

**Parents Say They're Gaining Control over Their Children's  
Exposure to Sex and Violence in the Media**  
**Kaiser Family Foundation**  
**Barbara Jordan Conference Center**  
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**VICKY RIDEOUT, M.A.:** Good morning. Thank you for being here. My name is Vicky Rideout, and I'm a vice president of the Kaiser Family Foundation and the director of our Program for the Study of Entertainment, Media and Health.

Today, we're releasing the results of our survey titled *Parents, Children and Media*. This is the fifth survey in a series that we've conducted since 1998, where we track parent's concerns about media, their use of media rating systems and other related issues.

Right now, we're in the middle of a very active period when it comes to kids and media. The television industry is in the midst of the first really comprehensive and coordinated public education campaign on TV ratings and the V-Chip. Meanwhile, several media companies have been hit with record-breaking fines on both indecency and educational content. The FCC recently issued a report to Congress calling for government limits on violent content on broadcast and cable television, and just a couple of weeks ago, the courts overturned an FCC ruling on so-called "fleeting obscenities."

So, today we're going to take a minute and look at where parents are in all of this, and then we're going to have a panel discussion about some of the implications of our

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findings and where we go from here. Let me start by taking just a minute to introduce our panelists to you.

First, on my far right, Jim Dyke is executive director of TV Watch, an organization that represents the television industry's perspective on policy issues about media content and regulation, in particular promoting parental controls and individual choices as an alternative to increased government regulation of television content. He also heads his own communications consulting firm, Jim Dyke & Associates, and he served as communications director of the Republican National Committee, where he spearheaded a successful communications strategy that helped re-elect President George W. Bush in 2004.

Next, we have Mike Angus. He's executive vice president and general counsel of Fox Interactive Media, a company that includes the popular MySpace Web site, along with many other online entities, including Fox Sports and the popular video-gaming site, IGN. At Fox, he negotiates new business opportunities, coordinates privacy and safety activities and oversees the day-to-day operations. Prior to joining Fox Interactive Media, he served as senior vice president at Fox Cable Networks Group, so we're happy to have you with us, Mike. Thank you for being here.

Dr. Victor Strasburger is a pediatrician and the author of numerous books and articles on children and media.

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He is currently chief of the Division of Adolescent Medicine, a professor of pediatrics and professor of family and community medicine at the University of New Mexico, School of Medicine in Albuquerque. He has authored more than 120 articles and papers and eight books on the subject of adolescent medicine, including the effect of television and other media on children and adolescents. He is also the author of the American Academy of Pediatrics' recent policy statement of children and advertising.

And finally, Tim Winter is executive director of the Parents Television Council, a media watchdog group that provides information on media content to parents and advocates for curbs on sex and violence in the media. Prior to joining the PTC, Mr. Winter spent 15 years in various management positions at the NBC Television Network, working on network broadcast operations, program production, international and domestic cable and the creation of MSNBC. And prior to joining NBC, Mr. Winter worked at MGM, where he led the legendary movie studio's interactive division and its online and video game publishing venture, so he has a broad array of experience in the media world. Thank you all for being with us today.

For the report that we're releasing here today, we conducted a nationally representative survey of more than 1,000 parents of children ages 2 to 18. We also conducted a

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series of focus groups with parents of children ages 9 to 14, so the tweens, in various cities across the country. At this point, what I'm going to do is I'm going to briefly run through some of the key findings just from the survey with you, and then a little bit later we'll take a look at some of the focus groups.

The first finding that I wanted to share with you is that a large proportion of parents continue to be very concerned about the issue of inappropriate content in the media. Two-thirds of parents say they are very concerned that children in this country of exposed to too much inappropriate content, and that's a number that has not changed since our last survey in 2004, so this is still a very salient issue for many parents. One thing that was interesting to us is that we did find some significant differences in the level of parental concern based on race. African-American and Latino parents are more likely to be concerned about children's exposure to inappropriate content than white parents are. So, for example, 67-percent of African-Americans say they're very concerned that children are being exposed to too much sexual content, compared to 45-percent of white parents. The comparable figures are 64-percent very concerned about violence, compared to 39-percent of whites and 60-percent are very concerned about coarse

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language, compared to 34-percent of white parents, with Hispanic parents falling in between in each case.

Indeed, parents are convinced that media messages do influence the behavior of children, specifically that sex in the media contributes to young people becoming involved in sexual situations before they're ready, 55-percent say it contributes a lot, and that violence in the media contributes to aggressive behavior, 43-percent say they think it contributes a lot.

Interestingly, even in this Internet era, when we asked parents which medium concerns them the most, parents still say TV more than any other medium, including video games, music or the Internet. In fact, two-thirds of parents support government regulation of television content during the early evening hours. Again, this is a number that has not changed since our last survey in 2004, and I think it reflects parents' strong concerns about the broader media environment that their kids are growing up in.

However, when it comes to their own kids, many parents are feeling a little bit better than they felt over the past 10 years. When we asked parents how concerned they are that their own children are being exposed to too much sex, violence, or adult language in the media that their kids use, it's still a pretty high level of concern, 40- to 50-

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percent, but it is clearly down noticeably since we first began surveying on this issue in 1998.

Now, why are parents' concerns about their own children's exposure to such content going down? We can't know for sure, but it may be because they feel like when it comes to what happens in their own homes, they're doing a pretty good job of monitoring their children's media use. Two-thirds of parents say they closely monitor their children's media use and only 18-percent say they think they need to do more.

Surprisingly, this is even true when it comes to the Internet. In fact, it's even a little bit truer. Almost three out of four parents whose kids use the Internet say they know a lot about what their kids are doing online. This, frankly, pretty much flies in the face of what we expected to find in this survey because we have this perception of parents as feeling overwhelmed, a little bit behind the curve, when it comes to their kids' technological expertise and trying to keep up with them. But, in fact, most parents feel pretty on top of their kids' Internet use. In fact, a pretty large majority say they do things like review the names on their children's Instant Messaging Buddy Lists, check their children's profiles on social networking sites like MySpace, check where they've gone online and so on.

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Now, there are lots of other ways for parents to monitor their children's media use, both online and offline. One way is for them to use the various media ratings and parental advisory systems that are out there for them. As you can see here, about half of parents say they use the ratings or advisories for TV, video games and music. Close to 80-percent use them for the movie ratings. Use of the music advisories has gone up since we first began surveying on this subject in 1998. Use of the movie ratings has gone down. But for TV and video games, it really has not changed at all since 1998.

Where there has been a little bit of change is in parents' attitudes towards these tools. Among those parents who have used each system, the proportion who say they find them "very useful" has increased over the years, at least for TV ratings, video games and music advisories. You can see the TV ratings still come in last in the percent of parents who say they find them very useful, compared to the other advisories, but in all three of those cases, the proportion who find them very useful has increased. This may indicate that parents are becoming a little bit more adept at using these ratings and advisory systems.

