

## Ethics and Civilisation in The Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

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### Abstract

Humans today are not immune to information and communication technology (ICT). The use of ICT is now gaining ground in every sector worldwide. Rapid development has made ICT a necessity among the people. This is because, ICT is a development that brings many benefits and advantages to human life. Indirectly, it also brings changes to civilisation and human lifestyle today. If it is appropriately used, ICT will bring benefits, but it can have adverse effects on individuals, communities, and nations if misused. The importance of this study is to explain to society, especially ICT users about the role of ethics and civilisation in the use of ICT and its implications for human beings if not used prudently. The methodology used in this study is in the form of a library study limited to document analysis. The key findings clearly show that ethics and civilisation are parameters in harmonizing human life as they aim to prevent human beings from engaging in immoral and criminal behaviour. However, the findings of the study show that there are negative behaviours in the use of ICT today, which result in negative implications for individuals, society and the country. This study is expected to benefit all, especially ICT users. Further studies are recommended to obtain more detailed information.

**Keywords:** Ethics, Civilisation, Information Technology (IT), Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Impact

### Introduction

Technology consists of various needs and facilities in the form of various equipment or systems. It serves to provide comfort and convenience to human beings. According to Amir (2021), humans have interacted with equipment or technology since ancient times. Since that time, various types of technology have been invented, and humans continue to invent and innovate to create new technologies. By the end of the 20th century, the development of technology seems to have reached a remarkable level compared to the technology of

previous times. Current technology has permeated deep into human life and culture. In this era of globalisation, technological tools are the primary medium of human beings in daily life; without technological tools, human beings cannot progress fast.

Information technology (IT), in general, is a key tool in the information age. This tool is used to access, store and disseminate information, especially digital information. IT refers to the use of various items and capabilities in creating, storing, and disseminating information (Hamdan *et al.*, 2000).

The advent of communication technology has advanced analogue to digital communication systems, allowing data, information, and voice to be moved through communication networks based on telephone lines, fiber optics, and satellites. Information and communication technology (ICT) is an extended term for IT that emphasises the role of integrated communications and telecommunication integration, i.e. telephone lines and wireless and computer signals.

ICT refers to the use of technology in managing, using and processing information. Specifically, ICT is related to the use of electronic computers and software to transfer, store, preserve, process and match information. For the general public, ICT is better understood as the skill of utilising and using the Internet to find, transfer, store and match information.

According to Ishak (t.t.), ICT is a term that refers to all communication tools or applications, including radio, television, cellular phones, computers and network devices and software, satellite systems, as well as various services and applications related to it such as video conferencing. Information and communication technology is changing rapidly. It simplifies daily affairs but also poses a threat if good ethics and morals do not accompany its use.

### **The Concept of Human Relations and Technology**

In this modern age, humans and technology are two inseparable terms. The very rapid development of technology at this time seems to facilitate and pamper human beings in carrying out their life activities. The relationship between human beings and technology can be seen in every activity performed. Humans cannot afford to avoid technology. This is because technology today is part of the basic needs that should be used and utilised. There is no doubt that there are many functions of technology that human beings can take advantage of. However, on the other hand, there are negative issues that need to be studied and monitored as a result of technological developments today. Today's technology does not only ease humans but also harms humans.

#### *a. ICT As A Facility*

The existence of ICT has simplified, smoothed and speeded up one's affairs in their daily life. Many government and private affairs in various sectors have used online system platforms. Matters such as payment of utility bills, banking, payment of zakat, applications for admission to institutions of higher learning and job applications are carried out virtually. This way, customers can complete their affairs quickly and easily without having to leave home, go from one place to another, find a parking space, queue and wait in line for hours.

In addition, ICT also facilitates the community in finding knowledge and information. Information is at our fingertips. The Internet is one of the developments of ICT, which is a communication system to convey information to all corners of the world. The system can be accessed through a computer, mobile phone or television. Humans can receive information quickly through ICT. With that method, our minds are always open, up to date and ready in the face of upcoming problems (Haziq, 2016).

