



ADVERTISING AND MARKETING GUIDELINES FOR APP DEVELOPERS

For the benefit of consumers, the ESRB encourages developers and publishers to display assigned rating icons, content descriptors, and interactive elements in all advertising and marketing materials that promote rated apps, as outlined below. Upon request by a developer or publisher, the ESRB’s Advertising Review Council (“ARC”) will review any advertisements, marketing materials, and media placements, within 24 hours, free of charge, prior to placement or distribution to the public. To submit materials for review or for questions relating to any of the guidelines detailed below, contact ARC@esrb.org

ESRB Rating Icons, Content Descriptors, and Interactive Elements

- **Rating categories** indicate the age-appropriateness of an app.
- **Content descriptors** indicate the reasons (e.g., Violence, Sexual Content, Language) that an app was assigned a particular age rating.
- **Interactive elements** indicate other interactive aspects of an app (e.g., if an app displays the user’s location to others or allows the user to make in-app purchases).

Hi-res versions of English, bilingual English/Spanish and English/French-Canadian ESRB rating icons and a full list of content descriptors and Spanish and French-Canadian translations are accessible [here](#) (User Name: esrbicons / Password: 4321). ESRB icons are trademarks owned by the Entertainment Software Association and cannot be altered in any way.

Display of Assigned Rating Information

For product-specific web pages/sites, most types of ads (e.g., in-app, online, print, out-of-home, email marketing messages, ads on mobile devices) and games sold online or on a mobile device:


The rating icon, and, if possible, the content descriptors and interactive elements should be displayed and be large and clear enough to be legible to most consumers.


For online display, the rating icon should be at least 53 pixels high.


A line or space should separate the content descriptors and interactive elements as shown in the two examples on the right.


Content descriptors and interactive elements should not be intermingled.


RATING CATEGORIES


EVERYONE
ESRB


EVERYONE 10+
ESRB


TEEN
ESRB


MATURE 17+
ESRB


ADULTS ONLY 18+
ESRB

CONTENT DESCRIPTORS (EXAMPLES)

Language
Suggestive Themes
Violence

INTERACTIVE ELEMENTS

Shares Location
Users Interact
Digital Purchases
Unrestricted Internet



Cartoon Violence
Comic Mischief

Users Interact



Cartoon Violence
Comic Mischief

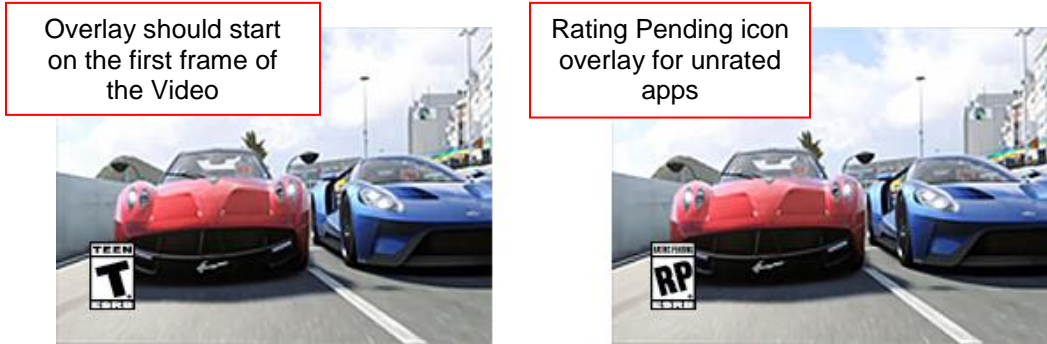
Users Interact

For smaller advertisements (e.g., in-app and small banner ads) - The rating information can be displayed in text (e.g., “ESRB: TEEN - Comic Mischief / Users Interact”).



For Trailers and Videos (hereinafter collectively defined as “Videos”):

If a video is suitable for a general audience (see Responsible Ad Content on Page 4), the rating icon should be overlaid on the lower left or right hand side of the screen at a minimum of 15% of the height of the screen over the *first* two seconds for Videos 15 seconds or less or over the *first* four seconds for Videos longer than 15 seconds, as follows:



OR

The rating icon and content descriptors should be displayed on a slate at a minimum of 50% of the height of the screen *prior to the start* of the Video for at least two seconds, as follows:



If a trailer or video is **NOT** suitable for a general audience and promotes an app rated Teen, Mature, or Adults Only, the rating icon and content descriptors (as seen above) should be displayed on a slate at a minimum of 50% of the height of the screen *prior to the start* of the video for at least two seconds.

Age-gates and Age-Restriction: All Videos that promote apps rated (or anticipated to be rated) Mature and that are not suitable for a general audience should be placed behind an age-neutral, cookie'd age-gate (see the example to the right) or age-restricted to viewers who are 17 years of age or older. All Videos that promote apps rated (or anticipated to be rated) Adults Only should be age-restricted to viewers 18 years of age or older regardless of content.





