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V2.2 29/02/2008

DVD Submission Criteria

For reference, the BBFC technical department carries out pre-viewing assessments of DVD submissions on Pioneer DVD-V7300D and V8000 players. Submissions are examined and classified using Panasonic DVD-S29 DVD players.

The BBFC is required by law to keep an accurate record of all works we classify. All DVD's submitted for classification are kept as an official record in our archive and thus must adhere to the following criteria:

- Submitted works should contain all video footage or DVD assets that will be released to the public unless such elements are considered exempt under the terms of the Video Recordings Act 1984. Click [here](#) for further details on exempt works.
- The BBFC will classify **everything** on a submitted disc unless you have indicated otherwise on the submission form.
- A replacement copy will be requested if footage submitted for classification clearly contains material that is not intended to be released or where there is clearly material missing unless this is noted as intentional on accompanying paperwork.
- If the version released to the public is different in **any** regard from the version classified by the BBFC, the work will count as unclassified and will be in breach of the Video Recordings Act 1984.
- A replacement copy will be requested if any other technical problems are encountered.
- The work must contain an onscreen title. This is a legal requirement and will form part of the 'unique title' which must be labelled on the disc at point of sale. Click [here](#) for the titling regulations.
- If the work is a feature and does not contain a title, a title slate must be placed at the beginning of the work and be released in the exact same form. It is not necessary (but it is helpful) to title every element on a DVD, but there must be an overall title.
- The title should be the one that the work will be released under. This title along with the category symbol and registration number (aka unique title) must be printed on the face label of the DVD release version of the work, exactly as it appears onscreen.

Multiple Audio/Language tracks and Subtitles

DVD Submissions increasingly contain multiple audio and subtitles tracks. The BBFC takes a pragmatic approach when determining which elements require viewing on submitted media.

For foreign language works, the BBFC will classify the original language that the work was produced in and any English Language tracks, if present. Any other language tracks will be ignored.

Therefore:

- If the work is a foreign language production and will be released in the UK with subtitles then this will need to be submitted for classification.
- If the work is also available in a dubbed English version, this will also need to be classified.
- If the work is an English language production however, it is not necessary to submit foreign language tracks or foreign language subtitles which may be featured on a DVD. If these are submitted they will be ignored.
- If a work will be released with subtitles for the hard of hearing then these may also be submitted.
- As of October 17th 2007 the BBFC has received legal advice on the issue of audio commentaries. Our advice is that audio commentaries will almost always constitute new video works and consequently require classification.
- The only exceptions are audio descriptive tracks which involve very simple and short descriptions of the action on screen (e.g. for the visually impaired).

Technical issues relating to DVD

DVD's submitted to the BBFC for a **video** classification must adhere to the following criteria:

- Submitted discs must be compliant with the DVD Specification, i.e. they must play in a DVD player.
- Digital video files (i.e. .avi, .mov, .mpg, etc) burnt to a DVD are **not** acceptable as they can only be read in a computer.
- DVD's must be either Region 2 or Region free (Region 0)
- DVD's can be either PAL or NTSC
- Chapter points can be included if desired but this is not mandatory.
- Temporary menus can be added if desired to allow easy navigation of the disc.
- Works can be submitted on DVD-R, DVD+R or replicated (factory pressed) DVD.
 - Where single layer discs are used, footage must be encoded at a high enough bit rate to ensure acceptable picture quality.
 - Dual layer discs have been noted to have a high degree of playback failure. In order to avoid this issue we recommend you submit the work split over multiple single layer discs.
 - Other formats such as (but not limited to) video CD, DVD RW, mini DVD and authoring discs are not accepted.
- There are no particular restrictions on audio formats, although surround sound audio tracks will generally be ignored unless this is the only audio track present. Please see above for details on which audio tracks need to be submitted for classification.
- **DVD's must be authored in such a way that they display counter timings and title & chapter information when placed in our DVD players.**
 - If a significant number of elements on a DVD do not display accurate timing information (i.e. anything more than a logo or intro sting + DVD menus) a replacement DVD copy may be requested. This is because we are required to calculate an accurate runtime for each submitted work. This enables us to effectively schedule viewing time, accurately invoice the submitting company, to easily check for material differences between different versions of the same feature and to note where contentious moments may occur in a work.

