Good morning, everyone

It is my pleasure to welcome all of you to the SLS Cyberlaw Section. This year we are celebrating the 10th anniversary of our section. Our first meeting took place at the University of Glasgow in 2005. Professor Steve Hedley (University College Cork) convened the section from 2005 to 2008. It has been my honour to look after the section after Steve. All these years we aim to provide a forum where legal scholars and practitioners can gather together to update each other on current developments in cyberlaw and discuss high-quality research relevant to legal issues in the information society. It has been our privilege to host well-renowned speakers and long-standing friends.

I think we would all agree that cyberlaw is a fascinating subject matter due to its interdisciplinary nature – crossing from civil law to criminal law and from social sciences to computer science. Cyberlaw has come a long way since the early days of the internet, and its importance has been gradually recognised. The subject matter has been expanding, interlinking other subject matters such as space law and telecommunications law. From one of the very first science fiction films in 1968 involving machine intelligence such as 2001: A Space Odyssey – ‘Open the Pod Bay Doors, HAL’ to today’s technological development in industries, machine intelligence assisting our work and daily life becomes a reality.

Today, more than ever before, we need mature and effective cyberlaw to protect our rights in the information society and to help us cope with the increasing challenges that new technologies may place upon us. As we all are aware, there are a number of recent new regulatory developments across the globe. For example, in February 2015 the new Open Internet rules concerning net neutrality were adopted by the US Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The EU has been also working towards the proposed Connected Continent Regulation establishing a set of balanced measures for net neutrality since 2013. As to data privacy protection, hopefully the final version of General Data Protection Regulation will be adopted by the EU by early 2016. It would be interesting to see how new regulations are to strike a balance between the fairness and openness of the Internet and the protection of individual rights without jeopardizing market development and technological innovation.

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Now let’s warmly welcome our keynote speaker Professor Andrew Murray from LSE. As we all know, Professor Murray holds a number of prestigious positions in our society such as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts (FRSA) and a Fellow of the Honourable Society of Gray’s Inn, 2007-2012. He is also the author of a great number of successful books. His forthcoming book is The Objective Self: Identity and Law in the Digital Society.
As you may be aware, his inaugural lecture titled “Open the Pod Bay Doors, HAL”: Machine Intelligence and the Law will take place at 6.30-8.00pm on Wednesday 30th September in the Sheikh Zayed Theatre, New Academic Building, LSE.

Today it is our great pleasure and honour to have him here. We would appreciate him sharing with us his insights into legal challenges and solutions to machine self-awareness and decision-making.