# Worksheet 6 Social, legal and cultural issues

**Task 1**

1. Use the Internet to find answers to the following questions:

How many people in the UK are registered on Facebook?

How many UK adults use Twitter?

[http://www.rosemcgrory.co.uk/2017/01/03/uk-social-media-statistics-for-2017/](http://www.rosemcgrory.co.uk/2016/01/04/social-media-statistics-2016/)

1. What steps is Twitter taking to reduce hateful content and abusive behaviour?

<https://blog.twitter.com/official/en_us/topics/company/2017/safetypoliciesdec2017.html>

What steps is Twitter taking to prevent the spread of misinformation?

<https://blog.twitter.com/official/en_us/topics/company/2017/Our-Approach-Bots-Misinformation.html>

3. Look up the site <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-39830727> and read the article “Facebook – the secret election weapon”.

Explain in your own words how a social media site can persuade people to have a particular point of view and influence elections.

4. Look up “How fake news spreads on social media” in a search engine and note down some of the points made, referencing the sites you visit

5. “Social networking sites improve the quality of people’s lives.” List some arguments for and against this statement. (Try a Google search on “social networking – good or bad?”)

<http://socialnetworking.procon.org/view.answers.php?questionID=001614>

6. List some instances where social media sites have been a great force for good in a crisis situation, and some instances in which they have brought devastating consequences to individuals or society.

**Task 2**

1. Read the article “When an algorithm helps send you to prison” from the New York Times, 26 October 2017.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/26/opinion/algorithm-compas-sentencing-bias.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/26/opinion/algorithm-compas-sentencing-bias.html)

The article describes how a man who pleaded guilty in court to driving a car without the owner’s consent and attempting to flee an officer was sentenced to six years in prison and five years of extended supervision. The judge justified this sentence on the grounds that the software COMPAS, a risk assessment algorithm, predicted a high rate of recidivism (reoffending).

1. Explain with reference to this scenario how algorithms may embed moral and cultural values and nevertheless produce biased results
2. Why does the software manufacturer refuse to disclose the details of how the algorithm works?
3. Give a reason why a court may use an algorithm, rather than the judge himself, to carry out a risk assessment which is used in the sentencing decision.

For further information, you can also download the article *“Algorithm guilty of bias? Study queries program’s use in courts”* from *The Guardian 18 January 2018,* which describes the use of COMPAS software.

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/jan/17/software-no-more-accurate-than-untrained-humans-at-judging-reoffending-risk>

2. How ethical is YouTube’s algorithm, which looks through billions of videos to identify 20 “Up next” clips that are relevant to a previous video and most likely to hold a viewer’s attention?

Read the article at <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2018/feb/02/how-youtubes-algorithm-distorts-truth>

**Task 3**

1. Are there laws aginst Internet trolls, cyberbullying and hate sites? Look up these sites:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-29678989>

<https://www.cybersmile.org/advice-help/category/cyberbullying-and-the-law>

<http://report-it.org.uk/reporting_internet_hate_crime>

1. What are the challenges facing legislators and law enforcers in the digital age?

<http://www.techrepublic.com/blog/it-security/what-makes-cybercrime-laws-so-difficult-to-enforce/>

1. Describe briefly two types of wearable device. What legal issues arise in connection to such wearable devices?

Look up the article “Legal challenges of wearable computing”, 30 April 2014 to help answer this question.

<https://www.swlegal.ch/getdoc/5ff2741a-6e1e-4108-99c7-8dc1566f21b2/140731_Roland-Mathys_Paper-Legal-Challenges-of-Wea.aspx>