14   THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

Chapter Summary

Computers and IT are part of our everyday lives. We use them at home and work. We use them for entertainment and communications. They are an integral part of our social and commercial infrastructure. They are an essential part of modern life.

The importance of IS/IT, and its rapid development and expansion into most facets of our lives, has been labelled the Information Revolution. That revolution gives rise to notions of the post-industrial society, or more positively, the Information Society.

While the use of IS/IT is vital to the functioning of a modern society, it can also turn into a threat. It can facilitate the democratic process but it also has the potential to enable authoritarianism. Computers are at the heart of an efficient, modern economy and society – but what happens if and when the machine stops?

In this chapter we examine the Information Society and its implications. One group with a special responsibility for the development of the Information Society are the IT professionals. One forum that considers this responsibility and participates in policy formulation is the professional body for computing, in the UK the Chartered Institute for IT (BCS). The chapter considers the role of professional associations and the BCS.

Finally, if you have studied Information Systems as part of a business or computing qualification, your next step could be to find a job. This chapter gives a short overview of the job market for computing and IT specialists.