Please see 'Missing timing data on front panel display' below for further details.
- **To ensure DVD's are easy to examine, functions should not be 'user disabled' where possible.**
 - A disc may be rejected if it contains any significant portions which will not allow the user to pause, fast forward and rewind or chapter search. This can make the work extremely difficult to examine should any possibly contentious material need to be checked.
- **All DVD's must be accompanied by an accurate contents list. The contents list must:**
 - Detail every element featured on the DVD and indicate which title and chapter each element is stored in on the disc.
 - Indicate which elements contain multiple angles, additional audio tracks (such as audio commentaries and foreign languages), subtitle tracks and other optional onscreen graphic elements.
 - Show where there is video footage stored on the disc as .VOB files which is not directly accessible through the DVD menu structure.
 - Detail any software or DVD-ROM elements contained on a disc which are only accessible through a computer.
 - **Please note it is the submitting company's responsibility to alert the BBFC to the presence of any 'hidden' DVD elements such as those described above, or any 'easter egg' or similar features.**
- Where possible it would be extremely useful if submitted discs were not encrypted with either CSS or Macrovision copy protection. This is in order to allow us to easily maintain our archive as required by the Video Recordings act 1984.

Commonly Encountered Technical Problems

Please check your work before submission as this cuts down on technical problems and ensures a quicker turnaround within the BBFC.

Please make sure that works do not have:

- Gaps, unless actually part of the work (this can often occur where master tapes have been misaligned)
- Repeated sequences or shots, unless actually part of the work
- Freeze Frames, unless part of the actual work.
- MPAA certificates before or after the work
- Textless material before or after work.
- Company logos or captions on screen e.g. "Property of..." that exceed the criteria set out in the Digital On-screen Graphics policy. Please see '[Use of Digital on-screen Graphics \(DOGs\) on submissions to the BBFC](#)' in News->2007 at www.bbfc.co.uk for further details.
- Ensure that the submission is the same screen ratio that you intend to release.
- Where a work has been recorded straight to DVD as a linear element, please make sure there is a lead in of black for a few seconds before the work begins. This is so it is clear where each section begins and ends
- If a work is composite (i.e. contains more than one video element), please make sure the submission form clearly indicates this.

Any submission which fails any of the above quality control checks will be stopped until a suitable resubmission is received. This will inevitably cause delays to the classification of your work.

Please note that submission parameters are subject to change. If in doubt about any submission criteria, please contact the technical department @: technical@bbfc.co.uk

Compatibility Issues

Compatibility problems have been encountered with certain DVD discs. It is recommended that high quality recording media is used at all times to minimise this risk, however compatibility issues are very much 'the nature of the beast' with the DVD format and can never be completely eliminated.

As DVD compatibility is a complex issue, the BBFC cannot guarantee that discs submitted to us will be compatible with our equipment. Please see below for further details.

Timecode

It is helpful if submissions include burnt-in timecodes, but this is not mandatory. Timecodes should be positioned in the top right hand corner of the screen without any black background. They should not obscure the image on screen. The numbering should start from the first frame of picture or sound, whichever is earlier. There is no need to change the time-coding for any resubmission. Please see our [Digital On-Screen Graphics policy](#).

Blu-ray and HD DVD

Please see the [HD DVD and Blu-ray Submission Criteria](#) for further details.

Seamless Branching

Legal advice has confirmed that the facility on DVD discs whereby the feature can be played with additional material (e.g. 'deleted scenes') edited in, sometimes in a variety of combinations, constitutes a new video work (see section 22(3) of the Video Recordings Act 1984).

A video certificate will cover all the possible combinations offered by 'seamless branching' facilities (including 'alternative ending' functions) providing that a single submission has included:

- (a) the feature with no additional material added
- (b) the additional material as stand alone items
- (c) the feature with all additional material (excluding alternative endings) branched into the feature

The elements can be submitted on:

- (i) separate discs forming a single submission; or.
- (ii) a single disc which allows the material to be accessed as required in (a), (b) and (c)

The relevant box on the submission form ('Seamless branching') must be ticked.

The BBFC will view (and charge for): the feature with no additional material added ; the additional material as stand alone items; the feature with all additional material (excluding alternative endings) branched into the feature.

The following pages provide technical data and work around solutions for encountered problems with submitted DVDs.

