**Multimedia Contemporary Ethical Issues Essay:  
By-Benjamin Couwenberg.**

The Essay question:  
Information Technology is revolutionising society, culture and communication at a global level. Consequently, governments across the globe have collaborated to develop comprehensive and detailed laws regarding the use of information technology. Provided that computer professionals adhere to these laws, their use of information technology will be considered to be ethical.

**Introduction**

It is 2012, and Information Technology (IT) is revolutionising society, culture, communication and general Multimedia (MM) in a new fashion. This new fashion is no longer constricted to one continent; it is global. Nor is it constricted to one construct; technology converges ever more rapidly. According to Moore’s law; the doubling of transistors on integrated circuits (ISSCC, 2003); we can expect more powerful information technology, and also expect technologies to continue their concrescence to new more powerful appliances with new features. Since the new technologies/features are on the increase via “accelerating returns” (Kurzweil, 2001), there is a concern within this essay and an ever increasing global population in the context of privacy, laws and ethical considerations.  
  
  
**Body**  
**Privacy:**  
If you were not hiding under a rock the last several years you would have noticed the random outlier news stories TV discussions about cyber-crime ID theft and Credit fraud, teen sexting (sexual content text messaging) or the armed forces cadet sex tape scandals, or whether you noticed other technological privacy issues like airport full-body scanners, you would appreciate that your privacy seems to be at greater and greater risk.   
  
In today’s busy technocratical world the context of privacy in the face of new cyber technologies is ever more pertinent as technology reaches ever further into our personal lives with; consumer privacy, medical privacy, employee and workplace privacy (Tavani, 2011, pg 132). From this we can see that privacy can affect many aspects of our lives.   
 The privacy issue flows into and overlaps with the next sections.  
  
**Law:**   
By now various Government across earth have collaborated to develop laws regarding computers and IT and their use. However the logical questions still follow; **is it needed; are the laws needed? Are the efforts enough? Is it all in vein?**

Is it needed; are the laws regulations methods needed?

It would seem that the IC3 (IC3, 2011) reports of in 2011 it receiving over 300,000 cyber-crime related complaints itself would be valid reason for law enforcement being needed . Then there seems only adage to the need basis from the continuous real world examples of rampant privacy infringing IT issues such as the military cadet webcam broadcast scandals (ADF, 2012). According to, The Sun (2009), “CYBERSPACE is the new hunting ground for criminals and others who want to do us harm. It is estimated £50billion is lost globally to internet fraud each year”. So it would seem law enforcement is needed.

Is it enough? The answer to this may seem obvious, that existing efforts do not contain all possibilities of miss-use nor do they on many occasion provide comprehensive enough all-encompassing regulation or mitigation. It can also be added for instance that cyber-crime generally is on quite the rise (FBI, 2009). This may seem as the existing Cyber /IT-laws are not achieving their desired effect or scope.   
However It can also be said to the contrary that their (the laws/regulations etc.) mitigative effects are having somewhat of a reasonably substantial impact, “Initially established for a convenient method for citizens to report Internet crime information, IC3 has **evolved** into a **vital** **resource** **for both victims of online crime and for law enforcement”,** IC3 (Internet Crime Complaint Center,2011). To add, the percentage increase of cyber-crimes committed year on year seems to be declining in the short term as we can see via registered complaints; “22.3 percent increase over the previous year (FBI, 2009), as opposed to “an 3.4 percent increase over the previous year” (IC3, 2011).  
  
The key bolded words in the above paragraph go hand in hand with the next question asked in this section; is it all in vein?  
Premise 1: Theory of Evolution (anthropological evolution, 1 example)  
Premise 2: Moore’s law (technological evolution, 1 example)  
Conclusion: There will be a battle between people and technology in an evolutionary speed context. As technology creates its own evolution via accelerating concresing exponentiating “returns” (Kurzweil, 2001), and as humans are evolving and the IT/MM/Cyber laws that come with them. We can see that it will be a question of; who can evolve fastest, the human laws or the artificial intelligences and technological trends? If not pertinent now then at some point within the next 20 years it must be discussed or realized.   
  
