Raffles Institution
2010 Preliminary Examination
GP (Paper 2)

Questions from Passage 1

1. What does the word 'hailed' (line 7) suggest about Obama's response to Internet freedom? [1m]

Pt	Lift	Inference	
a	Obama…hailed 'access to information' as a 'universal right'.	For a full mark, answer should address (a) support/approval/advocacy (1/2) & (b) enthusiasm (1/2) for Internet freedom e.g. He welcomed it enthusiastically *0 marks – He 'values…', 'regards as important', 'has high regard for it'*	1

2. What are the two opposing views found in paragraph 2? *Use your own words as far as possible.* [2m]

Pt	Lift	Suggested Paraphrase	
a	**Techno-utopianism** … to believe that **dictatorships**, too, **would fall** with the click of a mouse	One view is that the Internet would be able to overcome despotic/authoritarian regimes/governments easily	1
b	Quite the opposite is true, say… **cyberskeptics**. In short… the Internet will lead to the **entrenchment of dictatorship**, not its end.	while the contrasting view is that the Internet will perpetuate these despotic/authoritarian regimes/governments instead of eliminating them.	1

Note:
Answer must be expressed as two distinct views for the full mark.
Maximum of 1 mark for answer that does not capture the contrast.
No marks if only one view is offered.
Do not accept examples in lieu of stating a particular view.
Allow lift of 'the Internet'.

3. Why does the author call the cyberskeptics' concerns 'shortsighted' (line 17)? *Use your own words as far as possible.* [3m]

Pt	Lift	Suggested paraphrase	
		It is shortsighted because…	
a	**predicated on the trend line over the last few years**…	… it is based only on a recent development/pattern	1
b	…autocracies **appear to have gained the upper hand** against democrats	… it only looks as if authoritarian regimes are stronger than democracies but… *Entire idea must be captured to get 1 mark* *Answer does not have to specify 'against democrats' to get 1 mark*	1
c	…the hardliners are **playing catch-up**	…in reality, they are still lagging behind	1

4. 'And when dictators fight back against it, they're pushing against a wall of water' (lines 30-31). Explain the metaphor. *Use your own words as far as possible.* [2m]

Pt	Metaphor	Suggested explanation	
a	Pushing against a wall of water…	Just as (a) pushing against a wall of water is an impossible/a pointless/meaningless/futile/ fruitless endeavour,	1
		(b) restricting/opposing/censoring Internet use is pointless/impossible/meaningless/futile/fruitless.	1

5. Why does the author use capital letters in 'Hermit Kingdom' (lines 45-46)? [1m]

Pt	Lift	Inference	
a	a decision that almost every nation is unwilling to make	The capitals emphasize being ostracized / unpopular / shunned / left out of the global community *Answer must capture both the idea of emphasis and isolation.* *Answer has to capture the idea that isolation is <u>imposed</u>, and not by choice.* *No ½ mark*	1

6. Vocabulary [5m]

	Word	1 mark	½ mark	0 marks
(a)	agenda (line 5) *noun* '…to advance the freedom **agenda**…'	motive cause objective purpose	plan idea	list outline programme movement
(b)	futility (line 44) *noun* '…revealed the **futility** of its censorship.'	ineffectiveness pointlessness uselessness	hopelessness	senselessness weakness failure
(c)	leery (line 49) *adjective* '…tend to be **leery** of simple solutions…'	wary suspicious apprehensive skeptical mistrustful distrustful	doubtful disbelieving	unsure uncertain aware ignorant disapproving
(d)	agitate (line 54) *verb* '…typically the first group to **agitate** for freedoms…'	lobby campaign	push demand advocate pressure	ask fight
(e)	beneficent (Passage 2 line 47) *adjective* '…supposedly **beneficent** Internet companies…'	magnanimous altruistic	benevolent generous	considerate philanthropic liberal helpful kind noble