Now, one reason that the TV ratings may not get more use or more rave reviews from parents is because a lot of parents still do not understand what the ratings mean. And,

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unfortunately, as you can see from this chart, we've had virtually no movement on that since our last survey in 2004. The one exception from that is the little bit of an increase in the awareness of the TV-14 rating. The TV-MA rating awareness, I should say, has increased a little bit since 1998, but not since 2004. So, as you can see here, almost no parents know what the content rating D means, which stands for suggestive dialogue, or EI, which stands for educational and informational program. Only a third know that the S rating denotes sexual content and only half know that the V stands for violent content. The age-based ratings fare a little bit better, with half knowing that TV-MA means for mature audiences and 61-percent knowing that TV-14 means appropriate for ages 14 or older.

As you know, the TV ratings are designed to work in conjunction with the V-Chip so that, if parents choose to, they can actually block shows with certain ratings from coming into their sets. The V-Chip has been required to be in all new TV sets over 13 inches sold since January of 2000. One thing that we have looked at in these surveys is simply tracking how many homes actually have a V-Chip-equipped television. We find that today more than 80-percent of parents do have a V-Chip-equipped TV in their home. That is, they've purchased a new TV since the requirement that new TVs include a V-Chip went into effect. But a majority of those

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who have a V-Chip still don't seem to be aware of it: 43-percent do know and 57-percent don't know they have one.

Among those who do have a V-Chip and know they have a V-Chip, close to half, 46-percent, say they have used it. Now, that may sound pretty good, but if you look at that from the basis of the total population of parents, factoring in all those who either don't have a V-Chip still or don't know they have one, it's still very few parents, just 16-percent, who say that they've ever tried the V-Chip. This is virtually unchanged since 2004. Those who have tried it really like it. More than 70-percent say they found it very useful. So, those who are trying it like it, but not many are trying it, perhaps because they don't even know that they have it.

Finally, turning to another topic, we also asked parents about a variety of issues about the affect of media on children and youth, and I want to share those results with you now. This basically will cover what parents believe about a lot of the things that have been said in the news about kids and media. For example, with media and obesity we found that two-thirds of parents do believe that children who spend a lot of time watching TV are more likely to be overweight, with 20-percent saying that's not true and 13-percent saying they don't know.

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On a more positive note, a majority of parents are also convinced that educational TV has real benefits for kids, with 59-percent saying that kids who watch a lot of educational TV have better verbal skills, but a somewhat higher proportion, 23-percent, saying they're not really sure one way or another. Remember that when it comes to obesity, only 13-percent said they didn't know, so the opinions were a little firmer there.

The percent of parents aren't sure goes up even more when we ask about the effect of baby videos on early childhood development. It's still a pretty large proportion, nearly half, who say that baby videos have a positive effect on early childhood development, and only 17-percent who say they don't, but this time 35-percent say they're really not sure one way or the other.

Finally, another controversial issue in the news has been the link, if any, between TV and attention deficit disorder in children. And we found that, in this case, parents really are not convinced of media's effect. Just 26-percent say it does have an effect, while 41-percent say it doesn't and 33-percent say they aren't sure.

Now, in order to get at some of the nuances that a national survey can't really uncover, we also conducted a series of focus groups, honing in on the parents of tweens, kids in the 9- to 14-year-old age range. We held a total of

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eight focus groups in Irvine, California; Dallas, Texas; Chicago, Illinois; and Washington, D.C. Here in D.C., we had the chance to video tape two focus groups and I want to thank Jackie Judd and Shawn Wayland [misspelled?] and Hillary Career [misspelled?] for their help with that, and thank the Foundation's Liz Hamel [misspelled?] from our Survey Research Department for the excellent job she did moderating the sessions, and Theresa Boston [misspelled?] for her help in organizing the groups and the entire project, including this event.

We've put together a short tape of some of the parents' comments from the D.C. focus group that seems to echo the thoughts of parents around the country. Let's take a quick look.

[Video Playing]

Okay, in summary, I guess what I would say is that while parents are still concerned about the broader media environment that they're raising their kids in, especially African-American and Hispanic parents, most of them feel like they're managing to cobble together the tools they need to do a pretty good job of monitoring the media their own children are exposed to, at least while they're at home. They think their kids' media use is an important issue. They believe that media has a real effect on their kids. A lot of them are using the tools that the industry has made available to

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them, like ratings and advisories, and they appreciate those tools a lot. But they also feel like – especially at least when it comes to television – they'd like to see a little greater support from the industry, particularly through more limits on sex and violence in programming shown during the early evening hours, even if it takes government regulations to get us there.

With that, I'm going to turn it over to the panelists to get their opinions and perspectives on our findings. It's my pleasure to introduce our moderator for today's panel session. Jackie Judd is a former ABC News correspondent who has covered many very important national and international issues for that network, and she is now a vice president of the Kaiser Family Foundation. Please join me in welcoming Jackie Judd.

[Applause]

**JACKIE JUDD:** Thank you and good morning everyone. Tim Winter from the Parents Television Council, I want to start with you. I think the survey has this fascinating finding that in a global sense, parents remain very concerned about media exposure, but when it comes to their own individual children, they have a different view. Their concern has declined over the years, as Vicky pointed out. What do you make of that?

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**TIM WINTER, J.D.:** Well, Jackie, I don't know that I agree with you. First of all, I want to commend Vicky and her team for another superb study. I think that a couple questions really jumped out at me in the data here. One was, as you just suggested, the societal concern. There is a societal concern when they talk about how children in this country are being exposed to too much, 93-percent said either very concerned or somewhat concerned, but the fact that parents are somewhat less concerned than they were a few years ago — I guess they can say that perhaps the sex and violence in the media sucks a little bit less than it used to — is not a solution in my view.

When you look at question number 25, "How concerned are you that your children are being exposed to too much," you're somewhere between 75- and 80-percent of either somewhat concerned or very concerned that their child. In spite of everything they're trying to do, in spite of all the efforts they're trying to make to protect their children, they're still 75- to 80-percent concerned, somewhat or very, to the point that two-thirds of the parents say, "We think we should have more regulation." I think that's really unfortunate.

**JACKIE JUDD:** But still, when you step back from the individual questions and you look at the more general findings and parents' concern about their own children has

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declined, do you think, to a degree, parents are fooling themselves?

**TIM WINTER, J.D.:** I thought that the video clips were very telling. I thought that the focus group comments we just saw are very telling, but I think that is the sentiment of the nation. Parents truly are upset. Are they fooling themselves in that they think they're doing a better job than they are? Perhaps. I think that, Vicky, your study from two years ago where they asked similar questions to children in the 2005 study showed that the children have a slightly different view of what they're able to get away with, but I think that's a sign of the times where you have children that are growing up knowing how to use more technology better than their parents. They are able to find certain ways around certain things. They can go over to Billy's house and see stuff that they can't in their own house.

**JACKIE JUDD:** And that was certainly the view of some of the parents we heard in the focus group.

**TIM WINTER, J.D.:** But the theme here of the data is, I think, extraordinary and it's a demonstration that Americans, parents especially, are concerned, very concerned. This echoes polling that we've done nationally, not just parents, but all Americans.

