

Appendix F

MYSTERY SHOPPER SURVEY AND PARENT-CHILD SURVEY

I. INTRODUCTION

In reviewing the publicly available consumer research about voluntary industry rating and labeling of movies, music recordings, and electronic games, the Commission concluded that additional research would provide useful information about consumer use of the rating systems. For example, there were little available data about the degree to which retailers prevent children from purchasing entertainment products that have been rated or labeled by entertainment producers as potentially inappropriate for children. Also, the Commission needed additional information to understand how parents and children perceive and use the available rating and labeling systems.

This Appendix reviews the results of two types of research projects the Commission sponsored to address these information gaps. First, the Commission contracted for a so-called “mystery shopper” study, a nationwide undercover survey of retail stores and theaters. The Commission’s contractor recruited 13- to 16-year-olds to visit theaters and stores selling entertainment products and attempt to purchase tickets to R-rated movies, explicit-content labeled music, and “Mature” or M-rated electronic games. Second, the Commission contracted for a national telephone survey of parents and children about their attitudes toward, and their use of, the rating and labeling systems for movies, music recordings, and electronic games.

II. THE “MYSTERY SHOPPER” SURVEY

One key measure in assessing the functioning of the entertainment media industry’s self-regulatory rating systems is implementation at the retail level. Although it is the producers of entertainment material whose products are rated or labeled under the self-regulatory systems, it is the retailers who control any sales restrictions included in those systems.¹ This section summarizes studies conducted by other parties, mainly media, to monitor enforcement, and describes the results of the Commission’s “mystery shopper”² survey.

A. *Third-Party Undercover Shops or “Stings”*

Limited data are available on retailers’ enforcement of the rating systems. Most studies have been conducted on an informal basis, usually by media, and suggest that the rating systems are poorly enforced. For example, in August 1999, the Annapolis, Maryland newspaper *The Capital* sent a 16-year-old boy to six area theaters to buy movie tickets for R-rated movies.³ He was reportedly successful in five of six attempts. One month later, *The Capital* sent the same boy to the same theaters to try again.⁴ This time, the 16-year-old was able to buy R-rated tickets four

out of six times at the same theaters. A February 1996 *New York Times* article focused on seven children who were trying to get into an R-rated movie in Yonkers, New York.⁵ The seven, ranging in age from 8 to 15 years, informed the cashier of their ages yet were still sold tickets. An article in the *Saint Paul Pioneer Press* in June 1999 reported on another informal study that tested whether a nine-year-old boy could purchase M-rated electronic games.⁶ The article's author took his son to four large retailers in the St. Paul area to see if he would be permitted to purchase violent electronic games. All of the stores except Funcoland sold M-rated games to the boy without any questions. Funcoland informed the boy that he needed a parent to be with him to purchase the game.

The *USA Today* newspaper conducted a larger scale informal investigation of the sale of R-rated tickets to underage children in June 1999.⁷ The paper sent teens to theaters "across the country" and then rated the theaters on their enforcement of industry guidelines restricting under-17 admission to those accompanied by a parent or guardian. The investigation took place after movie theaters pledged to uphold this admission policy. According to the article, the results demonstrated that the teens, in most cases, "sailed right through" the enforcement checks and successfully purchased tickets for R-rated movies. In March 2000, the Illinois Attorney General's office conducted a "sting" to determine whether games rated Mature for violence were sold to unaccompanied minors in Illinois. The visits, conducted by the Attorney General's Investigations Division, took place in seven locations across Illinois. According to the Attorney General's office, children 13 to 15 years of age were able to buy M-rated games in 32 of 32 attempts from major retailers.

These types of unannounced visits at least suggest that the rating systems are only loosely enforced. The small scale or circumscribed geographical focus of the tests leaves open the possibility that only a few theaters or a few cashiers are lax, or that a particular minor used to test the system may appear to be much older than he or she actually is.

B. The Commission's "Mystery Shopper" Survey

To obtain more information about implementation of the rating and labeling systems, the Commission contracted with Second to None, a company experienced in mystery shopping, to conduct visits to retailers across the nation. The contractor arranged 1,158 visits, reflecting attempts at 380 electronic game purchases, 383 music purchases, and 395 movie ticket purchases.

The contractor recruited "mystery shoppers" 13-16 years of age from 46 states and the District of Columbia. Each teenage shopper visited one retail location for each of the three

industries, and attempted to purchase either a ticket to an R-rated movie, an explicit-content labeled CD, or an M-rated game.⁸ Parents transported the children to the store or theater but were instructed not to accompany the children during the transaction. The contractor required shoppers to submit proof of age and verification for completed purchases by submission of a receipt.⁹ About half of the shoppers (52%) were male; 53% were 13 or 14, with the remainder 15 or 16 years of age.¹⁰ The shops were conducted between May and July 2000.

After the visit, the data were submitted by completing a questionnaire available on the contractor’s proprietary Web site. The questionnaires focused on three substantive questions, reported in Table 1:

1. Was there any sign, poster, or other information to inform customers of the rating or advisory system or the store or theater’s policy on rating or advisory enforcement?
2. Was the child able to purchase the product or admission ticket?
3. Did the cashier or clerk asked the child’s age before purchase?

The results of the survey are reported in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Total Frequencies and Percentages of Yes and No Responses to Each of Questions 1, 2, and 3 for Each Product Line.

Product		Movies		Music		Games	
		Shoppers (#)	Percent	Shoppers (#)	Percent	Shoppers (#)	Percent
Q1	NO	182	46	337	88	335	88
Was Rating Information Posted?	YES	213	54	46	12	44	12
Q2	NO	212	54	56	15	59	16
Was Child Able to Make Purchase?	YES	183	46	327	85	321	85
Q3	NO	204	52	321	84	322	85
Did Employee Ask Age?	YES	191	48	62	16	58	15

C. Availability of Rating Information at Stores and Theaters

Electronic game retailers and music retailers were similar to each other in generally failing to post rating information prominently in the store. Relatively few parents – 12% – noted that they had seen information about the rating or advisory system or the store’s policy posted at game or music stores.¹¹ Although it is possible that this information was posted somewhere in the store, these data at least suggest that this information is not prominently displayed in game and music

stores. Movie theaters, on the other hand, were much more likely to provide information about the rating system or theater enforcement policy. The majority of theaters (54%) did provide this kind of information.

D. Purchase Success and Age-Check Data

Approximately equal numbers of children were able to buy M-rated games and explicit-content labeled recordings: 85% of the children in the survey were able to buy these games and 85% were able to buy recordings.¹² Less than 17% of the music and game store clerks (16% and 15%, respectively) asked the children attempting to purchase games and music recordings how old they were. Movie theaters, on the other hand, were much more likely to restrict access to R-rated movies. Slightly more than half of the theaters enforced the MPAA's restriction that children under age 17 must be accompanied by an adult to see R-rated movies: 54% refused to sell tickets to see an R-rated movie to the shoppers. Almost half (48%) of the cashiers asked the shopper's age at point of sale. Nonetheless, slightly less than half (46%) of theaters did sell tickets to shoppers under 17 years of age. And, in those cases where a theater does restrict underage shoppers' entry at the box office, there are still ways for determined children to gain entry, including having an older friend or sibling purchase the tickets for a group or purchasing a ticket to a PG or PG-13 movie at the box office and then switching to another movie once inside a multiplex.¹³

E. Age, Gender, and Major Chain Comparisons

For each of the three product categories, the shopper's age significantly influenced whether the shopper could complete the purchase and whether the retail clerk or movie cashier asked the child's age.¹⁴ In general, younger children had less success in purchasing material and were more frequently asked their age.¹⁵ Nonetheless, even the youngest shoppers (13-year-olds) were successful in purchasing the ticket or product at 29% of movie theaters, 70% of music stores, and 76% of game stores. Males had less success than females in purchasing R-rated movie tickets, but enforcement was about the same for males and females among music and game retailers.