Note: Do not penalize spelling, word form errors under content mark

Questions from Passage 2

7. 'He told Chinese leaders that they stood "on the wrong side of history"' (line 7).
What was Bill Clinton implying about authoritarian regimes? *Use your own words as far as possible.* [1m]

Pt	Lift	Suggested paraphrase	
		In the face of the Internet / technological development, *[½ mark only if answer doesn't include idea of 'technological development']*	
a	The Web, and new communications technology in general, will **open up closed societies** (line 5)	authoritarian/paternalistic regimes/states will become liberalized	1
	OR	OR	
b	and hasten the **demise** of authoritarian regimes (lines 5-6).	and will fall	1
	OR	OR	
c	…the Internet will spark the **decline** of autocrats (line 8)	authoritarian regimes will be rendered out-of-date/obsolete/irrelevant.	1

8. What evidence is there that 'the decline of autocrats has been proven false' (line 8)? *Use your own words as far as possible.* [2m]

Pt	Lift	Suggested paraphrase	
a	…overall the number of **free** societies…has **declined**	In general, there are fewer democratic/liberal nations today	1
b	Online **activists** in many places have much **less freedom**…	Internet-based campaigners/protesters/People who use the Web for their causes are facing far more restriction *0 mark if answer cites examples in lieu of the main idea*	1

9. What does the author imply when he uses the phrase 'deafening silence' (line 56)? *Use your own words as far as possible.* [2m]

	Lift	Suggested paraphrase	
	… other big technology firms with China operations. 'We have done business in China for more than 20 years and **we intend to continue our business there**,' a Microsoft spokesman told the press after Google pulled out (line 56-58).	a) The writer implies that the lack of support/response/comment (silence) makes a strong statement (deafening),	1
		b) that the well-established/major/significant companies regard enterprise or profit is more important to them than other considerations.	1

10. Summary [8m]

According to Kurlantzick, how do authoritarian governments manage the Web? Using relevant material from paragraphs 3 to 5, summarise the ways in which they do so. Write your summary in **no more than** 120 words, not counting the opening words which are printed below. *Use your own words as far as possible.*

	Authoritarian governments manage the Web…	
	Lift	**Paraphrase**
A	Many have **developed highly sophisticated methods of monitoring and filtering** Web sites (line 17)	…to come up with extremely advanced ways (1/2) to keep an eye on/track and/or screen/sieve/censor online content/pages (1/2)
B	…are **learning from each other's** filters (line 18)	They adopt/copy/exchange/share one another's screening methods *Accept lift of 'filters'* *Do not accept 'technology' for 'filters' if it is not linked to point A*
C	Use **state-backed commentators**… (line 21)	Employ government-approved/-sanctioned observers/reporters/officials… *Key idea: 'state-backed' (1 mark)*
D	… **to control online discourse** (line 21)	… to dictate/influence/shape/restrict/ regulate online/Web discussions
E	… **and threaten political opponents** (line 21)	… and to intimidate enemies of the state/antagonists *0 mark: 'coerce', 'blackmail'*
F	…savvy autocrats **create their own** [portals] (lines 24-25)	Astute/ clever dictators can start/commission/have their own portals /online gateways *Accept lift of 'portals'*
G	…**will not include content about controversial topics** (line 26)	[that allow them to] leave out information/issues/subjects that are contentious/potentially divisive
H	perpetuate **a fiction of a free** Internet… (line 31) / users often think they are seeing the same Internet as someone in…another free country (line 32)	Give/continue/sustain the illusion of uncensored online content *Accept lift of 'Internet'* *½ mark if answer lifts 'freedom'*
I	… **while quietly blocking** politically **hot** sites (lines 31-32)	…even as they secretly restrict access to politically contentious/popular Web pages *Accept lift of 'politically'*

J	…**monitor political activists** (line 35) / **follow dissidents** (line 40)…	Track/Spy/Keep an eye/Keep a watch on protesters/opponents…
K	…**activists…are building…dossiers of information about themselves** (line 38)	[INFERENCE]…by getting details/data about who they are
L	… **and track groups online rather than having to infiltrate meetings…in people's homes or in bars** (lines 41-42)	[INFERENCE] Observe/Trail these people virtually instead of physically *Answer must include the contrast between virtual and physical tracking*

Sample summary:

Authoritarian governments use the Web to come up with extremely advanced ways to keep an eye on and screen online content. They copy one another's screening methods and employ government-sanctioned observers to influence Web discussions and to intimidate enemies of the state. Astute dictators can commission their own portals and leave out information that is potentially divisive. They give the illusion of uncensored online content even as they secretly restrict access to politically contentious sites.

