

## **The impact of ICT on the way I do things at home and school**

For this assignment I will explain to you about the effects ICT has on my everyday life. I will take examples of ICT I use, at home and at school, and will explain why and how they help me in my average day. The ICT technologies that I will talk about will be:

- 1) The computer
- 2) The Internet
- 3) E-mail
- 4) MSN
- 5) Flash Drive

### **1) The computer**

One of the most important things technologies I use is the computer. Its basic units are the monitor, tower unit, the keyboard, the mouse and the speakers. I also have additional units to let me relax more and do things much easier.

As well as using my computer at home, I also have to use the computers at school.

My computer at school is network. I send my homework from home to school to print out. The disadvantage is that anyone else from school can hack in to my school computer, as they have the same network, or just get my password and delete my essays, change them or corrupt all my files. I always need to remember to keep my password.

### **Software on my computer**

Microsoft word  
Microsoft excel  
Microsoft Access  
Microsoft PowerPoint

Each of these programs in Microsoft Office enables me to do different tasks.

### **Microsoft word**

Microsoft word is a very useful program which I use for nearly all my essays and coursework's from school, just like I am writing this very essay. I also use word to write letters if ever I need to send one. A little further in the year, we shall be going on work experience and word will aid me in typing up the letter to the different companies and firms. I will not have to worry about handwriting at all and I can correct my self as many times as I want and nobody will know. If I was writing by hand, it would take me a very long time as I would have to take care of my handwriting and make sure I make no mistakes.

I would also have to make sure my grammar is perfect and if I ever did make a mistake, I would have to start all over again. But if I was using Microsoft word, I could cut copy paste and edit for as many times as I wanted to. If I made a mistake I

would just delete the word/s and no one would be the wiser. For tiny mistakes, like capital letters, the computers will autocorrect the document and for larger ones, the computer would put a red line under the word. If I made a grammar mistake, the computer will put a green line under the word. Both these lines stand out so the mistake can immediately be seen.

If I had to do this document off by hand, I would not be able to add pictures to make my presentation much better. The only way to correct my self, I would have to use correction fluid, and if I wanted to add something to my document I would have to start from the beginning again. Hand-written documents cannot be cut copy or pasted, therefore, Microsoft word, in my opinion, is much better than writing document by hand.

### **Microsoft Excel**

I use excel in my ICT coursework which I work on three times a week at school. At the moment in ICT, I use excel to record information about Kingsway hall hotel. This comes in very useful as I can draw up lots of charts to give examples of the way the booking system works and guests arriving and leaving. Also, I use excel to draw up graphs for science, when I have to show the effects and the time it took in an investigation, geography for drawing up graphs for things like population control and maths for showing the percentages of things. Excel also comes with a built in calculator which helps me a lot by doing sums for me when I type out a formula. It is good because when it sees a pattern, it types it out automatically. E.g. I am writing out the numbers 1-50. If I wanted to, I can make excel type them all out automatically. Done manually, it would have taken several minutes, but by computer, a few seconds! This is very fast and efficient and very *very* useful!

### **Microsoft Access**

We use access in our current coursework where we store data about customers and stock. This information can be extracted in the form of reports using queries. I use access at home which substitutes for a personal diary. My personal diary I would use to store information about friends and family for their addresses, telephone numbers and birthdays. Whenever I have kept a diary, I always forgot to put it in the right places, so I would lose it. Because of this, I would miss friend's birthdays or telephone numbers. Using access means that I will not lose the info I need. The only way this can happen is if there was a virus, but I have anti-virus' at home to protect my computer.

The difference between using access on my computer and keeping a personal diary is that I could lose my diary which would cause me frustration and grief, but my information would not be lost, as access is on m y computer which I use very often. I could also lose the information on my computer if I had a virus, but my anti virus and regular checkups make sure this does not happen.

### **Microsoft PowerPoint**

PowerPoint is mainly used for presentation purposes. Recently I used it to present my application for the duke of Edinburgh award. I also use it at the local youth club I go to four times a week from 6-8 in the evenings when ever I am asked to do a

presentation about myself or something else. This is to boost self-confidence and our speaking skills. If I did this presentation by hand, I would find it very difficult. Making my presentation on the computer is better as it can be made colourful. The information pops up on the screen automatically. If I did my presentation by hand, I could be nervous and drop an information card on the card and ruin the whole presentation and be the laughing stock of the presentation.

