



Skills for Inclusive Digital Participation

**Intermediate
General Digital Skills
Manual**

Skills for Inclusive Digital Participation

Intermediate General Digital Skills Manual

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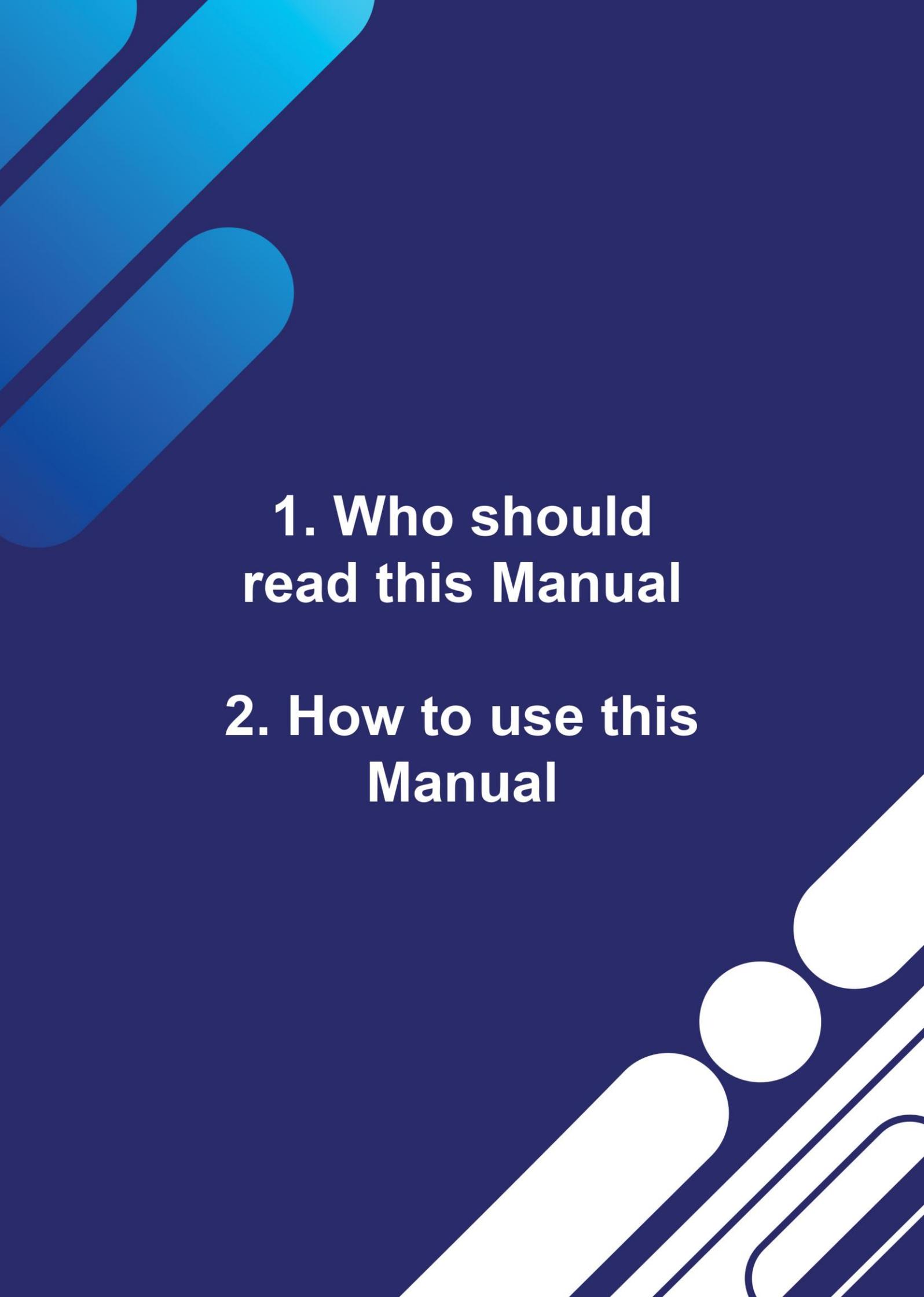
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**1. Who should
read this Manual**

**2. How to use this
Manual**



1. Who should read this manual?

This manual is intended for both trainers, and learners who want to develop their understanding of, and engagement with, digital technology. This manual focuses on accessing information, creating content, and using software to do your job better, support your studies or make your life easier.

This manual is a resource guide for trainers. This manual is to be used by the more advanced learners practice and reinforce what they have learnt in the training sessions.



2. How to use this manual

If you are a trainer then you should read this manual, the supporting materials in the accompanying annexes, and the accompanying **SIDP Pedagogy Guide: Guidance and suggestions for trainers using Skills for Inclusive Digital Participation**. This guide includes guidance and suggestions on how to achieve the most from this document. It also equips you with a step-by-step guide on how to disseminate the various learning resources that are meant for the target audience who include differently abled learners.

As a trainer or teacher, we assume you have a good understanding of how to use training materials to develop knowledge, skills and confidence in your students. We also assume you will use materials that are relevant for your students.

We have structured the course materials into self-contained topics to help give you flexibility when you use these materials. You could deliver all the training materials to all of your students, or you could choose to deliver only the topics that are useful for your students to learn more about. It is our hope that this flexibility in the use of

training materials will help you deliver appropriate learning journeys for your students.

2.1 Mandatory, recommended and discretionary topics

The content in these manuals is divided into topics. The topics are manuals are categorised into three types:

1

2.1.1 Mandatory topics

These are topics you must do. A good understanding of these topics is an important foundation for developing digital skills.

2

2.1.2 Recommended topics

These are topics that important for many learners, but possibly not for all learners. Recommended topics should be covered if possible.

Recommended topics can be very useful as:

- Extension exercises in a training workshop.
- As an assignment after a training workshop.
- As preparatory work before a training workshop, for instance when a learner moves from basic manual to another manual.

3

2.1.3 Discretionary topics

These topics should be covered if there is time, or an interest in the subject. These topics cover important areas of knowledge and skills, but they may be slightly more advanced in nature, or more specific in application.

2.2 A suggested learning journey

This manual introduces fundamental digital skills and explains their relevance and importance in an increasingly digital world.

This manual has a little more emphasis on step-by-step instruction as this is an introductory manual than the follow-on manuals.

This manual includes the following topics:

Topic	Category
Accessing Information Online	Mandatory
Content Creation including Online (Productivity) Office Software Office (Productivity) Office Software	Mandatory
Communicating Online	Mandatory
Introduction to social media and social media platforms	Mandatory
Editing Images	Discretionary
Registering for an Online Course	Discretionary

Table 1: Topics for intermediate digital skills manual

2.2.1 Follow our suggested learning journey

We have suggested topics that we think are important for you to study (mandatory topics) and useful topics to study if you have time (discretionary topics).

Study all the mandatory topics in order. These topics must be completed to qualify for a certificate of participation.

If you wish to continue studying beyond basic digital skills, we suggest you proceed to the discretionary topics. You can choose to study some, or all, of the topics that interest you.

2.2.2 Annexes and worksheets

To support you as you work through this manual there are additional materials available. These are:

2.2.2.1 Worksheet annexes

There are standardised activity sheets, and reflection sheets. You can print these and use the forms as you progress through the programme.

These worksheets can be filled out in training, or as part of extension working such as preparatory work or homework assignments given after training.

