

An explanation of the impact of the availability of electronic information on individuals and society

I am going to compile a report; I will discuss to you the impact and availability of electronic information on individuals and society today. Firstly I will look at the impact it has on me and my family. ICT has a big impact in the everyday life of me and family and I will explain this in detail below.

Myself and my family:

Myself and my family use ICT every day, my parents would use it to type up assignments, check emails, contact friends and family members from different countries. Without the surge in ICT we would never be able to do any of these tasks. If we didn't have ICT we would have to write out a letter and post it off through air mail and the recipient mightn't get it for another few days, whereas an email, once sent, the person can receive it within a few seconds. I use it a lot more because of schoolwork, for word processing assignments and finding and printing out research. With out ICT, handing in work, would take a lot longer if we didn't have the electronics we have today. I will explain below how ICT is available for us all.

Communicating to friends and different countries – Using the internet and an increase in mobile phones contacting people from other parts of the world has never been easier. Through social networking sites like www.myspace.com, www.bebo.com and www.facebook.com I can easily make fast contact with friends and arrange plans for the weekend, find out information like homework or coursework etc, and email websites like www.hotmail.com, www.yahoo.co.uk and www.aol.com. From a few clicks of a mouse my parents and I can instantly, send and receive emails. By emailing it saves a lot of time there is no running to the post office, and best of all it's entirely all free of charge.

Online Banking – Me and my family all have credit cards; from these we can receive money from a cash machine (ATM) and use this to pay for goods and service, all have an online function where you can check yo ur balance, latest transactions, pay for bills, transfer funds, etc. The impact of credit cards means that we don't have to be in procession of cash all the time, this is a good security measure.

Schoolwork – The internet provides a research machine for all different types of information. Major search engines like Google (www.google.com) Ask (www.ask.com) and WebCrawler (www.webcrawler.com), provides quick relevant research in the topic you are requiring to know information about. Many of these search engines provide an advanced search feature also; It's a big help for coursework and assignments, research can be found with a few clicks of a mouse. Also through our school portal I can access the files on my school computer from home. If I don't have or forget, my USB pen, I can use the file access function to get my work and complete it at home.

Word Processing – Both myself and my parents have to use a word processor a lot of the time. For myself I use Microsoft Word a lot because of school, and studying double award applied ICT, all my work is based on computers, whether it's typing out assignments or typing up notes etc. My parents would also get a lot of use out of word processing programmes, more so my mother, she had to type up all her assignments for her Counselling course at Queen's. It saves a lot of time compared to writing up work, it's faster, neater, includes a spell checker, word count, grammar check, dictionary and many more features.

Employment – Through the internet finding the perfect job has never been easier; websites like www.jobcentreonline.com provide a list of full time and part time jobs throughout the Newry and Mourne area. From this website you can search for jobs through available categories or can use an advanced search function which lets you type in the job you're looking for, choose the region and choose a wage band, plus plenty more features. Overall this will result in less unemployment, and it will avail to all jobs within the North and South of Ireland.

Society in general and individuals within it:

Fingerprint system – Through the fingerprint system libraries, schools, police stations, and airports have all benefited. For example our school library uses the fingerprint system to find out overdue books, most popular books so more can be ordered in etc. Also throughout our school there is a number of fingerprint systems for paying for our school dinners, we all use our own fingerprint to add money to our account. This makes paying for our dinner a lot easier and faster. Also when coming from and going to America; the security check involves personal information being filled in and fingerprints of both index fingers being taken. From this the American authorities can simply find whether we are still in the country or not, and fingerprints from a crime scene etc can be easily accessed. This will stop high levels of immigration and people with high criminal records accessing countries like America or the UK. Keeping both jobs and the general public safe.

Disabled people – The internet has become a paradise for disabled people; with online services getting bigger and better; disabled people do not have to leave the house to do the shopping or pay the bills; because all this can be now done through the internet. Many banks have now online banking services; I know that my bank does. (www.northernbankonline.com) through this service I can check my balance, check the available amount I can withdraw from my card, and I can also use my card to pay for bills and services online. Also big shopping brands like Tesco, Sainsbury's and SuperValu all provide online shopping; this can be then delivered straight to the person's door. However this can take away from the social aspect of shopping.

Traffic control – All traffic lights throughout all the major cities throughout the world are controlled by computers in some way; without the help of computers, the traffic throughout, would not run smoothly. If a person was in control of

making sure the traffic lights were cutting congestion throughout the city, more than likely, he/she would find or have problems. Computer control is a lot more efficient than man power; whether it's finding errors, timing issues etc, overall the traffic lights will work a lot better, overall reducing traffic congestion.

Vote counting – Vote counting has come a long way and has been made a lot easier and simple through the use of an electronic vote counting system. The presidential election for the US president; was in such a high demand of voters, the electronic voting system, made the vote counting a lot easier, and this made the election in terms of wins of states, run a lot more efficient. It also saves time; people spending hours counting millions of votes, and if they forget their count, they'll have to start counting all over again. A bad point of the electronic vote counting is what if the system breaks down? It would put an election into a disaster zone.