First 8 points – 75 words when expressed succinctly

12. AQ

Sheridan argues that the Internet plays a crucial role in building democracies, whereas Kurlantzick is of the view that the Internet does not spread freedom.

How far do you agree with their views?

Support your answer by referring to what you have read in both passages and to the situation in your society. [8m]

For a reasonably competent discussion, candidates are expected to:

- Make reference to and show engagement with some key **ideas** in the passages with **evaluation/comment**, and not just pick examples to agree or disagree with. For example:
  - Passage 1, Para 2: "dictatorships…would fall with the click of a mouse"
  - Passage 1, Para 5: "futility of…censorship"
  - Passage 2, Para 4: "fiction of a free Internet"
- There must be clear **justification** of their view/position, and the justification must be backed by **concrete** examples from their society. For example, in the context of Singapore:
  - The influence of OB markers on Internet discussion/dialogue
  - Self-censorship
  - Selective blocking of sites as a symbolic gesture of Web regulation/control = "light touch regulation" (e.g. pornographic/illegal drugs/fanatical religious sites)
  - Government using the Web for outreach, feedback
  - PAP embracing the Web out of necessity in spite of initial reservations [= "savvy autocrats" @ Passage 2, Para 2]
  - Monitoring of online activity resulting in arrests, punishment, etc (recent case of self-radicalized NS man)
  - Online petitions to change/challenge/influence policy (e.g. petition re: Mother Tongue weightage in the PSLE)
- Students should be able to show **nuanced** application / **critical** evaluation of ideas from the text to the situation/dynamics in their own country, instead of making sweeping/unconvincing parallels. For example:
  - In Singapore, although there is a lot of online activity, not much of it actually translates actual activism, protests (vs. Thailand)
  - In Singapore, the majority of online comments tend to gravitate towards socio-economic issues rather than real political issues
- Students can frame their responses according to **various domains** – e.g. social / political / economic
- NOTE: Students are NOT required to fully agree or fully disagree with either text, <u>unless they can present a convincing case for doing so</u>

AQ – More possible points / examples / arguments

	From Passage 1 (*Barrett Sheridan, "The Internet Helps Build Democracies"*)	
	From passage	**Possible points / arguments / examples**

A.	Autocrats have "mastered the use of cyberspace for propaganda" (*lines 12-13)*	<u>Government use of Internet</u>: Students need to be careful about making sweeping accusations of "propaganda – vs. genuine effort by government to engage the ground
		
		 <u>E.g.</u>
		• "Singapore Elections" page on Facebook (fans from both the ruling People's Action Party (PAP) as well as opposition political parties. Almost 300 people have signed up and they include Senior Minister of State for National Development Grace Fu, PAP Members of Parliament Lim Biow Chuan and Zaqy Mohamad, as well as grassroots organisations such as Aljunied GRC.)
		• Ministers on Facebook (Deputy Prime Ministers Wong Kan Seng and Teo Chee Hean, and Ministers George Yeo, Yaacob Ibrahim, Vivian Balakrishnan and Lim Hwee Hua)
		   • *Central Singapore District Mayor Zainudin Nordin, an MP for Bishan-Toa Payoh GRC, has received requests from residents seeking jobs. "It is an enabling tool that allows residents to communicate with us easily, and see what we are up to," he said.*
		   • *Senior Parliamentary Secretary and North East District Mayor Teo Ser Luck said a key advantage of **Facebook** is that it consolidates information from a variety of people at a glance. "It has helped me know better what people feel about a range of issues and how they respond to our work," said the Pasir Ris-Punggol GRC MP who has his own **Facebook** site.*
		• Young PAP on Facebook