In turn, ICT facilitates and promotes borderless communication relationships. The existence of social sites such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter and Telegram indirectly make communication between humans more widespread in sharing information. In addition, ICT can also strengthen the relationship between family members and fellow Malaysians. Malaysians, whether locally or abroad, can keep in touch with their family members and friends at any time. Electronic mail can be received and sent from anywhere globally (*Susun Atur, 2017*).

ICT facilities also help in expanding business activities. The emergence of online businesses such as Shopee, Lazada, eBay and Amazon have made it easier for shoppers to buy the goods and products they want. According to Yazid et al (2016), among the factors that motivate buyers to purchase online are convenience and time savings. Current situations and trends allow them to take risks to make purchases online. In this case, traders need to be sensitive and more vigilant in formulating marketing strategies in order to gain trust and provide a positive experience to buyers and consumers.

The existence of ICT has also given birth to a more educated society. In the context of education, in addition to assisting the management and administrative tasks, ICT has the potential as a tool to enhance the teaching and learning environment. The use of ICT in application-based teaching and learning processes such as the Internet can help management and learning inside and outside the classroom directly involving educators, students, parents and community members. The use of the Internet in the teaching and learning process allows students to acquire original information and materials independently, facilitating collaborative and global comparisons (Haziq, 2016).

Based on the progress of ICT, national security can be preserved. The role of ICT as an essential contributor in maintaining peace and security in the country is through television systems or CCTV cameras. The increasing number of criminal cases can be overcome with the help of CCTV. Places and areas such as banks, casinos, airports, and supermarkets use and install CCTV systems. The purpose is to monitor the safety of a particular place. In addition, with the existence of this CCTV system, the criminal activities that take place can be detected, and subsequently, the criminals involved can be arrested (*Susun Atur, 2017*).

The existence of easy access to modern technology can simplify all aspects of human life. The intermediate concept of technology affects human movement. When modern technology becomes an intermediary between man and the world of reality, human actions will change. The advent of modern technology now, which is mostly more focused on human convenience, arises their natural desire to acquire such technology, causing them to work harder because modern humans think that life will be easy if they have that technology. Unfortunately, the

pursuit of such technology causes profound psychological and social effects on modern humans (Amir, 2021).

*b. ICT As A Burden*

The presence of ICT is considered a burden in education and life. According to Ridzuan (2015), the use of ICT in teaching and learning requires teachers or lecturers to allocate a lot of time for the preparation of materials and teaching materials on the computer before the class begins. The teaching process using ICT also requires them to be skilled in making presentations and integrating multimedia, at least using PowerPoint with inputs such as inserting video, graphics and sound according to their creativity. However, the desire to improve teaching and learning materials only remains a desire due to the problem of lack of computer skills and knowledge about the use of computers in teaching and learning. The fact is, they are aware of the benefits and convenience of using ICT in teaching, but time constraints, skills and maintenance problems make them feel burdened.

The next burden is related to providing infrastructure facilities and support materials to specific groups. The supply of ICT facilities such as computers is unbalanced between urban and rural areas. Malaysia's network and broadband system, which is still not widespread, makes internet access difficult. This results in the existence of a digital divide burden. The digital divide means that there is a gap between one community and another in accessing ICT, accessing information through ICT, and understanding and using information from ICT. Factors that cause the digital divide are economic factors such as the inability to buy and obtain ICT services, geographical factors such as places that do not have internet coverage, computer skills factors such as not knowing how to access information, and language and literacy skills factors such as not being able to read and understand internet language well. Furthermore, ICT also brings a new burden to life in this modern world. Among them, individuals are easily victimised by cyberbullying. This act of cyberbullying is a repetitive act to intimidate, anger, and embarrass someone using ICT facilities such as text, chat, email, social websites, mobile phones, and internet games. These symptoms of cyberbullying have a direct and widespread impact because bully attacks can occur 24 hours a day with a vast capacity. It also raises unique concerns because of the ongoing occurrence of incidents; the information recorded is permanent and open, and the bully is challenging to identify. In addition, it also affects victims emotionally, physically and mentally (Majlis Keselamatan Negara, 2021).

