

SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR DECISION

Under the Films, Videos, and Publications Classification Act 1993 (FVPC Act)

HEADNOTE

Title of publication:	Call of Duty: Black Ops IIII
Other known title(s):	Call of Duty: Black Ops 4
OFLC ref:	1800367.000
Medium:	Computer Game
Classification:	Objectionable except if the availability of the publication is restricted to persons who have attained the age of 16 years.
Descriptive note:	Contains violence and horror.
Display conditions:	None

Call of Duty: Black Ops IIII is an online first person shooter in the renowned *Call of Duty* franchise. The first of the series without a single player campaign, *Black Ops IIII* comprises traditional team-based competitive multiplayer, a co-operative Zombies mode, and the new Blackout mode. Blackout is a *Call of Duty* take on Battle Royale, scattering reimagined remnants of popular multiplayer maps across a wide landscape. Players can queue up solo, or in two or four player teams, to gather weapons, equipment, and vehicles and battle it out with many other players for the number one spot. The Zombies mode is an up to four-player co-op battle against increasingly challenging waves of undead. There are three different pulp-adventure themed campaigns, where players kill zombies to unlock new weapons and abilities, to kill even more zombies. Where the Zombies campaigns are set on the Titanic, a decrepit island installation, and ancient arenas, the traditional multiplayer uses more straightforward near-future military scenarios. Two teams battle in various attack & defend, capture point, and score-based modes on a variety of maps. These span from the virtual tourism of a Mediterranean village and the luxury of a country estate, to military installations and war-torn jungles and city streets. In-development versions of the publication were examined on both PC and the PlayStation 4, and is also set to release on the Xbox One consoles.

The game deals with matters of violence and horror.

As a multiplayer first person shooter, the game primarily depicts repetitive infliction of serious physical harm. Using an arsenal of firearms and explosives, players repeatedly kill or are killed by their opponents. These include pistols, sub-machine guns, assault rifles, sniper rifles, shotguns, frag grenades and Molotov's. More exotic weapons can be used depending on the class being played, such as grenade launchers, flamethrowers, and electric-shock weapons. With successful play, bonus 'score streak' abilities can be called in, such as homing missiles, attack helicopters and overhead drones to reveal enemy positions. On death, players are shown the viewpoint of the victorious opponent. At the end of the match a brief recap shows the best play of the game, with momentary slow motion used to highlight the killing shots.

With each hit there is a blood mist effect and directional blood spray. Blood decals also spatter the nearby environment. However, as the time-to-kill is relatively quick this bloody impact is not sustained. It is instead repeated with successive opponents as players swiftly converge on each other in this fast-paced game. Explosives fling bodies through the air, and the use of a combat knife is a simple blood spurt effect. Soldiers briefly scream if engulfed in flames or burnt by radiation weaponry, adding an element of cruelty to the bloody violence. However they are either swiftly killed, or if they kill their attacker, they simply continue on. While there's an associated 'wounding' gameplay element where injured players have reduced health and are unable to heal for a period of time, this is little more than a gameplay conceit.

Horror themes also arise from the Zombies mode, where the undead and monstrous fleshy creatures relentlessly attack the players. They are presented with glowing eyes and missing flesh, lurching with an unnatural gait. However there is an increase in the degree of violence in the Zombies game mode, through decapitation and dismemberment. When attacked with sufficiently powerful weapons, undead limbs and legs can fly off, or heads pop with a satisfying blood burst. While this is a gorier depiction of violent combat, being limited to obviously undead opponents ensures this is not especially realistic, reducing the impact.

All told, *Call of Duty: Black Ops III* is a game comprising of highly repetitive and bloody first person violence, primarily towards human opponents. The violence is satisfying and frenetic, as teams struggle against each other for supremacy. The violence on display is heightened in the Zombies mode with the use of gore and horror themes, though tempered by its clearly unrealistic presentation. While the game presents pro-social elements of co-operation and competition, it also presents the potential to inure its players towards depictions of violence. Moreover, the violence and horror on display is likely to shock and disturb younger audiences. As a result, the unrestricted availability of the publication is likely to be injurious to the public good. Considering this with the right to freedom of expression as set out in the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990, a restriction on the availability of the publication to older teenagers and adults is the lowest reasonable restriction which can be applied in order to prevent injury to the public good.