From Passage 1 (*Barrett Sheridan, "The Internet Helps Build Democracies"*)		
	From passage	**Possible points / arguments / examples**
B	the use of online tools and mobile phones to organize protesters and project their message around the world *(lines 22-23)*	Hardly any of this in Singapore. Even the gay rights event at Speaker's Corner in May 2010 was touted by organizers pinkdot.sg as "NOT a protest, rally or demonstration but a simple gathering of like-minded Singaporeans" (http://www.pinkdot.sg/index-2010.swf). Of course, the organizers were granted a permit to hold the event – which hardly makes it a "protest"!
C	just how powerful an organizing and communicating tool the Internet is, even when limits are placed on it. And when dictators fight back against it, they're pushing against a wall of water. *(lines 29-31)*	No "wall of water" here?: Students can reflect that even though many Singaporeans are Net-savvy, many may not be involved in activism. In fact, even those who want more say in governance & policy are not stepping up to get involved • *"SINGAPOREANS want to have a greater say and be more involved in the political process and policymaking compared to 12 years ago, according to a new study. Yet, the study by the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) found that when it came to actually making their views on public policy issues known to the **Government**, just 8 per cent actually did so…"* (ST, 2 Aug 2010) BUT there is the possibility/threat of the Net enabling those who are self-radicalised – e.g. NS man Muhammad Fadil Abdul Hamid arrested on April 4, to be detained for two years under the Internal Security Act (ST, 7 Jul 2010)
D	heavy-handed Web censorship tactics, blocking many foreign sites and e-mail programs *(lines 37-38)*	The MDA officially adopts a "light-touch" approach to Internet regulation in Singapore *[see Annex A at the end of this document]*.

	From Passage 1 (*Barrett Sheridan, "The Internet Helps Build Democracies"*)	
	From passage	**Possible points / arguments / examples**
E	the futility of its censorship. Their choice was a binary one: accept that the Web cannot be controlled, or eliminate it altogether. Choosing the latter sets a nation on a path to becoming the next Hermit Kingdom, a decision that almost every nation is unwilling to make *(lines 44-46)*	Students would be hard pressed to find good evidence of the government clamping down on the Internet. In fact, its stance is to increasingly loosen control & move with the times, largely in recognition of the fact that (a) it is hard to police the Net; (b) Singapore cannot afford to be "cyber-landlocked" if it seeks to continue developing (economically, socially, politically, etc.) • The next GE is likely to see "podcasts and vodcasts put out by political parties as part of their Internet election advertising" (ST, 10 Jan 2009) • In terms of "engaging netizens", Minister for Information, Communications and the Arts Lee Boon Yang signalled a "mindset change" in a Government that had previously kept cyber chatter at arm's length… The Government is now "fully into e-engagement" (ST, 10 Jan 2009)

F	the path toward democracy is a long one … It's during that long process – which academics such as Huntington call "democratic consolidation" – that the Web's impact will be most felt. *(lines 47; 51-52)*	Students will need to cite good examples of "democratic consolidation" – i.e. political/activism sites that have good, sharp analysis (vs. "grumbling" blogs, chatrooms full of vitriol but little substance, etc.)
		
		Online political sites, e.g.:
		  (1) http://theonlinecitizen.com/
		     TOC began in December 2006 with a simple aim in mind: telling the stories about Singapore and Singaporeans that weren't being told in the mainstream press. Blog site which endeavours to reflect the views and opinions of ordinary Singaporeans
		  (2) http://thevoiddeck.org/
		     This website is about the goings-on of the Internet regarding Singapore issues both close and not so close to our heart.
		
