



IRISH FILM CLASSIFICATION OFFICE

Annual Report of the Director of Film Classification 2020



An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
Department of Justice

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To Heather Humphreys
T.D., Minister for
Justice

Dear Minister,

I am pleased to present the Annual Report of the Director of Film Classification for 2020 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 as described on our website www.ifco.ie:

- 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.

In 2020 a total of 259 films were certified for cinema release in Ireland. This is a decrease of 49.1% on the previous year. This decrease was entirely due to the closure of cinemas as a result of the Covid pandemic.

The total number of DVD titles certified in 2020 was 1,961, an increase of 1% on the previous year.

During 2020 there were no decisions appealed to the Classification of Films Appeal Board.

I would like to place on record my appreciation of the work done by my IFCO colleagues, the Assistant Classifiers and also the Governance team in the Department of Justice & Equality for their continued support.

Yours Sincerely,



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, 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 were:

- Possible Brexit implications of materials delivery from UK which could hamper our commitment to client service delivery.
- Possible breakdowns in online data transmission also resulting in delayed service delivery.

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.

During 2020 IFCO was subject to audit by the Internal Audit Unit of the Department of Justice. This audit found that *an effective system of internal controls is in place.*

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.

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 2020 that require disclosure.

Financial control environment

I confirm that a control environment containing the following elements is 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.

Compliance with Section 42 of the Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014

I confirm that IFCO is in compliance with the relevant provisions of the Act having regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and treatment of staff and persons to whom we provide services, and protection of human rights and service users. These commitments are reflected, as required, in the current Strategic Plan.

'Mild threat and rude humour.'
(Consumer advice for *Trolls World Tour* on IFCO's website)



Trolls World Tour
Director: Walt Dohrn.



Key Developments in 2020

Operational Activity

The total number of cinema feature films certified during 2020 was 259, a decrease of 49.1% on the previous year.

The total number of video works certified was 1,961. As the demand for physical DVDs continues to decrease so too will the number of submissions. This is also reflected in the number of Video Licences issued which has halved in the last 10 years.

Appeals

There were no appeals regarding classification decisions in 2020.

Video Games

During 2020, IFCO examined 21 games rated 18 by the Pan European Games Information System (PEGI) to ensure compliance with provisions of The Video Recordings Act, 1989.

This Pan European classification model for video games, instituted in 2003 with IFCO as a founding member, continues to evolve. Ger Connolly is a member of the PEGI Council which establishes classification criteria. He is also a member of the PEGI Complaints Board which adjudicates on classification appeals.

Focus Groups/Presentations

As with other years IFCO facilitated discussions with students on its work.

We also partnered with Cinemagic on its classification modules.

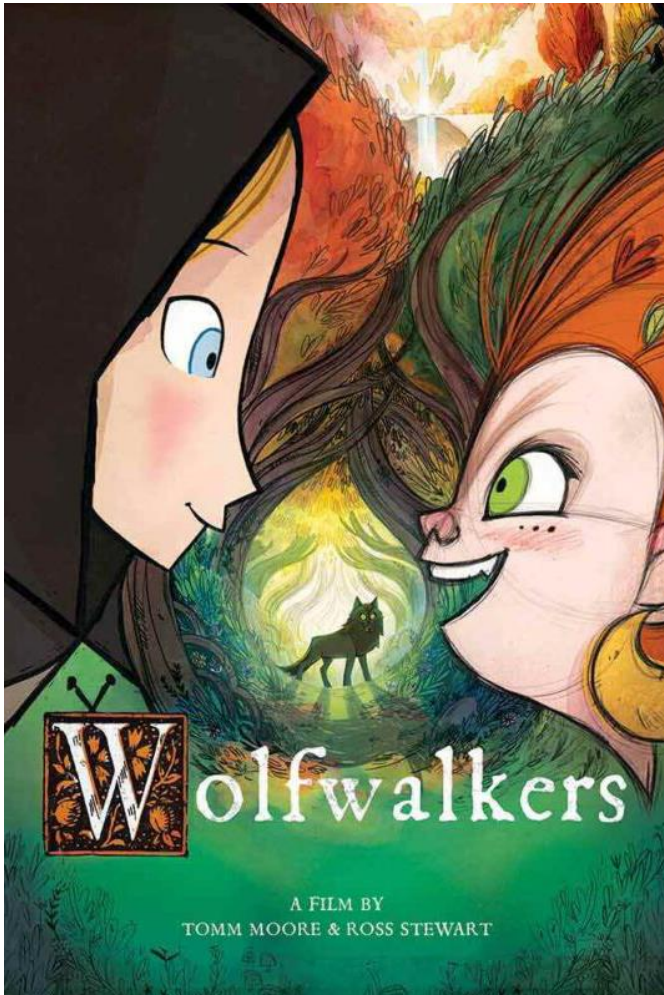
Also, we were very pleased to continue our partnership with the Dublin International Film Festival Fantastic Flix project.