**JACKIE JUDD:** Vic, did you want to jump in on this?

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**VICTOR STRASBURGER, M.D.:** Yeah, Jackie, I think you're right. Parents are fooling themselves and they're doing it for a good reason, which is called the third-person effect, which we know about from communications research. The third-person effect says everyone thinks the media affects everyone else but themselves. And it is well documented. We've known about it for many years. People sitting in this audience think, "Hey, it's those dumb bozos out there who are being affected by sex and drugs and violence on TV. It's not us. We're smarter." All of us think that way, adults, and I think children do, too. Of course, if you ask parents, "Are you doing a good job in regulating media that your kids see?" They're going to say, "Yes." It's like asking a politician, "Have you ever beaten your wife?" What are you going to say? [Laughter] Two-thirds say they closely monitor what their kids watch, yet two-thirds of teenagers have a TV set in their bedroom according to Kaiser's work.

By the way, I agree completely with Tim. Kaiser is virtually the only foundation that is doing TV research and it does a wonderful job and they are really to be commended. I wish more foundations and more government agencies got into the act. Parents think they're controlling the media. The kids say they're not. If they have a TV set in their bedroom, you're not controlling the media. Two-thirds of

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teenagers, one-half of grade school kids, one-third of small children have a TV set in their bedroom. So I think parents would like to think they're controlling the media, but they're not. I am a so-called media expert and I can tell you I'm one of that 18-percent that feels I'm not doing a very good job, so what does that tell you?

**JACKIE JUDD:** Mike Angus, as Vicky pointed out, before you went into new media, as we old folks call the Web [chuckles], you were on the TV side. I'm wondering what your take is about why parents, to a larger degree, aren't using the tools that have been out there for quite a while now, the TV ratings Vicky described, the V-Chip, et cetera?

**MIKE ANGUS, J.D.:** One of the things that I take from this study, and it's a bit of a different approach, is that I think concern is a good thing. I think it's good that parents are concerned and I can take that concern and reconcile it with them feeling like they're doing a good job. I think we should all, as parents, be concerned about what our children are exposed to and take that opportunity to learn more about what they're being exposed to and to become more involved and engaged and to talk to them about all those issues that they're being confronted with, whether it's on television, on the Internet, at school or anywhere during their day.

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**JACKIE JUDD:** But part of that concern – and I'll move to Jim Dyke now – on the parents is that the television networks may not be policing themselves well enough so, as we saw, a majority support the idea of some government regulation? Have you concern?

**JIM DYKE:** Well, I have a couple of thoughts. I agree with Mike. I think concern is a healthy thing. If you put some of this in context, there are 110 million television households and 35 million of them have children in them. Not all programming is intended for children. Parents ought to be aware of that and they ought to be concerned at what their children are seeing. Sometimes this debate gets a little lost to me. It seems to me the question is, what is the best approach to ensure that children don't see programming that is inappropriate for them? In that context, it also seems to me that for too long we've had sort of a public policy debate that's sort of been ruled by mob rather than reason and thoughtful consideration to solutions.

Is it possible today to say that the tools don't work, that they failed, and that we need government based on the following? Overwhelmingly, 65-percent of parents monitor their children's media use.

**JACKIE JUDD:** Or say they do.

**JIM DYKE:** Say they do.

**JACKIE JUDD:** Think they do.

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**JIM DYKE:** Think they do. If part of what we're going to do with the survey is sort of say, "We don't think these questions are accurate," that's okay, but I think there are [laughter] some other points. They don't think their own children are exposed to a lot of inappropriate content. Parents think they have a lot more influence over the kids than the media does. They have increased awareness of ratings at 81-percent and V-Chip is 70-percent. Nearly three out of four, or 71-percent, of parents who have tried the V-Chip say they find it very useful, a higher proportion than any of the media ratings or advisory systems. So it may not be a perfect system, certainly, but parents who use it like it. To be out there saying that it's broken, it doesn't work, it's useless and government has to step in and take action, I think is a mistake.

**JACKIE JUDD:** I feel like we have a little bit of a Rorschach test going here. Everybody is reading this survey in some different ways. Tim Winter, what's your take, though, on something that we've been talking about so far, that is the challenge of parents getting comfortable and more frequently using the tools that now exist, as opposed to government regulation?

**TIM WINTER, J.D.:** I think that any tool, any resource that helps a parent be a better parent is a good thing. In my home, we have V-Chip. We use the V-Chip on

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television sets. I use channel-blocking devices on my cable box. I have a TiVo in my daughter's bedroom, which is programmed with what's called Kid Zone, which is, I think, one of the best solutions if you're going to have a TV set with your child. It filters out just about everything except for that which you specifically want in. All that put together still has me gripped with fear for what is – again, talking to the social scientists, I've never had a single conversation with anyone who's either a specialist in the field or anyone who's even just a child or family psychology in their own private practice who isn't abundantly concerned with what the impact is on children, even in spite of all these efforts. I think that for anyone to look at the results of this study and say [applause] "We've done our job. I think we have a good situation here," I think is fooling themselves.

**JACKIE JUDD:** Jim?

**JIM DYKE:** Can I just say a couple of things? For one, I'm surprised to hear Tim say he uses these tools. I read repeatedly that the PTC believes the tools are a failure and that they don't work and that we need government to step in and save the day. So I think it is a good thing that you're saying today that –

**TIM WINTER, J.D.:** When did I step in and save the day? Have we ever said that? Name once.

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**JIM DYKE:** You repeatedly call on the government to pass regulation to increase regulation of media content.

**TIM WINTER, J.D.:** Name one.

**JIM DYKE:** But just to finish my point, it is good news that the tools do work and they are a solution, because they are.

**JACKIE JUDD:** But parents in the survey are suggesting that it may not be enough of a solution if such a large number are still looking at government regulation.

**JIM DYKE:** Well, I think two things to that. I saw that the government number was during the early evening hour. That was the question. I think it's important to – and something TV Watch has done fairly in depth and we'll be having a new poll that comes out next week that you can [inaudible] deeper – really present people with the choices. For starters, I would ask, why just early evening? Why not in the morning? My daughter watches TV in the morning. Why not "Oprah" in the afternoon? That had some pretty graphic stuff on it? Why does the question limit it to that? So then, what are the choices?

In today's Kaiser report, I noticed that there was a reference to the PTC Violence Study, something that I found to be extremely subjective in its conclusions. I would like to see some of the polling results that we had from our previous polls, since 92-percent of Americans agree that

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while they don't always like the content of programs they and their families watch, they'd rather make that decision for themselves than have the government make the decision for them. We have a fairly strong body of polling that lays out some pretty clear choices and people seem to take a different approach.

**JACKIE JUDD:** Vicky, do you want to get in?

**VICKY RIDEOUT, M.A.:** Yeah, on a couple of things.

First of all, on the difference between the results that we get between TV Watch and the Kaiser Family Foundation on the issue of whether parents support the legislation and the regulations, I think, with all due respect, I'd pit my question wording against yours for objectivity. I'd invite people to compare the two questions.