Looking only at the largest retailers and theater chains, of 267 shoppers attempting to buy tickets to an R-rated movie from leading chains American Multi-Cinema, Inc., Carmike Cinemas, Inc., Century Theatres, Cinemark USA, Inc., GC Companies, Inc., Hoyts Cinemas Corp., Loews Cineplex Entertainment Corp., National Amusements, Inc., Regal Cinemas, Inc., and United Artist Theatre Circuit, Inc., 119 were successful (45%). Among large electronic game retailers, 227 of

258 shoppers (88%) were able to purchase M-rated electronic games at Babbage's Etc., Best Buy Co., Inc, Electronics Boutique Holdings Corp., KB Toys, Kmart Corp., Sears Roebuck & Co., Target Stores, Inc., Toys "R" Us, Inc., and Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. Among large music retailers, 225 of 253 shoppers (89%) were able to purchase explicit-content labeled recordings at stores owned by Best Buy Co., Inc., MTS, Inc. (Tower Records), Musicland Group, Inc., Target Stores, Inc., Trans World Entertainment Corp., and Warehouse Entertainment, Inc. Overall, the larger movie theater chains and smaller chains and independents had comparable enforcement rates. The largest music and game retailers, however, were significantly more likely to permit the purchase, and were less likely to check the age of the mystery shopper, than were smaller music and game retailers.

III. THE COMMISSION'S SURVEY OF PARENTS AND CHILDREN REGARDING SELF-REGULATORY PRODUCT RATING SYSTEMS

The second research project the Commission undertook was a nationwide telephone survey to learn more about consumer perceptions of the rating and labeling systems. The goal of the survey, contracted with Roper Starch Worldwide ("RSW"), was to collect information on parents' awareness and use of the systems; their attitudes toward the systems; their knowledge of the systems; and their views on violence and the role of the rating and labeling systems in providing information about violence. The survey methodology is set out in Section A below, followed by separate sections relating to each entertainment media product.

A. Overview of Methodology

The Commission, in consultation with the staff of RSW, developed the questionnaires for the telephone survey of parents and children. In total, RSW surveyed 763 parents by telephone: 256 parents about movies, 255 parents about music, and 252 parents about electronic games. In addition, the contractor surveyed 413 children: 136 children about movies, 138 about music, and 139 about electronic games.¹⁶

RSW obtained the sample of respondents for the survey using random-digit-dialing of working telephone exchanges across the U.S. To ensure adequate coverage of all 50 states and the District of Columbia, the sample was stratified by nine U.S. Census Bureau regions. This prevented over- or under-representing any part of the country. The response rate for the survey was 35.5%.

B. Questionnaire Format

Each questionnaire followed a similar format, and the detailed analyses below track this format.¹⁷ Parents and children were first asked about the frequency of the child's usage of the medium, and about their roles in the product selection and purchase process. A series of questions about whether parents restrict the child's use of the medium, and the nature of any restrictions, followed. Next, respondents were asked about their awareness, knowledge, familiarity, and use of the rating system. Parents were asked about their satisfaction with the systems, about their concerns about violence, and about how well the rating or labeling system provides them information about violent content. Children were asked a series of questions about their experience at the retail level and whether they had attempted to obtain rated or labeled material. In addition, some questions were asked only about a specific industry. For example, the game and music questionnaires sought information about where music and games are obtained, and the movie and game questionnaires included questions testing parents' and children's knowledge of specific ratings.

C. General Findings

Although each of the surveys focused on a single product, the questionnaires followed a similar structure and had many common questions. As a result, generalizations can be made across all of the surveys, and comparisons can be made among the three products. This section describes generalizations for the parent surveys and children surveys, with key findings presented in Table 2. Specific industry findings are presented in later sections.

1. Parent surveys

Parents report substantial involvement in the selection and purchase of movies, games, and music. Parents report being more involved, however, in the selection and purchase of movies than of games and music.

Parents report placing greater restrictions on the viewing of movies than on the playing of games or the listening of music. Parents are particularly concerned with the violent content of games, with violence consistently emerging as the key reason for restricting their child's game-playing. In contrast, profanity is the parent's key concern with music. For movies, violence, sex, and (to a lesser degree) profanity are key concerns.

The survey results suggest that parents are aware of the three rating systems to varying degrees. Parents are most aware of the MPAA movie rating system and least aware of the newer

ESRB system for electronic games. Parents report using the ratings as guides to decide the appropriateness of entertainment products for their children and as signals to obtain more information about a product.

In addition, parents profess a high level of concern about the level of violence in movies, games, and music. Although a significant number of parents perceive that the ratings do a “good” or “excellent” job in informing them about violence, a substantial number note that the systems do only a “fair” or “poor” job in informing them about the level of violence in entertainment products.

Finally, the autonomy parents give to their children varies with the child’s age. Parents give older children greater freedom in selecting and purchasing entertainment products than they do to younger children, and are less likely to restrict older children.

2. Children surveys

Parents and children vary in their perceptions about who plays the primary role in the selection and purchase of movies, music, and games. Children report that they play a greater role in selection/purchase of entertainment products; parents indicate that the children play a lesser role. Further, boys report having more freedom in the decision process, and parents suggest that they monitor boys more than girls. Consistent with parents’ responses, children note that more restrictions are placed on their movie watching than on their game-playing and music listening activities.

Children reported that they watch movies, listen to music, and play games on a frequent basis. About half (49%) of children reported they see movies on home video at least once a week, see movies in the theater at least once or twice a month (59%), and listen to music at least five hours per week (61%). A majority (59%) of children, however, reported that they play electronic games less than five hours per week.¹⁸

Parents and children disagree about the extent to which the parents restrict the movies, music, and games the child can see, listen to, and play. Fewer children than parents report that the parents have restrictions in place.

Overall, children are more aware of and familiar with the three rating and advisory systems than are their parents. Children are most aware of movie ratings, and least aware of game ratings. Some children admitted that they had tried to circumvent ratings, but most of these children purported to have adult permission to do so.

A summary table of key results is below:

Table 2: Key Results of Parents and Children’s Surveys Across Entertainment Products

Parents’ Responses			
	Movies	Music	Games
Who selects the product?			
An adult	21	11	17
An adult and the child together	78	55	53
The child	2	34	29
Who purchases the product?			
An adult	60	34	38
An adult and the child together	36	37	45
The child	3	28	15
Do you restrict your child’s use of the product?			
% saying "yes"	90	72	68
Are you aware of a rating system for the product?			
% saying "yes"	91	77	61
How often do you use the rating system?			
% of aware, familiar parents saying some, most, or all of the time	88	62	52
% of aware, familiar parents saying rarely or never	11	38	45
Are you satisfied with the rating system?			
% of aware, familiar parents saying somewhat or very satisfied	81	74	77
% of aware, familiar parents saying somewhat or very dissatisfied	17	14	9
How does the rating system do in informing you about violence?			
% of aware, familiar parents saying good or excellent	48	44	55
% of aware, familiar parents saying fair or poor	50	40	29

Children’s Responses			
	Movies	Music	Games
Who selects the product?			
The parents	13	9	6
The parents and the child together	66	36	45
The child	21	55	48
Who purchases the product?			
The parents	54	20	31
The parents and the child together	33	40	41
The child	13	40	25
Does your parent restrict your use of the product?			
% saying "yes"	79	44	45
Are you aware of a rating system for the product?			
% saying "yes"	76	76	73
How often do you pay attention to the rating for the product?			
% of familiar children saying some, most, almost all, or all of the time	79	63	51

The following sections describe the results of each industry in greater detail.

D. Movie Survey Results: Detailed Analysis

1. Decision and purchase process

Parents appear to play an active role in their children’s movie selection and purchase process. Most parents (78%) say that they and the child usually choose movies jointly, while 21%

of parents state that they usually make the decision themselves. [Q2a]¹⁹ Only 2% of parents indicate that the child usually decides which movies to see. [Q2a] Though children see themselves as playing a greater independent role in the decision process – 21% of children say they usually decide which movies to see – the majority of children (79%) say that adults are involved in the selection process, alone or jointly. [Q2a]

In addition, older children (for purposes of this survey, 14- to 16-year-olds) report that they are more likely to make the movie-selection decision on their own than are younger children (32% vs. 13%).²⁰ [Q2a] More younger children (11- to 13-year-olds) say that their parents make the decision alone than do older children (23% vs. 0%). Among older children, more boys than girls state that they make the decision alone (38% vs. 24%).

