

SOIC – Social and Organisation Issues in Computing

In Class Test: 9th December 2009

Location: B29 – Senate House (North Block)

Time: 18h30 – 20h00 (90 min)

Subject: Essay on: The Internet - an Empowering vs Censorship Tool

The Internet is often seen as a positive technology which promotes democracy and economic growth. According to this view, it allows citizens to easily access public information and e-Government services, and individuals and groups to socialise and to improve their knowledge and skills through novel opportunities for learning. At the same time, the Internet is also being used by governments to promote their own goals, to regulate discussions of current affairs, to monitor citizens, and in some cases to enforce censorship.

In this essay you are asked to adopt the view of a consultant asked to advise the UK government on behalf of a human rights organisation. What advice would you give regarding the use of the Internet by the UK government? In particular, discuss:

1. The benefits the Internet brings to citizens in terms of education, economic development and participation to public life as expressed through voting for example.
2. The facilities the Internet and the law provide to the government for controlling and monitoring its citizens and for opportunities for propaganda.
3. Measures the government could take in order to ensure benefits to both citizens and government while still ensuring that human rights are preserved.

Rules:

This in-class test accounts for **10%**.

This is a **closed book** in-class test: no material is allowed during the test (no books, no slides, no lectures notes, no personal notes, etc.).

The question is released three weeks prior the test so that students can make necessary research work in order to prepare their essay that will be written during the in-class test session.

Students are strongly advised to carefully consider the following points when preparing and writing their essay:

- Clarity of arguments;
- Evidence (examples);
- Quality of text.

Students are reminded that plagiarism is strictly forbidden.