For Television Ads:

The rating icon should be overlaid over the footage at a minimum of 15% of the height of the screen for at least two seconds for ads 15 seconds or less or four seconds for ads longer than 15 seconds. The icon overlay should be placed either at the start or at the end of the ad.

A voiceover should be synchronized with the display of the applicable rating icon as follows (pre-recorded voiceovers are available [here](#)):

- For ads 15 seconds or less, the applicable “Rated _____” voiceover (e.g., “Rated Everyone” or “Rated Mature”) should be used.
- For ads longer than 15 seconds, the applicable “Rated _ for _____” voiceover (e.g., “Rated E for Everyone” or “Rated M for Mature”) should be used.

Please Note: *All TV ads should be suitable for a general audience (see Responsible Ad Content on Page 4).*

Responsible Placement of Ads Promoting Apps Rated Teen, Mature, or Adults Only

Ads that promote apps rated (or anticipated to be rated) Teen, Mature, or Adults Only should not be directed to consumers for whom the promoted app is not rated as appropriate.

The following guidelines will assist advertisers in responsibly placing in ads and marketing assets in media for apps rated (or anticipated to be rated) Teen, Mature, or Adults Only. The below percentages should be determined by using audience composition data from a syndicated data source for the applicable media. If you do not have access to audience composition data or for best practices for determining compliance with the below guidelines, see contact information on page 4 for guidance.

- **Television advertisements, trailers, videos, and online banner ads** should not be placed on television programs or websites where 35% or more of the viewers are under 13 years of age if they promote an app rated (or anticipated to be rated) Teen, 17 years of age if they promote an app rated (or anticipated to be rated) Mature, or 18 years of age if they promote an app rated (or anticipated to be rated) Adults Only.
- **Print ads** should not be placed in publications where 45% or more of the readers are under 13 years of age if they promote an app rated (or anticipated to be rated) Teen, 17 years of age if they promote an app rated (or anticipated to be rated) Mature, or 18 years of age if they promote an app rated (or anticipated to be rated) Adults Only.

Advertisements on mobile devices, social media, and streaming sites that promote apps rated (or anticipated to be rated) Mature should not be targeted to users under 17 years of age (18 years of age for advertisements that promote apps rated or anticipated to be rated Adults Only).

Email marketing messages that promote apps rated (or anticipated to be rated) Mature should be directed solely to persons who have registered as 17 years of age or older, or 18 years of age or older for messages that promote apps rated (or anticipated to be rated) Adults Only.

Cross-Promotion: An app that is rated (or anticipated to be rated) Mature should not be cross-marketed with other apps, products, brands, or events intended for persons under 17 years of age (18 years of age for apps rated or anticipated to be rated Adults Only).



Responsible Ad Content

An ad should accurately reflect the nature and content of the app being promoted and the rating it has been assigned (i.e., an ad should not mislead the consumer as to the promoted app’s true character).

For example: If an app does not contain blood or suggestive themes, then the ad should not portray any type of blood or suggestive themes.

Ads cannot glamorize or exploit the ESRB rating in order to market an app.

For example: Ads should not contain phrases like “A Teen rating has never been pushed this far”.

Paid ads (i.e., banner ads, TV spots, pre-roll, or any video or trailer for which the publisher has provided money, make goods, barter, or any other consideration of value for placement) should be suitable for a general audience and should not contain any content that is likely to offend a reasonable parent or consumer.

For example: Gratuitous violence, blood, characters being shot, violent blows to the head; weapons pointed at head, depictions of fatal injuries and/or suicide, strangulation/choking, impaling; wounds inflicted with swords/knives, dismemberment; decapitation; torture; full or partial nudity; any type of sexual activity; overly sexualized depictions of body parts (e.g., breasts, buttocks); illegal drugs; child or animal abuse; molestation; rape; irresponsible behavior (e.g., underage drinking, drinking and driving); women harassed, beaten, bound or gagged; people on fire; offensive language or gestures; profanity; hate speech; racial epithets; defecation; urination; sacrilege; offensive depictions of physically or mentally disabled individuals. Ads should also not exploit politically or socially sensitive topics (such as terrorist acts), leverage a tragic event, or promote criminal or fraudulent behavior.

Contact ARC@esrb.org:

- For guidance on how to display ESRB rating information on advertising, websites, marketing materials, TV spots, or Videos that promote an app before it has been assigned a rating.
- For questions with regard to any of the above guidelines.
- To submit materials for review prior to placement or distribution to the public.
- For access to the ARC Manual, which contains more detailed guidelines concerning appropriate ad content; targeted marketing for apps rated Teen, Mature, or Adults Only; age-gates for videos promoting apps rated Mature or Adults Only; and display of rating information when advertising, promoting or selling apps that have been rated by the ESRB.
- For rating display guidelines for storefronts.