

BSBTEC202

**USE DIGITAL
TECHNOLOGIES
TO
COMMUNICATE
IN A WORK
ENVIRONMENT**

BSBTEC202

Use digital technologies to communicate in a work environment

Release 1

Learner Guide

Aspire Version 1.1



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Level 1, 464 St Kilda Road
MELBOURNE VIC 3004 AUSTRALIA
Phone: (03) 9820 1300

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Contact details

Participant
Name:
Start date:
Phone number:
Email:
Work location
Name:
Address:
Postal address:
Workplace supervisor name:
Phone number:
Fax:
Email:
Registered Training Organisation (RTO)
Name:
Address:
Postal address (if different):
Phone number:
Fax:
RTO contact name:
Mobile:
Email:

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Before you begin

This Learner Guide is based on the unit of competency *BSBTEC202 Use digital technologies to communicate in a work environment*, Release 1. Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program. You can access the unit of competency and assessment requirements at:

www.training.gov.au.

How to work through this Learner Guide

This Learner Guide contains a number of features that will assist you in your learning. Your trainer will advise which parts of the Learner Guide you need to read, and which Practice Tasks and Learning Checkpoints you need to complete. The features of this Learner Guide are detailed in the following table.

Feature of the Learner Guide	How you can use each feature
Learning content	Read each topic in this Learner Guide. If you come across content that is confusing, make a note and discuss it with your trainer. Your trainer is in the best position to offer assistance. It is very important that you take on some of the responsibility for the learning you will undertake.
Examples	These highlight key learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.
Practice Tasks	Practice Tasks give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into action. Your trainer will tell you which practice tasks to complete.
Summaries	Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic.
Learning Checkpoints	There is a Learning Checkpoint at the end of each topic. Your trainer will tell you which Learning Checkpoints to complete. These checkpoints give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt.

Foundation skills

As you complete learning using this guide, you will be developing the foundation skills relevant for this unit. Foundation skills are the language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) skills and the employability skills required for participation in modern workplaces and contemporary life.

The following table provides definitions for each foundation skill.

Foundation skill area	Foundation skill description
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognises textual information within different materials and interprets information to determine requirements, as well as confirming accuracy of content
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Records key information relevant to requirements and prepares simple correspondence using basic punctuation, text and correct spelling
Oral Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtains information through listening and questioning and uses clear and appropriate language suitable to audience
Self-management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognises and follows explicit and implicit protocols and meets expectations associated with own role
Problem solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognises and responds to routine problems in context of own work

What do you already know?

Use the following table to identify what you may already know. This may assist you to work out what to focus on in your learning.

Topic	Key outcome	Rate your confidence in each section
Topic 1: Identify methods of digital communication	1A Identify the purpose of communication and the intended audience	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1B Identify and select the most appropriate communication application	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
Topic 2: Implement procedures to send and receive digital communications	2A Access emails, and create and check outgoing digital communication	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2B Determine appropriate action in response to incoming communication	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
Topic 3: Assist with digital communications	3A Plan for securing, monitoring, maintaining and storing digital communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	3B Ways to communicate electronically with targeted groups of stakeholders	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident



Topic 1 | Identify methods of digital communication

- 1A Identify the purpose of communication and the intended audience
- 1B Identify and select the most appropriate communication application

1A Identify the purpose of communication and the intended audience

To identify the best digital communication method/s, you need to know the purpose of your communication and your intended audience.

Before creating your digital communication, determine:

- the purpose – why you are communicating
- the intended audience – who you are communicating to.

This will help you establish the most appropriate method of communication to use, and provide you with an idea of:

- the content – what you will say
- the language and tone – how you will say it.

For example, you may be asked by your manager or supervisor to inform all staff in the organisation of an upcoming staff meeting. Knowing your purpose and audience helps you understand the content and format of your communication. This would be to send an email to all staff with the details of the meeting, using a polite and friendly tone. The advantage of email is that it can be accessed from a computer or a tablet (by those working in the office or working from home) or from a mobile device (by those commuting to or from work or travelling offsite).

Purpose of communication

To ensure you communicate effectively and your message is received and understood by the intended people, you have to know the purpose of your communication.

The purpose may be immediately evident, or you may have to ask your manager or supervisor for clarification.

For example, the purpose of digital communication could be to:

- inform staff of an upcoming meeting
- communicate task requirements
- communicate task progress or completion
- ask questions or make a request
- answer questions or provide information about something
- give a customer a quote on the price of products or services
- send or receive invoices
- say thank you or acknowledge that a message has been received.

Example

Determining the purpose of communication

Joanne's manager asks her to email last month's sales results to the marketing team. She now knows the method of communication (email), the content to include (last month's sales results) and the audience (the marketing team). However, she may not know why she is being asked to do this (i.e. the purpose).

She decides that the easiest way to determine the purpose is to ask her manager directly.

Her manager tells her the purpose is to find out whether a new line of baby products would be viable. Joanne thinks about this and realises it isn't helpful to send a figure to the marketing team of the total number of sales. Instead, the team would probably prefer the sales results to be split into categories so they can see how well baby products are selling in comparison to other products.

After she sends the email, the sales manager responds, thanking her for clearly showing the individual sales results for the various products produced by the company. They decide to go ahead with launching the new range of baby products.

Intended audience

Knowing who the intended audience is will help you identify the best method of communication and the language you should use.

Understanding the purpose of your communication may not be enough for you to determine your intended audience so you might have to clarify this with your manager or supervisor.

However, often you can work out who the intended audience is based on the purpose.

For example, you may need to communicate that you will be out of the office for a few days attending a conference. You need to determine who does and doesn't need to be informed of this.

You may need to inform:

- staff in your team or staff in teams you work with
- other staff who are offsite or work in other locations
- your manager (if they don't already know)
- any clients who may be expecting to hear from you during this time.

You would not need to inform:

- staff with whom you don't usually deal directly
- other people who are not likely to be impacted by your absence.

Determining what content to include

Once you know the purpose of your communication and the intended audience, you can determine what you should write.

Depending on the purpose of the communication, you may need to include:

- specific dates, such as the dates of upcoming meetings or deadlines
- amounts, such as how much stock to order
- prices, such as quotes for goods and services
- contact details, such as another person to contact in your absence
- screenshots, such as error messages to indicate an issue you are having
- attachments, such as documents, pictures or a screenshot.

Be aware that some people may not need as much detail as others. For example, if you're sending a stationery order to a supplier, you may need to indicate specific brands and prices of items to ensure the correct items are delivered. However, if you're asking staff in the office which stationery products they would like you to order, you don't need to discuss the specific brands to order or the cost of each item.

Determining tone and language

Knowing who you are communicating to and what their prior knowledge is will help you to decide what tone of language to use.

For example, if you're communicating to a manager or important client, you would most likely use a formal business tone. You may need to start an email with 'Dear Mr/Ms ...' and end it with 'Yours sincerely' before including your full name and job title.

If, on the other hand, you're communicating to a friend or colleague you work closely with, you may be able to use a more relaxed, informal tone. You could start an email with 'Hi Mike' and end it with 'Cheers' or 'Thanks' followed by your first name.

You may even decide that another form of communication is appropriate. For example, if you know that a colleague is out of the office and needs to know something urgently (such as a changed meeting time), a text message sent directly to their mobile may be more appropriate than an email as they are more likely to see the message straight away. If you're sending a text message, a less formal tone is generally appropriate. For example:

'Hey Mike, just letting you know that the meeting that was supposed to start at 10am today has been rescheduled to 11am. Cheers.'

When communicating with people outside of the organisation, you should probably avoid certain terms – such as jargon and abbreviations – that are known only to staff. For example, while you may commonly use terms like ‘ROI’ (return on investment) or ‘TBC’ (to be confirmed) in your day-to-day interactions with colleagues, a client may need these terms spelt out or even explained. This will come down to their prior knowledge and how much they need to know.

Commercially sensitive information

Commercially sensitive information is any information that could negatively affect a business if it was communicated to outside parties.

Also referred to as confidential information, commercially sensitive information is anything that could negatively affect a commercial interest (i.e. a business’s ability to operate in a competitive market) if it was disclosed.

‘Trade secrets’ are one form of commercially sensitive information. Trade secrets can include:

- technical information, such as details about an invention, a manufacturing process, a recipe or a design
- business information, such as supplier details, pricings and cost estimates, and product development plans.

To determine whether information is commercially sensitive, consider the following questions:

- If the information was disclosed, would this result in a negative consequence?
- Would the negative consequence be significant?
- Would the negative consequence be likely?
- Is there a clear link between the disclosure and the negative consequence occurring?
- Would the negative consequence still be likely if the information was not disclosed?

You must not communicate anything that could be deemed commercially sensitive to anyone who is not authorised to have access to the information.

When determining the content of your communication, consider whether any of it could be deemed commercially sensitive. If you think it could, ensure it is only sent to those authorised to know about it. For example, it would not be appropriate to include customers and clients in an email when a message or attachment includes trade secrets or other confidential information. Be particularly careful when forwarding and replying to emails as other people may be included in the ‘cc’ (carbon copy) or ‘bcc’ (blind carbon copy) fields who should not have access to certain information.

Practice Task 1

Read the following case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Rory works as an administration assistant for technology giant Americain. His manager, Peter, is on his way to a meeting with an important client, where he intends to showcase some of Americain's latest developments. Peter rings Rory and asks Rory to send him the designs for a new form of wearable technology that the company plans to produce. He forgot to save a copy of these plans on his tablet.

Rory locates the files on the server and sends them to Peter.

Question 1

Who is the intended audience Rory needs to communicate with?

Question 2

What is the purpose of the communication?

Question 3

What content does Rory need to include and is this commercially sensitive?



1B Identify and select the most appropriate communication application

After identifying the purpose, intended audience and content, you need to choose an appropriate way to communicate the information.

There are various applications you can use to communicate digitally with people inside and outside of the organisation (including colleagues who work remotely).

Ways of communicating include, but are not limited to:

- emails
- text messages sent to a mobile phone
- text or voice messages sent via a messaging app
- video or web-conferencing software.

Communication applications are generally used to communicate information between a select group of individuals. For example, an email may be sent to an individual, a team of people or a mailing list of customers. Anyone who is not sent the message directly is not likely to read it (unless the message has been forwarded to them by someone else).

However, other forms of digital communication are accessible by the general public, meaning anyone could access and read the information. This kind of communication includes:

- blogs and online forums
- social media platforms
- podcasts
- other content that is published directly to a website.

When publishing anything online, be careful not to breach privacy and confidentiality requirements. Always check with a supervisor or team leader about the requirements for using digital technology at work. They will be able to confirm what the protocols are for the organisation and provide you with copies of the guidelines you will need to follow. This includes policies on the use of communication tools and social media and procedures for sending and receiving emails.

Mobile applications

Mobile device technology enables access to your email account wherever you are, as long as you have an internet connection.

All you need to get started is a tablet or smartphone that provides access to email using either wi-fi or mobile data. These devices essentially combine traditional mobile phone capability (voice and short message service, or SMS) with small, handheld computers that have numerous capabilities depending on the apps that are installed.

Wireless connection to the internet from a mobile phone can reduce phone-call costs and help employees use their time more effectively. However, you may need to consider the software, hardware and connectivity costs, as well as the operational costs.

Many applications allow you to communicate using smartphones and tablets, with mobile phones also offering the more traditional messaging services.

Text messages (also called SMSs) enable mobile phone users to receive and send short messages on their mobiles. Most text messages can be received free of charge, but in order to send text messages, phone users usually have to pay a monthly fee to their service provider or a small fee for each message. Many mobile service providers offer SMS free of charge as part of a contract or mobile phone plan. Just like an email, a text message can be sent to one person or multiple people at once.

Text messages can also be sent through cloud-based services such as Apple's iMessage, Google Message or WhatsApp. These have the advantage of allowing you to see a conversation thread from different contributors in the group.

Text messages can be a useful way to communicate with staff and others in various locations. For example, you may need to send a text message to your manager informing them that you're running late for work. Or you may want to send text messages to customers to inform them about an upcoming appointment.

Types of messaging applications

Continuing innovation in communication technology means there are ever more options available for sending and receiving digital communications.

Wireless handheld communication devices are common in many workplaces, meaning you can communicate digitally from many different locations using a number of devices and applications. You need to be able to access and use the appropriate application for communicating electronically in your workplace, and ensure this adheres to organisational policies and procedures.

Email is the most commonly used application in businesses, and many email providers offer similar services. You will need to be able to access and use the email system used by your organisation. This learner guide focuses primarily on Microsoft Outlook as a means of communicating digitally to a range of people both internal and external to the organisation.

There are a number of other applications you could be asked to use. However, not all of these will necessarily be available in your organisation. You should also check whether a policy or procedure requires you to use a certain type of application when communicating specific information or contacting particular people, such as customers and clients.

This table outlines the features of some of the applications you may have access to in your organisation, including the strengths and limitations of each.

