



# Marketing Violent Entertainment to Children:

A Fourth Follow-up Review of  
Industry Practices in the Motion Picture,  
Music Recording & Electronic Game Industries

## **A Report to Congress**

Federal Trade Commission

July 2004

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requirements for descriptors on the back of packaging, and requiring age identifiers on the Mature and Adults Only icons (Mature icon now says "MATURE 17+").<sup>201</sup>

## 2. Advertising of rating information: current practices

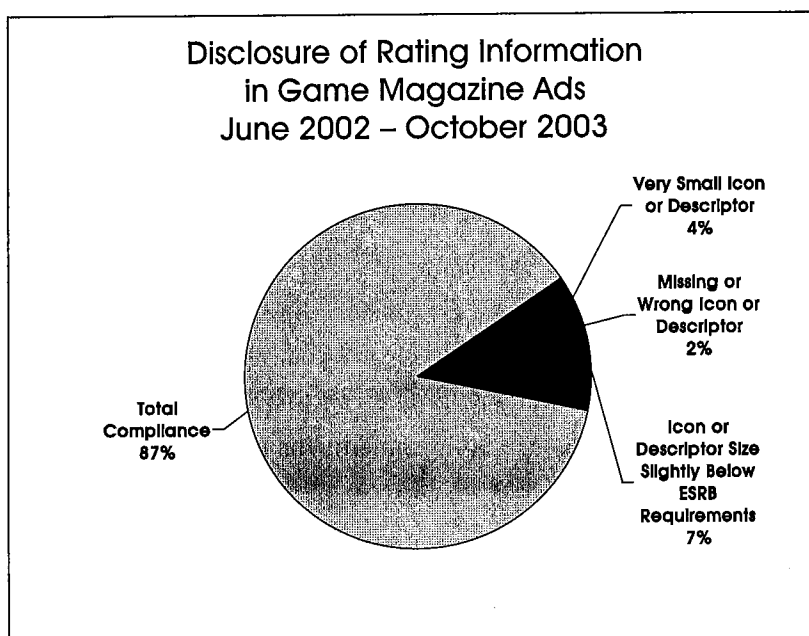
### a. Television advertising

For this Report, the Commission reviewed a selection of ads for M-rated games that aired in 2003. This review found that all but one of the 10 game ads included the AdCode's required voice-overs and rating icons. One 30-second ad incorrectly used the abbreviated voice-over intended for shorter, 15-second ads.<sup>202</sup> These results suggest game industry advertisers are generally complying with industry requirements for disclosing rating information in television advertising.

### b. Print advertising

In its review of print ads in the June 2002 Report, the Commission found nearly all game advertisers either fully or substantially complied with industry requirements for rating disclosure, with 2% of ads containing a very small icon or descriptor and 1% missing or containing an incorrect icon or descriptor.<sup>203</sup>

For this Report, the Commission conducted a review of print ads running between June 2002 and October 2003<sup>204</sup> in the following six popular game enthusiast magazines: *100% Independent PlayStation 2 Magazine*, *GamePro*, *Computer Gaming World*, *Electronic Gaming Monthly*, *Tips & Tricks*, and *Nintendo Power*. Overall, 4% of the ads reviewed contained an icon that was sized substantially below the ESRB requirements and another 2% of the ads contained a missing or incorrect icon or descriptor.<sup>205</sup>



A large majority of the major advertisers were in compliance with industry standards. Of the 52 companies that placed four or more ads during the eighteen-month review period, 39 adhered to the industry standards. The companies that did not comply placed at least some ads that had icons and descriptors that were incorrect or missing altogether.<sup>206</sup>

The Commission also reviewed retailer ads in these same publications from Best Buy, Electronics Boutique, Wal-Mart, Ebay, Amazon.com, CompUSA, Virgin Megastore, Kmart, and Pricegrabber.com. Each of the retailers displayed the rating icon on the cover art of the product packaging shown in