Note:

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CONSIDERATION SHEET

OFLC ref:	1800367.000
Submission channel:	s12(1)

Title of publication:	Call of Duty: Black Ops III
Other known title:	Call of Duty: Black Ops 4
Medium:	Computer Game
Distributor:	Total Interactive
Country of origin:	United States
Language:	English
Applicant:	Film & Video Labelling Body

Examination transcript No:	
Examination date:	14 August 2018
Other identifying information:	

COMPONENTS OF FILM

Components of film originally examined:

	Components	Running time
Game:	Call of Duty: Black Ops III	
Total running time:		

Components of film excised:

**CONSIDERATION OF THE PUBLICATION UNDER THE FILMS,
VIDEOS, AND PUBLICATIONS CLASSIFICATION ACT 1994 (FVPC ACT)**

Description
<p><i>Call of Duty: Black Ops III</i> is an online first person shooter in the renowned <i>Call of Duty</i> franchise. The first of the series without a single player campaign, <i>Black Ops III</i> comprises traditional team-based competitive multiplayer, a co-operative Zombies mode, and the new Blackout mode. Blackout is a <i>Call of Duty</i> take on Battle Royale, scattering reimagined remnants of popular multiplayer maps across a wide landscape. Players can queue up solo, or in two or four player teams, to gather weapons, equipment, and vehicles and battle it out with many other players for the number one spot. The Zombies mode is an up to four-player co-op battle against increasingly challenging waves of undead. There are three different pulp-adventure themed campaigns, where players kill zombies to unlock new weapons and abilities, to kill even more zombies. Where the Zombies campaigns are set on the Titanic, a decrepit island installation, and ancient arenas, the traditional multiplayer uses more straightforward near-future military scenarios. Two teams battle in various attack & defend, capture point, and score-based modes on a variety of maps. These span from the virtual tourism of a Mediterranean village and the luxury of a country estate, to military installations and war-torn jungles and city streets. In-development versions of the publication were examined on both PC and the PlayStation 4, and is also set to release on the Xbox One consoles.</p>

Section 3(1): the Subject Matter Gateway	
Does the publication describe, depict, express, or otherwise deal with matters such as:	
—	Sex ¹
✓	Horror
Horror themes arise from the <i>Zombies</i> mode, where the undead and monstrous fleshy creatures relentlessly attack the players. They are presented with glowing eyes, and lurch with an unnatural gait. Some have missing flesh, and can be bloodily decapitated and dismembered in combat.	
—	Crime

¹ Note that a publication can be found to deal with a matter such as sex if (a) the publication is or contains 1 or more visual images of 1 or more children or young persons who are nude or partially nude; and (b) those 1 or more visual images are, alone, or together with any other contents of the publication, reasonably capable of being regarded as sexual in nature. (s 3(1A)).

Section 3(1): the Subject Matter Gateway	
✓	Cruelty
There are brief elements of cruelty with the use of the flamethrower, or radiation weaponry. This is considered with violence below.	
✓	Violence
As a multiplayer first person shooter, the game primarily deals with repetitive violence. This is considered further below.	
—	None of the above, <u>proceed to s 3A and s 3B</u>

Section 3(2): Certain publications are "deemed to be objectionable"	
Does the content of the publication raise any of these issues? If it does, discuss, and conclude whether the publication promotes or supports, or tends to promote or support, that matter.	
—	s 3(2)(a) The exploitation of children or young persons for sexual purposes
—	s 3(2)(b) The use of violence or coercion to compel a person to participate in, or submit to, sexual conduct
—	s 3(2)(c) Sexual conduct with or upon the body of a dead person
—	s 3(2)(d) The use of urine or excrement in association with degrading or dehumanising conduct or sexual conduct
—	s 3(2)(e) Bestiality

Section 3(2): Certain publications are "deemed to be objectionable"	
—	s 3(2)(f) Acts of torture or the infliction of extreme violence or extreme cruelty
✓	None of the above
If the publication promotes or supports (or tends to) any of these matters, could excisions be used to remove the problematic content?	
—	Yes. Consider the rest of the publication under s 3(3) and s 3(4) and discuss the required excisions in the conclusion.
—	No. The publication is deemed to be objectionable. <u>Proceed to Conclusion</u>

