

Information technology in a global society
Higher level and standard level
Paper 2

Wednesday 20 May 2015 (morning)

1 hour 15 minutes

ARTICLE

Instructions to candidates

- Do not turn over this sheet until instructed to do so.
- This sheet contains the article required for information technology in a global society higher level and standard level paper 2.

Theme: Student cyber-bullying using social networking sites

IT system: using computer-based technologies and social networks

According to a recent poll, more than 10% of parents surveyed around the world said their child had been cyber-bullied and nearly 25% knew a child who had been a victim. The most widely reported method of online cyber-bullying is by using social networking sites, such as Facebook.

5 Results from the poll indicated that 32% of parents in India had said that their child had experienced cyber-bullying, followed by 20% in Brazil, 18% in Canada and Saudi Arabia, and 15% in the United States.

10 Billye, in Utah, USA and Olivia, in Wales, UK are two teenagers that have been victims of cyber-bullying through Ask.fm. Ask.fm is a social networking site that is popular with teenagers. The site allows an account holder to send anonymous questions from a cell phone (mobile phone) or laptop to another account holder. Once a response is received, the exchange of messages is posted publicly for anyone to read. Both Billye and Olivia received a constant stream of nasty messages through the site, and felt that they would not survive this cyber-bullying. Cyber-bullying victims suffer from a range of stress-related health problems, including anxiety and depression. In the case of Billye and Olivia, they were able to take control of the situation and overcome the
15 cyber-bullying. In instances where the cyber-bullies anonymously post in school, school security systems can be used to identify the cyber-bullies.

20 People who cyber-bully are able to terrorize their victims 24/7 by using cell phone apps* to post directly to social networking sites. The postings can include a range of personal information, photos, or videos intended to hurt or embarrass the victim. The anonymous nature of these websites may also lead bullies to behave even more aggressively than they would in real life.

25 There is considerable evidence that cyber-bullying is a worldwide concern. However children and students often feel helpless when they are trapped in a cyber-bullying situation. Parents are uncertain about how to help their child if they are being bullied via their cell phone services and social networking sites. In some locations, parents of the children who are doing the cyber-bullying may be held accountable for the actions of their children.

30 Teachers and school administrators are often uncertain about what their role and responsibility is regarding cyber-bullying that occurs both inside and outside of the school premises. They are also concerned about how cyber-bullying disrupts the school's positive learning environment and are uncertain about what action they should take. Often it is unclear if laws apply in some instances of cyber-bullying. In other situations new laws have been passed quickly and may be difficult to enforce. However social networking sites do not want to lose their advertisers and customers. They often make claims on their websites that they are addressing issues related to cyber-bullying.

[Source: www.reuters.com; www.ksl.com; www.bbc.co.uk and deletocyberbullying.eu]

* apps: application software, typically small, specialized programs downloaded onto mobile devices; apps can also run on the internet, on a computer, or on a cell/mobile phone or other electronic device
