Week Ten

**Task 1:**

As discussed in the text, the relational database model is widely used. Using the web, find the product names of as many relational database management systems (RDBMSs) as you can. When you identify a RDBMS, note if it is a commercial product and if so, who produces it. Take some time to note the features of the products and what differentiates them from each other.

**Discussion point 1:**

Of the products you found in task 1, which were the “most popular”? How did you come to this conclusion? Which products seemed to be aimed at the small-to-medium business? Which were aimed at large business/corporate use? Were any of the RDBMSs “application specific” i.e. designed to work with specific types of application and/or data?

**Task 2:**

As SQL evolved there was a need for languages standards. Find out what is the current standard is for the SQL language.

**Discussion point 2:**

Many RDBMSs are based on the SQL standard. However, they database vendors often provide additional features to the language set. Why do database vendors do this? What advantages does this give to the product? What disadvantages can this have a) to the consumer and b) to applications that operate with the RDBMS?

**Task 3:**

It is unlikely that you would have heard of or encountered OO databases before reading about them in the text. Their industry presence and usage is small and often specialised. However, some of the larger database vendors implement a form of the OO database known by the acronym ORDBMS. Using the web, expand this acronym and explain how these databases work. What are the advantages and disadvantages of ORDBMSs?

**Discussion point 3:**

The use and abuse of databases is a contentious issue and one which often raises public concern. Emotive language and terms such as “Big Brother”, “civil rights” and “privacy” are often used when discussing the storage of information in databases. Do you think databases are a threat to the public? Why/Why not? What if multiple databases are linked – for example, linking tax records to criminal or medical records? What safeguards need to be in place when managing and accessing databases?