Electronic funds transfer – This is a computer based system that allows money to be transferred from one account to another or transfer money to another country with a few clicks of a mouse. It saves time, no running to the bank or queuing up, also is a good impact for disabled people; they can avail of this service. Although through use there is the risk of fraudulent crime, hacker's etc, certain security measures decrease this risk. Personal details, like security questions and answers might have to be answered before a transfer can take place.

Transport and travel – From the increase in public transport, trains, buses, airplanes etc, and measures have been put in place in order to make purchasing tickets and checking timetables more accessible. For example, Translink is the major provider for all train and bus services (public transport) has a website online, providing timetables, costs, new services available, and lots of information. Flights can also be booked online now, it saves a run to the travel agents, although going to the travel agent, would be the more preferred option to get the best results and packages, although if you look about online you can come across a lot of very cheap flights and options.

How organizations use ICT to communicate with individuals and Society:

With the big increase in ICT, ICT saves organizations a lot of time and money, instead of dentists and opticians etc ringing your house to remind you of an upcoming appointment, a short and simple text message can be sent to your house phone that won't go unanswered. Emails to clients are also a big thing now, I will explain in more detail below.

Emailing – Organizations can now use a faster option to get in touch with their clients. And that option is emailing. Emailing is the cheaper and quicker option towards writing a letter, buying a stamp and going to the post office and posting it. Through emailing you don't have to do any of these things, there are two main things required to email, the address of the person you are sending the email to and the information in the email. With a click of the send button, it will surely have reached the recipient in a few seconds. The chance

of someone not receiving an email is very unlikely, whereas there is a high chance where a letter can go missing or go to the wrong address. Also if an email gets into the wrong hands, private information can be spread throughout the internet.

Televised advertising – Each household throughout the UK has at least one television. Televised advertising is a popular option, because 90% will watch a television for at least two to three hours a day. Businesses can use television primetime to communicate with potential customers and advertise their latest product. An effective advert will catch the eye, with no better way to advertise it than on the television. Overall this should increase the sales of products dramatically.

Radio - The radio might not just be as popular as the television but if a business could promote their products through a popular radio station like Radio 1, RTE2fm, Cool FM etc, it will catch the potential clients attention and hopefully interest them in buying the product. It also would be a lot cheaper than a television advert.

Texting – This is a cheap form of getting an important message across to a client. Dentists and opticians and other personal throughout the health region can now text the appointment details to their home phone number, free of charge. The impact of texting the home phone number, it will keep ringing the house phone until the phone is picked up, so there is no chance of the client missing the call if they are not at home or available to take the call.

Teletext – teletext advertises everything from cheap flights to the latest new models of cars, lotto numbers, and cinema listings etc. This is a quick way of finding out information.

Pop up windows – pop up windows is a popular method of how companies advertise their products. Pop up windows will be placed on popular websites like www.bbc.co.uk, www.bebo.com, www.facebook.com, www.ebay.co.uk etc. Pop up windows can get the message across although I prefer to close the pop up window.

Those who do not have or want access to ICT:

Fraud – people might not have or use ICT (online banking) because of a bad experience, e.g. fraud, personal details being taken, and bank account details could have been posted around the internet /sold on. People may think the safer option is to go to the bank and have your money dealt with by professionals.

OAPs – old age pensioners might not be able to benefit from ICT, because when they were growing up, computers might have only been in early development. Although courses are available to help, many OAP's wouldn't know how to switch a computer on and would be embarrassed to ask a friend or family member for help.

Low income – families with a low income, e.g. single parents with two children etc, would find it hard to pay the costs for a computer, not only the computer, also for the monthly cost of internet access. Also with the latest credit crunch, families are finding it hard to provide food and clothes for themselves and their children without paying for computers. Although there are alternative options like internet cafes, that can provide hourly access for £2 or £3.

Young children – young children might not be able to get access to ICT because their parents might be finding it hard to cope with paying bills etc (low income). An alternative option is most primary and secondary schools, also libraries have ICT facilities available for students to use during or after school.

Social networking websites – although social networking websites like Bebo, Facebook and MySpace, provide a cheap and fast way of communicating to friends, bad things can be lurking on sites like, paedophiles who pose as boys and girls of 14, 15, 16 years of ages, gain the trust of many vulnerable children and pass personal information. This puts the welfare of the child in danger. Some parents may not allow their children access to ICT because of fear for their children's safety. The only alternative is to monitor their children's browsing, or add parental controls, blocking them from chat rooms, and things they shouldn't be on, keeping them safe while they're online. There is also a major threat of getting viruses or being hacked when online, viruses on the internet can automatically get access to bank account details and passwords for online banking, which will put people financial issues into danger.

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