



Cambridge International AS & A Level

THINKING SKILLS

9694/42

Paper 4 Applied Reasoning

May/June 2024

1 hour 45 minutes



You must answer on the enclosed answer booklet.

You will need: Answer booklet (enclosed)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Answer **all** questions.
- Follow the instructions on the front cover of the answer booklet. If you need additional answer paper, ask the invigilator for a continuation booklet.

INFORMATION

- The total mark for this paper is 50.
- The number of marks for each question or part question is shown in brackets [].

This document has **8** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

Questions 1 and 2 refer to Document 1.

- 1 (a) State the main conclusion of the argument. [1]
- (b) Identify **three** intermediate conclusions in paragraphs 3 to 4. [3]
- (c) Analyse the structure of the reasoning in paragraph 2. [4]

- 2 (a) Identify and explain **three** flaws and/or weaknesses in the reasoning in paragraphs 3 to 5. [6]
- (b) Assess the extent to which paragraph 6 supports the argument as a whole. [3]

3 Question 3 refers to Document 4.

- (a) 'The UK public thinks individuals have more responsibility for safeguarding online privacy than governments.'

Identify **three** weaknesses in the support given by the graph in Document 4A to this claim. [3]

- (b) 'Public opinion about how much the government should regulate the internet remains largely unchanged since 2013.'

Identify **three** weaknesses in the support given by the table in Document 4B to this claim. [3]

4 You are advised to spend some time planning your answer before you begin to write it.

'Governments should regulate the internet.'

Construct a reasoned argument to support **or** challenge this claim. In your answer you should make critical use of the documents provided. [27]

DOCUMENT 1

- 1 In 2021, India announced rules to regulate social media that would make companies more accountable for content hosted on their platforms. India joined an expanding list of countries that regulate social media. Should we be worried about this trend?
- 2 Many governments want to regulate social media because they are worried about the dangerous consequences of certain forms of content such as misinformation, defamation, hate speech, threats to public order and terrorist incitement. But we already have laws against most of these things. All we need to do to remove the need for regulation is to enforce more rigorously the laws we already have.
- 3 State regulation of social media would restrict the freedom of speech of every citizen. If a government has the ability to censor social media platforms, then the content that the site's users can view will be limited. This deprives citizens of the right not only to choose the information sources that inform their opinions but also the right to express those opinions. If we want to have freedom of speech, we cannot have social media censorship.
- 4 Strict censorship is likely to lead to fewer news platforms in total and thus a narrow information stream. A narrow information stream would lead to an increase in prejudice and hence an increase in religious and cultural intolerance. A lack of available information can also make people feel detached and powerless. Therefore censorship would create a perfect environment for the rise of extreme ideologies.
- 5 In a regime of censorship, those providers that want to keep operating must learn to work within the regulations set by the government in order to avoid negative attention or sanctions. This means that all social media platforms that are allowed to exist must actively avoid offending the government. Eventually the only providers that are left are, in effect, mouthpieces for state propaganda. In such a society, independent news outlets struggle to exist, which leads to public protests, the destabilisation of the country and the fall of the government itself.
- 6 Tighter regulation of social media would undoubtedly reduce competition, and competition is obviously necessary for innovation; so, tighter regulation of social media platforms would stifle innovation and hence the economy.
- 7 Regulation could have negative consequences for freedom, stability and the economy; so we should resist the increase in state regulation of social media.

DOCUMENT 2

Early enthusiasts believed that the internet was the beginning of a new egalitarian world, where the powerless would be on an equal footing with the powerful. There was no central controlling authority regulating who could contribute or what they could contribute. Anyone with an internet connection would have the same ability to reach everyone on the internet as the editor of the *Washington Post*. Access to government, data, education and information was open and licence-free. However, with universal access comes universal vulnerability.

Today everyone, including young children, has access to the internet. In these circumstances we must have procedures for tackling illegal and harmful content. The internet is used for a wide range of unpleasant activities, many of which are illegal in most countries, for example financial scams, copyright theft, money laundering, cyber terrorism and libel. Society is as entitled to protect itself from these crimes as it would be if such activity occurred off-line. We ought not to accept universal access to offensive content as the price for freedom of expression.

The benefits of the free market are often cited as the prime reason to hesitate about government interference in any business activity. In the early days, the new crop of internet-based companies embraced that belief, arguing that the internet and internet-based companies should not be regulated in the new libertarian utopia. However, the benefits of a free market derive from competition and the ability of new providers to enter the marketplace. Ironically, the internet has become dominated by companies emerging from those early pioneers, all of whom pursue profit and market dominance as aggressively as any oil company. Moreover, the internet is being used by companies, governments, and others to gather personal information that can be used as a commodity and to actively misinform people.

During the Industrial Revolution, governments did not interfere much in big business. The results of this lack of regulation were pollution, long working hours, a disregard for safety and low wages. But unions, social movements and the media of the time forced governments to create regulations that changed the way companies operated. The result was not a catastrophic destruction of capitalist society. Economies continued to thrive, and a balance was struck between the interests of business and social justice. The same sort of regulation could work for the internet without destroying what makes it a great benefit to modern life.

Other electronic communication networks, such as radio, television and telecommunications, are regulated and the same could, and ought to, be done for the internet. Most governments, consumer groups and even internet service providers favour some form of regulation. It is time to overrule ideological objections to government interference and embrace fair regulation of the internet.

