

7 THE INFORMATION AGE

LESSON A ► A weird, wired world

1 STARTING POINT Internet trends

A Look at these Internet trends. Choose the ones that affect you.


Internet Trends

NOW ...

- Music fans have been given access to nearly unlimited music libraries in “the cloud.”
- Increasingly, information about Internet users is being collected for marketing purposes.
- Many traditional textbooks have been replaced by online versions.
- With the development of new online tools, more employees are being allowed to work remotely for part of their workweek.

IN THE FUTURE ...

- Most store purchases will be made by using a mobile device linked to an online account. Cash or credit cards will rarely be used.
- More and more doctor’s examinations are likely going to be done over the Internet.
- More candidates for employment will be identified, interviewed, and hired online.
- The Internet is going to be subjected to a greater number of hacker attacks due to the increasing amount of personal information stored online.



B Pair work What did people do before these trends appeared?

“People used to buy CDs, and they put them in CD players to listen to them.”

2 VOCABULARY Technology buzzwords

A Match the terms on the left with the definitions on the right.

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| 1. download ____ | a. wireless connection to the Internet |
| 2. app ____ | b. a radio or TV show downloadable from the Internet |
| 3. post ____ | c. transfer files to your computer or smartphone |
| 4. blog ____ | d. harmful software that attacks computers or phones |
| 5. Wi-Fi ____ | e. send a short typed message from a cell phone |
| 6. the cloud ____ | f. put something on the Internet for others to see |
| 7. podcast ____ | g. software that secretly records your online activity |
| 8. spyware ____ | h. a program often used on mobile devices |
| 9. text ____ | i. large, remote information storage areas on the Internet |
| 10. virus ____ | j. an online journal or newsletter, usually of personal opinions |

B Pair work Which of these technologies do you have experience with? When do you use them? Why?

“I’ve been downloading music and videos for years. And if I’m too busy to watch TV, I download podcasts of interesting shows to my smartphone. It’s great!”

VOCABULARY PLUS see page 136

3 GRAMMAR

Passive of present continuous, present perfect, future

Use the passive for actions where the emphasis is on the object of the action.

Use the passive of the present continuous for ongoing actions.

More employees **are being allowed** to work remotely for part of their workweek.

Use the passive of the present perfect for recently completed actions.

Music fans **have been given** access to nearly unlimited music libraries in “the cloud.”

Use **will + passive** or **be going to + passive** for actions that will begin in the future.

Most store purchases **will be made** by using a mobile device linked to an online account.

More and more doctor’s examinations **are likely going to be done** over the Internet.

GRAMMAR PLUS see page 118

A Look at the Starting Point on page 54 again. Can you find more examples of each passive?

B Complete the sentences with the correct passive form of the verb in parentheses. Sometimes more than one answer is possible.

- Thousands of computers already have been infected (infect) by spyware.
- Currently, the cloud _____ (utilize) by a large number of businesses.
- Thousands of blogs _____ (start) on all sorts of topics every day.
- In coming years, even more fun game apps _____ (develop) for the youth market.
- Nowadays, teen Internet use _____ (monitor) by concerned parents.
- These days, podcasts _____ (download) by people of all ages.
- Many computer viruses _____ (create) by teenagers.
- In the future, Wi-Fi _____ (make) available in most public places.



4 LISTENING

Social networking: Different opinions

A Listen to three people’s opinions about social networking. What do they mainly use it for?

- _____
- _____
- _____

B Listen again. Choose the correct answers to complete the sentences.

- Michael believes that social networking at work . . .
 a. should be restricted. b. makes workers happier.
- In the case of children, Lisa believes that social networking . . .
 a. teaches social skills. b. is potentially harmful.
- Daniel is careful about what he uploads or posts so people won’t . . .
 a. steal his work. b. form a bad opinion of him.

5 VOCABULARY

Connecting ideas formally

A These expressions connect ideas in different ways. Put them in the correct columns. Sometimes more than one answer is possible.

additionally	as a result	for instance	in fact	nevertheless	similarly
as a matter of fact	for example	furthermore	likewise	on the other hand	therefore

Add information	Compare or contrast	Emphasize	Give an example	Show a result
<i>additionally</i>				

B Choose the appropriate connector to complete the sentences.

- Tom loves technology; *similarly* / *for example*, he has the latest cell phone.
- Many airports offer inexpensive Wi-Fi; *nevertheless* / *in fact*, at some it's even free.
- Many of my friends' computers have been damaged by viruses; *nevertheless* / *therefore*, I am going to update my antivirus software.
- Some websites aren't reliable; *as a result* / *likewise*, many people are being misinformed.
- Few people could have predicted recent advances in Internet technology; *for example* / *likewise*, predicting the future of the Internet is difficult.
- Internet identity theft is something very serious; *on the other hand* / *as a matter of fact*, it can ruin your life.



