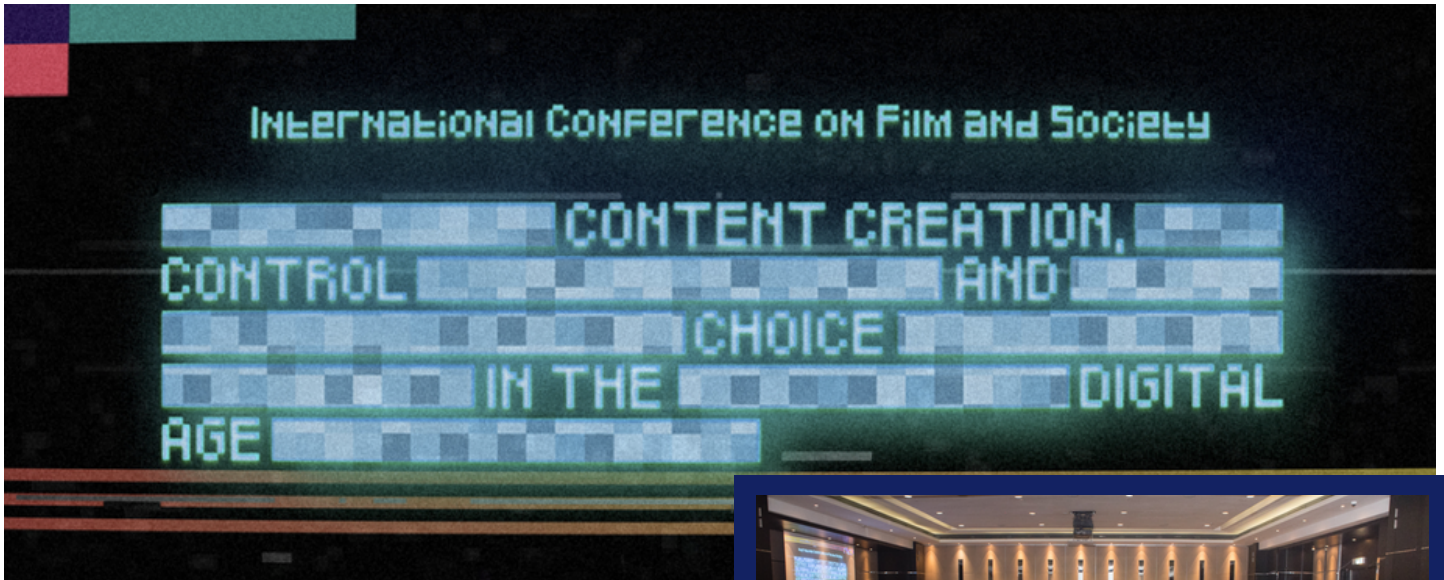


KEY FINDINGS AND INSIGHTS

The 'International Conference on Film and Society: Content Creation: "Content Creation, Choice and Control in the Digital Age' 7-8 September 2023



KEY INSIGHTS AND FINDINGS

We are pleased to share with you the comprehensive insights and findings derived from the recent conference organized by the Content Forum and the Freedom Film Network (FFN). The 'International Conference on Film and Society: Content Creation: "Content Creation, Choice and Control in the Digital Age' was held on 7 and 8 September brought together creators, producers, regulators, academics, and activists from across Southeast Asia. The event was well-received and fostered an inclusive dialogue on reshaping the film industry landscape, with valuable learnings from our friends in the same industry in other countries.

A. EMBRACING BALANCE IN REGULATION AND CREATION

1. Freedom and Responsibility

The consensus among participants was a pressing need to change our approach to film regulation and creation, emphasizing a balanced framework that:

- **Respects Filmmaker Freedom:** Advocates for the freedom of filmmakers and content creators to produce content without undue constraints.



- **Protects Consumer Rights:** Recognizes the right of consumers to choose and consume content in alignment with their preferences and the requirements of minors under their care.
- **Supports Industry Growth:** Acknowledges the importance of fostering an environment conducive to the growth of the film industry.
- **Safeguards Vulnerable Groups:** Aims to build resilience in vulnerable groups against disinformation and harmful content.

2. Shared Responsibility

Empowering creators, platform providers, and consumers to share responsibility over the creation, display, and consumption of films was identified as a solution. The duty to protect vulnerable groups and build resilience extends to all stakeholders, including regulators, creators, platform providers, educators, and parents.



3. Rejecting Moral Policing

It was underscored that strict censorship, particularly by government entities, could impede a holistic approach to national values and integration, suppressing certain voices in the process and at worst, running the risk of being unconstitutional.

B. HOLISTIC APPROACH TO CONTENT PLATFORMS



Recognizing the interconnected nature of content consumption, it was agreed that policies and approaches should be holistic, avoiding segregation based on the medium of consumption, which may result in double-standards and an unlevel playing field.

C. REGIONAL COLLABORATION



1. Shared History and Values

The conference highlighted the potential for regional collaboration based on our shared history, common values, and norms, suggesting a collaborative effort to tackle shared challenges.

2. Resource Sharing

Participants identified opportunities to share resources and support each other, especially when filmmakers face threats.

D. TRANSITION FROM CENSORSHIP TO SELF-REGULATION

1. Industry-Regulated Bodies

The prevailing sentiment among panellists and participants was that prior censorship is obsolete. The regional trend leans towards setting up industry-regulated or autonomous bodies to oversee film regulation. This would also be aligned with the current practice for content over the electronic network, which is subject to the self-regulation framework under the Content Forum, as designated by the Communications and Multimedia Act 1998. It was agreed that all content, including films, should be treated the same.

2. Rights-Based Self-Regulation

Participants endorsed the idea that most government objectives could be achieved through self-regulation, involving a system of classification. Alex Sihar from Indonesia shared that while censorship puts the state and state interests as the subject, classification puts the people (society) as the subject.

3. Stakeholder Collaboration

Any code should adopt a 'rights-based' approach, collectively developed by stakeholders with input from public consultation. Understanding both the supply and demand sides of content creation is essential, with consumers empowered with knowledge, skills, and tools for effective self-regulation.

4. Industry Adaptation

There is a pressing need for greater understanding among the creative community, students, and aspiring filmmakers about relevant laws, guidelines, and codes. With technology advancing rapidly, decisions about restricting content must be evidence-based, considering intersectional perspectives.



E. ALTERNATIVE SPACES

1. Filmmaker Preparedness

In the fast-paced landscape of media and creative arts, filmmakers must plan and prepare to minimize risk. The Content Forum and FFN websites provide valuable resources, tips, and tools. Efforts can be made to further improve these resource centers, with input from relevant stakeholders.

2. Government Support

States should play a more active role in supporting alternative cinema and filmmakers, nurturing creativity, and educating filmmakers. Defending these alternative spaces is crucial for fostering new generations of filmmakers and an enlightened audience.

F. CALLS TO ACTION AND NEXT STEPS

1. Government Initiatives

The government is urged to put in place a clear timeline to transition from censorship to classification and self-regulation of the film industry. Additionally, incorporating media literacy and resilience among consumers through education, advocacy, and awareness is crucial.

2. Industry Collaboration

The film industry practitioners can be prepared for self-regulation with a comprehensive training and education program on laws, regulations, content standards and best practices, which are already available in the Communications and Multimedia Content Code. Collective efforts are essential to improve the ecosystem for filmmakers.

3. Regional Cooperation

Industry practitioners in the region should explore ways to pool and share resources, training, and other forms of support for independent filmmakers.