



Do I Need a Computer?



The easiest way to answer this question, is to compare a computer to a car. A car makes life a great deal easier, but there are other options, buses, cars, taxis and walking. A computer is very useful but for most people having your own computer is not essential. You can use friends, office and the library computers. However it is very important to be aware of what computers can do, as they are now in every area of life.

Most jobs require you to have some knowledge of computing and the government are actively promoting the use of the Internet. I've just renewed my car tax disc online. If you pay for services online make sure that it is a secure website. Look for the lock symbol next to the Internet address which should begin https: to show that it is a secure site. If you click on the lock you will see the security certificate.



Computers can be confusing, if you would like a free computer taster session please contact me at the address below. I can also be contacted at this address if you wish to attend the Maths and English courses run by Derby College at the school. These are free to anyone who has not gained a Maths or English GCSE in the last 5 years. If you wish to use a computer to improve your Maths and English the BBC site www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise can be useful.

If you do decide to buy a computer, it is important to decide what you want to do with it. A car is no use sitting in a garage, a computer is no use sitting in the corner of the room gathering dust as it doesn't do what you want. So take time to talk to your friends and colleagues, check out the different advice sites.

The government maintains a website to help parents, this is www.parentscentre.gov.uk, This site has information on buying a pc and equally important information on health and safety and how to be safe online.

As with a car, it is very important to ensure that you are operating your computer correctly, especially if connected to the Internet. The website site www.getsafeonline.org gives advice on keeping safe and explains about such things as using a firewalls, installing antivirus software and how to protect your pc, yourself and your business.

When you first start using a computer it will feel strange, just as I felt when I was learning to drive, but it does get easier as you understand how it works. I've been fortunate enough to have the opportunity to teach people of all ages, one of the learners on my beginners course is 81. So you are never too old to learn a new skill!

If you want to know more about our courses, have any ideas for articles or taster sessions, I can be contacted through our website www.westparkcommunity.co.uk by telephone 821964 or e-mail at community@westpark.derby.sch.uk.

Jean Moss—Community at West Park School