Type of application	Features	Strengths	Limitations
Email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Messages may be targeted to individuals or groups ▪ Commonly used in most organisations ▪ Suitable for short and long messages ▪ Common email services include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Microsoft Outlook – Google Gmail – Yahoo Mail – Telstra Mail (Bigpond) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Helps to keep a record of communication ▪ Has a number of formatting options, including adding emphasis to text and adding dot points ▪ Can be used to send large attachments ▪ Usually free to install and use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Requires internet access to send and receive messages ▪ It is often unclear whether the message has been received and read ▪ Message may be undeliverable if the email address is incorrect or if attachments are too large
Text messages sent via SMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ May be targeted to individuals or groups ▪ Suitable for sending short messages ▪ May be sent from any mobile device to any other mobile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A more instant form of communication ▪ Can be used to send links and small attachments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Usually a cost involved ▪ It is often unclear whether the message has been received and read ▪ Older mobile phones may not be able to receive certain types of messages (such as pictures or videos sent as attachments)

Type of application	Features	Strengths	Limitations
Text messages sent via messaging apps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be targeted to individuals or groups Suitable for short messages Can be used to send links and small attachments Common messaging apps include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apple iMessage Facebook Messenger Google Hangouts Jabber WhatsApp Yahoo Messenger 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A more instant form of communication It is usually clear whether or not the message has been opened and read Allow you to track a conversation Useful for group messages, where multiple people can be involved in a conversation Usually free to install and use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require both the sender and receiver to have the correct app installed on their system Usually require internet access to send and receive messages
Video calls/conferences via messaging apps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide 'face-to-face' communication between people in different locations Can be used for video conferencing (e.g. where one or more people can't attend a meeting) Common video messaging apps include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Microsoft Skype Apple FaceTime Google Hangouts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow real-time communication Enable you to see the other person's facial expressions, body language and gestures Most apps enable typed messages as well as verbal communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require reliable internet access for all parties All parties need the correct app and latest version installed Require everyone to be able to communicate at the same time <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a conference call may need to be arranged in advance Require all users to have hardware such as a microphone, speakers and a camera

Internet-based communication platforms

The internet provides a variety of platforms for communicating.

Internet-based communication platforms include real-time text chatting, Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), web conferencing (webinars) and video conferencing. They enable groups of participants to communicate via text, voice or video and to contribute to discussions on an equal basis. Each participant types or verbalises comments that the entire group can see or hear. The text chat environment allows a user to type private comments, viewable by only one other participant. It's also possible to exchange files with other participants.

Internet-based communication platforms can be used in various ways. Examples include:

- managers in different offices who are working together to implement a new record-management system for a national organisation
- managers in different states who wish to collaborate on a workshop to be presented at a national conference
- a group of students taking a class at a training organisation who may wish to communicate with a guest speaker or trainer via the internet.

Participating in online meetings

As a participant in an online meeting, you may be asked for your views on issues, to provide an update of your progress on specific tasks or to participate in a general discussion about a certain work topic.

During online meetings, you can usually read everyone's views and contribute to the meeting at any time by posting comments until the chair decides it's time to move on. Remember that comments appear in the order they're posted, so conversations are not grouped together.

When relying on voice online with no video, it is easy to be misinterpreted because of the absence of visual cues such as gestures and facial expressions – so avoid jokes and sarcastic comments.

Example

Conducting an online meeting

Staff at Larger Than Life hold a meeting every three weeks to coordinate the promotion for their client, Omega. This meeting involves advertising, sales and media staff in six different locations. The team uses Skype for Business to conduct their meetings. Each attendee has a web camera and microphone attached to their computer. They can see each other and speak freely over the internet, and they can share documents with other attendees electronically. In cases where it's hard to clearly understand what's being said, they can type information that displays on the computer screens of the other attendees.

Team members can later print a transcript of any information that was presented during the meeting and use this to prepare the minutes of the meeting. The meeting can also be recorded and shared with other employees using a podcast function.

Online communication platforms

Online communication platforms such as social media networks and online forums can be used to communicate to the general public.

These types of programs are commonly used in organisations to promote products or services to new or existing customers, or simply to increase brand awareness.

Be aware, however, that with any form of online communication open to the public, it's difficult to know how many people have access to it, and it may be difficult (or even impossible) to delete the communication once it has been uploaded. Ensure you follow policies and procedures when communicating information, particularly when you're representing your organisation on a public communication platform.

Some common online communication programs – along with their strengths and limitations – are outlined in this table.

Type of program	Features	Strengths	Limitations
Social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can be used to communicate short messages (or posts) to a large number of people ▪ Can be used to send targeted messages to a specific individual or group ▪ Common social media platforms include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Twitter - Facebook - Instagram - LinkedIn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can be used to reach a large number of people ▪ Posts may go viral, increasing the spread of the message ▪ May be used for one-on-one communication as well as public posts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Once content is uploaded it can be difficult to delete as users may be quick to copy and share it
Blogs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ May be in the form of online journals or feature articles ▪ May allow readers to comment on articles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have a number of formatting options, including adding emphasis to text and adding dot points ▪ Allow more detailed information to be shared 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If comments are turned on, these will need to be monitored to ensure appropriate language is used
Podcasts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide a way to distribute audio-video files across the internet ▪ Are recordings that can be played through various programs, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Windows Media Player - QuickTime - iTunes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enable users to share their voice, which can create a more personal connection with the audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Require hardware such as a microphone, headphones and/ or camera ▪ One-way form of communication

Type of program	Features	Strengths	Limitations
Wikis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collaborative websites that allow users to add and edit content ▪ Content is categorised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Most wikis have a version control system so that if content is deleted, the page can revert to a previous version ▪ Enable you to search for content using key words ▪ Encourage contributions from the general public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ May be difficult to track who the content has been written by, what the original content said or how it has changed over time
Online forums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enable people to ask questions, and share ideas, thoughts and advice on particular issues ▪ Messages on various topics can be categorised into threads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Allow an open discussion of ideas and encourage contributions from the general public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Less instant form of communication – it may take a while to receive a response ▪ May require someone to monitor and moderate content on the site

Example

Online forum policy

The following is a policy by Larger Than Life on using forums to communicate information.

Larger Than Life Policy for the use of forums

- Be civil. Do not attack other participants personally. Respect other people's opinions.
- Keep it clean. Do not use any language that could be considered abusive, offensive, threatening or otherwise objectionable.
- Stay on topic. Ensure that your message relates to the forum that you're posting to. Off-topic conversation should be sent to relevant parties directly by email.
- Be kind to newcomers. Encourage them by providing guidance, responding to their questions and helping them to achieve positive outcomes from participating in the forum.
- Do not use material that could breach anyone else's copyright or other legal rights.
- Do not transmit any material that may contain viruses.
- Ignore spam on mailing lists and news groups.
- Do not add large attachments. If you have a large file that you would like to distribute, put it on a web page and include the URL link instead of attaching it.

Information-sharing tools

When you collaborate with others online, you may need to share electronic files.

File-sharing software allows you to upload any kind of file for use or review by others, including graphics, documents and spreadsheets. It's possible for users of the information-sharing tool to download and edit the files, and then upload them again. It's essential to use an appropriate tool to manage and record the edits to documents.

You can choose to allow others to only view your files or to view and edit them. Information-sharing tools such as Google Drive and Microsoft's SharePoint include a version control system that prevents people from undoing each other's work and also allows you to track changes to show exactly who did what.

Practice Task 2

Read the case study, then complete the questions that follow.

Case study

Lee is responsible for word processing the lengthy proposals that Larger Than Life develops for new advertising and public relations campaigns. His manager, Kara has been overseas meeting with clients for several weeks. Each day Lee and Kara communicate using Skype, which allows them to talk to each other without potentially high charges for international phone calls. This means that Lee can speak to Kara and get complete instructions without rushing through his questions in an effort to save money.

Question 1

Identify two positive and two negative outcomes of using this method of communication.

Question 2

How else could Lee and Kara undertake this task effectively?

Identify appropriate applications in line with policies and procedures

Be aware of the systems and applications commonly used in your organisation to communicate electronically.

When determining the application you should use to communicate, you need to determine the available resources in your organisation. For example, you may wish to use Skype for Business to conduct video conferencing, but your organisation may only have a basic version of Skype installed or may use another video-conferencing system, such as Polycom.

Additionally, organisational policies and procedures may indicate that certain types of information must be communicated using a particular application. For example, your organisation may use a collaborative system such as Asana or SharePoint to send and receive files and communicate task requirements. If that's the case, you may have to communicate all information regarding tasks (including meetings, progress and deadlines) using this system.

Refer to your policies and procedures or ask your supervisor if you're unsure.

Communicating in line with policies and procedures

When communicating online, there are specific conventions and etiquette you may be expected to follow.

Your workplace may have developed specific guidelines for you and other employees to follow when collaborating online. These guidelines may be included in your organisational policies and procedures.

The standards for communicating online vary from company to company. You will need to check your policies and procedures to ensure you're communicating in the way the organisation expects you to, particularly when communicating with people outside the organisation. Remember the importance of protecting commercially sensitive information.

Here are some common rules that may be outlined in a company's policies regarding online communication.

Emphasis

Avoid using capital letters and bold font to emphasise certain points. This may be considered impolite. Instead, you can use italics to draw attention to certain information.

Privacy

Ensure you respect other people's privacy; for example, don't forward emails without their knowledge or give out email addresses and other contact information without their permission.

Replies

If you receive a message, you may have to acknowledge that you've received it, particularly if it's a request that you can't follow up on immediately. If someone has provided you with something useful, such as information you've requested, thank them when you receive it. Always use the same polite behaviour as you would if you were face to face with someone.

Aggressive messages and criticism

Don't send aggressive messages (sometimes called 'flames'). Also be careful about criticising other people in messages. This isn't ethical and you can't assume that you and the addressee will be the only people to read your message. Remember, digital messages aren't strictly private as you might not be aware of others who are included in the message, or your message may be forwarded to someone else without your knowledge.

Example

Email usage policy

The following example is an extract from Larger Than Life's email usage policy.

Larger Than Life Email Usage Policy

- Allow time for emails to be received and replied to, keeping in mind time differences around the world and other colleagues' busy schedules.
- Do not send abusive or heated messages (flames). If you receive a flame, it is best to ignore it.
- Don't assume any internet communication is completely secure.
- If you are replying to a message, quote only the relevant parts.
- If you want your mail to be read, don't make it too long (i.e. no more than 100 lines).
- Ensure the subject line reflects the content of the message.
- Never send chain emails. Notify the system administrator if you receive any.
- Immediately notify the system administrator or IT support person if you receive any suspicious messages that may contain a virus.
- Remember that unsolicited email advertising is unwelcome (and forbidden in many countries).

Practice Task 3

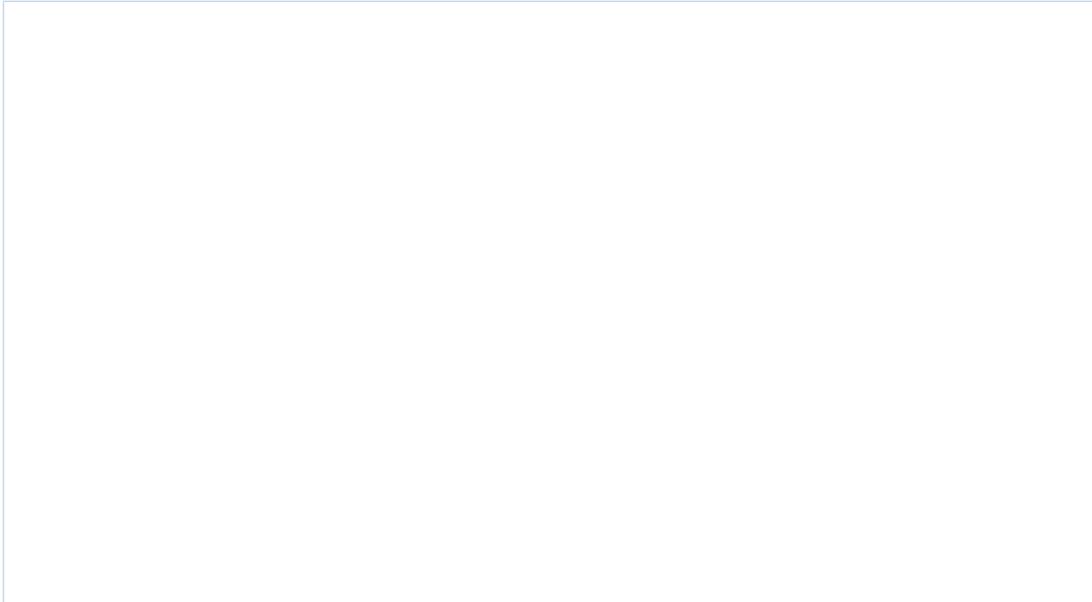
Read the case study, then answer the question that follows.

Case study

Your team has been asked to participate in an online meeting with employees from across the organisation to identify opportunities for improvements to work practices. Your team has a history of minor conflicts with members of the accounts department. Your supervisor is concerned that this conflict will emerge again and has asked your team to develop a set of guidelines for participating in online meetings.

Question 1

Draft at least five guidelines that can be used during these meetings.



