

Using a PC Correctly and Safely

Online Help

- The internet can be used for a numerous amount facilities. The online dictionary and thesaurus can help you by explaining certain words and giving examples of words related to them so that you understand what a word means. It can also help you find a word which is related to or means the same as that word. This can help you vary your text.
- If an error message appears whilst you are working, the internet can help you understand what it means or tell you which option to choose. This is beneficial as there is less chance your work/document will be corrupted.
- The help tool can assist you to choose certain procedures, help you understand ways in which to use the software and sometimes even correct your errors. This will help the whole task not seem overwhelming.
- An online grammar and spelling checker is also available. This will check that all of the words are spelled correctly and most of the time gives you suggestions to spell your word differently.

Viruses

A virus is a program that corrupts data; it can spread from file to file or computer to computer.

E-mails:

As well as text, it is also possible to send other files via e-mail – these are called attachments. For example, you could e-mail a picture or a music file to a friend. Unless you are expecting to receive an attachment, treat any you receive with suspicion as it is easy to get a virus from an infected attachment. It is also possible to view an attachment without fully downloading it or you can use virus-checking software, such as McAfee or Norton, to scan the attachment before downloading. Both methods help to reduce the risk of getting a virus.

Internet:

A virus is often deliberately written to infect a computer, and make copies of itself. They often corrupt other files – and even operating systems. They move between computer systems by attaching themselves to harmless computer files and e-mails.

Hacking means accessing a computer system and its files without permission.

It is illegal, and once inside a system, the hacker might be able to view, edit, copy or delete important files, or plant a virus. Organisations can protect themselves by using passwords, encrypting files and using hacking-detection software. The main way to reduce the risk of viruses is to use anti-virus software – but it is important to use an up-to-date version because new viruses are detected nearly every day.

Data Storage

I have saved my documents of work on the computer (**RAM**) as well as on my memory stick.

RAM (Random Access Memory):

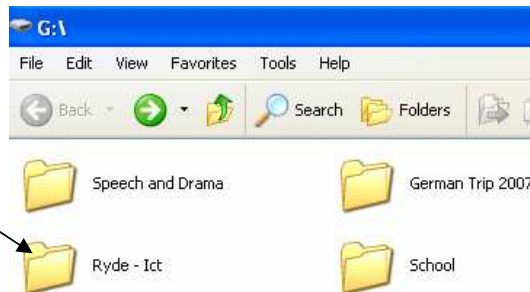
I used the computer's memory (CPU) to save my work as I did it, which is known as immediate access storage (IAS). The software I used, gave me regular prompts to remind me to save my work, however, there is a feature on some software's where they will automatically save your work. RAM is known as volatile memory, which means it is never stored permanently, and can easily be lost. This is why it is vital to save your work regularly.

Memory Stick:

A backing storage (also known as secondary storage) is any data-storage area outside the central processing unit (CPU). I used a memory stick also known as a pen drive, to back-up my data. I could therefore, store anything up to 1 gigabyte. Memory sticks are small, very stable and do not break easily and therefore are a convenient and compact way of backing-up and transferring data. A back-up is a copy of the original file currently in use to replace lost or damaged file(s), usually in another location and done regularly.

The diagram below is a screen dump of my backed up work on my Memory stick:

I.C.T GCSE folder.



Health Issues

There are three main problems connected either with poor design of the equipment, or from not using the equipment properly. In each case the risk is small, but the effects can be serious.

1. **Repetitive strain injury (RSI)** is a general term for aches pains and muscle or tendon damage resulting from overuse of a keyboard or mouse. Some people call it upper limb disorder. RSI can usually be prevented by buying an ergonomically-designed keyboard that makes it easier to touch-type without straining fingers. You should also exercise your fingers and hands regularly.
2. Spending too long in front of a Visual Display Unit (VDU) can cause **eye strain** and **headaches**. The glare from the screen and poor-quality images on some old monitors can make it hard for the eyes to focus properly. Therefore, you should arrange the equipment properly. Adjust the chair and the VDU to find the most comfortable position to work. Good background lighting and screen filters should also reduce VDU glare and therefore eye strain and/or headaches. You should also take regular breaks from computer work where you look away from the screen and possibly walk around.
3. **Circulation, fitness** and **back problems** might result from sitting all day in front of a computer rather than walking around. This can result in a long-term health problem. Again, looking away from the screen, walking around and exercising your fingers and hands also help reduce the health risks.

Safety Issues

The main law covering computer use at work is the Health and Safety Regulations 1992. The law says the employers need to do five main things:

1. ANALYSE WORKSTATIONS, AND ASSESS AND REDUCE RISKS:

This means employers need to check that the computer equipment and area around it is safe, and if it is not they need to take action to make it safe.

2. ENSURE WORKSTATIONS MEET MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS:

This includes providing proper computer chairs and good lighting.

3. PLAN WORK SO THERE ARE BREAKS OR CHANGES OR ACTIVITY:

Employers must not expect workers to work at a computer all day. They must provide regular breaks or allow them to do non-computer work.

4. PROVIDE FREE EYE-TESTS:

Eye tests should be free to all staff that regularly use Visual Display Units as part of their job.

5. PROVIDE HEALTH AND SAFETY TRAINING AND INFORMATION:

This is so that employees can take action themselves to reduce the health risks.

Employees should also take the following into account:

- Avoid having liquid near computers as this can cause electric shocks.
- Trailing wires are needed to be tied neatly so they cannot be tripped over.