

# **ICT**

## **Study Module 8**

# Using ICT to communicate

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# 8 Using ICT to communicate

By the end of this module, you should be able to:

- ▶ use email to communicate effectively
- ▶ describe how ICT supports collaborative working
- ▶ operate safely online and respect others

## Introduction

If the people you want to communicate with are in the same room, it is always best to talk to them directly. If not, ICT can help you stay in touch and work together effectively even when you are miles apart!

In this module, you will learn about the features of email that support collaborative working and get an opportunity to explore some of the growing number of web-based tools that enable people to meet and work together.

No-one can doubt the importance of staying safe and respecting others whilst working online and this module will give you some hints and tips on how to do so.

### Skill Standards covered

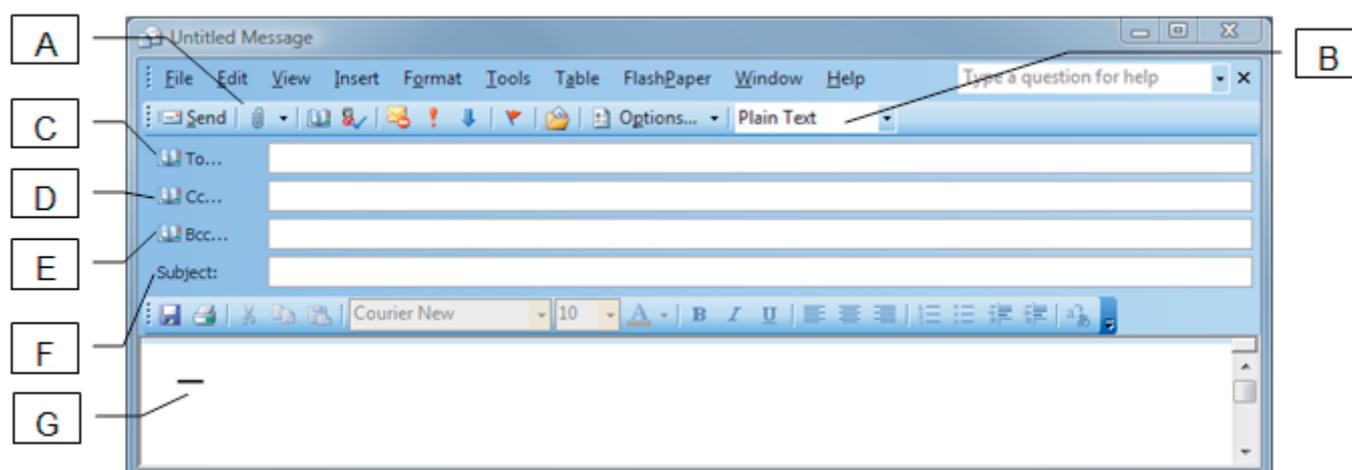
| At Level 1, you can... |   | At Level 2, you can... |   |
|------------------------|---|------------------------|---|
| 2                      | Interact with and use ICT systems to meet requirements of a straightforward task in a familiar context      | 2                      | Select, interact with and use ICT systems safely and securely for a complex task in non-routine and unfamiliar contexts |
| 2.1                    | Select and use software applications to meet needs and solve straightforward problems                       | 2.1                    | Select and use software applications to meet needs and solve complex problems   |
| 9                      | Use communications software to meet requirements of a straightforward task                                  | 8                      | Use communications software to meet requirements of a complex task  |
| 9.1                    | Read, send and receive electronic messages with attachments   | 8.1                    | Organise electronic messages, attachments and contacts  |
|                        |   | 8.2                    | Use collaborative tools appropriately   |
| 9.2                    | Demonstrate understanding of the need to stay safe and to respect others when using ICT-based communication | 8.3                    | Understand the need to stay safe and to respect others when using ICT-based communication                               |

# A Email

Email is a popular method of communication. You can access email on a computer, a mobile phone and other digital devices that have wireless connectivity.

## Components of an email

Here is an example of an email, with labels identifying the parts of the message.



**A:** The file attachment symbol. Click if you want to attach a file.

**B:** This drop-down list allows the format of the message to be selected. The options are: plain text, rich text or html. Rich text or html are used when the message includes images or formatted text.

