**ST. JOSEPH’S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), BANGALORE-27**

Register Number:

Date:

**BCA/BVC- IV SEMESTER**

**SEMESTER EXAMINATION: APRIL 2019**

**MCT 414 - Media, Culture and Technology (MCT)**

**This paper contains THREE printed pages**

**Time: 2 hours Max. marks: 70 marks**

*INSTRUCTIONS TO THE CANDIDATE:*

1. ***Please write your respective section in your answer script.***
2. ***You are allowed to use a dictionary***
3. ***Stick to the word limit***

**INTERNET AS AN ARCHIVE**

1. **Read the following article by Stuart Jeffries which was published in *The Guardian* on 30th June, 2011.**

**Why we must remember to delete- and forget- in the digital age**

When Viktor Mayer-Schönberger's stepfather died, he left a collection of 16,000 heavy glass photographic slides, his visual record of decades travelling the world. His stepson had to decide what to do with them. "I had two rules in working out whether to keep a slide. One, if there was anybody in it, I knew or might know. Two, if it was beautiful. Know how many I kept? 53." His stepfather also kept a diary of his travels. Mayer-Schönberger doesn't expect to publish it any time soon. "The entries were so dull! What was the temperature, if the butter was good." But maybe there was a point in his stepdad recording butter quality at some otherwise forgotten breakfast. In his book *Delete: The Virtue of Forgetting in the Digital Age*, Mayer-Schönberger, professor of internet governance and regulation at the [University of Oxford's Internet Institute](http://www.vmsweb.net/), writes: "Time is quite simply a very difficult dimension of human memory for humans to master." Mayer-Schönberger says: "My stepfather's diary was probably incredibly meaningful for him because when he read some banal detail about butter, maybe that triggered the memory of the place for him. He externalised what was important for him, so he would have the cues he needed to remember something later."

In *Delete*, Mayer-Schönberger traces the history of such external memories – cave paintings, scrolls, photographic slides, diaries – and their importance to the flourishing of human knowledge. "Since the early days of humankind," he writes, "we have tried to remember, to preserve our knowledge, to hold on to our memories and we have devised numerous devices and mechanisms to aid us. Yet through millennia, forgetting has remained just a bit easier and cheaper than remembering." No longer. Because of the digital revolution, he argues, it is easier to keep everything – the drunken email you sent your boss, the photo you put on Facebook in which you're doing something non-CV-enhancing to an inflatable cow – rather than go through the palaver of deciding what to consign to oblivion. That's because so many of our external memories – digital pictures, emails – are now hardly as heavy as Mayer-Schönberger's stepfather's glass slides, but lighter than bees' wings. The overabundance of cheap storage on hard disks means that it is no longer economical to even decide whether to remember or forget. "Forgetting – the three seconds it takes to choose – has become too expensive for people to use," he writes. If Mayer-Schönberger's stepdad had taken digital photographs, his stepson wouldn't have had to bother thinking about which to delete.

But isn't it great that digital memories correct fallible human ones? "Many of my critics say that forgetting is a weakness of the human mind that we should be happy to get rid of. I agree we benefit from digital memories, but not if that means we lose the capacity to forget because that capacity is valuable."

His point is that a comprehensive memory is as much a curse as a boon. He cites the case of a 41-year-old Californian woman called AJ who, since she was 11, has remembered the events of her every day in agonising detail – what she had for breakfast three decades ago, what happened in each episode of every TV show she watched. That inability to forget, Mayer-Schönberger argues, limits one's decision-making ability and ability to form close links with people who remember less. "The effect may be stronger when caused by more comprehensive and easily accessible external digital memory. Too perfect a recall, even when it is benignly intended to aid our decision-making, may prompt us to become caught up in our memories, unable to leave our past behind." […]

In the 19th century, [Jeremy Bentham envisaged a prison called a panopticon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panopticon), in which guards could watch prisoners without them knowing whether they were being watched. In the 20th century, [Michel Foucault](http://www.cla.purdue.edu/academic/engl/theory/newhistoricism/modules/foucaultcarceralmainframe.html) argued that the model of the panopticon was used more abstractly to exercise control over society. In the 21st century, Mayer-Schönberger argues that the panopticon now extends across time and cyberspace, making us act as if we are watched even if we are not. He worries that this "perfect memory" will make us self-censor. "That's becoming standard. In the US most colleges have a mandatory class on how to clean up your Facebook account." […]

