

The Impact of Technology on Children Workshop

Age Ratings of Video Games

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What are video game age ratings?

Classification certificates are given to video and computer games by law.

They are designed to help you decide whether a game is suitable for a child or young teenager.

What are video game age ratings?

The rating system has two parts:

1. An Age Rating
2. A Content Descriptor

Part 1: An Age Rating

Each game will be rated at a particular age level.

The logo representing that level will appear on the front, back, and spine of the case:

Part 1: An Age Rating

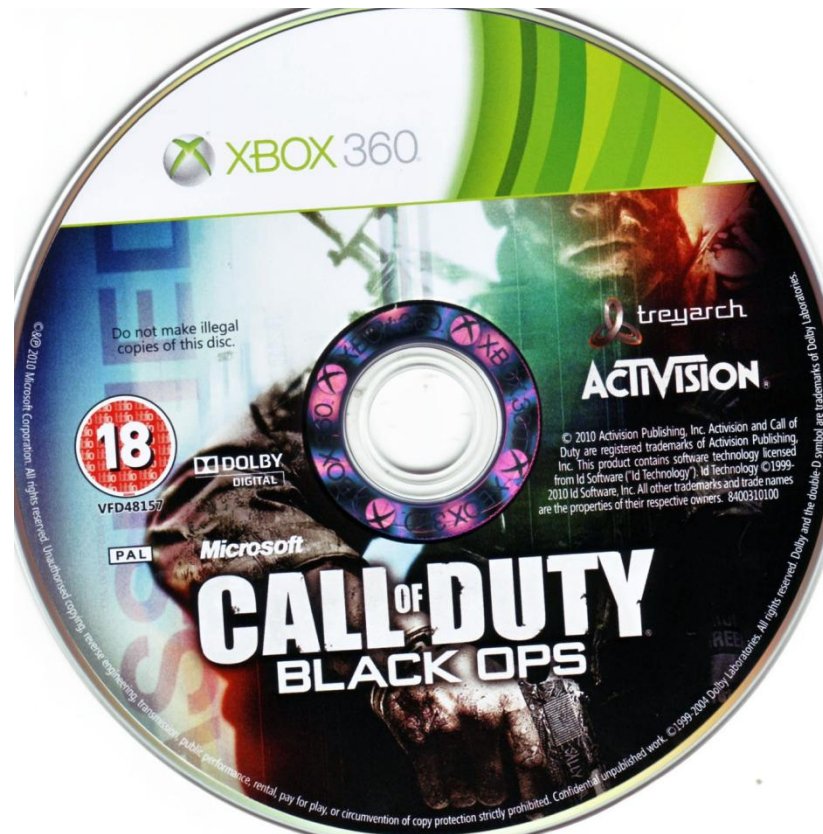


Part 1: An Age Rating



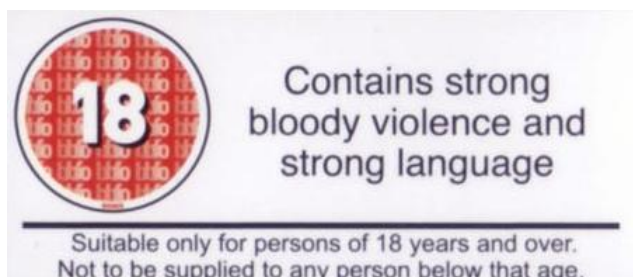
Part 1: An Age Rating

As well as on the disk:



Part 2: A Content Descriptor

Each game will have images or words on the back of the box, next to or near the age logo, to describe the content of the game.



The Age Rating System in the UK

Before 2009 there were two rating systems used in the UK.

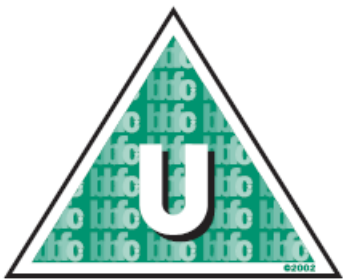
1. BBFC Rating System
2. PEGI Rating System

It is important to remember that some older or second hand games may use either of these rating systems.

BBFC

British Board of Film Classification

Since the Video Recordings Act was passed in 1984 the BBFC has been classifying video games and films.



Universal



Parental
Guidance



Suitable
for 12 years
and over



Suitable
for 15 years
and over



Suitable
for 18 years
and over

PEGI

Pan European Game Information

This rating system was developed by the Interactive Software Federation of Europe (ISFE) and also includes Content Descriptors.

PEGI: Age Ratings



PEGI: Content Descriptors



Gambling



Online games



Violence



Discrimination



Sex



Drugs



Fear



Bad language

The Age Rating System in the UK Today

From 2003 the two systems began to be replaced along with many national age rating systems with a single European System: The PEGI System.

This replacement was completed at the end of 2009.



The PEGI System (from 2009)

This is based on a code of conduct to which every publisher using the system is committed.

PEGI uses self-regulation, which means each company bases their ratings on their own judgements.

This system consists of 5 Age Categories and 8 Content Descriptors.

PEGI: 5 Age Categories



www.pegi.info



www.pegi.info



www.pegi.info



www.pegi.info



www.pegi.info

PEGI: 8 Content Descriptors



So what do you expect from a child's game?

A PEGI 12 rated game is described as:

“These are games suitable for persons aged 12 and over. It contains mild violence or suggestive themes and mildly suggestive language”

Here are some examples of video games rated PEGI 12:

Marvel vs. Capcom 3

Available on: Xbox 360, and Playstation 3

Outline: A fighting game where one or more players battle with fantasy characters.