2.2.2.2 Country specific annexes

Each manual has accompanying annexes from countries in the pilot – Indonesia, Kenya and Nigeria.

These annexes contain local content, case studies and examples, exercises and resources that are relevant for that country. These additional materials are an important and useful addition to individualise materials for different countries and cultures.

Country specific annexes supporting this manual include:

- Annex_Intermediate General Digital Skills_Indonesia
- Annex_Intermediate General Digital Skills_Kenya
- Annex_Intermediate General Digital Skills_Nigeria

2.2.3 The SIDP learning journey and certificates of participation

It is expected that learners complete at least the mandatory topics and have evidence of their activity (through completed and notarised activity worksheet and reflection worksheets) to qualify for a certificate of participation.

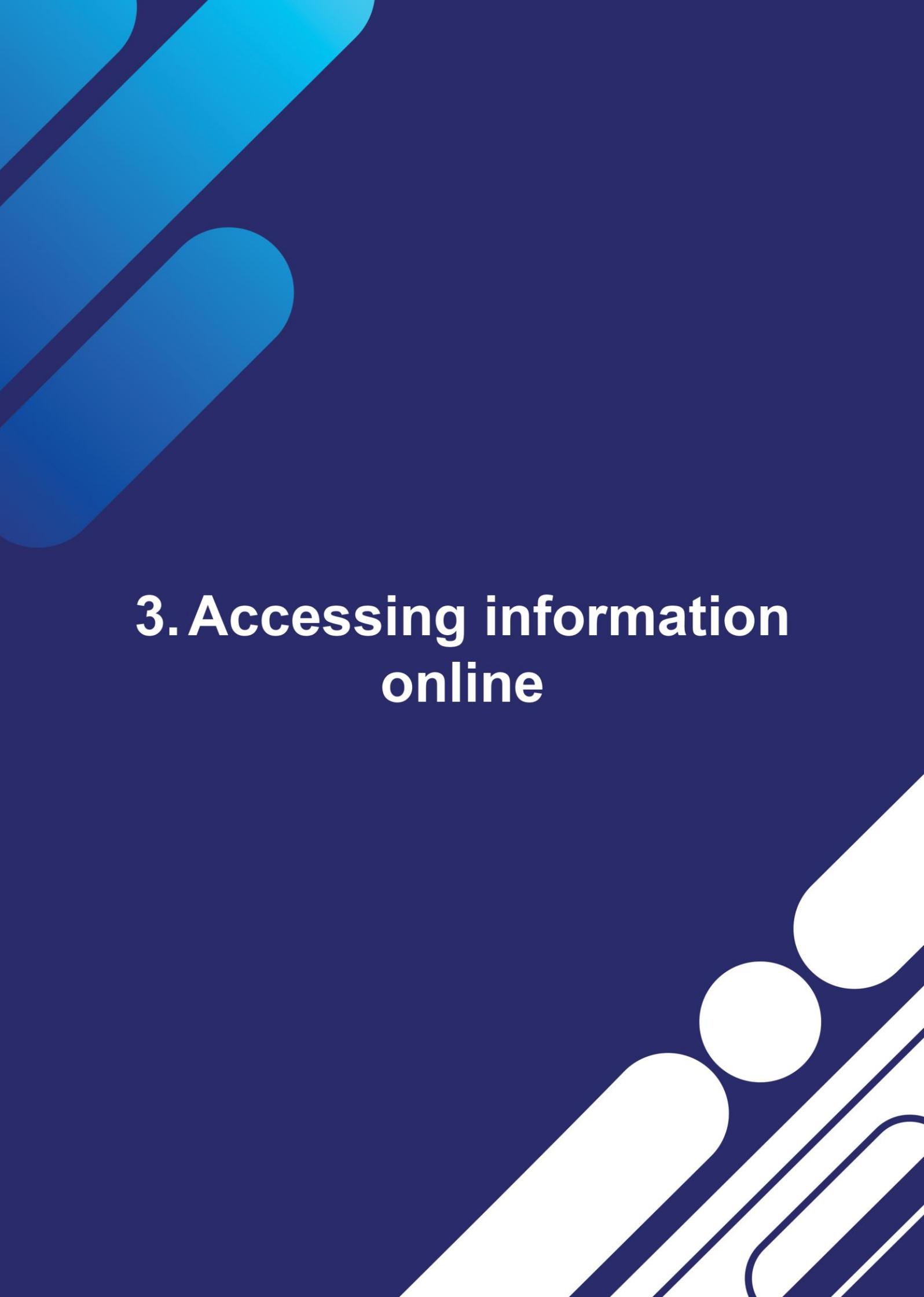
2.3 Further guidance on delivering the SIDP programme

For more information on how to use this manual and materials to deliver the SIDP programme please refer to section **Guiding your students on their learning journey** in the Pedagogy Guide.

2.4 For more guidance

For more information on how to do this please refer to section **Guiding your students on their learning journey** in the Train the Trainer guide.

If you are using these materials without guidance from SIDP trainers, then you should read this manual and supporting training materials in the accompanying annexes.

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3. Accessing information online



3. Accessing information online

For a brief introduction to accessing websites please refer to the companion manual **Basic Digital Skills Manual**.

3.1 Search engines

A search engine is a type of software that allows you to look for and find resources online. A browser systematically searches the World Wide Web or web for short, for information specified.

The information you provide is called a “search term” and is normally in the form of text. There are also ways of searching with pictures, and sounds. Search results are generally presented in descending order of relevance, often referred to as a search engine results page.

The information may be a mix of links to web pages, images, videos, infographics, articles, research papers, and other types of files.

The most common search engines according to their popularity are Google, Yahoo, Bing and Ask.

See the annex specific to your country for further guidance on the most popular search engines.

3.1.1 Refining your search results

You can narrow and customize your search results to find exactly what you want by using a range of criteria to filter search results.

For example, you can find sites updated within the last 24 hours, see only videos or images.

3.1.2 Using web browser tabs on a computer

Tabs allow you to open and organize multiple websites inside a single window. This keeps your screen from getting cluttered and makes it easy to switch between sites.

1. Open a new tab.
2. At the top of your Chrome window, next to the last tab on the right, click New tab (this may be represented by a  sign).
3. Or Windows & Linux keyboard short cut: Ctrl + t.
4. Or Mac keyboard short cut:  + t.

3.1.3 Activity: Search the internet

You will:

- Choose an appropriate search engine.
- Search on international news.
- Search for information on your local town.

After you have completed the activities reflect and record your work.

For a blank activity and reflection template please see the accompanying annex. Annex_Activity and reflection template.docx

3.1.4 Language and your web browser

On some occasions, it is important to change the language of your browser to a language that you understand better, such as a local language, to make web searching more accessible for you.

3.1.5 Activity: Translating a webpage with your browser

For this demonstration you can use a free and widely available web browser called Google Chrome.

1. On a webpage written in another language, click the Translate button in the top right-hand corner of your browser window.
2. Chrome will translate the webpage into your language of choice this one time.

After you have completed the activities reflect and record your work. For a blank activity and reflection template please see the accompanying annex.

Annex_Activity and reflection template.docx

3.1.6 Activity: Changing language settings on a browser

You can set Chrome to show all settings and menus in the language you want. This option is only available on Windows computers. On Mac or Linux Chrome will automatically display pages in the default system language for your computer.

