



let's make a
better
world

The Internet: it's easier than you think



Technology: it's already a part of your life...

We're surrounded by technology. Nowadays we take it for granted and often use it instinctively. Washing machines. Microwave ovens. Mobile phones. Cars. The TV set. We use technology at home, work and at play – even at the supermarket checkout and the cash point when we're shopping. Whatever our age, technology often helps make our lives easier and saves us time, usually at the simple touch of a button or two.

A computer is just another machine we can use to speed up jobs that help enrich our daily lives. It gives us access to the Internet – an exciting digital environment that's full of opportunity. It's the world's biggest encyclopaedia, college, office and job centre. It's the world's biggest club, department store, travel agency, record

shop, newspaper, hobby shop, sports stadium and community centre. Perhaps you'd like to buy and sell using online auctions? Or explore your family tree? No problem. Thanks to email, the Internet is also the world's fastest postal service that keeps you in touch with friends and family – whether they're five miles away or 5,000.

- Send emails, share pictures and even make video calls

Straightforward, fun and exciting...

You may think that computers are complicated, expensive and easily broken with a baffling mess of cables. Far from it: if you can use a mobile phone or a microwave oven, you can work a computer. Today's machines are tidily and sturdily designed – simple to operate with little or no experience. Even though they've never been cheaper to buy, there are places near you where you can drop in and use one for free or next to nothing.

This guide will help show you just how straightforward getting online with a computer really is – and inspire you to explore an exciting new range of activities and information that can improve the way you live, work and organise your life.



You can do it...

In fact, did you know that the over-55s is the fastest growing group of people using a computer to go online? And a recent survey¹ published by the BBC showed that one in three over-55s uses

the Internet and more than half feel that it has given them a new lease of life. The Internet isn't just for younger people – it's for everyone. And you could be one of them...

1 Source: Hewlett Packard, published by BBC News Online, May 2005

Why not try it out?

Getting online is easier than you might think and there are Internet facilities in your community. A quick look in a local services directory or a phone call to the council will tell you which libraries,

community centres or local charities offer Internet access. With nearly half of all UK households having Internet access, why not simply ask to have a go on a friend or a family member's computer?

- **Helps bring your nearest and dearest closer to home**

Convenience at home...

A popular and convenient way of connecting a computer to the Internet at home is with broadband, a powerful information cable that's now available to more than 95 per cent of homes across the UK.

With almost every other home in the country now having access to the Internet, more and more people of all ages are using it for a range of activities – from keeping in touch with friends and family, pursuing hobbies, job-hunting, shopping and planning holidays to even researching their family trees!

Some important things to remember:

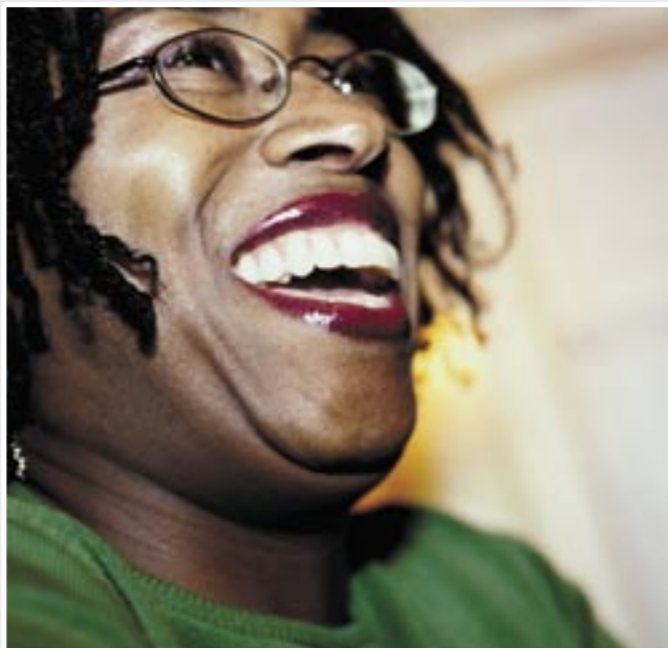
- It's never too late to try something new.
- Don't feel intimidated – you already use technology in some form everyday!
- The Internet really is for everyone.
- You don't need to own a computer to use the Internet – you can get free access at all UK Online Centres, public Internet access points, most libraries and many community centres.
- Have a go on your own, with a friend or partner, at home or at work.
- Ask your family for advice – they can help you.
- Use it to keep in touch with family and friends quickly, cheaply and easily.
- Use it to develop your hobbies, go shopping, make new friends, access benefits and services.

Technology in action: explore your hobbies ...

Wendy Raper, from Lynton Park in Newcastle found help within her local community when she decided to trace her family tree. She soon learned how to use the Internet with the help of her local Age Concern charity.