Section 3(3): Matters to be given particular weight	
If any of the following criteria apply, discuss in terms of the extent and degree to which, and the manner in which, the publication:	
✓	s 3(3)(a)(i) Deals with the infliction of torture, serious physical harm, significant cruelty
<p>As a multiplayer first person shooter, the game primarily depicts repetitive infliction of serious physical harm. Using an arsenal of firearms and explosives, players repeatedly kill or are killed by their opponents. These include pistols, sub-machine guns, assault rifles, sniper rifles, shotguns, frag grenades and molotovs. More exotic weapons can be used depending on the class being played, such as grenade launchers, flamethrowers, and electric-shock weapons. With successful play, bonus 'score streak' abilities can be called in, such as homing missiles, attack helicopters and overhead drones to reveal enemy positions. On death, players are shown the viewpoint of the victorious opponent. At the end of the match a brief recap shows the best play of the game, with momentary slow motion used to highlight the killing shots.</p> <p>With each hit there is a blood mist effect and directional blood spray. Blood decals also spatter the nearby environment. However, as the time-to-kill is relatively quick this bloody impact is not sustained. It is instead repeated with successive opponents as players swiftly converge on each other in this fast-paced game. Explosives fling bodies through the air, and the use of a combat knife is a simple blood spurt effect. Soldiers briefly scream if engulfed in flames or burnt by radiation weaponry, adding an element of cruelty to the bloody violence. However they are either swiftly killed, or if they kill their attacker simply move on. While there's an associated "wounding" gameplay element where injured players have reduced health and are unable to heal for a period of time, this is little more than a gameplay conceit.</p>	

Section 3(3): Matters to be given particular weight

However there is an increase in the degree of violence in the Zombies game mode, through decapitation and dismemberment. When attacked with sufficiently powerful weapons, undead limbs and legs can fly off, or heads pop with a satisfying blood burst. While this is a gorier depiction of violent combat, being limited to obviously undead opponents ensures this is not especially realistic, reducing the impact.

—	s 3(3)(a)(ii) Deals with sexual violence or sexual coercion, or violence or coercion in association with sexual conduct
—	s 3(3)(a)(iii) Deals with other sexual or physical conduct of a degrading or dehumanising or demeaning nature
—	s 3(3)(a)(iv) Deals with sexual conduct with or by children or young persons
—	s 3(3)(a)(v) Deals with physical conduct in which sexual satisfaction is derived from inflicting or suffering cruelty or pain
—	s 3(3)(b) Exploits the nudity of children or young persons
—	s 3(3)(c) Degrades or dehumanises or demeans any person
—	s 3(3)(d) Promotes or encourages criminal acts or acts of terrorism
—	s 3(3)(e) Represents that members of any particular class of the public are inherently inferior to other members of the public by reason of an characteristic that is a prohibited ground of discrimination specified in s 21(1) of the Human Rights Act 1993

Section 3(3): Matters to be given particular weight

—	The publication doesn't deal with any s 3(3) criteria
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Section 3A:

Does the publication contain highly offensive language to such an extent or degree that it is likely to seriously harm viewers under a certain age? Yes

No

Discuss (including any necessary consideration of offensive language that is not 'highly offensive' or any highly offensive language which is not likely to cause serious harm to young viewers):

The use of highly offensive language was not encountered during examination.

Section 3B:

Does the publication contain any of the following material?

—	Harm to a person's body, including self-inflicted death, self-mutilation or harmful body modification (other than any already discussed under s 3(3) criteria).
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—	Conduct that, if imitated, would pose a risk of serious harm to self or others (other than any already discussed under s 3(3) criteria).
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—	Physical conduct of a degrading, dehumanising or demeaning nature (other than any already discussed under s 3(3) criteria).
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—	Visual images of a person's body that alone or with any other contents of the publication are of a degrading, dehumanising or demeaning nature (other than any already discussed under s 3(3) criteria).
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✓	None of the above
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Section 3B:

Does the extent and degree of the material make the publication likely to cause any of the following harms to young people under a specified age because of their general levels of emotional and intellectual development and maturity?

