

IRISH FILM CLASSIFICATION OFFICE

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Annual Report of the Director of Film Classification 2017

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DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND EQUALITY

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IRISH FILM CLASSIFICATION OFFICE

To Charles Flanagan  
T.D., Minister for  
Justice and Equality

Dear Minister,

I am pleased to present the Annual Report of the Director of Film Classification for 2017 as prescribed by Section 29 of The Video Recordings Act 1989.

Our statutory functions are governed by the Censorship of Films Act 1923 and The Video Recordings Act 1989 together with their relevant amendments. We also adhere to the following Principles:

- We believe that adults (i.e., persons over 18) should be free, within the law, to choose what they wish to view.
- We have a duty to protect children and young people from harm.
- We strongly encourage and promote the exercise of parental responsibility.

2017 proved to be yet another one of increase in the number of cinema films submitted for classification. In the period, 447 films were classified compared with 420 in 2016. Indeed since 2014 there has been a 30% increase in theatrical submissions.

Video and DVD however showed a decline during the year. A total of 3,089 works were received for classification compared with 3,830 in 2016. After 4 years of reasonably static submissions, this was a significant decline. Early trends for 2018 show that the level of business in this area will be similar.

Five Assistant Classifiers were appointed in March for a 3 year term. This followed a public recruitment process which drew a large response.

During 2017, one decision was appealed to the Classification of Films Appeal Board, who upheld the IFCO decision.

I would like to place on record my appreciation of the work done by IFCO staff, the Assistant Classifiers and also to acknowledge the constructive input of John Laffan and the staff of the Civil Governance unit of the Department of Justice and Equality.

Yours Sincerely

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Ger Connolly  
Director of Film Classification

## **Statements of Compliance with State Body Governance**

1. I confirm that an Oversight Agreement has been agreed with the Department of Justice & Equality which indicates compliance with the requirements of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies.
2. An Appropriate assessment of IFCO's principal risks has been carried out. The two main risks identified are:
  - o As the window for classification becomes ever shorter, IFCO has to ensure client deadlines are met. To this end IFCO will examine the feasibility of product being delivered digitally rather than physical DVDs.
  - o With recruitment of classifiers from April 2017, it was imperative to have any newly appointed persons trained as quickly as possible to ensure continuity of quality service.
3. IFCO is adhering to the Public Spending Code.
4. IFCO is compliant with Irish tax law.
5. On Behalf of the Irish Film Classification Office, I acknowledge my responsibility as Director for ensuring an effective system of internal control is maintained and operated.

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a tolerable level rather than to eliminate it. The system can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, transactions authorised and properly recorded, and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or detected in a timely way.

### **Risk and Control**

A risk register is in place which identifies key risks facing IFCO and these have been identified, evaluated and graded according to their significance. This register will be reviewed again in 2018.

The risk register details the controls and actions needed to mitigate risks and responsibility for operation of controls assigned to specific staff. I confirm that a control environment containing the following elements is in place:

- Procedures for all key business processes have been documented.
- Financial responsibilities have been assigned at management level with corresponding accountability.
- There is an appropriate budgeting system with an annual budget which is kept under review by senior management.
- There are systems aimed at ensuring the security of the information and communication technology systems.
- There are systems in place to safeguard the assets.

### **Procurement**

I confirm that IFCO has procedures in place to ensure compliance with current procurement rules and guidelines.

### **Internal Control Issues**

No weaknesses in internal control were identified in 2017 that require disclosure.

### **Financial control environment**

I confirm that a control environment containing the following elements are in place:

- Financial responsibilities have been assigned at management level with corresponding accountability.
- Reporting arrangements have been established at all levels where responsibility for financial management has been assigned.
- Formal procedures have been established for reporting significant control failures and ensuring appropriate corrective action.

### **Administrative controls and management reporting**

I confirm that a framework of administrative procedures and regular management reporting is in place, including segregation of duties and a system of delegation and accountability and, in particular, that there is an appropriate budgeting system with an annual budget, which is kept under review by management.

- There are regular reviews by management of periodic and annual financial reports which indicate financial performance against forecasts.
- A risk management system operates within IFCO.
- IFCO ensures that there is an appropriate focus on good practice in purchasing and that procedures are in place to ensure compliance with all relevant guidelines and procurement policy.



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'Mild violence and threat.'  
(Consumer advice for *Paddington 2* on IFCO's website)



Paddington 2  
Director: Paul King.