Parents report being even more involved in the actual purchase process. Some 96% of parents say that they, alone or with their child, usually purchase the movie tickets at the theater, movies at the store, or rent the videos. [Q2b] Adults are more likely to buy or rent a movie for younger children, with the process becoming more shared as children get older: 65% of parents of children 11-13 years of age said they usually purchase the movie themselves, versus 53% of parents of older children. [Q2b]

Of children surveyed, 13% say they usually make the purchase alone. [Q2b] Parents tend to be more involved in the purchase process with younger children: 59% of 11- to 13-year-olds say their parents make the purchase, contrasted with 47% of 14- to 16-year-olds. [Q2b] A substantial number of 14- to 16-year-olds (21%) note that they make the purchase alone. [Q2b] For older children, boys say that their parents take control more than girls: 56% of boys 14-16 say their parents rent or buy the movie or movie ticket, compared to 33% of girls. [Q2b] More girls than boys say they make the decision jointly with their parents (43% vs. 25%). [Q2b]

2. Parental restrictions

Nearly all parents (90%) report that they “restrict” the movies their children watch. [Q3a] By contrast, 79% of the children surveyed say their parents restrict. [Q3a] According to parents, the primary restrictions were based on the movie ratings (32% of those parents who restrict or 29% of all parents), while other restrictions focused on the specific movie content, such as violence (21% of parents who restrict) and sexual content (20%). [Q3b] The number of parents who say they restrict the movies their children watch was higher for those with younger children (95% vs. 83% for older children), with no major differences appearing in parents’ responses based on the child’s gender. [Q3a]

Similarly, when parents who restrict were asked how they decide which movies their child can see, the leading response was that parents base the decision on the movie's rating (20%, or 18% of the total sample). [Q3c] Other parents who restrict said that they preview the movie or watch while the child watches (19%), or read or watch reviews (13%). [Q3c] Other responses discussed the content of the movie, with parents mentioning violence, sex, and profanity. [Q3c] For parents who say they do restrict, it is difficult to determine how frequently or diligently they restrict. When asked specifically if they had refused a child's request to see a particular movie since the previous summer, 66% of parents who restrict said they had, with the major reasons being "sexual content" (24%), "violence" (19%), and "profanity" (10%). [Q3d, 3f] Others mentioned, more generally, that the content was inappropriate for a child (12%). [Q3f]

As noted above, fewer children than parents said that the parents restrict the movies they can see. [Q3a] In explaining the basis for the restrictions, children's comments are consistent with the parents' comments. As with their parents, the leading basis for restriction is the movie's rating (32%) or violent (13%) or sexual (7%) content. [Q3b] Likewise, when asked if there were some kinds of movies that their parents did not want them to watch, the children noted the same three factors: violence (19%), sexual content (19%), and the rating (17%). [Q3d]

More younger children noted having restrictions on the movies they watch than older children (91% vs. 62%). [Q3a] More girls noted having restrictions than boys (90% vs. 68%), with an especially large difference between older girls and older boys (81% vs. 50%). [Q3a] Younger children were also more likely than older children to note that there are movies that their parents do not want them to see (90% vs. 73%). [Q3c]

3. Awareness, knowledge, and use of the rating system

The vast majority of parents (91%) are aware of the rating system for movies, and a majority of those who are aware of the system felt "very familiar" (52%) or "moderately familiar" (35%) with the system. [Q4a, 4b] Of the total set of parents, 47% said they are "very familiar" with the ratings. [Q4b]

In an open-ended question asking their understanding of "what the rating system tells you about movies," parents mentioned specific ratings (17%), types of content such as violence (13%) or sex (14%), and age-appropriateness (12%).²¹ [Q4c] When asked to name all the ratings they could think of, each one of the ratings besides NC-17 was named by a majority of those aware of the system, with higher recall of the ratings that might be described as more "adult" in content (77% of parents named the R rating, 74% mentioned the PG-13 rating, 63% mentioned the PG

rating, and 58% named the G rating). [Q4d] However, when asked whether certain ratings were a part of the movie system, including two ratings that were not actually part of the system, a substantial number of parents (40%) mistakenly indicated that incorrect ratings (one of the electronic game ratings, “M or Mature,” and a rating similar to the music industry advisory label, “PA or Parental Advisory”) were part of the movie system, suggesting that these parents’ familiarity with the system may be incomplete. [Q4e]

When asked the meaning of specific ratings, responses included age-related references, content-focused meanings, and a signaling function. [Q4f] Specifically, when parents were asked what the R rating means, many responses were age-related (“17- to 18-year-olds,” (24%); “not for children/for adults,” (17%)). [Q4f] There was also substantial content focus, especially related to profanity (16%), sex (16%) and violence (15%). [Q4f] Parents mentioned specific content less when asked about the two PG-related ratings (PG and PG-13): for the PG rating, the most frequent answer was that parents should preview or monitor the content (25%); for the PG-13 rating, the majority of parents view the rating as age-related (referring to children 12 or 13 years of age (40%)), and 10% thought it meant that the parent should preview the movie or watch with the child. [Q4f]

Children’s responses essentially track the parents’ responses. When asked what the different ratings mean, children saw the R rating as referring both to age restrictions (“17- to 18-year-olds” (27%) and “not for kids” (18%)) and to content issues (violence (18%), sexual content (13%), and profanity (10%)). [Q4e] Children viewed the PG-13 rating predominantly as referring to “12- and 13-year-olds” (40%) while they saw the PG designation as suggesting that “parents must accompany the child” (27%). [Q4e]

The majority (74%) of those parents claiming to be aware of the system say they use the ratings all or most of the time. [Q5a] (Overall, 66% of the entire sample claimed to use the ratings all or most of the time.) [Q4a, 5a] Among those who do use the rating, it is primarily used to restrict their child from watching movies with certain ratings (23%), as a signal to parents that they should preview the movie or watch it with the child (15%), or to get more information on the film (10%). [Q5c] Among the 10% of parents who say they “rarely” or “never” use the movie rating system, the leading reasons given were that the parent uses his or her own judgment to decide whether the movie is appropriate or that the parent trusts the child to choose movies that are appropriate for him or her. [Q5b] Parents of younger children use the ratings more than parents of older children (81% of parents of younger children use the ratings “most” or “all or nearly all of the time” versus 65% of parents of older children). [Q5a]

Among those parents who were aware of the rating system, the majority thought the system was “very easy” (58%) or “moderately easy” (34%) to understand. [Q7a] Almost half of parents also reported that they are “somewhat satisfied” with the rating system (49%), while another third are “very satisfied.” [Q7b] Satisfaction also varied by age, with parents of older children more likely to be “very satisfied” (40% vs. 27% for parents of younger children), and parents of younger children more likely to be “somewhat satisfied” (55% vs. 41%). [Q7b] Among those who were “somewhat” or “very satisfied” with the rating system, the leading reason for their satisfaction was a general one: either that parents are satisfied with the system, that the system is a good one, or that the system is good but not perfect (29%). [Q7c] Notably, 22% of “somewhat” or “very” satisfied parents made negative comments to describe their satisfaction, including 11% who said that the ratings are inconsistent or inaccurate, and another 10% who said the ratings are too general and do not specify the reasons for the ratings given. [Q7c] Likewise, when dissatisfied parents noted reasons for their dissatisfaction, the most frequent response (38%) was that the ratings were inconsistent or inaccurate, and another 19% thought that the rating should be more descriptive, such as specifying the reason for the rating. [Q7c] The sample size of “somewhat” or “very dissatisfied” parents, however, is small. [Q7c]

Turning to children’s responses, the majority of children (76%) were aware of the movie rating system, and those aware of the system tended or claimed to be “very” or “somewhat” familiar (84%) with the ratings. [Q4a, 4b] More boys than girls (84% vs. 67%) said they were aware of the movie rating system, and more boys than girls said they are “very familiar” with the system (57% vs. 35%). [Q4a, 4b] Children were most familiar with the R, PG, and PG-13 designations, with more than 70% of aware children naming each of these ratings in response to an unaided recall question. [Q4c] Virtually every child asked correctly identified “R or Restricted” and “PG or Parental Guidance” as part of the movie rating system. [Q4d] However, as with parents, a sizable minority of children mistook ratings from other systems as part of the movie rating system, with a little under one third of the children, on average, identifying “T or Teen,” “M or Mature,” or “PA or Parental Advisory” as a movie rating. [Q4d]

