

MM 93-48

From: Ken Wood <kenwood@ti.com>
To: A16.A16(kidstv)
Date: 9/19/95 8:59am
Subject: re: Rules for Children's Television

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From: Dr. Kenneth W. Wood
5000 N. Colony Blvd
The Colony, TX, 75056

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I am a former PTA President and Boy Scout leader, so I've worked with children. I also tutor, and have taught evening classes at UTD.

There is good educational programs on TV. 70% is on PBS. The rest is Discovery Channel and Learning Channel, but not all viewers have cable. There is no reason commerical stations couldn't have good, and profitable, educational programs as well.

There are some points of the current proposal that bear comment:

1. Labeling a program as educational is not adequate. I suggest that ANY program labeled as "educational" must, at a minimum, have on its REGULAR staff personnel clearly qualified to be preparing educational material, AND their job must be in direct support of preparing and evaluating the educational content of the program. In addition, it would be NICE, but not mandatory, if some independent panel could certify a program as educational. Clearly, current programs such as "Sesame Stree" and "Newton's Apple" would qualify. But we need some way to keep mindless cartoons from being pawned off as "educational" when clearly they have entertainment value only.

2. "Sponsoring" is a mistake. If every station in a given market dumped its share onto, say, one station, the letter of the law may have been fulfilled, but in practice one station will carry all those shows. The body of evidence that shows competition breeds success is too large to list here. However, if ALL stations are not required to carry their fair share, and therefore have to compete to make the programs a success, nothing will get better. Co-operation or coloboration, however, is a good way for stations to work together and still compete in the market place. With the cost benefits of one station or company producing a show syndicated across the nation, children's programming can be just as profitable as any other without any need to using sponsoring.

Thank you for soliciting input, especially in electronic form, since those of us active in our communities have little time to provide feedback to these kinds of issues.

- Ken Wood

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Ken Wood (kenwood@ti.com, MSG ID PDQB) 462-3250
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I am Pentium of Borg; Division is useless; You will be approximated!

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From: <KennyC1234@aol.com>
To: A16.A16(kidstv)
Date: 9/19/95 3:51pm
Subject: MM Docket 93-48

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MM Docket 93-48

This correspondence is in response to your desire to meet the "educational and informational needs of children" through programming that furthers "the positive development of the child in any respect.", as mandated in the Children's Television Act of 1990.

I am certain that there may be many areas where you will be able to focus on the goals of the legislation. One particular audience that has been virtually neglected in children and youth oriented programming is the gay, lesbian and bisexual youth.

I clearly understand the controversy of this issue. The chief concern of addressing the gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth in a non-judgmental fashion is that heterosexual youth may be influenced or recruited into the homosexual orientation. Organizations, generally considered to be extremists, even go so far as to deny that gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals exist without being recruited, that sexual identity is a personal choice. Scores of studies, even one's that were initiated to support this idea, argue against the notion that sexual identity is simply a choice we make.

Despite the numerous arguments against so-called gay-positive programming, the fact remains that depression and suicide is increasing among adolescents.

Recent reports from government studies show the great need for education and support for children and adolescents dealing with sexual identity questions.

I feel certain that you have been bombarded with information from both sides of this argument. I am sure you have been informed, in detail, of ideas and opinions on this subject.

Laying all arguments and personal opinions aside, I ask you to consider the many, many young hate crime, major depression, and suicide victims that have been documented sexual identity related. One can only imagine how many other undocumented cases exist.

Please objectively review the materials that have been sent to you by the professional organizations on both sides, and make a decision that will facilitate the positive development of children in respect to sexual identity questions.

If I can provide any further information or answer any other questions you might have, please contact me. Thank you for your consideration.

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From: Bennett.Michelle <bennett3@NIEHS.NIH.GOV>
To: kids tv <kidstv@fcc.gov>
Date: 9/19/95 4:25pm
Subject: kids tv

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Dear KidsTV at FCC,

I heard something on the radio about the restructuring of network tv and the requirements for the networks to have a certain number of hours of educational t.v. directed at children per week. The report I heard gave this address and a call for input.

