

The Information Age

You've probably come across the expression 'The Information Age', but what does it actually refer to? The Information Age is also known as the Computer Age, Digital Age or New Media Age. It refers to the idea that the distinguishing characteristic of our current period in human history in **1** to the past is the access to and control of information. It is an age **2** by personal computers, the World Wide Web and digital information.

It's so easy for people to learn about almost any subject and **3** up with current events. This, however, has had a huge effect on traditional **4**, such as book publishing and printed newspapers.

Many people have **5** a part in bringing about the digital revolution. One of the most important is the American mathematician Claude E. Shannon, who is considered the **6** of Information Theory and the electronic communications age. He suggested that all information could be encoded in a simple language of zeros and ones. He demonstrated how the broadcast or transfer of all information, from telephone signals to television, could be based **7** this system. With the development of the Internet in the 1970s and with the **8** of personal computers ten years later, the Digital Revolution or Information Age had begun.

1. a. content b. connection c. link d. comparison
2. a. notified b. defined c. filled d. separated
3. a. stay b. keep c. take d. hold
4. a. intelligence b. material c. media d. production
5. a. stated b. experimented c. played d. managed
6. a. founder b. superior c. viewer d. director
7. a. in b. over c. of d. on
8. a. household name b. box-office success c. nomination d. popularity

Complete the sentences with the correct form of the words in the box. There are two extra words which you do not need to use.

reality	season	bookmark	point	emphasise
original	plot	sideways	shortened	edit

1. Have you seen the first episode of _____ three? It was terrible.
2. I'd rather you didn't _____ the camera at me. I don't want to be filmed.
3. Don't use a(n) _____ version of your name in your password.
4. The of _____ *Hungry Nights* was very predictable.
5. The _____ website was impossible to use. This is much better.
6. Don't forget to _____ the page so you can find it again.
7. Terence _____ the need for caution when giving personal information to a website.
8. Why do people watch _____ shows? I can watch my brothers arguing without switching on the television.

Circle the correct words.

1. Who is the celebration in honour **for** / **of**?
2. The scientists are using **cutting-edge** / **jam-packed** technology that has never been used before.
3. The video game was first **released** / **praised** in 2013, but it is still very popular with teenagers.
4. I haven't been in contact **with** / **by** Sophie since she left England.

5. The film is full of **potential** / **suspense** which will keep your eyes glued to the screen.
6. If you are ever in need **for** / **of** help, don't hesitate to call me.
7. You should read this book to cheer up. It's **convincing** / **hilarious**!
8. I didn't like Gregory Allister in his last film. He used to be a great actor, but I have a feeling he's losing his **touch** / **interest**.
9. Brenda and I met up after work to **post** / **catch up** on each other's news.
10. Children should not watch **reviews** / **commercials**, because they just want everything they see.

Choose a, b, c or d.

1. As soon as I arrived, the secretary me ____ some coffee.
- a. offered c. was offered
- b. offering d. been offered
2. Queues for the performance ____ to be very long.
- a. expected c. are expected
- b. are expecting d. is expected
3. I don't have a car today. It ____ at the garage.
- a. is fixing c. is said to be fixed
- b. is fixed d. is being fixed

4. It is said ____ the idea was taken from Margaret's book.

- a. that c. for
- b. to be d. by

5. The shop in Maple Street ____ into last night.

- a. broken c. was broken
- b. broke d. was breaking

6. All employees need to ____ about the meeting.

- a. inform c. being informed
- b. be informed d. been informed

7. These jewels ____ to be from Africa.

- a. are c. are believing
- b. are believed d. believed

8. ____ to be very rich.

- a. People think c. He thinks
- b. People thought d. He is thought

9. Elizabeth ____ her friends at school to call her Liz.

- a. has asked c. was asked
- b. has been asked d. is asked

10. Jeremy was made his hair when he started his new job.

- a. cut c. to cut
- b. cutting d. cuts

Read the text and complete the gaps 1-6 with the sentences a-g below. There is one extra sentence that you do not need to use.

The Age of Misinformation

A colleague informs us of a disturbing bit of news she has read.

A couple are going to spend time in prison because they did not feed their one-year-old baby although it was crying! We spend our lunch break debating whether the parents were wrong and if it is the state's right to tell parents how to bring up their children. Confused, I decide to read the whole story online. I'm surprised to find that only one website reports the story. ____1 The website reports on a variety of current stories, but the more I read, the more I realise that some sound real and some sound too weird to be believed. When I look at the website's 'about' page, I realise that this is an entertainment site and the incident never happened.

This experience is not isolated. ____2 Their purpose is to feature pieces of news written in such a way as to appear real, whereas in fact they are not. The motive here is satire, or the desire to make a humorous comment on an issue.

____3 It depends. If someone recognises the source of the article as an entertainment website that includes lies in its stories, then they know to ignore the facts presented and just have a good laugh. Unfortunately, many still take whatever they read online at face value, believe the information word for word, and go on to express strong feelings in the comments section of websites.

In the days to follow, they discuss the issue with friends and family, fight over it and make absolute statements, all the while believing that these are hard facts.

Many people refer to our times as 'The Information Age'.

The invention of the Internet allowed for the free sharing of information like never before. The upside? There is now more opportunity for each and every one of us to become wellinformed about all sides of an issue. The downside?

____4

The very nature of the Internet, the right of everyone to post on blogs, wikis, newspaper commentary sections and so on, means that at the same time as we have more information, we also have more misinformation. An article or wiki entry could be anything from slightly inaccurate to wholly incorrect. The reasons for misinforming people can vary from completely innocent (forgetting to include a piece of information) to purposefully evil (promoting racism against a specific ethnic group). _____ 5

As one blogger who studied history at university mentions: 'I take my information from more than one place, with many sources, dates, and names of people that actually exist to back them up'. When reading something that is disturbing, she says 'be a little curious, but be a little more skeptical. In other words believe half of what you see and none of what you hear.' _____ 6

The first two results come from the same website – the first one claims it was said by an American writer of the 19th century, Edgar Allan Poe. The second one says it came from an 18th-century American politician, Benjamin Franklin. The sixth result, from the Poe Museum, confirms that it was said by Edgar Allan Poe but gives the correct version, which was 'Believe only half of what you see and nothing that you hear'. All that searching for a twelve-word quote!

- a. Innocent and fun, right?
- b. There is a great amount of misinformation.
- c. This means that more and more people feel they have the right to write whatever they want online.
- d. Digging a little deeper, I start to feel uneasy.
- e. I haven't heard this before, so I search for it online.
- f. In this confusing environment, how can we find the facts?
- g. There are a number of such websites popping up like mushrooms.