

COMMUNICATING AND SHARING ONLINE

SCENARIO 5



Original materials created on behalf of the Education and Training Foundation and funded by the Department for education

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Refers to Modules:

Communicating and Sharing online

Creating and editing digital media

Relates to Standards:

- Create, edit and use contacts when sending and receiving online communications comprising text and other digital content to individual and multiple recipients; initiate and participate in a video call.
- Identify and use appropriate modes of online communication for a range of contexts and audiences.



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Perhaps the best aspect of using the internet is its ability to connect people; where distance and personal difference is no barrier to making that connection.

The power of this connectivity means it needs to be used carefully and wisely to get the best effect.

The loss (unless video communication takes place) of seeing who we speak to means the way is open to misinterpretation and misunderstanding.

In this Scenario, we will explore how to make the most of these two activities (communicating thoughts, sharing ideas) in terms of learning, living and working.

This Scenario looks at the ability of the web to accommodate the communication of thoughts and the sharing of ideas and how we might encourage learners to do this well for their own and the wider good.



Scenario 5

Managing contacts

Contacts

Devices remember the addresses of people we contact, regardless of the platform used.

Know who you are writing to

Remembering names means that addresses don't need writing out every time and, with predictive text used, addresses take clues from what is typed to suggest the full address, speeding the process up.

Groups for personal and professional

- **WhatsApp** forms groups of users
- **Facebook** forms communities of users
- **LinkedIn** creates communities around topics or professions
- **Email** allows groups to be given one address for the group

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Learning activity:

Ask learners to think about the types of people that may be in each group that they join or perhaps would create. Use the [Type of contacts](#) sheet to help discussion. (Entry level)

If not already established, ask a learner to volunteer to establish a WhatsApp group for the class. (Level 1)

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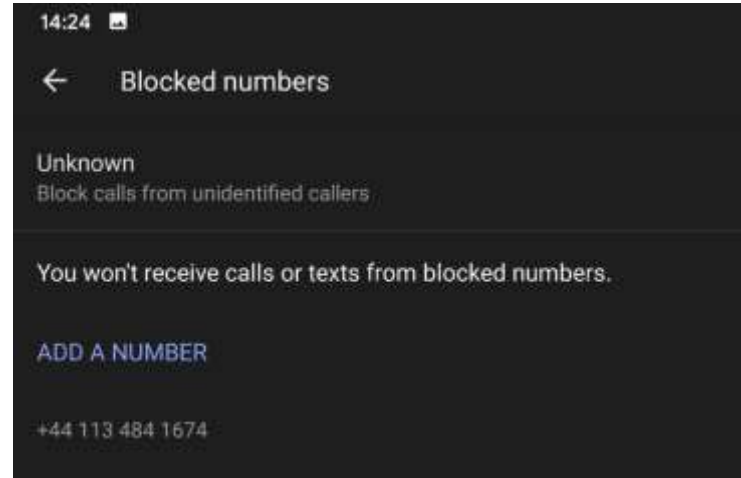
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Blocking

Blocking is a form of deleting that prevents a contact making contact again, meaning that the contact is permanently deleted.

The number or address is effectively blocked from appearing on a given account or device. It works as well in blocking telephone number contacts.



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Keeping contacts safe

Holding addresses of our contacts in any form makes us the custodians of information belonging to the owner.

With it comes a responsibility to protect it from use by anyone else who does not have the permission of the owner.

From this, two things need to be done:

1. Don't share contact details of anyone else without permission.
2. Treat addresses as sensitive information.



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Learning activity:

Ask learners to look for places on their devices where addresses are kept.
Ask learners to open an address book on any mobile device or their contacts list in a laptop.

Ask them to estimate how many addresses are no longer right or needed as a percentage of the contacts held. (Entry level)

Ask learners to think of a situation where addresses have been inadvertently shared in using email.

Possible suggestions include:

- Not using Blind Carbon Copies in email (BCC)
- Replying to all by default in an email
- Adding new people into a thread of emails that has email addresses (and perhaps content in it) that should not have been shared.

(Level 1)

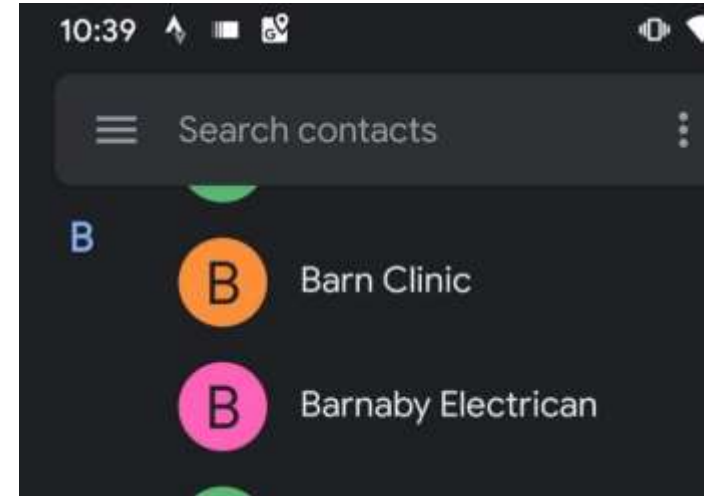
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Gardening

Not every contact made merits keeping in a contact list. Keeping unwanted addresses safe is an unnecessary added task.

