



Penceil Paper 4

Outline course plan for 'Living with Computers' course

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Niace

September 2005

Outline course plan for 'Living with Computers' course

The course will be run for 12 weeks, with one 2 hour session per week

Week 1

Introduction: introducing students and tutors; background to the course; aims of the course; aims of the students – what do they want to do with computers.

Practical exercise: Sitting properly (H&S issues); Switching on and off; the windows interface (compare with mobile phone interface [and others like digital camera, iPod?]; keyboard; mouse (practice with solitaire) left button only; Setting up a hotmail account – discussion topic, passwords

Request students to bring in an e-mail address of a friend or an organization to send a mail to in week 2

Week 2

What is e-mail: what is the Internet; dial-up and broadband; choosing an ISP; e-mail addresses and URLs; web-based e-mail vs. e-mail downloaded to own computer; reply to and forward options; risks of flaming – why tempers fray on e-mail

Practical exercise: Send an e-mail to the tutor – discussion topic, what are all the strange keys on the keyboard

Week 3

How to find information: using a browser; using search engines

Practical exercise: Find High Trees web site; what projects does it run?

London's weather, weather where you were born

Sites to find and investigate – local council, parliament, find e-mail addresses for elected representatives; government departments; free music; following individual hobbies and interests

Medical search – influenza; sorting ads from free results (Google, Yahoo and MSN); printing your findings

Favourites/bookmarks

Week 4

What's in the box?: Open up a PC to show: CPU, memory, hard drive, mother board and cards and how they fit physically; portable storage – floppies, CD-RW, memory cards, pen drives

Practical exercise: buying and setting up a PC; what do you need to buy for what purpose; printers - inkjet vs. lasers; speed measures and size measures; accessibility options – print size vs. amount you can view; prettying up the desktop

Week 5

The file system: what are files; why folders; e-mail folders; file sizes; file extensions;

Practical exercise: Downloading images from the internet; saving them; renaming; save as; attaching them to e-mails; copying, moving and deleting them

Week 6

Writing in word: Typing, copying, pasting and moving; pasting text from the internet; navigating round the page; spell-checking; text formatting and fonts; copying and pasting between applications – Word to hotmail

Practical exercise: typing a letter to attach to an e-mail; printing a document

Week 7

Common applications: word processors; spreadsheets; accounts; photo editors; drawing programmes; audio and video players; e-mail clients; browsers

Practical exercise: finding freeware and software on the web; internet radio

Week 8

The database world: What is a database; who knows what about you; ID cards and medical records; convenience vs. privacy.

Practical exercise: Shopping online; accessing public services on-line; car tax on-line – links between DVLA and insurance company databases

Week 9

Threats, viruses, spam, spyware and hackers: What are threats; how do you protect yourself – the right tools, configured and updated, and sensible practice

Practical exercise: how is your PC configured; is it up to date; does your ISP block spam; other ways of performing common tasks – right mouse button and keyboard shortcuts

Week 10

Making your voice heard on the Internet: Blogs, chat and message boards

Practical exercise: Writing a comment on a discussion page on a BBC site (news or programme site). Locating blogs of interest.

Week 11

What to do if your computer goes wrong: Sources of help; how to identify the information a help desk will ask for.

Attaching devices to the PC: Using your computer with an iPod, camera etc

Practical exercises: Finding version information and the system information screens; attaching a peripheral.

Week 12

Review of course; has it met your needs; what to do next – speaker from ALS or college

Practical exercise: How to assess trust-worthiness and authority; is it true, is it a rip off?; how up to date is information; compare search results on a controversial subject (e.g. asylum seekers or Iraq); the planet Mars; diabetes