

ACOFS - The Australian Council of Film Societies

Film Society Handbook

Chapter 13: FEEDBACK

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It is important for a film selection committee to get some sort of response from the members as to their reactions to films screened. The easiest way is for members to rate each film when it is screened.

For comparison purposes this response should be in standardized format, so that the various societies screening the same film can compare results. The most widely used rating method used by film societies both here and overseas a 5-step rating system that results in an audience response expressed as a REACTION INDEX or RI. Members are asked to rate each film from A (Best) to E (worst) either on a ballot paper which is handed out to members as they enter the cinema, or by members putting counters in voting boxes with slots marked A to E, as they leave the theatre.

The REACTION INDEX is calculated as follows:

1. The number of votes in each of the 5 categories are totalled.

The RI is calculated by totalling the number of A votes + 0.75 x B votes + 0.5 x C + 0.25 x D, divided by the number of votes and expressed as a percentage.

For example:-

If 21 votes are cast as follows – 8xA, 7xB, 2xC, 1xD and 3xE.

The R.I. is calculated as follows

A: 8 times 1	= 8
B: 7 times 0.75	= 5.25
C: 2 times 0.5	= 1
D: 1 times 0.25	= 0.25
E: 3 times 0	= 0
Total	= 14.50

RI = Total divided by no. of votes counted = 14.50/21 = 69.0 %

The reaction index calculated for each film can be a useful indicator of how the members responded to the films, but the results should be treated with a great deal of care. It is very easy to slip into the trap of reducing film appreciation to a mere number. That is certainly not the purpose of measuring audience response. A closer look at how a Reaction Index of 50 can be obtained will illustrate the trap.

	A.	B.	C.	D.	E	RI
Film 1	0	15	70	15	0	50%
Film 2	40	10	0	10	40	50%

In both cases the RI was 50%. Was the response of the audience the same for both films? NO.

Film A was a "good" safe film and a rating of 50% is not particularly impressive in terms of film society material.

Film B really split the audience. Some thought it really terrific and others couldn't stand it. This film is definitely of more interest to film society programmers, since one of the aims of a film society is to promote discussion.

It is useful for programming purposes to have a written record of what your audience thought of a film. Don't depend on your memory.

The Victorian Federation have recently introduced a "StarBox" system for collecting feedback. Members of a society rate the film screened by placing a plastic disc in a StarBox in one of 5 slots marked from 1 to 5 stars. The rating is the weighted average of all votes cast.

For example if the votes cast are, 10x5* (stars), 8x4*, 3x3*, 1*2*, 0x1* equates to 4.2* average.

To express this as a RI, you would subtract 1 and multiply by 25, giving 81%.