The subsequent burden of ICT in life is hate speech. According to William (2010), hate speech means speech or expression that tarnishes the good name of a person or persons based on (allegedly) membership in a social group identified by characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, physical disability or mental, and others.

According to Noor (2017), hate speech damages the reputation of a social group. Stereotyping on characteristics of nationality, race or religion is followed by inciting hostility, violence and discrimination against the group.

In addition, ICT becomes a living burden when used to commit financial fraud or scammer. According to Jalil (2020), The Royal Malaysian Police (PDRM) categorises the crime of online financial fraud into five types, fraud or non-existent loans; e-commerce; Macau Scam; Love

Scam and short message service (SMS) scams. The scam also does not identify victims whether they are a professional group, middle class or elderly. The heinous tactics of financial fraud cause victims to feel anxious, panicked and possibly fearful, especially the elderly. As a result, the victim took hasty action and suffered huge losses. The abomination of this financial fraud is because there are cases that cause the victim to lose lifetime savings, create an unnecessary maximum debt or lose self-esteem.

Apart from that, ICT also causes many people to be burdened with debt, especially credit card debt. According to Omar (2009), the practice of debt or credit has now been considered commonplace. In fact, some consider debt a necessity. The culture of indebtedness has become commonplace among Malaysians, especially youths and young executives, to get what they want. As a result of uncontrolled demand, debt or credit supply is also not monitored, the credit market involves demand and its supply is now becoming very encouraging. Credit card offers include personal loans, home appliances and vehicle accessories ownership schemes, homeownership schemes for rent and various other forms. ICT is also seen to burden the generation that has never studied or mastered it well so that ICT becomes technostress, technophobia and technophobes to them. Technostress is a modern adaptive disease caused by an inability to cope with new computer technologies (Broad, 1984). On the other hand, technophobia is a fear of technology or dislike of advanced technology or complex devices, especially computers. There are three categories of technophobia: uncomfortable technophobes, cognitive technophobes, and enthusiastic technophobes (*Yestherapyhelps*, t.t.).

### **Ethics and Civilisation of ICT Use**

ICT is a term that refers to all communication devices or applications, including radio, television, cellular phones, computers and network devices and software, satellite systems, including various services and applications related to it, such as video conferencing. Information and communication technology is changing rapidly. It simplifies daily affairs but also poses a threat if its use is not accompanied by good ethics and morals (Ishak, t.t.).

Nowadays, ethical issues are increasingly discussed in the IT era because ICT has changed the nature or nature of ethics. Before the advent of ICT, issues and questions about ethics were only discussed at the theoretical and philosophical level, but today, ethics need to be applied in practice or practical action. Many previously undisclosed treatments are emerging along with the rapidity of IT. So, when things related to computing are brought together with ethics, many problems arise. Therefore, the need for a new set of ethics is strongly felt in the current IT era (Yusof, 2007).

The use of ICT must be based on Islamic morality. Everything that is done while working, surfing the Internet and using technology is always seen by Allah and will be asked in the Hereafter.

The words of Allah in surah al-Taubah, 9: 105, which mean:

*And say (O Muhammad): Do good (to others), and Allah and His Messenger and the believers will see what you do. and you will be returned to the Knower of the Invisible and the Visible, then He will make clear to you what you used to do.*

Some several ethics and guidelines need to be followed in some dimensions of this borderless world:

*a. Communication Ethics*

Communication ethics are fundamental to know and apply in daily life. Similarly, when interacting through social media, the ethics of online communication are unwritten rules that can maintain mutual comfort. In daily life, human beings are taught to be polite in speaking or communicating so that there are no misunderstandings or mistakes that can lead to bad relationships. Ironically, manners and pure values in face-to-face communication are often left behind when communicating in the virtual world. According to Pamela (2020), there are seven communication ethics on social media and online discussion ethics that need to be applied:

1. Read and follow the rules in the discussion group
2. Be careful in commenting
3. Respect the opinions of others
4. Need clarification and confirmation
5. Focus on the main theme of the discussion
6. Do not obsess over being famous for creating sensational viral issues
7. Follow general rules in written communication

In communicating, Muslims are prohibited from using bad words to expose the evil of others unless persecuted. Internet users are also bound by this reminder of God not to use it as a platform to curse or insult others or commit evil deeds that deviate from God's will.

This is stated in surah al-Nisa', 4: 148, meaning:

*Allah does not like bad words spoken openly (to expose the evil of people); except by the persecuted. And Allah is All Hearing, All Knowing.*

*b. Ethics of Seeking Science*

The advent of ICT has fundamentally succeeded in changing the practices and procedures of almost all fields, including the education system. There are too many platforms to conduct online learning, but implementing them is not as easy as we thought because there are constraints or challenges of online learning that need to be faced. Among the significant challenges in Malaysia are the lack of devices for learning, a less conducive environment, the level of skills in the use of technology by teachers, and students' attitude during e-learning sessions (Hanafi, 2020).

Now that the teaching and learning process has changed to online, manners as a student must be maintained. In the implementation of online learning, as face to face learning, manners and learning ethics must also be understood and followed by each student to ensure that the process of seeking knowledge can be implemented well and achieve its objectives. Failure to apply an understanding of good manners or ethics during online learning sessions, as well as the need to practice it, will invite an atmosphere of disharmony and interfere with the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process.

According to Hashim (2020), among the manners that need to be understood, applied and practised by every student who follows online learning are:

1. Have the right intention in seeking knowledge and start learning by praying
2. Make initial preparations for learning
3. Be on time and maintain presence throughout the teaching and learning sessions
4. Communicate well by using appropriate emojis
5. Be actively involved in the classroom
6. Apply for permission to inform in the chatbox in advance if there is a need to go out for a while.

Islam highly praises every effort made to seek knowledge. However, it must be done in a civilised way. In Islam, knowledge and manners are inseparable; in fact, they are complementary to each other.

*c. Writing/Work Ethics*

ICT is a gateway to gaining unlimited knowledge. ICT facilities and skills will enable members of the Malaysian community to acquire knowledge in various fields for social use, employment, economy, education, politics, and so on. Creative activities such as writing and publishing are essential for advancing knowledge. Writing allows the results of one's thoughts and research to be widely disseminated to be studied, commented on and used by others. In that way, knowledge will grow and germinate (Ghazali, 2018).

However, as technology becomes more sophisticated, a handful of parties are abusing power in the IT world, among which is plagiarism. As a writer or creator, the following ethics need to be seen in producing a piece of writing, including:

1. Write the original reference source
2. Comply with copyright law
3. Avoid the practice of plagiarism
4. Write with the correct information without manipulation
5. Publish an original work without taking what someone else wrote in whole or in part.

Writers also need to adhere to ethics when writing to avoid an atmosphere of insecurity, chaos and insecurity in society caused by unethical writing. While there is no ethics specific to writers when they create and write, it must be admitted that this does not mean that writers are allowed to write unethically.

*d. E-Commerce Ethics*

The existence of the Internet and the changing lifestyle of the society, which is increasingly busy and dependent on the use of business in boarding schools, has made the online business method an option for traders and consumers. Every trader should understand business ethics, even when done online. Business ethics is essential in the business world, where ethics is a moral principle of business conduct that traders and consumers can accept. Standards of ethical conduct in business should be practised to prevent the occurrence of misconduct (Mamat & Othman, 2016).