1. On your computer, open Chrome.
2. At the top right, click More  > Settings.
3. At the bottom, click Advanced.
4. Under "Languages," click Language.
5. Next to the language you'd like to use, click More .
6. If the language isn't listed, add it by clicking Add languages.
7. Click Display Google Chrome in this language.
8. Restart Chrome to apply the changes.

After you have completed the activities reflect and record your work.

For a blank activity and reflection template please see the accompanying annex.

Annex_Activity and reflection template.docx

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4. Online Learning



4. Online Learning

Online learning is a way to study and learn using the internet and the web. You can learn and study at home, at work or wherever you choose, via the internet.

Classes, teaching materials, support, and assessments are all delivered online through your digital device. Many classes that are delivered by video are also recorded so they can be re-watched. This can really help with your learning and revision.

Online learning includes everything from degrees to short courses, and practice tests.

- It's important to look for credible sites to study and learn, so definitely do your research.
- Learning online also requires you to understand online technology. You need to know how to start your computer, laptop or tablet and register or sign up for the learning platform.
- You also need to know how to navigate the screen.
- Understand your preferred learning styles and the mode of instruction that best suits your schedule.

There are many reasons why online learning programmes have become a popular form of distance learning. Here is a list of some of the major benefits of online learning programmes:

4.1 Advantages of online learning

4.1.1 Anywhere

Learners can participate in classes from anywhere in the world, provided they have a computer and Internet connection. Learners access the classroom through

their computers or mobile phones virtually instead of having to “go to class” physically.

4.1.2 Anytime

The Virtual Classroom, if it is recorded, or is available as text, is accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

4.1.3 Any pace

The learner can decide how fast or slow to progress through the online course. This flexibility can be useful for people juggling work, family, and study.

4.1.4 Access to resources

It is easy to include distinguished guest experts or students from other institutions in an online class. Furthermore, today’s students have access to resources and materials that may be physically located anywhere in the world.

4.2 Some disadvantages of online learning

While online programmes have significant strengths and offer unprecedented accessibility to quality education, there are weaknesses.

4.2.1 You need internet access

- Internet accessibility is not universal.
- Your internet connection could slow down or fail altogether.
- In some areas internet access also poses a significant cost to the user/learner. Some users pay a fixed monthly rate for their internet connection, while others are charged for the time they spend online.

4.2.2 You may need specific digital device or software

- Learners need suitable digital tools to access online learning platforms.

4.2.3 You need reliable power

- Access or reliability of electricity may cause problems with connecting to the internet.

4.3 First steps to online learning

Online programmes offer technology-based instructional environments that can be both of a high quality and allow for the learning opportunities to be expanded.

- **Step 1:** Identify your interests, personality, values, and lifestyle preferences.
- **Step 2:** Explore occupations, skills, and major areas of study compatible with your personal choices.
- **Step 3:** New occupations are emerging, existing ones are disappearing. Your career decisions should therefore be based on the current and future job market opportunities.
- **Step 4:** Unsure of which occupations best suit you? Do your research and discuss with different professionals already working in your chosen industry.
- **Step 5** Articulate skills & entry requirements for your chosen career path and engage in additional learning opportunities using online learning platforms.

The best place to check if you're looking to learn for free are the following international platforms.

e-Learning platform	Website
Google digital garage	https://learndigital.withgoogle.com/digitalgarage/
FAO elearning Academy	https://elearning.fao.org/course/view.php?id=737
Agora	https://agora.unicef.org/
Open WHO	https://openwho.org/
Futurelearn	https://www.futurelearn.com/
Udemy	https://www.udemy.com/
Coursera	https://www.coursera.org/
Alison	https://alison.com/
Khan Academy	https://www.khanacademy.org/
Skillshare	https://www.skillshare.com/
Edx	https://www.edx.com

Table 2: International platform

The background is a solid dark blue. In the top-left corner, there are several overlapping, rounded rectangular shapes in various shades of blue, ranging from a light cyan to a deep navy. In the bottom-right corner, there are white geometric shapes, including a circle, a rounded rectangle, and several parallel lines, some of which are also in shades of blue, creating a layered, abstract effect.

5. Organising your information



5. Organising your information

For guidance on creating directories and directory structures please see the accompanying manual **Basic Digital Skills Manual** for the section **Navigating Your Digital Device** and associated activities.

5.1 Storing and organisation your information online

With cloud storage you can keep your data secure online. This means you don't need to invest in a storage device or carry it with you. Cloud storage allows you to share and transfer data easily.

Online storage is usually very secure and safe. Data is regularly backed up so that there is no loss and cloud storage can be much cheaper than physical storage devices.

Some well-known cloud storage options are listed below. Most have free basic storage.

- OneDrive.
- Dropbox.
- IDrive.
- Apple iCloud.
- Amazon Drive.

5.2 Google Drive as a storage resource

Google Drive is very popular because of its close integration with the Android operating system. You can upload, view, share, and edit files with Google Drive. When you upload any file or folder to Google Drive, it will take up space on your drive.

5.2.1 Activity: Upload & view files from android

1. On your Android phone or tablet, open the Google Drive app.
2. Tap Add .
3. Tap Upload.
4. Find and tap the files you want to upload.
5. View uploaded files in My Drive
6. You can move or delete the files as required

5.2.2 Activity: Upload & view files from a laptop or PC

1. On your computer, you can upload from drive.google.com or your desktop. You can upload files into private or shared folders.
2. On your computer, go to drive.google.com.
3. At the top left, click New > File Upload or Folder Upload.
4. Choose the file or folder you want to upload.

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6. Creating content



6. Creating content

Content creation is the process of conceiving and developing your own information in a variety of forms that is relevant, accessible, and effective o others.

There are many forms of content including:

- Documents with text
- Spreadsheets
- Text messages
- Images and GIFs
- Infographics
- Videos
- Animations and simulations.

6.1 Expected learning outcomes from this topic

At the end of this unit, using Office Productivity, or other online, tools you will be able to:

- Create and manage documents (like letters, CVs, minutes)
- Create and manage data and information such as budgets and spreadsheets
- Create and manage presentations
- Edit images and photos

6.2 First steps to create documents

Productivity software, sometimes called office suites, are collections of applications that help you create documents, edit, manage and share documents useful for your business, academic, personal and social life.

There are two main ways these types of software are used:

- Cloud, or online, through a web browser or internet enabled portal of some type
- Local Apps, or offline, with the software saved on your digital device

6.3 Online (productivity) office software

Online productivity software are application programmes used for producing and managing information in the form of different types of documents. These documents can be written documents, presentations, worksheets, databases, charts, graphs, digital paintings, electronic music, and digital videos.

The best-known online productivity solutions are Microsoft Office (Office 365), and Google Docs (and Google Workspace).

