

Part I:

PTC Ratings Legend: (<http://w2.parentstv.org/main/toolkit/familyguide.aspx>;
Family Guide to Prime Time Television; 2013)

Red: Show may include gratuitous sex, explicit dialogue, violent content, or obscene language, and is unsuitable for children.

Yellow: The show contains adult-oriented themes and dialogue that may be inappropriate for youngsters.

Green: Family-friendly shows promoting responsible themes and traditional values.

Blue: Unrated program.

After browsing the Family Guide to Prime Time Television on the Parents Television Council website, I found that many of the shows listed as inappropriate for children are as I would have expected. Shows such as “Family Guy” and “Two and a Half Men” are marked in red, indicating, according to the website’s “PTC Ratings Legend,” the show may include “gratuitous sex, explicit dialogue, violent content or obscene language, and is unsuitable for children.”

The shows in red, such as “Family Guy” and “Grey’s Anatomy” appear to be wholly inappropriate for children because they contain sex, explicit dialogue and inappropriate language, while shows in yellow such as “Shark Tank” and “The Voice” contain language and themes that may not be appropriate for children. I am an avid “Shark Tank” watcher and I notice that usually the language or products that are being pitched to the sharks may be considered as inappropriate to young children (sometimes they are alcohol-themed gifts.) However, to teenagers and young adults, “Shark Tank” could be seen as an educational show, pinning entrepreneurs and investors together to invest in and sell certain products.

I can understand “Family Guy” as being unsuitable for children, as I am usually appalled myself at many of the jokes on the show, (however funny they may be) and I am 22. Shows such as “America’s Next Top Model” are rated as inappropriate. Tyra Banks’ long shown reality show featuring models vying for a position as “America’s Next Top” may not only contain inappropriate language, but may also guide children to a realm of eating disorders and concern with their appearance. In my opinion, these types of shows glorify being skinny and not eating to an extent. I have watched the show a couple of times, and I also see bad language being a factor in the PTC’s decision. Shows such as this one may teach children that it is acceptable to demean people if they are not up to a specific “industry standard.”

As an avid watcher of “The Big Bang Theory,” I can understand why this show may be marked as inappropriate. There are many “sexual jokes” in the show, especially pinned by characters Howard and Raj. However, I wouldn’t necessarily rate this as completely unacceptable for children to watch. I’m not sure they would grasp all of the concepts on the show since most of the sexual content is through jokes rather than actual visuals.

I do not usually watch crime shows such as “Law & Order: SVU” or “CSI,” but having many friends who watch these shows, I believe that they may be inappropriate for children due to the fact that they often show violent images and

take on cases that children may not have exposed themselves to, such as sexual assault.

I am surprised, however, that Glee was noted in red as inappropriate for children, only by my understanding that it seems as though many youngsters watch the show, as they are passionately known as “Gleeks.” I can understand if the songs the show covers have sexually explicit content or the fact that relationships are portrayed in the show could be perceived as inappropriate, but from my knowledge, I am not entirely sure why the show is on the inappropriate list.

Providing a list noting shows suitable for children is important. I am sure many families rely on this list to guide them on what they allow their children to watch. I find it important that parents take note of what their children watches, because children have the curiosity of a sponge. With television and the wide variety of shows available, children are likely to take note of what they watch and wonder what something means if it is inappropriate. There should be regulation to what children watch in an effort to make them smart. Some content on TV shows simply does not render appropriate for adolescents.

Many of the shows listed contain a lot of jokes and sarcasm. While a teenager or young adult would be able to distinguish the sarcastic nature of these shows, children and adolescents may not be able to. Shows such as “Family Guy” contain a great amount of jokes and idioms that may pose as offensive to some people. I have seen even my parents get offended by some of the odd jokes on “Family Guy.”

There will always be those who are offended by certain shows; it depends on a viewer’s moral compass. I think shows such as “Shark Tank” could be rendered as educational for children (however, I do not believe all of the shows in yellow serve an educational purpose.) I think if a child is watching “Shark Tank” with his or her parents it would not serve as inappropriate.

