

Research cont.

The research updates information collected for a 2001 study by the BSA, *The Younger Audience*, and takes into account the significant changes that have taken place in how children use traditional and new media.

"Not surprisingly, the research reveals that children are interacting with new media, like cell phones, MP3 players and the internet, in high numbers. However, there are marked inequalities in access to new media, with Pacific and Māori children, in particular, falling behind Asian and Pākehā children.

Eighty-nine percent of Asian children and 77% of Pākehā children use a computer at home with access to the internet compared with just 53% of Māori children and 38% of Pacific children.

The latest study also indicates that the 'bedroom television culture' identified in the 2001 study has grown.

"Twenty-seven per cent of children now have a television in their bedroom compared with 18% in 2001. And now a significant number of children also play computer or video games and use their cellphones while in their bedrooms." Dominic Sheehan said children were not the passive viewers that some complainants made them out to be. They were clear about what media content was inappropriate or upset them and had opinions about it.

"As in 2001 their concerns about TV centre on violence, sexual content and bad language. With new media they tend to be concerned about sexual content on the internet and bullying via cell phones.

"Some of the children we interviewed had experienced these things personally but the research suggests these worries might also be influenced by their parents' concerns."

Most pleasing in the report, perhaps, was the existence of rules and protections that families had for viewing and media use. Parents tended to put rules on the use of most media, especially for television and the internet.

"More than half the children surveyed said they mainly used the internet while they were alone. It is important then that children are fully equipped in how to keep themselves safe while online.

"Media literacy, the ability to access and understand media in order to use it effectively, is becoming increasingly important. New media especially brings new challenges for both children and their parents. It is clear from the report that Kiwi children need continuing information and support so that their media experiences can be safe and productive ones."

Election Programmes Code

The Election Programmes Code review, necessary because of changes to the Broadcasting Act made in conjunction with the newly passed Electoral Finance Act, has been completed. The revised code comes into effect on 1 June 2008, and is available in print and from the BSA's website from that date.



New Practice Notes about Liquor and Violence Standards

Two new practice notes are on the BSA website, www.bsa.govt.nz. One discusses the liquor standard and the other the violence standard. You can find all practice notes under the Codes and Standards menu. Practice notes are designed to help complainants and broadcasters understand the approach the BSA is likely to take in considering issues about standards.

QUARTERLY

NUMBER 38, MAY 2008



Research launched that shows how Kiwi kids use the media

New BSA research, launched by the Minister of Broadcasting the Hon Trevor Mallard at a small function in Auckland this week, shows that New Zealand children are savvy media users. While there has been an explosive growth of media devices in homes in the past few years, the research shows that television remains the principal form of entertainment for children.

The research, *Seen and Heard*, was carried out by Colmar Brunton. It involved interviewing more than 600 children aged between six and 13 and their primary caregivers. The focus of the research was how New Zealand children use and respond to media including television, radio, the internet, and cell phones.

Ninety nine percent of children watch TV programmes, 84% play computer or video games, 62% use the internet and 42% use a cellphone.

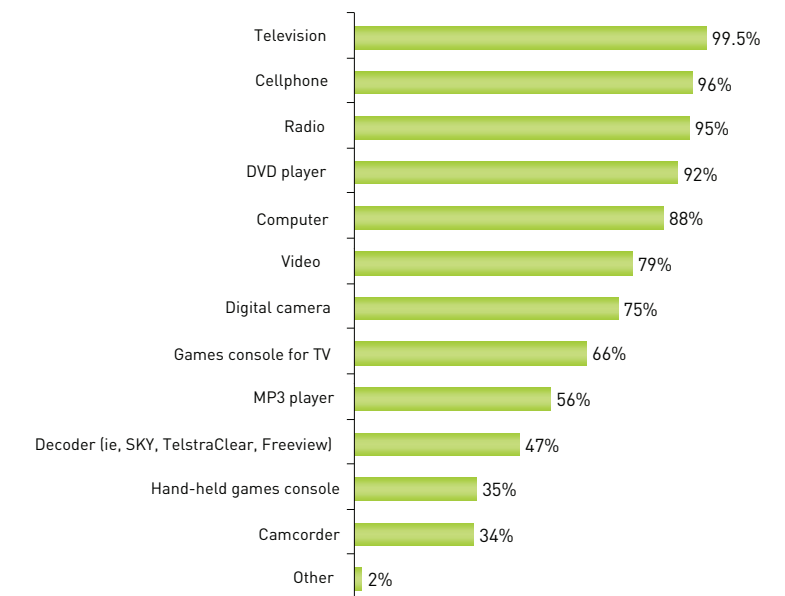
When it comes to television, both parents and children have a high awareness of classifications and warnings on programmes and use these as a guide to whether a programme will be suitable for children.