Her confidence quickly grew and now with a computer at home, she regularly uses the word processor to write up her documents and is using the Internet to research her other hobbies – art and antiques.

Said Wendy, *“I have a great interest in antiques, enjoy art and cannot wait to start diving into my hobby online. There is so much information out there; it’s great to be having lessons to learn how to get hold of it!”*



Technology in action: sharing interests and experience...

72-year old budgerigar enthusiast Frank Jones discovered a whole new world using the Internet after a friend put him in touch with the charity Citizens Online. Inspired by his learning, Frank joined an Internet budgerigar group and now uses a digital camera to take photos of his budgies and shares his pictures all over the world in regular emails to his fellow enthusiasts as far away as Australia, New Zealand, Canada and Pakistan.

Frank is delighted by his discovery: *“It has changed my life, really. I use the Internet to find and buy cheap goods, research my hobbies and communicate with people worldwide.”*

The Internet brings the world right to your door. For many older people like Wendy and Frank, it’s a priceless source of information, from researching hobbies to shopping and keeping in touch with family and friends.

How might you use it?



A computer keeps you in touch in more ways than one...

One of the most popular uses for a computer is email and it's a lifeline for millions around the world. Just type in the email address of whom you're writing to, add your message and then click the 'send' button – it's delivered in seconds to that person's computer, wherever they may be in the world. With many families having relatives and friends a long way away or overseas, it's a great way for staying in touch. You can also use it to exchange photographs and even video.

The phone call still remains the favourite way of keeping in touch. And with a computer, a broadband Internet connection and a webcam – a simple and cheap video camera that plugs into the computer – you can now make video calls to your friends and family for a fraction the cost of a normal voice call on your existing phone line.



- Make the most of your interests

Technology in action: eyes and ears across the ocean...

Patricia Humble's 70th birthday brought an unusual gift – a computer and a broadband connection from her son. Having never used one before the prospect was quite daunting. But with a little help from her family, Patricia has been amazed at the impact the Internet has made on her life.

With a son and grandchildren in America, Patricia soon learnt how to set up and use email. Then deciding that she'd like to see and talk to them as well as exchange emails, she went a step further and bought a webcam. She now makes very low cost video calls that enable her to see and talk with her family face-to-face nearly every day – even though they are very far apart.

Says Patricia (below): *"It's good to be able to see the grandchildren. The webcam is very clear, so you actually feel that they are in the room with you."*



It's never too late to learn...

Using the Internet is a great way to way to find information, keep in touch or make friends. And you don't need to own a computer to pick up the basics – don't forget the free facilities already available on your doorstep in the community.

Once you've cracked it, using the Internet for learning is really fun, whether you simply want to find out information for a new interest or more information for an old one. Whatever the subject, you'll find what you're looking for – and there is a host of support groups and online communities that offer help.

...or take a new direction in your work life

Ever thought about how a new job might provide a refreshing new direction in life? The Internet is also the world's biggest job and training centre, one that never shuts:

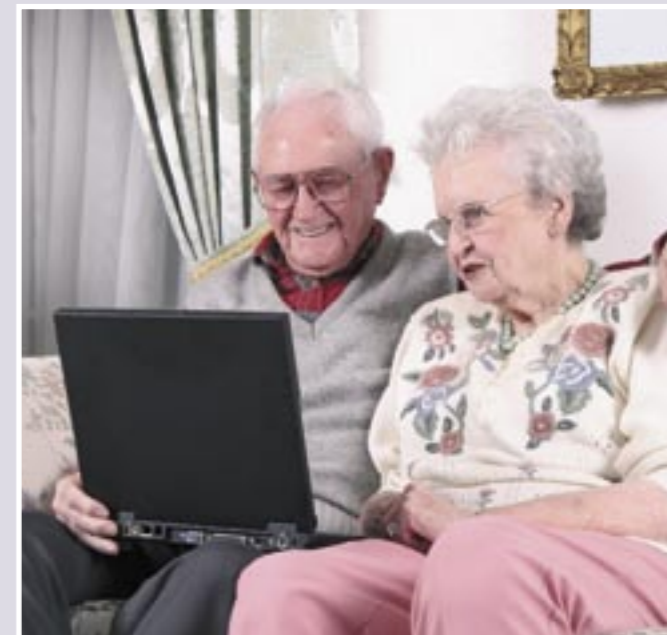
- Train for new qualifications – online.
- Get tips on how to write or improve your CV.
- Investigate areas that interest you, see what jobs are available and then apply for them.
- Exchange views and information with like-minded people.
- Help maximise your chances of doing the job that suits you best.
- Help find a part-time job – or one that enables you work some of the time from home.
- Access to a computer and connection to the Internet can help you achieve all these things.