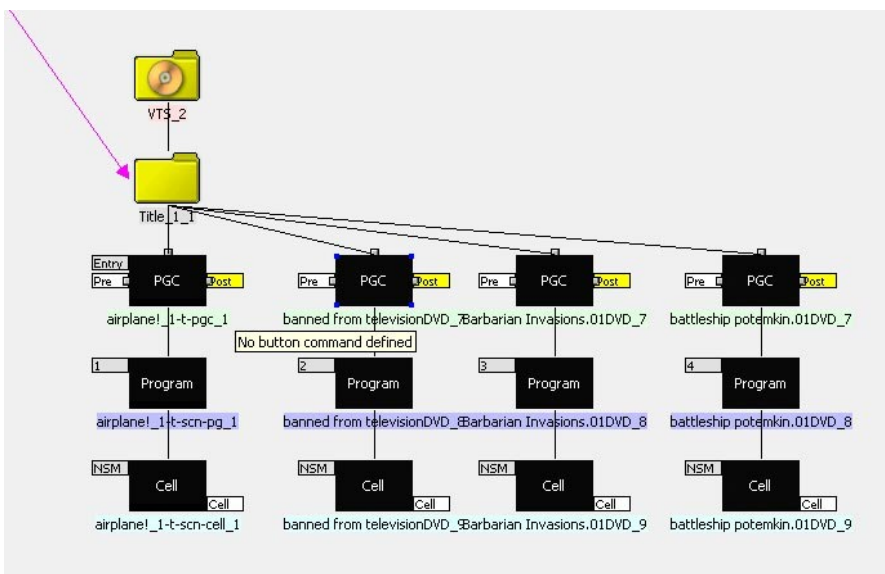
Missing timing data on front panel display

A specific problem has occasionally been encountered where some DVDs have failed to display the counter on the front panel display of certain DVD players. This means that a runtime cannot easily be calculated, which is essential for classification - this data is used to efficiently schedule works for viewing, calculate the fee for submitting companies, to allow us to easily check for material differences between different versions of the same feature and to note where contentious moments may occur in a work.

Analyzing the VIDEO_TS.IFO of these discs using the freeware program IFO.EDIT has shown that the Video Manager Title Play Map contains the following characteristics:

- not one_sequential (random, shuffle, stills, loops, or more than one pgc)
- Jump/Link/Call commands invalid 0
- Prohibited user op. PTT play or search no
- Prohibited user op. Time play or search yes

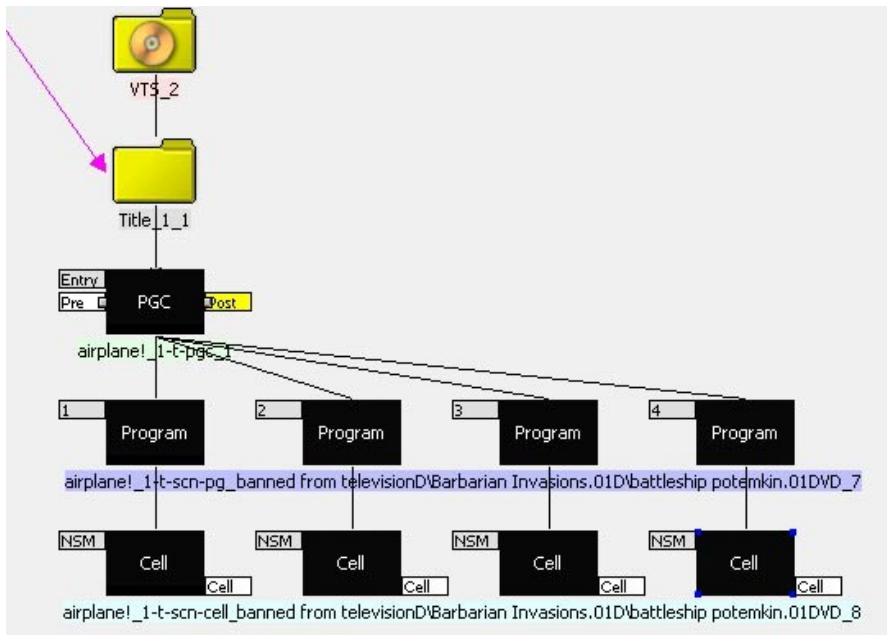
This differs from discs which display timing data correctly and is due to the way the footage is organized on the disc.



