Your notes

Cambridge National IT: revision notes

Digital communications

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Types of digital communication

- Email: can be formal or informal, can carry attachments, and can go to one person or many. It is not instant.
- **Instant messaging** and SMS text messages: quick and informal, and good for groups.
- **Social media**: reaches large audiences quickly with posts, images and video, and people can reply.
- **Video conferencing**: face-to-face meetings over the internet, which saves travel.
- Websites, **blogs**, vlogs and **podcasts**: publish information for a wide audience, and can be updated at any time.

Devices and channels

- Devices include smartphones, tablets, laptops, desktop computers, smart TVs and smart speakers.
- Some communications go to chosen people (email and messages). Others are broadcast to anyone (websites and public posts).

Choosing a method

- Consider the audience (who and how many, and their access needs), the purpose (to inform, persuade, entertain or instruct), the content (text, images or video, and whether it is confidential), how quickly it must arrive, the cost and the security.
- A school might email parents a formal letter, text them an urgent reminder, and share photos of sports day on **social media**.

Advantages and disadvantages

- Advantages: speed, reach, low cost, multimedia content and two-way communication.

- Disadvantages: people need devices and internet access (the digital divide), security and privacy risks, messages can be misunderstood without tone of voice, information overload, and posts can be permanent.

Your notes

Key terms

Digital communication	Sending information electronically, such as by email or social media.
Instant messaging	Sending short text messages over the internet in real time.
Social media	Websites and apps where users create and share content with others.
Video conferencing	Holding meetings with live video and sound over the internet.
Blog	A website with regular posts, often written by one person.
Podcast	An audio programme that people can download or stream.
Target audience	The group of people a communication is aimed at.

Quick questions

Cover the answers and test yourself: remembering is what makes it stick.

1. Which method is best for a formal letter to parents with an attachment?
2. Which method lets people meet face to face over the internet?
3. What is one advantage of social media for a business?
4. What is one disadvantage of text-based messages?
5. What is a podcast?
6. What should be considered first when choosing a communication method?
7. Which method best suits an urgent reminder to parents?
8. Why might a company avoid using email for confidential information?

Answers

1. Email
2. Video conferencing
3. It can reach a large audience quickly and cheaply
4. Their tone can be misunderstood
5. An audio programme that people can download or stream
6. The audience and the purpose
7. A text message
8. Emails can be intercepted or sent to the wrong person

What to do next

Practise 12 questions on this topic

Try 4 exam questions, with mark schemes

Read the lesson, one step at a time

Free revision for GCSE and KS3 at lycolearn.co.uk. Some notes are for one exam board only, and say so in brackets.

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