### **The internet**

The internet is the worldwide network of interconnected computers which all use a common protocol, known as TCP or IP, to communicate with each other. Every publicly accessible web site is hosted by a web server computer, which is a part of the Internet.

To access the internet, a PC with a modem (modulator-demodulator) is needed. A modem is a device that converts the digital signal from a computer to an analogue signal that can be transmitted along an ordinary phone line. This allows computers to connect to the Internet through a telephone line.

Search engines help users find web pages on the keyword entered. The search engines maintain databases of web sites and use programs (which are normally referred to "spiders" or "robots") to collect information. The collected information is then indexed.

Search engines can be set up to either search content within only one Web site, or to search the *entire* Internet. Many search engine developers have their own web sites such as 'Lycos' 'Alta Vista' and 'Google'.

In addition to search engines there are index sites such as 'Yahoo', where links to Web sites are organized into categories so that you can browse categories rather than guessing at search terms.

I use the internet for school to research. I sometimes need to use the internet to find info on coursework topics. E.g. I was recently given an essay to write on McCarthyism. First I thought of looking in books for the info, but there wasn't enough information in the books. To find enough info, I needed to take several books out, but the school library only allows us to take out one book. So I went on to the internet, and searched for it. In a fraction of a second, I was presented with hundreds and hundreds of pages, full of websites to do with McCarthyism! It would have taken me days to get the necessary information needed from books, but by using the internet, in a matter of seconds I had *everything* I needed, and more!

But there are also a few problems with the internet, the main one being when the internet lags. It is not very common, but when it does lag, it is very annoying. The main reason for this is when there are network problems, or when there are many people on at the same time, like in America, where many people use the internet.

A few weeks ago, I had a chemistry test. Instead of taking out a few books, I decided to use the internet. I managed to get many revision websites. By using a few of these websites, instead of taking out books, I managed to save my self a visit to the local library, meaning I had even more time to revise for the test!

Also, you can speed up the connection and speed of the internet by upgrading to broadband, which makes the internet much faster. This is good for downloads etc. because a 40 hour download can only take 1 hour to download, if you have broadband! Also, there are hardly any lags, and you can move from page to page really quickly.

I also use the internet to play games. The reason I play games is so I can relax a little from the tensions of school. On the internet, there are thousands and thousands of games websites. Within seconds of entering some keywords, I am presented with thousands of different games I can play.

Another thing about the games in the internet is that they are free. The only thing I have to pay for is the actual internet itself. If I had bought the games from a shop, they would have cost me a lot of money (a fairly good game is worth around £30!), but because of the internet, I am allowed to play games *without* paying for them.

I can also download/ listen to music for free which also saves me a lot of money, as I would have to pay a lot of money to buy all the songs I like. It also saves me time, as while I am download the songs, I can do carry on with what ever I was doing, as long as I leave the computer and internet on. This saves me a visit to the shop, and also a lot of money, as most songs on the internet are free.

The internet also allows us to keep in contact with people around the world! Using MSN Messenger, email etc. we can stay in touch with friends and family all over the world! It is extremely cheap, and very reliable! It is like a letter, but a lot cheaper, and gets to the destination a lot faster! We can also attach files at. To the email for free, and it will still get there extremely quickly, unlike a real letter.

A disadvantage about the internet is that children can access porn sites, though this problem can be resolved. Porn sites can be manually blocked by the administrator, or a web filter can be used which blocks certain types of websites.

Another problem with the internet is chatting to strangers. A paedophile can lure child to a certain place, pretending to be a young teenager. The child will believe the paedophile to be the person he says he is, as there isn't really a way to find out the real identity! This has happened quite a lot over the years, and is still a very dangerous problem! The only real ways to make sure this doesn't happen are either by not chatting at all, or by seeing the person through a webcam!

### **E-mail**

Email is a very commonly used function of the internet. It allows to the user to send a 'letter' electronically. This mail can be sent nationally or internationally, and the person who is being sent the email will receive it within seconds!