I am the parent of 2 young boys. I think a lot of what is on t.v. does nothing for their creativity, does not spark innovation and does not motivate.

I dont think it is unrealistic to request that the networks devote at least 15 hours per week to educational programming for children. And of course with the hours of this programming set at realistic times. In the age of VCR's and multi-television homes I think most everyone could adjust quite nicely. And the most important part is that the kids would really benefit.

Look to the popularity of Sesame Street (on PBS) as just one of many examples of programming that gets kids thinking. I can imagine how the networks would complain about any time requirment for educational t.v. ... but I hardly think that I am in the minority today. We live in an age of t.v. and like it or not it figures prominently in our children's lives...the least the gov. can do is help us make sure that some of what our kids see on t.v. is good for them.

I appreciate your permitting me to voice my opinion and I look forward to the day when educational t.v. is a part of every networks agenda.

Michelle Bennett

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MM 93-48

From: <B._J._Bryan.WESTINGHOUSE-PGBU@NOTES.compuserve.com>
To: A16.A16(kidstv)
Date: 9/19/95 9:16am
Subject: Children's Programming

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I am writing in response to a news story on National Public Radio. The question was raised "How many hours of public service (especially educational children's) programming should a TV station be required to broadcast in return for having the exclusive use of a frequency in the public spectrum?" I care about this issue because I have two children under five years old.

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I think that they should be required to broadcast at least an hour a day. And not at 0-dark-thirty in the morning either. It should be between the hours of 3:00 and 8:00 PM.

I also see no reason that this hour should be commercial free. There are plenty of advertisers who would be happy to have an audience that consists primarily of children. And if the TV stations and networks whine about being forced to broadcast educational programming, you should tell them that they can give up their license and go onto cable. They have made a hole mountain of money using the public air ways; it's time that they gave the public back something better than Opra and Hard Copy.

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From: Marge Hermans, Juneau <JSMCH@acad1.alaska.edu>
To: A16.A16(kidstv)
Date: 9/18/95 11:12pm
Subject: Comments on Childrens TV Act

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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September 18, 1995

TO: Federal Communications System kidstv@fcc.gov
RE: Comment on Children's Television Act

Dear Folks,

I do not think dumping gratuitous sex, violence, and raunchy language onto public airways does anything but **debase** our children and our society. Little of the sex, violence, and cheap innuendo on TV today are necessary to artistic expression.

I value free speech very highly. I also feel there is a point where free speech begins to conflict with a widely-agreed-upon understanding of the public good. Too much commercial TV programming has reached that point. Although our concepts of freedom assert that adults must be allowed to choose to watch whatever programs they wish, I do not think American children are adequately protected from the ill effects of a TV marketplace ruled by economic greed and the lowest common denominator of ethical and aesthetic values.

Until enough Americans learn to use their TV controls to advocate for and protect children, and until TV stations will monitor themselves instead of going only for big bucks, I believe the government needs to actively pressure stations to improve.

The Children's Television Act should:

* continue to require a specific number of hours be devoted to high-quality children's programming, and the programs should be shown during the hours children are most likely to watch TV. I do not think 10 hours a week is too much to ask.

[NOTE: There are any number of reputable, widely-agreed-upon standards for "high quality" as regards children. Programming should be required to live up to at least one set of these standards to be accepted as fulfillment of this requirement.]

* restrict programs heavy in sex, violence, and raunchy innuendo to times outside the hours when children are likely to be watching television (preferably limited to very late night hours)

I believe government regulation should only be a last resort, so once citizens learn to take responsibility for protecting children from rotten TV programming, or once the TV industry has found a viable way to regulate itself, I believe these regulations should be removed, and provision should be made for that now.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Marjorie C. Hermans
9630 Moraine Way
Juneau, AK 99801

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