I guess I was thinking of playing devil's advocate with you, Jim, just for a second. As I read, for example, the FCC's report to Congress on violence and why they would argue the TV ratings and the V-Chip have failed. I'd put it to you to counter that point of view. I think what they would say if they looked at this is, "Okay, only 16-percent of parents all these years later use the V-Chip. It hasn't budged at all. There has been no increase in the use of the TV ratings and no change in the understanding of the TV ratings, even after the industries public education campaign has been underway, so therefore," and again, I'm just arguing

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devil's advocate from their perspective, "we think that these tools don't work." How would you respond to that?

**JIM DYKE:** If I could just do two things, because your point to the polling is fair and that's why we did another poll and really dove into it more. So, if I can, just to sort of brush that back a little bit, this is a question from a poll we'll be releasing next week. It's an agree or disagree and we tried to make it easy for people to agree, which is, as Victor pointed out, what people typically do. "The current parental controls and ratings systems have failed. It's time for the government to step in and do more." Disagree was 60-percent and agree was 35-percent.

So, again, I think that if you really want to get into how people feel about what the government ought to be doing, you need to really dive into the question some more.

**VICKY RIDEOUT, M.A.:** Well, if I could, I think what our survey shows is a little more nuanced. Give parents credit for a little more nuanced view. They don't think the current ratings have failed. They appreciate them and plenty of them use them. At the same time, the reality seems to be they still support thinking the industry should do a little more. That's how I read those findings.

**JIM DYKE:** In the early evening hour is what the question says. I mean, I'm just reading the question. But to your second point about what the FCC would say and why

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they might say that the ratings or the tools don't work, certainly that can be their opinion, but based on the polling, there is also a larger context of how people control their media. We sort of dismissed earlier the fact that parents are monitoring their media, but they're also using DVRs, DVDs and other technologies. I think just because people aren't using the available technologies does not mean that the system is a failure. Certainly, we have to do more to educate parents so that they know that they have these tools. It's an important step.

**VICKY RIDEOUT, M.A.:** But do you believe that the tools need to change and, if so, how?

**VICTOR STRASBURGER, M.D.:** Absolutely and I think part of the problem is whose government is going to step in? If you ask the current government to step in, I'd say, "No, thank you." If we ask a future government to step in - Al Gore, for example, was a very key influence on developing the TV ratings in the first place. They did not go as far as he wanted them to go. The American Academy of Pediatrics and I specifically were involved with those ratings. They did not go as far as we wanted them to go either. The ratings systems are a mess. They are a mess. The TV ratings are voluntary. The video game ratings are voluntary. The movie ratings are done in high secrecy. If any of you have seen the recent movie on that, this film is rated NC-17 and it's a

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wonderful movie. We need a universal ratings system and the American Academy of Pediatrics has come out strongly in favor of that, as have a number of studies and academics. Parents really want a universal ratings system. You can say that's government regulation to insist that we have that. Would that be so awful?

**JACKIE JUDD:** Jim? [Laughter]

**JIM DYKE:** If you want to have a conference on ratings, let's do it. But, to me, that's not the debate that's taking place right now. By the way, Victor, I think you make my point very well. By the subjective nature of government, you may have a lot of confidence in a future government. I don't. I'm not certain what it'll be. I have confidence in educating parents because I don't think government can do this job, even if we get to a place where they're empowered to do it.

**JACKIE JUDD:** Underlying our conversation this morning, of course, has been this question of what is the responsibility of media, in terms of doling out - I'm not quite sure what the right phrase is - sex and violence in any kind of media? Mike, what's your view of what the responsibility is?

**MIKE ANGUS, J.D.:** The responsibility of media in doling out the sex and violence? I think I would phrase the

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question a bit differently and look at it as, what do we need to do?

**JACKIE JUDD:** You're not the first person to say that this morning. [Laughter]

**MIKE ANGUS, J.D.:** I look at what tools we're providing to the parents. Everyone has talked about the V-Chip failures and one of the things I take away again from the study is that I'm encouraged by what our efforts on the MySpace site have been to empower parents and to educate them about what tools are available for them on the internet and to engage and participate in their kids' online lives. I think that providing them with additional tools to do that and to be more astute about what's going on - we're releasing, in connection with the next school year, a parental software tool called, for now, Zephyr [misspelled?]. Zephyr will allow parents to install it on their computers and know whether or not their children are using MySpace and, if so, what their account name is and what age they're representing themselves to be. One of the mothers from the study had said that she found out that her son set up an account through a relative and misrepresented himself as 17. This software tool would allow parents to see that automatically to know, for example, if they do go to Billy's house and to log into their account and then subsequently change their age. So that's something that the tool is going

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to allow parents to do. Again, it will foster the dialogue, which we feel is the most important aspect of online safety, to have the kids talking to their parents about it.

**JACKIE JUDD:** When you were developing this new software, what considerations were in play to make it easy for parents to use?

**MIKE ANGUS, J.D.:** We had a number of focus groups on our own to reach out to parents and find out what it is they want and need. There are plenty of software tools out there. I think a number of the folks from the study used them to allow them to very closely monitor everything that is going on on a computer, for example, such as what sites they're going to. You can get into even more depth and read messages. This is something that was designed to be very simple, very clean and also to allow other sites to participate, so if Yahoo chooses to join into this endeavor, they can add Instant Messaging and you can find out what Instant Message services your child is using. It's very simple, it is very easy to use and it is designed in an open way so that other services can participate. It's going to be made available free.

**JACKIE JUDD:** I'm wondering if there's anything for the traditional TV industry to learn from what's happening on your front. Does anybody want to take that?

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**VICTOR STRASBURGER, M.D.:** I think, overall, if the entertainment industry would simply realize that it has a public health duty – way back when in 1932 the public owns the airwaves and they are leased back to the networks to produce programming in the public's best interests. That is the FCC act that established television in the United States. Are the networks doing that? Are they doing that? I think they need to recognize they have a public health responsibility. Hollywood needs to recognize that. The amount of smoking in movies has gotten completely out of control and it's a powerful influence on teenagers. Hollywood and the networks need to understand that media work as a kind of super-peer. We all acknowledge the influence of peers on kids. The media are a super-peer. I think if they did that, we wouldn't be talking about government regulation as much. I think when you go to Hollywood and you say, "Look, we have some concerns. There is too much smoking in the movies, too much violence." They say, "First Amendment. Don't come near us." Nobody is talking about censorship here. The American Academy of Pediatrics has always been strongly against censorship. We're not talking about regulating media down the N<sup>th</sup> degree. We're talking about common sense.

**JACKIE JUDD:** But everybody's common sense is different. Tim?

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**TIM WINTER, J.D.:** I would like to commend Mike for the efforts that they're taking on MySpace and for the online protections they're trying to put in place. I think that anytime we're talking about television and the Internet today. It's an ever-shifting landscape. We see announcements every day in the newspapers about more and more television content going to the Web. We're not far away from the point where like TiVo and Apple and so forth are doing so that you go out and get whatever you want, any time you want. You get it through your broadband connection. You throw it over onto your screen in your living room and you watch it whenever you want to.

