

Component 1: Impacts of digital technology on wider society

Impacts (continued)

Cultural issues

- The digital divide:
 - The gap between populations that have full access to modern ICT, and those who have restricted access.
 - The divide traditionally exists between those in cities and those in rural areas; between the educated and the uneducated; between socioeconomic groups; and globally, between the more and less industrially developed nations.
- The changing nature of employment:
 - Teleworking – employees working from home
 - Collaborative cloud-based documents enable workers to share documents with their employer
 - Communication can be via email or video conferencing
 - Many technology-based jobs have been moved abroad, where costs are cheaper
 - Automation of processes using technology has led to a fall in manual, low-skilled work, such as warehouse packing
 - More high-skilled work is now available, which includes the maintenance of automated systems.

Ethical issues

- Self-driving cars - making decisions between life or death for its driver and other people
- Artificial intelligence - could the creation of thinking machines raise a host of ethical issues including the potential to harm humans.

Privacy issues

- The use of drones for surveillance
- Tracking people internet usage and information shared with websites visited
- With whom the data and information is shared
- The storage of personal data, including biometric data on a server.

Environmental issues

- Increase in delivery lorries on the road has caused increased congestion and increases in carbon emissions
- Are we a paperless society? More and more paper seem to be consumed affecting rainforests and influencing global warming
- Old computer equipment needs to be disposed of correctly which is expensive. Dumping old computers on landfill sites can cause pollution of toxic substances into the water supply and lead to health problems
- Computer equipment generates heat so many organisations install air conditioning systems leading to increased carbon emissions
- Many computers are left on standby, wasting electricity unnecessarily and increasing carbon emissions
- Mining the rare earth elements required in the manufacture of computers causes pollution
- Global assembly lines and pollution from transportation.

Professional standards

Code of conduct

It is important for employees to conform to professional standards, including formal and informal codes of ethical behaviour.

Each code of conduct is different and usually reflects an organisation's ethos, values and business style. Some codes are short and set out general guidelines, whereas other codes are large documents that include a variety of aspects relating to an organisation's values, ethics, objectives and responsibilities.

Formal codes of ethics are usually enforced by the threat of disciplinary action should the code not be adhered to.

An individual's own personal code

An individual's own personal code often supersedes the bare minimum requirements of an organisation's code. An individual's own personal code will vary from person to person as they choose to act upon their own ethical standards in their everyday actions.