



December 8, 2008

## **ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN URGES PARENTS TO CHECK VIDEO GAME RATINGS WHEN PURCHASING GAMES AS GIFTS**

Chicago — With the holiday shopping season in full swing, Attorney General Lisa Madigan today urged parents to check the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) ratings before purchasing computer or video games as gifts for children and teens to make sure that the games are age and content-appropriate.

The ESRB ratings on computer and video games are designed to provide information about the game's content, so consumers can make informed purchase decisions. ESRB ratings have two parts: the rating symbols suggest age appropriateness for the game, and the content descriptors indicate elements in a game that may have triggered a particular rating and may be of concern. For example, the content descriptors note if the game contains sexual content, violence, or profanity. The ratings indicate, for example, whether the game is suitable for everyone, children 10 and older, or teens 17 and older.

"Parents need to know what's in the games their kids will be playing, just like they know what movies they see and the books they read," Madigan said. "The ESRB age ratings and content descriptions provide parents with details that are helpful in deciding whether a game is suitable for their children. I encourage parents to consult available resources like the ESRB so they know what type of games they are purchasing."

"More than 40 percent of Americans expect to purchase a computer or video game this year and a majority of those games are purchased during the holiday shopping season," said Michael D. Gallagher, CEO of the Entertainment Software Association (ESA), the trade association representing U.S. computer and video game publishers. "As parents choose titles from the broad range of entertainment choices our industry offers, we urge them to use the ESRB ratings system to ensure the games they purchase for their children are appropriate."

"As a parent, I know how important and challenging it is to manage the media that our children consume. Luckily, video games are actually among the simplest to control," said Patricia Vance, president of the ESRB. "The ESRB ratings are easy to understand, and provide valuable guidance about the age appropriateness and content of video games."

Madigan also reminded consumers about her office's resources to help them purchase safe products this season, including her annual *Safe Shopping Guide*, which contains color photos and descriptions of hundreds of products recalled during 2008, including toys, jewelry, furniture and clothes. Consumers can obtain free copies of the guide by calling Madigan's Recall Hotline at 1-888-414-7678, visiting any of the Attorney General's main or regional offices, or downloading a copy online at [www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov](http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov).

"Parents should know that there are resources like these available to them this holiday season to ensure the products they purchase are safe and appropriate for their children," Madigan said.

"For additional information about Madigan's consumer product safety work, visit [www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov](http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov). To learn more about the ESRB ratings on computer and video games, please visit [www.esrb.org](http://www.esrb.org).

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