He's intrigued by what Facebook does to human identity. "In the analogue era, it was relatively simple to keep your lives separate. If my main leisure pursuits were being in the golf club and in an S&M circle, it was essential that no one at the former knew about the latter. Facebook, by not allowing you to have two accounts, problematises that separation. The response is that individuals employ strategies to hack the system – almost all my colleagues have two Facebook accounts, to keep different parts of their lives boxed in."

What can be done to reverse the demise of forgetting? "I suggest we reset the balance and make forgetting just a tiny bit easier than remembering – just enough to flip the default back to where it has been for millennia, from remembering for ever to forgetting over time." He argues that digital storage devices (cameras, mobiles, computers) should automatically delete information that has reached its expiration date. How? He suggests that users, when saving a document, they have created, would have to select an expiration date in addition to the document's name and location on their hard disk. "Expiration dates are about asking humans to reflect – if only for a few moments – about how long the information they want to store may remain valuable." This chimes with Harvard cyberlaw expert Jonathan Zittrain's idea that we should have a right to declare [reputation bankruptcy](http://futureoftheinternet.org/reputation-bankruptcy) – i.e. to have certain aspects of one's digital past erased from the digital memory.

Mayer-Schönberger envisages that each digital camera could have a built-in process to select expiration dates for a photo. Before taking a picture the camera would send out "picture requests" to what he calls "permission devices" (about the size of a key fob that, perhaps, might dangle from our necks) that respond to the request with the owner's preferred expiration date. That date could range from zero to three years to 100 years from now (an option reserved for really memorable pictures). He concedes expiration dates are no overall solution to the problem, but what he likes about them is that they make us think about the value of forgetting and, also, that they involve negotiation rather than simply imposing a technical solution to a technical problem. There are alternatives, such as turning your back on the digital age. "I don't like digital abstinence. I want us to embrace participation in digital culture and global networks. Just not at any cost." […]

Mayer-Schönberger is now researching what he calls "institutions of remembering". "We set up institutions of memory to help us remember important things – such as the Holocaust, for example. But with Google and Flickr and other sites offering seemingly comprehensive memory, we might be prompted to devalue these established institutions of memory. They risk being drowned out by stuff online. My fear is that the digital age, while benefiting us enormously, impoverishes us too."

**I(A) Answer any THREE of the following questions in 150 words: [3X10=30]**

1. “That's because so many of our external memories – digital pictures, emails – are now hardly as heavy as Mayer-Schönberger's stepfather's glass slides, but lighter than bees' wings.” What is the above statement drawing our attention to? Elaborate by reflecting upon the writer’s larger viewpoint on memory and forgetting?
2. What do you understand by the term ‘panopticon’? How is the cyberspace compared to a panopticon in the above passage? Do you agree or disagree with such a comparison? Elaborate.
3. Do you agree with the view that there has been a demise of forgetting in the present digital age?

Do you feel that along with forgetting, there is also a demise of remembering, that is taking place? Justify.

1. What is your opinion on Schönberger's idea of choosing expiration dates for photographs that are uploaded online? Do you feel that it is a viable solution in erasing some embarrassing moments that might have found its way online? Elaborate.
2. **Answer the following questions in 200 words: [2x15=30]**
3. How do you understand the word ‘archive’? Write about any three personal archives you can find at home? How do these objects enable in the preservation of your family’s history?
4. Imagine you meet a person who is designing a website which aims to present the connection between food and history. She comes to you seeking suggestions regarding the organisation of the content on the site. What would be three good suggestions you would want to give her and why?
5. **Look at the image given below:**



The text in the image reads:

MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Personnel at Museum: “It’s all been digitized and put on DVDs”.

**III(A). Answer the following question in 150 words: [1X10=10]**

1. What is the above image trying to portray? What in your opinion would be going on in the mind of-
2. The lady
3. The boy