**JACKIE JUDD:** It's on cell phones now, too.

**TIM WINTER, J.D.:** Exactly, so we are headed in that direction. Clearly, the courts have said there is a different legal standard, in terms of any sort of government involvement, Internet versus public airwaves. Again, I commend the efforts being taken and I only wish that there were more efforts on the broadcast side. When the V-Chip was first discussed, when it was first proposed, the industry barfed. I remember working at NBC when it happened and they were decrying the V-Chip as censorship and now, lo and behold, it's the Holy Grail of protection. The industry found a way.

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Again, I spent most of my career in the industry. I'm still new in this public policy thing. I've only been doing it for four years now. I spent my whole career in the industry. These are my friends. I love them with every fiber of my being, but what they did – not my friends, of course [laughter] – was they found a way to use what was a threat as a Trojan horse. "Hey, we warned you. Hey, we have the V-Chip out there. You have the power to block it, but we're just going to keep sending it out there." They found ways. With the PTC analysis of the ratings system, we found the descriptors – the DL [misspelled?] S and V, which most people can't identify, although I guess half could identify some of them – to be missing between 70- and 80-percent of the time. If they are rating their own programs, if the networks are rating their own programs, the fox is guarding the henhouse there – no pun intended. If the ratings are wrong, the V-Chip can't work. We've had a number of conversations about that. There has to be a more objective standard. There has to be a uniform standard so that people understand the difference between TV-14 in television and PG-13 in the movies. When you actually look at the list of words used in a PG-13 movie today, parents of a 13-year-old child, if they saw those lists, I think they would say, "This isn't really for a 13-year-old."

**JACKIE JUDD:** Vicky?

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**VICKY RIDEOUT, M.A.:** I wanted to actually ask Tim something when we were talking before about what PTC does or doesn't support, in terms of solutions or policy recommendations. I was going to ask you to elaborate on what your position has been on that. In particular, with the ratings, I've read your reports about the failure of the ratings system. Are there any changes that could be made to the ratings that you think might help make them satisfactory to you? For example, if there was an independent board that assigned the ratings, or if there were some kind of uniform standards across networks as to what would get a TV-14 or what would get a V or an S? Would you support them?

**TIM WINTER, J.D.:** I'll go back to what I said in my first comment when I spoke here earlier. Any resource, any tool that is trustworthy, that is real, that is accurate is a good resource for parents. When I go through the supermarket, I can look at the box of Wheaties to see what the ingredients are. Like most people, I can find that helpful. But if it's wrong, how helpful is it? If the ratings are wrong, how helpful are the ratings? I had dinners several weeks ago with some TV network executives that were responsible for broadcast standards, broadcast controls. In listening to them talk about their earnestness, how earnest they are in their efforts, how there is this Chinese wall between programming and how the programmers hate

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the standards people because the standards people are always saying no. I suggested that perhaps they should not have standards inside the company at all, but outsource it and have an objective ratings system. They said, "Oh, no." It's because they don't want to lose the control.

**JACKIE JUDD:** Jim, do you want to jump in on that?

**JIM DYKE:** Again, there are a lot of subjective decisions going on. I looked at the PTC study and I didn't see the ratings of the shows that you cited in the study. They weren't included, so I looked them up. They were all T-14. Of them, seven shows had an L indicators, 13 shows had V, three shows had S, six shows had D. One of the shows had three out of four descriptors.

Look, I'm not saying that that means it's not right for you, because it obviously is. That just means that it's maybe not right for me. That is the problem with all of this. People make subjective decisions about what's right for their family and what their children ought and ought not to see. Are the ratings perfect? Absolutely not. If you set your blocking technology to TV-14, though, none of the shows listed in your report would have been viewed.

**TIM WINTER, J.D.:** Again, look at the industry's attempt to rate their own programs. It was 50-something-percent of parents that could identify what TV-MA meant, but if you said to block TV-MA in your V-Chip in your television

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set, 100-percent of everything on prime time broadcast television comes through. There were 0-percent of mature-rated programs, including some of the most graphic content we have ever seen at the PTC. If you ask these parents that they've talked to whether everything out there appropriate for a 14-year-old, I don't see how you can possibly say with a straight face that there is any level of accuracy with the ratings system.

**JACKIE JUDD:** There's one thing we haven't touched on that I'll ask any of you to respond to. That is, I'm wondering if, over the years that Vicky has done this survey, parents' tolerance for sex and violence has changed, if the threshold is now different, if what was unacceptable 10 years ago is perfectly acceptable today? Vic?

**VICTOR STRASBURGER, M.D.:** You're damn right it has. [Laughter] Yeah, there's something called ratings creep that Kim Thompson at Harvard School of Public Health has noted in movies. I think it exists. Just look at what's on television. I consider myself a fairly moderate person and I am amazed at the use of words on TV that I never heard when I was growing up, and I would have had my mouth washed out with soap if I had used them. They are becoming commonplace. I think what happens, again, is a research term that I'll use, it's called desensitization. As people hear things more often, see more violence, see more sex, they are desensitized

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and it takes more and more to get a reaction out of them.  
We're all being desensitized.

**JACKIE JUDD:** I wonder if that may account in part for the finding related to a parent's concern about their individual child, because the threshold is just lower.

**VICKY RIDEOUT, M.A.:** I think it's possible there is a generational change going on. It's possible it's desensitization. It's possible it's just that the younger generation has a different opinion as well. I was just going to comment that with regard to television, what strikes me from the survey and from the focus groups that we did is that where this issue is of most concern is with the tweens. It's not with the 15-year-olds and it's not with the little kids. With the little kids, parents feel like there are a few networks out there and their kids know what they are. I tell them they can watch this channel or that channel and it's all going to be kids' shows. By the time the kids are 15, they can watch whatever they want, for the most part, they just want to keep them away from the most salacious content on a premium cable channel, for example. But it's the 10-, 11- and 12-year-olds where I think there are the most interesting issues. These are kids who are kind of straddling childhood and teenage-dom themselves, so when we asked parents what their favorite video games were, you'd hear "Rugrats" and "Grand Theft Auto." [Laughter] If you asked what their

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favorite TV shows were, they'd say "Malcolm in the Middle" and "CSI." The kids' tastes are kind of straddling these two worlds. Parents aren't really sure what's appropriate for kids that age. Those are the parents who are most likely to use the V-Chip, by the way. It's not the littlest kids and it's not the older kids, obviously, but it's those parents. Nearly one in four parents with kids that age will use the V-Chip. A lot of those kids like TV-14 shows, so it's TV-14 where the issues come in. The thing is the TV show can have different content every week, so the parents are getting a lot of their pressure from some of their tweens to watch these TV-14 shows. So many shows that are on in prime time are TV-14. One week it might be borderline okay and the next week it might be really alarming to a parent. If they set their V-Chip, they constantly have to take it off if they want to let them watch that TV-14 show.

I don't know what the solution is, but I think it's important for everybody, especially in the TV industry, to be thinking about that tween audience and some quality programming for them that parents would approve of and that the kids would be interested in.