## **Key Developments in 2017**

### **Operational Activity**

The total number of cinema feature films certified during 2017 was 447, an increase of 27 on the previous year.

The total number of video works certified was 3089, a decrease of 19% on 2016. While this is a significant drop, the early signs for 2018 suggest parity with the year under review.

In the main our business partners continue to have material classified, regardless of mode of delivery.





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'Mild threat.'

(Consumer advice for *The Greatest Showman* on IFCO's website)



The Greatest Showman  
Director: Michael Gracey.



## **Appeals**

There was one appeal in 2017. The film FREE FIRE was classified 18 with the consumer advice "Relentless bloody violence. Strong drugs use." The Classification of Films Appeal Board considered the appeal and reaffirmed the 18 classification.

## **Video Games**

During 2017, IFCO examined 37 games rated 18 by the Pan European Games Information System (PEGI) to ensure compliance with provisions of The Video Recordings Act, 1989. This system continues to evolve and has proved to be a very effective model with many countries now participating.

## **Focus Groups/Presentations**

A number of interactive presentations were made to Second and Third Level Students during the year including those made at the Cinemagic Film Festival events in Dublin and Dundalk.

## **Guidelines**

The published guidelines continue to be monitored to ensure a fair reflection of public expectations of IFCO's mandate.

## **Website**

During 2017, work began on updating the IFCO website. While it has proved a very useful tool, particularly for parents/guardians in accessing film content, it has begun to have a dated appearance. Given that it is 14 years in situ, this revamp is indeed timely. With great assistance from the internal Justice IT team, it is hoped to launch this new site in mid-2018. Allied to this will be the introduction of an IFCO app, which should shortly follow the website upgrade.

## **Complaints**

During 2017, IFCO received 17 complaints from the public which related specifically to classifications awarded. The most received in respect of any one title was 3 in the case of WHY HIM, a comedy classified 15A for "Frequent Strong Language and Sex References."

The low number of such complaints is indicative, I feel, to a general level of satisfaction with the work being carried out in the office. However, it is to be hoped that the updated website will be more visited and perhaps encourage people to contact IFCO. All constructive input, whether positive or negative is very welcome and informs as to people's expectations of IFCO service.

## **Digital Delivery**

During late 2017 it is intended to examine the feasibility of digital receipt of Video submissions. This would greatly assist our business clients who are dealing with ever decreasing time between production and release.



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'Frequent sci-fi action.'  
(Consumer advice for *Star Wars: The Last Jedi* on IFCO's website)



Star Wars: The Last Jedi  
Director: Rian Johnson.



## **Financial**

The fees charged by the Office for the certification of cinema films and DVD/videos and for the issuing of licences in 2017 were as follows:

○ <b>Video</b>	<b>€953,487.06</b>
○ <b>Film</b>	<b>€384,183.37</b>
○ <b>Licences</b>	<b>€197,000.00</b>
○ <b>Labels</b>	<b>€952.50</b>
○ <b>Miscellaneous</b>	<b>€1,000.00</b>

Total income received on behalf of the Department in 2017 was **€1,536,622.93**.

'Strong language and sex references.'  
(Consumer advice for *Lady Bird* on IFCO's website)



Lady Bird  
Director: Greta Gerwig.





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## Certification of Cinema Submissions

### Cinema Submissions Certified 2017

Features	447
Shorts	4
Trailers	<u>621</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1072</b>

### All by Category

G	158
PG	191
12A	383
15A	269
16	51
18	<u>20</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1072</b>

### Features/Shorts Certified by Category

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>
G	38	28	37	38
PG	49	47	62	58
12A	114	117	131	126
15A	139	129	142	164
16	44	38	35	45
18	<u>7</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>20</u>
	<b>391</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>451</b>

### Single Country of Origin

146	USA
72	India
53	UK
38	Ireland
15	Japan
14	Poland
10	France
6	China
5	Canada
3	Australia
3	Germany
3	Italy
2	Lithuania
2	Russia
2	Spain
1	Austria
1	Belgium
1	Bulgaria
1	Denmark
1	Egypt
1	New Zealand
1	Northern Ireland
1	Pakistan
1	Romania
1	Sweden
1	Turkey
<b>385</b>	<b>Total</b>