Children also said that they pay attention to the movie ratings when deciding which movies to see: 79% say they pay attention to the ratings at least “some of the time,” while 58% say they pay attention “most” or “all or almost all of the time.” [Q5a] The most frequent way children said that the rating affects their choice is to control what they cannot watch (30%). [Q5b] A substantial number of children who said they pay attention to the rating, however, say that the rating has little effect on their movie choice (20%). [Q5b] Likewise, those who say they rarely or

never pay attention to a movie's rating note that the ratings are not important (21%) and that they watch what appeals to them, regardless of the rating. [Q5c] More younger children say they pay attention to the ratings than do older children. [Q5a] In fact, 40% of older children say they rarely or never pay attention to the rating as compared with 6% of younger children. [Q5a]

4. Parental concerns about violence

When asked directly about their concern related to violence in the movies their children watch, the majority of parents (55%) were "very concerned," 37% were "moderately concerned," and only 9% of parents are "not at all" or "not very concerned." [Q8] Further, half of parents familiar with the system (50%) think the rating system does only a "fair" (34%) or "poor" (16%) job informing them about the level of violence in movies. [Q9]

5. Children's experiences with rating system enforcement at theaters

When asked about ways of circumventing restrictions on their movie watching, 20% of children noted that they had tried to see an R-rated movie in a movie theater without an adult. [Q6a] The majority of these youth noted that they had an adult's permission, that the adult knew the movie was R-rated when giving permission (every child asked said the parent knew), and that no one had tried to stop them from seeing the movie at the theater (75%, 18 of 24).²² [Q6c, 6cc, 6d] Eight of 24 children asked said they have bought a ticket for a movie with another rating and gone to see an R-rated movie instead; four of 24 said they had asked someone else to buy a ticket for them out of concern that the cashier would not sell to them. [Q6f, 6g] Older children were more likely to try to see an R-rated movie without a parent. [Q6a]

Similarly, 17% of the children noted they had tried to rent or buy an R-rated movie on video without an adult. [Q7a] Older children, again, were more likely to try to rent or buy a movie without a parent. [Q7a] Of these 21 children, 17 said that they had adult permission, and each of the 17 said that the adult knew that the movie was R-rated. [Q7c, 7cc] Six of the 21 children noted that someone working at the store tried to stop them from renting or buying the movie, but all of them said they were still able to buy or rent the movie. [Q7d, 7e] Given the small sample for these questions (21 children), these data are only illustrative.

E. Music Survey Results: Detailed Analysis

1. Decision and purchase process

The survey revealed an interesting difference in how children and parents perceive their respective roles in the music selection and purchase process. More than half (55%) of children indicate that they usually decide on their own which music to purchase,²³ and 40% report that they purchase the music alone as well. [Q2a] Parents see their role in the process as more important. Only one third (34%) say that their child usually decides which CDs and cassettes to buy, and only 28% indicate that their child purchases music alone. [Q2b] Parents are much more likely to view the purchase decision as a joint process (55%) than are children (36%). [Q2b]

By comparison, children have greater autonomy to both select and purchase music than to select and purchase movies or electronic games. For games, 29% of parents responded that the child usually decides which game to buy or rent, and 15% responded that the child usually purchases or rents the games. [Q2a, 2b] For movies, 2% of parents responded that the child usually decides which movie to buy tickets to, buy, or rent, and 3% responded that the child alone usually purchases or rents the movie or buys the movie tickets. [Q2a, 2b] This greater autonomy is also reflected in the children's responses. For games, 48% respond that they usually decide and 25% usually make the purchase; for movies, 21% usually decide and 13% usually make the purchase. [Q2a, 2b]

The Internet is already beginning to have an impact on children's music listening in some ways. Most children (65%) noted that they have listened to music over the Internet, and 22% reported that they have downloaded music from the Internet. [Q1c, 1d] However, the Internet does not yet nearly rival stores as a source of music purchases: 91% of children buy music in stores, whereas 5% purchase from the Internet and 27% from record clubs. [Q1b]

2. Parental restrictions

This difference in parents' and children's perceptions also showed up when respondents were asked whether the parent restricts the music to which the child can listen. Less than half of the children (44%) report that their parents restrict the music they listen to, whereas 72% of parents say they do.²⁴ [Q3a] Parents mentioned profanity (28% of the overall sample) and sexual content (9% of the sample) as principal content concerns for the restriction. [Q3b] Violence was also mentioned as a concern by some respondents (6% of the sample), but was not as salient in parents' minds as profanity.²⁵ [Q3b] This does not mean that violence was not a concern for parents. The vast majority of parents noted that they were "very" or "moderately" concerned about

the amount of violence in the music children listen to, with 63% “very concerned.” [Q9] In addition to profanity, violence, and sex, some parents (13% of the sample) mentioned that they prohibited their children from listening to specific bands or music genres. [Q3b] Few respondents mentioned that they restricted their children’s music based on the parental advisory label: only 9% of parents mentioned that they use the label (6% of the overall sample), and 4% of children whose parents restrict said that their parents use the label as the basis for restricting the child’s music.²⁶ [Q3b]

Consistent with parents’ responses, profanity was the leading concern mentioned by children (51%, or 22% of the total sample) as the basis for restricting the music to which they listen. [Q3b] Only 9% mentioned violence specifically. [Q3b] Less than one third (28%) of the total sample mentioned that there are some kinds of music that their parents do not want them to listen to; the restriction was principally based on either a specific music genre, album, or artist, or on profane content. [Q3c]

3. Awareness, knowledge, and use of the labeling system

About three quarters of parents (77%) (and children also, 76%) indicated that they were aware of the music advisory system. [Q4a] Parents of older children were more likely to be aware of the advisory system (82%) than were parents of younger children (72%). [Q4a] (Older children also were more aware than younger children (87% vs. 64%). [Q4a]) About half of the overall sample of parents surveyed claimed to be “very” or “moderately” familiar with the system. [Q4b] When it comes to using the system, 45% of the overall sample of parents reported using the advisory system at least “some of the time” in deciding what music to buy (or 62% of parents aware of and familiar with the system). [Q5a]

Parents who do not use the system or use it only rarely, cited a variety of reasons for non-use: some trusted their children to make appropriate choices on their own, some said their children did not like to listen to the types of music that the parent might have a problem with, and others simply did not believe that the advisory was important. [Q5b] Indeed, just over half of the children who are aware of the explicit-content advisory (51%) listen to “hardly any” explicit-content labeled music or do not listen to explicit-content labeled music at all. [Q4c] More than one third of children (36%), however, say that half or more of the music they listen to is labeled with the parental advisory label. [Q4c] Slightly less than a quarter of older children (21%) indicated that they listen to explicit-content labeled music “most or nearly all of the time,” with 32% of older boys listening to labeled music “most or nearly all of the time.” [Q4c] More than

half of older children who are aware of the system (53%) rarely or never pay attention to the advisory label. [Q5a]

Of parents who do pay attention to the explicit-content label, many use it as a notice or warning to spur them to acquire more information about the music or to make sure that they listen to the music either before buying or with their child after buying. [Q5c] When asked how they would respond if their child came to them to ask about buying an explicit-content labeled album, one third (33%) of parents indicated they would not allow their child to purchase that music. [Q6]

As noted above, about half of parents claim to be “very” or “moderately” familiar with the system, and, of parents familiar with the system, three quarters (74%) are “very” or “somewhat” satisfied with the system. [Q4b, 8a] But it is not clear how well parents know the system. For example, most parents who claim to be familiar with the system (55%) believe that the advisory system has something to do with a child’s age, even though the system has no recommended age limit (27% indicated it has nothing to do with age, and 13% were not sure). [Q7b] Although parents may have the impression that the advisory system is age-related simply because it is a “parental” advisory, it appears that parents are confused between the music system and the game and movie systems, which do provide specific age recommendations.