**JACKIE JUDD:** Thank you. I have two quick questions on slightly different subjects, and then I want to open it up to the audience. Mike Angus, to you, any surprise in the finding that parents were slightly less concerned about their

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kids' exposure to what's on the Internet than to television? Given all we know about how young kids are now using the new media, did you expect the Internet to be on top?

**MIKE ANGUS, J.D.:** I didn't expect it, but I'm not surprised after reading the report. The reason is that I think parents are aware that they need to be more involved and more engaged. I think that there is a sentiment that it is the Wild West out there. The Internet is international, it's global and there is no effective way — unlike the channels that are coming into your home, where you know what's there and it's programmed by the networks. Here, they can go anywhere in the world and the parents are, by nature, going to be more engaged. They're going to be talking to their kids more about it. Because of that, we need to provide them with the tools. I think they do understand the need to be educated themselves about how all of it works.

**JACKIE JUDD:** Okay. And to you, Vic, if you can reflect for a moment or two on the question that Vicky talked about towards the end of her presentation, about how parents link watching TV to kids being overweight, but they don't see concerned about food advertising on TV. The Academy has called for a ban on junk food advertising, so what do you make of the fact that parents don't seem so concerned?

**VICTOR STRASBURGER, M.D.:** We have not done a very good job, I think, of educating parents. They are still more

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concerned about sex than they are about violence. I found that interesting in your report, Vicky. They've always been more concerned about sex than they are about violence. Every other Western country knows that media violence is more damaging to kids than sex on TV, every other country and every piece of research says that. Yet, parents are more worried about sex. They're almost as worried about bad language as they are about violence. We have not done a good job of educating parents.

The media clearly contribute to obesity. There are about 15 or 20 studies that show that. There is a wonderful study that says if you simply decrease the amount of TV time, you decrease obesity, just cut the amount of TV time. The American Academy of Pediatrics says no more than two hours a day of entertainment screen time. Kids spend six hours a day with all media combined and three hours a day with television. In my office, I see obese teenagers and kids every clinic, every week. It has really gotten to be a problem. We see babies drinking Coca-Cola in bottle, in baby bottles. We've got to do something about this. This is an urgent public health crisis and it means not advertising junk food to kids, especially kids under the age of eight, who have no intellectual capacity to understand what advertising is all about. The Federal Communications Commission said that 25 years ago.

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**JACKIE JUDD:** Questions to the audience – if you could wait to get the mic, stand up and identify yourself and your affiliation so that our viewers on the web will know who you are. The gentleman right there in the brown jacket?

**DOUG LEVIN:** Good morning. My name is Doug Levin. I'm with Cable in the Classroom, the cable industry's education foundation. My question really is about chart eight. We were talking about differences in parent attitudes and behaviors based on the age of their children, but clearly there are other things going on with parents. Here, chart eight is about the racial/ethnic background of families and their different opinions. I'd love some comment from the panel about those differences, maybe why they think they're happening and what the implications of those might be.

**VICTOR STRASBURGER, M.D.:** I think there needs to be more research on this. What I can tell you is that African-American families are onto something. African-American teenagers are more resistant to cigarette advertising, for example. They smoke at lower rates because of that. There is something. We need to study ethnic differences and racial differences about how families look at TV. There is something protective in African-American families. I think you're seeing it in this study, and we've seen it in other studies. I think it's great. I want to know how to bottle it.

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**JACKIE JUDD:** Jim or Tim, do you want to take that on?

**JIM DYKE:** To be honest, I'd have to refer to the doctor or to Tim.

**JACKIE JUDD:** Vicky?

**VICKY RIDEOUT, M.A.:** Well, one thing that I can speculate is that kids from African-American homes spend a lot more time watching screen media than other kids, so that may be a reason that there's greater concern on the part of their parents. I don't know.

**JACKIE JUDD:** Who has another question? Yes, the gentleman in the blue shirt in front.

**DOMINIC PERRY:** My name is Dominic Perry [misspelled?]. I'm with a group called the Coalition for Independent Ratings, and we bring together a group of organizations that are creating their own ratings outside of the industry and trying to provide a resource. I don't think the study asked about parents' interest in independent ratings. I'd be interested to hear any of the panel talk about how open do you think they would be, and what role do you see independent ratings potentially playing in this conversation? Perhaps increasing folks' interest in the V-Chip, since parents are saying they're not that pleased with the TV parental ratings.

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**JACKIE JUDD:** Tim, you guys don't provide independent ratings per se, but you provide a lot of reviews on your Web site, right?

**TIM WINTER, J.D.:** As an organization, we actually watch every hour of prime time broadcast television programming and a lot of original cable programming. We record every instance of sex, violence, profanity, every advertiser and we make that information available to the public, hopefully allowing them to make a more informed choice for their families. You can go to "TV Guide" and see what the plot is, but at the PTC's Web site, you can see what type of content you're likely to see in that program.

Is it independent? Well, I guess it's certainly our look on things. We try to be as objective as we possibly can be. We have very open criteria, in terms of how we rate certain words and certain scenes. If death is depicted, how is it depicted and so forth? We have a simple traffic light – red, yellow and green – for sex, violence, profanity and then overall. Again, anything that the industry can do to step up and help – the NRA just helped to pass a gun control bill in Congress. If that's possible, I believe that the industry can come to this table with Mike and be part of the conversation and a better solution, as opposed to wrapping themselves in the flag and hiding behind what I think is reality here.

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**JACKIE JUDD:** Tim, who actually evaluates the shows? And who created the standards?

**TIM WINTER, J.D.:** We have a research staff here in our Virginia office that records and monitors everything. They're trained. Again, it's a powerful database tool with basically any possible sex, violence, profanity, disrespect for authority or disrespect for religion identified as best as we can. We're always adding new categories of content as they become available. We never had incestuous necrophilia as a topic in our database until a couple years ago when the FX Network put that on there. It's as objective as we know it can possibly be. We're trying to always improve our research. We've actually recently hired a PhD to run our research department and we're looking forward to him tweaking the system as well.

**JACKIE JUDD:** I was going to ask Dominic, how many independent ratings systems are out there, and do you have any sense of how many parents are using them?

**DOMINIC PERRY:** On our Web site, we try to collect and list every independent organization that we can find as doing ratings. Right now, we have over a dozen different organizations. Quite honestly, most of them are small. They're fledglings and it's a new industry. We see it as something that's rising as parents begin to look out and try

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to find other resources, precisely as in this conversation.

How can they supplement and how can they find tools?

**JACKIE JUDD:** Is there anything common from one organization to the next that you've been able to spot?

**DOMINIC PERRY:** The one thing that I think, at a very broad level, is there seems to be an agreement across the ratings systems that the three main areas you want to get to are profanity, sex and violence. In some form or another, those seem to be the basic things. What we were hearing more and more, as Vic talked about, is that smoking is becoming more and more of an issue and something that our groups are hearing. Do you have anything on smoking? Do you have a way to help us filter on that? Those would be the basic areas?

