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UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

279 0106 ZA

BSc degrees and Diplomas for Graduates in Economics, Management, Finance and the Social Sciences, the Diploma in Economics and Access Route for Students in the External Programme

Sociology and Ethics of Information Systems

Tuesday, 30 May 2006 : 10.00am to 1.00pm

Candidates should answer **THREE** of the following **EIGHT** questions: **ONE** from Section A, **ONE** from Section B and **ONE** further question from either section. All questions carry equal marks.

PLEASE TURN OVER

SECTION A

Answer **one** question from this section and **one** further question if you answer only one question from Section B.

1. Explain how the under-determination of data can result in 'the experimenter's regress'.
Use these notions to explain why a problematic system might be caused by a poor design **or** a poor implementation process.
2. Explain what actor-network theory means by the symmetry principle. Use examples to illustrate your answer.
What practical issues may limit the use of this notion in analysing information systems activities?
3. Explain what Lucy Suchman means when she argues that plans are, at best, seen as an artefact for reasoning about action but not as a generative mechanism for action.
How do you believe these ideas could impact the process of strategic planning?
4. In what ways is the process of rule-following related to particular forms-of-life?
How can system developers ensure that systems based on established norms and conventions are understandable and usable by different social groups?

SECTION B

Answer **one** question from this section and **one** further question if you answer only one question from Section A.

5. 'Machines should never make decisions.' Discuss this statement with reference to the notion of autonomy and responsibility.
6. 'Software should not be owned.' Discuss this statement with specific reference to the nature of intellectual property.
7. 'Computers in the workplace are just another opportunity for managers to control employees' **or** 'Computers in the workplace empower employees.'
Discuss these two statements and argue your own position.
8. It is often argued that technology is neutral. Explain why you would agree or disagree with this position. Use an example of an everyday technology to illustrate your position.

END OF PAPER