		Students may also wish to reflect on the

		"roadbloacks" facing such "democratic consolidation" that comes *not* from the government but from the people themselves, e.g.: • Lack of political maturity → grumbling, personal attacks, unsubstantiated accusations/criticism, etc. – e.g. attack against Young PAP member in early 2010 (accusing him of using his grassroots connections to drum up business for his events management company) • Singaporeans still trying to decide how much they want the government to be "hands off" – could be a case of wanting their cake & eating it too? E.g. in the cases of Pastor Rony Tan making insensitive remarks about Buddhism and 3 teenagers making online racist comments: *"…when it comes to remarks on race and religion, the instinctive reflex is to summon the authorities. Indeed, the irony of anti-establishment netizens clamouring for the iron fist of the law did not pass unnoticed"* (ST, 6 Mar 2010).

From Passage 2 (*Joshua Kurlantzick, "The Web Doesn't Spread Freedom"*)		
	From passage	**Possible points / arguments / examples**
A	Online activists in many places have much less freedom than they did four years ago as well. *(lines 11-12)*	Sharper students would reflect on whether activism online may actually be problematic given how *public* such activism may be, and not only because of government monitoring or control. Full-time national serviceman (NSF) Muhammad Fadil Abdul Hamid was arrested on April 4 and will be detained for two years under the Internal Security Act (ISA).
B	monitoring and filtering Web sites *(line 17)*	Students would be hard pressed to "prove" that arrests of activists (e.g. self-radicalized NS man Muhammad Fadil Abdul Hamid) was due to government monitoring/filtering of the Internet or online "tracking" of activists. The reports in newspapers tend to be silent about *how* such radicals are tracked down, and whatever is reported can be taken as facts that have surfaced *after* arrests are made – e.g. *"Fadil began zealously surfing the Internet for jihadist propaganda and videos while studying in a local polytechnic… He later made contact online with a known radical, Anwar Al-Awlaki, and with an Al-Qaeda recruiter…"* (ST, 7 Jul 2010) However, there have been calls/recommendations of proactive official measures that can be taken in the fight against state threats, and students need to reflect on *why* such measures may be *necessary* (for national security, racial harmony, etc.), e.g.: *"religious and community institutions, government agencies and think-tanks should work together to identify best practices in building "theological and ideological firewalls". Such firewalls would help "immunise" the wider population against violent extremist ideas…"* (ST, 8 Jul 2010)

From Passage 2 (*Joshua Kurlantzick, "The Web Doesn't Spread Freedom"*)		
	From passage	**Possible points / arguments / examples**
C	use state-backed commentators to control online discourse and threaten political opponents *(line 21)*	Again, students would be hard pressed to "prove" that this is being practiced in Singapore. They must avoid simplistic arguments, e.g. that the *presence* of official/government websites & portals points to the *attempt* to control/curtail open discourse. Students may also consider the *conservative* mindset of many Singaporeans, who actually see the Internet as a tool for propagating shared/desired social practices & ideals. They need to consider if many Singaporeans actually *want* some control/policing of the Internet in order to preserve social order, impart desired values, e.g.: **Current:** "Muis [has] set up an **online portal** for young people to query religious teachers." (ST, 12 Jul 2010) **Proposed:** "One new idea thrown up by a community leader who does not want to be named is that of a **national council to prevent radicalisation**. He suggests it could work like existing national councils on drug abuse and crime prevention, which focus on raising awareness of these issues." (ST, 12 Jul 2010)
D	And rather than just put portals in the hands of Western companies, savvy autocrats are creating their own… government-backed search engine *(lines 24-25; 27-28)*	E.g. http://www.gov.sg/ (S'pore govt portal) – Students need to reflect on whether such government portals are there for authoritarian control or for improving transparency, providing information to citizens, allowing feedback channels, etc. Again, they cannot merely label a website as an "autocratic" tool the moment it belongs to the government!