### Multiple Country of Origin

8	UK/USA
3	Canada/USA
2	China/USA
2	France/Belgium
2	France/Germany
2	Ireland/Canada
2	Ireland/UK
2	UK/France
2	UK/USA/Canada
2	Various
1	Australia/China/Russia/Thailand
1	Belgium/France
1	Brazil/France
1	Canada/South Korea
1	China/Canada/USA
1	China/Hong Kong
1	Czech/UK/USA
1	Denmark/USA
1	Finland/Germany
1	France/Austria/Germany
1	France/UK
1	France/USA
1	France/UK/USA
1	Germany/France/Ireland
1	Hungary/Germany
1	Iran/France
1	Ireland/France/Spain/USA
1	Ireland/France/USA
1	Israel/USA
1	Italy/France/USA
1	Japan/UK
1	Korea/Japan
1	Netherlands/UK
1	New Zealand/UK
1	Russia/France/Germany
1	Spain/Canada
1	Spain/USA
1	Sweden/Denmark/Finland
1	Sweden/Germany/France/Denmark
1	UK/Belgium
1	UK/France/Germany
1	UK/Netherlands/France/USA
1	UK/Germany
1	UK/Poland
1	UK/Sweden/USA
1	USA/Canada
1	USA/Denmark
1	USA/Ireland
1	USA/UK
<b>66</b>	<b>Total</b>



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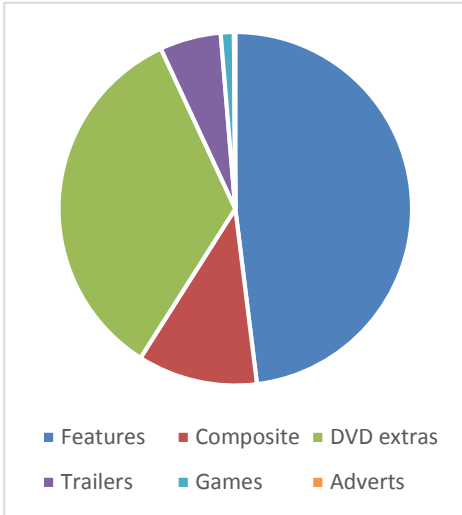
'Strong bloody horror. References to child abuse.'  
(Consumer advice for *It* on IFCO's website)



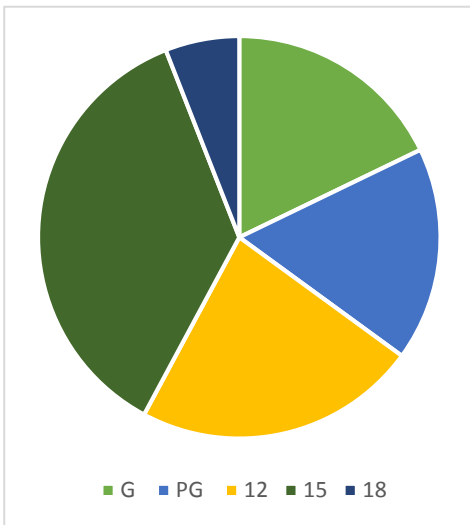
*It*  
Director: Andy Muschietti.



## Certification of Video/DVDs



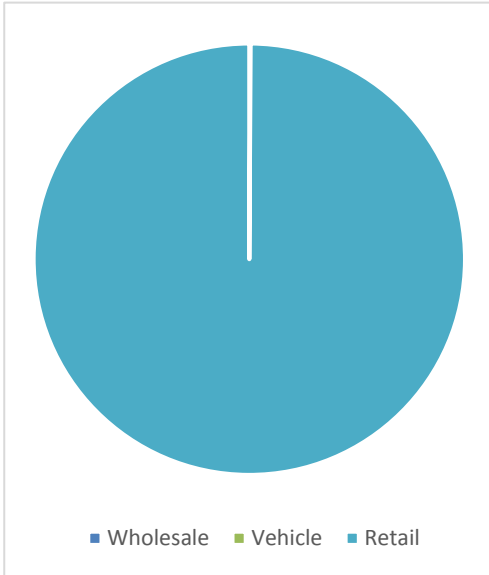
<u>By Type of Work</u>	
Feature	1484
Composite	339
DVD Extra	1052
Trailer	173
Video Game	37
Advert	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>3089</b>



Category	<u>DVD/Video Works Classified by Category</u>			
	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>
G	676	726	805	551
PG	675	610	590	531
12	884	905	845	705
15	1331	1596	1427	1118
18	227	228	163	184
<b>Total</b>	<b>3793</b>	<b>4065</b>	<b>3830</b>	<b>3089</b>



