of media offered to children in Africa will be discussed. The Summit will also discuss the Children's Television Charter, in preparation for the Second World Summit in London in 1998.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, contact:
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The Second World Summit

THE SECOND WORLD SUMMIT on Television for Children will take place on March 9-13, 1998 at the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre in London. It will be hosted jointly by the BBC, Channel 4 ITV and Nickelodeon UK. The Summit is chaired by Anna Home, Head of Children's Programmes at the BBC.

The Second World Summit is inspired by the first (see page 14) which was very significant in raising the profile of children's programming throughout the world as well as prompting initiatives to promote quality, research and training for those concerned with children's television.

The organisers hope the Second World Summit will attract an even greater number of delegates and speakers

working in broadcasting and production and also those in academic institutions, regulatory bodies and other organisations concerned with children. They are also mindful of the vastly differing conditions that prevail world-wide in broadcasting and that the Summit must address the variety of needs and interests that delegates will bring to it.

THERE WILL BE MAJOR DEBATES on issues such as: supporting indigenous programming in a predominantly English language global marketplace; the boundaries and taboos of children's television; problems of raising finance, locally and internationally, and the rapidly expanding multi-channel world and its implications for children.

The new media world of interactive programmes, CD-roms, the Internet and electronic games and their impact will also be demonstrated and debated, and the Summit will start with a debate on the nature of the child audience.

There will also be daily masterclasses with a strongly practical emphasis given by distinguished practitioners on the production of drama, animation, factual, light entertainment and pre-school programmes for children. There will be classes on the crafts of writing and directing and designing for these genres and series on putting together co-productions.

Other workshops and sessions will cover subjects such as merchandising, blockselling, programming for teenagers, children's participation in programme-making; planning telecommunications infrastructures in developing countries for a new generation; distance learning; media education for children; programming in countries with multi-lingual and multi-cultural populations and training future children's programme makers.

Also planned is a children's event for which 50-75 children aged 10-13 from all over the world will gather at the conference centre to take part in their own events, workshops and discussions as well as to participate in many of the main summit sessions both on the platform and in the audience.

THE SUMMIT COMMITTEE welcomes suggestions for sessions and speakers so if you would like to contribute ideas please contact:

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American Summit in 2000 – The World is Welcome

PROOF OF THE UTILITY of the First World Summit on Children's Television launched by the Australian Children's Television Foundation in 1995 is that it provided the incentive for others to pick up the torch – see information about regional and global summits in this newsletter. And in May of 2000 there will be a Summit of the Americas in Toronto, Canada.

Within the countries of the North, Central and South America exist the full range of production, distribution and financing problems that seem to affect all developed and developing countries. The need for media education exists in all of them as well.

While the program of Summit 2000 will be driven by the concerns and issues of children's television in the Americas, delegates from around the world will be welcome. Planning is already underway to assemble travel assistance for delegates with limited resources so that equitable participation is assured.

The right of children to quality programming that is developmentally appropriate and culturally relative is the principle around which the conference agenda is being set.

Television itself is evolving as new forms of program delivery emerge. Looking several decades ahead we can anticipate even more complex environments in which programming for children will have to struggle for priority and recognition.

In addition to a program market, there will be opportunities for professional development for programmers, producers and creators, sessions at which to challenge some of the assumptions that have become the conventional wisdom of children's television, investigation of alternative financing models for production, distribution and program exchange, as well as for those interested in the field of media education.

The intent is to broaden the understanding of the impact of media on young people, and to spark the development of new strategies for creating, refining, marketing and financing promising program concepts that will enhance the international menu of children's television.

KEALY WILKINSON

National Director

The Alliance for Children and Television

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International Conference on Culture and Development Our Creative Diversity – A Critical Perspective

Lillehammer, Norway, 5-7 September 1997

Of four working groups, one will be devoted to **Children and Young People**.

The purpose of the conference is to build on the work done by the World Commission on Culture and Development, embodied in the report *Our Creative Diversity*, UNESCO, 1995, by further examining in a critical, but constructive, manner the two themes of 'global ethics and cultural diversity' and 'creativity and communication'. The conference is primarily intended for researchers from a variety of backgrounds who are interested in linking the cultural aspects of development more closely to political agendas. Politicians and others who take a special interest in these problems are also welcome.

FOR INFORMATION, please contact:

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II World Meeting on Media Education

May, 18th - 20th 1998, and

International Congress on Communication and Education

May, 20th - 24th, 1998, in Sao Paulo, Brazil

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IN 1995, THE I WORLD MEETING ON MEDIA EDUCATION was held in La Coruña, Spain. As one result, the World Council for Media Education (WCME) was created in 1996. WCME is an international forum of representatives – researchers, educators and non-governmental organisations – committed to media education. A committee of WCME is organising the II World Meeting on Media Education.

