

## UNIT 5 • The Media

### D The Future - The Internet: Friend Or Foe?

#### Speaker 1:

The problem is that nothing that you put on the Internet is really secure. People can hack into your emails, for example, or get your credit card number if you buy something. The CIA already has sophisticated technology which monitors Internet traffic using key words. For all you know, the secret service has got a file on you. It's like putting a tap on your telephone so they can hear your conversations. The plus side is that this could be used to stop potential terrorist acts, for instance if a message contains bomb-making instructions, or when they enter a suspect's home and go through his emails. But on the other hand it could be used for more sinister purposes, such as limiting people's civil liberties.

#### Speaker 2:

It's out of control. There's just no censorship. People can put whatever they like on the net. For example, I walked into my young son's room the other day, he's only eleven years old, and he had this really hard-core porn on his screen. I was shocked. It's appalling that young children have such easy access to pornography. And what about those paedophiles using the net to share their filthy images and turning paedophilia into big business? It's disgusting!

#### Speaker 3:

It represents the biggest step forward in the freedom of information in the last couple of hundred years. Not long ago, for example, your only source of information was the newspapers or the radio, and you can choose from a limited number of these, and we know who controls them. But there are no controls on the Internet. If your government wants to pull the wool over your eyes in the domestic media, you can just go on line and find out the truth and there's nothing they can do about it.

#### Speaker 4:

There's too much stuff out there and most of it's junk. Our kids are becoming anaemic with all that time spent chained to the modem. It sounds cool to say that you're 'surfing the net', but what does that really mean? Spending hours in front of the screen, finding out useless information about film stars or pop singers or whatever catches their fancy. And what do they get out of it? Square eyes. And if their parents haven't got broadband, whenever you call them on their home line, the telephone's engaged, because their kids are surfing the net!

#### Speaker 5:

It's no wonder they call it the Information Revolution. Not long ago, if you wanted to find out about something, you had to go to the library and hope they'd got the book you wanted, or search the bookshops to buy a book on the subject. But today, you just click onto a search programme, type in the key words, and you've got masses to choose from. Not only that, if you're doing research, you can quickly find out what's going on in the world and what research has already been done. It's like having the work of thousands of people on your bookshelf. It certainly speeds up the dissemination of knowledge.