Thus, the emergence of e-commerce is also a transaction that does not conflict with the trading system that the Islamic law has set, if it meets the conditions and pillars of trading. Since the original law for something is *mubah* (must), then e-commerce is also *must* as long

as it meets the pillars and conditions of sale and purchase that Islam has outlined to ensure the welfare of humankind as a whole (Wahab, 2019).

### **Impact of ICT on Humans**

The 21st century has now presented an explosion of information technology (ICT) that is making the world now borderless across the globe. It gave birth to social media, which has emerged as the most widespread communication medium in this century. It has become part of life's priorities, covering all levels of human beings regardless of their age, gender, status and level of education. The process of communication and dissemination of information is becoming more sophisticated, and the world is getting smaller. Among the main advantages of using social media are easy access, fast, cheap and many options. In addition to the various positive impacts achieved due to current technological advances, there are also risks and adverse effects that cannot be ignored.

In the current era of globalisation, the advancement of ICT is becoming increasingly important for every human being. Advances in the field of information dissemination are swift and dynamic, making human beings not left behind to follow developments at home and abroad. Just by having a personal computer connected to an internet service, people can get information from all over the world in a short time. They just need to move the mouse to get the latest information in a field. Search engines like google.com, search.com and yahoo.com are used as a platform to get information. Internet browsers only need to use search engines to get the information they want, whether for learning, research or knowledge.

The use of social media has become a necessity in this millennium so much that it is said that human dependence on social media today is worse than their dependence on alcohol and narcotics (Dizik, 2017). With three taglines, "easy, cheap, and fast", human beings move from the real world to the virtual world (Khilmie, 2013). ICT and social media allow users to access a variety of applications anywhere and regardless of time. Social media applications are used to communicate, say hello, have discussions, and so on. The Internet has also been used as a platform to communicate because it is effortless without the need for high costs. The use of messengers such as Yahoo, Skype, Gtalk and Hotmail has further facilitated communication between various parties, and its use is prevalent.

There is no denying the benefits of ICT gained by humans. However, there are also adverse effects resulting from the sophistication of this information technology. This dependence on ICT causes times when the digital world that overshadows social media is used arbitrarily. As a result, there are various negative impacts, whether in social, cultural, religious, political or economic risks. The polemics sparked by digitalisation, including social media, have raised various global or national issues.

It was reported that the United Kingdom government dealt with nearly 70 cybercrime incidents a week at the end of March 2020, and most involved inaccurate information about COVID-19 (Mahadevan, 2020). The issue of internet addiction among Korean adolescents also increased from 2.9% to 62.4% (Seo et al., 2009). This phenomenon prompted Korea to introduce the Cinderella Law or Shutdown Law in 2011 to address the problem of internet addiction.



At the national level, the rapidity of social media technology has had a profound social impact even though it is not widely realised by many Malaysians. Statistics released by MyCERT, CyberSecurity Malaysia 2019 on cyber security incident statistics for 2016 to 2018 show several categories of cyber security incidents such as cyber harassment, online fraud, intrusion, malicious or malicious code, spam and email spam. In addition, online fraud cases also increased in 2018, which was 5,123 cases (Pitchan & Omar, 2019).

The mass media should take advantage of ICT by cooperating by publishing positive, authentic and balanced reports as well as maintaining religious, racial, racial and economic sensitivities to ensure that Malaysians as a whole protect their behaviour from committing acts that could divide existing unity. It should not be with the development of information technology that many fake news, inaccurate and not from authentic sources that touch on racial sensitivities, have affected the people in this country, thus triggering feelings that can cause division and enmity among them.

### **ICT Issues**

The world today is faced with various ICT issues that harm individuals, communities and countries. Among the issues:

#### *a. Spreading False News*

Fake news occurs as a result of fabrications that have no basis in truth or news that is added or distorted from the original so that only a tiny amount of original true news remains. The purpose of fake news is to raise doubts and suspicions about something, to create anxiety and worry with the aim of inviting to an outlined goal. The most dangerous can lead to hatred, strife, enmity and disrupt unity in society. False news that circulates in the community can be dealt with by making the community understand the dangers and effects so that they can avoid them. Fake news can also be overcome by multiplying the accurate news, clarifying the nature of the false news and not believing it. With that, the fake news will weaken and disappear little by little. Society cannot live in peace and prosperity as long as false news is widespread in society (Ghani et al., 2020).

