The impact of ICT on an adult in employment

Working Practises Interview

The employee that I interviewed was Mr. B Knowles, an ICT coordinator at Barking Abbey School who teaches 5 lessons per week, which includes Year 12 AS level ICT. His duties also include being co-ordinator for the ICT test bed project currently being run at the school. Furthermore he is in charge of setting up and installing ICT test bed resources in all classrooms.

Technologies he uses

- ➢ Internet
- ➢ E-mail
- ➢ Laptop

Internet

The internet is very useful for him while he is at work. He emails others schools concerning test bed issues which arise and also researches different types of ICT hardware and software projects using various search engines. This enables him to find the products available from around the world for the best price and then orders them online which is quick and saves the school money. He also uses the internet to find learning resources for his ICT lessons which help him prepare for the lesson planned.

At home he uses the Internet to search for cheap holidays at popular websites such as www.lastminute.com and also to book theatre or concert tickets for himself or his family. He finds using "RAC" a useful site as it is a route finder and plans short and long journeys to visit relations. He uses online shopping at supermarkets and other stores to buy products, which are delivered to his house. He also helps out his son by collecting information on Universities by browsing various University websites.

What he used *before* new technology

Before new technology, Mr Knowles had to complete tasks the harder way. This included constantly being on the telephone ringing up various companies on information for buying products including requesting brochures. He often used the Yellow pages, Thomson Local and telephone A – Z to contact businesses. This involved waiting in queues to talk to a member of the companies' team or get re-directed to other teams who deal with different matters, etc. This was very frustrating for him and wasted a lot of his time.

What he used *after* new technology

After new technology Mr Knowles finds it easier and quicker to do his day-to-day work via the Internet. He spends time in a more different and easier manner compared to before the technology was available. He can complete searches from the Internet for products easier and at the same time can use online ordering to save more time rather than use the telephone to order brochures and ordering details. For work he normally uses e-commerce to do his searches from which he can book his holidays or book concert tickets, which is more convenient than to visit the travel agent or telephone ticket hotlines.

Advantages

The benefits of the new technology are that Mr Knowles can find fast and efficient information on businesses, institutions or any type of service. Quality of resources found is good as well as the quantity of resources available using searches. Cheap products can be found from Internet searches, which save money for the school and also is less time consuming.

Disadvantages

Although the Internet has so many benefits, Mr Knowles believes that the Internet is not always safe to their users as there are a lot of computer viruses used by Internet vandals, which can spread throughout your computer and corrupt your system and can delete important files. The Internet attracts criminals to credit card fraud, terrorism and paedophilia. Also the cost of using the Internet can be an issue as installing modems for broadband access can be expensive. We tend to rely on the connection or availability and sometimes network failures or other hardware or software difficulties cause problems.

E-mail

At work Mr Knowles uses it to email teachers and also email various businesses. He can use emails to liaise with other schools including test bed contacts in Durham, etc regarding ICT test bed issues. Emails also give him the ability to send memos, meeting reminders

Mr Knowles does not use emailing as much at home. He uses it to find out confirmation of tickets and products brought online. He also uses email and web cam to communicate with his relations in New Zealand. He emails attachments with photos to his brother and emails other friends constantly rather than using telephone which is inconvenient and more expensive.

What he used *before* new technology

Before the introduction of emails Mr Knowles use to use the post, using one of the fastest letters posting facilities, royal mail. He often used the telephone to contact friends and businesses. Also used faxes to send documents quickly but also spent a lot of time on hold and being diverted to other departments.

What he used *after* new technology

Mr Knowles found using emails less time wasting as it was quick, fast and efficient. Information is quickly passed and transferred instantly which makes it easier than sending letters through the post as it delayed by a couple of days.

Advantages

Advantages of this new technology are that Mr. Knowles is able to save more time to do other things as emails are sent instantly. Also by using this method he saves money than sending letters and faxes.

Disadvantages

The main disadvantage of the introduction of this new technology is has been a great decrease in the number of letters sent the mailing system. This is not a direct disadvantage to Mr. Knowles. Also receiving junk mail through the emailing system can be a nuisance and viruses, which are also sent, can corrupt the system and delete important files. A lot of time is spent looking at different emails as they tend to become over loaded and it is very easy to delete important emails by mistake.

Laptops

A laptop is very useful for Mr. Knowles at school as he uses it to write reports in Microsoft Word and also uses Excel to produce spreadsheets to show his costs on buying ICT products for the school. He also designs web pages in Ms FrontPage for the school website.

At home he uses it to continue with the work he has remaining to do from school which normally completing spreadsheets of all the ICT products he had brought or he does for the school or completing ICT test bed reports. He has a network of 4 computers at home and if none of them are available he uses his laptop instead, which is convenient.

What he used *before* new technology

Before he used a laptop most f his reports were handwritten which looked unprofessional and corrections or mistakes would mean he would write them out again. His accounts for buying ICT products were done manually using a calculator and his information was drawn by hand on graph paper.

What he used *after* new technology

With the technology he is able to type up his reports on Word quickly with less error. He can also do his accounts on the access and completed on the spreadsheet.

Advantages

Advantages of the introduction of this new technology mean he can work at home with no hassle of having to carry his work on disks and transfer them over email, as a laptop is portable. This means he can complete his work at home, on weekends, in holidays and virtually anywhere. With the Microsoft Access and Word Publisher it means he can type reports and do his accounts with fewer errors and make it look more professional.

Disadvantages

The main disadvantage of Laptops is that it can be very expensive and is a prime theft item for criminals. Furthermore a laptop is so small and compact it can be easily stolen or damaged. It as has a small keyboard and a touch mouse, which can be annoying. Battery life is very short and has very quick power consumption.