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PROGRAMME DU DIPLÔME DU BI
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INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IN A GLOBAL SOCIETY
CASE STUDY

For use in November 2006 examination only

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

• Case study booklet required for higher level paper 3 information technology in a global society examination.

Foreword

The ITGS case study is the stimulus material for the questions on HL paper 3 and provides a basis for further investigation on similar areas of impact in a local and global perspective. Students are expected to research, analyse, evaluate, synthesize and reflect on ideas from their investigation. Work done on the case study should reflect the integrated approach explained on page 8 of the *ITGS guide*.

Through their investigation of the case study students should be able to:

- apply the social and ethical issues listed in the *ITGS guide* (pages 11-13)
- investigate the IT systems in a social context related to the case study
- relate areas of impact to other similar local and global situations
- discuss possible future developments, challenges, solutions, improvements and different approaches in the local and global environment considering IT systems.

Students are expected to research, analyse, evaluate, synthesize and reflect on ideas from their investigation of real-life situations. Information may be gathered from local/global sources including field trips, interviews, primary and secondary research, inviting guest speakers, and online interviews.

Students will be expected to use the knowledge and experiences that they have gained in their responses to examination questions. In some instances, additional information may be provided in examination questions to allow students to generate new ideas.

The hotel represented in this case study is entirely fictional. Any similarity between the fictitious hotel presented and any actual hotel is unintentional and no harm is intended.

Case Study: Dissan Hotel

Overview

The Dissan Hotel is a 5-star hotel in Columbo, Sri Lanka, attracting both tourists and business people because of its relaxed atmosphere and strategic location close to downtown tourist attractions and businesses. Hotel guests experience friendly personalized attention, which they receive from the moment that they fax or phone their reservation and throughout their entire stay. The hotel, which was built in 1985, has 250 rooms on 6 floors and offers many modern services including a restaurant, snack bar, lounge, news-stand and gift shop, in-door and outdoor swimming pools, fitness room with massage and sauna, business center, and meeting rooms.

The features and services offered by the hotel include:

- television (cable/satellite/hotel channels with hotel information and local details)
- air conditioning
- telephone
- safe in the room with combination lock
- smoke alarm in rooms
- hotel key system with each room having a common key for the room and the mini-bar
- commercial laundry and dry cleaning service
- room service
- concierge services
- reservation and check-out services
- currency exchange at the front desk
- business center (3 computers with Internet access, scanner, laser printer, photocopier and fax machine)
- 3 meeting rooms (no network access but a ceiling mounted projection system that can be interfaced to video and DVD players and laptops is available with a large white screen. Overhead projector and paper flip charts for writing are also available).

Currently upon check-in, the hotel guest receives a card indicating their name and room number. Whenever the guest pays for any of the services of the hotel, the guest shows their card and signs the bill. The bill is then forwarded to the hotel accounting office. No money is used within the hotel. A receipt for the bill is given to the hotel guest so that they can keep track of the bills that have been incurred within the hotel, and payment can be made upon checkout.

Human Resources

The Dissan Hotel has a general manager who is responsible for the smooth running of all aspects of the hotel and accounting office staff who collate the customers' bills from all expenses incurred within the hotel. The accounting office staff are responsible for all normal business accounting functions relating to purchases and payments made by the hotel as well as employee salaries. The assistant manager of the hotel maintains all of the personnel records.

The Dissan Hotel employs its own personnel to handle all hotel services rather than rely on outsourcing. In addition to the personnel who come directly in contact with hotel guests, there are service personnel specifically qualified and responsible for IT and communication services located in hotel rooms, the business center, meeting rooms, hotel reservation desk and accounting office.

Hotel Guests

The Dissan hotel guests are actually composed of two target groups: tourists to Sri Lanka and people traveling due to international business. Upon registering in the hotel, all guests complete a questionnaire that records their name and personal contact details, their passport number and citizenship, length of stay at the hotel and purpose of the visit. There is no indication on the form regarding the purpose for the collection of the information or where and how the information will be stored and accessed.

IT Systems

The hotel IT management system is composed of several components:

- room reservations
- billing of hotel guests for rooms and all services used with the hotel
- accounting functions associated with running all hotel services
- maintaining employee records and payment of salaries.

Hotel guests have both cable and satellite television services in their rooms. Laptop computers can be used with the second telephone line in each room for accessing the Internet. The connection is a standard 56 kbps.

The computers in the business center have been installed with standard applications required in business such as word processor, spreadsheet and presentation software and can also be used for accessing the Internet. Black and white laser printing, scanning, photocopying and faxes are also available.

Whenever a user has difficulty with the operation of any of the hardware or software in either the business center or meeting rooms, the reception desk is contacted and a hotel IT service person is called to solve the problem. The hotel IT service person also responds to any requests for IT support for a presentation or meeting.

Challenges Faced

The Dissan Hotel must remain competitive with the services and operations supported by IT offered by both local hotels and internationally. Although the hotel has made some upgrading of their IT and communication services in hotel rooms, the business center and meeting rooms, the hotel must look to the future and implement new IT systems. These new systems need to improve the reservation and onsite services offered to hotel guests and improve the efficiency and management of all the hotel services. However, the privacy of hotel guests and the security of data are a major concern.

An increasing number of business people and tourists are traveling with laptop computers capable of wireless connectivity. They increasingly request access to the Internet, as well as hotel services and local information, from anywhere within the hotel premises. Guests of the Dissan Hotel are world travelers and are accustomed to quality hotel services offered in other hotels.

An increasing number of hotel guests need access to facilities where they can process and print images from digital cameras and simple editing video footage. They also require the capability of easily uploading their images to the Internet.

The Dissan Hotel general manager would like to have a complete overview of all aspects of the hotel by accessing the information from his laptop computer from anywhere in the hotel. He would also like the employees, who are responsible for the various services, to only have access to the information that relates to their area of responsibility. For example, the restaurant manager should only have access to information

relating to restaurant reservations, deliveries of goods and the cost effective running of the restaurant.

The hotel manager and his staff are investigating the IT systems of the Dissan Hotel and making comparisons with other international hotels and their systems. The manager insists that any internal publications, such as hotel advertising and guest information, must be of the highest quality. Also, he would like to update the website to include more services for hotel guests including online reservations. In addition, the hotel management would like to improve the process of payment for hotel services by guests to make use of new IT that is available. It is proposed that linking this process with check-in in some way could have enormous benefits in terms of the administration of the hotel and its internal payments systems. The Dissan Hotel has set its goal to have modern, reliable and secure IT services and systems that protect the privacy of the hotel guests and provide quality efficient personalized service.

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