**C:** The 'To...' (or recipient) field contains the email address of the person to whom the message is being sent. More than one address can be entered here.

**D:** The 'Cc...' (or carbon-copy) field contains the email address of the person (or people) who will receive a copy of the message. The person receiving the message (the recipient) will be able to see who has been sent a copy.

**E:** The 'Bcc...' (or blind carbon-copy) field is similar to 'Cc', but with one important difference. The receiver of the message will not be able to see who else has been sent a copy.

**F:** The subject line field contains a short heading that describes the message. This will be displayed in the recipient's email inbox when the message is received.

**G:** The body of the message. Whatever the sender enters into this field will be seen by those who receive it.

### Tip

Create and save your own digital signature! Inserting it into your emails is more efficient than typing it again and again.

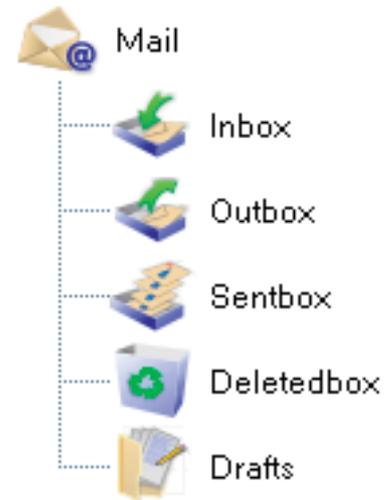
## Mail folders

Emails are organised into folders, like this:

- Inbox** holds messages received
- Outbox** holds new messages that are yet to be sent
- Sent box** holds messages that have been sent to others
- Deleted box** holds messages that have been deleted, from any of the other mail boxes
- Drafts** holds part-completed messages

Here is a view of some messages in the 'Inbox' folder. One message is selected; the body of the selected message appears in the lower section, with other message details. This message has a file attached.

Clicking on a message in the list opens the message and displays its content.



The screenshot shows an email client interface. The top section is the 'Inbox' list, which is organized by date. The selected message is from Ann Weidmann with the subject 'plans for next week = all changed, revised diary attached'. The message body shows the subject in bold, the sender's name, a 'High importance' notification, an attachment 'Diary version2.doc (24 KB)', and the message content: 'Dear Bertold', 'As discussed over the phone Please find attached the revised diary.', 'See next Tuesday as agreed.', and 'Ann'.

Messages shown in bold have not yet been read. The message displaying ! is a message sent with high priority – the sender decides on the priority, not the receiver.

## File attachments

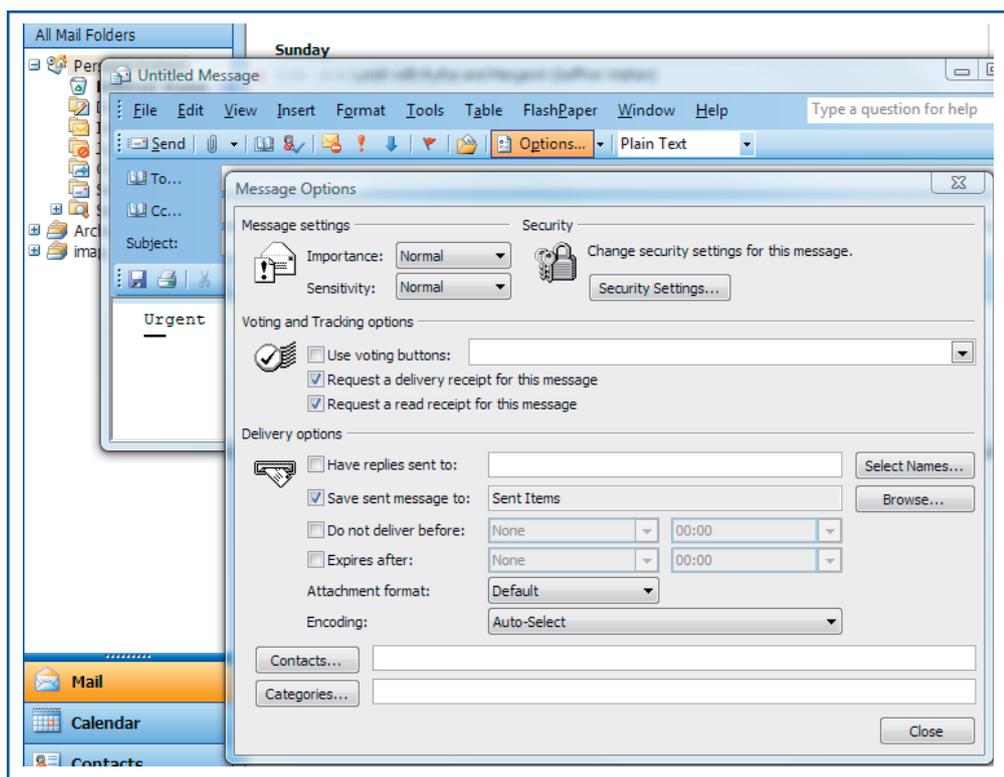
The paper-clip symbol shows that a message has a file attached.

