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Regulating online : participant-driven approaches

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Abstract

This thesis considers and evaluates different approaches to regulating online gaming communities, including traditional top-down regulation, as well as bottom-up and hybrid forms led by participants. I examine the regulatory environment in both the video game and gambling industries through case studies of the science fiction, massively multiplayer game *Eve Online* and offshore gambling platforms and their community sites. I identify that the participant driven approach to regulation sometimes used in the offshore gambling industry was dependent on a number of factors, notably the strength of the community and the risks to platform operators of negative publicity. By subsequently comparing this to the video gaming industry, I suggest that participant driven processes may be an appropriate way to resolve disputes in the games industry, and show how these are – to a limited extent – already being applied.

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