Email from Professor Donald Bligh, School of Engineering, Computer Science and Mathematics, University of Exeter

My concern lies between questions 5, 9 and 10, but I claim no expertise, indeed little knowledge, about ICT.

I see the areas between Biology and Chemistry being infilled. This could be enormously accelerated if the rules of chemistry could be programmed in such a way as to develop the discipline of "theoretical chemistry" in rather the way theoretical physics mushroomed 100 years ago. In particular neuroscience is rapidly developing, not least with greater knowledge of brain chemistry.

My particular interest is the effect this OUGHT to have on the fundamentals of law and punishment by recognising that behaviour is caused. The assumptions behind Mens Rea are based upon a Christian and Roman conception of behaviour that will be shown to be wrong. (The freewill-determinism issue) There will need to be long-term public education to recognise the implications of this. There is already a gulf between academic and professional perspectives on crime and punishment and common public attitudes that undermines confidence in the criminal justice system.

I guess all this is not quite what the Royal Society had in mind, but it is a matter that needs long-term consideration and it does relate to the effects of IT on our understanding of psychological health.