Online suite productivity	Website
Google Docs	https://docs.google.com
Google Workspace	https://workspace.google.com/
MS Office 365	https://www.office.com/
iWork (apple)	https://www.apple.com/uk/iwork/
Zoho Workspace	https://www.zoho.com/

Table 3: Online suite productivity

6.3.1 Activity: Starting to use Office 365

1. Open Office 365, <https://www.office.com/>.
2. Sign up or sign in using your email address and password.

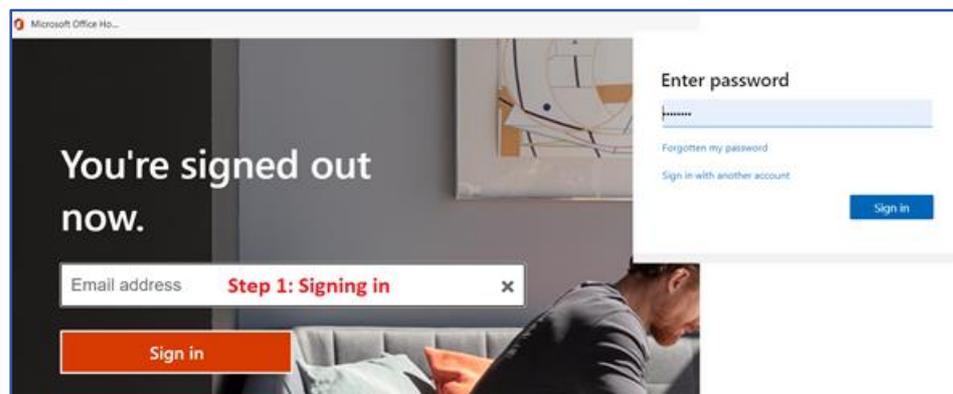


Figure 1: Sign in to Office 365

You will see a window like the one below

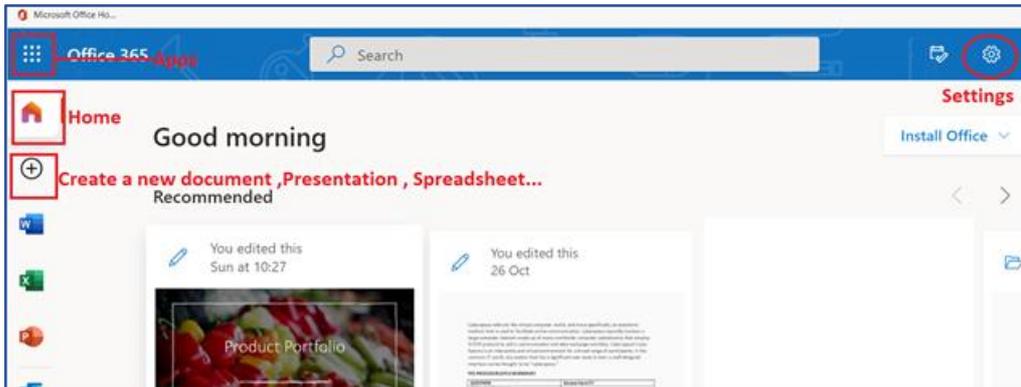


Figure 2: The Office 365 start screen

3. To create a New Document, Spreadsheet, Presentation, Click on the **Plus** \oplus sign.
4. To change language, password, themes, time zone, Click on **Settings**.
5. To access all apps in Office 365, click on the **9 dots** in the top left-hand corner of the window.

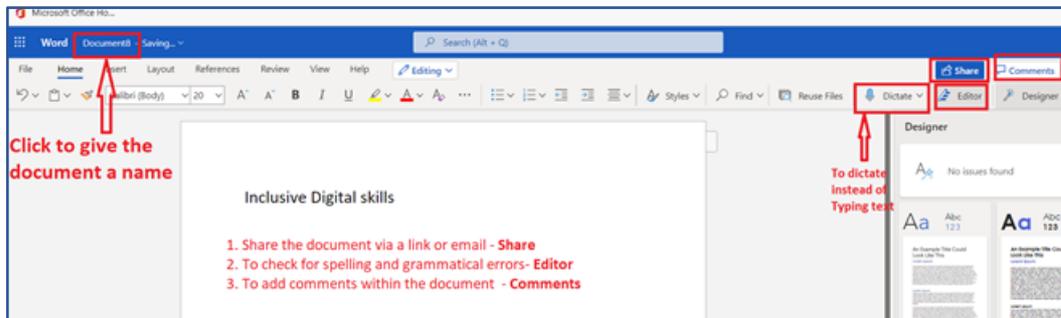


Figure 3: Creating a document using Office 365

Try these additional activities:

- Dictate instead of typing text using the **Dictate feature**. This means you can speak to your computer, and it will type your speech for you.
- Add an audio narration to text using the **Transcribe feature**.
- Automatically have your work edited by using the Editor feature that scores your work.

After you have completed the activities reflect and record your work.

For a blank activity and reflection template please see the accompanying annex. Annex_Activity and reflection template.docx

6.3.2 Activity: Collaborative working and sharing documents online

Google Docs is an online word processor that enables you to create and format documents and work with other people collaboratively. As well as creating documents you can also share a Google document with work colleagues, friends, and family. This can be a powerful way to work collaboratively with many people at once.

Sharing a document via email

1. From your open document, click on the **Share** button in the top right-hand corner of your browser window.
2. Add the email addresses of others separated by a comma.

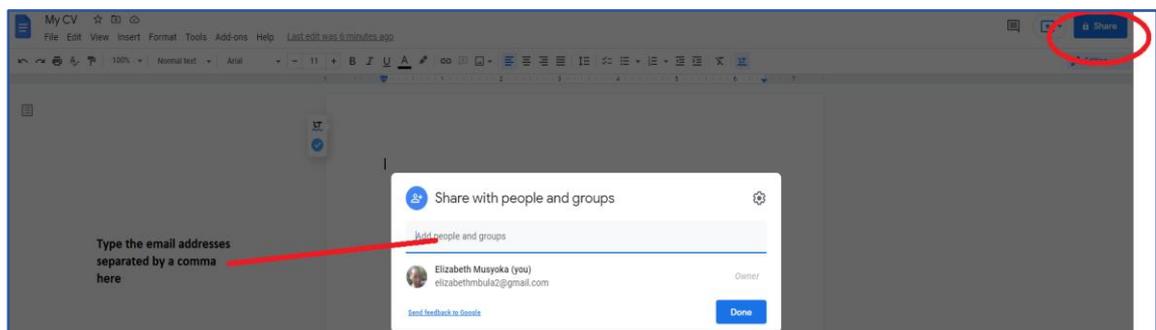


Figure 4: Sharing Google Docs via email addresses

Sharing a document via a link

1. From your open document, click on **Get link** button as shown below:

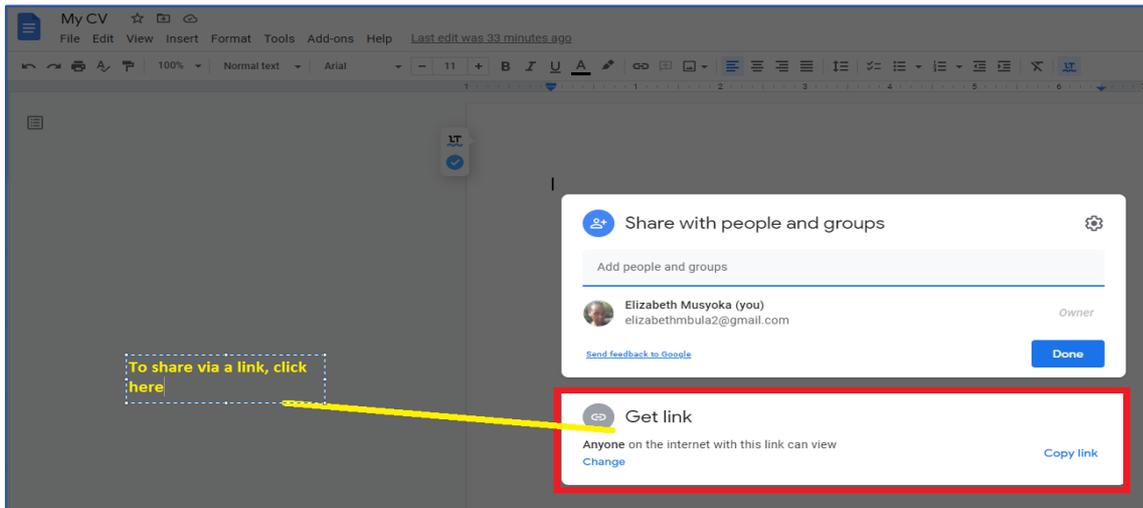


Figure 5: Sharing Google Docs via a link

2. Select who you want to share the document with (Restricted or Anyone with the Link).
3. Give them **Access rights** from the pull-down menu such as viewer, commentator, or editor.
 - a. Viewer option permits reading but no alterations to the document.
 - b. Comment option permits comments and notes to be added.
 - c. Editor option permits full editing of the document (add, delete, or amend the document).

