Information and Communication Technology

In this paper I will describe the different software packages that are used frequently and describe the value of Information and Communication Technology to me as a student. In my future profession, Social Work, Residential Child Care, I will be making use of my ICT knowledge in many ways, such as word processing, spreadsheets, and presentation packages and of course e-mail and the Web.

Word Processing

As we spend much of our time writing at work, at home, at school or even during leisure activities, Word processing is the most popular PC application. At work we send memos and write procedure manuals. At home we keep to-do lists and prepare party announcements. At school we write reports and essays. During leisure time, we keep diaries and write letters to our family and friends. These are just a few of our day-to-day writing activities that can be made easier and more professional through the use of word processing software. Word processing software enables users to enter and edit text in documents in preparation for output (printed, faxed or sent vial e-mail). Word processing documents can include graphic images.

Long (1997)

Although I am only in first year at Strathclyde University, I am already using Word Processing a lot. I use Word Processing for writing essays, writing reports and also to write a reflective journal throughout this course.

Spreadsheets

We used to use pencils, erasers, and calculators to deal with rows and columns of data, but now we can make use of spreadsheet software, which is an electronic

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alternative to these manual tasks. Spreadsheets are used for all sorts of data that

include rows and columns, like for instance income statements, personnel profiles,

home inventories and budget summaries.

Long (1997)

Lotus 1-2-3 for Windows and Microsoft Excel are examples of spreadsheet software.

I have had a course in these two software packages and find them very easy to work

with. If you have worked with the one, the other is easy to pick up on and to work

with. I have not yet had to use any form of spreadsheet during my course, but maybe

in the future either during the course or in my profession I will make use of

spreadsheets.

Presentation Packages

Presentation packages like PowerPoint are used for presentations. You can make

different slides with either pictures or text on it. These different slides can be put in

the right order of the presentation and then either get printed out as hand outs or they

can be projected onto an overhead projector. I find that presentation packages have

made presentations more interesting, but also more enjoyable. Not just listening and

watching the presentation, but also the making of the presentation. You have the

ability to put headers and footers on all the slides; you can choose different font sizes

and also different font types. You can choose to put pictures anywhere on the slide

and you can choose different ways of bulleting the points that you have listed. These

are only a few of the things that could help you make your own presentation.

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At University I have already had to do a group presentation and used an overhead projector for this. We only had to do a small presentation of two minutes each, so a presentation package was not needed. If and when I will have to do a presentation on my own, I will most definitely use PowerPoint to present my presentation well.

E-Mail

E-mail stands for electronic mail. E-mail enables people to send electronic messages to each other's electronic mailbox. There are many different ways to set up an e-mail account. Some people use the World Wide Web to actually open an account, say for instance with Yahoo or Hotmail, but others choose to set their account up through Microsoft Outlook or Eudora. All e-mail accounts will have the same sort of function that you can use within your account. You can always send, receive and store e-mail messages. You can usually change the font types and font sizes as well, before you send the message on to the recipient. There will also be a priority you can choose from when sending your message, as this will then show on the recipient's mailbox how important the message is. The mailbox is where you have all your received e-mail messages.

Within my course I have already been using e-mail a lot, either to stay in touch with my friends within University or friends and family without the course. It is very helpful to get in touch with your tutors and lecturers, as it is sometimes hard to get a hold of them. It is also very handy for staying in touch with your fellow students, as a lot of them you have or will only see once in a blue moon.

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The Web

The Web is actually an abbreviation of The World Wide Web and is also known as WWW. This Web is formed by linking computer networks in various countries, which are formed themselves by linkages of individual university and other networks. Information on the Web is presented as a "page" located at a particular site, each page having its own unique identifier. Pages are linked together as a hypertext system. Hypertexts are highlighted text or images, which are linked to other related pages. Clicking on the hyperlink will take you to the linked page. This linked page will also contain links to other pages. By clicking such links it is possible to move through the Web by an infinite number of trails. Your trail can take you directly to information which you need, or it can peter out in trivia. The amount of information available is enormous and this is why the Web is a valuable resource for a student. You do however need to learn how to find the relevant and avoid the trivia.

Lucie Waterhouse (2002)

Now I am studying Social Work, Residential Child Care at University I will have to do a lot of research. This research can be done by reading lots of books, but also The World Wide Web will be very useful to look different issues up. There will be a lot to find that you will be able to find in Libraries, but it is very useful to have every thing at hand on just a computer.

Word count: 1059

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In the following paper I will critically evaluate two different websites with reference to clearly identified criteria, including accuracy, authority, objectivity, currency and coverage.

