

## Media Studies – The Internet

Although the internet has been around since the mid-twentieth century, it was only in the 1990s that it really took off. Since then, it has become part and parcel of daily life for millions around the globe.

Listed below are some of the advantages and disadvantages of the internet.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<p><b>Information</b> is available at the click of a mouse. By using search engines like Google and Internet Explorer, users can research almost any topic under the sun.</p> <p>Students can use the internet to research projects and homework assignments.</p> <p>News stories can be updated as they happen, which gives the internet an advantage over print media in particular.</p> <p><b>Communication</b> is faster than ever, thanks to email, instant messaging and social networking sites such as Facebook. Such communication makes it possible for people to strike up virtual friendships with people around the world, which may aid understanding between different cultures. It also helps friends and families to stay in contact and keep up to date with day-to-day happenings, even when they live far apart.</p>	<p>The information supplied might not be reliable. Wikipedia is widely used, but the information on this site is not necessarily accurate or factual.</p> <p>Not every student has access to the internet at home. Those who do not are referred to as 'the information poor' and they are at an academic disadvantage in an age where it is expected that the majority of students can readily and freely access information online.</p> <p>Social networking sites can be timewasting and can distract students and workers from more productive tasks. They can also be a focal point for bullying, as derogatory comments and photographs can be posted without the subject's consent. Even if the offending remarks or pictures are taken down, it is often too late as they may have been read or even copied by many people.</p> <p>There is also the very real danger of people pretending to be who they are not. There have been several instances of</p>

<p><b>Entertainment</b> is easily available in most people's homes now, thanks to online gaming, sites showing movies and TV series, and sites which allow music downloads.</p> <p><b>E-commerce</b> is an ever-expanding field as more and more individuals and companies do business over the internet. Whether you want to buy a book or book a hotel, you can do it all online.</p>	<p>youngsters arranging to meet a person they believe to be a teenager, for example, only to find out too late that they have fallen into the hands of someone who intends them harm.</p> <p>Because it is so simple to sit in front of a computer and watch a download of a film, many people are slow to get up and go out to the cinema. Online entertainment is useful, but it can lead to people interacting less with others as they become lost in the virtual world.</p> <p>Film-makers, musicians and others in the entertainment industry find it difficult to prevent piracy of their material. This leads to loss of sales revenue and may jeopardise future film or music production.</p> <p>If you do business over the internet, you risk identity theft. Unless you and the company or bank you are dealing with are careful, your credit card details, for example, could be stolen and your money taken.</p>
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