Ringdom of Saudi Arabia Portal of the General Presidency of Scholarly Research and Ifta'

Fatwa no. 21205

Q: In recent times, internet cafes have spread everywhere. What is the ruling on investing in this business, given that they involve some harms and forbidden acts as clarified in the following cases:

The first scenario: The user rents the PC by the hour and connects to the Internet. We do not know what he is going to browse on the net. There are so many useful and harmful programs and sites, and some sites can be blocked by the King `Abdul `Aziz City for Science and Technology.

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However, some users can unblock theses banned sites.

Note: We cannot control a program except by cancelling the service.

The second scenario: There is what is called the Microsoft Chat program that is used for chatting and mailing. Users hold conversations and discussions on useful and scientific matters. Others may be bad users who use vulgar and indecent words. Furthermore, they may send and receive pornographic movies and pictures. It is possible to control sending and receiving of images and movies, but some users manage to break this restriction using devious techniques.

A: If such machines give users access to forbidden and indecent materials that contradict Islamic doctrine or give access to pornographic images, movies and news; or to suspicious conversations or forbidden games, and the owner of the internet cafe cannot prevent such Munkar (that which is unacceptable or disapproved of by Islamic law and Muslims of sound intellect) or have control on these devices, then investing in internet cafes is Haram (prohibited). This involves cooperating in sin and transgression. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) states: (Help you one another in Al-Birr and At-Taqwâ (virtue, righteousness and piety); but do not help one another in sin and transgression. And fear Allâh. Verily, Allâh is Severe in punishment.)

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May Allah grant us success! May peace and blessings be upon our Prophet, his family and Companions!

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Source: Fatwas of the Permanent Committee

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