- Cause them to be greatly disturbed or shocked
- Increase significantly the risk of them killing, or causing serious harm to, themselves, others, or both
- Encourage them to treat or regard themselves, others, or both, as degraded, dehumanised or demeaned.

Discuss likely harm/s or why the content is unlikely to cause these harms:

Submissions & consultations (if applicable)

—	Consultation or enquiries required under s 21
—	Submissions received from interested parties under s 20

Any other information to be taken into account (if relevant)

(e.g. previous OFLC decisions, decisions of other classification bodies, research, books, articles, reviews, etc.)

Conclusion

- In addition to all of the above matters, consider relevant s 3(4) matters: the dominant effect of the publication, character of the publication (including any merit, value or importance), impact of the medium, intended or likely audience, intended purpose, and any other relevant circumstances relating to its use
- Identify any likely injury to the public good from the unrestricted availability of the publication
- Determine the classification, taking into account the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 (NZBORA) and the need to impose the least restrictive limitation on the right to freedom of expression that will prevent injury to the public good

Call of Duty: Black Ops III is a game comprising of highly repetitive and bloody first person violence towards human opponents. The violence is satisfying and frenetic, as teams battle against each other for supremacy. The violence on display is heightened in the Zombies mode with the use of gore and horror themes, though tempered by its clearly unrealistic presentation. While the game presents pro-social elements of co-operation and competition, it also presents the potential to inure its players towards depictions of violence. Moreover, the violence and horror on display is likely to shock and disturb younger audiences. As a result, the unrestricted availability of the publication is likely to be injurious to the public good. Considering this with the right to freedom of expression as set out in the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990, a restriction on the availability of the publication to older teenagers and adults is the lowest reasonable restriction which can be applied. Therefore *Call of Duty: Black Ops III* is classified as objectionable unless its availability is restricted to persons who have attained the age of 16 years.

Classification

R16

Descriptive note to cover: Violence & horror

Excisions (if applicable)

Display conditions (restricted publications only)

Are display conditions necessary? Yes

	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Reason for any display conditions:	

Date 14 August 2018

OFLC Ref 1800367

Title Call of Duty: Black Ops III

Other Known title(s) Call of Duty: Black Ops 4

Medium Console Game

Director (s) —

Producer (s) —

Country (ies) USA

Language (s) English

Zombies Mode

~~Titanic~~ into c/s. characters on ship hulking guy punched out guard. blood spurt w/ U strikes to
man catches mirror & artefact. glowing orb. punched out & transforms into 2. others transform -

Winged Despair

Blood of the Dead.

into c/s. Mrs reach prison. except they they fiddle w/ undead.

Copious blood spray & splatter.

Rich to fail's laboratory.

except blood prison. broken concrete wrapped corpse hooks. the under

IX

Towers

Atominors in cave, a whispering well of water. they whole eyes turn

they are gladiators, in Rome / Coliseum-like structure
masked figure holds up mirror & activates it.
prisoners scream, turned to zombies.

lots of blood. decapitation, cleaning.

gone as head man torn apart & a fleshy mouth appears

can shoot limbs off zombies, but
(hands+forearms)
leg.

blood burst on
post-mortem.

⇒ there is + drinks ^(in game)
but large blood spurt

yet there are decapitated zombies/corpses
in environment.
w/ fleshy muscle neck +
bone

& blood splatters on
environment. —

Multiplayer - variety of maps.

shootin' people.
large blood mist
+ ^{short-lived} blood globules
& directional splatters.
no decap/dismemberment
ragdoll.

NB: Blackout
non-functional at
this beta stage.
Could replace map,
but no one to battle.

Blackout = (?) 100 players
last-man-standing
SP or Squads in
a large landscape

CALLOF DUTY: BLACK OPS IIII ~~(SLICK)~~ (POSTER)

18 00367.001

14/08/18

NB this is a poster... on a slick format, so not actually a slick.

"FRONT": PSK logo at top.

Reorder info below. Logo in centre page w/ 3
military operating on stage ~~log~~. Image on dark
BG behind.

Release date, CTC logo & publisher logos bottom
of page

"BACK" the same, but no PSK logo or CTC/pub. credits
image, instead