Runtime data will not be shown where two or more video elements are stored within a single title, as shown to the left.

The Program Chains (PGCs) contains runtime data for each video element.

As there is more than one PGC in the title folder, the DVD player cannot resolve an overall runtime for the title.



In order to correct this, separate out the video elements into separate title folders so there is one Program Chain (PGC) per title folder.

Linking the separate video elements to a single PGC as shown to the left will also correct this.

These screen shots are taken from Sonic Scenarist.

Other authoring packages may implement this in slightly different ways, but the basic principal remains the same.

DVD playback errors

Recordable DVDs are less reliable than the replicated discs which are used for commercial DVD releases. Replicated discs are produced in a factory and the information is pressed onto the surface of the disc from a glass master copy.

In contrast, recordable discs use a dye which is burnt by a DVD burners laser to store the data on the discs surface.

This dye is less reflective than the surface of a replicated disc and results in less information being reflected from the surface of the disc. This leads to playback errors.

Playback failure rates

4989 works were submitted to the BBFC on DVD during a 12 month period from 31/01/2006 to 01/02/2007.

127 of these were rejected due to playback errors, 2.54% of works submitted on DVD.

13 DVDs were rejected because they did not display timing data as noted on page 3. That's 0.26% of works submitted on DVD.

This shows an approximate compatibility rate of 97.2% which is in line with compatibility rates for DVDs quoted below.

For reference, the BBFC technical department carries out pre-viewing assessments of DVD submissions on Pioneer DVD-V7300D DVD players. Submissions are examined and classified using Panasonic DVD-S29 DVD players.

For companies that have not submitted works to the BBFC before, we strongly urge you to submit test DVDs prior to submitting works for formal classification. This will allow us to overcome any technical difficulties which could delay the progress of works formally submitted for classification.

Reflectivity

Used with permission, courtesy of W. Timbers www.pinkpigeon.net/downloads.

There are problems occasionally with DVD Recordables. The following is taken from the DVD Faq: (<http://www.dvddemystified.com/dvdfaq.html#4.3>)

"The basic problem is that recordable discs have different reflectivity than pressed discs (the pre-recorded kind you buy in a store), and not all players have been correctly designed to read them".

To reduce the problems of reflectivity and read errors

- Encode your video with an average bit rate below 6.5 Mbps
- If using VBR encoding, set the maximum bit rate to 9 Mbps or below
- Compress your audio to AC-3

Edge Effect

The edge effect describes the problem some DVD players have reading the information on the outer edge of the DVD. According to research undertaken jointly by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), the Optical Storage Technology Association (OSTA) and the DVD Association (DVDA):

- 38 out of 50 failures were in the outer edge of the disc
- “Edge” begins to appear around 10% from end of the disc and becomes significant around 5% from the end
- Ignoring errors outside the edge, compatibility rises to 98%

On a positive note the research noted that overall compatibility is improving over time

To reduce the edge effect

- Avoid filling up the DVD with data right to the edge

Further steps you can take to safeguard against possible playback errors.

- Media quality matters – There exists significant variation in DVD Recordable media quality. Make sure you choose a good brand. “Manufacturers make modifications to the dye to improve its stability or to make it less expensive. This process may result in similar dye types having considerably different qualities.”
- Media-Burner combinations matter – When choosing DVD Recordable Media, make sure that it is recommended for your DVD burner. Often manufacturers provide this information on their websites. It is also important to keep the firmware on DVD burners updated.

Unstable Picture when down-converting from HD

This problem is only apparent when played back on an interlaced display. Progressive displays such as PC's or HD screens will not display this problem.

This occurs when a 1440 x 1080i HD anamorphic edit is converted to m2v for Standard Definition DVD authoring.

Unlike other forms of interlaced video which run odd frames first, HD runs even fields first and this primarily caused the corruption.

The solution is to add an adaptive deinterlace filter at the input stage effecting the HD footage which is then served to the output deinterlaced and reinterlaced in the correct order of odd filed first for M2V.

The above information is quoted from media companies involved in the production of DVDs for submission to the BBFC. It is provided with the intention of reducing compatibility problems for anyone submitting work and will be updated as new errors and solutions are encountered.