4. Parental concerns about violence

The vast majority of parents (89%) noted that they were “very” or “moderately” concerned about the amount of violence in the music children listen to, with 63% “very concerned.” [Q9] Although 44% of parents familiar with the system said the system does a “good” or “excellent” job in informing them about the level of violence in music, almost as many (40%) felt that the system does only a “fair” or “poor” job. [Q10] In reality, the explicit-content label does not provide any information about how much violence a particular recording contains (or whether the recording contains violence at all) and the system does not provide content descriptors.²⁷

5. Children’s experiences with buying labeled music at stores

Children also answered questions about their experiences, if any, in purchasing labeled products. Few children reported that they attempted to buy an explicit-content labeled album when not accompanied by a parent or other adult (24 respondents, 22%), and of those that did, almost half (13 respondents, 54%) indicated that they had permission to do so. [Q6a, 6c] Here, again, the age of the children made a difference: 37% of older children reported that they have tried to buy labeled music without a parent. [Q6a] Most of the 24 children indicated that the

parent knew the album was labeled (18 respondents, 75%) and did not mind that they had bought it (16 respondents, 67%). [Q6cc, 6g] Children were successful in purchasing explicit-content labeled music without a parent or other adult present, as every one of the children reported that they were able to buy the album (20 of 24 were able to buy without difficulty, and the remainder were still able to buy the album). [Q6e, 6f] The small number of children answering these questions counsels for caution in interpreting the results, but the results at least suggest that relatively few children claim to buy explicit-content labeled material without parental or other adult accompaniment and without adult permission. The data also suggest that children who do attempt to make an unaccompanied purchase are usually successful, as the mystery shopper survey data discussed in Part II, above, confirm.

F. Games Survey Results: Detailed Analysis

1. Decision and purchase process

Parents and children vary in their perceptions of their roles in selecting and purchasing electronic games.²⁸ Almost half (48%) of children asserted that they alone usually decide which games to buy or rent, though only 29% of parents reported that the child usually decides. [Q2a] Similar differences were found in responses to a question about purchasing or renting behavior: 25% of children reported that the child usually purchases or rents the games, as opposed to 15% of parents who said that the child usually made the purchase or rental. [Q2b]

Older children, as might be expected, are more independent in both selecting and purchasing games. Thirty-eight percent of parents of older children say the child usually makes the game selection alone compared to 21% of parents of younger children. [Q2a] The differences are more marked in the children's responses: 65% of older children say they usually decide alone, versus 30% for younger children, and 35% make the purchase alone, versus 15% for younger children. [Q2a, 2b] In addition, parents' and children's responses demonstrate gender differences, with more boys (and parents of boys) saying they usually decide and purchase on their own. [Q2a, 2b]

Whether judging by children's or parent's reports, it is clear that most parents are able to play a watchdog role when they choose to do so. According to the children, almost three-quarters of parents (72%) are usually involved in the process, if only to purchase the game. [Q2b] According to parents' responses, even more parents (83%) are involved in the actual purchase transaction: 38% reported that they usually purchase or rent the games, and another 45% of parents do so together with the child. [Q2b] This level of parental involvement, either at the point

of selection or purchase, means that most parents have the opportunity to review rating information or to check the product packaging to determine whether they approve of the game's content.²⁹

Whether children are buying M-rated games alone or with their parents, it is clear that they play M-rated games. Of 93 children who specified at least one of their current favorite games in response to an open-ended question (some respondents did not name any game as a favorite, or named a favorite genre instead of a particular game), 22 (or 24%) named a game that is M rated. [Q2d] Other children might play M-rated games but did not name an M-rated game as one of their three current favorites. Of those parents who attempted to name their child's current favorite game (comparing parents with children in the same household), their selection matched one of the child's three favorite games 30 out of 36 times. [Q2c] Although this relatively high accuracy rate would suggest that parents are very familiar with their children's game-playing habits, most parents did not name any game as their child's favorite. [Q2c]

2. Parental restrictions

Parents and children also disagree whether parents restrict the games children play. While 45% of children report that their parents restricted the electronic games the child could play, 68% of parents say that they restrict. [Q3a] As with selection and purchase behavior, age makes a difference: parents are more likely to restrict younger children, according to both parents' and children's responses. For example, 63% of younger children say their parents restrict the games they can play, but only 27% of older children say their parents restrict. [Q3a]

Parents and children do agree on one thing: violence is by far the main reason that parents restrict the games their children play, with about half of parents and children naming violence as the basis for restriction. [Q3b] Slightly under half of parents (43%) had told their child, since the beginning of summer 1999, that he or she could not play a particular game. [Q3d] By far, violence or violent content was the leading reason (41%) given by those parents who told their children not to play a particular game. [Q3f] Of those children who said that there are kinds of games that their parents do not want them to play, 41% said their parents do not want them to play violent games. [Q3d]

When asked how they decide which games their child can play, some parents (14%) responded that they take steps to test a game before purchase, such as by trying to play the game before buying, or by supervising their child's usage after purchase. [Q3c] Others (also 14%) mentioned that they look for violent content. [Q3c] Parents also use other techniques. They look

at the game packaging, such as the graphics, to get a sense of the content (11%); check the game's rating (9%); and obtain information about the game from other parents, salespeople, their child, or media sources such as magazines (9%). [Q3c]

3. Awareness, knowledge, and use of the rating system

Although most parents care about violent content in games, it is less clear that they use the game rating system to learn about a game's violent content. Only three in five parents (61%) say they are aware that the game rating system exists (as opposed to 73% of children). [Q4a] Of those aware parents, 8% say they are not at all familiar with the rating system. [Q4b] Of the 53% of parents who claim to be aware of the system and at least slightly familiar with it, 45% rarely or never use the system. [Q5a] Most older children's parents who are familiar with the rating system "rarely" or "never" use the system (58%). [Q5a] By contrast, 32% of younger children's parents who are familiar with the system say they "rarely" or "never" use the ratings. [Q5a] Overall, only 24% of parents surveyed are at least slightly familiar with the system and use it at least some of the time. [Q5a, 5b] This low usage rate may be due to the system's being relatively new. Few parents (4%) named the game's rating in response to an open-ended question about their restrictions on which games their child can play, and 9% mentioned the rating when explaining how they decide which games their child can play.³⁰ [Q3b, 3c]

Even among those parents who said they are aware of and at least slightly familiar with the rating system, little more than half (52%) correctly indicated that the rating system provides both an age rating as well as descriptors indicating a game's content.³¹ [Q4cc] Three in five could not name a single one of the game ratings unaided.³² [Q4d] When asked whether specific ratings (including two ratings that were not actually part of the rating system) were part of the game rating system, these parents were essentially unable to distinguish the ratings that are part of the system from the "foils" or false positives.³³ [Q4e] These responses indicate that parents either do not use the system enough to be familiar with it or at least are confused about the various rating systems. Children were more familiar with the ratings than their parents: more children were able to name at least one game rating unaided, and approximately one third of the children in the overall sample were able to correctly identify the game ratings, after subtracting those children who incorrectly identified a false positive.³⁴ [Q4d]

Parents respond to ratings information in a variety of ways. Parents who claim to be aware of and familiar with the rating system were asked what they would do if their child wanted to play an "M or Mature" rated game. Of that group of parents, about one in five (21%) said they would

not allow the child to play the game because of the rating. [Q6] Almost as many (20%) indicated that they would either test the game themselves prior to purchase or at least monitor the child's play so that they could get a sense of the game's content. [Q6] Other parents noted that they would discuss the game with the child to assess whether it was appropriate (5%), while some would allow the child to play (6%). [Q6]

Parents who report using the system indicated that they use it in a variety of ways. Some use the rating itself as a guide to assess whether the game's content is appropriate for their child. [Q5c] Others use the rating to spur them to seek out additional information from other sources or to check the other information on the game box more carefully. [Q5c] Other parents say they preview the games themselves, or they supervise the child's play after purchasing if the rating indicates that the game may be inappropriate. [Q5c] Some will not purchase games rated Teen or Mature. [Q5c]

Parents who do not use the system gave a variety of responses, as well. Some say they do not use the rating because they check out the game themselves or supervise the child's play. [Q5b] Others say the child's game preferences are such that the content of the games selected is not a concern or that they trust their child to exercise his or her own judgment in selecting appropriate games. [Q5b]

A large majority of parents who said that they were at least slightly familiar with the ratings reported that the ratings were "moderately" or "very easy" to understand (77%). [Q7a] A similarly large majority of these familiar parents reported that they were at least "somewhat satisfied" with the ratings (77%). [Q7b]