Summary

- Identifying your purpose and audience helps you determine the content and format of your communication.
- Knowing who the intended audience for your communication is will help you identify the best method of communication and the language and tone you should use.
- When determining the content of your communication, consider whether any of it could be deemed commercially sensitive.
- There are many different types of messaging applications, each with strengths and limitations.
- Online collaboration tools provide ways to communicate with other parties in real time by typing, voice and/or video.
- Always ensure you are following policies and procedures, particularly when representing the organisation on a public site.
- Do not post any personal information – such as your home address, phone number or personal email address – on a public site.

Learning Checkpoint 1

Identify methods for digital communication

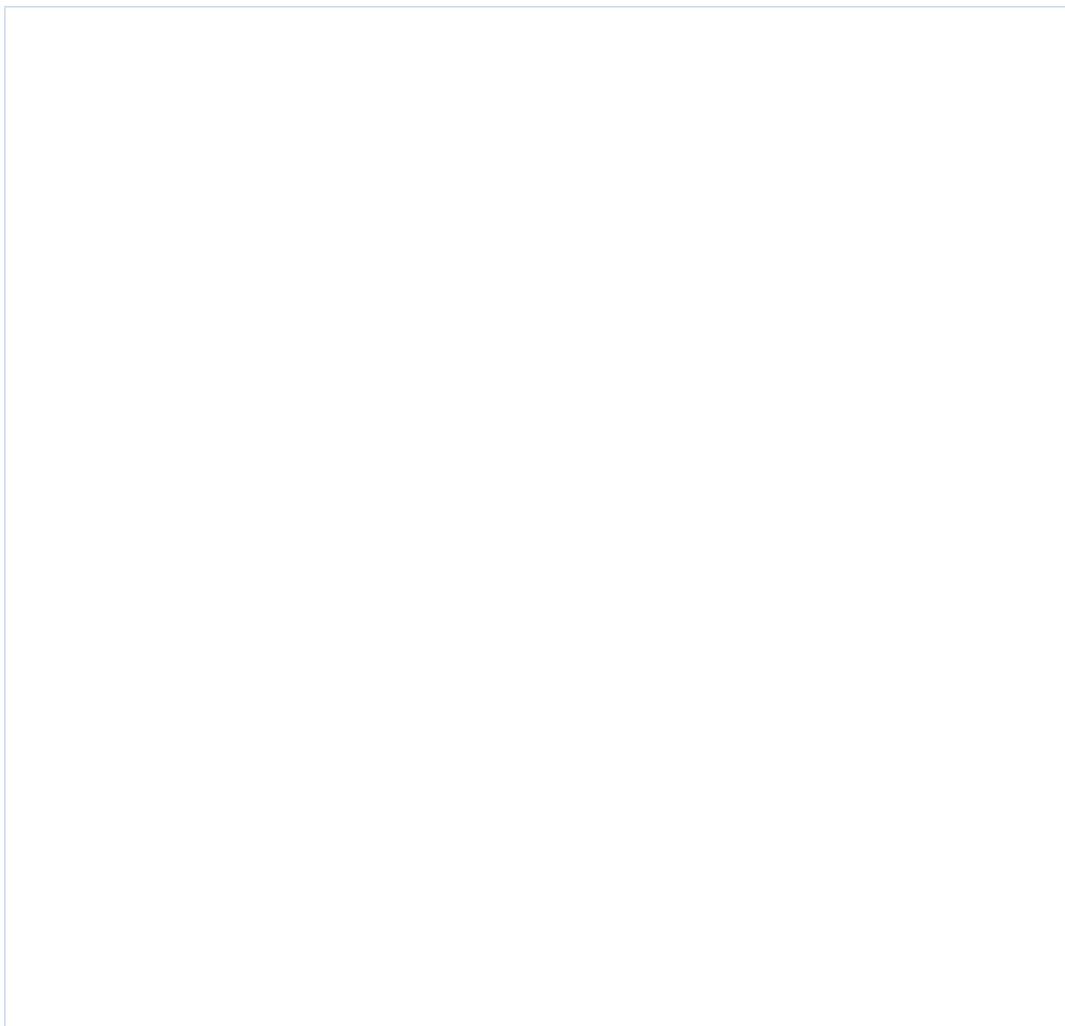
Your supervisor has asked you to help her coordinate next month's sales meeting. Her plan is to conduct the meeting with interstate sales staff online. She would like you to draft an email or memo that she can send to participants.

1. Write an email that covers the following information:
 - the advantages of conducting meetings online
 - how online meetings are conducted
 - any tips that would assist participants to contribute most effectively to the meeting.

Remember to:

- prepare a suitable subject line for your email.
- refer to your workplace policies and procedures including email etiquette.

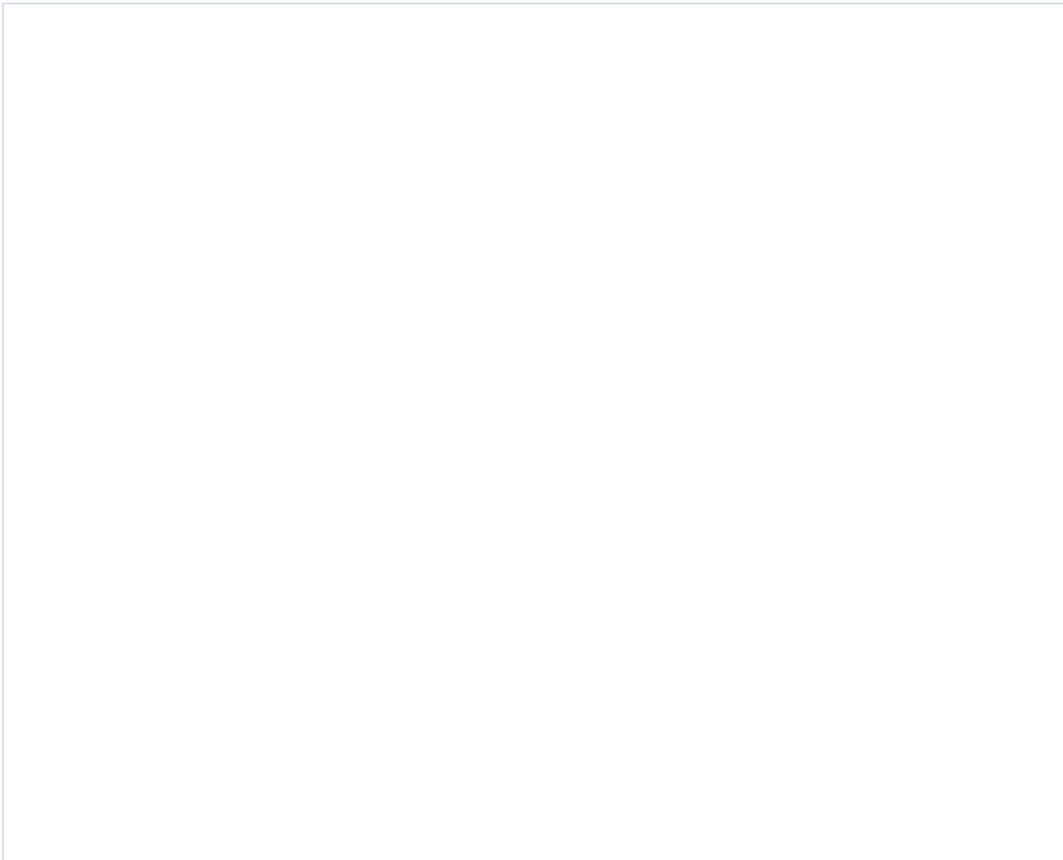
Note: If you do not have access to these documents, you may wish to refer to the various policies and procedures for Larger Than Life in this Learner Guide.



2. Identify two other methods of communicating to set up the meeting with staff.



3. Identify two of the strengths and two limitations of the methods for communicating to staff listed above.





Topic 2 | Implement procedures to send and receive digital communications

- 2A Access emails, and create and check outgoing digital communication
- 2B Determine appropriate action in response to incoming communication

2A Access emails, and create and check outgoing digital communication

Digital messages such as emails can be accessed via your email software or using webmail and must be prepared with care.

Emails and other forms of digital communication are convenient, time-efficient and easy to send, but they are subject to the same laws as any other type of business correspondence. You can easily make mistakes, so always follow workplace procedures when sending emails and other messages.

For example, your organisation will expect you to prepare communication using appropriate language, tone and format. There are many different options and combinations, and you need to know what is expected in your workplace.

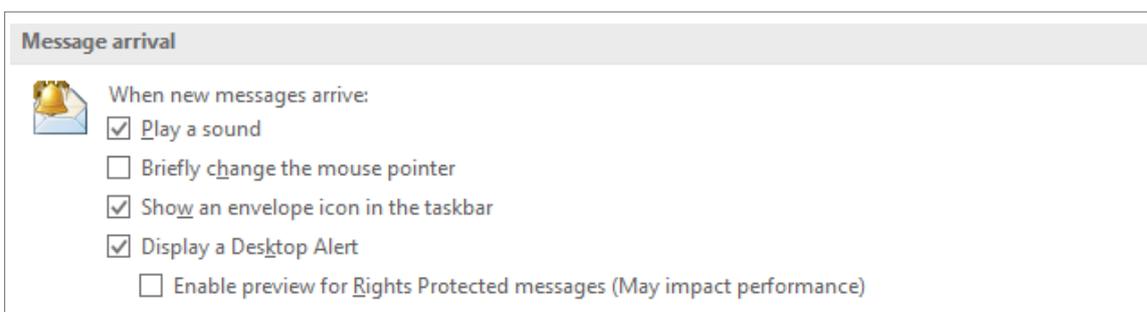
Accessing emails

In the workplace you access your email throughout the day to receive messages and to send messages to others, both inside and outside of the organisation.

It's common practice to sign into your work email at the start of the day and to stay signed in until you finish working.

Accessing emails using email software

Your email software will generally notify you when new emails arrive. This may be via a pop-up at the bottom of your screen or an update of the email tab on your browser with the number of new (unread) messages. A message prompt can be useful if you don't check your email regularly, in case an email requires an urgent reply or follow-up. If you're using Microsoft Outlook, you can direct your email software to display a message using email options. To do this, select **File**, then **Options**. Select the **Mail** tab and update your preferences, as in the following example.



Accessing emails using webmail

Webmail is a server-based email system for accessing emails from an email account on the internet. You can send and receive email messages from almost any computer that's connected to the internet. This means that if your organisation offers webmail, you can log on to your email from a location other than your workplace. The webmail application and your email messages are on a remote server, not your local computer.

Webmail applications contain a built-in help file, which guides you through the process of setting it up to read email on a remote server. If you need specific information while setting it up, such as the names of your incoming and outgoing mail servers, contact your workplace website administrator.

Webmail is based on hypertext mark-up language (HTML). This means that you can use any major internet browser to access your email messages. Additionally, your email is stored on your domain's server. Therefore, you can save emails and attachments on the server instead of downloading them to your computer.

Accessing digital communication applications

Digital communication applications such as Skype, WhatsApp, Yammer, Slack and Microsoft Teams may be installed on your work computer or mobile device as apps.

Some, such as Skype or Teams, are either always on, if you're logged onto your computer, or you may need to log in to these each time you open them, for additional security.

Ensure that commonly used applications have shortcuts on your desktop or icons that are easy to access on your mobile device so you can open them when required to read and send digital communications.

Practice Task 4

Identify and record the type of digital communication that you believe should be used in each scenario.

Question 1

On a weekend, Maddie needs to advise all staff that a meeting that was to be held at 8am Monday morning has been postponed.

Question 2

Ron is travelling to a sales expo in a regional town. He has to schedule appointments with several clients during the few days he will be away.

Question 3

Farzin is completing a business course and wants to communicate with other students as they work on a project that is due on Monday.

Question 4

Imranha arrives home and realises that she hasn't replied to an urgent email that was sent to her work email address.

Question 5

Marco has recently started work in a customer service department. He has to respond to customer messages from his desktop computer during business hours.

Drafting your communication

Ensure that your communication is appropriate for the audience and the purpose of the communication.

An email should include:

- the recipient's email address
- a subject line
- a greeting
- the main body of the message
- a closing
- a signature
- any attachments.

The subject line should contain a brief description or title for your message. Ensure that your subject line accurately reflects what the email is about. You should make your subject line clear and precise. It helps your recipient make decisions about the importance of your message, and when and how to deal with it. A well-written subject line also makes it easier for both the sender and receiver to file the message and find it later.

The type of greeting you use depends on who you're sending your message to and its purpose. It also depends on whether you're expected to use a formal or informal tone. For example, you might start an email with 'Dear Mr Harcourt' if Mr Harcourt is an important client you don't know very well, or simply 'Hi John' if John is someone you know well. If you're in any doubt, it's always better to use a formal greeting. Formal greetings are also preferable in situations when the recipient may need to forward the message to someone else, such as their manager.

If you're using a messenger application, it doesn't necessarily mean that you should be informal. Many businesses send customers alerts and notifications via text message – while they're usually brief, they should still be polite.

The main body of text contains your message. Sentences should be short and the meaning should be clear. Each paragraph should contain one idea only. You might have to include two or more paragraphs, but try to keep your message brief. Most people expect emails to be short and to the point. Text messages should be shorter still. If you need to include lots of information, it might be more appropriate to add an attachment containing the information.

