

Ouza entertainment studio ltd,
International House,
33 Dunloe Avenue,
London, N17 6LB
UK

Dear Senator Ann McEwen,

My name is Christopher Evans and I am a director of Ouza entertainment ltd creator of the interactive game, Miss Bimbo (Miss Bimbo.com).

I am writing in response to your email received on 16th April 2008 re: your inquiry into the sexualisation of children in the contemporary media environment and the public submission you received from Ms Shirley Owen.

This email will be in 2 parts. Firstly I will respond to the submission from Mr Shirley Own and secondly address your inquiry.

With regards to the submission you received from Ms Shirley Owen, frankly we were very surprised, shocked and disappointed at what she has written. It is a clear defamation of our business and our characters. Her lexis, accusations and tone are deeply offensive and if it were not for the good nature of your inquiry her comments would not deserve a response. Apart from the personal attacks, 'sick minds' and 'niche market to further seduce girls as young as nine' it is quite apparent to me that she has not even logged on the site or played the game for herself. I believe she has watched some negative news coverage and without any investigation on her own behalf proceeded to slander our company, ourselves personally and our game. Her words are hurtful and completely without a well rounded understanding of the subject matter eg missbimbo.com

It is important that the public are able to take part in your inquiry but hurtful ill founded attacks as submitted by Ms Owen will not provide any good for anyone.

Secondly – your inquiry into the sexualisation of children in the media.

We welcome your inquiry as it is important that children are protected and it is also important that media companies are held accountable. We find ourselves in that category and as such will certainly stand up for our actions and be held accountable for any of our games and brands. We take our responsibilities very seriously and will do all we can to get the correct balance between creating a fun entertaining game for our users whilst also ensuring we are aware of our responsibilities to our users (including younger users) and society in general.

Contrary to media reports, we hadn't received one single letter or email of complaint before our site was in the press. We can't help but wonder whether the outrage was created by journalists

pandering to their particular audiences. I would like to share with you some figures on the game: The average age of our (467 500) members is 17.7 years old.

Of the top ten players at the moment only 1 of them is aged under 16.

This is completely different to what was reported in the media. However we acknowledge that 20.1 % of overall members are aged under 16 and as such we must do all we can to make sure they enjoy the game but also are protected from material that is not suitable for players of this age group.

It is a challenging balance because 79.9% of our players are over the age of 16 and as such we are aware that we must keep the game fresh and interesting as we are also accountable to our shareholders. The name 'Miss Bimbo' was initially changed to 'My Diva doll' for the English version. However, it was the players themselves that didn't like this change. They asked for the game to be called Miss Bimbo as it was originally named in France.

We have decided to incorporate some changes in the game.

Firstly, we will be employing a full-time female manager in the next few weeks. She will be in charge of overseeing the forums, games development and 'tone' of the game. We hope to find an ambitious young independent lady and we look forward to her in-put in the development of the site.

We have also altered the 'tone' of the game and some of the wording in an attempt to affirm positive attributes eg strong independent, confident aspirations. This has meant that we have lost some of the 'edge' to the game that older players appreciated but is an attempt to protect the innocence of our younger players. When we created the game we didn't have 'younger' players as our target market and imagined a majority of our players would be teenagers aged between – 16 to 20 years of age. However it has turned out that younger players have started to be interested in our game and as such we must set them as our 'default' when judging the appropriateness of content. This is something new we have learned and unfortunately this has led to some of the older players claiming the games is being 'watered down'. We know now that it is our obligation to alter and moderate the site to be suitable for our players who are under 16.

We will continue with this in mind when adding new aspects to the game and when re- writing a lot of the script which I hope you will notice has changed the tone of the overall game whilst also (hopefully) maintaining its 'cool' appeal.

I am actively seeking partners, agencies and websites with whom we can share information with regards to issues such as self esteem, eating and female issues both positive and negative etc We also intend to have more information in the forums that can be easily read by players and browsers.

Luckily, we have a loyal community of members whom understand that we are trying to make a positive fun game for all of our members whilst also acting responsibly to the needs of our players (of all ages) , society and shareholders. Sometimes it is not an easy balance to strike but we will certainly do our part.

Personally I do not like the way media outlets such as publishing houses are allowed to 'airbrush' photo images in magazines that are targeted at readers below the age of 16. I think it is wrong that they are allowed to use advanced software such as photoshop to airbrush celebrities or models into 'perfect' humans. These images are then used in pop music or 'teen' magazines. I feel that this is a bad example to set to our children as they subliminally absorb these ideas of perfection. I would like to see a law that limits teen/childrens magazines using digitally enhancing software on photos.

I wish you all the best with your good work on this inquiry.

Yours sincerely,

Christopher Evans

Director,

Ouza interactive entertainment studio ltd