



General Certificate of Education
Advanced Subsidiary Examination
June 2013

Critical Thinking

CRIT1

Unit 1 Foundation Unit

Source Material

This source material is to be read in conjunction with the questions in Unit CRIT1.

A

Introductory information outlining the background to Documents A to C

In July 2011, Britain's biggest-selling Sunday tabloid newspaper, the *News of the World*, was closed down by its owner, Rupert Murdoch, in response to allegations about its involvement in phone hacking. It was alleged that not only had the newspaper hacked the phones of celebrities in order to find out details of their private lives, but also that a teenage murder victim's phone had been hacked.

The Leveson inquiry was set up to investigate the phone hacking allegations and took evidence from many of those involved.

What follows in **Document A**, and continues in **Document C**, is some of the evidence given to the Leveson inquiry by Paul McMullan, the deputy features editor at the *News of the World* between 1994 and 2001.

Oxford Dictionaries Online defines phone hacking as 'the action or practice of gaining unauthorised access to data stored in another person's phone, especially in order to access their voicemail'.

Document A

Phone hacking defended at Leveson inquiry

1. Today the focus of the Leveson inquiry switched from its alleged victims to those who are suspected of undertaking the practice of phone hacking. Paul McMullan has, today, defended hacking as a legitimate means of obtaining information.
2. McMullan, who was the *News of the World's* deputy features editor between 1994 and 2001, said, "what the paper was doing was justified as the British public bought the paper in their millions."
3. "All I have ever tried to do is write truthful articles and to use any means necessary to try to get to the truth," he said.
4. "Sometimes you have to enter a grey area that I think we should sometimes be applauded for entering, because it's a very dangerous area. My life has been at risk many times, at home more than in war zones. I used to get a death threat at least once a month for 15 years of my career."

Source: AQA, 2012

Document B

Vicky and Louise are discussing the phone hacking story.

- Vicky** Call me crazy, but I think McMullan is right, because sometimes the end justifies the means. And if truth is the goal we seek, then any means of getting it is justified, including hacking into people's phones.
- Louise** If that's your argument then you must be assuming that truth is always more important than anything else. But that's not true; that's crazy.
- Vicky** Look, the truth is more precious than anything else, including people's so-called right to privacy. For one thing, the hard-won truths of modern medicine were got by invading the body's privacy; teams of medical students literally hacking into corpses with their saws and knives. And not just corpses. There's invasive surgery too. And what about brain scans? What's more important, the body's health or mobile phones? Medical researchers are just like phone hacking journalists – they invade people's privacy to get at the truth. And if it's good enough for medicine, it's good enough for journalism.
- Louise** But some truths are a waste of time because they're worthless. For example, no one knows the truth about how many hairs you have on your head, but that doesn't give other, weirdly curious people the right to invade the privacy of your hair with a comb and a magnifying glass so as to discover the truth which is "more precious than anything else".
- Vicky** You're making my case look ridiculous by twisting what I said, just to win the argument. Secret truths about powerful politicians and famous celebrities are a lot more important and interesting than the number of hairs I have on my head. They sell more newspapers for a start. And anyway, these people are in the public eye by their own free will, so they have already forfeited their right to any privacy. The public have a right to know about these things and in a democracy, the press should be free to do what it takes, including phone hacking, to pursue these truths and tell these stories. If the public find them interesting, then they are in the public interest.
- Louise** I agree that what politicians and celebrities get up to in private is more important than how much hair you have, but most of it is not important enough to justify hacking into their phones in order to find this out. Phone hacking is a serious breach of privacy. It's a kind of electronic burglary, because it's breaking into someone's private space without their permission. It should only be done by the police and in really serious cases such as with suspected terrorists. And I don't see why someone in the public eye, like a movie star, must therefore automatically lose all right to any sort of privacy.

Turn over for the next source

Turn over ►

Document C**Phone hacking defended at Leveson inquiry****(continued from Document A)**

1. McMullan branded *News of the World* editors Rebekah Brooks and Andy Coulson – later Prime Minister David Cameron’s media chief – the “scum of journalism”. “They should have had the strength of their conviction to say, ‘Yes, sometimes you have to enter into a grey area, or indeed a black, illegal area for the good of our readers, for the public good.’ Instead...they said, ‘oh, we didn’t know they were doing that’. They’re the scum of journalism for trying to drop me and all my colleagues in it.”
2. He added: “Phone hacking is a perfectly acceptable tool – given the sacrifices we made – if all we are trying to do is to get to the truth. I didn’t think anyone realised that anyone was committing a crime at the start. In 21 years of invading people’s privacy I’ve never actually come across anyone who’s been doing any good. Privacy is for paedos. Privacy is evil. It brings out the worst qualities in people, such as hypocrisy. It allows them to do bad things.”
3. Later, McMullan admitted spending £15 000 to £20 000 a year on expenses, just £3000 of which was legitimate.

Reader’s comment, regarding McMullan

“This is the guy who openly admits to fiddling his expenses! How can we trust anything he says?”

Source: AQA, 2012

END OF SOURCE MATERIAL