Internet and communication

As a society we need to communicate and share. The internet allows us to communicate and share information in a matter of seconds.

Using email to communicate

Two of the main ways in which people use the internet for communication are email and VoIP.

Email (short for electronic mail) is the digital equivalent of sending a letter. Each email has a sender, a receiver and a message. The big difference is that instead of waiting for our posted letter to be delivered by the post office, an email is sent and received almost immediately.

Advantages and disadvantages of email

Aside from speed, email has several other **advantages**:

- It costs virtually nothing to send an email, whereas you need to buy stamps to post a letter.
- The same email can be sent to many people at the same time.
- Assets, such as text, videos or sound clips, can be attached to email.
- A record is kept of each sent email, so it is possible to refer back to check what was sent.
- When emails are sent, the recipient doesn't have to be there. Emails can be sent late at night and the recipient will see it when they check their email the following day. This has great benefits when sending emails to another part of the world.
- Emails can be sent at any time or day of the year. Post is not usually delivered on Sundays or bank holidays.

- Emails can be sent and received on various internet connected devices, eg PCs, laptops, games consoles, tablets or smartphones.
- Emails can be automatically forwarded on to another address.

Using email has its **disadvantages** too:

- The recipient can only receive the email if they are connected to the internet.
- Emails can sometimes contain viruses in the form of attachments.
- Spam emails can be a problem. So can phishing emails, which are designed to trick people into giving away personal information.
- Because emails can be delivered to internet-connected digital devices anywhere, they can be hard to get away from.

Email is a hugely popular form of communication for businesses and individuals alike. Nearly 200 billion emails are sent each day.