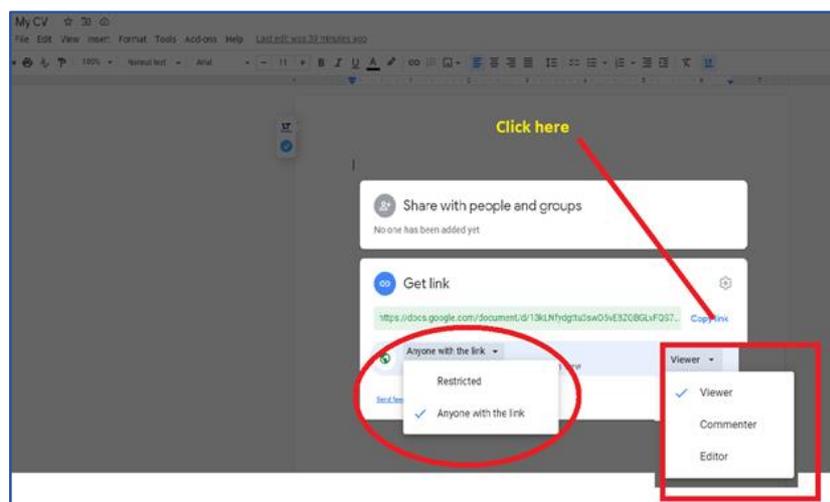


Figure 6: Setting access rights for a Google document you want to share

4. Click on the **Copy** link.
5. Then paste it to the new location, such as a message in a WhatsApp group.

After you have completed the activities reflect and record your work.

For a blank activity and reflection template please see the accompanying annex. Annex_Activity and reflection template.docx

6.4 Office software: offline or local apps

These are application programmes that enable you to create, modify and view general office documents (letters, spreadsheets, presentations, image editing, databases etc) when you are not connected to the internet.

This is possible because software, or application software, is installed on your digital device. The software can be used without an internet connection. Well-known examples include:

- MS Office (MsWord, Ms Excel, Ms PowerPoint etc).
- Open Office.
- LibreOffice.
- Apple iWork Suite (Pages, Spreadsheets and Keynote).

6.4.1 Word-processing tools

MS Word behaves offline in a very similar way to its online counterpart in Office365. It also has many similarities with Google Docs. The main differences are:

- You do not need to be connected to the internet to create, save and access your documents
- The saved file is located on your digital device (not in the cloud).

There are many other excellent word processing tools in common use. Some of these are:

- WPS word.
- iWork Pages.
- OpenOffice Writer.

- WordPerfect.
- FocusWriter.
- LibreOffice Writer.
- AbiWord.

See the accompanying annex for your country for examples and exercises using relevant software available in your location.

6.4.1.1 Further resources for online and offline word processing

- Word processing basics, <https://sites.google.com/site/wordprocessingwithoffice07/basic-word-processing-skills/day-3---fun-with-fonts>
- Google Docs, <https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/googledocuments/>
- Beginners guide to Google Docs, <https://www.howtogeek.com/420971/the-beginners-guide-to-google-docs/>
- Video tutorials, <https://youtu.be/xJiUTXGv3PE>
- WPS, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=snyeUA1Fo-g>
- Google Docs on a Mobile Device, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=38R9Uc-0oXg>
- How to write a business proposal letter, https://www.doctemplates.net/business-proposal-letter-samples/#google_vignette

6.4.2 Presentation tools

Presentation software is designed to allow users to create a presentation of ideas by creating a slideshow. The presentation, or slide show, is used to tell a story or support a talk or webinar.

Presentation programmes are used by businesses to improve understanding of topics without having to read long documents. For this reason, they are also popular with trainers and teachers. A presentation can contain elements such as:

- Text.
- Images.
- Animations.
- Audio.
- Videos.

Well known examples of presentation software include MS PowerPoint, OpenOffice Impress, Canva (an online tool) and Keynote (Apple iOS). See the accompanying annex for your country for examples and exercises using relevant software available in your location.

6.4.2.1 Further resources for online and offline presentation software

- Microsoft, <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/powerpoint-for-windows-training-40e8c930-cb0b-40d8-82c4-bd53d3398787>
- Google, <https://support.google.com/a/users/answer/9282488?hl=en>
- Video tutorials, https://youtu.be/sTKzs_E5Sx4
- Video tutorials, <https://youtu.be/og7yuqh3QOc>
- Video tutorials, <https://youtu.be/mqAANGaWIDw>
- Video tutorials, https://youtu.be/K2CNM_pznWM

6.5 Spreadsheets

A spreadsheet is a tool that is used to manipulate numbers by performing calculations and presenting the data in a graphical manner. The data is organised in rows and columns of cells. This system can help arrange, calculate and sort data in a quick and systematic way.

The information in a spreadsheet is mostly in the form of numbers but other types of information can also be included such as text, mathematical formulas, references and functions.

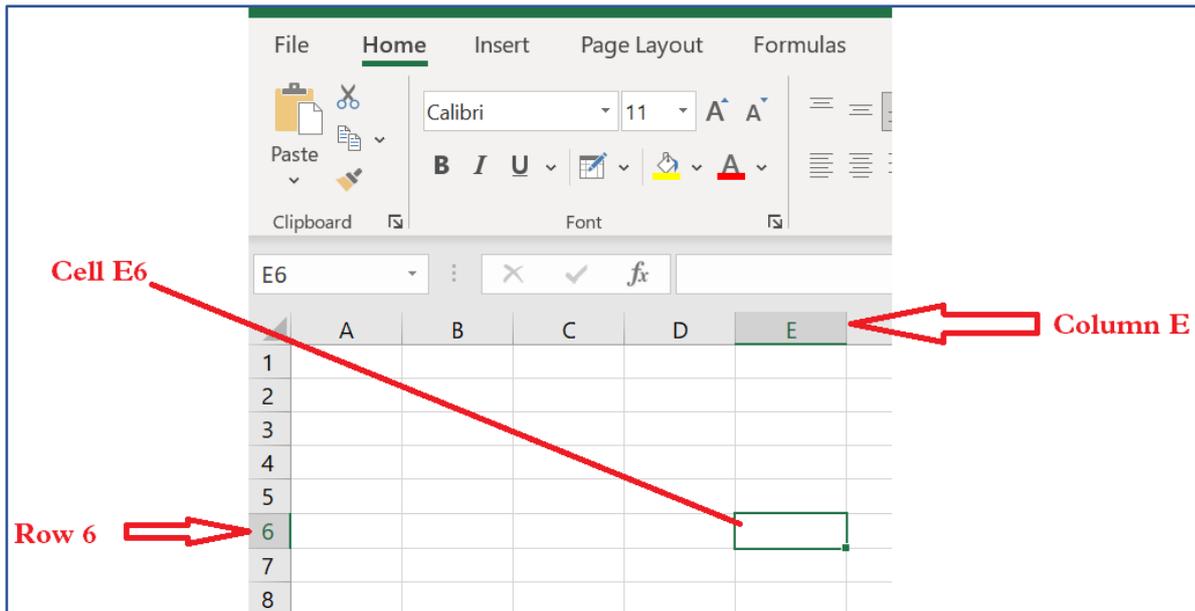


Figure 7: A typical spreadsheet

Some well-known examples of spreadsheets programmes include:

- Microsoft Excel (Online / cloud, Windows, Android, IOS).
- Google Sheets (Web, IOS, Android).
- LibreOffice Calc (Windows, Mac, Linux, Android).
- Smartsheet (Online / cloud, Android, IOS).
- Quip (Windows, Mac, Android, IOS).
- Zoho sheet (Online / cloud, Android, IOS).
- EtherCalc (Online / cloud).
- Air table (Online / cloud, Android, IOS).

6.5.1 Further resources for online and offline spreadsheet applications

- How To Use spreadsheets with WPS On Your Mobile Phone
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=duNN439GaMI>
- Google Sheets Tutorial for Beginners
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FlkZ1sPmKNw>
- Working with Google spreadsheets
<https://www.benlcollins.com/spreadsheets/how-to-use-google-sheets/#one>

- Excel video training <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/excel-video-training-9bc05390-e94c-46af-a5b3-d7c22f6990bb>

6.6 Editing Images

Complex ideas can sometimes be easily conveyed using a single image. When you are selling goods and services online, good quality images are vital. On digital platforms, images make a greater impact on the purchaser than product descriptions or even the product reviews.

Image editing is the process of manipulating, enhancing, and transforming images. An image editing software is used, for example Photoshop, or GIMP.

6.6.1 How to edit images a word processor of presentation

Most office software, for example PowerPoint and Word, allow you to do some basic editing of image, such as:

1. **Resizing.** Shrink or enlarge an image to the correct size.
2. **Rotating.** Flip an image to face the correct direction, including mirroring it horizontally or vertically.
3. **Cropping.** Deleting parts of an image that you don't need.
4. **Removing picture backgrounds.** You can create a transparent image.
5. **Image effects.** You can add colour tints and adjust settings such as brightness.

Additional image editing requires investment in specialist software discussed below.

6.6.2 Activity: Using Microsoft Paint

MS Paint is a free Microsoft programme. It allows you to create picture files and edit the pictures saved on your laptop or desktop. Try these simple steps to open the application and begin editing images.

1. In the search box next to start on the taskbar, type paint, and then select Paint from the list of options.
2. If you have the latest version of Windows 10, open Paint 3D, featuring new 2D and 3D tools.

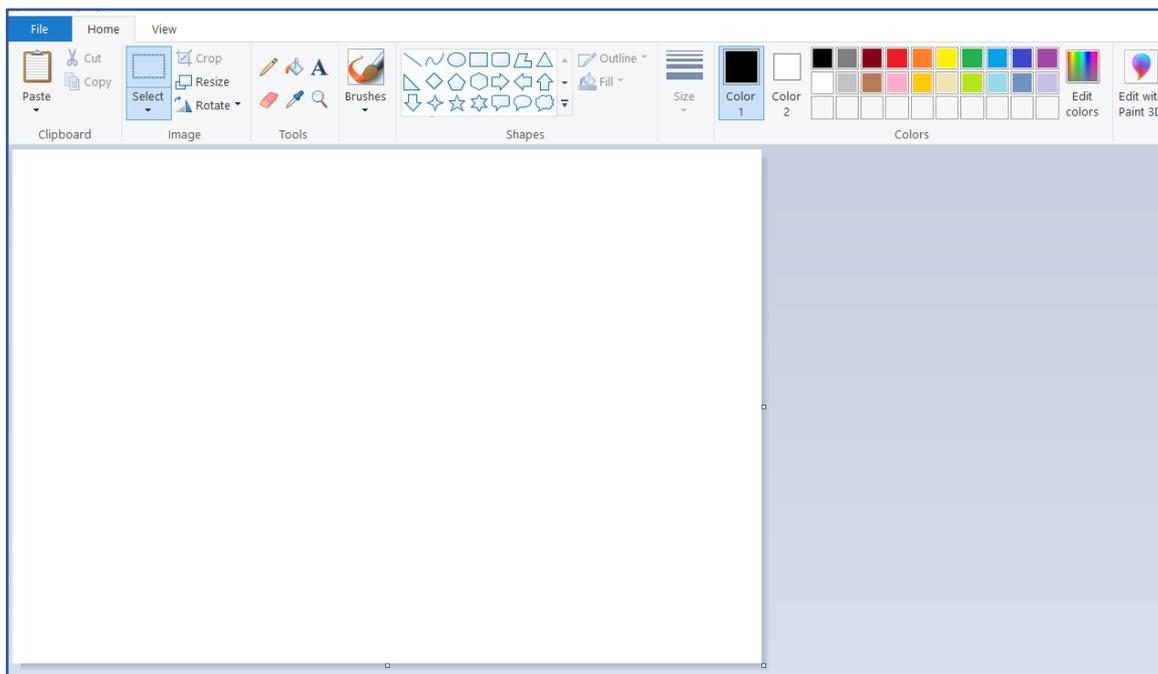


Figure 8: The MS Paint screen

Software such as Photoshop give you greater flexibility in image creation and editing, see resources below.

6.6.3 Snipping tool

This is a Microsoft Windows Screenshot tool (this allows you to cut images from a page and save it somewhere else). To open the snipping tool:

1. Search by typing Snipping Tool.
2. Click to open.
 1. Use it as illustrated in the figure below.

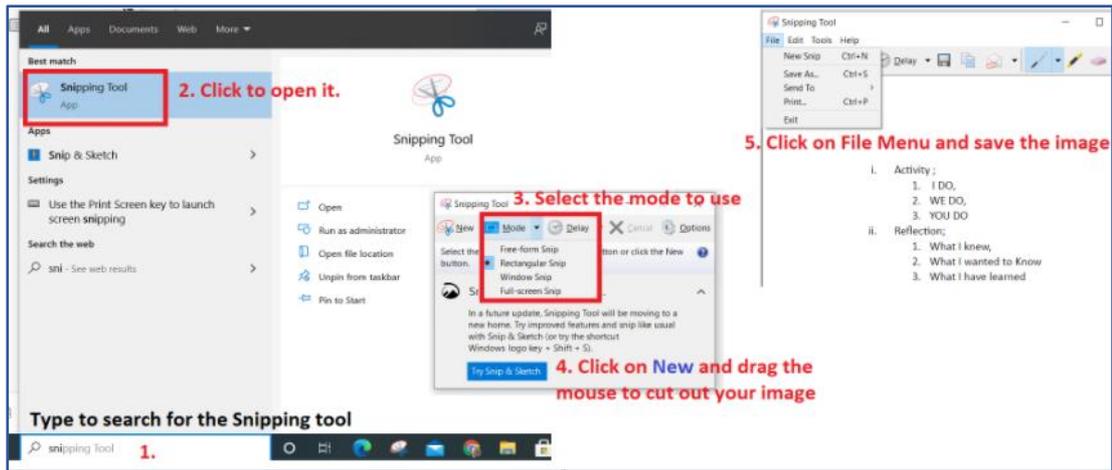


Figure 9: The MS Paint "Snipping" tool

6.7 Editing images on mobile devices

Snap seed is a mobile app available for both iOS phones and Android phones.

