IT Applications: VCE Information Technology Units 3 & 4

Chapter 7: 'Storage, communication and disposal of data and information'

Apply your knowledge answers

1   Find a company, such as a music store, a video store or a doctor's surgery, and do the following:
    (a)   identify that company's mission statement
    (b)   identify its organisational goals
    (c)   identify at least one information system within the company and explain how it meets one of the organisational goals.

2   Compare the mission statements of the two organisations in Figure 7-1. In what ways do they differ? (Hint – consider the type of organisation.)

3   How has the *Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2000* affected the information produced by your school?

4   Read the article in Figure 7-22 and answer these questions:
    (a)   What data does Marion gather about customers and employees?
    (b)   How does she use this data?
    (c)   How might staff be affected by the monitoring that is described?
    (d)   Which information privacy law(s) would relate to the handling of the data that Marion collects?

5   At ACME Sales, some employees have set up a network game that they play after work on Friday nights. The manager does not know about the game, as it has been carefully hidden on the hard disk of one of the company computers. There is no company computer use policy.
    (a)   Why might management object to what these employees are doing?
    (b)   Argue the case in favour of an employee who is being questioned by a supervisor over the network game.

6   Why might an organisation object to employees using the Internet for private purposes?

7   Do you believe emailing a hoax virus warning to be unethical or illegal?

8   Consider an information system used by a hospital to store medical records and answer the following questions:
    (a)   What specific security threats might there be for this information? Mention both physical and logical.
    (b)   Why might these threats exist? In other words, why would the hardware or data be of use to others?

1   The responses to this question will differ, depending on the organisation a student selects to investigate. When reviewing the answers, keep in mind that a mission statement explains 'what' an organisation wants to achieve, whereas an organisational goal explains 'how' they are going to achieve the mission. Information systems must also have system goals which relate directly to an organisational goal.

2   The types of organisations investigated will determine the responses to this question. In general, however, not-for-profit organisations often have service to members or the public as a key mission, whereas other organisations will often be wanting to return money to shareholders.

3   The Privacy Amendment Act has forced all schools to evaluate how they collect and mange Information about both students and parents. Teachers and school administration must be careful about what academic results are distributed and in what manner. Each school should have a short summary of how it complies with the amended Privacy Act.

4   'IT Unwraps choc-lovers'

    a) Marion gathers data about employees and customers like what and how many chocolates people buy. This can be linked to salespeople to see how many sales they make.

    b) From this data the performance of staff can be evaluated. In addition, Marion can ensure that stock is automatically reordered when it runs low.

    c) Staff might be affected by the monitoring system in a number of ways. For some it might prove to be stressful. It is not really an invasion of privacy. For others, it might be viewed as a challenge or a useful tool in helping to improve their competency as sales staff.

    d) The data that Marion collects would be protected by the Privacy Act 1988 (if credit cards are used for purchases) and the Privacy Amendment Act.

5   Employees playing games on a company's network after hours:

    a) Whilst no company computer use policy exists, the fact that the game is hidden away and played after work, when it is assumed supervisors have left, indicates that this is unethical. Management might object to this use of their equipment because it will increase the wear and tear on hardware as well as the possibility of causing data delays on the network - especially for the Friday backup.

    b) The employee may use arguments such as:
It is outside work hours (company time), so there is no impact on productivity.
There has been no alteration to company software or data.
Participating in gaming may help employees bond and work better as a team during the day.
They had no idea about the company's position on the matter because no computer use policy exists.

6   An organisation might object to employees using the Internet for private purposes for several reasons. If the organisation pays a fee for data downloaded, it will have to pay more because of what the employee is downloading. If the employee is pursuing illegal (online gambling) or unethical (looking up pornography) activities, this might reflect poorly on the organisation.

7   Technically a hoax virus warning is unethical, rather than illegal. If people read the message, then forward it, it may only increase network traffic. Some email virus hoaxes, however, contain instructions for 'removing' the virus. Typically these instructions involve deleting critical system files. Again, this may not be considered illegal, unless it was considered to be a form of cracking.

8   A hospital's medical records:

a) Physical threats may include natural disasters and possible theft or tampering. Logical threats would typically be user error or, in extreme cases, a hacker or cracker looking for medical information about specific people.

b) Both the hardware and data might be sold. It is the data which is of greater concern, however, because medical details are considered to be confidential and are protected under both state and federal privacy laws. The data could be used for blackmail or simply to embarrass someone.