Research

The research project went for tender in early 2020 with the assistance of the Office of Government Procurement and the contract was awarded to Behaviour & Attitudes. The constraints of the Covid restrictions posed a logistical challenge but the fieldwork was completed and the findings will be published in 2021.

The project addressed the suitability of classification guidelines, attitudes to, and awareness of, the work of IFCO and also possible future direction of the office.

'Sequences of animated threat which may be unsuitable for very young children.'
(Consumer advice for *Wolfwalkers* on IFCO's website)



Wolfwalkers
Director: Tomm Moore, Ross Stewart.



Complaints

During 2020, IFCO received 5 complaints from the public which related specifically to classifications awarded. This low volume is reasonable given the closure of cinemas for much of the year.

Goals and Performance 2020

The following were the main outcomes of the targets set for 2020:

- The number of classifications issued was 2,454 which was 21% under the target of 3,111. This was solely due to the reduction in theatrical submissions as a result of the cinema closures during the pandemic. Pre-shutdown in March, the figures were in line with the target.
- The undertaking of wide, independent and statistically valid research went to tender in Q2 supervised by OGP. The difficulties posed by Covid restricted both qualitative and quantitative segments, resulting in delays. The results will now be published in 2021.
- All client deadlines were achieved. This was greatly facilitated by the online delivery system introduced in 2019. This allowed viewing and classification of many video works remotely.
- The target of not exceeding €600K expenditure was achieved. The outturn for the year was €504K.
- The income target of 1.2m was not realised. The total was €810K which reflected the collapse of theatrical submissions. There was also a significant decrease in video licensing of €63K. This reflects the diminishing market for physical DVD releases.



'Intense action sequences. Brief strong language.'
(Consumer advice for *Tenet* on IFCO's website)



Tenet
Director: Christopher Nolan.



Financial

The fees charged by the Office for the certification of cinema films and DVD/videos and for the issuing of licences in 2020 were as follows:

• Video	€396,671.95
• Film	€299,794.17
• Licences	€113,200.00

Total income received on behalf of the Department in 2020 was **€809,666.12.**



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'Racist violence. References to sexual violence.'

(Consumer advice for *The Trial of the Chicago 7* on IFCO's website)



The Trial of the Chicago 7

Director: Aaron Sorkin



Certification of Cinema Films

Cinema Submissions Certified 2020

Features	254
Shorts	5
Trailers	<u>234</u>
Total	493

All by Category

G	94
PG	76
12A	156
15A	121
16	31
18	<u>15</u>
Total	493

Features/Shorts Certified by Category

	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>
G	38	41	45	31
PG	58	61	64	29
12A	126	124	138	75
15A	164	159	177	78
16	45	52	64	31
18	<u>20</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>15</u>
	451	460	509	259

Single Country of Origin

59	UK
56	USA
24	India
16	Ireland
12	Poland
4	Australia
4	Canada
4	France
4	Japan
3	Mexico
2	China
2	Latvia
2	Russia
2	South Korea
2	Sweden
1	Chile
1	Denmark
1	New Zealand
1	Spain
1	Tunisia
201	Total