**JACKIE JUDD:** Thank you. A question on this side, the lady in the middle here.

**ANGELA MICKALIDE:** Good morning. I'm Angela Mickalide with the Home Safety Council. To what extent do children understand the ratings? Have any studies been done in this area? It occurs to me that as my children became tweens - they're now older teens - they were watching television by themselves. So is this an opportunity for parents to have discussions with children about what the ratings mean, do the kids understand it and can they self-monitor?

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**JACKIE JUDD:** Interesting question. Vicky, do you want to take that?

**VICKY RIDEOUT, M.A.:** Yeah, we haven't studied that in a long time. We did, a number of years ago, do a survey of kids about the TV ratings system. I can tell you from the focus groups that I do that I think a lot of kids understand them and are aware of them, perhaps even more so than the parents are [chuckles]. I've heard of a number of instances that their kid tells them that this show is rated such and such, "Can I watch it?" Or even, "I probably shouldn't watch it." So I have heard of that happening.

**ANGELA MICKALIDE:** As a parent of teenage boys, I would be concerned that if my kid saw a rating, it would induce them to want to watch it. [Laughter]

**MALE SPEAKER:** There is research on the movie ratings, and kids definitely know the movie ratings. If you have an 8-year-old and he or she wants to go to a PG-13 or R-rated movie, I have to say I go to movies a lot. Every time I go to an R-rated movie, there is a 5-, 6- or 7-year-old – at least several – sitting in the audience, and I cannot believe it. I cannot believe it. I want to know why and there is no research on that. Why do parents take their kids to movies that are inappropriate for them?

**VICKY RIDEOUT, M.A.:** Because of the high cost of babysitting. [Laughter]

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**JACKIE JUDD:** Exactly. A question in the back there.

**STEPHEN BALKAM:** Stephen Balkam with the Family Online Safety Institute. Earlier, several members of the panel almost yearned for a universal rating system and, in fact, what we are hearing is that there a dozen or perhaps more of them out there, so perhaps that is an unattainable Holy Grail. Perhaps what we're looking for is a universal labeling system. Ratings, after all, are subjective evaluations of content, usually age-based. Whereas, labeling systems – a bit like the food labeling system – is more of an objective description of content and you could use that as sort of a sort of framework or a foundation for many different ratings systems because, quite frankly, the idea of a universal ratings system that works across television, across movies, across games and the Internet seems an unattainable goal. I just wanted to get your reaction to that.

**JACKIE JUDD:** Can you give us an example of what you mean by labeling?

**STEPHEN BALKAM:** Well, my own experience with the ICRA [misspelled?] system, which is 46 different categories based in areas to do with nudity, sex, language and violence, but also alcohol, tobacco, gambling and a various number of things. Basically, it says that it either has this kind of partial nudity or it doesn't. It has this kind of profanity

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or it doesn't. It has an on/off kind of radio button selection. It is an attempt at being a taxonomy, if you will, an objective description of content without any subjective overlay as to whether or not it's appropriate for a certain age range. Sorry, the last point about that is the reason is that it has to work internationally. We developed this system for use on the Internet because the French consideration about nudity, for instance, is very different from what it is here.

**JACKIE JUDD:** Jim, do you want to respond to that, react to it?

**JIM DYKE:** Not really. [Laughter] I don't think I'm smart enough to follow the guy. Maybe universal ratings are a little over my pay grade. I do think there seems to be a consensus on the panel maybe and from some of the questions in the audience that the current ratings system is not useful or is deceiving. I have a different take on that.

**VICKY RIDEOUT, M.A.:** Excuse me, Jackie? I just wanted to say that we've just been joined by Commissioner Deborah Tate from the Federal Communications Commission and she wanted to come up and share a few thoughts with us.

**JACKIE JUDD:** Excellent. Welcome, Commissioner.

[Applause]

**DEBORAH TATE:** Thank you all so much. I'm sorry that I couldn't be part of the panel. I was actually mentoring

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young women this morning. I'm glad to see so many of you all here.

Again, I just want to thank Kaiser for the significant part that they play, both in Washington and across the country, as we've talked about before. Even though I think everybody expressed their desire not to have the government involved in regulating this area, I share that same belief. We would hope that the voluntary efforts of the industry would come forward and would move us faster and more quickly to try and resolve some of these problems.

I do think it's interesting that, no matter what the statistics are, this is the number one issue – when I go home or when I'm on the road at the grocery store, working out or running – that people stop and talk with me about, kind of under the whole purview of positive programming, if you will.

One of the things that I wanted to comment on, because I did look at it and I thought it was just fabulous that 41-percent – and this is one of the highest statistics, actually – of parents are using the controls to block access to web sites. I think that's so important as we move forward because, as you all know, for our kids and certainly the next generation, it's all going to be a screen, no matter if it's this big in their hand or if it's that size screen. I think that that is something that is really good news that is in this report.

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I guess the other thing that I wanted to talk a little bit about – and somebody mentioned the international – is whether it is in the advertising, where Britain just banned advertising to children, or in Brazil where they banned trans fats, which also brings up childhood obesity. I think that we, here in America, want the industry and parent's groups like Kaiser and all of those that you all represent here to come together. That's why we've been working so hard with our task force on childhood obesity. It's just one more example of how we have to work together. I applaud all of you all who are here.

I have said before that I hope we'll get to more balanced messaging. Again, I think that it is really helpful to have scientific research and it's really helpful to have statistics, but I think that we all recognize that there are some problems. All of those of us here working together can help try and solve those problems. I think all of you all for your efforts and I look forward to working with each of you all in the future, as well as those of you who all are here today. Thank you again for the passion that you have for children, be they young children, tween or teens. Thank you all.

[Applause]

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**JACKIE JUDD:** Is there anyone in the audience that wants to respond to what Commissioner Tate said or follow up with a question? Yes, the gentleman up here.

**ROBERT KESTEN:** Robert Kesten, Center for Screen-Time Awareness. Basically, what the Commissioner just said is very nice. I serve on the task force. But the reality is that research has been in all the countries that have now banned advertising to children – Canada, the UK, Scandinavian countries – and they've done a lot of this research and they know that balanced messaging doesn't work and all this other stuff doesn't work. The reality is that we put too much pressure on parents, but then again, not enough pressure on parents to do what's right. Not everybody has to be a parent and not everybody should be a parent. The reality is that that is tough, but our government always looks for Band-Aids, rather than for real solutions, so we're going to end up with a task force that only comes part of the way, a government that only comes part of the way and nobody is going to accomplish anything. The industry can do an awful lot more. MySpace may be doing a lot, but I get all these e-mails from people on MySpace who say, "Go to my Web site where I can be completely naked, because MySpace won't let me do that." And that's going to every, single kid out there. So there needs to be a lot more done in places that promote themselves as

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meeting grounds for children. There is just way, way too much accessibility.

In Germany, middle-schoolers were downloading snuff films on their cell phones. That's not broadcast. That's not anything. As the Commissioner said, it's about the screen. Really, the only way to deal with this is to limit screen time because less exposure is better. If you're not going to get the healthy, educational content, you're better off really knowing to turn it off. That's really the responsibility of all of us helping us to understand how to use the technology, rather than letting the technology use us.