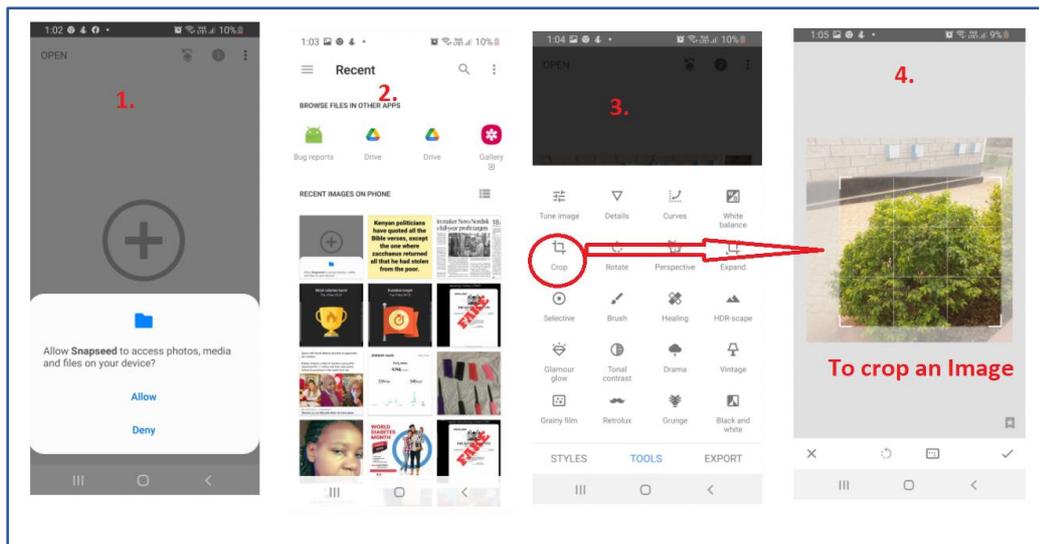


Figure 10: Snap seed app in an android phone.

6.8 Resources to help you with image and photo editing

- Guide on how to use Snap seed app in an Android phone, https://picxtrix.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Snapseed_Editing_Tips.pdf

- Guide on how to use Snap seed app in iPhones, <https://iphonphotographyschool.com/snapseed/>
- Learn Photoshop, <https://www.sjsu.edu/ajeep/docs/Photoshop%20Module%20v7c-PC%20for%20WEB-2.pdf>

6.8.1 Activity: Image editing

You will:

- Take a photo(s) using your phone camera or download an image(s) from the internet.
- Using one of the tools above, edit the photo(s)/image and share it/them in the WhatsApp group.

After you have completed the activities reflect and record your work. For a blank activity and reflection template please see the accompanying annex.

Annex_Activity and reflection template.docx.

6.9 Editing videos

In this topic you will learn the basic skills on how to edit a video.

Videos are powerful and effective communications tools. This is because people remember 20% of what they hear, 30% of what they see and an amazing 70% of what they see and hear.

You can edit your video using a laptop /desktop, even a tablet/phone using special software known as video editing software.

Some video editing software is available free. The software is available offline (local app saved on device) and online (web or cloud apps).

See the accompanying annex for your country for examples and exercises using relevant software available in your location.

6.9.1 Resources to help you with video editing

- Tutorial on using Windows Movie Maker on an MS Window laptop and a desktop,
https://as.exeter.ac.uk/media/universityofexeter/academicservices/educationenhancement/creatingvideo/Quick_Start_Guide_-_Movie_Maker.pdf
- Video tutorial for Windows moviemaker,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qRDI48CVSwY>
- Video tutorial for Windows moviemaker,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o7LbJmkQs3w>
- Tutorial on Kinemaster video editor on an Android Phone,
<https://northsearegion.eu/media/10388/3-editing-kompatibilitetstilstand.pdf>
- Tutorial on FilmoraGo video editing app, <https://mdl原因.lau.edu.lb/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Making-Videos-with-FilmoraGo-mobile-application.pdf>

The background is a solid dark blue. In the top-left corner, there are several overlapping, rounded rectangular shapes in various shades of blue, ranging from light to dark. In the bottom-right corner, there are several overlapping, rounded rectangular shapes in white, also in various shades of white, creating a sense of depth and movement. The text is centered in the middle of the page.

7. Communicating online



7. Communicating online

Digital communication allows immediate connection with individuals or groups anywhere in the world. Online communication can help with flexibility and resilience of a business or enterprise.

7.1 Why is online communication important?

7.1.1 Digital media Improves Communication

Increasingly businesses, government agencies and individuals communicate digitally. No business will be sustainable if it cannot efficiently communicate digitally. For instance, video conferencing and online meeting platforms such as Google Meet, Zoom and Skype allow individuals and businesses to work remotely and connect globally in real-time. This reduces the need for travel and renting or buying physical space for your business.

Emails, WhatsApp, and Zoom changed the way that people interacted with one another during the Covid-19 lockdown. Many were able to use their phones and computers to work remotely, and even hold meetings.

7.1.2 Digital media can help cut costs

Using email and social media is generally cheaper than real life alternatives such as printed brochures, advertising posters and direct mail letters. All of these have design, print, material and shipping costs. Online communication only has design costs, and possibly licensing costs of a software tool to get your message out.

Global experience shows that investment in digital communications increases and improves productivity and investment in it is rapidly recovered, sometimes in weeks.

7.1.3 Increases speed of communication

Online communication is generally much faster than real life communication. A newsletter can be written, designed, and sent to thousands of potential customers in hours. A physical brochure/leaflet would need to be written, edited, printed, and posted – all of which could take days.

Engaging in social marketplaces with customers, or on social media or social messaging platforms is even faster.

7.1.4 Increases scale of communication

Online communications can increase the number of people you speak with in two main ways:

- It is cheaper and faster which means you are more able to send out emails or posts to more people than physical brochures or letters.
- It is much easier for a reader of your messages to pass on your email or link to other people. If this happens a lot, it is known as “going viral”. This means a message is rapidly raising your service or product profile.

7.2 Types of digital communication

There are many types of digital communication channels, many we have covered earlier like email, video conferencing, videos etc. There are a few key platforms, that you need to get to know.

7.2.1 Social network platforms

Social networks are applications (apps) or websites that support users to create and share content and find and connect with other users. Most of us now have at least one social media account, and many of us have several. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, TikTok, LinkedIn and Pinterest are currently the most popular social media platforms in the world.

Not all social networks are the same. Different platforms have different uses:

- Facebook: primarily a social platform.
- Twitter: primarily a linking & news sharing platform.
- LinkedIn: a professional social networking platform. Useful for engaging businesses, recruiting talent, and accessing local networks of professionals

Research which platforms are best for your type of business.

Privacy is extremely important on social media. Get to know your privacy settings and make sure they're set appropriately for you. Remember that employers can (and do) access and research your public social media presence when you apply for jobs, so be careful what you post publicly, and consider using a pseudonym, or fake name.

Should you add your colleagues on social media? Many businesses require you to do this as an internal communication platform. When connecting socially be careful what you post and what you access – inappropriate content or behaviour may damage your prospects in future.