So from this the re-iteration occurs of the initial question; is it all in vein? That is to explicate; are man-made laws bound to become obsolete due to their implementation speed/ slow mitigation effect on “IT miss-use”?  
Re iteration also occurs here in the context of privacy; if we do nothing now due to seeing that future context; a point where technological feats and issues thereof far outpace law creation and mitigation, then wont our privacy be at risk? It is obvious though however that just because we see a future point where it may be no use to implement laws against IT miss-use, that it does not follow to conclude; do nothing because of this in the meantime.   
  
It would seem fit to say that firstly; laws/mitigations then should be implemented as it appears existing efforts are having a positive effect helping people, and that secondly; no logical conclusion can be found to state do nothing, and thirdly; There is a strong need for continuous law enforcements. Therefore it does **not** seem in vein to keep collaborative global assertion toward creation of cyber/IT crime mitigation methods such as the already existing laws in motion.

**I.T. Revolutionizing society and culture:**  
In 2012 and consequentially beyond we will see Information Technology (IT) continue to revolutionize society, culture, communication and general Multimedia (MM) in a new fashion. This new fashion is no longer constricted to one continent; it is global. Nor is it constricted to one construct; technology converges ever more rapidly; According to Moore’s law (Kurzweil, 2001). But apparently there is more to the story, from a symbolic view point we can also see the general compression of information (T.McKenna, 1995. B.Couwenberg, 2012) and also subsequently see Information Technology concresing in a compression pattern (Ray Kurzweil, 2012). This will clearly ‘revolutionize’ Education amongst a myriad of other societal aspects such as super computer future decision making (Zeitgeist, 2008) or robotics.   
  
**Education + Communication revolutionizing:**  
However education is most pertinent to talk about “A culture cannot evolve any faster than its language evolves, and it cannot be anymore glued together than its bandwidth that it's languages will tolerate, and so what this technology that is putting in place, is going to mean is, it will dissolve boundaries; is its going to make us transparent. In the future we won’t bring home pictures and put them on the fridge but we'll put them on our Website, and someone can walk through it” (T.McKenna, 1996). An example of how IT advances can revolutionize education can be seen in the joint venture between two of the worlds most astute Universities; Harvard and M.I.T releasing free online degree courses (Tamar Lewin, 2012).  
 Since computer memory is already better than human memory being able to store more and more quickly which is allowing you to remember less because the computer has stored it, and all you need to do is know how to use the computer, which can often be easier than memorizing large amounts of data we can expect technology in general and hence IT/Cyber fields to drastically robotize and become more artificially intelligent cyberneticly running themselves. So we can see that Information Technology advances will evolve the way the world works and may completely individualize and revolutionize education and society in general on a never before seen scale via a global internet reach capability.   
  
Education leads to morals and ethics through *realization environmentalis;* realizing ones surroundings and near future and thus leading to ‘social good’ via seeing the planet is one planet and we are all on it; similarly this is one society I am in it, which leads into the next section.   
  
**Professional ethics:**

The previous sections then logically and clearly lead to ethical questions in the context of IT/Cyber-crime miss-use issues.   
Revising part of the Essay question;

‘Provided that computer professionals adhere to laws, their use of information technology will be considered to be ethical’. We can see that ethics and laws are not the same thing, and that a computer programmer for instance can have large impact on a much larger population than himself, so hence a logical next question is;   
Can all IT professionals just "obey the laws" and all will be fine?....or do they need something else, like ethics, to guide them?

From the previous sections we can seemingly answer this with an astounding yes, professionals and non-professionals alike will require something more than laws since;   
Premise one: Cybernetic IT growth may drastically out pace law placement/adherence speed;  
Premise two: Cyber-crime is increasing.

Premise three: Privacy in this subject’s context will only become more vulnerable.   
We can then conclude and see that: Something more is needed than just law enforcement and ethics as a base of human behaviors is a candidate.   
  