**JACKIE JUDD:** Commissioner, do you want to respond or comment, follow up?

**DEBORAH TATE:** I'm a lot more optimistic. I hope the task force will make some difference and I hope that this will just be a starting point this week. I think most everybody saw the announcement by Kellogg about both their nutritional standards and their advertising, so we hope that the rest of the industry will continue to take efforts like that. I think that it is always a balance and it's a tough balance. We have 10 million obese children or teens in this country. It's a national health epidemic. I think every one of you who represents any group can do something. I spoke with the pediatricians about becoming more involved on

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Capitol Hill. Obviously, Congress become very involved in both the obesity issue and the violence issue. I don't want to leave anyone under the impression at all that we're not going to enforce the law. We have laws the Congress passed in certain authority and, in fact, we will be revisiting some of the issues that were part of the children's TV settlement that also move us over talking about screen time and all the different screens that children see, whether it's violent programs or advertising for unhealthy foods. I'm pressing onward. I'm more optimistic, but thank you for you comments.

**JACKIE JUDD:** Vicky?

**VICKY RIDEOUT, M.A.:** Yeah, I had a question actually for Mike.

**JACKIE JUDD:** I think he wanted to get in there, actually. Go ahead, Mike.

**MIKE ANGUS, J.D.:** If I could take that one, too, I think that limiting screen time is a parental decision, as I assume you advocate. I think that one of the things we're missing are the positive things that television and the internet can provide. In this study, 59-percent said that the internet was overall a positive experience for them. There are a lot of positive things on the internet and on MySpace. For these age groups that we're talking about, the 14s, that's an important developmental point in their lives and, like it or not, many parents are no longer comfortable

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allowing their kids to go to the pizza parlors, the skating rinks or the malls by themselves and they find themselves unable to really engage in that one-on-one peer communication, which is essential to development at that age. The social networking aspect of MySpace and other sites really has served to replace that for many kids. This is where they find their voice. This is where they talk to people and express themselves. It's finding new music, of course, but it's also engaging in political dialogue, it's participating in our impact channels for social causes and things like that.

Just more broadly speaking, you made a comment about the content that's available. That is one of the things that are of great concern to us. We don't want those kids of things, such as pornography and links to it on our site. When we find them, we delete them. We have links on all of our pages for people to report inappropriate content. In addition, we provide a lot of safety features specifically designed for the younger users. For 14- and 15-year-olds that use the site, we have automatically private profiles. No one else can see them unless they're a friend. That cannot be changed. Now, if you're 15 or 17, you can change that from private to public. But, again, that's part of the dialogue with the parents and is a decision that each parent

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makes with their child at the appropriate for my 14-year-old may not be appropriate for your 14-year-old.

**VICKY RIDEOUT, M.A.:** My question was going to be was the thing that surprised me the most in this survey I think were the findings about the monitoring of the internet and how confident parents felt about their ability to know what their kids were doing online, because I really did have the idea that they felt like they were just kind of in the dark. To see that more than eight in 10 parents whose kids use social networking sites say they've ready their profile and they know what a Buddy List is and they've checked the Buddy List – in the focus groups they really seemed to be aware of, "Yes, I know who this kid is who's on my kid's Buddy List," and so on and so forth.

I was just wondering, in terms of any research that you guys have done, whether this tracks with what you find, in terms of parent involvement or are kids pulling the wool over their parents' eyes in this way? Is there something more that you would suggest parents should do that they might not be doing?

**MIKE ANGUS, J.D.:** I guess to go back to one of the points that someone made earlier, can we kind of do that and say we're done now? I think the answer to that is clearly no. This is an ongoing process and it's an evolving process. As the media changes and as our kids' interaction with that

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media changes, we have to change the tools that we're providing to parents. The parents have to, in turn, change their level of engagement, involvement and communication. The most important thing, again, is for us to educate the parents and let them know what's out there, whether it's about the V-Chip and how to use it properly or about the internet and our Zephyr tool that's coming out and how to use that.

**JACKIE JUDD:** I think we have time for one more question from the audience, this lady here, and then I'll turn to Vicky for a final thought.

**ALICE CAHN:** Hi, Alice Cahn from Cartoon Network. I was really interesting in this last conversation, Vicky, because what we've been looking at is the intergenerational nature of media use. If you look at some of the research that Dorothy and Jerome Singer did at the Yale Child Study Center when they looked at the value of intergenerational play, what we know about parents' use of media with their kids is if you sit next to your child and watch the television program or play the video game, they get more out of it, whether you have a conversation about it or not, it's the value of your time with your child. I'd love to see the next round of Kaiser research really look into this nature of intergenerational media use, especially around video gaming. Victor, you brought it up. Mike, you've brought it up.

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We've been looking at how we have a generation of parents now who grew up as gamers, who are now playing games with their kids. That's very different than 10 years ago or 20 years ago. This has been a terrific conversation. Thank you very much.

**JACKIE JUDD:** Thank you. Vicky? Or did one of you want to respond?

**MALE SPEAKER:** I agree. The problem is that, for example, with TV, Annenberg has some research that only 25-percent of parents co-view with television. I can tell you it's incredibly pro social. When my son was smaller, I wanted to read the C.S. Lewis *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* to him. He said, "No way. No how." We watched a video, a one-hour video of *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* and we read all six or seven books after that. There are amazing pro-social aspects to media, and we have not done a good job of telling parents they need to co-view, that is a kind of sex education, that it is a kind of anti-violence education. If you're sitting with your child and you see something violent and you can, "Well, what do you think of that? Is there another way to resolve that problem besides a fistfight or a shootout?" Parents trump media.

**VICKY RIDEOUT, M.A.:** In response to that, Alice, when it comes to television, there has been this trend toward, I guess, the nicheification, if you will, of

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programming. That has some pluses and some minuses. The pluses might be that there's more content that's appropriate for different, specific age groups of kids. The minus is that everybody is in their own room, watching their own programming. I think something like 60-percent of households have three or more televisions sets. I think the reality is that, when it comes to television, viewing is splintering, not coming together. The internet, obviously, it's a lot harder to do together and I don't think that's something that happens a lot. With mobile media, that's something where it's the personalization of media use and the privatization of media use, which does make parental monitoring more challenging. There is some cozying up together to watch television together once a week. When co-viewing takes place, in my experience, it's been more likely to be the TV-14 show that the parent wants to watch and they kind of say, "Well, my kid is bugging me. They want to hang out with me. I'm going to stretch the rules and let them watch this program with me because I really don't want to miss 'Gray's Anatomy' or 'Desperate Housewives,'" or whatever it is today.

I think where it's most interesting is with the video games. I think you're really right. It's inherently a two-person activity. This generation of parents has grown up with video games. Something I've heard a lot in the focus groups is that that is a way for dads and kids to socialize

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together. I hear a lot of moms say, "That's the positive think I see in the video games. It really provides an activity for my husband to do with my kids together and they really relate on it." So, for better or worse, I think that's one role that media are playing.

I basically just want to thank all of the panelists for an engaging and lively conversation, thank Jackie for an excellent job moderating, and thank all of you for coming today. Thanks.

[Applause]

[END RECORDING]

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