VOCABULARY PLUS see page 136

6 DISCUSSION

Social networking debate

A Pair work Do you think social networking sites are a positive or negative influence? Find a partner who has the same opinion.

B Group work Find a pair who disagrees with you and your partner. Take turns explaining your reasons. Each pair gets a chance to disagree.

"The way I see it, social networking sites are a positive influence because they allow me to have friends all over the world."

"That may be true, but in my opinion, online friends aren't really true friends. In fact, . . ."

Useful expressions

Expressing opinions

If you ask me, . . .
 The way I see it, . . .

Disagreeing

That may be true, but . . .
 I see your point, but . . .

Giving reasons

That's why . . .
 The reason for that is . . .

7 WRITING

Writing a product or service review

Writing and posting a product or service review helps other consumers make informed decisions. Most product and service reviews contain similar features.

A Look at the information about product reviews. Then read the review below and select the things the review does. Find examples in the review with a partner.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. names the product and explains its use | <input type="checkbox"/> 4. suggests how it could be improved |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. explains where it can be purchased | <input type="checkbox"/> 5. states who would find it useful and why |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. mentions positive features | <input type="checkbox"/> 6. gives the exact price |

Organize Me

Organize Me XPS is one of the best tools I have used for managing my busy schedule – and I have used many over the years. With this app, I'm able to organize all of my tasks and appointments in one place with just a couple of simple steps. Furthermore, a simple set-up is all it takes to share my plans with others. Having the ability to share my lists and calendars with colleagues and friends like this is extremely useful.

The only drawback some people might find is that it does not have all of the features offered by some of the more expensive productivity apps; nevertheless, it does exactly what I need it to do. In fact, the app's simplicity is its best feature. I just love the simple interface.

Although the developers promise that free updates offering new features will be released soon, if you ask me, the low cost makes it a really good value as is.

If you're someone who writes notes on little pieces of paper and then loses them, get this app. It will really boost your productivity. I use it every day – for school, work, and everything else.

B Use one of these topics or your own idea to write a product or service review.

- technology you purchased
- a game or app you tried
- a restaurant you ate at
- a service you used (dry cleaner, hair salon, mechanic)

C Group work Take turns reading your reviews. Then answer the questions.

1. Whose review is the most interesting and informative? Why?
2. What additional information would you want to know as a consumer?
3. Which reviews would convince you to buy the product or use the service?
Which ones would lead you to make a different choice?

LESSON B ▶ Information overload

1 STARTING POINT

Future shock

A Read these comments about technology. Do you agree or disagree?

WHAT'S YOUR TAKE ON TECHNOLOGY?

Joo-chan, Seoul:
 “Apps are cool, aren’t they? I download lots of them to my smartphone. Wouldn’t it be great if phones came loaded with even more apps?”



Ana, São Paulo:
 “Isn’t it weird how some people use mobile devices constantly? They don’t notice anything around them. It’s actually dangerous, don’t you think?”



Sarah, Los Angeles:
 “Don’t you think there are too many websites full of misinformation? Shouldn’t the government fine sites that contain false information?”



Yang Ming, Taipei:
 “Doesn’t it seem like kids spend too much time playing violent video games? It makes kids more aggressive, doesn’t it?”



B Pair work Compare your answers with a partner. Do you think the government should regulate any of these things?

2 VOCABULARY

Forms of communication

A Where do you find these forms of communication? Put them in the correct columns. Then add another expression to each category.

banner ads	bumper stickers	crawls	infomercials	spam	text messages
billboards	bus wraps	fliers	pop-up ads	telemarketing	voice mail

On television	On the Internet	On the phone	On streets or highways

B Pair work Which of the above are the most useful ways of communicating information? The least useful? Do you find any of them annoying?

“Those crawls at the bottom of TV screens aren’t useful. It’s impossible to read them and pay attention to a show at the same time. Don’t you think they’re annoying?”

VOCABULARY PLUS see page 136

3 GRAMMAR

Negative and tag questions for giving opinions

Use negative questions or tag questions to offer an opinion and invite someone to react.

Isn't it weird how some people use mobile devices constantly?

Doesn't it seem like kids spend too much time playing violent video games?

Wouldn't it be great if phones came loaded with even more apps?

Shouldn't the government fine sites that contain false information?

Apps are cool, **aren't they**?

It makes kids more aggressive, **doesn't it**?

Use the phrase *don't you think* to form negative or tag questions for opinions.

Don't you think there are too many websites full of misinformation?

It's actually dangerous, **don't you think**?

GRAMMAR PLUS see page 119

A Look at the Starting Point on page 58 again. Find the tag questions used by Joo-chan and Yang Ming. Why do they have different endings?