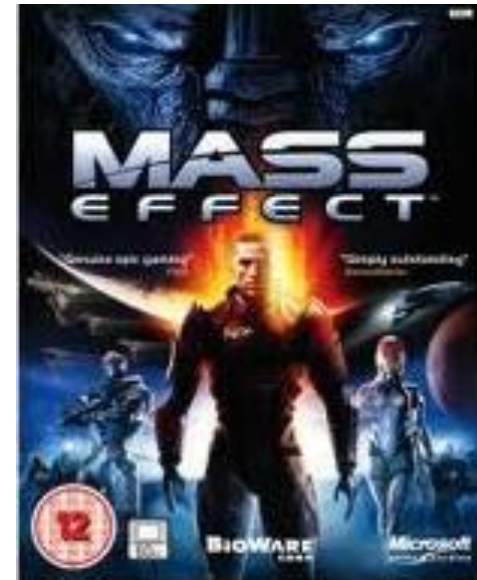
Marvel vs. Capcom 3



Mass Effect

Available on: Microsoft Windows, Xbox 360,
and Playstation 3

Outline: An action, role-playing game where
the lead character must shoot and kill an
alien species to survive.



Mass Effect



Naughty Bear

Available on: Xbox 360, and Playstation3

Outline: Players control a mischievous teddy bear and they earn “naughty points” for doing various tasks.



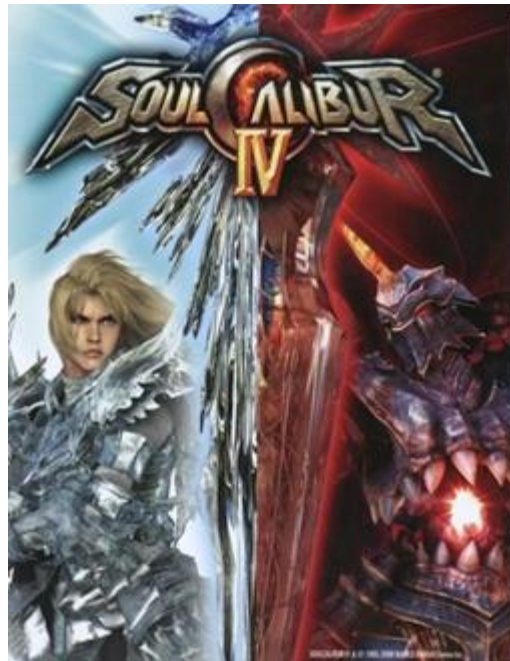
Naughty Bear



Soul Calibur IV

Available on: Xbox 360, and Playstation 3

Outline: A fighting game where one or more players battle with fantasy characters.



Soul Calibur IV

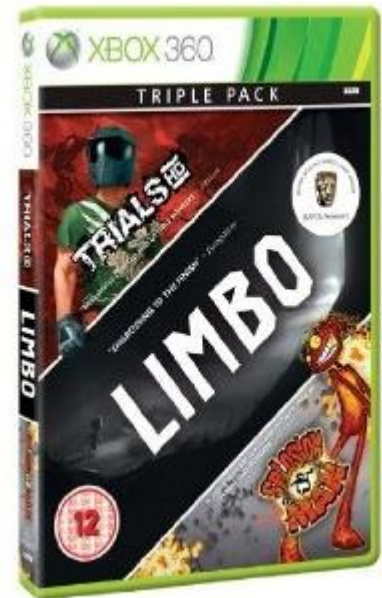
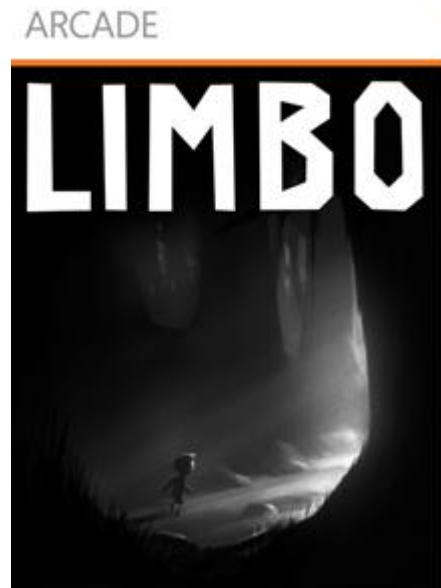


Limbo

Available on: Xbox 360

Outline: A puzzle-platform video game where you play an unarmed boy in search for his sister.

The main idea is for the character to die before you solve the puzzle.



Limbo

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q7z60YyuJsk>



It's just a game...It's not real...

The ratings are there to help show you what the content of the video game is likely to be.

It is illegal in the UK to sell an age rated video game to a person who is below the age required.

Game ratings are just like movie ratings, you wouldn't let a 12 year old watch an 18 rated movie...

Still not sure?

You can always visit the PEGI official website:

<http://www.pegi.info/en/index/>

Or the Ask About Games website:

<http://www.askaboutgames.com/>

Facebook Games

Facebook regulations state that users should be at least 13 years of age.

The user's stated age determines what content they can see on Facebook.

Age ratings of games on Facebook are decided by developers.



Mobile Games

Mobile games have their game ratings determined by the publisher.

Restrictions to play mature content are put in place by the owner of the phone (eg the parents)



Summary

Ratings to look out for:



Content Descriptors:



Three Important Tips

1. Make sure your child is old enough to play the game.
2. Make sure you know what they will be exposed to.
3. The responsibility is in your hands.