Multiple Country of Origin

3	Ireland/UK
3	UK/USA
3	Various
2	Australia/USA
2	China/USA
2	France/Belgium
2	India/USA
2	Italy/France/UK
2	USA/Bulgaria
1	Australia/India/USA
1	Canada/Hungary/USA
1	Canada/Japan/USA
1	China/France
1	China/Germany/Japan/USA
1	France/Algeria/Belgium/Qatar
1	France/Germany
1	France/New Zealand
1	France/Portugal
1	Germany/France
1	Germany/France/USA
1	Germany/Luxembourg
1	Germany/USA
1	Iceland/Denmark/Sweden
1	Ireland/Belgium/Morocco
1	Ireland/Belgium/USA
1	Ireland/Luxembourg
1	Ireland/Luxembourg/Belgium
1	Ireland/UK/USA/Sweden/Belgium
1	Italy/France
1	Italy/Greece/USA
1	Italy/USA
1	Luxembourg/Ireland/USA
1	Portugal/USA
1	Portugal/USA/Malaysia
1	South Africa/UK
1	Sweden/Germany/Norway/France
1	UK/Australia/USA
1	UK/Belgium
1	UK/Sweden/USA/Poland/Spain
1	UK/USA/India
1	USA/Belgium/Ireland/Denmark
1	USA/Canada
1	USA/Canada/Italy
1	USA/Mexico/Canada
1	USA/South Korea/Spain
1	USA/UK
58	Total

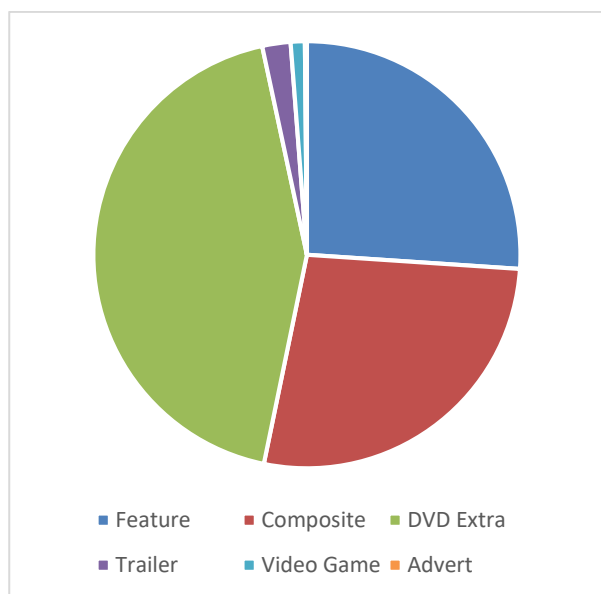
'Strong sex, violence and language.'
(Consumer advice for *Parasite* on IFCO's website)



Parasite
Director: Bong Joon Ho

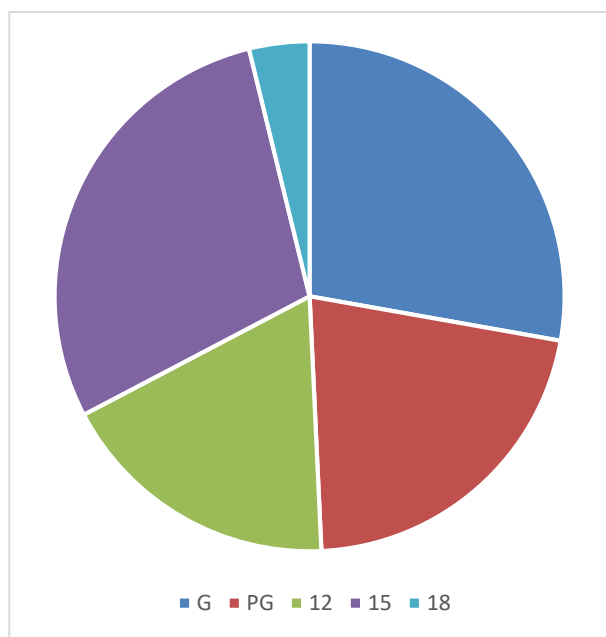


Certification of Video/DVDs



By Type of Work

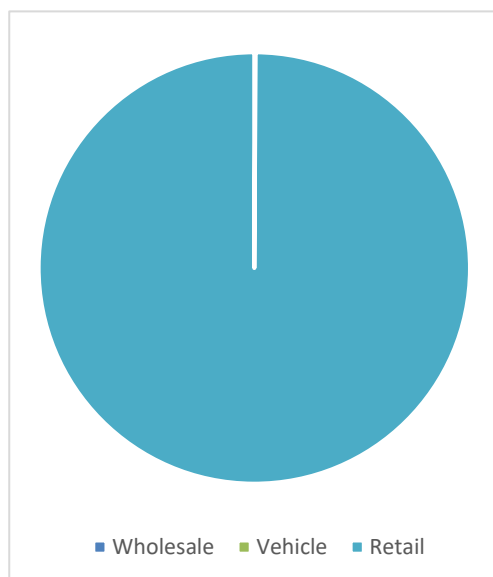
Feature	511
Composite	533
DVD Extra	851
Trailer	42
Video Game	21
Advert	3
Total	1961