The advantages of email are that it is extremely fast, very reliable, and is much cheaper than sending a letter! Many companies also use email to get information around to its workers. They use email instead of letters simply because letters would take too long, and would cost too much.

If I was trying to organise a meeting, it would be much easier to just email each other, rather than finding a suitable time, and wasting time organising the venue as it would be much quicker, and would save a lot of time.

Also, if you had to discuss something with a friend, it would, once again, save a lot of time and money. If, instead of email, they used letters, it would take days to receive a reply! And if they used the telephone, you would waste valuable time talking about non-important things, rather than getting straight to the point. It would also be cheaper.

You can also send email to several people at once. If a club etc. needed to send information to all its members, they could type up everything in a mail, and send it to many people. This would save them the time of writing the information several times over.

A great advantage of email at school is if the teacher could not make it to school, he or he could easily send an email to the school with the subjects the pupils are to learn. This way, the teacher could stay at home, and the pupils still don't miss out on anything!

Also, if a pupil cannot attend school for a period of time, they could easily be sent the work via email, and also, they can send it back to be marked. This too will ensure the child doesn't miss out on anything and fall behind everybody else.

One of the disadvantages of emailing is because it is so simple and easy to use, people tend to sit at home and email each other instead of going out and socialising. This makes them less and less active, and eventually turns them in to 'couch potatoes'.

A second disadvantage is that the two people chatting do not talk face to face which means they can not have a proper conversation in person. They tend to rely on computers. The problem with this is that if this goes on for a long time, when the 2 people meet face to face they will be very uncomfortable. This is because before they always had something between them (i.e. the computer) but this has now been removed.

Another disadvantage with email is if the internet or your e-mail provider is down. This means you will not be able to access your emails, some of which may be very important!

### **MSN Messenger**

MSN Messenger is a program which allows me to communicate with people all around the world. It is very commonly used; millions world-wide use it! It is basically instant messaging, but with lots of extras. For a start, you can use different emotions and winks, you can access it on your mobile phone, you can play games, you can start a video conversation using a web-cam and you can start an audio conversation too with a microphone. Unlike emailing, you can have a 'face-to-face' conversation with another person, even if they are several thousands miles away! It is extremely fast, and is not like the internet, which lags if there are too many people on at the same time. Even if everyone who used it was on at the very same time, the message would still be sent and received in a fraction of a second!

At school, MSN has been blocked, as it could cause a distraction to pupils studying. Because of this, I only use it at home.

With MSN messenger, I can keep up-to-date with many friends and relatives around the world. Last year, I went on holiday to Rome. In Rome, I found a cyber café which had both the internet and MSN messenger. It was at a reasonable price (about £1 for an hour) and everyday, I would use MSN Messenger to send pictures of Rome, and just chat. It was very fast, which surprised me, as Rome is approximately 1200 miles from Bolton.

A good advantage of MSN is that several people could join one conversation. This is a very good service, as now it is possible to have meetings on MSN!

We can also transfer files to each other while chatting online, chat to more than one person at a time, store over 100 contacts, play games with our contacts, create a profile.

Every time a new version is released, MSN immediately starts work on an even better version meaning there is usually a newer version of MSN, every 3-4 months!

Because of this, the technology and range of features on MSN is rapidly growing.

### **Flash Drives**

A few months ago, I decided to buy a flash drive so I could take work from my home computer, to the school computers and vice-versa. At the beginning of the year, I didn't have one, and this really made my life harder. If I was behind in coursework, I could not take it home, meaning I only had about 3 hours a week working on it! It wasn't enough time, so I had to spend a few extra hours after school a week working on it.

I decided to buy a flash drive as I had a lot of time free on the weekends, and it would benefit me a lot if I could spend that time on my coursework.

I bought a 1GB flash drive for £20.

Buying the flash drive has really helped my ICT work, as I can now take my course works home and spend a few extra hours a week.

I could have used a CD-drive, but the school computers don't have a CD-drive. On top of this, CD's easy to damage, or break, and are also big flat objects.

I could have also used a floppy disk. The reason I didn't was because they have a very limited storage capacity, and can easily be damaged.

Overall, I think ICT makes life much simpler and easier, both at school and at home. I am sure ICT will carry on getting better and better, making our lives *even* simpler.