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News Release

STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL 11AM ON 21 MAY 2008

BBFC DOWNLOAD CLASSIFICATION SCHEME TO INCLUDE THE ADULT INDUSTRY

The BBFC's widely recognised and understood classification system is moving to the world of downloadable films and will include the 'R18' category which covers explicit sex works. The first adult entertainment company to join the scheme is Strictly Broadband.

Launched today, BBFC.online – as the new service is called – covers the full range of BBFC classifications from 'U' through to 'R18'. The scheme is designed to give consumers the assurance they seek when choosing new media content. This is particularly relevant in the area of sexually explicit adult content as the scheme will provide potential customers with guarantees that the content is legal, consensual and non-violent.

Membership of the scheme will also require e-tailers and VoD services to have age verification or gate-keeping systems in place to control underage viewing, and the effectiveness of these will be monitored by the BBFC.

Strictly Broadband has been an active partner during the development and testing of the scheme and is the first adult industry company to join. David Cooke, Director of the BBFC said:

“The Video Recordings Act does not cover the world of downloads so adult content that is not on video or DVD is subject to very little regulation. There are all sorts of potential problems associated with the downloading of sexually explicit material including the possible criminalisation of internet users who download extreme violent pornography, which the BBFC refuses to classify. Online material rated 'R18' by the BBFC will comply with the same guidelines and laws as apply to 'R18' videos and DVDs sold in licensed sex shops. Companies like Strictly Broadband that sign up to the BBFC.online scheme are sending a clear message to their potential customers that they are acting responsibly to ensure that their product is properly labelled and subject to effective gate-keeping measures. ”

Jerry Barnett, Managing Director of Strictly Broadband said:

"As the UK market leader in internet-streamed adult entertainment, we're pleased to be founder members of the BBFC Online scheme. It has been difficult in the past for legitimate companies to sell adult video on the internet, as the law is far from clear in this area. We welcome the clarification that the new scheme will bring to the business, which will allow the further development of a strong and legal British adult entertainment industry, and give British consumers the ability to decide whether they are buying legal material or not."

Notes for Editors

1. The BBFC's legal advice is that works supplied by 'non-physical' means (eg by streaming or download) are not covered by the Video Recordings Act 1984.
2. Membership of the Scheme is voluntary and by subscription (£900 per annum) and there is no cost to consumers.
3. BBFC.online is 'Platform Neutral' – it is designed to cover all forms of digital content delivery (eg web, set top boxes, hand-helds mobile phones).
4. The Criminal Justice and Immigration Act has created a new offence of the possession of 'extreme violent pornography' – BBFC classified material is specifically excluded under this definition.
5. The contact for Strictly Broadband is Jerry Barnett, Managing Director. Telephone 020 7267 5600. Email jb@strictlybroadband.com

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