

# To what extent should the government censor the media?

[Media](#), [Social Media](#)



Over the 20th century, censorship in Canada has been changed drastically. Its first intention was to protect the community from certain social degradation but has now shifted over to help support restrictions on certain public expression. This brings on the question of whether or not censorship is really necessary. To what extent should the government censor the media?

Contrary to popular belief, censorship is an inescapable course of action in our everyday lives. According to Oxford dictionaries, censorship is defined as, “ the suppression or prohibition of any parts of books, films, news, etc. that are considered obscene, politically unacceptable, or a threat to security.” This in itself partially contradicts with section 2b of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom, which clearly states that “ everyone has the freedom of thought, belief, opinion, and expression” as free expression is one of the core roots our country is based on even if this right is something that is constantly being challenged. Censorship should be a little less restricting on art and music as for the most part is a way for others to express themselves artistically whereas for video games there should be some limitations. A common issue parents or people in general have nowadays is how violent and obscene certain video games have become. Not only are some extremely degrading and disrespectful to certain genders, race, etc. it has become much more graphic too. This could then arise the question of how much do video games truly influence its users, especially to those who are much younger than the intended audience and have somehow gotten a copy.

Apart from that, the government should most certainly censor serious and illegal issues such as child pornography. For instance, the R. v. Sharpe case where the accused used section 2b of the charter to justify for his actions, in this case – possession of child pornography, saying the charges were “ a violation to his right to freedom of expression.” and therefore shouldn’t be charged. Of course the trial Judge and the British Columbia Court of Appeal both ruled against him. How Sharpe obtained said images/videos was never mentioned in the case so there is no proof of where he got them but, the amount of child pornography on the internet is revolting and awful. This is just one of the few examples of what the government should censor or in this case block.

Now on the flipside, what should not be censored? Perhaps one of the most famous controversies in Canada about censorship is the Litter Sisters Books and Art Emporium v. Canadian Customs. One could argue this is a violation to both section 2, freedom of expression and section 15 of the Charter, the right to be treated equal, however with this in mind, it could just as well be justified with section 1 which allows the government to legally limit an individual’s Charter rights. On one side you have Canadian customs trying to censor these and on the other it’s a discrimination to the LGBTQ+ community. In another case, an artist, Ryan McCourt had the opportunity to display his sculptures outside of Edmonton’s Shaw Conference Centre back in 2006 for a whole year. McCourt decided to have four large sculptures of Ganesha, a deity in Hindu mythology, who is sometimes presented nude, which is what he did. This obviously then caused quite a commotion and

received around 700 signed names on a petition complaining about the sculptures' "disrespectful" nudity and demanding for it to be taken down. This seems a bit extreme as the sculpture itself wasn't in any way disrespectful to the culture and if you think about it, there are many ancient pieces of art such as sculptures, paintings, pots/vases, etc. from Ancient Greece that have nude people on them and they are placed in many museums worth millions of dollars. It is an artistic way to express the beauty of human nature and having people hold a petition and even getting the mayor involved violates McCourt's right for his "freedom of expression".

In conclusion, censorship is something our society needs in order to keep things ethical and for us to have a sense of morality. It helps keep certain things in check as well as shielding children from unnecessary subjects they do not need to know at the moment. Although censorship can be handy at times, there should also be some restrictions on how harsh these blurred lines can be or sort of like a heads up, that is why there are warnings and disclaimers in the beginning of movies or TV shows. You need a healthy balance of both to keep things equal because if you have more then another it becomes unbalanced and unfair.