The aims of the World Council for Media Education are:

1. to foster and promote Media Education at the primary, secondary and higher education levels,
2. to link Media Education practices to changing ideas about teaching and learning,
3. to support the concept of democracy and promote the role of Media Education in the development of democratic citizenship, practices and principles,
4. to explore equality of access and democratic uses of media,
5. to provide a global forum for discussion of theory and practice,
6. to promote an expanded notion of the concept of "literacy",
7. to encourage the development of high quality applied research,
8. to disseminate information about developments and practices appropriate to different cultural contexts including curricular resources, teaching methods, assessment and learning outcomes,
9. to offer advice to administrators, policymakers, industry, practitioners and others about Media Education,
10. to create meaningful links with the Third World that create mutual understanding and support,
11. to explore how new communication technologies impact on society and on education.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO RECEIVE
THE NEWSLETTER IN THE FUTURE?

If you have not yet registered in the Clearinghouse network, please contact

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European Conference on Children & Culture

March, 12-14, 1998 in Stockholm, Sweden

The conference *Children & Culture*, a joint initiative by organisers associated to 'Stockholm – Cultural Capital of Europe 1998', will take place in connection with the UNESCO International Governmental Conference on Culture and Development in Stockholm next year.

With the Convention on the Rights of the Child as the frame of reference, *Children & Culture* will focus on the following themes, among others:

- children and young people as cultural actors
- children's democratic access to the cultural expressions and to their cultural heritage
- media, pluralism and freedom of experience
- school as a cultural environment.

The full programme – with plenary sessions, key-note speakers, work-shops and round-table discussions, as well as visits to schools and meetings with children and young people as cultural actors – will be available at the beginning of Autumn 1997. The conference language is English.

FOR ADDITION TO THE MAILING LIST, please contact:

Children & Culture –

Stockholm Cultural Capital of Europe 1998
P.O. Box 163 98, 103 27 Stockholm, SWEDEN

Tel: +46 8 698 1998. Fax: +46 8 698 1999

E-mail: margareta.andersson@kultur98.stockholm.se



Media Education Research IAMCR in Glasgow 1998

The 21st General Assembly and Scientific Conference of the International Association for Mass Communication Research (IAMCR) will be held on July 26-30, 1998, in Glasgow, Scotland. One section of the Association is dedicated to Media Education Research.

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THE CLEARINGHOUSE

We welcome researchers, policy-makers, media professionals, teachers, voluntary organisations and interested individuals to the Clearinghouse information network. As a participant you will receive our publications (in English) with the contributions of other network participants from all parts of the globe. (Participation is free of charge.)

The value of the Clearinghouse as a forum rests in the breadth of its coverage and the commitment of its participants. In short: the more relevant information we gather, and the more who contribute from all continents, the better our services.

We are interested in research related to children, young people and media violence, and in documentation of measures, activities and alternatives of relevance to this field.

News briefs and short articles to our newsletter, *News on Children and Violence on the Screen*, will be greatly valued, as will notices of coming and recent conferences, seminars and other events; of new publications; and of active associations and organisations with children and media in view.

We are also grateful for receiving relevant publications and materials – if possible, two copies of each, please! They will successively be informed of in the newsletters, and be documented at the Clearinghouse into a growing knowledge base for overviews, compilations and bibliographies of interest to various groups of users.

As for publications and materials in other languages than English, French, German and Spanish, we kindly ask you for complementary translations of the titles.

We look forward to hearing from you, not least regarding any requests or suggestions you may have concerning Clearinghouse services. And we hope that you will come to appreciate our efforts – as a means of making your own work known in wider circles, and as a way to keep abreast of others' work.



Literature, received publications and materials

We will from the next issue of the newsletter publish references to recent published books, articles, reports and other material of relevance to the Clearinghouse activity, including those sent to the Clearinghouse.

Many thanks for all publications and materials already received!

**The UNESCO
International Clearinghouse
on Children and Violence
on the Screen, at**

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Göteborg University

NORDICOM is an Institution within the Nordic Council of Ministers

*THE CLEARINGHOUSE IS TO
CONTRIBUTE TO AND EFFECTIVIZE
KNOWLEDGE ON CHILDREN,
YOUNG PEOPLE AND MEDIA VIOLENCE
SEEN IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF
THE UN CONVENTION ON THE
RIGHTS OF THE CHILD.*