The first website I will critically evaluate is the SIRCC (Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care).

Accuracy

The SIRCC website has been active since 12/06/01. The intended users for the SIRCC website would be anyone who is currently working in Residential Child Care or is in a Residential Child Care course and of course anyone who is interested in Residential Child Care. I find that the SIRCC site is very suitable for these intended users. The spelling and grammar on the website is not always correct, as the author tends to forget some letters, or puts spaces in the words.

The information provided on the site is well organised. The left hand menu will take you to each of the different areas of the site. When you click, a selection of further menu choices will appear. These can be used to delve deeper into one of the areas on the site while you can still reach any other part of the site. There are different links to other sites, which give more information on topics discussed on this site.

The data on the site is relevant, as anything on the sight is related to Child Care. The site was redesigned in January 2003 and was last modified on 16/01/03. The site is definitely authentic, as The Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care is an official institute here in Scotland, which is funded by the Scottish Executive and is a

partnership of the University of Strathclyde, the Robert Gordon University, Who Cares? Scotland, Langside College and Save the Children.

Authority

The SIRCC web site is designed and maintained by Sheryl Lindsay, Assistant Librarian at SIRCC. And can be contacted on sheryl.lindsay@strath.ac.uk. You can also contact SIRCC through post, telephone or fax and also through e-mail on sircc@strath.ac.uk.

There is no evidence of bias, as everything is written in an objective manner. It is all information on different subject and links to other sites relating to these subjects, so no one is giving their own opinion.

As I mentioned above in the evaluation for accuracy, there is a partnership between the Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care and the University of Strathclyde, the Robert Gordon University, Who Cares? Scotland, Langside College and Save the Children.

Objectivity

This site is designed without any obstructive advertising. The site is only devoted to anything to do with residential child care, nothing else.

The site is designed in a very plain manner. All the information that is provided on the site comes from either Mr Andrew Kendrick, professor of Residential Child Care at Strathclyde University, the SIRCC staff members or one of the other partners of SIRCC, so it is all straight forward and there is no evidence of the information being

bias. Everything that is mentioned on the site is backed up with links to other websites with the actual facts on the subject.

Currency

The information on this site was created on 12/06/01 and the last update was on 15/01/03. The actual Home page was last updated on 16/01/03. This is mentioned on every page of the site at the bottom of the page.

The different links to other sites are also up to date as they are links that refer to genuine institutes. The site search facility on the site is not available at present, but is hoped that one will become operational later this year. A few pages have not been updated yet, but they are in progress of getting updated.

There will always be a certain amount of information on the site that will be static, but if there is anything new in residential child care, they will update this on the site. The site has a section on the home page that gives you all the latest news.

Coverage

On the site there are all different kinds of topics, like education and training, but also about conferences and events to go to. Within the discussion on these topics, they do not go very in-depth, but I find that it is all very clear and there is usually another link to give you more details. The links with more detail to the subject do offer further opportunities to explore the topics in any depth. This site could be used by anyone with an internet connection, as you do not require access to additional software.

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The second site that I will evaluate is the Scottish Executive Website.

Accuracy

The Scottish Executive website has been active for a while, but I have not been able to find when it was created. The site is suitable for anyone who needs information on anything you can think of within the UK. The spelling and grammar on the website is not always correct, but the overall site is well organized.

You have the contents of the site on the left hand side of the page and along the top you have the different options. You can choose many different topics, and when chosen, you will have lots more information and links to go to.

It says today's date at the top of the page, but it doesn't say if that is the date it was last updated or that that is just the date.

Authority

The website has lots of different contacts to get in touch with, if you ever have comment on anything relating to the website or the topics. There is no evidence of bias, as everything is written in an objective manner. It is all information on different subject and links to other sites relating to these subjects, so no one is giving their own opinion, unless it is a journal of someone.

Objectivity

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Also this site is designed without any obstructive advertising. There is no evidence of bias on this website. Everything that is mentioned on the site is linked to other websites with the actual facts on the subject.

Currency

As I mentioned before I cannot find when the site was created They mention today's date on the top of every page, but do not know if that is because they have updated the information on that date, or that it would always be today's date. The links to other sites are up to date. There will always be a certain amount of information on the site that will be static, like the different topics to choose from, the different options, but I suppose the links would be updated once in a while.

Coverage

On the site there are all different kinds of topics, like children and young people, but also about agriculture and food. When clicking on either one of the topics, you will come to a lot of different links to choose from, relating to that topic. When clicking on one of the further links, you will go to a totally different website relating to that topic .

Word count: 1162