4. Parental concerns about violence

Five of six (84%) parents are "moderately" or "very concerned" about the amount of violence in some electronic games. [Q8] About half of parents familiar with the system (55%) say that the rating system does a "good" or "excellent" job of informing them about the level of violence in games. [Q9] However, 29% said the system does only a "fair" or "poor" job.³⁵ [Q9] As noted above, parents' responses to the questions designed to gauge their actual awareness and use of the system suggest that most parents either do not know about or do not use the system.³⁶

5. Children's experiences with rating system enforcement at stores

Interviewers also asked children a series of questions about their experiences with enforcement of the rating system in retail stores. Children were asked whether they had, since the

beginning of the previous summer, ever tried to buy an M-rated game without a parent or other adult. [Q6a] Only 16% of children said they had tried to buy or play an M-rated game – with older children more likely to have made the attempt than younger children. [Q6a] Of the 17 children who claimed to have attempted to buy or play an M-rated game, nine said they had permission to do so (although the parent was not always aware that the game was Mature-rated when asked). [Q6c] Children reported that store employees tried to stop the unaccompanied child from buying the Mature-rated game in three of 17 cases, and they were successful each time in preventing the sale.³⁷ [Q6d, 6e] Only one of the 17 children had asked someone to buy or rent a game for them out of concern that they would be checked because of their age, and only 8% of the children surveyed said they had played an M-rated game on an Internet gaming Web site without a parent's permission.³⁸ [Q6f, 6g]

IV. CONCLUSION

These data are helpful in resolving questions about how the entertainment media rating and advisory systems are applied in practice. The mystery shopper survey demonstrates that in general parents cannot rely on retailers or theaters to restrict children's access to material that may be inappropriate for them. The parent-child survey provides a window on how parents and children use – or do not use – the rating and advisory systems, and on how they purchase entertainment products. The data also show considerable differences between parents' and children's responses on a whole range of issues. The findings should help contribute to a fuller understanding of the ways that parents and children make use of the rating and advisory information designed for their benefit.

Attachment A to Appendix F Sample Parent-Child Survey

Taking the parents' movie questionnaire as an example, each survey began with questions about the frequency of use of the medium and questions about the parents' and children's respective roles at point of sale:

- 1a. Since the beginning of last summer, on average, about how often did (Child's name) go to the movie theater to see a movie?
- 1b. Since the beginning of last summer, on average, about how often does (Child's name) watch movies on home video?
- 2a. For the movies that (Child's name) watches, who usually **decides** which movies to buy tickets to, to buy, or to rent? Is it usually the child, an adult, or an adult and the child together?
- 2b. For the movies that (Child's name) watches, who usually **purchases or rents** the movies or movie tickets? The child, an adult, or an adult and the child together?

The survey then turned to the parent's restrictions on media use:

- 3a. Do you or don't you restrict which movies (Child's name) watches?

If the parent does restrict, the parent was asked about the restrictions, with questions that did not refer to the rating system:

- 3b. What are the restrictions?
- 3c. How do you decide which movies (Child's name) can see? (PROBE: And what do you look for?)
- 3d. Since the beginning of last summer, have you told (Child's name) that he (or she) cannot see a particular movie on home video or in a movie theater?

If so, the parent was asked:

- 3e. If you recall, what was the name of the movie that you told (Child's name) not to see?

- 3f. Why didn't you want (Child's name) to see that movie? (PROBE: Anything else?)

A series of questions about the parent's awareness, knowledge, and use of the system followed:

- 4a. Are you aware whether there is a rating system to help parents decide what movies they do and do not want their children to see?

If the parent was aware of the rating system, the parent was then asked:

- 4b. How familiar would you say you are with the rating system for movies?

Parents who were not aware of the system, or not familiar with the system, were asked only one additional question (question 8 below). Parents who were aware and at least somewhat familiar were tested about their knowledge of the system, with both unaided and aided recall questions:

- 4c. What is your understanding of what the rating system tells you about movies?
PROBE: Is there anything else?
- 4d. In thinking about movie ratings, please tell me all the movie ratings you can think of.
- 4e. Now I am going to read you some ratings that may or may not be used to rate movies; you may have named one or more of these already, that is OK. For each one, please tell me whether the rating is part of the movie rating system, not part of the system, or if you don't know.
- 4f. Now I am going to mention some ratings. For each one, please tell me what you think the rating means. How about R or "Restricted..." PG or "Parental Guidance..." and PG-13 or "Parental Guidance-13...."?

Parents were asked about their usage of the system:

- 5a. Do you use the movie's rating when (Child's name) wants to watch a movie all or nearly all of the time, most of the time, some of the time, rarely, or never?

To follow up, parents who rarely or never used the system were asked why they do not use the system. Parents who do use the system were asked how they use it. Parents were then given a hypothetical situation and asked how they would respond:

6. Imagine if (Child's name) comes to you and says that he/she wants to see a movie, which happens to be R-rated, what would you do? PROBE: Anything else?

Parents were asked whether, when deciding whether their child should or should not see a movie, the ratings are "very easy," "moderately easy," "not very easy," or "not at all easy" to understand (7a). They were also asked whether they are satisfied with the rating system in providing them with information about the movies their child wants to see, and to explain why they are satisfied or dissatisfied.

Parents were then asked directly whether they are concerned about violent content:

8. Parents differ in their opinions about the violent content of some movies that their children may be exposed to. Some are concerned, while others are not concerned about the violent content in some movies that their children see. Generally, are you very concerned, moderately concerned, not very concerned, or not at all concerned about the amount of violence in the movies children watch?

Parents who said that they were aware of and familiar with the system were then asked:

9. Does the rating system do an excellent, good, fair, or poor job in informing you about the level of *violence* in movies?

In the children's movie survey, the questions about frequency of use and role in the decision-making and purchase process were the same as in the parents' survey. Children were also asked whether their parents restrict which movies the child can see in a theater or buy or rent for home and, if so, what the restrictions are. Children who said that their parents do restrict the movies the child can see were then asked additional questions about the restrictions:

- 3c. Generally, are there some kinds of movies that your parents don't want you to watch?
- 3d. What are the kinds of movies your parents don't want you to watch? (PROBE Any other kinds?)

The questions about awareness, familiarity, knowledge, and use of the system tracked the parent's survey, although instead of asking how the children "use" the rating they were asked whether they "pay attention" to the rating. They were then asked how the movie's rating affects their choice of what movie to see, or if they rarely or never pay attention to the rating, why they rarely or never pay attention to the movie's rating. Children were then asked a series of questions about the enforcement of the rating system at theaters and stores:

- 6a. Since the beginning of last summer, have you tried to see an R-rated movie at a movie theater without a parent or other adult?

If they had tried to see an R-rated movie at a theater without a parent or other adult since the beginning of the previous summer, they were asked:

- 6b. What was the name of the last R-rated movie you tried to see at a theater without a parent or other adult?
- 6c. Did you have your parent's or other adult's permission to see that movie?

If they had permission to see the movie, they were also asked:

- 6cc. Did your parent or other adult know that the movie was R-rated?

All children who had tried to see an R-rated movie in the last year without a parent or other adult were then asked:

- 6d. Did anyone working at the theater try to stop you from seeing the movie?

For those who said someone working at the theater had tried to stop them from seeing the movie, they were asked an additional question:

- 6e. Were you still able to see that movie in a theater without your parent or other adult?

All children who had tried to see an R-rated movie in the last year without a parent or other adult were then asked:

- 6f. Since the beginning of last summer, have you bought a ticket for a G, PG, or PG-13 rated movie at a movie theater and gone into an R-rated movie instead?
- 6g. Since the beginning of last summer, have you asked someone to buy a movie ticket for you because you were concerned the cashier would not sell it to you because of your age?

Comparable questions were asked about the child's experience trying to rent or buy an R-rated movie on home video without a parent or other adult.

