The Internet, The best thing since sliced bread!
Or is it?

The subject that I am going to discuss is the Internet, and if it is the most important thing that has happened this century, or if it is a ticking time bomb waiting until it explodes and society is destroyed. But before I start I will give you the background information of the creation of the Internet.

In 1957 the Soviet Union launched the first artificial satellite into orbit and starts the space race. The United States fears that the Soviets will become even more advanced than them and so establish an advanced research project to try to overtake the USSR in the technology and science department. In 1962 Paul Baran Rand of the Rand Corporation (a government agency) is commissened by the U.S. Air Force to study and investigate how the military could maintain control of its nuclear arms after a nuclear attack and how it could order a counter attack. He came up with the idea of a packet switched network (the break down of information into diagrams). Then in 1972 Ray Tomlinson creates the First Email program. The Advanced Research Projects Agency is renamed The Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency. Following this in 1976 The Atlantic packet Satellite network is born. This network linked the United States with Europe. It used INTELSAT, these satellites were owned by a consortium of countries. In early 1979 the creation of BITNET, by IBM introduced the "store and forward" network. It was used for emails. Then in 1981 National Science Foundation created a network called CSNET for institutions. Afterward in 1983 Internet Activities Board created.

In 1984 U.S. Government Arpanet is divided into two networks. MILNET for the military and ARPANET for the advanced research component.

The department of defence disbands the ARPANET and it is replaced by NSFNET in 1990.

Following this in 1994 Pizza Hut Offers Pizza ordering on its web page and the first cyber bank opens.

What's more in 1995 a $50 annual fee is imposed on domains, excluding Government and Educational domains.

Next in 1996 10,000,000 people are on the Internet. Furthermore in the year 2000 over 35,000,000 people are on the Internet and it is estimated that 1 in 3 homes in the developed world have access to a computer and the Internet.

Now for the argument; the Internet is the best thing since sliced bread? There are numerous reasons why the Internet is so good: for instance E-mails can be sent instantaneously across the world, While it would take a letter up to three weeks reach the other side of the world. You can do your shopping from home via interactive TV or by computers thanks to the Internet, and pay for goods by credit card.

You can now also bank over the Internet with many different banks including the Nationwide, Barclays and many more.

The Internet is a vast source of information that is greatly needed for pupils who are doing essays, such as the one I am currently doing. It helps them gather information on subjects for school, for instance for career studies pupils that have to gather information on a career they wish to pursue in the future.

The Internet allows you to view live events such as concerts, newscasts and programs such as "Big Brother" and "Formula One." You can also listen to music and radio over the Internet, which comes in handy when there are no radios about.

There is also a vast array of educational sites for all age groups. An example of such

are: BBC G.C.S.E Bite size for pupils studying their G.C.S.E's and also sites for younger children, an example of this is "Sir Educate" a site for 5-10 year olds, this teaches them about Maths, English, Science, Religion and how to use the Internet. This is valuable for parents who have pre-school children and even children at school. Staying with the subject of children, parental lockouts are built into nearly all Internet software you can limit what a child see or can get into.

"Chat rooms" are very popular on the Internet as they enable you to talk to someone on the other side of the planet. I myself have been in a chat room and made friends with people in England, Wales, USA, Canada, and many other places including Australia. To avoid a large phone bill you can join a special discount scheme that some Internet Service providers are able to provide. So surely the Internet must be a good thing if people can talk to each other when there are thousands of miles between them; it then allows people and families to stay in touch no matter how far apart. It helps children revise for tests and to learn new things; it keeps computer companies on their toes trying to build faster, and more powerful computers, so this a good thing, **isn't it?**

Now for the second part of the discussion I found this the most difficult as I am very fond of the Internet. Here are some of the reasons why people dislike the Internet.

Many people view the Internet as being very additive; someone could log on to a chat room and forget to come out! This will be reflected in a costly phone bill.

"Chat rooms" are a brilliant place to meet new friends but what of the stories of young teenage girls finding a "boyfriend" in the chat room whom they assume to be the same age as themselves and arranging to meet them, only to find that their "boyfriend" is a 45-year-old paedophile! Luckily every time this has happened a parent is with the girl, but what would happen if the parent was working and no one accompanied the girl? Would another sad incident like the little girl, Sarah, happen? Nobody knows, but thankfully it hasn't happened **yet** and it probably won't happen thanks to the child's parents

Because of the size of the Internet it is very easy to get lost, and even easier for a child. One minute they could be looking up Pokémon sites and the next they could end up on an extreme adult site, but it is very easy to get lost. Parental controls are a brilliant way to avoid this problem but they are difficult to install and use properly.

Internet fraud is very common with people known as "HACKERS" breaking into Banks and Building Societies, finding out account numbers and PIN codes and using **your** money, in **your** account, to buy goods for themselves, and most of the time they are undetected by the Banks security systems! "Hackers" can also break into government computers and find personal information about you from what size of shoe you wear to how much tax you pay each year. If you think this is a bad thing it is not. They can even get into your own personal computer whenever you are connected to the Internet; they can read personal files and if they have no time for this they can even download your whole hard drive in a matter of minutes! Another thing that "Hackers" like to do is to release viruses on to the Internet every now and again! These viruses can be programmed to look for a certain word or even an account number, and delete all of the files that it is contained in. If you think that a virus scanner would be able to detect these

viruses, you're right, but they are not much use if the virus turns it off before it gets to work! But thankfully anti viruses are available as soon as the virus is. So surely this is not a good thing. From waking up one day to find your hard drive deleted or to finding out that you are dating a paedophile! should the Internet be taken out of the public hands?

 So is the Internet the best thing since sliced bread? I believe that yes the Internet is a great tool, and it has the potential to help everyone. Certain restrictions have been made to prevent paedophiles from entering "chat rooms" or trying to arrange a "date" with a child. Parental controls are being made easier so that even a monkey could set them, (I am not implying that parents are monkeys) and are pass-worded so that they cannot be removed easily. Government branches and Banks are being twice as careful when they are setting up their websites so that "Hackers" cannot enter their sites without the correct access codes. I would encourage as many people as I can to join schemes like BT and Freeserve have on at present to reduce the cost of "surfing the net". The Internet also allows the world to communicite even if the language is different. It has the potential to help Mankind better itself over time by helping us talk things over.