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THE BRITISH COMPUTER SOCIETY

**THE BCS PROFESSIONAL EXAMINATION
Diploma**

PROFESSIONAL ISSUES IN INFORMATION SYSTEMS PRACTICE

11th April 2000 - 2:30p.m. - 4:30p.m.

Answer FOUR questions out of SIX. All questions carry equal marks.

Time: TWO hours.

*The marks given in brackets are **indicative** of the weight given to each part of the question.*

1. Many organisations undertake regular job performance appraisals. Appraisal systems can vary in purpose and style.

Explain the different purposes of an appraisal system. **(4 marks)**

Describe a suitable generic appraisal process, showing how this might affect the style of the appraisal. **(15 marks)**

What influence would your membership of the British Computer Society have on the preparation for your own appraisal? **(6 marks)**

2. Explain the main purposes of the Data Protection Act 1984. **(15 marks)**

Describe the main differences between this original Act and the new Data Protection Act 1998. **(6 marks)**

Discuss why these changes were considered necessary. **(4 marks)**

3. NewSoft develop bespoke software for other organisations. Each project involves the production of a new computerised information system to the requirements of the client. Judith is a self-employed contractor and has recently been asked to produce a web-based electronic commerce system for a client of NewSoft, a furniture retailer called Sofas & Co. The e-commerce system allows the client organisation to take orders and manage its customers electronically. Given the potential demand for similar systems, NewSoft has decided to reuse the software developed for the client and create a packaged solution.

Discuss the intellectual property rights involved in this situation. **(17 marks)**

What action could have been taken either by Sofas & Co or by Judith? **(8 marks)**

4. Explain the meaning of the terms *fixed assets* and *current assets*, illustrating your explanation with suitable examples. **(10 marks)**

Describe how the two types of asset are valued for balance sheet purposes, using as an example the following assets owned by a company that writes and sells software packages:
 - a stock of 500 user manuals for version 1 of a package, version 2 of which is to appear shortly. The company paid £5,000 to have 1,000 manuals printed and has been selling them at £25 per copy;
 - a file server costing £15,000 that is used by the software development teams. **(15 marks)**

[Turn over

5. Write short notes on **FIVE** of the following:

- a) the advantages and disadvantages of limited company status;
- b) the structure of the engineering profession in the UK;
- c) activity networks;
- d) the Computer Misuse Act 1990;
- e) work in progress and the calculation of its value;
- f) the nature of overheads.

(5 x 5 marks)

6. Pontevedro Software produces a range of packages for project management, accounting, and cost estimation in the construction industry. It is currently developing a new package for computer-aided drafting that will interface with the cost estimation package. It currently employs some 200 professional staff. The packages are sold in the UK, North America, and Australia but the company is keen to expand into Asia and into mainland Europe. The organisational structure of the company is more or less the same as when it was a company with 20 staff, operating only in the UK and the directors have decided that a fundamental reorganisation is necessary.

Discuss the main decisions that have to be taken before the new organisation can be set up.

(25 marks)