Double-click the file icon in the message. This will open the file from the temporary files folder. Use the 'Save As' menu option to save the file elsewhere.

Right-click the file icon in the message to open a context menu. Use the 'Save As' menu option to save the file elsewhere.

### Tip

Explore message options – delivery and read receipts are useful for important, time-critical emails. If you do not get a receipt, ring or text the recipient.



### Skill Builder 8.1

Sending an email on a round-trip is a good way of testing your email system.

- Create a new email. In the 'To' field enter your own address. Enter something suitable into the subject field and the body of the email – it only needs to be a few words.
- Send the email.
- Wait for your message to be received. This may happen automatically, or you may need to click 'Send/Receive' to check for new messages. The time taken to 'roundtrip' your message may be very short, or it may take some time.
- Repeat the task: this time, attach a small text file to the email.
- Open the attachment in the received email.
- Repeat the task again: this time set the format of the email to html and insert an image into the body of the email.
- Is the image present in the email you receive?
- Delete the practice emails that you have generated in this task.

## Managing your inbox

Emails and attachments take up storage space on file servers. Some organisations and providers therefore set a maximum size for a single mailbox.

Delete unwanted emails as soon as you receive them. This will keep your Inbox manageable and will make it easier to keep within the size limit.

Many email programs have an archive facility that will remove old emails from the 'Inbox' and save them to another location. If there is a possibility that you may need to refer to an email at a later date, store it in an archive folder.

Archiving can be set to happen automatically every few days or weeks.

### Address book

An address book is a database of contact details. When a new email is created, typing a contact name into the 'To...', 'Cc...' or 'Bcc...' field of an email will automatically enter the email address, if the contact is in the address book.

You can add new contacts to an address book, edit the details of existing contacts and delete contacts.

### Contact groups

Contacts who have something in common (all members of the same club, for example) can be saved as a named group. When you want to email these people, all you need to do is select the group by name to send your email to everyone in the group.

#### Skill Builder 8.2

Set up a contact group of friends. Send a welcome email to the group.

#### Tip

Emailing is a quick and useful way to communicate, providing you are sensible.

- If your email is to someone you don't know personally, it is important to use proper spelling, grammar and punctuation. Use the spell-checking option if your software has one.
- You can use informal language and punctuation if you email a friend.
- Try not to send emails in capital letters because IT SEEMS AS IF YOU ARE SHOUTING, which may upset some people.
- Be careful what you say in an email: it may end up somewhere you didn't mean it to go.
- Remember that most of the images on the internet are copyright. You must check what the conditions are for using them before you email them to someone.

## Respecting others

- Good behaviour doesn't stop just because you are online!
- Making illegal copies of other people's work is stealing.
- The recipient of your email or posting is a person with feelings that can be hurt. Never put something in an email you wouldn't tell the person to their face.
- Respect others' views and opinions, even if you disagree.

## Email etiquette (some simple email dos and don'ts)

**Use names**

Use the name of the person you are mailing and make sure your name appears at the end.

**Don't use email to discuss confidential information**

Once your email has been sent, you have no control over it.

**Use a meaningful subject**

The subject line is meant to tell the recipient what the email is about. It should be brief but clear.

**Don't forward circulars or chain letters, or any email from a source you don't recognise**

Sometimes these contain viruses! Just delete these emails as soon as you receive them, and don't open them.