Message language and tone

Many organisations have policies or guidelines on the type of language they expect you to use when sending correspondence on behalf of the organisation.

The language you are expected to use in a professional email may include particular phrases, titles, terminology and greetings commonly used in your industry and organisation. You may be required to describe products using certain words, refer to people by their correct titles and departments, or end your emails with your organisation's standard signature. Find out what rules or conventions you're expected to follow when preparing emails. This may be specified in organisational policies and procedures.

Keep all the information you need to refer to handy; for example, as a directory of staff names, titles and departments, or as a list of commonly used acronyms and abbreviations.

Emails should be written in clear, plain English, using professional language. Your message will also be easier to understand if you use uncomplicated words, short sentences and simple language.

Messages sent via text or in apps tend to be shorter and use abbreviations. Ensure your audience will understand the language you're using, and when communicating with clients and colleagues, keep the tone and language professional.

Remember the four Cs: messages should be clear, concise, correct and courteous.

Clear	<p>Clear writing is easy to understand. It involves using simple words wherever possible. Sentences should be active, not passive. Active sentences put the subject (the person or thing that carries out the action) before the verb. Passive sentences put the object (the person or thing the action is being done to) before the verb. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The manager signed the contract. (Active) ▪ The contract was signed by the manager. (Passive)
Concise	<p>A concise message uses as few words as possible to convey information. To write concisely you should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ explain exactly what you mean ▪ avoid repeating yourself or using two words that mean the same thing ▪ ensure you don't distract the reader with unnecessary information.

Correct	Writing correctly means following rules and styles for business writing. Your workplace may have a style guide that describes the formatting rules used to make sure documents prepared across the organisation are consistent. Your organisation may expect you to use particular phrases and terminology. Ensure that the information you have included is accurate, and that your grammar and spelling are correct. Your email program may have a spellcheck function – remember to use it.
Courteous	Courteous writing is polite and respectful. It may involve thanking the person in advance or using 'please' to ask for something. Courtesy includes respecting people's privacy.

Some workplaces expect you to write emails using formal language (a more serious tone). Other workplaces may instruct staff to use a more casual or conversational tone when communicating with customers.

The use of language and tone, and the type of message all vary according to the purpose of the message and the audience. For example, if you had to tell an important client about a problem with a delivery, you would write a message using formal business language. If you wanted to invite staff to morning tea to welcome a new manager, you could send an informal message.

Think about your purpose when you're choosing the tone of your message. Why are you sending the message and what are you hoping will happen as a result? Make sure your meaning is clear.

How you sign off (close) your message also depends on the purpose of the message and your audience. The close – for example, 'Yours sincerely'; 'Cheers'; 'Thank you' – should match the formality of the greeting.

Your organisation is likely to have written policies about using offensive, sexist or racist language when communicating with others. Even if your organisation doesn't have these policies, you're expected to understand and comply with legal requirements relating to workplace standards. These may include laws about equal employment opportunity, bullying and harassment. Failure to use appropriate behaviour and language can result in a complaint and even prosecution.

Creating a social media post

Creating social media posts is different from creating messages as social media posts tend to have a more general audience. Here are some guidelines for writing different types of social media posts.

Status updates on social network sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Aim to use no more than 50 characters to provide relevant, up-to-date information. ▪ Engage the audience by asking a question and ensure the post is attention grabbing. ▪ Consider the audience's question, 'What's in it for me?' ▪ Provide a link to more information.
Blogs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create an engaging title that uses key words at the start to grab attention. ▪ Draw readers in by asking a compelling question in your first sentence. ▪ Keep posts between 500 and 800 words. ▪ Use links to direct readers to further information. ▪ Choose one or two images that complement your text and engage interest. ▪ At the end of the post, ask your audience to act on what you have just told them – a call to action. ▪ Add buttons to encourage readers to share your blog on social media.
Microblogs	<p>Microblogs are messages that have a limited character count. Facebook has a limit of 60,000 characters, Weibo has 140 and Twitter has 280.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Get straight to the point but don't sacrifice grammar and punctuation. Keep it professional! ▪ Use questions, facts and points of interest to engage the audience and encourage retweets. ▪ Let your readers know what you want them to do; for example, 'Find out more ...'

Electronic signatures

Your electronic signature should contain your name and any other details your organisation wants to include, such as your job title and contact details.

Your organisation may have a set format for electronic signatures so that all staff project a consistent company image.

If your organisation doesn't have a set format, you can set your own by following these steps.

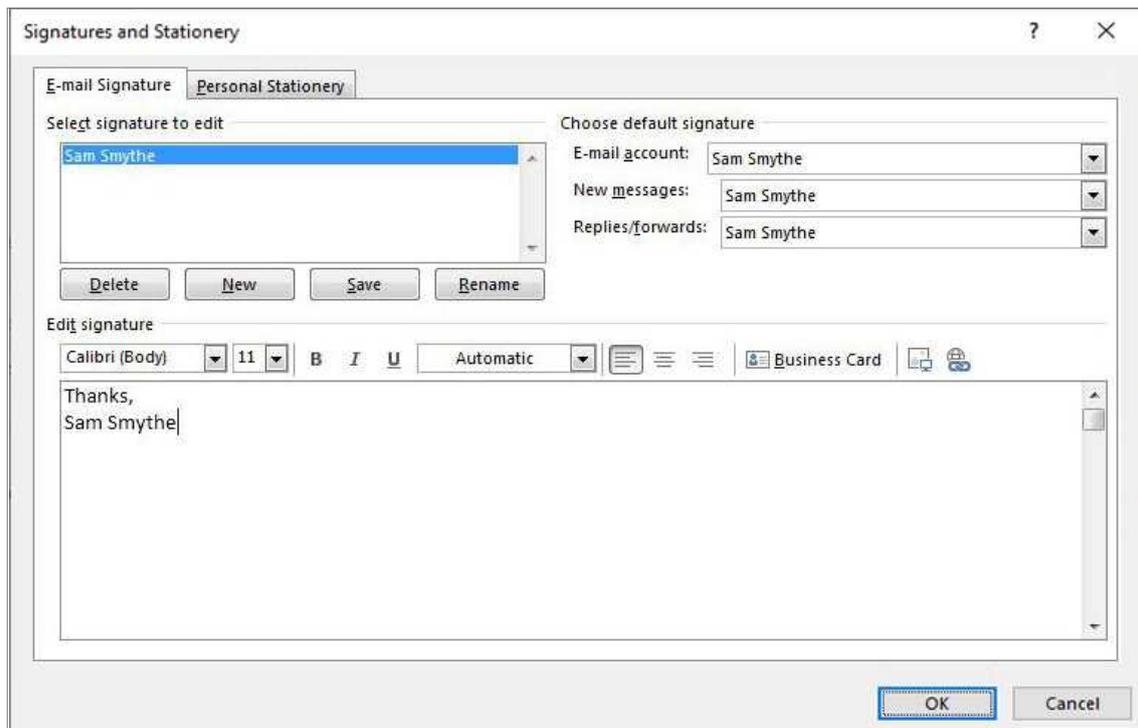
With a new email open in Outlook, go to the **File** tab, then select **Options**. Select **Mail** then **Signatures** on the right-hand side.

You can create a **new** signature by clicking **New**. Choose whether the signature is displayed for **New messages** and/or for **Replies/forwards**.

Write the text for your signature, then click **OK**.

To **insert** your signature, go to the Insert tab, click the arrow under **Signature** and choose the signature you would like to use.

You can also edit or remove a signature.



Checking your draft communication

Once you have drafted your communication, check it to make sure everything is correct.

Checking your communication is an extremely important step because once you have sent it, it is difficult – or often impossible – to recall it. You can make serious mistakes by sending messages without checking them first.

Emails and many messaging applications have built-in spell checks that indicate when a word is misspelt. However, be wary of auto-correct functions, which may replace words and significantly change the intention of your message.

Social media posts can generally be edited or deleted after they're published, but your audience may have already seen your errors and possibly even taken a screenshot of your message.

Here's a checklist to follow before sending an email, or any other message, as well as examples of common mistakes.

Checks to make

- Are the spelling, punctuation and grammar correct?
- Is the meaning clear?
- Is the text formatted correctly?
- Is the language concise?
- Is the information in the message correct?

Common mistakes

- Sending confidential information to the wrong person
- Not proof reading your message carefully
- Saying that an attachment is included when you have forgotten to attach it
- Sending an email to an incorrect address so the message is undeliverable or goes to the wrong person

Example

Email checklist

Here is an example of a checklist used by public relations firm Larger Than Life when composing and sending emails. The checklist is given to new employees to help them develop a professional approach to using email.

Larger Than Life Email Checklist

Addresses

- Is every letter, symbol and number in the address correct?
- Does the recipient have more than one email address, and have you chosen the correct one?
- Is the message addressed only to the people who need to see it?
- Have you checked the cc list?

Subject line

- Does the subject line help the recipient understand what the message is about?

Larger Than Life Email Checklist

Greeting

- Is the greeting appropriate for the audience?
- Is the greeting appropriate for the purpose of the message?

Main body of the message

- Are the spelling, punctuation and grammar correct?
- Is the meaning clear?
- Is the text formatted correctly, either to a standard business format or to your organisation's required format?
- Is the information in the message correct?
- Does the email follow legislative and organisational requirements concerning privacy and confidentiality, ethics and anti-discrimination?

Close and signature

- Are the close and signature appropriate for the tone and purpose of the email?

Email and message attachments

Attachments are files that can be sent as separate files with a message.

Attachments could be pictures, word-processed documents or other electronic files. Emails are generally the most appropriate way to send attachments, as a large file or a number of small files can be attached to a single email. When you're attaching files to an email, your message should act as a covering letter, giving the recipient a brief description of what you have attached. Attachments should be clearly labelled so they can be easily identified, filed and retrieved later.

Some organisations have systems in place that will automatically reject emails with certain attachments. If you're having difficulty sending an email with an attachment, you may need to make a special arrangement with the receiver to forward the email via their IT department.

You should also be aware that attachments increase the size of the email. This means it will take longer to send and receive the message or it may not be able to be sent at all. You can find out the size of a file by locating the document icon for the proposed attachment through your browser or computer network. Open the document, select **File**, then **Info**. You will discover a list of options relating to characteristics of the file. The size will appear under **Properties**.

If you need to attach a large file or a number of files to an email, consider these alternatives.

Divide

Divide the message into a number of smaller messages. For example, if you're sending drafts of a large report, send each section in a separate email. Label your emails very clearly in the subject line; for example, 'Sales Report Section 1: Message 1 of 2' and 'Sales Report Section 2: Message 2 of 2'.

Reduce

Reduce the size of large files by compressing them. You first have to check with the receiver that they have the software for decompressing them. There are various applications available that compress and decompress files; for example, DropStuff and WinZip. It doesn't matter what you use, as long as the recipient has a program that can expand the files once they receive them.

Link

Send a link to the file instead. If your organisation uses cloud storage servers such as OneDrive and Dropbox, you can create a link to your file or folder and share it in a message. The link allows the recipient to download the file themselves.

Attachments are only useful if your recipient can open and read or view them. To send attachments successfully, you need to be sure the recipient has the necessary software or application to open the files.

Practice Task 5

Question 1

The following statements describe the content of a range of digital communications that need to be sent. Write each message using the suggested application.

- a) You need to send an email to confirm an appointment with a client, Mr Hopkins, for next Friday at 11am, to discuss refinancing his mortgage.

- b) You wish to contact the maintenance supervisor via text message regarding a broken handrail on the stairs at the entrance to the library.

- c) You need to use WhatsApp to ask all team leaders to advise you of which team members they have nominated to attend this month's safety training.

- d) You need to distribute the latest health and safety committee's meeting minutes to your external team and you know that the mail server is down. What application do you use and what would your message say?

Question 2

Jasri often sends communications to internal and external teams on behalf of her manager. Not all of them read their emails, so she needs to contact some by text message and others by Skype. It can be very time consuming. What could Jasri do to improve this situation?

Question 3

Here are the subject lines of some email messages Vanessa receives:

- » Hello there!
- » Meeting minutes 8 March
- » Client query about prices
- » You want to know this
- » Canberra flight times
- » Wow! What a result!
- » Report for July sales
- » A quick question
- » Missing client address

Which of these subject lines tell her what the corresponding email is about?

2B Determine appropriate action in response to incoming communication

You have a responsibility to ensure that your email processes comply with your workplace policies and procedures.

This means you must be able to identify and take appropriate action with regard to urgent, confidential, personal, suspicious or potentially dangerous emails.

Email programs offer a range of tools that allow you to effectively and efficiently manage your email.

Emails can be marked with symbols that provide information. For example:

- An exclamation mark indicates the email is important or urgent.
- A flag indicates that some follow-up action is required.
- A paperclip shows there is an attachment to the email.

The symbols and the contents of the subject line will help you decide what to do next.

Prioritising emails

Ensure you deal with urgent emails first, according to what your workplace expects.

Urgent emails may be marked with an exclamation mark by the sender, indicating 'High Importance'. They may require you to carry out an action or respond to the email within a set time.