Part II:

“Part of public broadcasting’s mission to serve the public interest also ‘may require the use of language or other broadcast matter that is potentially objectionable to some.’” (<http://www.current.org/2013/06/npr-other-noncoms->

[push-for-laxer-fcc-indecency-rules/](#); NPR, Other Noncoms Push for Laxer FCC Indecency Rules; June 2013.)

In my opinion, I believe the broadcast networks are setting an example for the viewing public. However, it is difficult to enforce strict regulations when much of the content presented in broadcasts may be rendered as inappropriate in FCC terms.

“Controversial words and images have been aired at times in scripted and unscripted shows on all the major over-the-air networks in the past eight years, dating back to when the FCC began considering a stronger, no-tolerance policy.” (<http://edition.cnn.com/2012/06/21/us/scotus-tv-indecency/>; High Court Rules for Broadcasters on TV Indecency; June 2012.)

They are subject to strict regulations because unlike the cable networks, they are broadcasting live news, sports and entertainment. I know what I can expect from my cable networks. TBS is where I watch The Big Bang Theory, funny movies on the weekend or Saved By The Bell in the morning. Lifetime is the network for love stories and Christmas movies, as is the Hallmark Channel. Whereas the broadcast networks are where I watch my live news and sports; NFL on CBS, 60 minutes, CBS This Morning and NHL on NBC, to name a few.

“Many other broadcast networks, including ABC, CBS, Fox and NBC, have long pushed for a similar loosening of restrictions and reduction of fines.” (<http://www.current.org/2013/06/npr-other-noncoms-push-for-laxer-fcc-indecency-rules/>; NPR, Other Noncoms Push for Laxer FCC Indecency Rules; June 2013.)

I feel that most people who are regular TV viewers know what to expect from the broadcast stations and cable networks. To say that “most” people are unaware is a sign of ignorance. As a viewer, I know what I am to expect from cable stations, such as E! and broadcast networks such as CBS. As I conducted research, I found there are many objections to keeping the indecency regulations restricted to broadcast networks.

As stated in the notes, the same broadcast indecency regulations that are enforced in over-the-air broadcasts in politics are also applied to cable-originated programs.

“Americans today, including children, spend more time engaged with non-broadcast channels delivered by cable and satellite television, the Internet, video games and other media than they do with broadcast media.” (<http://www.deadline.com/2013/06/broadcasters-tell-fcc-that-audience-decline-makes-indecency-rules-archaic/>; Broadcasters Tell FCC That Audience Decline Makes Indecency Rules Archaic; June 2013)

While this could be true, I don’t agree with making a generalized opinion stating children are not involved in watching broadcast television.

“NPR argued that the commission should adopt a more measured policy and dismiss cases such as one-time outbursts on live broadcasts.” (<http://www.current.org/2013/06/npr-other-noncoms-push-for-laxer-fcc-indecency-rules/>; NPR, Other Noncoms Push for Laxer FCC Indecency Rules; June 2013.)

The Safe Harbor period is the period of time between 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. It is important for indecent programming, because it is likely when no children are

tuned in to watch TV. This is when broadcast networks are allowed to show content and shows such as “The Late Show with David Letterman” or “Late Night with Jimmy Fallon” and feel confident that they will not be subject to fines due to children watching.

While I feel that broadcasting indecency is difficult to enforce, I believe it should be to keep the viewing content safe, if any children happen to be watching. For me, while it is important to get the truth in many situations (such as with news,) it is important to keep the content viewable and clean. I do not want to be subject to inappropriate content, while it may be inevitable. I think of the situation if I were a parent, I would not want my children subject to any inappropriate content. However, I feel that as stated in the NPR quote, one-time outbursts should have the permission to be excused, although they may cause a lot of controversy, such as Justin Timberlake and Janet Jackson’s Super Bowl 38 wardrobe malfunction. **Although the FCC received nearly 540,000 complaints and CBS was fined \$550,000 following the incident.** (http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/money/2005-01-20-bowl-cover_x.htm; NFL Strives to Ensure Super clean Super Bowl; January 2005)

Part III:

With Internet being a staple in homes and workplaces, I believe the scarcity rationale should be questioned due to the fact that the Internet is so heavily used.