## Licences Issued 2017

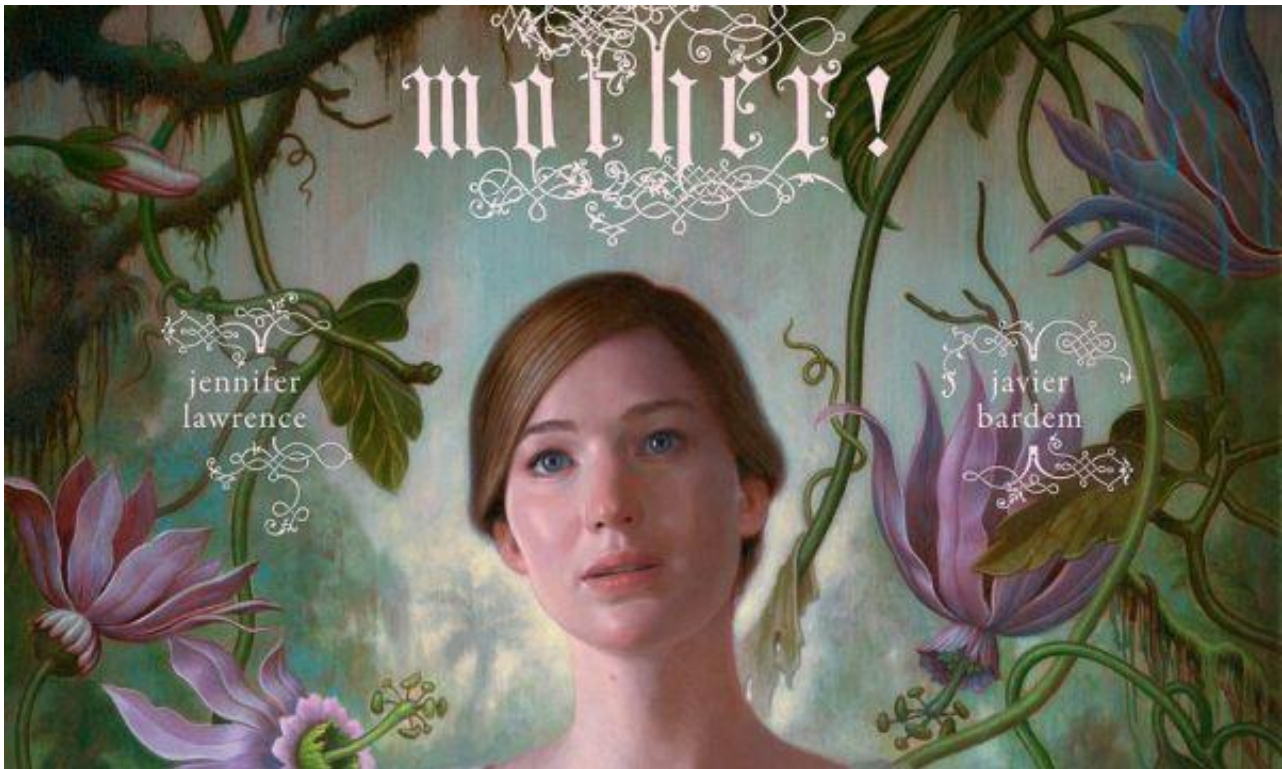


Wholesale	0
Vehicle	1
<u>Retail</u>	<u>1,015</u>
Total	1,016



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'Very strong graphic violence.'  
(Consumer advice for *mother!* on IFCO's website)



mother!  
Director: Darren Aronofsky



## **Staff**

### **Director of Film Classification**

Ger Connolly was appointed as Director of Film Classification in May 2016. He was formerly an Assistant Censor and Deputy Director.

Ger was born and lives in Kildare town. He graduated from UCD with a B. Comm Degree, studied accountancy with Deloitte, and worked in that capacity in the advertising and manufacturing industries. He was appointed a part-time assistant film censor in November 1993. He served as Deputy Film Censor from 2003 to 2016. He was one of three Irish delegates to the Conference of European Film Classifiers in Dublin in 2001.

He represents Ireland on the board of PEGI, the Pan European Games classification system, and sits on both its Advisory Board and Complaints Board.

### **Part-Time Assistant Classifiers During 2017**

#### **Zélie Asava**

PhD in Film Studies  
Appointed 2017

#### **Mark Brennan**

Journalist  
Appointed 2017

#### **Niamh McCole**

PhD in Film Studies  
Appointed 2017

#### **David Power**

TV Producer  
Appointed 2017

#### **Martin Scanlon**

Barrister  
Appointed 2017

[www.ifco.ie](http://www.ifco.ie)



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