You may need to decide whether to forward the email to a colleague or manager for their attention or whether you can deal with it yourself. Let the sender know you've received their email, even if they're expecting you to forward it or take some other follow-up action. You can use your reply to tell the sender what you're going to do.

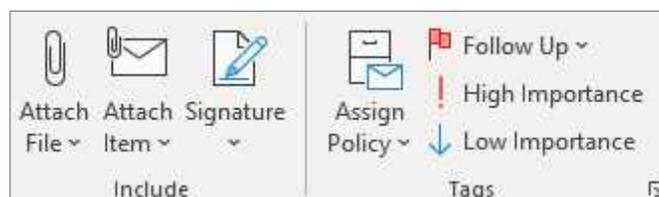
After you've dealt with urgent emails, you still have to prioritise your other emails. There may be a large number of them, depending on your job role. If you've been on holidays or sick leave, you may return to work to find your email inbox full of messages. Some will be less relevant than others. For example, they may have been forwarded to everyone in the workplace unnecessarily or may be spam emails or junk mail.

For each email, look at the subject line and who sent the email to determine its importance. Open the most urgent and important ones first and take note of what they ask you to do, replying if necessary. You may need to flag them for follow-up.

To do this in Outlook, you can either click on the flag icon for the message or right-click the email and hover over **Follow Up**, then assign a follow-up date to it, such as tomorrow, next week or a custom date. This will create a red flag icon and highlight the email in your inbox. Once you've dealt with it, click on the flag icon to change it to a tick.

Sending urgent and important emails

Email programs offer a range of tools you can use to alert the receiver that your email requires special attention. You might want to send an email to a client about an urgent meeting request and mark the message as urgent. You can set a message to be of high, normal or low importance. Once you have drafted the email, you can set a follow-up date or change the importance in Outlook to either **High Importance** or **Low Importance**. If neither of these are selected, **Normal Importance** will be assigned by default.



You can also change the sensitivity level of messages. For example, if you want to send an email to a staff member about their leave entitlements or salary conditions, you can mark the message as private, personal or confidential. This prevents the message from being modified after it has been sent. To do this, select the arrow on the bottom right of the Tags section in Outlook. This will open a pop-up window. Next to Sensitivity, choose **Normal**, **Personal**, **Private** or **Confidential**. You can also request a delivery receipt and/or a read receipt by ticking the appropriate boxes.

Handling suspicious emails

If you see any suspicious messages or extensions you're not familiar with, don't open them under any circumstances.

You should be wary and suspicious of certain types of email, in particular those with any of the following characteristics.

Unknown sender

Treat all emails from an unknown sender with suspicion, especially if they contain an attachment, which may indicate a virus. Contact your IT support person before opening these types of email.

Note that some viruses can draw email addresses from address books and mail themselves out, so a recognisable source is no assurance that it isn't an infected email.

Email address

Some emails may appear to come from a known and trusted organisation, such as a bank. You should be careful of these, particularly if they ask you to click on a link or input your password. To check whether the email is genuine, look at the sender's email address. An address that contains a lot of random numbers or letters is not likely to be from a reputable organisation.

Subject line

Emails (either known or unknown) that have a subject line urging you to open the message immediately may not be genuine. Suspicious subject lines include 'Check this out – it's great!', 'You've got to see this picture!' and 'Congratulations – you've won!'

File extensions

Be careful of emails with attachments that have unusual file extensions rather than the more common ones, which are .pdf, .doc (or .docx), .xls (or .xlsx), .gif, .jpg and .ppt (or .pptx).

Ask your supervisor or IT helpdesk for assistance. Make sure your virus protection program is set to scan your incoming mail and notify you of any infection it finds. It's also good practice to undertake a virus scan of your entire computer system on a regular basis, just in case.

Do not open any files attached to an email unless you know what the files are, even if they come from a friend or someone you know. Some viruses copy themselves and spread through email. Don't risk infecting everyone in your address book. When in doubt, always check with the IT helpdesk.

Most viruses ask you to open the email that contains them before they become active, so your best method of prevention is not to open any email until you're sure it's safe to do so.

If you suspect your computer has been infected by a virus and you have a virus protection program installed, immediately run a full scan of your computer. If you do have a virus, the virus protection program will advise you what course of action to take.

If you know the name of the virus, sometimes looking it up on the internet will provide you with useful information. As computer viruses become more complex and dangerous, prevention and protection become more important than ever.

If you receive any suspicious emails or attachments, you may have to take actions such as:

- deleting the infected file
- downloading a special file from the internet to remove the virus completely
- seeking professional advice
- advising your IT department or manager, in line with your workplace policies and procedures.

Viruses and malware

Computer viruses are easily transmitted through email, especially via attachments. They can cause significant damage to your computer and your organisation's network, usually by corrupting files on a computer they infect. You can even pass them on without realising it. As soon as you open an infected attachment, the damage is done.

Viruses are a type of malware; that is, malicious software designed to steal from or damage your computer.

Other types of malware include:

- spyware – software that steals internet usage data and sensitive information from your computer
- ransomware – software that locks a computer system, or steals and threatens to distribute sensitive data unless a ransom is paid (ransoms can range from a few hundred to thousands of dollars)
- adware – software that generates online ads on the user's system, usually as a pop-up or banner display
- Trojan horses – malware that fools the computer into thinking it's safe, but internally does damage to the system.

Email services, including those offered by most internet service providers (ISPs), usually have some kind of virus filter protection for emails that are sent or received through them. Your ISP may send you information from time to time advising you of the anti-virus measures they are using. It's likely your organisation will also have anti-virus software installed on all computers. This software should be updated regularly to make sure it has the latest security measures in place.

There are many different types of computer viruses, and there's always a delay between when a new virus is created and when it can be successfully recognised and dealt with by anti-virus software. Sometimes you may receive an infected message before the anti-virus software has had a chance to develop a program to fight it.

To avoid information loss, your organisation should back up files regularly. This way, if a virus destroys your files, they can be replaced with an older, unaffected version.

Spam

Spam is unsolicited commercial or junk mail. It's similar to paper-based junk mail, such as a brochure or flyer. Delete spam as soon as you identify it, or move it to your junk folder. Chain emails are also regarded as spam and you should not forward them. The more spam you have in your inbox, the less effective your email will be.

Spam may also include phishing scams, which are emails sent in an attempt to gain personal or sensitive information, such as usernames, passwords and credit card details. Be careful of any email that asks you to provide this kind of information, even if it seems to come from a reputable source, such as a bank.

Australia has anti-spam legislation. It prohibits sending unsolicited spam that has an Australian link. This includes spam sent by mobile phone as well as email. The law has stiff penalties with fines of up to \$1.1 million for breaking it. However, some experts believe the law might not be able to stop professional spammers from sending mass messages.

Setting security levels and filters for incoming communications

Your organisation is likely to have policies about how to handle incoming digital communication. This will especially apply to emails that look suspicious or dangerous to the organisation. Some organisations will not permit emails to be received by multiple recipients. Most have restrictions regarding the size of the email, attachments and specific subject lines. For example, an email may not be delivered to your inbox if it has an unsuitable (blocked) heading such as 'Competition' or 'The Winner!'

Your organisation may have policies regarding attachments or may block certain attachments or large files. You can discuss having blocked emails or attachments released with the appropriate personnel, if necessary.

You may be required to notify the IT department, tell your manager or warn your colleagues of any possible virus-infected attachment or spam that may have been sent out. If you have accidentally sent one to colleagues or customers, warn them not to open it.

Mobile device security

Organisations often have concerns about the security of email and other messages on mobile devices. Your organisational policies and procedures may recommend methods you can use to reduce the risks, such as:

- adopting the same policies enforced for desktop and laptop computers
- limiting exposure by controlling and reducing the amount of data stored on devices
- using specialised software that allows information to be wiped from devices that are lost or stolen
- protecting your mobile phone or tablet with a password.

Example

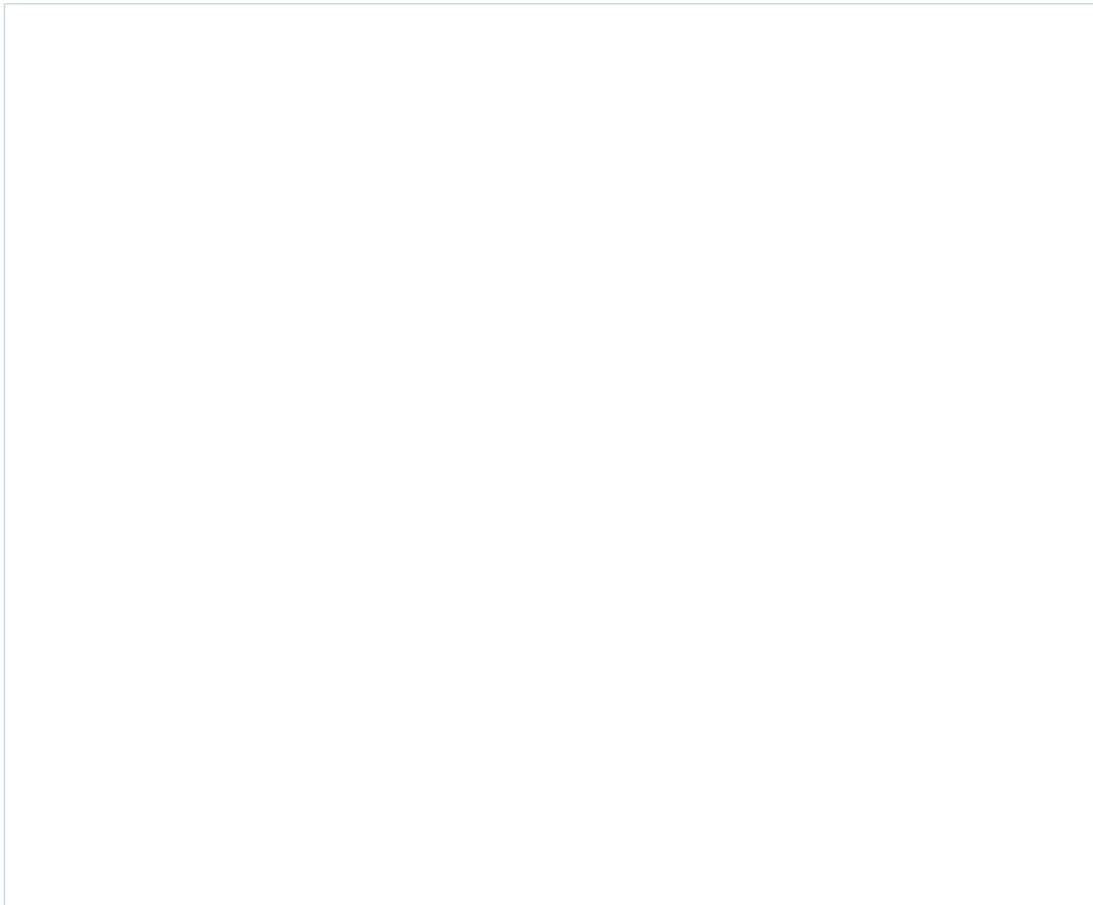
Receiving a suspicious email

Mahtab saw an email in her work inbox with the subject line 'ILOVEYOU'. She thought it had to be from her boyfriend. Great! She was about to open it when she received a message from the IT helpdesk. It was warning everyone not to open emails with that subject line as they contained a very destructive virus. The email had been sent all over the world. Mahtab immediately deleted it without opening it.

Practice Task 6

Question 1

Using digital communication applications can have a negative side if you don't use them carefully and aren't wary of who you're exchanging messages with. Suggest three things you should do and three things you should not do when it comes to using digital communication applications safely.



Tracking options

Unlike for most messaging applications, you don't immediately know whether the recipient of your email has received it.

While you expect your email and internet services to be reliable, there may be server or line difficulties that present temporary technical problems. For this reason, setting your email software to track messages can be very useful. You can then be confident the message has been received.

You can access tracking options in Outlook by selecting the **File** tab and then selecting **Options**. Click on the **Mail** tab, then scroll down to **Tracking**. The following example shows the options for tracking.



The screenshot shows the 'Tracking' dialog box in Outlook. It contains the following options:

- Delivery and read receipts help provide confirmation that messages were successfully received. Not all email servers and applications support sending receipts.
- For all messages sent, request:
 - Delivery receipt confirming the message was delivered to the recipient's email server
 - Read receipt confirming the recipient viewed the message
- For any message received that includes a read receipt request:
 - Always send a read receipt
 - Never send a read receipt
 - Ask each time whether to send a read receipt
- Automatically process meeting requests and responses to meeting requests and polls
- Automatically update original sent item with receipt information
- Update tracking information, and then delete responses that don't contain comments
- After updating tracking information, move receipt to:

Personal emails and messages

Ensure you're aware of your employer's policy on receiving and sending personal emails.

You may need to refer to organisational policies and procedures or ask your supervisor for advice. Some organisations will allow you to send and receive personal emails during your breaks, while others will have a strict policy against the use of office technology for any personal communication (including email). These restrictions may have been established to reduce the potential of email being received that includes viruses, spam or other malicious content.

Many organisations have implemented procedures where they routinely review emails sent and received in the organisation. Remember, even if the email seems to be addressed only to you, it can sometimes be accessed and read by other parties. You should caution your friends against sending you emails that contain attachments or that use discriminatory, abusive or inflammatory language.