The scarcity rationale was put in place to regulate TV and radio broadcasters. However, the inclusion of Internet content usually cannot be subject to security before posting. With the Internet, users have a voice to comment on the content being shown.

There are many different forms of entertainment broadcasted on the Internet. There are movies, videos, homemade clips and music videos that are not subject to regulation. Social media outlets allow for people to post their own content and comments that aren't being regulated except by the user themselves; (Think Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, YouTube) unless the content is seriously offensive, in which case I am sure it would be reported.

I think broadcast and Internet should be rendered the same, however. Let's say a college student does not have an Internet subscription at home (this seems highly unlikely, but possible.) Once they attend college, they are subject to use the Internet and are able to expose themselves to content that isn't regulated. There are many places where Internet is a public entity and people have access to it, even if they do not subscribe to it at home.

With all of the new technology available today and the means to express various opinions, the scarcity rationale should not be an acceptable means to regulate content. The content in question has the potential to be broadcasted anyway. In my opinion, lines divide broadcast and Internet content. On the Internet users have the means to get involved with content posted. This comes in the form of "participatory journalism," and can range from social media websites to commenting sections on websites or discussion boards.

"Government can impose rules on TV and radio broadcasters that it could not impose on pamphleteers and newspapers because of the technological scarcity of usable wireless frequencies."

(<http://ammori.org/2010/06/07/the-scarcity-rationale-elena-kagan-and-media-regulation/>; The First Amendment's 'Scarcity Rationale': Elena Kagan and Media Regulation; June 2010)

The Center for Communication & Civic Engagement said it best with this passage: **"The media environment is shifting, slowly and incrementally, away from the broadcast model where the few communicate to the many, toward a more inclusive model in which publics and audiences also have voices."**

The inclusion of "participatory journalism" as a means in which people Tweet or post their own news through Facebook is changing the "objective" nature of journalism because people are now permitted to post the news they please in the manner which they please. Unlike television and radio, the Internet provides freedom for readers and viewers.

Many people are moving on from traditional media formats such as television, radio and newspapers, to gather their news from Internet media outlets such as Facebook and Twitter. From my own current experiences as a media/interactive intern at a small-market news station, Facebook, Twitter and even Pinterest play a crucial role with viewers. My station's Facebook page has nearly 78,000 likes and 10,300 followers on Twitter, making these websites active places to showcase news to the community.

(<http://www.hypergene.net/wemedia/weblog.php?id=P38>; We Media>>Chapter 3: How Participatory Journalism is Taking Form; 2002)

User-Generated Content: News websites provide viewers with a way to “collect content” from their audience to post. These websites collect “full-length articles, advice/tips, journals, reviews, calendar events, useful links, photos and more.”

- Feedback on the Subject Posted
- Strengths and Weaknesses
- Self-Correcting of Content Posted

Participatory Journalism: “Participatory journalism uses a ‘publish, then filter’ model instead of the traditional ‘filter, then publish’ model. We examine the self-correcting process, strengths and weaknesses of each of the major participatory journalisms systems or formats. These include: discussion groups, user generated content, weblogs (blogs,) collaborate publishing, peer-to-peer systems and XML syndication. The various functions the audience can serve are examined and the type of participatory journalism formats these functions thrive in are also provided.”

- Online discussion groups
- Chatrooms
- Commenting on posted stories
- Forum discussions
- Facebook posts (“Liking” and commenting;) Twitter communication (“@,” “Retweet,” “Favorite”)
- Mailing lists, newsgroups, bulletin boards

These methods of communication provide an outlet for the user to get involved with content provided and with their opinion comes the strong possibility that it will not be regulated.

Blogs: Posting any information from community news to “personal diaries” as a means to gather involvement from readers.

Simply stated, participatory journalism allows those reading the news the right to publish their own content. In my opinion, this is what makes regulating content found on the Internet a difficult task.