

RE: NOI REGARDING Violent Television Programming  
And Its Impact on Children

Two questions posed in the NOI on this subject are:  
"What can be done to enhance the usefulness of the V-chip?" and "Are there ways to improve the ratings system?"

I'd like to make comments on these questions...

The usefulness of the V-chip could be enhanced by having new all televisions present a V-chip menu when they are first powered up. The menu should ask for the user to enter a password, and then the user can be presented with two options: Set the levels of programming content applicable to their family, or simply deactivate the chip. By going through this process, all new television owners will be faced with making this decision. From my experience, most televisions do not force you through this process.

In regards to improving the television ratings system, I feel an arms-length board needs to be created--not to determine the ratings, but to check frequent samples of broadcasts to see if the ratings agree with average community standards.

As a Canadian, I obviously have no formal rights to intervene with FCC decisions, however I frequently write and comment on media content and its relationship with families. Recent publications that have referenced my work and have interviewed me include The NY Times, St. Petersburg Times (FL), and I write a weekly column for The Parents Television Council.

Thank you.

Rod Gustafson