Privacy, integrity and confidentiality

Think about other people's privacy and confidentiality when forwarding messages.

A sender might have intended that only you read their email. They may not approve of you passing their message on to others. Think carefully before forwarding emails and other messages, as they can contain confidential information that is illegal to pass on to others, such as private information about a client. Sometimes you'll need to ask permission from the original sender.

When you forward emails and other messages, never change the content of the original message. This is dishonest because you're not forwarding the true words of the original sender. Before you forward a message, check that the message is complete and includes all the necessary information.

Respect your organisation's policy regarding forwarding emails. Policies are likely to include not using your work email system to forward jokes, memes or other non-work-related information. Such messages quickly fill up your inbox, making it difficult to identify important work-related messages.

Responding to digital communications

You will need to reply to emails or forward them on to someone else on a daily basis.

To reply to a message in Outlook, open or select it from the inbox. Select **Reply** to reply to the sender only or select **Reply All** to send a reply to all recipients of the original message.

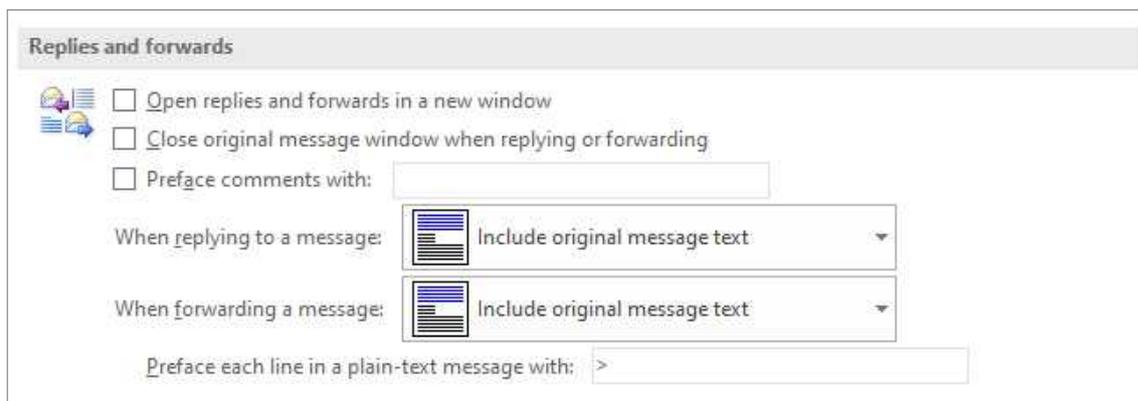
The reply window is then displayed with the **To** and **Subject** fields completed. The original message is also displayed in the reply window, usually with 'RE:' inserted in the subject line.

When replying to emails, you might want to include all or part of the original message in your reply. This can help recipients understand which parts of their message you're referring to. Depending on your email software, there are different ways to format the original message to make it stand out from your new message.

However, there may be instances when you don't want to include the original message. This could be because it:

- contains sensitive comments
- is too long
- includes unnecessary or irrelevant responses from several other contributors.

If you don't want to send the original message or you want to indent or attach a prefix in your reply, you can set your email accordingly. To do this in Outlook, select **File**, then **Options**. Select the **Mail** tab, then scroll down to **Replies and forwards** and update your preferences, as in the following example.



You may also wish to forward emails. For example, you might want to forward an email to your manager for advice if you don't know how to respond to it. You might also receive an email that others need to know about.

It's important to know who to forward emails to and when. If you're unsure about when it's appropriate to forward an email, or who you should forward it to, ask your supervisor or colleagues for help.

Responding to social media posts

Some customers voice their complaints by posting on social media sites.

There is a high expectation from customers that their complaints and issues will be addressed more quickly if they approach a business through social media.

Here are some tips for responding to social media posts.

Respond quickly	Always respond to customers and try to do this within an hour. If you can't resolve their issue immediately, provide a timeframe in which you can. You might want to include information about when your organisation is available to respond to customer queries.
Do not ignore negative reviews or comments	Always try to handle the situation professionally and politely with the aim of turning the customer's negative experience into a positive outcome. Ensure you acknowledge their issue and explore ways to resolve it.
Be consistent	Ensure your responses are consistent. It can be very damaging to your organisation if customers are receiving different answers or different levels of service.
Be friendly	Customers do not want to talk to a robot; they want human interaction. Ensure you respond with a friendly tone that is consistent with your organisation's language and tone policies.

Practice Task 7

Part A

Claire works at public relations firm Larger Than Life. The following table identifies a range of messages she has either received or been asked to send.

Using the table, identify the characteristic of the message and suggest actions for Claire to ensure she processes the messages appropriately. The first one has been done for you.

Message	Type	Action
An email from a regular supplier identifying special offers on products that are available for that month	Work-related, not urgent	Follow your organisational policy regarding purchasing and advertisements. This may be to forward the email to an appropriate person for consideration, or to ignore and delete the email.
A tender (quote) that is being sent to a client detailing the costs of a new advertising campaign		
A major client wants the managing director to contact her urgently. The MD is in a meeting but Claire knows she has her phone with her switched to silent.		
Email with the subject line: Improve your love life		
Claire must confirm that all recipients read the message she is sending them regarding next month's health and safety meeting.		
Claire's friend has sent her a message with photos of a party they attended last week.		

Part B

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Robert is the managing director of Larger Than Life. He has spent a considerable amount of time preparing a proposal for a potential new client. He has prepared a document that includes images of the various methods (print advertisements, billboards and storyboards for television advertisements) that would be used to promote the client's products. The costs of the campaign are included.

Robert is tired and wants to go home. It's important that the members of the advertising and sales team receive the email and review the proposal before it's sent to the client in the morning. He quickly sends the email with the attachment, then shuts down his computer and leaves.

When Robert arrives at work in the morning, he finds that several of the messages have been returned as 'undeliverable'.

Question 1

Suggest three factors that could have stopped the emails from being delivered.

Question 2

Prepare a checklist that Robert could refer to when emails are returned to help him work out the reason.

Summary

- Digital messages such as emails can be accessed via your email software or using webmail.
- Log in to applications in accordance with organisational policies and procedures.
- Create clear messages, tailoring them for the recipient, and check for accuracy before sending them.
- Sort and prioritise your emails, and ensure you deal with urgent ones first.
- Handle urgent emails according to organisational procedures.
- Be careful of suspicious messages that might contain a virus or another form of malware.
- Messages with attachments or links from unknown senders might contain a virus and should be checked by IT personnel before they are opened.
- Incoming messages must be read and responded to in accordance with organisational policy.
- When forwarding emails, take care with regard to the privacy and confidentiality of the original sender.
- Email can be returned as undeliverable because the address was incorrect, the sender's or recipient's server was temporarily out of order, or files were too large or not permitted.

Learning Checkpoint 2

Implement procedures to send and receive digital communications

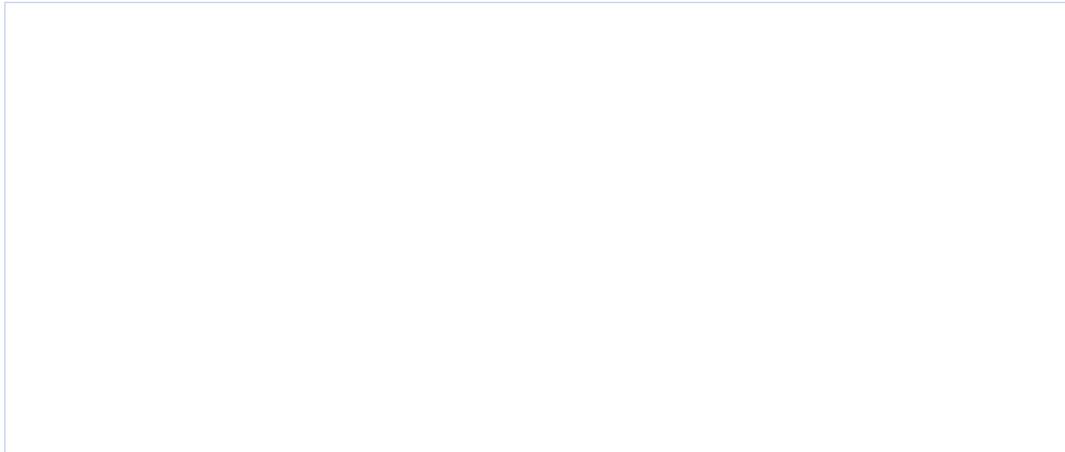
Part A

Read the case study, then answer the question that follows.

Case study

Lyn receives an urgent email from a customer about the prices of her organisation's products. It requires a reply, but Lyn has to find out some details before she can answer. Once she has found the necessary details, she opens a new email and types in the address, the subject line and a polite note. Then she inserts an attachment that lists the product prices. The email is returned as 'undeliverable'.

1. List three reasons that could have caused the email to be undeliverable.



Part B

- Over a period of two days, complete this table showing details of:
 - the types of messages you receive, such as customer enquiries, information for staff, details about your tasks, potentially dangerous emails, advertising and personal emails
 - the number you receive of each type
 - the way you responded to each type, such as forward, reply, file, print out or delete.

An example is completed for you.

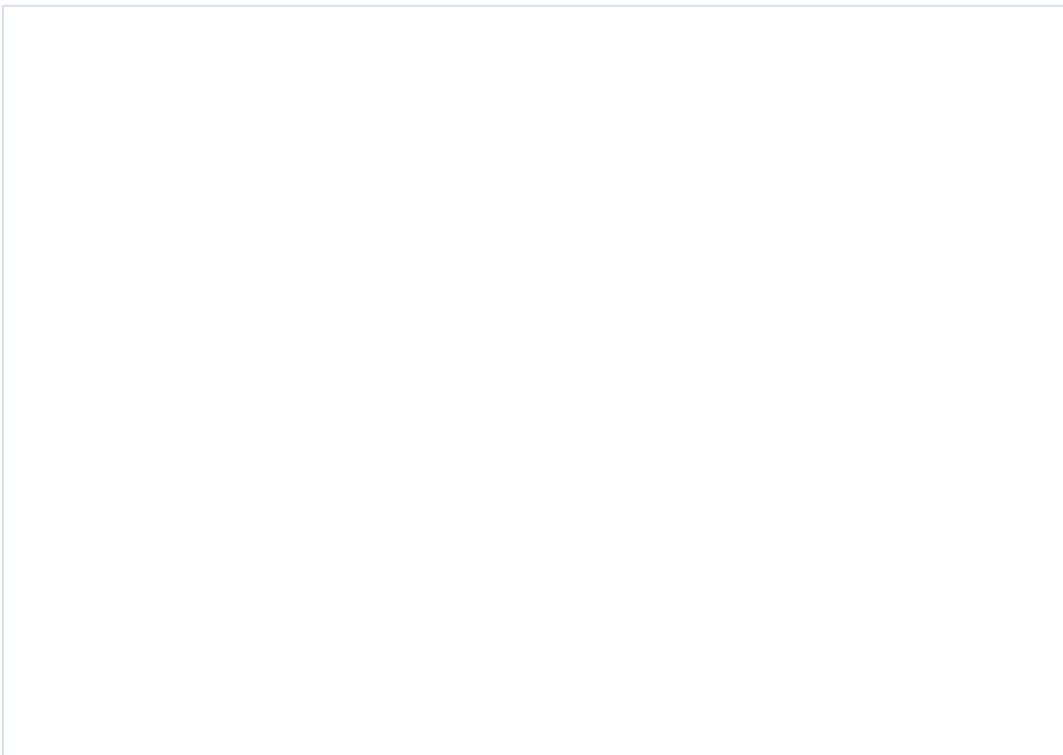
Type of message	Number of each type	How you responded
Personal text messages	34	Personal response

- Describe how you prioritise your email inbox. Explain why.

3. Imagine you are training a colleague on how to respond to social media comments. Write some instructions about how to deal with comments according to your organisation's requirements.



4. Identify four things that may suggest a message is unsafe.





Topic 3 | Assist with digital communications

- 3A Plan for securing, monitoring, maintaining and storing digital communications
- 3B Ways to communicate electronically with targeted groups of stakeholders

3A Plan for securing, monitoring, maintaining and storing digital communications

Most organisations have policies and procedures in place to manage the large amounts of information they process.

Organisations receive and send many digital communications each day. Your role is to ensure that organisational policies and procedures are followed when it comes to sending messages securely, monitoring and responding to the messages you receive, and archiving and deleting communications appropriately.