**Attachment B to Appendix F
Tables of Mystery Shopper Survey Data**

1. Table of Mystery Shopper Results by Age of Shopper

Was child able to make purchase?

a. Movie Theaters

Frequency/ Col Pct	13 years old	14 years old	15 years old	16 years old	Total
No	56 71%	78 62%	46 46%	32 36%	212
Yes	23 29%	48 38%	54 54%	58 64%	183
Total	79	126	100	90	395

b. Music Stores

Frequency/ Col Pct	13 years old	14 years old	15 years old	16 years old	Total
No	24 30%	12 9%	15 16%	5 6%	56
Yes	55 70%	115 91%	79 84%	78 94%	327
Total	79	127	94	83	383

c. Electronic Game Stores

Frequency/Col Pct	13 years old	14 years old	15 years old	16 years old	Total
No	18 24%	10 8%	19 20%	12 15%	59
Yes	57 76%	119 92%	77 80%	68 85%	321
Total	75	129	96	80	380

Was the child asked his/her age?

a. Movie Theaters

Frequency/Col Pct	13 years old	14 years old	15 years old	16 years old	Total
No	31 39%	53 42%	61 61%	59 66%	204
Yes	48 61%	73 58%	39 39%	31 34%	191
Total	79	126	100	90	395

b. Music Stores

Frequency/ Col Pct	13 years old	14 years old	15 years old	16 years old	Total
No	55 70%	112 88%	77 82%	77 93%	321
Yes	24 30%	15 12%	17 18%	6 7%	62
Total	79	127	94	83	383

c. Electronic Game Stores

Frequency/Col Pct	13 years old	14 years old	15 years old	16 years old	Total
No	57 76%	121 94%	76 79%	68 85%	322
Yes	18 24%	8 6%	20 21%	12 15%	58
Total	75	129	96	80	380

2. Table of Mystery Shopper Results by Gender

Was child able to make purchase?

	Males	Females	P-Value
Movies			
Respondents	205	190	
Respondents Able to Purchase	85	98	
Percent Able to Purchase	41%	52%	0.04
Music			
Respondents	197	186	
Respondents Able to Purchase	165	162	
Percent Able to Purchase	84%	87%	0.36
Games			
Respondents	204	176	
Respondents Able to Purchase	175	146	
Percent Able to Purchase	86%	83%	0.45

Was child asked his/her age?

	Males	Females	P-Value
Movies			
Respondents	205	190	
Respondents Who Were Asked Their Age	110	81	
Percent Who Were Asked Their Age	54%	43%	0.03
Music			
Respondents	197	186	
Respondents Who Were Asked Their Age	31	31	
Percent Who Were Asked Their Age	16%	17%	0.81
Games			
Respondents	204	176	
Respondents Who Were Asked Their Age	30	28	
Percent Who Were Asked Their Age	15%	16%	0.75

3. Table of Purchase Behavior by “Major” Chain vs. Non-“major” Chain

Was the child able to purchase the item?			
Type of Store or Theater	Movies	Music	Games
Non-Major (in %)	50	78	77
Major Chain (in %)	45	89	88
P-Value	0.31	0.01	0.01
Was the child asked his/her age?			
Type of Store or Theater	Movies	Music	Games
Non-Major (in %)	46	22	22
Major Chain (in %)	49	13	12
P-Value	0.53	0.02	0.01

ENDNOTES

1. Some type of retailer enforcement currently is an element or goal only of the movie and electronic game industry self-regulatory systems. The music recording industry has not required that stores restrict sales of explicit-content labeled albums to children under a certain age, instead emphasizing that such a decision should be left to the retailers' discretion. Nevertheless, some music recording retailers have indicated that their policy is not to sell such recordings to children. *See Report Section V.C.*
2. The "mystery shopping" industry is one that employs individuals to visit an establishment in an anonymous way, just like any other customer. "Mystery shoppers," so-called because the shoppers' role is not declared to employees at the establishment, may be hired by a company to provide an external check on the company's customer service, for example.
3. Allison Foreman, *5 Theaters Let Boy, 16, into R Films*, *The Capital*, Aug. 1, 1999, at A1.
4. Allison Foreman, *Four Theaters Fail a Second Underage Test*, *The Capital*, Sept. 5, 1999, at A1.
5. Trip Gabriel, *The Ratings Game at the Cineplex*, *N.Y. Times*, Feb. 18, 1996, at B1.
6. David Hanners, *Informal Survey Finds Video Game Ratings Ignored*, *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*, June 12, 1999.
7. Trey Graham, *Despite ID Policy, R Rating Rarely Bars Teens from Screens*, *USA Today*, June 16, 1999, at 4D.
8. Shoppers were initially assigned a location to shop based on 1999 telephone data and industrial classification codes for businesses in each industry in the shoppers' general geographic area, using the first three digits of the shopper's zip code. In many cases, these assigned locations were too distant from the shopper, had closed, or did not sell the product. Therefore, after more than 20% of the shops were completed based on these random assignments, shoppers were informed that they could select the location to shop.

Data from both assigned and unassigned shoppers are compared here. For the question that related to whether the parent noticed an age advisory, only for the movie industry does there appear to be a difference in response rate between shoppers who went to assigned vendors and shoppers who chose vendors. For movies, shoppers who were assigned a vendor observed the advisory more often than those who selected a theater (62%-51%, $p=0.048$). For music and game vendors the effect was not significant ($p>0.05$).

For all three products, the group that went to assigned stores was able to complete the purchase a higher percentage of the time than the group that chose a vendor. This difference was statistically significant for music (92%-82%) ($p<0.013$) and games (92%-82%) ($p<0.016$) but not for movies (50%-45%, $p=0.458$). Children in the group that chose the vendor were asked their age in a higher percentage of cases than the group that shopped at assigned vendors. For music and games, this difference was significant ($p<0.044$): music (11% (assigned a store) vs. 19%

(chose store)) and games (7%-18%). For movies the difference was not significant (47% vs. 49%, $p= 0.671$).

9. The contractor required shoppers to submit proof of age and verification for completed purchases by submission of receipt; if they were not able to make a purchase, the shoppers were to buy another item at the store to get a receipt, except in cases where the shopper went to a movie theater showing only one R-rated movie. Shoppers did not submit receipts in every case: some indicated that they were required to provide the receipt to the store in order to return the item, as parents were instructed that the purchased items should be returned if the purchase attempt was successful. Still, a majority of shoppers did submit receipts verifying that they had completed the shop: all told, more than 80% of the shops were documented by receipts either for the rated item purchased or for another item purchased at that location. Looking only at shops for which receipts were submitted, shoppers submitted receipts documenting a successfully completed purchase of the rated product or theater admission for 771 of the 1,158 total shops.

10. Percentages cited in this appendix have been rounded. Accordingly, certain figures may add up to slightly more or less than 100% due to rounding.

11. Parents completed the questionnaire on the Web site after getting the information (*e.g.*, whether the child was able to purchase) from the child.

12. Review of the mystery shopper data indicated that some shoppers mistakenly purchased edited or “clean” versions of explicit-content labeled recordings, specifically at Wal-Mart and Kmart, despite the instruction that they purchase explicit-content labeled recordings. The product identification numbers (or SKUs) for all other receipts with universal SKU data were rechecked, confirming that the albums selected were the explicit-labeled versions. The results from the Kmart and Wal-Mart purchases of clean versions of explicit albums are not included in the data reported here.

13. In the Parent-Child Survey conducted on behalf of the Commission, eight of 24 children who said that they had tried to see an R-rated movie at a movie theater without a parent or other adult since the beginning of the previous summer had bought a ticket for a G, PG, or PG-13 movie and then gone to an R-rated movie instead, while four had asked someone else to buy them a ticket out of concern that the theater would not sell him or her the ticket. *See infra* Section III.D.5.

14. Note that all differences cited in the analysis of the mystery shopper data are statistically significant differences, with $p<0.05$.

15. Data table for comparisons in this section are presented in Attachment B to this Appendix.

16. The data cited in the text are based on analyses of those subjects for which full age and sex information was available. There were 93 subjects, accounting for 8% of the total number of subjects surveyed, that were dropped because of missing age or sex information. These missing observations accounted for a low of 5% of subjects in the parents’ movie survey to a high of 13% in the children’s music survey. Analyses conducted by FTC staff determined that the exclusion of these incomplete observations did not materially alter the results cited in the text.

Households were screened for the presence of an age-eligible child, as well as for the child's use of movies, video and personal computer games, and music such as albums, cassettes, or compact discs. A household was considered to be eligible for the survey if the child used any one of the three media (although parents were not questioned about a particular medium if the parent indicated that the child did not use that medium). Households were interviewed about one product (*i.e.*, movies, music, or games) only.