Technology in action: picking up new skills...

When Carol McKee moved to Rhyl in Wales, she wanted a change of career to become an office administrator – and that meant learning new skills.

With the help of the Citizens Online charity that promotes the use of the Internet in society, Carol was quickly able to sign-up for an IT course and her confidence has gone from strength to strength. Things have since gone so well that Carol is now taking a City & Guilds qualification in IT.

Says Carol: “Anyone can learn new skills in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere”.



Technology in action: planning an (inter)active retirement...

62-year old Kathleen McDonald from Newcastle is using the Internet to help plan for her retirement. The more she uses it the more her confidence grows and she is hoping her newfound skills will enable her to pursue her new retirement hobby – gardening.

Thanks to the support of Age Concern, she's using the Internet to do more and more. Having recently booked holiday flights online, Kathleen believes that the Internet really is opening new doors for her and allowing her to become more independent. And once she retires she'll be able to keep in touch with friends and old work colleagues via email.

Says Kathleen (right): *"It's a new hobby... the Internet will supply lots of wonderful information that is immediately available rather than having to spend money buying books."*



A shopping lifeline – online...

When you are connected to the Internet, it doesn't really matter how mobile you are. If circumstance prevents you from getting about as much as you'd like, pretty much all the shopping you need to do can be done quickly, easily and securely online.

Supermarkets have web sites where you can order your weekly shop for delivery direct to your door.

Need to pay your utility bills, keep insurance up to date or look after your banking? Want to order gifts for family and friends? No problem, you can do it all via your computer from the comfort of your home. You can even read your favourite newspapers and magazine online too.

Technology in action: working together...

Husband and wife Gordon and Sylvia Carroll enjoy the challenge of learning new skills and keeping up-to-date with technology by using the Internet at their local Age Concern centre.

Gordon believes it's easy to get lost with computer and Internet jargon but what they have taught themselves has cut through all that. The big difference was learning together.

Now they are able to keep in touch with friends via email, using word processing, Internet banking and researching information for hobbies and interests.

Says Sylvia: *"We don't have a computer at home just yet. The plan is once we get to grips with it we will then go and choose the best package for our needs."*

Breaking down barriers...

People with visual impairments or who have restricted movement can often feel isolated from mainstream society because they are excluded from everyday means of accessing news, information, goods and services. A computer with Internet access can help change all that.

There's a wide range of specially developed software programs designed to help people with

particular needs get as much from their computers and the Internet as everyone else. From large, clear text and screen magnification to coloured screen backgrounds with bigger text sizes for better contrast, there's a solution that can help. Then there's speech technology where your computer will read out loud what's on the screen – and even let you ask the computer to carry out tasks for you!

Technology in action: delivering information for everyone...

Craig Barrass has a visual impairment but has been connected to the Internet at home since 1997. He is a big fan of what it has to offer him and finds it an invaluable tool for research. Craig uses magnification and screen customisation to make text easier to read on-screen. Thanks to coaching from the North Tyneside Society for the Blind, Craig has developed his Internet and computing skills.

Craig says: "There are so many options for visually impaired people who want to use the Internet. For instance, if you don't want to use magnification so you can read words on the page, you can opt for clever speech technology that allows web pages to be read aloud."

As easy as 1-2-3...

We live in an era of rapid technological change. The more we are exposed to technology, the more we use it. The more we use it, the more comfortable we feel with it – and the more we get from it. New and exciting content and services are constantly emerging, delivered by computer, mobile phone, digital television – or all three. You can tap into them cheaply and easily and use them as little or as much as you like.

Great leaps have been made over the last few years in ensuring computer technology and the Internet are accessible, affordable and easy-to-use. These leaps aren't just limited to the technology: support in or around your community is also in place to help every step of the way.

Hopefully this guide has helped shine some light on just how uncomplicated it is to join the Information Society. The rest is up to you. Just remember: using technology really is easy and it's also a lot of fun!



Contact us...

For more information about how you can get online, call the following independent organisations and charities who will be more than happy to advise you on what to do next:

- **UK Online Centres free on 0800 771 234** ...or online at www.ufi.com/ukol/
- **Citizens Online on 01793 882800** ...or online at www.citizensonline.org.uk
- **Age Concern on 020 8765 7200** ...or online at www.ageconcern.org.uk
- **Help the Aged on 020 7278 1114** ...or online at www.helptheaged.org.uk
- **Your local library**
- **Your local parish, district, city or county council**

You can also find answers to many popular questions about the Internet at www.bbc.co.uk/webwise

This brochure is available in large print, Braille and Audio. To request a copy please call **0800 800150**.



Offices worldwide

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