



ENTERTAINMENT SOFTWARE RATING BOARD

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ESRB TO BEGIN ASSIGNING “IN-GAME PURCHASES” LABEL TO PHYSICAL VIDEO GAMES

New ParentalTools.org website launched to help parents manage their child’s in-game spending.

New York, NY – The Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) today announced that it will begin assigning a new “In-Game Purchases” label to physical (e.g., boxed) games. The In-Game Purchases label is one of several [interactive elements](#) that ESRB currently assigns to notify consumers about the interactive or online features of a digital or mobile game. Consumers can expect to start seeing this new notice on all games that can be purchased in stores and wherever those games can be downloaded in the near future.

“The video game industry is evolving and innovating continually, as is the ESRB rating system. ESRB’s goal is to ensure that parents have the most up-to-date and comprehensive tools at their disposal to help them decide which games are appropriate for their children,” said ESRB president Patricia Vance. “With the new In-Game Purchases interactive element coming to physical games, parents will know when a game contains offers for players to purchase additional content. Moreover, we will be expanding our efforts to educate parents about the controls currently at their disposal to manage in-game spending before their kids press ‘Start’.”

The new In-Game Purchases label will be applied to games with in-game offers to purchase digital goods or premiums with real world currency, including but not limited to bonus levels, skins, surprise items (such as item packs, loot boxes, mystery awards), music, virtual coins and other forms of in-game currency, subscriptions, season passes and upgrades (e.g., to disable ads).

“We are delighted to support ESRB’s continuing dedication to safeguarding children from inappropriate experiences both online and offline by providing parents with essential information about video games,” said Stephen Balkam, Founder and CEO of the Family Online Safety Institute. “ESRB’s decision to add the In-Game Purchases label to game boxes further empowers parents with the tools they need to make informed decisions for their families.”

Today ESRB also launched ParentalTools.org, an easy-to-use one-stop resource for parents including:

- A detailed introduction to the new “In-Game Purchases” and other interactive elements;
- Links to step-by-step guides for setting parental controls to help manage different aspects of video game use in the home, including money and time spent playing; and
- A link to the ESRB ratings guide that provides an explanation of ESRB’s three-part rating system.

In addition to the information available on [ParentalTools.org](https://www.parentaltools.org), ESRB will conduct a nationwide campaign to help educate parents about how they can use tools like ESRB ratings combined with parental controls to manage the games their kids are playing and with whom. A new PSA will be posted on [ParentalTools.org](https://www.parentaltools.org) and other supporting websites.

About ESRB

The ESRB is a non-profit, self-regulatory body that assigns age and content ratings for video games and mobile apps so parents can make informed choices. It also enforces advertising guidelines adopted by the video game industry and helps companies implement responsible online and mobile privacy practices under its Privacy Certified program. Visit www.esrb.org for more information.

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