

CERO Code of Ethics

Article 1 (Objective)

The Computer Entertainment Rating Organization (hereinafter referred to as "CERO"), a specified nonprofit corporation, hereby provides the CERO Code of Ethics (hereinafter referred to as "these regulations"). CERO aims to fully respect freedom of expression in pursuit of the sound growth of the computer entertainment culture and sets as its objective that the development, publication and sales of console games should satisfy the ethical standards expected by society and should be sustained. CERO reviews console games to evaluate whether or not they are suitable in the light of ethical standards expected by society, classifies the games that have been evaluated as suitable into specified categories, implements an "age-appropriateness rating," and prescribes criteria for said rating and other pertinent regulations.

Article 2 (Scope of Application)

1. The rating by CERO shall apply to console games that are sold in Japan, but not to computer and video games for business use.
2. Regarding online games for console, the rating by CERO shall apply only to the framework thereof, but not to variable components such as bulletin boards that can be modified by users.
3. The rating by CERO shall apply to all the expressions stored in a game including the theme concept system, hidden commands, and tricks, wherein "system" means the architecture, framework and mechanism thereof.
4. The rating by CERO shall apply to goods contained in and illustrations displayed on the box of console games, but not to promotional items, magazine advertisements, TV commercials, etc.
5. In these regulations, "console games" are the games that are developed and sold to function on the console platforms or services listed in Appendix 1.

Article 3 (Reviewing Categories)

1. CERO classifies console games broadly into "game-series apps" and "educational/database-series apps" and reviews them separately.
2. Requesters for the rating by CERO shall specify under which category they wish their products to be reviewed.
3. "Educational/database-series apps" will not be subjected to the age-appropriateness rating; however, it shall not include the expressions set forth in Article 7 (including Appendix 3) and shall comply with educational and database purposes.
4. "Game-series apps" are console games other than the ones of educational/database-series apps.

Article 4 (Reviewing of Game-series Apps)

1. In reviewing game-series apps, it will be determined whether or not the banned expressions set forth in Article 7 (including Appendix 3) are present in the game being reviewed, and, if present, the game will not be assigned a rating. For those that do not include the banned expressions, their expression types and expression degrees with respect to the items listed in Appendix 2 will be comprehensively evaluated, and one of the following rating categories (age classification) will be assigned to the game:
 - A: for all ages
 - B: for 12-year-olds and above
 - C: for 15-year-olds and above

D: for 17-year-olds and above

Z: for 18-year-olds and above only

2. The rating criteria set forth in the preceding section by CERO shall comply with the internal Regulations stipulated separately.

Article 5 (Reviewing of Educational/Database-series Apps)

The reviewing of educational/database-series apps shall constitute evaluating whether or not the game being requested will satisfy the classification requirements set forth in Section 3, Article 3.

Article 6 (Rating Result)

1. CERO shall notify the requester of the rating result in accordance with the rating procedure prescribed by CERO. The requester, when selling or using console games, shall print the rating classification category and rating (age-appropriateness category) mark assigned by CERO in a way specified separately on the rating-requested object. This, however, does not apply to a case where the requester presented in advance a legitimate reason for not printing the rating as such and CERO has approved it.
2. CERO, upon determination that a rating-requested object should not be assigned a rating because the game contains the banned expressions set forth in Article 7 or due to the classification judgment according to Section 1, Article 4, or when it determines that an object does not comply with "educational/database-series" classification, shall notify the requester of the rejection reason in writing.

Article 7 (Banned Expressions)

1. The banned expressions prescribed in Appendix 3 shall not be used in console games.
2. Improper discriminatory expressions shall not be used in console games. Such improper discriminatory expressions include but are not limited to the following:
 - (i) Improper discriminatory expressions based on race, creed, sex, occupation, religion, family/social background, physical/mental condition, living condition, etc.
 - (ii) Improper discriminatory expressions that are directed to socially vulnerable people such as the elderly, infants, the physically disabled, and the mentally disabled.
 - (iii) Expressions that unreasonably defame or slander individuals, corporations or organizations and harm their honor or dignity.

Article 8 (Revision)

1. The board of directors of CERO may revise these regulations (including Appendices) as needed.
2. A revised CERO Code of Ethics shall be notified to members and publicized thoroughly.

[Supplementary Provision]

These regulations shall be put in effect as of October 1, 2002. Revised on October 17, 2002; effective as of October 18, 2002.

Revised on December 13, 2002; effective as of December 14, 2002.

Revised on October 16, 2003; effective as of October 17, 2003.

Revised on December 18, 2002; effective as of December 19, 2003.

Revised on June 24, 2004; effective as of June 25, 2004.

Revised on December 16, 2004; effective as of December 17, 2004.

Revised on March 24, 2005; effective as of March 25, 2005.

Revised on July 21, 2005; effective as of July 22, 2005.

Revised on November 24, 2005; effective as of November 25, 2005.

Revised on February 23, 2006; effective as of February 24, 2006.

Revised on July 13, 2006; effective as of July 14, 2006.

Revised on November 30, 2006; effective as of December 1, 2006.

Revised on March 29, 2007; effective as of March 30, 2007.

Revised on July 26, 2007; effective as of July 27, 2007.