Contacts in the address books can be deleted and it is good practice to occasionally check through contacts to remove any not wanted or not used. The ability of contacts to grow and the need to manage them is often described as 'weeding out' and hence the idea of gardening.



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Communicating

What we communicate

The nature of any encounter we have is determined by the amount of information we share and the degree of sensitivity of information. What is discussed with best friends and what they know about us is very different from what we and our postman or woman talk about or know about each other.



TEACHING TIP

Use the resource [Types of contact](#) to introduce the different purposes and methods of instigating communication.

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Modes of communication

The same rules apply to connections across the internet but with the added challenge of the loss of visual clues we use to make us cautious about what we share and discuss in physical meetings.

There are a few apps available for communication and there is a degree of design built into them all that makes them suitable for different communication purposes.

The skill is finding the right tool to host the right approach for the right audience.



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Learning activity:

Show either of the following YouTube videos of a person talking to people in social situations using the tools and approaches use in online conversations. Ask learners to discuss the importance of process and context.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CwT5PLBKEKk&feature=youtu.be>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_pyJIERCrJE

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xzxt1sJ3RzI>



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Writing to people you don't know

Groups and audiences form easily in web-based communications as those in groups draw in others, or have others ask to join. Knowing who is in groups we join is not always easy making it difficult to have particular people in mind when we write.

Speaking to others is sometimes easier in an audio call, because in understanding the context of discussion prior to speaking and gauging a reaction from others when finished, corrections can be made.

Seeing people talk in a video call improves again the ability to contextualise what is being said. If it is a live video call there may opportunity to question and get clarification.



TEACHING TIP

Share the resource [Mixed messages](#) as an illustration to aid a discussion about how seemingly innocent messages can lead to unintended responses.

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Learning activity:

Ask learners to think about ways in which messages might be misunderstood when writing to people not known to the author:

Learners should find:

- The way messages are worded
- The use of language
- Assumptions in the messages written.

(Entry level)

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Searchers, audiences and communities

Apart from communicating directly, other users may become part of an audience by searching for the writer and ask to join.

It includes having others join a community that gives them access to everything already communicated in that group so there is an element of having to think about everyone following communications prior to posting!



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Communicating with emojis

A method of communicating that has developed over the last few years to help overcome or reduce the risk of misunderstanding by using simple images or cartouches called emojis to give a context to a comment. The idea of an emoji is to give the reader guidance on the context in which a communication is made where there are no physical or body language signals available.

They can be used to:

- take a formal feel out of a text by introducing sarcasm or humour
- give a guide on what a message means (this is the context in which I mean this)
- send an emoji-only message to express a feeling better than words
- soften a difficult message by expressing empathy.

There are thousands of emojis and individuals can choose to create their own; the important feature of an emoji is to clarify the context.



TEACHING TIP

For an alternative view on the possible overreach and damage to language caused by emoji's see this Google study, as reported in the Daily Telegraph (April 2018)

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/2018/04/17/emojis-ruining-english-language-young-people-rely-communicate/>

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Learning activity:

Ask learners to think about sending the following message and how they might use an image to explain its meaning.

1. Expressing sorrow for a friend's predicament
2. Celebrating an exam success
3. Expressing anger at a situation reported in the news (Entry level)

Ask learners to think about the following message and the number of contexts and suitable emojis that can be added to it:

“Dave has withdrawn from the course so we will need to think how to move on from here”. (Level 1)

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Longer forms of communication

Sometimes there is more to say than one or a few sentences. Some communications need to be read, heard or seen, and it depends on the nature of the communication which one is better.

Hearing is more personal than seeing and seeing is more personal still, but there is increasing complication and, in many instances, the need to hear or see is not necessary.

- A **web-log** (shortened to blog) is normally a series of written communications.
- A **podcast** is a series of spoken communications.
- A **video-log** (shortened to vlog) is a series of videos.

TEACHING TIP

A useful exercise is to ask learners to think about using the wrong method of communication to understand the best way of communicating. For example:

- Messages about changing a classroom are sent as videos
- Written instructions on how to tie a bowtie
- Listening to a series of announcements about the administration of a learning programme (Entry level)

Refer to the [Guide on three types of communication with learners](#).

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The nature of the communication

Messages contain different types of communication. Some involve following a series of steps or seeing how something is done. Others like listening that lets them do other things (walk the dog, take a rail journey) whilst concentrating on what is being said.