Ethical systems are used to identify and analyze-(what laws do not always do!) the problem or controversial practice (Tavani, 2012, pg 19).   
We also saw that laws are needed, which may be hinting that un ethical use issues do arise and will continue to arise, which logically leads to; clearly we need to establish some basic absolute or relative ethical guidelines for Cyber/IT/MM use on a global scale as the issue is now globally reaching via the internet. Since professionals now have global reach and have specialized skill sets (such as programmers who can implant viruses), professional ethics should be a starting point for a plural global ethical embrace.   
  
  
  
**Conclusion:**  
So what can we draw from the above? IT seems clear to take away the need for ethics as an underlying principle plurality proverbially reverberated with global reach.   
This is further backed up as we can also see that laws may be outpaced via exponentially faster technological trends and convergence and that there is clear possibility of global large scale negligence’s. So the former combined with the latter may ensue grave consequences if un-mitigated or left to flourish without any ethical concerns being raised. IT seems man is about to operate on a whole new onto’s ^1 with himself and ethics seems as it will be the grounding foundation for a new technocratic global revolutionized society and govern human relations/human machine relations. Clearly though problems remain in creating some kind of unified ethical base/global framework of idealology as different cultures have different “beliefs” and identities which can clash, but that discussion was beyond this essay.

Word count; 1700

**References:**   
  
 **Text sources:**  
  
 Tavani, HT 2011, Ethics & Technology; Controversies, Questions, and Strategies for Ethical Computing,

3rd edn, John Wiley & Sons Inc. pg 19, 132.

**Websites/Electronic sources:**   
  
ADF cadet sex 'broadcast on webcam, April 5, 2011.

< http://www.watoday.com.au/national/adf-cadet-sex-broadcast-on-webcam-20110405-1d2nt.html>, viewed

14/08/2012.  
  
B.Couwenberg, 15th August, 2012.

<http://bensnotes.weebly.com/note-38-time-compression-consummation-summation.html>, viewed 15/08/2012.  
  
FBI Releases Annual Internet Crime Report, 2009.

<http://www.thenewnewinternet.com/2010/03/15/fbi-releases-annual-internet-crime-report/>, viewed 14/08/2012.  
  
International Solid-State Circuits Conference (ISSCC), February 2003.  
<<http://www.intel.com/about/companyinfo/museum/exhibits/moore.htm>>, viewed 14/08/2012.

IC3, Internet Crime Complaint Center, 2011.  
<http://www.ic3.gov/media/annualreport/2011_IC3Report.pdf>, viewed 14/08/2012.   
  
Learning Technologies 2012 - Ray Kurzweil - The Web Within Us: When Minds and Machines Become One.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gwdnqo7Tk1w>

Ray Kurzweil, Director at Singularity University, viewed 15/08/2012.

Peter Joseph, Zeitgeist, 2008.

<http://www.zeitgeistmovie.com/>, viewed 15/08/2012.

Tamar Lewin, May 2, 2012.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/03/education/harvard-and-mit-team-up-to-offer-free-online-courses.html?\_r=1>, viewed 16/08/2012.  
  
T.McKenna, 1996, Evolving times.

<http://www.endalldisease.com/terence-mckenna-evolving-times/>, viewed 15/08/2012.

T. McKenna, 1995.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k9vkoDkeaVM&feature=related>

Terence McKenna - Timewave Zero, viewed 15/08/2012.

The Law of Accelerating Returns, March 7, 2001 by Ray Kurzweil

<http://www.kurzweilai.net/the-law-of-accelerating-returns>, viewed 14/08/2012.

29th June 2009, The Sun,

http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/features/2502200/Waging-war-on-cyber-terrorists.html>, viewed 16/08/2012

**Appendix:**   
  
^1~ Onto’s; a whole new ontological relationship. Ontology having to do with the study of the nature of being, so the context when the word was used was meant in a relational way of new being; instead of man in relationship with local tribe/society members the new internet structures and technology will create a relationship or onto’s between man and machine/technology on a global scale.