TITLE: HAS THE INTERNET STOLEN PEOPLE'S PRIVACY AND CHANGED US TO COMMERCIAL PRODUCTS?

In this day and age, the Internet and the use of Web 2.0 has made it relatively easy for people (specifically young adults) to create websites, blogs, Facebook accounts, Twitter accounts, YouTube accounts and many more; all of which can display personal details, conversations, activities, photos, videos and even people's innermost thoughts if they desire. I accept that people decide to place these details at there own discretion, but with the option of being able to write what we like in a ridiculously easy manner, has the internet 'forced' us to display these details and has our concept of personal privacy completely evaporated? In my dissertation I am going to research and explore just how much people think about what they publish on the Internet about themselves and how websites such as Twitter.com has potentially changed our nature into branding ourselves as commercial products.

I will start my dissertation by looking into the history of privacy and how people kept themselves to themselves significantly more than today. Was this just because there was no Internet or has our society and culture changed since the public introduction to the World Wide Web?

To continue, I will explore recent times and how the Internet has hugely changed the way people communicate and represent themselves. From my personal point of view, individuals don't seem to have second thoughts regarding what information they publicly display about themselves within the Internet, and in a sense we have effectively become products of the Internet itself. As a result, I will be focusing on the popular Web 2.0 websites such as Facebook, MySpace, YouTube and Twitter.

Linking with my research involving Twitter, I would like to explore the website in-depth and how it is transforming into a 'breaking news' source as a result of the power of the people talking about their thoughts and doings, who feel they have to express to the society surrounding them.

As well as this, I am also interested in how (just like humans), companies are not private about their activities and can also use social networking sites (such as those previously mentioned) as an advertising source. Also in relation to advertising, I find it interesting how recently some advertisements are more popular than the actual product themselves. For example, CompareTheMarket.com are currently using the campaign CompareTheMeerkats.com to promote themselves, when ironically the advertisement is more based on CompareTheMeerkats.com and has proved to make you forget what they are truly advertising for. Is this because the companies know people will talk and express their thoughts on the campaign over the Internet, and will that force their name as a leading company?

I plan to conclude this dissertation on exploring the future of privacy, and how the Internet may even take it away from people altogether. However our society is evolving and do people not want to be private anymore and enjoy telling the world what activities they are constantly undergoing. Do people simply not care if they are not private anymore?

As I feel very strongly about this specific subject, I feel I have a good knowledge on the matter

at hand. However I have researched and located multiple references, that I will study throughout and use to assist me to gain further knowledge on this subject area. These so far include:

The Control Revolution: How the Internet is putting individuals in charge and changing the world we know.
Author: Andrew L. Shapiro
Published: 1999

The Future of Reputation: Gossip, rumour and privacy on the Internet
Author: Daniel J. Solve
Published: 2007

Twitter Revolution: How social media and mobile marketing is changing the way we do business and marketing online
Author: Deborah Miceh and Warren Whitlock
Published: 2008

The Little Book of Twitter: Get Tweetwise!
Author: Tim Collins
Published: 2009

The Twitter Book
Author: Tim O'Reilly and Sarah Milstein
Published: 2009

I also plan to conduct surveys and ask the general public on their views on privacy and how much information they are willing to put on the Internet and what sites they are signed up to. I think it would be interesting to see how people would react if their information and/or thoughts were published in the public eye as well as on the Internet and if they will see that in a completely different perspective than just being posted Online; as I believe people see the Internet as a shield and a place where they can become anybody they wish, whereas in real life I think people are more aware of themselves and care significantly more about their privacy.

I plan to place all my research and enquires on my blog and in my workbook, which enables me to put everything together and write my Dissertation once it has been constructed.