Following research industry standards, RSW made up to four calls to each household to screen for eligibility and to obtain participation. When necessary, RSW made up to an additional two calls to the qualified household to conduct the interview with the parent. Once RSW completed an interview with a parent, it attempted an interview with the child in that household. In households where more than one child between the ages of 11 and 16 years of age resided, a random selection method, asking for the child between 11 and 16 who had the most recent birthday, was used to select a child for inclusion in the study. In the attempt to reach the specified child within the household, RSW made up to four additional calls during both day and evening hours. In some cases, it was necessary to conduct interviews with children in households when no parent interview was conducted. In these cases, RSW contacted the parent, collected demographic information for the household, and secured permission to interview the child. RSW conducted 18 of the child-game interviews, 46 of the child-music interviews, and 38 of the child-movie interviews in households where it could not obtain full parent interviews. Telephone interviews were conducted between May 10, 2000 and June 8, 2000.

RSW checked the data from completed interviews for consistency and coded responses to open-ended questions into categories that summarized the most frequently mentioned responses. RSW submitted preliminary codes and examples of the associated verbatim responses to the Commission for comment and approval. RSW then coded open-end responses into the approved response categories and tabulated them as part of the overall data set.

17. The complete questionnaires and survey results are available at the Commission's Web site, www.ftc.gov.

18. These rates are generally consistent with those reported by other surveys that have measured children's own reports of their entertainment media usage. However, the Commission's estimates may be understated, as its study was based on children's retrospective self-reports of their behavior. The present survey was not designed to measure actual frequency rates. Based on a comparison of children's self-reports with parental estimates, parents tend to underestimate the frequency with which children use these entertainment products.

19. Citation is to relevant question(s) on questionnaire for the entertainment product discussed, for parents' or children's survey based on response given.

20. Differences between responses, such as comparisons between boys' and girls' responses or between older and younger children's responses, are noted only when the difference between the response rates is 10% or greater. In many, but not necessarily all, cases, cited differences will be statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

21. A large minority of respondents (37% of those who claimed to be aware of the system) said they did not know or refused to answer the question. For the open-ended survey questions, there were a substantial minority of parents, usually in the 30-40% range for a given question, who either refused to answer the questions or responded that they did not know or did not remember. This may indicate a sensitivity to questions about parents' roles in restricting or monitoring their children's media usage, or a lack of knowledge about the rating systems that made parents less willing to articulate their answers. Although it is difficult to know the precise reasons for this phenomenon, two points must be noted. One is that substantially fewer children in the survey for each industry responded that they did not know an answer or refused to answer. Also, even among parents' responses, the rate of refusals varied depending on the particular industry. For example, most of the parents who participated in the music survey indicated that they did not know an answer, but did not refuse to answer. For the game survey, however, more parents refused to answer particular questions as opposed to saying that they did not know.

22. The small sample size for these questions counsels caution in interpreting these results. Of the six children who said someone at the theater did try to stop them from seeing the movie, three were able to see the movie in the theater subsequently. [Q6e] On enforcement of the age restrictions in the theater, *compare* the Mystery Shopper survey, *supra* Part II (indicating that 46% of children participating in the survey were able to purchase tickets to R-rated movies at theaters).

23. As might be expected, more older children (14- to 16-year-olds) than younger children (11- to 13-year-olds) indicate that they usually make the selection (74% vs. 36%). [Q2a] More older children than younger children also indicate that they usually make the purchase (61% to 19%). [Q2b] Parents' responses also reflect this age difference. Almost half of parents of older children (48%) said that their child usually makes the decision to select music, and 43% said that the child usually makes the purchase on his or her own. [Q2a, 2b]

Also, children from non-married households were more likely to report that they made the decision (68%) than children from married households (49%). [Q2a] This result was also reflected in the purchase data (49% of children in non-married households reported that they purchase on their own, as opposed to 36% of children in married households). [Q2b] Parents' responses reflected this differential too, with fewer respondents from married households indicating that the child usually makes the purchase than non-married households. Small cell sizes for the non-married/married household comparisons for some questions advise caution in interpreting these results.

24. The married/nonmarried household distinction also appears when looking at whether parents restrict their children's music: both children's and parents' reports vary depending on whether the household is a married household, with fewer parents restricting in nonmarried households. [Q3a] The age distinction appears as well: 55% of younger children said their parents restrict, while only 33% of older children said they restrict. [Q3a] More parents with older children responded that they do not restrict (39% vs. 14%). [Q3a]

25. When asked in another question why they had not wanted their child to listen to a particular album, artist, or genre, parents again mentioned profanity as the leading response. [Q3f]

26. When asked, further, how they decide which music the child can listen to, parents' predominant response (30%) was that they either try to listen to the music before buying or listen to the music with the child to keep a check on the content. [Q3c] Again, some parents mentioned that they use the explicit-content label (9%) or inspect information on the music packaging, such as song titles or lyrics, or the packaging graphics (4%). [Q3c] When parents who had told their child that he or she could not listen to a particular album, artist, or type of music were asked why they did not want their child to listen to the album, only 2% mentioned the explicit-content label. [Q3f]

27. See Report Section IV.A.

28. For purposes of the survey, the term "video games" was inclusively defined to include handheld games, console games, and computer games.

29. Note, however, that parents may have more control over children's purchases or rentals at retail stores than other ways that children obtain games. While 68% of children say they buy games at the store and 28% say they rent games, 34% borrow games and 17% buy, play, or download games online. [Q1c] Eighteen percent have downloaded game demos online, allowing them to play at least a portion of a game.

30. Only two of 49 children whose parents restrict their game playing specifically mentioned, in an open-ended question, that the restriction is based on the rating. [Q3b]

31. The remainder said that the system had only an age component, only a content descriptor component, or said they did not know.

32. The rating most frequently mentioned, Teen, was recalled by 18% of parents. Children did considerably better in demonstrating unaided recall of the ratings: only 31% were unable to name any of the ratings unaided, and 47% were able to name the Teen rating (again, the best recalled rating) unaided. [Q4c]

33. Based on the average of the two false positives, parents were more likely to pick the false positives (a rating similar to the music advisory label, "PA or Parental Advisory" (57%), and a movie rating, "PG or Parental Guidance" (40%)) than two out of three of the actual rating categories ("M or Mature" (59%), "E or Everyone" (45%), and "T or Teen" (45%)). [Q4e]

34. A recent Annenberg Public Policy Center survey similarly indicates that children are more familiar with the television rating system than their parents. See Emory H. Woodard, IV & Natalia Gridina, *Media in the Home 2000: The Fifth Annual Survey of Parents and Children* [hereinafter *Media in the Home 2000*] 32-35 (Annenberg Pub. Policy Ctr. U. Pennsylvania 2000).

35. A Gallup survey provides a different view of whether people are satisfied with the level of information provided by the rating systems about violence levels. Most people reported that the systems do not provide adults with enough information about the violent content in entertainment to make decisions about what is appropriate for children: 58% thought the movie rating system did not provide enough information about the violent content in movies, and 74% thought that the music and game systems did not provide enough information. David W. Moore, "*Public:*

Current Efforts to Control Exposure of Children to Violent Entertainment Are Not Enough,” Gallup News Service (June 23, 1999) (reporting results of Gallup poll of 500 respondents conducted June 11, 1999), www.gallup.com/poll/releases/pr990623.asp (visited Aug. 16, 2000).

36. The *Media in the Home 2000* survey reports that 49% of parents use the video and computer game rating system, as opposed to 80% who use the movie rating system and 45% who use the music system. *Media in the Home 2000*, *supra* note 35, at 36.

37. Though the sample size here is small, these figures are consistent with the data from the mystery shopper survey conducted on behalf of the Commission, *supra*.

38. The data indicate that many children do not play games on Internet gaming Web sites, at least at the present. About half (47%) of children said they never play games on Internet gaming Web sites, and another 43% say they play on those sites less than five hours a week. [Q1b] The 8% of children who have played a Mature-rated game online without permission may be compared to the 17% of children who said that they currently buy, play, or download games online. [Q1c, 6g]