**Answer your emails as soon as you can**

Email is immediate, so people expect a quick reply.

**Do not attach large or unnecessary files**

Large files can take a long time to send and receive.

**Use emoticons and abbreviations carefully**

Emoticons (smileys) and abbreviations may not be understood by everyone. Avoid smileys in any formal email.

**Don't overuse 'Reply to all'**

Not everyone on a list needs to see your reply. Avoid sending needless emails; it's a bit like spam.

**Try not to write in capitals**

It sounds like you are SHOUTING.

**Don't send or forward emails containing offensive, racist or obscene remarks**

If you send on anything of this nature, it becomes your message and you could be liable.

**Always read the email before you send it**

This is the best way to pick up any mistakes. Don't forget to run a spellchecker on it.

**Use proper spelling, grammar and punctuation**

It will give a bad impression if you don't, and you may be misunderstood.

## What is spam?

Spam is junk email sent to you by people you don't know, usually trying to sell you something you don't want.

Emails offering to sell you something you don't want are very annoying. But emails that try to get you to reveal personal information, such as the number of your bank account, your PIN or password, are dangerous. This type of activity is called 'phishing'.

Phishing emails are not always easy to spot. They give the impression of having come from a trustworthy organisation such as a bank or a credit card company and include a link to an official looking website, which is really a fake.



## What should you do about it?

If an email makes you an offer which looks too good to be true – for example, saying you have won a lottery you haven't entered – don't respond! Delete the email.

If an email asks you to provide personal details about yourself, such as your password or login details – don't! A legitimate organisation will never ask you to provide personal information in an email.

### Tip

#### Tips for staying safe online

- You need to be savvy to stay safe when communicating online.
- Beware of email 'scams' such as phishing. Set up an email filter to stop them getting through to you.
- Never send confidential information about yourself in an email.
- Don't open file attachments from people you don't know or don't trust. They may contain viruses or something you would rather not see.
- Don't be too trusting. People you meet online may not be who they say they are!
- Never give out personal information to people you meet online in a chat room or social networking site.
- Report anything suspicious.
- If in doubt, log off.

# B Collaborative working

There are a number of ICT tools that enable people to work together on a project even when they are in different locations.

## Video conferencing

Video conferencing is a great way of holding meetings when the attendees are not all together in one location. You need a webcam to capture the video, a microphone to capture the sound, video conferencing software and a high speed internet connection to handle the data transfer.

## Online workspaces

Files stored in online workspaces can be accessed from anywhere in the world, providing there is an internet connection. This makes it easy to share files with other people and work collaboratively on a project. Access to an online workspace is password protected. An administrator with full access rights manages the workspace, with other users having limited access rights.

### Skill Builder 8.3

- Use the internet to find out more about Google docs. What features does it have that support collaborative working?
- Upload some photos to an online photo album and set the access rights so that your friends can view and comment on them.
- If your school or college has a virtual learning environment (VLE), explore how it supports collaborative working.

# C Wrapping up

## Skill Check – make sure you know how to:

- ✓ send an email to an individual
- ✓ send an email to a group
- ✓ send an email with an attachment
- ✓ send an email using 'Cc...' and 'Bcc...'
- ✓ reply to an individual
- ✓ reply to all
- ✓ use an email address book
- ✓ *use distribution lists (L2)*
- ✓ use folders to organise emails
- ✓ send an email with high priority
- ✓ *request confirmation of receipt and opening (L2)*

## Knowledge Check – make sure you know about:

- ✓ spam and phishing attacks
- ✓ ways in which ICT supports collaborative working
- ✓ online workspaces
- ✓ access rights to online workspaces

### Test Tips

- In Task 4, you will be asked to send an email to someone. Make sure that your message is suitable for the intended audience and use a meaningful subject line.
- If you have to send a file, make sure you attach it.
- Since you are not allowed to use the internet during this part of the test, you won't be able to send your email. Instead, you must produce a screenshot of it. Make sure the screenshot is clear. The examiner cannot award marks for things that they can't see.
- In the Level 2 test, there could be a question about collaborative tools.
- Be prepared to answer a question about staying safe and respecting others when working online.