However, parents' awareness of the 8.30pm 'watershed' is much lower and has fallen in the past six years. Less than half of parents know that 8.30pm is the time when TV programmes that are not suitable for children start to screen.

Chief Executive Dominic Sheehan said "This is significant because the research also shows that children are frequently watching television after 8.30pm, when programmes not suitable for children are screened."

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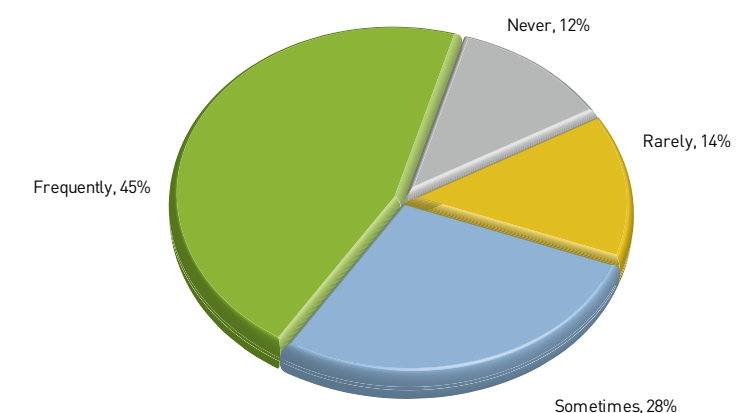
Media in homes of New Zealand children aged 6-13 yrs



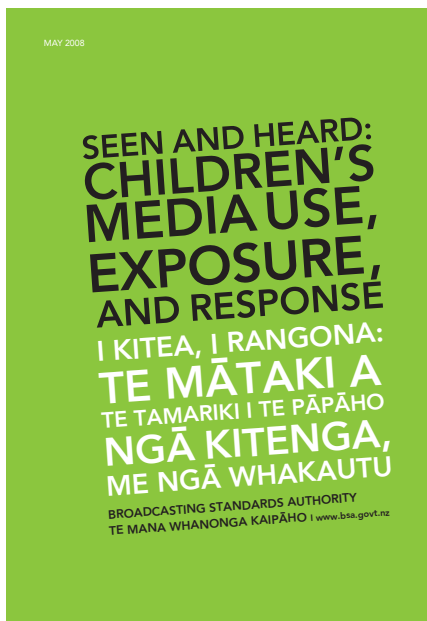
Source: Q2a (Parent)
Base: All households (n = 604)

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Frequency of parents' use of classifications and warnings to guide their children's viewing behaviour



Source: Q3k (Parent)
Base: All parents with children who watch television (n=600)



Copies of the research are available from the publications page of www.bsa.govt.nz. For a printed copy, while stocks last, please email trishc@bsa.govt.nz

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0800 Number

The Broadcasting Standards Authority's free phone number is

0800 366 996

A recorded message explains the complaints process, and a connection through to the office is provided.

DECISIONS

The BSA issued 36 decisions between January and March 2008

Decisions of interest included the following:

Balance, accuracy, fairness

Three items broadcast on Radio New Zealand National on 20 April 2007 centred around the assertion that the Wellington City Council was 'looking at scrapping its free weekend and evening parking in the city'. The items included interviews with several Wellington motorists and retailers, who reacted negatively to the idea of charging for parking on weekends, and a representative from the Retailers' Association who opposed the plan.

The Wellington City Council complained that the items were unbalanced, inaccurate and unfair. It said that councillors did not approve, nor did they consider, any proposal to remove weekend parking or to increase weekday meter parking. A report prepared by a consultancy firm, which was attached as Appendix 3 to the Council's Draft Parking Policy, recommended that the Council consider removing up to five percent of on-street metered parking space and charging for the currently free evening and weekend parking. However, the Council said that this report had been attached as background only, and was not part of what councillors were asked to consider or approve.

The Authority upheld the complaint that the items were inaccurate. It considered that listeners would have been left with the impression that there was a possibility that free weekend parking would be 'scrapped', and that this was part of the policy under consideration. The Authority accepted the complainant's evidence that this was not the case.