Setting security levels

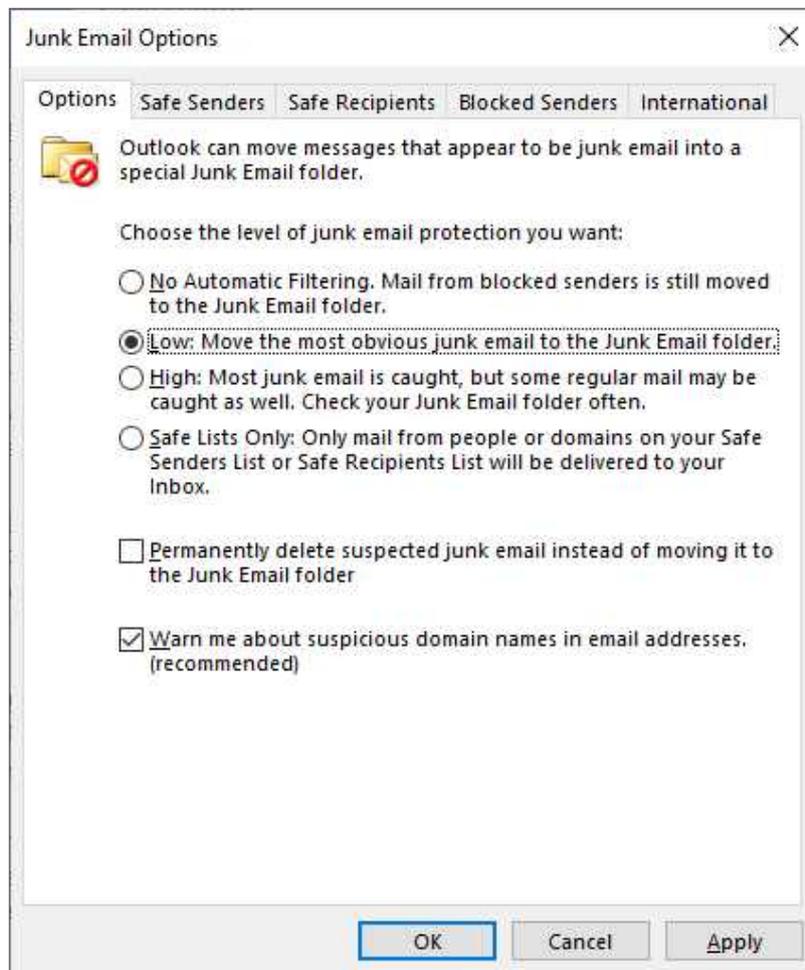
It is important to ensure that security settings on all company devices are enabled and working properly.

Your organisation is likely to have clear policies and procedures when it comes to what applications can be installed and used on company devices. This ensures the security and confidentiality of the data the organisation creates, receives and distributes. It's likely that your security settings are already enabled, but it's useful to know what they are and how to check that they're turned on.

Email security settings

You're able to adjust your email settings to filter out junk mail, block senders who regularly send spam, and add safe senders so that their emails never go into junk mail.

For example, in Outlook go to the **Home** tab and click on the **Junk** drop-down menu, then select **Junk Email Options**. From the **Options** tab, you can select the level of filtering you would like for emails that your system thinks may be junk. You can select **No Automatic Filtering**, **Low** or **High**, or you can choose to only receive emails from people on your 'Safe Senders' list. All other emails will be sent to your junk folder.



Social media security settings

If you use social media for work, it's just as important to make sure you utilise the security settings of each platform to ensure you reduce the risk of your account being hacked and others falsely posting on behalf of your organisation.

The settings for your organisation's social media accounts will most likely be different from those on your personal accounts because you want your organisation's profile to be public and found by anyone.

To increase your account security in Twitter, you can choose to receive login verifications to your phone so you're alerted if anyone tries to access the Twitter account. This is known as two-step verification and many apps employ this level of security to prevent criminals from hacking into accounts. You should always choose two-step verification if available and seek the advice of your IT department or manager if you need help.

To adjust the security settings in your social media account, look in the settings menu for 'privacy and security'.

Security settings in messaging applications

Many applications have built-in security settings, but some need to be turned on. Skype's message function and Facebook messenger allow end-to-end user encryption, but it has to be manually turned on.

Messaging apps such as WhatsApp scan links sent through messages and will alert you if they think the link is suspicious.

If messaging apps are installed on your organisation's devices, it's likely that your IT department has ensured all appropriate security settings are enabled. However, you can find out more about the security settings in your messaging applications by looking at the security and privacy information on your app menu or via a web search.

Organising your inbox using filters

It's a good idea to organise your inbox so you can easily find and retrieve emails.

For example, you may decide to sort your incoming messages by subject (in alphabetical order), by which ones are urgent, or by the time and date the emails are received.

To change the way messages are sorted in your inbox in Outlook, click on **Filter** and hover over **Sort by**, then select an option. For example, you can choose to sort by date, subject or who the email is from. If you choose **Importance**, all the emails marked with 'High Importance' will appear at the top of your inbox. If you choose Size, the largest sized emails (usually ones with attachments) will appear at the top of your inbox.

Creating folders is also a useful way of sorting your email inbox. For example, you may create an 'Admin' folder for meeting requests and other general emails, and separate folders for particular projects and tasks. To create a folder in your inbox, go to the **Folder** tab on the ribbon and click on the **new folder** icon. This will create a new folder that you can label 'Admin'. To move emails into a different folder, you click on the email and drag it. Alternatively, tick all the emails you'd like to move to the folder, then click **Move to** and select the appropriate folder from the drop-down menu. If you decide to delete a folder, ensure you've saved all the emails you still want to keep or move them into a different folder.

You might also find it useful to classify emails according to type as this will help you to develop a plan for how to prioritise and respond to your emails. Here are examples of different types of emails you may receive.

Administrative

These are emails that are received or sent by an organisation's employees and relate to the day-to-day business activities of the organisation.

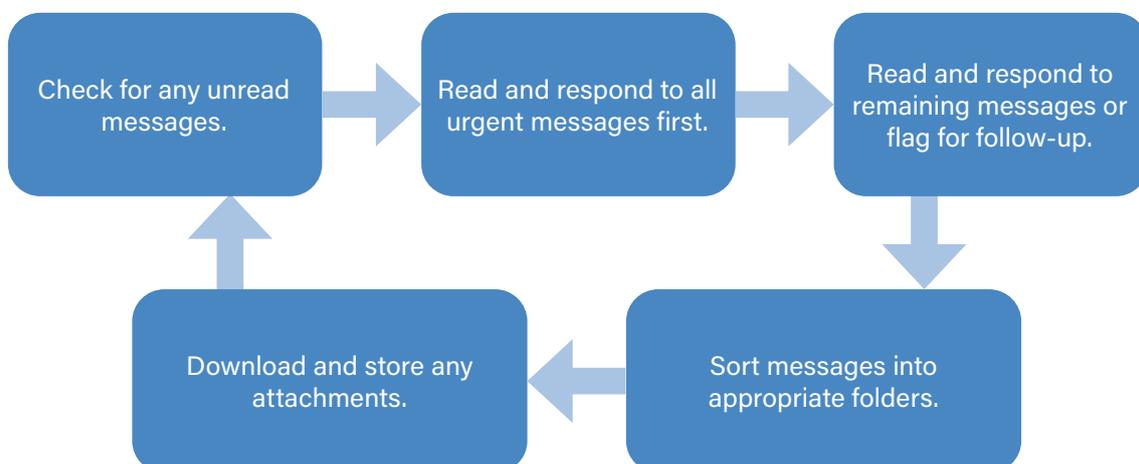
Information with temporary value	<p>You'll encounter emails that have only temporary value to the organisation, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ meeting arrangements ▪ staff movements ▪ stationery requests ▪ instructions to perform tasks ▪ invitations ▪ staff leave. <p>You can usually use your own judgment and delete these emails if and when you believe they're no longer needed.</p>
Spam	<p>These are any unsolicited emails you receive that aren't related to your work responsibilities. They should be deleted immediately.</p>
Personal	<p>Your personal emails can be deleted at any time. Personal emails could be related to lunch arrangements, jokes and private messages between employees and people from outside the organisation.</p>

Monitoring and maintaining digital communications

How you monitor and maintain your digital communications will depend on your role and the expectations of your manager and organisation.

If your role is to deal with customers, you might receive messages from them via email and social media platforms. It can be quite overwhelming dealing with large numbers of messages so you'll need an effective plan in line with your organisation's policies and procedures to prioritise, manage and maintain them.

To continually monitor incoming and outgoing messages throughout the day you could create a checklist or a plan along the lines of the following cyclical process.



Monitoring messaging apps

Messaging apps are usually set up to alert you when a message comes in. This can be distracting and may divert you from your current work or other priorities.

How you plan to monitor and respond to messages received through messaging apps will depend on your working style and who the message is from. For example:

- if you see it's from your manager, you may want to quickly check it and respond immediately
- if you're working on something important or urgent, you may want to delay looking at the message until you've finished your immediate work
- if you see it's from a colleague who is likely to be sending you a funny comment or photo, then it may be best to look at it later and decide if it needs a response.

Your organisation will have policies with regard to how messaging apps should be used effectively in the workplace, but it's up to you to monitor these and manage your time to ensure you respond when appropriate and are not distracted by constant communications.

Monitoring social media

It's likely that your organisation utilises several social media platforms to communicate with its customers. There are a number of social media monitoring tools available that allow you to not only schedule and send messages to multiple platforms, but also respond to mentions and messages. Tools include Hootsuite, TweetDeck and Sprout Social, but there are many others.

Your organisation is likely to have a policy in place regarding response times to customers and this will include messages that come through social media. Using a tool will allow you to prioritise and filter messages as a team and mark them as complete.

You'll need to plan your time with your manager and your team to determine how often social media messages are checked and responded to and who is responsible for this work.

Practice Task 8

Part A

Read the case study, then complete the task that follows.

Case study

Claire at Larger Than Life has established several folders to manage her email:

- Inbox
- Drafts
- Sent items
- Deleted items
- Planning notes
- Training and assessment
- Stock reports and ordering
- Omega project
- Personal.

In this table, identify the folder she should use to store each of the emails she receives.

Email	Folder
Notes for next month's health and safety committee meeting	
Email sent to sales staff	
Invitation to a friend's birthday party	
Stationery prices received from the supplier	
Conference details for Omega promotion	
Assessment task to be completed for her business course	
Spreadsheet of Omega budget	
Confirmation of travel arrangements for managing director to Omega conference	
Correspondence from her friend	

Part B

Research one social media monitoring tool. Use the following table to record the name, features and other important characteristics of the social media monitoring tool. Remember that different products may contain different features and you should briefly explain in plain language not only the feature's name, but also what this means in terms of monitoring your social media messages more efficiently.

Name:	
What social media platforms does it monitor?	
Cost:	
Features:	
How would it help?	

Storing incoming and outgoing messages

Emails may be regarded as legally binding documents and must be stored securely if they contain important information.

Incoming emails can be recorded in various ways. For example, you can print a report or keep a mail register. What types of messages must be kept and where they are stored will depend on the organisation. For example, your organisation's policies and procedures may stipulate that messages are to be kept electronically, either in your personal computer files or in the central computer files. You may be able to delete routine emails confirming meeting times, but be required to keep a printed paper copy of those containing important information.

It's also a good idea to keep records of the emails and other messages you've sent, at least until you're sure the receivers have received them. This means that if there's a problem with delivery, or if someone in your office needs to obtain a copy of correspondence after you've sent it, you'll be able to find the message and resend it.

Important messages that have been sent or received (e.g. confirming delivery costs or task requirements) can serve as a record to refer to later, and should be filed accordingly.

Some organisations have policies and procedures to follow when storing emails and other messages. Many leave it up to the individual to make a judgment about what is important and what should be discarded.

Your organisation may also have guidelines for cleaning out inboxes, and copying and storing messages. For example, some organisations might insist that all staff keep the number of messages in their inbox to a maximum of 50 or may limit the total size of individual inboxes.

Email messages can be copied and stored:

- in your email program
- in other software applications
- on your computer
- on a shared computer network
- on USB drives, external hard drives or in cloud-based storage
- in a filing system in paper-based form.

The following questions can help you determine whether an email supports ongoing business and needs to be saved in the organisation's records management system:

- Did I receive or send this email in the course of my work?
- Does this relate to a project I am working on?
- Does the email require an action or response?
- Does the email provide advice or give a direction?

If the answer to any of these questions is 'yes', the email should be saved in the organisation's records management system.

Storing messages from messaging applications

The reasons for saving emails also applies to messages sent via other applications. Even messages from messaging applications can be saved. WhatsApp allows you to export message conversations and images to a text file that can be saved to a cloud drive or emailed to you.

To find out how to save and store messages from your messaging application, carry out an internet search or ask your IT department for help.

Archiving emails

Archiving emails means storing them for a long period of time, usually in a safe location away from your personal computer.

Archived messages are kept for a variety of reasons. Sometimes messages can't be deleted as they contain important information that might be needed in the future. Some documents must be kept for a specific number of years in accordance with legal requirements. Messages that need to be archived can be stored on a computer server or other external storage device, or in a cloud-based application on the internet.

Once messages are archived, they can be retrieved or accessed as needed by searching for the message in its archived location. This may involve searching on an external hard drive, a computer server you don't usually use, or a cloud-based application. The location of archived messages and the methods used to retrieve them will vary according to the systems used in your workplace.

As you'll often have to retrieve archived messages long after they were sent or received, the clarity of the subject line is very important. Imagine that you have to find a message in a year's time. Would you be able to identify it from its subject line and know what the message was about? Always think about how easy (or difficult) it will be to retrieve messages when you archive them.

Deleting emails

You should empty your inbox regularly to keep your email system running efficiently.