DVD/Video Works Classified by Category

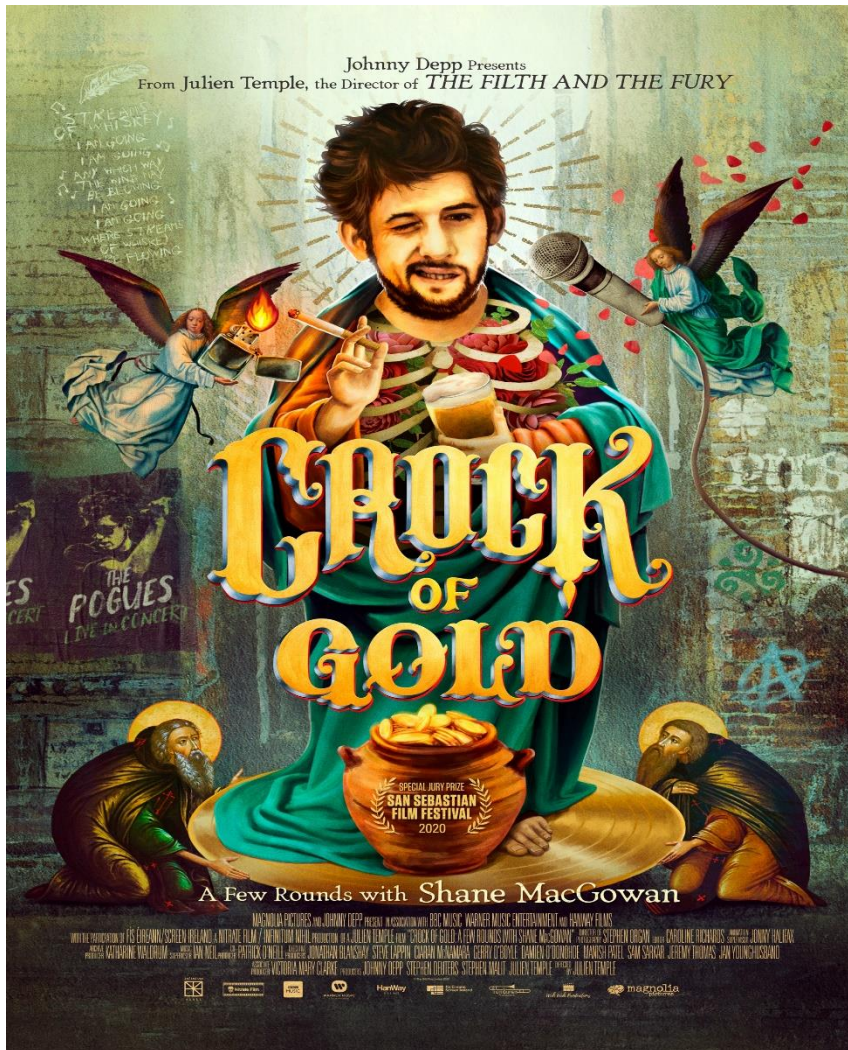
	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>
G	551	471	385	545
PG	531	436	306	421
12	705	657	489	354
15	1118	929	653	566
18	184	128	109	75
Total	3089	2621	1942	1961

Licences Issued 2020



Wholesale	0
Vehicle	0
<u>Retail</u>	<u>626</u>
Total	626

'Very strong drugs use and sex. Very strong language.'
(Consumer advice for *Crock of Gold* on IFCO's website)



Crock of Gold
Director: Julien Temple



Classification Team

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.

He was appointed a part-time assistant film censor in November 1993 and served as Deputy/Acting Director from 2003-2016.

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

Part-Time Assistant Classifiers During 2020

Zélie Asava

PhD in Film Studies

Mark Brennan

Journalist

Niamh McCole

PhD in Film Studies

David Power

TV Producer

Martin Scanlon

Barrister

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