The Authority also found that the items were unfair to the Council as listeners would have been left with a negative impression of the Council and its plan to charge for weekend parking.

The Authority ordered Radio New Zealand to broadcast a statement summarising its decision. The broadcaster is appealing the Authority's order. **Decision ref. 2007-056**

Good taste and decency – *Californication*

The first episode of a programme called *Californication*, a black comedy about a self-obsessed novelist named Hank, was broadcast on TV3 at 9.30pm on 8 November 2007. The opening scene showed Hank going into a church and talking to a statue of Jesus about his writer's block. A nun appeared and after listening to him talk about his troubles, offered him a 'blow job'. The nun then approached Hank and stood in front of him. The sound of a zipper was heard, and with the camera view level with Hank's chest, the nun descended out of view. Hank put his hand out to block the statue's view, and said 'Sweet baby Jesus, Hank is going to hell'. It was then revealed to viewers that Hank was dreaming, and he was shown waking up in bed with the woman who was dressed as a nun in his dream.

The episode contained frequent use of swear words. It included a scene where a woman, who Hank later discovered was 16 years old, punched Hank in the face twice while they were having sex. Hank also spoke crudely to a woman he had just met.

Bob McCoskrie on behalf of Family First, and four others, complained that the programme breached standards of good taste and decency.

The Authority declined to uphold the complaints. It noted that the programme was rated AO, preceded by a verbal and written warning, and broadcast at 9.30pm. In addition, the Authority considered that the title of the programme, *Californication*, and media publicity prior to the broadcast, indicated that it was likely to contain challenging content.

In the Authority's view, the church scene was used for dramatic effect and, while it did have some shock value, it was not explicit or gratuitous. It noted that the other sex scenes were matter-of-fact rather than titillating, and were important to the programme's storyline. No full-frontal nudity was shown.

The Authority also concluded that while *Californication* did contain challenging language, it was not excessive or gratuitous given the nature of the programme, the storyline, and the type of characters.

Decision ref. 2007-129

Social Responsibility – The Edge

An item called 'Win Dom's Money', broadcast on The Edge at 8am on 9 August 2007, involved a radio personality called Chang being dared to drink a shot glass of glass cleaner for \$60. Before the hosts allowed Chang to drink the shot, they phoned the National Poison Centre (the Centre) and told the Centre employee that someone had ingested a shot glass-sized quantity of glass cleaner. The employee gave medical advice about what to do and made it clear that it was not a life-threatening situation. After the call, Chang proceeded to drink what he thought was glass cleaner. The hosts then revealed that they were playing a prank on Chang, and the shot glass really contained a harmless blue-coloured energy drink.

The office manager at the National Poison Centre, made a formal complaint alleging that the item had breached standards of fairness and social responsibility.

The Authority upheld the complaint that the prank was socially irresponsible stating that the hosts had misled the Centre staff member and wasted the Centre's valuable time and resources, solely for the purposes of entertainment. It considered that the broadcaster's view that the prank was 'not necessarily a bad thing' ignored the reality that prank calls to the Centre could potentially cause a delay in staff being able to deal with real life-threatening emergencies.

The Authority noted that The Edge is targeted at an audience of 10 to 29-year-olds, and that the broadcast took place at 8am when children would have been among the audience at home or in the car on the way to school. It considered that many of the station's listeners would not have been able to understand the potentially serious consequences of making a prank call to an organisation such as the Centre. Because the prank was portrayed in a positive and humorous light, the Authority found that many of the station's target audience would have considered that it was acceptable and 'cool' to replicate the hosts' actions.

The Authority ordered RadioWorks Ltd to broadcast a statement summarising its decision. **Decision ref. 2007-102**

Appeals and Other Court Proceedings

Wellington City Council and Radio NZ

RNZ has appealed the WCC decision (2007-056) – see summary.

RNZ are appealing the BSA's requirement that they publish a statement summarising the decision on the grounds that the BSA failed to give proper reasons for the order and that the order was inconsistent with other BSA decisions.

Du Fresne and Canwest TV Works

The High Court has ruled on the appeal of the Du Fresne and Canwest TV Works decision.

The decision (2007-017) concerned an interview Canwest TVWorks conducted with JS, a committed mental patient. JS' doctor brought the original complaint. The BSA found that JS could not consent to the interview and so Canwest TVWorks had breached the privacy standard of the free-to-air broadcasting code.

On appeal, Justice France quashed the BSA's decision.