Make judgements about the validity of the author by watching them.
For others, reading is important, allowing the change of the pace of reading between skimming and re-reading.

The nature of the communication is critical.

A final thought on publishing

People who are good at being able to attract an audience due to the interest they generate in what they have to say can attract followers. If there is sufficient interest, the size of the following can generate an income from advertising and product placement. These people can become 'social bloggers' and are known as 'social influencers'.



TEACHING TIP

Learners should see the connection that starts with a simple message right through into a website focused on the author and the shared interests they have with their following.

Those that wish to explore this further by setting up a website can explore Weebly, WordPress or a host of other website providers. (Level 1)



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Sharing

Communication that is transactional becomes interactive, where the writer and reader start a conversation with responses and replies.

It can include sending attachments, where the message introduces the attachment as illustration, example, affirmation or further detail on the subject discussed. The communication of ideas becomes the sharing of thoughts.



TEACHING TIP

Ask learners to find a social influencer and share their finding with the class.

Look for social bloggers who have achieved celebrity status as contestants on reality television programmes.

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Social learning

Sharing thoughts allows each of us to learn from others and allows each of us to add to, improve, dispute or adapt ideas and, in the process improve mutual understanding.

This kind of meaningful sharing is called collaboration and collaboration is the corner stone of learning.

For social learning to be effective, it requires those involved to follow the same rules that apply in responses in normal day to day conversation is:

Physical clues that provides a context for a message is not always present.

The loss of physical clues allows feelings to influence responses. physical clues available meaning that contribution need to be clear in purpose and context.

Responses should always fulfil at least one of the following purposes.

- An acknowledgement what is good and original in other peoples' ideas.
- A suggestion to refine the information to develop the argument given.
- Offering an alternative source that illustrates what has been said or develops the argument.
- Correct factual inaccuracy, (but done so respectfully), pointing to evidence where possible, focusing criticism on the idea and not the person who made it.
- Add detail to what has been said to help develop the context.
- Suggest ways and provide links to how anything posted could be adapted or applied elsewhere.

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Learning activity:

The 'ad hominem' attack

Introduce [Six ways of responding to a message](#) and ask learners to consider both good and bad responses to a posting of your choice.

Not being able to see and have empathy with the tone of a message, the ability to misconstrue is very possible.

An 'Ad hominem' attack means the respondent criticises the writer's character or intelligence or motives and, by implication suggests that their views are silly or should be ignored. The response is directed at the person, not their argument.

The rule in responding to group discussion is always centre on the quality of the arguments and not the character of the author.

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Summary

As with so much with regards to technology, the management of it is finding the balance between the ability of the technology to connect everyone to everyone else in a huge system, with the desire of each to preserve their individuality, tastes, interests, preferences and needs.

In the scenario The Digital footprint and digital identity we explore these ideas further as a feature of the digital footprint and enhancing an online reputation.

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Extension activity

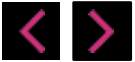
Learners should be encouraged to consider what they would like to communicate, based on their studies, or interests, or family relationships.

Then invite them to consider a suitable platform to support the kind of activity and its purpose, and whether a platform already exists that they can join or they want to start their own.

For more adventurous learners consider setting up a webpage to contain a place to communicate and to host collection of items to share.

Invite learners to explore one or more of the following activities:

- Set up a WordPress page and write something of interest for others in the class to find and respond to.
- Create a free Skype account and make video calls to each other.
- Form a Google hangout (or ask a learner to do this) and invite others to join the group.
- Using FaceTime, learners contact each other in class.
- Using sound recording app on a smartphone or tablet to record a five-minute informal talk on a subject of interest to the writer, that is then published by mail attachment or through the learning environment to others in the class.
- Set up a webpage using one of several hosting sites.



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An Emoji reference library.

<https://emojidictionary.emoji.foundation.com>

The Pope has his own blog, and publishes an email address for those who want to write to him.

<https://thepopeblog.blogspot.com/2005/04/popes-email-address.html>

An article from Psychology Today on the purpose of emojis in communication between people who are separated when communicating.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/contemporary-psychoanalysis-in-action/201605/why-do-we-use-emojis>

Build a personal website; in this example using WordPress.

<https://wordpress.com>

Build a personal website; in this example using Weebly. Others are available.

<https://www.weebly.com/uk>

A Google Hangout for video sharing.

<https://hangouts.google.com/?hl=en-GB>

Using Skype for video calling.

<https://www.skype.com/en/>

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	Helping learners to communicate online: effectively.	Enhance Project modules designed to help teachers deliver the topic available not the ETF website.
	Helping learners to communicate online safely and appropriately (trolling, SHOUTING).	Enhance Project modules designed to help teachers deliver the topic available not the ETF website.

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Appendices

Select the links to open the PDFs for the appendices.

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[Appendix 2 – Mixed messages](#)

[Appendix 3 – Guide on three types of communication with learners](#)

[Appendix 4 – Six positive ways of responding to a group posting](#)



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