Revised on November 29, 2007; effective as of November 30, 2007.

Revised on March 27, 2008; effective as of March 28, 2008.

Revised on April 24, 2008; effective as of April 25, 2008.

Revised on July 21, 2011; effective as of July 22, 2011.

Revised on September 22, 2011; effective as of September 23, 2011.

Revised on June 19, 2014; effective as of June 20, 2014.

Revised on December 20, 2014; effective as of December 21, 2014.

Revised on December 17, 2016; effective as of December 18, 2016.

Revised on February 16, 2017; effective as of February 17, 2017.

Revised on October 16, 2020; effective as of October 17, 2020.

Revised on March 21, 2025; effective as of March 24, 2025.

Appendix 1List of Platforms/Services to Be Covered

SEGA Corporation	Dreamcast
Sony Interactive Entertainment Inc.	PlayStation PlayStation 2 PlayStation Portable (incl. PSPgo) PlayStation3 PlayStation Vita PlayStation 4 PlayStation 5
Nintendo Co., Ltd.	NINTENDO64 GAMECUBE GAMEBOY GAMEBOY ADVANCE NINTENDO DS (incl.DSLite, DSi, DSiLL, 3DS, New NINTENDO 3DS) Wii, Wii U Nintendo Switch Nintendo Switch 2
BANDAI NAMCO Entertainment Inc.	Wonder Swan
Microsoft Japan Co., Ltd.	Xbox Xbox 360 Xbox One Xbox Series X S
Personal Computer Manufacturers	Personal computers (Compliant OS: Windows, Mac)
Cellphone Manufacturers	Cellphones, Smart phones (CompliantOS: Android, iPhone, etc.)
Cloud Game Service Providers	Cloud Game Services

as of March, 2025

Appendix 2

List of Expression Types and Expression Degrees

1. Expression types

-- Sex-related expression type --

"kiss," "embrace," "underwear exposure," "sexual intercourse," "nudity," "sex-evoking expression," "adultery," "defecation," "sex entertainment industry," "swimwear/costume"

-- Violence expression type --

"description of animated blood," "description of mutilation/body-cutting," "description of corpse," "killing/wounding," "horror," "description of versus beat 'em-up game/fighting"

-- Antisocial act expression type --

"description of crime," "controlled substances such as narcotics," "abuse," "illegal drinking/smoking," "illegal gambling," "incest, sexual crime, etc.," "providing/soliciting prostitution," "suicide/self-injury," "human trafficking, etc."

-- Language and ideology-related expression type -- Improper expressions related to language and ideology

2. Expression degrees

- Whether "direct" or "indirect"?
- Whether "positive" or "negative"?
- Whether "necessary" and "spontaneous"?
- Whether "thematic" or "background" with respect to the main theme?

It is to be reviewed whether or not the content may cause an unreasonable disgusting feeling or may be antisocial or sensational from the viewpoint of ordinary people.

Appendix 3

"Banned Expressions"

-- Sex-related expressions --

1. Expression of genitals and parts thereof (including pubic hair)
2. Expression of a sexual intercourse or sexual-intercourse-associated embracing, caressing, etc.
3. Expression of urination, defecation, etc., intended to enhance a sex drive or arouse a sexual stimulus.

-- Violence expressions --

1. Expression of animated blood that gives an extremely cruel impression.
2. Expression of mutilation/body-cutting that gives an extremely cruel impression.
3. Expression of a corpse that gives an extremely cruel impression.
4. Expression of killing/wounding that gives an extremely cruel impression.
5. Expression of horror that gives an extremely cruel impression.

-- Antisocial act expressions --

1. Expression for the sake of a mass murder/violence that is not necessarily related to the theme or concept.
2. Expression affirming that controlled substances such as narcotics and psychoactive drugs are used illegally not for a substantial purpose such as medical treatment.
3. Expression of an abuse scene assuming that the abuse can be justified.
4. Expression affirming that a crime can be praised or fostered.
5. Expression affirming providing/soliciting prostitution and expression of child prostitution.
6. Expression of incest, expression directly described about a rape and a quasi-rape, sexual act against the party's will, and expression affirming such acts.
7. Expression explicitly recommending drinking/smoking by minors.
8. Expression affirming and recommending suicide/self-injury.
9. Expression affirming adultery.
10. Expression recommending human trafficking.

-- Language and ideology-related expressions --

1. Regarding banned language on broadcasting, discriminatory language, and unpleasant language in general, phrases that happen to defame or derogate, including direct or indirect expressions and metaphors, shall not be used. But a case may be excluded, in which the expression in question is considered circumstantially or contextually necessary in the light of common sense.
2. Expression and language that incite discrimination.
3. Expression that regards an existing individual, country, national flag, race, ethnic group, religion, ideology, or political organization as an enemy or expresses disdain against any of them, and that unilaterally criticizes and defames.

-- Theme, concept, system --

Unnecessarily excessive focusing on sex, violence, antisocial act, and language/ideology.

-- Supplementary --

1. In addition to the respective banned items described above, rating may not be assigned based on newly introduced banned items deemed necessary due to social changes.
2. The language of the banned expressions above shall be interpreted to comply with the purposes of newly introduced "Z" category.