From Passage 2 (*Joshua Kurlantzick, "The Web Doesn't Spread Freedom"*)

	From passage	Possible points / arguments / examples
E	much of the public…has no idea how much news and information they are missing out on in their filtered Web universe / users often think they are seeing the same Internet as someone in the U.S. or Japan or another free country *(lines 29-30; 31-32)*	Here again, MDA's "light-touch" approach means that Singaporeans actually enjoy a great deal of unfiltered web content.
F	political activists [are] creating their own personal Web pages or Facebook pages, activists in countries like Iran are building the kinds of dossiers of information about themselves *(lines 37-39)*	Similar to the approach to point A above – students need to reflect on how the *public* nature of the Internet makes online activism/protest particularly problematic, e.g.: • "[Self-radicalized NS man Muhammad Fadil Abdul Hamid] searched for bomb-making information online, and **posted a self-made video glorifying martyrdom and justifying suicide bombing**." (ST, 7 Jul 2010) • "[27-year-old Abdul Malik Mohammed Ghazali] was arrested…after he **posted comments related to the Youth Olympic Games (YOG) on a Facebook group**…[saying] it was time to "burn Vivian Balakrishnan and the PAP" (ST, 26 Aug 2010) **Students could also reflect on how such online posts could be "outed" by fellow concerned or offended citizens, and comment on whether this actually <u>underlines</u> the Internet's power as a tool of democracy, giving "people power" a boost & allowing them to participate in active & responsible citizenry**

From Passage 2 (*Joshua Kurlantzick, "The Web Doesn't Spread Freedom"*)

	From passage	**Possible points / arguments / examples**
G	It also has become easier for the security services to follow dissidents, since they can track groups of them online rather than having to infiltrate meetings of dissidents in people's homes or in bars *(lines 40-42)*	Students need to recognize that, for opposition parties or "dissidents", the Internet is a double-edged sword. While it offers them a fast, effective way to reach a bigger audience, it also opens them up to scrutiny by the authorities. But again, students will not be able to "prove" that the PAP has attempted/is attempting to "infiltrate" any opposition/dissident group, whether online or offline – they should avoid such baseless accusations! Some examples of opposition online presence: Singapore Democratic Party: http://yoursdp.org/ Workers' Party: http://wp.sg/ + Youth Wing: http://wpyouth.sg [On Twitter: http://twitter.com/wpsg/]

Light-touch Regulation

- In regulating the Internet, MDA adopts a balanced and light-touch approach to ensure that minimum standards are set for the responsible use of the Internet while offering maximum flexibility for industry players to operate.
- MDA also encourages industry self-regulation and public education efforts to complement its co-regulatory approach.

MDA's Guidelines

- MDA has established an Internet regulatory framework to promote and facilitate the growth of the Internet while at the same time safeguarding social values, and racial and religious harmony.
- MDA's focus is with the provision of Internet content to the public, and one of its main concerns is the ease of access to pornography on the Internet, especially by the young.
- MDA's guidelines do not cover webpages operated by individuals and personal communications such as email and instant messaging.

Cyber Wellness

- MDA recognises the need to educate the public on the positive as well as the hazardous aspects of the Internet. MDA's MediAction programme seeks to promote media literacy and discerning use of the media. A key component of this programme is the promotion of cyber wellness.
- Cyber wellness refers to the positive well-being of Internet users and a healthy cyber culture for the Internet community. It involves an understanding of the risks of harmful online behavior, an awareness of how to protect oneself and others from such behavior, and recognition of the power of the Internet to affect oneself and the community at large.
- The four core values underpinning the cyber wellness vision are:
  - balanced lifestyle
  - embracing the Net and inspiring others
  - astuteness
  - respect & responsibility

Internet Filtering Features and Software

- MDA has received feedback outlining the concerns of parents and schools about the dangers of the Internet, especially its impact on the young.
- To address these concerns, the MDA has worked with the three Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in Singapore to provide optional family access networks that parents can subscribe to for their children. All the ISPs launched their family access networks in 1998.
- Meanwhile, stand-alone filtering software such as CyberPatrol and NetNanny are also available on the market.
- With these services and such software, parents can be better equipped to help their children access the Internet safely.