#### *b. Pornography and Sex*

This pornographic website highlights all sexual behaviours that are normal or abnormal according to the tastes of various people. According to Pitchan et al (2019), among the main factors of adolescents browsing pornography is the peer influence that drives them to browse pornography due to invitation and video sharing by their peers. In addition to that factor, they also browse pornography because they are curious about words that can drive them to view pornography as a sensation. Next is the factor that pornographic videos and pictures are readily available through the Internet without having to pay money or register on a website to browse pornography. The last factor causing adolescents to browse pornography is the existence of smartphones which are the primary communication tool used by the study informants to browse pornography. Awareness needs to be inculcated in all individuals that pornography is wrong and against religion and morals. Parents should also monitor their child's ICT use so that they do not get caught up in negative things.

*c. Online Game Addiction*

Online games are a type of game that is played on a LAN or internet network. There are various types of famous games that are loved by all circles, both children and adults, such as Fortnite Mobile, Clash Royale, Playerunknown's Battleground (PUBG) Mobile, Call of Duty Mobile, Plato, Crossy Road and many more. The increase in the number of online games is increasing day by day due to the increasing advancement of modern technological devices such as smartphones, laptops and tablets (Zamberi, 2021). The role of support from friends, lecturers and family members for students with addiction problems is also crucial. Communicating regularly with them can distract their attention and focus from video games and help them recover. These online games can be a fun and rewarding activity if done in the right way.

*d. Hacking*

Hacking is a computer intrusion in which a hacker accesses a computer system illegally or unauthorised without obtaining permission from the owner of the computer system and intends to steal data or obtain confidential information (Termimia & Ramli, 2017). The government is advised to implement laws on the misuse of technology Multimedia Act 1998 in every community to address this problem. The Act comprises 282 Sections, and provides two Sections related to cyber security, namely Section 211 and Section 233. Pursuant to Section 211 (1), a person or content application service provider shall not provide indecent, obscene, false, threatening or obscene content for the purpose and intent to harass, harass, persecute or threaten any individual. Based on this provision, it is clear that cyberbullying, pornography, spreading viruses, and spreading defamation or false news are an offence under this Part. Next, governments need to enforce internet usage laws as well as improve security controls in terms of personal information and data (Pitchan & Omar, 2019).

### **Conclusion**

This study explores ethics and civilisation in the use of ICT. These findings clearly show that ethics and civilisation are parameters in harmonising human life as they aim to prevent human beings from engaging in immoral and criminal behaviour. However, the findings reveal that there are negative behaviours in the use of ICT nowadays, which result in negative implications to individuals, society and the country. Therefore, all parties, especially the government, must work to address the issue and implications of ICT abuse. This effort will be a milestone to realise a peaceful and harmonious life. ICT is a reality of modern life that cannot be separated from human life; if we do not use ICT in life, it is feared that we will be left behind in many aspects of life. If driven towards goodness, ICT will be the best agent of goodness; however, if misused can lead to various problems at the individual, organisational, community, national, and global levels. Issues such as hate speech, pornography, and addiction to online games need to be addressed well not to affect the formation of unity and civilisation in Malaysia.

ICT is also often misused for personal, organisational and political interests around the world. This can be avoided if ethics and integrity in ICT use are applied to society. ICT needs to be learned, mastered and utilised for the good of humankind, as well as needs to be managed ethically and lead the human civilisation of the future. This study is expected to benefit all, especially ICT users. Although many studies on ICT and issues have been conducted, this study adds by focusing on ethics and civilization in the use of ICT. However, this study was limited

to document analysis. To obtain more detailed information further studies are recommended using questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis.

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