



ARKS KEYS TO INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

CRITICAL AWARENESS

Critical Awareness of Information Technology

Computers are often seen as the answer to some of the daily tasks carried out in offices, universities, shops, banks, insurance companies, schools, and many other places where information is needed to complete tasks.

Have we come to rely more on the computer than on the human being behind it?

What do you think?

What do you think are the main advantages of Information Technology?

What do you think are the main disadvantages of Information Technology?

Write your brief comments in the box.



What do you think?

The first computer built in the United States came into use in 1946 and was called ENIAC. It weighed 30 tons, filled the space of a two car garage, and contained 18,000 vacuum tubes, which failed on average at the rate of one every seven minutes. It cost half a million dollars at 1946 prices. Today, the same amount of computing power is contained in a pea sized silicon chip.



Almost every year computer manufacturers and software developers produce faster computers and new updated software. Computers are big business.

Information has now become a commodity that is bought and sold on national and international markets. Should we be concerned about the ways computers are being used in work, education, shopping and leisure pursuits?



Activity

Make a list of the ways you have seen Information Technology being used over the last week, in the home, at work, in education and training, and in your social life.

Either discuss in a group or write a short paragraph about how Information Technology affects our lives. Some questions to think about are:

- Has Information Technology really revolutionised our lives, or do we just carry on as usual?
- Are people who can not afford a home computer at a disadvantage in education or the job market?
- How do governments use Information Technology?
- How has Information Technology affected people in the work force?

There are no right or wrong answers to these questions, but it is important to be aware of the influence of those who have control of information systems that hold details of individual people.



What do you think?

What do you think?

If you look back to what you wrote about the advantages and disadvantages of computers, has your view changed? Can you think of any more advantages or disadvantages of using Information Technology? Write your comments in the box.

Information Technology and the Internet

More and more people are now 'on line', all over the world. Sitting in your own home you can communicate almost instantly with someone sitting in their home in Australia.

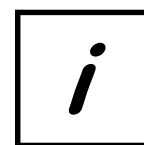
What do you think?

What would you see as the main advantages and disadvantages of being able to do this? Write your comments in the box.



What do you think?

The World Wide Web contains millions of pages of information, which you can fairly easily gain access to. Governments such as the United States have their own 'web sites' where individuals can obtain information. The World Wide Web also has 'web sites' that have been created by individuals, on any topic imaginable.



You may be aware that some of the 'web sites' contain pornography. So we can have sites that can give us information about how Governments work but also sites that can contain information that people may find disturbing.

The Internet can also give people the opportunity to express their views about certain topics. 'Chat rooms' for instance, have been set up where individuals from all over the world can 'talk' to each other about things that interest them.



Activity

At present the Internet is not 'policed', that is there are no regulations about what is put on the Internet. Either discuss in a group or write a short paragraph about how the Internet may affect our lives. Some questions to think about are:

Should there be regulations about what is 'allowed' to go on the Internet?

Do you think the Internet is a 'good' thing?

What are the main benefits of the Internet?

What are the main disadvantages of the Internet?

There are no right or wrong answers to these questions, but it is important to be aware of what is happening on the Internet and World Wide Web.



What do you think?

What do you think?

If you look back to what you wrote about the advantages and disadvantages of computers, has your view changed?

Can you think of any more advantages or disadvantages of using the Internet?

Write your comments in the box.

The intention of this section of the Information Technology Pack has been to get you to think about the advantages and disadvantages of Information Technology.

It is hoped that it has raised more questions than given answers.

Thank you for completing this.