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Government Assaults Software Developers in Last Minute Bid to Lose Election

According to the Australian¹ the Australian Labor Party have announced that they plan to force app developers to submit games and apps to the censors. The Pirate Party condemns this move as completely unworkable and a direct assault on the software industry.

"With the announcement that the government plans to force app developers to submit their works to the Australian censors, any credibility the ALP have in dealing with the digital environment has been torn to shreds. Apps are globally developed and available. Many developers work from home as a hobby and cannot afford the cost of classification, especially if they need clearance with each country separately as would occur if other countries followed Australia's lead," said Pirate Party Australia spokesperson, Simon Frew.

"Where will they draw the line with the policy?" Frew asked. "If they were to apply it consistently across the entire Internet, it must apply to all Facebook games, flash games, YouTube clips, podcasts and blogs. It puts the same legal classification obligation that currently applies to major media organisations onto individual producers and users, making the costs so prohibitive that most content will become unavailable in Australia."

An app developer, Steve Bian argues, "Many of these games would be G-rated since many are puzzle games or platformers. These games are harmless, and yet they will be hit just as hard as those involving sex and violence and most likely disappear from the Australian App Store due to costs involved. Meanwhile, violent games backed by large publishers will continue to sell. The end result is that we will have fewer non-violent games to choose from, which is counter to the point of the system."

"Many of these apps and games sell for extremely low prices. How does the Government propose that these simple hobbyists gather the required capital to create a simple app or game and release it to the public? It is an absurdity that the Government believes once again that they can apply their bastardised classification scheme to such a dynamic system as the Internet." said spokesperson Brendan Molloy.

"If they think they can classify everything on iTunes without crippling the market, they are mistaken. Consider if they attempted to classify every video uploaded to YouTube. We would be buried in bureaucracy and cost in the name of 'protecting the children'. It's nonsensical."

The Pirate Party proposes the abolishment of the Refused Classification category, and the default classification of all unclassified material as R18+. This is a similar method used by the rest of the world for classification of media.

This policy raises questions as to whether the entire scheme is just a push to raise revenue as part of the Labor Government's continued assault on internet freedom. Molloy concludes, "Let's face it, the ALP have no understanding whatsoever of how the Internet works as a technology nor as an ecosystem. A great big new fail for the Labor Government."

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¹ <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/media/apps-and-games-to-face-censor-says-alp/story-e6frg996-1225905609780>