

ICT COURSEWORK 3D

In this piece of coursework I will be writing about three different types of technologies within town centres. I will be explaining to you how they affect the public, the advantages and disadvantages of the piece of technology and what I personally think of it.

TECHNOLOGY 1 - TRAFFIC LIGHTS

Garrett A. Morgan invented the traffic signal during the 1920's. The very first traffic lights did not even have lights at all. They had signs that said stop and go. Traffic light are chosen in certain areas if the traffic is known to be bad or there have been a number of accidents in that locality.

Traffic congestion and delay costs businesses millions of pounds each year in time loss. Also , the exhaust emissions from a numerous amount of stationary vehicles are damaging to the environment and our health. The council and government alike are very aware of these problems, but, realize that they cannot be fixed by building one or two new roads.

Urban Traffic Control (UTC) Centre, based in Reading, is a centre that manages the traffic signals on both the local road network and the motorway junctions within the partnership area. Video cameras positioned at strategic locations on the road network give the UTC electronic links with traffic control equipment, allowing visual checks to be made on traffic conditions. Information regarding traffic incidents and other problems can be quickly and easily found to the emergency services and UTC officers can use visual information from the cameras to make judgments as to when they should manually override signal controller equipment to manage critical situations. The UTC centre also provides traffic information to local and national radio and television stations for broadcast to the public, allowing motorists to make appropriate travel and routing decisions.

Through the UTC centre there is a continual review of all traffic signals throughout the West Berkshire area, with priority given to major road junctions. As part of this, the timing for each set of traffic signals is reviewed and to improve road safety and traffic flow, with consideration

also given to priority for pedestrians and cyclists.

The main reason why traffic lights are important is they help pedestrians cross the road knowing that cars have stopped; but if there were no traffic lights then pedestrians would have to take a chance crossing the road knowing full well that at any given point in time a car or bus or some type of moving vehicle could come along and not have enough time to stop for the pedestrian; the vehicle would either have to try and stop but still hit the pedestrian or try and turn away from the pedestrian; either way both of these scenarios will end up in someone getting hurt or an accident.

In the past I have been in the situation where traffic lights have gone out of time so people just take it into their own hands when to go and when to give way. This is not a bad thing as everybody understands when they are to go and when they are not. I don't even think that traffic lights are that necessary in most cases; if the traffic was let to go freely there would probably be less congestion. For example, if you had a red light but the road was clear you still can't go so when more traffic arrives and the lights turn green then not as many people would be able to go because after a few cars had gone the lights would go red again, this would continue and more traffic would build up. If people were allowed to go when they wanted, a lot more traffic could pass causing less congestion.

The only real reason I can see for traffic lights is for pedestrians. For the rest of the drivers they are not as useful as they usually just hold you up.

TECHNOLOGY 2-CCTV CAMERAS

The UK is the world leader in video surveillance. Britain is monitored by 4 million *CCTV* cameras, making us the most watched nation in the world. There is one *CCTV* camera for every 14 people in the UK. If you live in London you are likely to be on cameras 300 times a day.

Since 1994 the *Home Office* has spent 78% of its crime prevention budget on *CCTV*, before assessing its effectiveness in deterring or detecting crime. It is used for routine surveillance of public spaces, round the clock. Other countries use *CCTV* in more targeted, limited ways: for example, in Munich, Germany cameras are used seasonally during the *Oktoberfest* in high-crime areas.

The technology is becoming more sophisticated. Cameras are combined with databases using 'facial recognition technology' to scan and automatically identify people's faces in crowds. This is going to be very useful to police and also the general public as it will keep criminals off the streets so there will be a lot less danger to the public.

In Newbury there are a number of *CCTV* cameras around the place. One of them is placed at the marketplace. The reason for this is that there are a number of pubs and clubs around there that are known for having trouble at them, *CCTV* cameras would help because you would be able to see who is involved and why which will crack down on crime.

I think that *CCTV* cameras are put in certain places where they think that trouble may be caused. *CCTV* cameras are not always clear so sometimes the criminal can't be found so it is pointless having them.

TECHNOLOGY 3-SERVE YOURSELF CASH REGISTERS

Recently Tesco's in Newbury have opened two new cash registers in there supermarket. These cash registers aren't any ordinary cash registers; they are "serve yourself" cash registers. The way these work is all items in the shop are registered on the computer and you scan the items on the scanner then the item will automatically be put onto your receipt and when you don't want to buy anything else and you have scanned all of the items that you wish to purchase you can swipe your credit card and if the card is accepted then a receipt will be printed and you will be able to walk away with all of your shopping.

This can be very useful as many people cannot be bothered with the hassle of serving yourself so they will just normally queue; people who don't mind waiting around for a bit longer than usual will not mind serving themselves which means less queuing, which in the long term means less waiting which means happier customers.

In the long term this might come to people losing their jobs; if self service does become even bigger then it is now then less staff will need to be employed. Another disadvantage is the fact that you are not allowed to purchase things like alcohol, cd's, DVD's and other electrical goods without aa member of staff authorising you to do so.