

Instructional Day: 8-9

Topic Description: The use of computers for communications and the impact this has had on society is discussed.

Objectives:

The student will be able to:

- Explain how computers are used for communications
- Recognize various forms of communication as data exchange
- Describe the implications of data exchange on social interactions
- Consider privacy of data that they create

Outline of the Lesson:

- Journal Entry (5 minutes)
- Identification of communications mechanisms (10 minutes)
- Communication Methods Chart (30 minutes)
- Impact of changes to communications on society (10 minutes)
- Privacy Activity (55 minutes)

Student Activities:

- Complete journal entry.
- Identify communications mechanisms.
- Pairs of students complete the Communication Methods Chart.
- Groups discuss the impact of changes to communications on society.
- Groups share a summary of their discussions with the class.
- Groups of students complete the Privacy Activity.

Teaching/Learning Strategies:

- Journal Entry: List as many computer-based communications mechanisms as you can.
- Identification of communications mechanisms
 - Volunteers provide examples from their journal entry. Post the responses.
 - Prompt students as necessary with examples.
 - Internet-based communication (email, chat, Facebook, Internet telephony)
 - Telephone-based communication (cell phones, texting, “landline” telephone service)
 - News and information “on demand”
- Communication Methods Activity
 - Students complete Communication Methods Chart.

- Students work in pairs (option to have each pair complete one sheet for both or each complete one). Add/delete options that you deem appropriate based on the habits of your student population.
- Take a poll for each category to see what form of communication is most popular for each scenario.
- Have a few students share their answer to “Why you chose this Method” for each scenario.
- Have a few students share their answers to 1-2.
- Impact of changes to communications on society
 - Ask students to do the following:
 - Imagine life without some or all of the computer-based communications mechanisms that we now take for granted.
 - List some of the consequences of an absence of technology (for example, without cell phones, the ability to instantly reach anyone goes away).
 - Based on these consequences, draw conclusions about the impact of the presence of the communications mechanism. (For example, if the absence of cell phones means the absence of the ability to instantly contact anyone, then the presence of cell phones means that we now have the ability to instantly contact anyone. One conclusion we can draw is that we have less privacy than we used to.)
- Privacy Activity
 - Students are placed into groups and assigned a scenario.
 - They are to prepare a presentation to answer the questions for their given scenario.
- Groups deliver presentations.
- Challenge the students to predict what communications will be like in 5 years, 10 years, and 25 years.

Resources:

- Communication Methods Chart
- Privacy Activity

Communication Methods Chart

Let's look at the different ways you can communicate with others. For each of the following examples, fill in the table below with which method you would choose for the given scenario and why.

The methods are:

- **Texting**
- **Phone call**
- **Talking in person**
- **Facebook**
- **Twitter**
- **Email**

Scenario to communicate	Method	Why you chose this method
1. Breaking up with a significant other (boyfriend/girlfriend)		
2. Asking parents' permission to do something when you think they will likely say 'no'		
3. Figure out where and when to meet a friend to see a movie		
4. Gossip about someone who could hear you if you spoke		
5. Gossip about someone not around you		
6. Getting help on homework		
7. Feedback on a big decision (like what color prom dress, what game to buy, what phone to get)		
8. Announce you met someone famous		
9. Complain about your parents		
10. Mourn someone you lost		
11. Buy something from someone you don't know well		

1. How would life be different if you could only communicate 1 on 1 instead of with multiple people at once?

2. How would life be different if you could only communicate in person?

Privacy Activity

Data are everywhere. You are 'giving off data' and providing data to others all the time. Sometimes this data can be directly linked to you as an individual; sometimes not.

Read the scenario assigned to you (many of these are based on real stories):

- A. A boss sees an employee who called in “sick” in a picture that someone posted on Facebook. In this picture the employee is partying the night before. The boss fires the employee.
- B. A company who has contracts with the Federal Government doesn’t want to hire you because a Facebook friend leaves lots of enthusiastic “legalize marijuana” postings on your wall.
- C. A teacher is fired because there’s a picture of this teacher holding alcoholic drinks on her MySpace page.
- D. Someone’s Netflix rental history is being used as evidence in a murder case because this person rented a lot of horror movies.
- E. An 18-year-old boy is charged with distributing child pornography when he uses his cell phone to send naked images of his 17-year-old ex-girlfriend to his friends.

Prepare a 3-5 minute presentation for the class that includes answers to the following:

1. Names of everyone in your group
2. The scenario you were assigned
3. In your scenario, did the people have the right to use the information they did or should it have been private? Why?
4. Are the people who were affected by the use of this information at fault? Why?
5. Give another example of something unexpected happening because of information shared at sites such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs.
6. Think about what data you’ve made available in different places/spaces such as Facebook, Twitter, texting, Netflix, email, at the grocery store, etc. What might other people think about who you are based on these data? Is it an accurate impression of who you are?
7. Consider each of the following broad categories of societal change:
 - Privacy
 - Safety
 - Globalization
 - Connectivity (keeping in touch with people)
 - Permanence of historical information

Discuss whether availability of data has had a positive or negative impact on each aspect of society and, if negative, how these consequences can be minimized.