DOCUMENT 3**Existing internet regulation around the world**

The internet poses problems for censorship because it becomes difficult to classify it and to decide who regulates it and how. Is it a postal service, or a telecommunications service? Should it be treated like a print medium or a broadcast medium? Should advertising industry regulations apply? However, many international jurisdictions have some form of internet regulation in place. An EU publication lists the following as concerns about unregulated internet activity:

- national security
- protection of children
- protection of human dignity
- economic security
- information security
- protection of privacy
- protection of reputation
- intellectual property rights.

The approach to internet regulation varies from country to country and is constantly evolving.

The USA has sophisticated regulations for the internet and uses a very broad definition of 'internet'. Content is lightly regulated but users can be, and are, prosecuted for activities that are illegal in the real world.

France has proposed using inspectors to prowl the internet inspecting content to ensure that information providers comply with regulations. Currently, however, the legal position is uncertain because the relevant section of French law has been declared unconstitutional on grounds of 'vagueness'. Another French proposal for regulation, called the Fillon amendment, is through a 'negative option' – internet service providers would not have to abide by the telecommunications code of conduct, but those which did abide by the code would be absolved of legal liabilities for content. However, the legal liabilities themselves are uncertain.

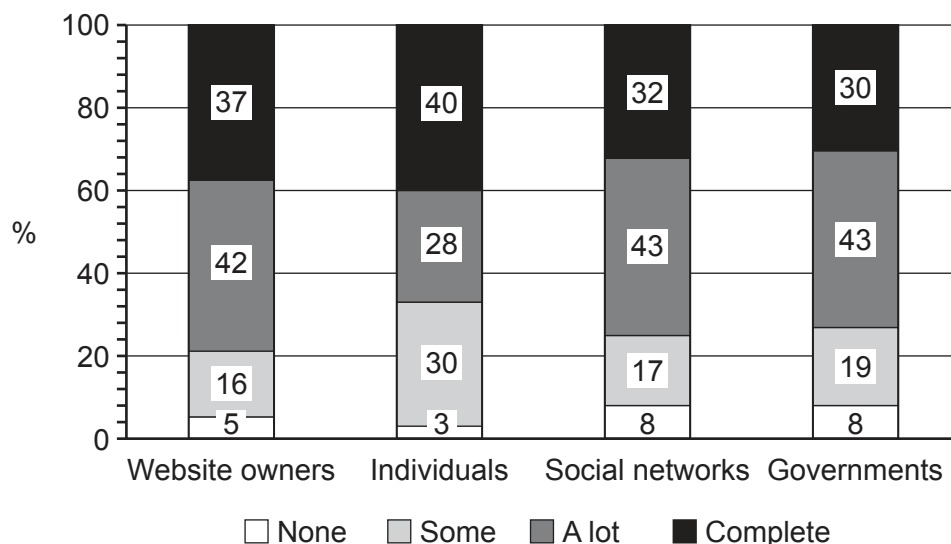
In China, internet access has to go through filters, using only a few government-controlled access providers. A common reply from those who argue against internet censorship is that users can simply connect using an international call. However, a Chinese law prohibits such calls. Violators face a warning, then a fine of up to the equivalent of an average worker's annual salary. The laws that apply to the internet are a subset of China's electronic media laws.

South Korea was the first country to have an internet-specific censorship law. It covers material on 'public domain services' that may affect public morals, national sovereignty, and 'young people's character, emotions and the sense of value'. Political speech is also regulated.

DOCUMENT 4A

The UK public thinks individuals have more responsibility for safeguarding online privacy than governments.

A recent UK survey asked respondents how responsible they thought various parties were for safeguarding online privacy. They were first asked whether website owners had no responsibility, some responsibility, a lot of responsibility or complete responsibility. They were then asked the same question about individuals, social networks and governments.



DOCUMENT 4B

Public opinion about how much the government should regulate the internet remains largely unchanged since 2013.

Year	Proportion in favour of 'more' or 'much more' regulation of the internet*		
	Users (of the internet)	Non-users	Average of Users and Non-users
2011	57	78	67.5
2013	50	68	59
2015	45	77	61
2017	41	79	60

*Survey of over 5000 respondents from a range of countries.

DOCUMENT 5

A selection of comments from an internet discussion forum

In a free society any system of controls on internet content represents a breach of the individual's right to freedom of expression. Just because we have some censorship of traditional media does not mean it needs to apply to the internet too!

ZY, Greece

We have laws to protect an elderly lady from having her bag stolen. What is wrong with having similar laws to protect her from being conned out of her savings by an internet fraud scam?

XW, South Korea

The internet is different from other communication networks – TV is simultaneously broadcast into millions of homes, whereas the internet requires a user to actively seek a particular website.

VU, Brazil

The internet is too big and changes too rapidly for any regulation to keep up. It operates in all countries and so regulation would require international cooperation – which just isn't going to happen.

ST, Pakistan

Times change. New laws always have to be introduced to deal with new and emerging crimes. There were probably no laws about guns before guns were invented.

RQ, New Zealand

In countries with restrictive regulations, some internet service providers end up playing safe and excluding content which is not criminal but might be considered offensive to a particular section of the community. Another example of woke political correctness permeating society.

PO, Ireland

It is not the job of an overbearing government to control or limit content on the internet. If children need protection from what's out there, then those responsible for them – parents, teachers, supervisors – should control what they access.

NM, Zimbabwe

Those who resist internet regulation on the grounds of freedom forget that similar arguments were used against the introduction of police forces, workplace safety regulations, workers' rights and even publicly funded education.

LK, USA

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