If you're absolutely sure an email is no longer needed, delete it. To delete an email in Outlook, simply select the email and click **Delete**. The message will then be removed from your inbox and moved to a **Deleted Items** folder.

If you want to permanently delete the email, select it in the **Deleted Items** folder and click **Delete** again. You'll then get a warning: 'This will be permanently deleted. Continue?'

Remove all files from your **Deleted Items** folder regularly to ensure they don't take up room on the computer or server.

There are various ways of deleting messages, depending on the email software. For example, you can set up your email system so that messages are permanently deleted the first time you delete them or you can choose to permanently delete all messages each time you shut down your computer. It's important not to move items to the Deleted Items folder if an auto-delete setting is operational unless you're absolutely sure you won't need them later.

Example

Storing and deleting emails

Claire at Larger Than Life has just finished sorting her emails into various folders. Now the firm's IT officer has advised Claire that she has exceeded her mailbox limit. She thinks this could be because of the size of various attachments related to the Omega project. She decides it's time to review whether she needs to retain all of her emails. Here are the actions she has taken with a selection of her emails.

Email	Action
Notes for next month's health and safety committee meeting	Claire stores a hard copy in the WHS Committee folder, then deletes the email. The agenda has already been prepared.
Email sent to sales staff	She keeps a copy in the 'Sent' folder.
Invitation to a friend's birthday party	She records the details in her phone, then deletes the email.
Stationery prices received from the supplier	She stores a copy in the stationery folder, then deletes the email.
Conference details for Omega promotion	She saves a copy on her computer hard drive.
Assessment task to be completed for her business course	She prints out the assessment task to complete at home later and stores the email on a USB drive, then deletes the original email.
Spreadsheet of Omega budget	She saves it on her computer hard drive, then deletes the email.
Confirmation of travel arrangements for managing director to Omega conference	She prints the information for the managing director and saves an additional copy on the hard drive, then deletes the email.
Correspondence from her friend	She replies to her friend asking her to send emails to her personal email address in future, then deletes the email.

Example

Policy for storing electronic communications

This is a policy that was developed at a museum to inform workers on how to create and store electronic records of communication.

Email creation and management requirements

- Decide if individual email messages have value as official museum records.
- Archive official email records and delete them only in accordance with approved retention and disposal schedules.
- Respect the confidentiality of email records and the privacy of personal information.
- Protect email transmissions against unauthorised access.
- Protect email records against alteration and manipulation.
- Retain the date and time of the email message, sender and recipient details, subject of the message, and any attachments to the email.
- Ensure the subject field is sufficiently descriptive about the content of the message to enable prompt identification of specific emails.
- Use folders based on function, subject or activity to manage email transmissions.
- Include an appropriate signature and disclaimer on all emails.
- For internal emails, the sender decides whether an email is to be included in the record-keeping system. For external emails, the recipient decides.

Deleting social media posts and comments

It may be tempting to delete negative comments from customers on your social media platforms, but it's usually more effective to try to deal with the complaint directly with the customer via one-to-one communication.

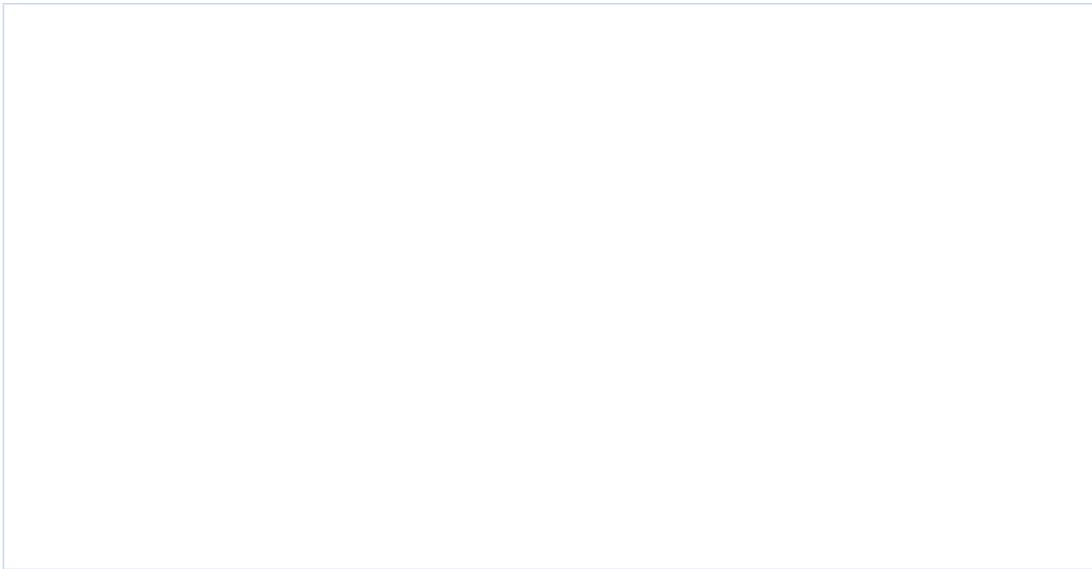
However, posts from customers that contain offensive language or remarks, or suspicious links, should be removed as they risk damaging your brand and upsetting your customers.

Practice Task 9

Part A

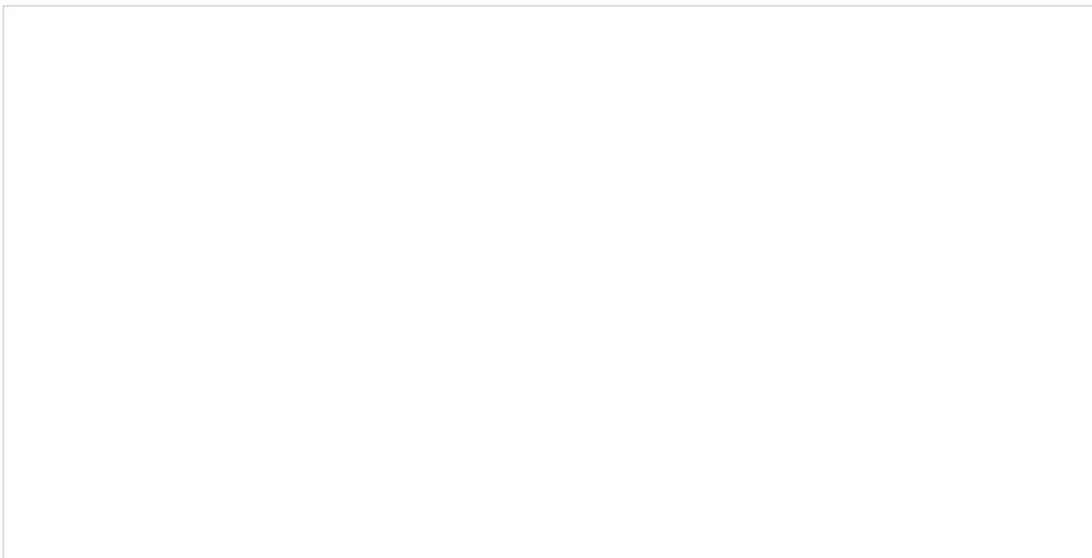
Question 1

Why should you store or archive messages as soon as possible?



Question 2

Describe an instance when it would be important to print out a message and file it.



Part B

Read the case study, then complete the task that follows.

Case study

Manu is employed as a project officer on a large construction site. She is responsible for photocopying, opening and distributing mail, copying and distributing construction plans, and recording information about the quality of the construction work that is completed on the site.

Here is a list of emails Manu received several months ago. Indicate whether she should archive or delete each item.

Electronic information	Archive or delete?
Unsolicited advertising material	
Quality inspection report	
Request for information required from the local city council	
Staff lunch barbeque last month	
Collection of money for colleague's gift	
Quote received from electrician	
Receipt for payment of WorkCover insurance	
Reminder for staff to attend workplace safety meeting	
Last month's stationery order	
Request to the Roads and Traffic Authority to close the road for construction work	
Thank-you note to staff from site manager	

3B Ways to communicate electronically with targeted groups of stakeholders

Occasionally you'll need to send a message to a group of people at the same time.

You need to know the various sources of contact information you have to work with and how your organisation arranges information. For example, databases that are used specifically to record customer details and certain other pieces of information (e.g. follow-up dates or the account manager in charge of the customer) are referred to as customer relationship management (CRM) systems. By entering someone's details into a contact list, you can sort your contacts in a way that suits you, such as by business name or email address.

Creating and maintaining contacts

To create contacts, you'll need to add names and contact details to an address book in your email system or messaging application.

Contact details may include:

- an email address
- a phone number for text messages and messaging apps such as WhatsApp
- a specific username for an application, such as a Skype username
- a username or email address for contacting others via social media, such as a LinkedIn name or Twitter handle.

The address book on most systems can contain additional information about each contact, such as phone numbers, job titles and a mailing address.

Your organisation may have multiple contact lists. Here are two examples:

- *Global Address List*. This contains all email addresses for users and work groups in your organisation. Only the system administrator can add new users to this list.
- *Contacts*. This is used to customise and store the email addresses of the business contacts you use.

To create a new contact group in Outlook, select the **Home** tab, then in the **New** group, select the **New items** drop-down menu. Select **More items**, then **Contact group**. Enter the contact details.

If your organisation uses a different email system and you're unsure how to set up a contact group, check your organisational procedures or ask a colleague or your supervisor for help.

Make sure your contacts' details are current by checking whether an address, phone number or username has changed and adjusting your records accordingly.

Here are some tips for maintaining email addresses:

- Remove old contact information from the system, either when someone gives you their details or when the person's contact details are no longer needed.
- Add new records as required.
- If messages are undeliverable, find out why. For example, is it a temporary problem with your or the recipient's email server and should you resend the message at a later time?
- Regularly check folders, address books, distribution lists, databases and other records to make sure that contact details are correct, up-to-date and stored in the correct location.

When preparing contact groups, there are three key points to remember.

Correct spelling

Ask people to spell out details such as their name and email address slowly, and repeat the information back to them to ensure you've heard them correctly.

Consistent entry

Enter the contact details into your organisation's system in a consistent way, so that the system will sort the contacts in an easy-to-find order. For example, enter a first and last name for everyone, or only a first name for everyone. Don't use a combination of the two as this could result in some contacts being sorted by first name and some by last name.

Preferred location

Find out your organisation's preferred place for entering contact information: it could be a contacts folder, various contact groups, address books or a database.

Mailing lists

Most email systems allow you to set up mailing lists (also known as distribution lists), which contain groups of addresses under a single name.

Distribution lists are groups or lists of email addresses stored in one place. They make group emailing easy because you can send the same message to a group of people simultaneously.

To make it easy to send emails, you should prepare and maintain distribution lists. These might be kept in a database or spreadsheet document. Follow your organisation's requirements to create and maintain these lists. You can set up your own address lists on your email system.

Shared lists can be accessed by a number of people in an organisation. For example, an organisation's staff address book may list all staff in the organisation, while the HR distribution list might contain only the names of staff who work in human resources.

The 'contact groups' function of email systems such as Outlook allows you to send messages to groups of people at one time. You can use the lists to communicate internally with other staff and externally with customers, suppliers, distributors, agents and other stakeholders. You might also be required to set up distribution lists related to work projects.

Sending group messages in messaging apps

Messaging apps have the functionality to allow you to create groups of contacts and send one message to many people simultaneously.

If your messaging app is set up by your IT department, you might find that teams, departments and groups have already been pre-defined and set up. You simply select the group you wish to contact, and then write the message.

If you're using apps such as WhatsApp or Signal, you'll have to manually create each group and invite individual users to join. Once created though, it becomes a very efficient way of communicating with targeted groups relevant to your organisation,

Practice Task 10

Question 1

Find out how to send a message to a group using your email system at work, at home or in your learning centre. Write down the steps you would follow.

Summary

- All digital communication applications should use security settings according to your organisation's policies.
- Digital communications must be monitored and maintained in order to be effective.
- Emails sometimes need to be copied and stored. They can be stored in your email program, on an external hard drive, in cloud-based storage on the internet or as paper copies.
- All emails and other messages should be organised and stored in appropriate locations, such as in email folders.
- Old emails should be archived or deleted to keep your email system running efficiently. Archived messages that must be kept, possibly for legal reasons, are stored away from your computer. Redundant messages should be deleted.
- Address lists allow you to store people's contact information. These lists help you to sort people into groups to make communicating with them easier.
- Shared lists are contact details that can be accessed by a number of people in an organisation.

Learning Checkpoint 3

Manage digital communications

Part A

1. Explain the ways in which a message may not be private.

2. List three reasons why creating groups helps distribute messages more effectively.

3. List three ways you can monitor digital communications.

Part B

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Kris is always very busy at work and doesn't have much time to attend to her emails, other than those flagged as 'Urgent'. This is Kris's comment:

'The IT person at work is always telling me I have too many emails in my inbox, and to empty out my deleted items folder. I really can't see the problem. I like keeping the ones I haven't replied to because I'm so busy at work. I can't ignore the people who sent them. What am I supposed to do about it?'

1. Explain why the IT person in this case study might be concerned.

2. Explain what Kris could do to manage her email system better.