Those working in the care professions, teaching and other sensitive professions are advised not to connect with clients/ service users or students through social media.

The one possible exception to this is adult graduate students – but even then, check first.

7.2.2 Content publishing platforms

Content publishing platforms are tools to easily publish your content digitally. Consumers want quick access to the things they need and enjoy.

Some well-known examples of content platforms include:

- YouTube: for video publishing, sharing, rating, & commenting.

- Wordpress: for creating blog-based websites, publishing articles and news.

7.2.3 Video messaging and conferencing

Video communication is growing in popularity and is used for social and business use (conferencing and collaboration).

Some of the most popular video conferencing apps are:

- Zoom.
- Skype.
- Microsoft Teams.
- Google Meet.

Though free to use, it may be worth buying subscriptions to increase availability and usability options. To use these apps, you need to sign up using an email address and a unique username. To get started, download one of the apps. You'll need a microphone and speakers that work (most modern computers now have these built in.) When you first sign in, you'll be asked to perform an audio test to ensure that your sound settings are correct.

Some free and simple to use. video chat tools include:

- Facebook Messenger's video function.
- WhatsApp Voice Call.
- Facetime app (for Apple users).

7.2.4 Apps for messaging

Instant messaging is extremely popular these days, and most smartphone users have at least one messaging app installed on their devices. Messaging apps use your phone number, email address, or a unique username to send messages to and from your contacts in real time.

Popular mobile messaging apps:

- WhatsApp.
- Facebook Messenger.
- Signal.
- Telegram.

- WeChat etc.

They are all slightly different and have different features, but they all work in the same way. Please be aware that some have lower security features than others.

You can only connect with other people if they are using the same messaging app as yours.

7.2.5 Email

Provides instantaneous written communication: effective for formal notices and updates, as well as informal exchanges. This can be done through different platforms e.g.

- Yahoo.
- Gmail.
- Hotmail.
- Outlook etc

7.2.6 Email Lists & Newsletters

While not a new concept for most, email remains a powerful tool for distribution of targeted information. It is important to differentiate the use of email in this way from email as a direct messaging tool. Be careful not to send out irrelevant or unwanted emails as this is considered bad practice (called spamming). If the content being emailed is valuable and relevant, and people have an opportunity to opt-out, then email communication will be appreciated and is far more effective than printed newsletters.

You can do this yourself inhouse, or use a service provider such as Mailchimp.

7.2.6.1 Advantages

- Emails are delivered extremely fast when compared to traditional physical mail.
- Emails can be sent 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
- Webmail means emails can be sent and received from any computer, anywhere in the world, that has an internet connection.

- Cheap - when using broadband, each email sent is effectively free. Dial-up users are charged at local call rates, but it only takes a few seconds (for conventional email, e.g., text only) to send an email.
- Emails can be sent to one person or several people.

7.2.6.2 Disadvantages

- The recipient needs access to the internet to receive email.
- No guarantee the mail will be read until the user logs on and checks their email.
- Viruses are easily spread via email attachments (most email providers scan emails for viruses on your behalf).
- **Phishing** - sending an email to a user falsely claiming to be a legitimate company to scam the user into providing information, such as personal information and bank account numbers on a bogus website. The details will then be used for identity theft.
- **Spam** - unsolicited email, i.e., junk mail.

7.3 Elements of effective communication

There are some simple steps you can take when you are preparing an effective e-mail, blog or tweet marketing campaign.

7.3.1 Subject lines

Subject lines are like newspaper headlines. They should convey the main point of your e-mail or the idea that you want the reader to take away from your email.

Therefore, be as specific as possible. One-word subjects such as “Hi,” “Question,” or “FYI ” are not informative and don’t give the reader any idea of how important your message is. If your message is time sensitive, you might want to include a date in your subject line, for example, “Meeting on Thurs, Dec 2.”

Think about the subject lines on the e-mail messages you receive. Which ones do you think are most effective? Why?

7.3.2 Greetings and signoffs

A greeting addresses your reader as an individual. It is the first step to building a connection. Don't just start with your text, and don't stop at the end without a polite signature. If you don't know the person well, you may be confused about how to address him/her or how to sign off. When in doubt, address someone more formally to avoid offending them.

7.3.3 Use the network

Use some of these approaches to get the best results from your communication platforms:

- **Friend & Follow.** Use social search tools to find people in the community, regional experts, affinity groups, etc. “Friend” them on Facebook & “Follow” them on Twitter. Invite them to join you or your business on LinkedIn. “Like” their relevant Facebook posts and “retweet” relevant Twitter updates. This builds good will and brings more attention to your social accounts.
- **Tweeting.** Use Twitter to push links, ask questions, and drive visitors to Facebook, YouTube & your web properties.
- **Facebook:** Use Facebook to directly engage the community in surveys & contests. Post fun & interesting pictures, & feature interviews. The reason you have a Facebook page is that every time you post on it, you appear in your followers' personal news feeds.
- **Participate:** Contribute to relevant online news & discussions. For example, use your Twitter account to add a comment to another businesses' articles. This brings exposure to your Twitter account and can help gather new followers.
- **Become a commentator on daily trends & issues:** Engage the community around these interest points. Be a source of valuable news and information about the community or about news that impacts the community.
- **Listen & pay attention:** Monitor for name and mentions, analyse for sentiment, and understand the difference between average users & key influencers.

- **Embrace mobile & location:** Social engagement is quickly moving away from desktop screens and into mobile devices. Learn how to take advantage of the ability for mobile devices to tie content to the physical locale of your community.

7.3.4 Be transparent and authentic

Be open and honest about your affiliation and the topic that you are creating content about to keep the experience authentic. Use a legal disclaimer for blogs.

Do not ever impersonate another person or use a false name (usernames are fine if you disclose your identity elsewhere).

7.3.5 Play by the rules

Abide by the guidelines of the host website. In addition to the terms of service, each social networking site has certain customs and conventions. Learn what is appropriate and follow the example of influencers in the community.

Respect the online community or the community you choose to represent or engage with.

7.3.6 Create content appropriate for all but tailored to the target audience

Make sure the content is appropriate for all audiences around the world before posting, while also tailoring the conversation to your target audience. Some audience members may have limited understanding of English, so simple sentences help. The definition of “appropriate” differs widely among people, so post as if everyone you know (and everyone you don’t) reads every word.

Content contributed to social media sites is public and often cannot be edited or deleted later. Even if you can delete it later, copies may propagate through

reposting, and links to your original post may show in cached information. Include key information so it makes sense if reposted out of context.

Do not post material that may infringe the copyrights, trademarks, or other intellectual property of others, do not post material that encourages others to do so. Ensure that you have permission to repost articles where appropriate.

7.3.7 Don't remove or alter feedback just because it is negative

Deleting negative comments or feedback creates the appearance that you are censoring/hiding something and discourages open, authentic dialogue. Instead, post compelling responses to criticism and consider them as opportunities for growth.

7.3.8 Filter for obscene or inappropriate comments

Obscene or inappropriate comments should be removed as quickly as possible. This includes content that is offensive, denigrating, or completely out of context. For borderline comments (in context but using profanity, for example), remove the comment and send the commenter a private message with the reason. The commenter then can repost within the guidelines.

7.3.9 Be the first to correct mistakes

If you make a mistake, admit it and make a quick and upfront correction. You are setting an example as a community leader



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