B Pair work Turn the statements into negative or tag questions. Then ask and answer the questions. Discuss your answers.

1. It's annoying how often telemarketers call.
2. They should get rid of those banner ads on the Internet.
3. It would be great if there were fewer billboards.
4. It seems like a lot of people are texting while driving.
5. It's sad when people are tricked into losing money by spam messages.
6. There are too many channels on TV these days.

4 DISCUSSION

It's kind of strange, isn't it?

A Pair work Do you agree or disagree with these opinions? Why?

Millions of people are addicted to online games these days. It's kind of sad, isn't it?

Wouldn't it be great if the Internet were turned off one day a week to give people a chance to rest?

Don't you find it annoying that social networking sites sell your personal information to marketers?

Don't you think a lot of people are being confused by misinformation on the Internet?

Aren't kids today being exposed to too much information on television and on the Internet?

B Group work What other problems are caused by modern information technology? Agree on the three most pressing problems and tell the class.

"Don't you think kids today spend too much time online? Won't their grades and social development suffer because of it?"

"You might be right. But their parents should set limits for them, shouldn't they?"

5 LISTENING

Health and technology

A Listen to a report on health problems caused by technology. Who is the main intended audience? Choose the correct answer.

- a. doctors or other health professionals
- b. frequent users of technology products
- c. designers of computers and mobile devices

B Listen again and complete the chart.


Problem	Symptoms	Advice
texter's thumb		
carpal tunnel syndrome		
gadget addiction		

6 DISCUSSION


Future technologies?

A Read about these technologies. Are any of them available now? Do you think any will be available in the future? Would you like to make use of them? Why or why not?


Technologies of Tomorrow?



You'll never be bored with the color of your clothes or furniture again. With color-changing fabric, you'll be able to select from a wide variety of colors using a remote control, changing colors whenever you want.



Wireless electricity will allow you to do away with chargers, batteries, and cords. Devices and appliances in homes and businesses will run on electricity transmitted wirelessly from a hidden power source.



A life recorder is a small wearable device that will take a video of everything you see, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. The sights and sounds of your entire life will be saved for years to come.

B Group work What new technologies are becoming popular? Which ones do you think are useful? What other technologies do you think will be invented in the future?

7 READING

Cyber-begging

A Pair work Imagine that a stranger asked you for money to help pay off a frivolous debt. Would you help? Tell your partner. Then read the article.

Can you spare a dime for my Gucci bills?



There was a time when Karyn Bosnak couldn't pay a \$59.00 bill at the grocery store. She was officially broke. She didn't have enough money to get on the subway, but she looked rich. She was a television producer, earned \$900 a week, and had a closetful of designer labels like Gucci and Louis Vuitton. But she also had a \$20,221.40 credit card bill and an empty bank account. Karyn decided that it was time for a change. She built a website and simply asked people to help her out by sending her a buck or two.

On the site, Karyn honestly explained her situation, Gucci shoes and all. "If 20,000 people gave me just \$1, I'd be home free, and I'm sure there are 20,000 people out there who can afford to give me \$1." Amazingly, it worked. Her website was visited by more than a million people. Although most donors just gave a few dollars, one generous donor sent \$1,000. She was on TV and in newspapers and magazines. She was offered a book deal and a movie contract. And of course, she was able to pay off her credit card debt.

She also sold her designer clothes on eBay. In her closet, where the Gucci purses once sat, Karyn keeps all the letters that people have sent her.

She's received teddy bears, subscriptions to *Vogue*, Dunkin' Donuts coupons, backpacks, jewelry, cat food, and candles.

It's hard to understand why so many people helped a total stranger pay off her huge credit card bill. Why did they do it? Karyn explains, "I was just honest about what happened; I didn't make up some sob story about saving the world." Her donors think it's funny and original, she argues, and view it less as a charity than as an entertainment site.

Imitators have sprung up all over the Internet, some with outrageously selfish requests like a BMW or a house. Actually, Karyn was not the first person to put up a website asking strangers for money. The practice has a name: "cyber-begging." Most sites receive little traffic and even less cash.

Karyn also had thousands of enemies and critics. People sent her hate mail and scolded her on websites. Karyn says she never let this anger bother her. "They are probably jealous they didn't think of it," she explains.

Source: "Brother, can you spare a dime for my Gucci bills?" by Janelle Brown, Salon.com

B Read the article again and answer the questions. Then compare your answers with a partner.

1. Why was Karyn in financial trouble?
2. What was her main solution to her problem? What else did she do?
3. Why did so many people respond positively to her website?

C Group work Discuss these questions. Then share your answers with the class.

1. Do you think Karyn was unethical, or was she simply clever?
2. What would you have done if you were Karyn?