



DIGITAL SKILLS FOR PEOPLE LIVING IN THE 3RD AGE
Effective Digital Access to Public Services



DIGITAL ACCESS PROJECT

LEARNING MODULE

Online communication

Code: M2BC

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October 2018

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Contents

SUMMARY	3
KEYWORDS	3
MODULE OBJECTIVES	3
UNIT 1: USING EMAIL	5
Specific objectives	5
What is an email?	5
Advantages of using an email	5
Email clients	5
Creating an email account	6
Writing an email	7
UNIT 2: CREATING AND MANAGING DIGITAL PROFILES	9
Specific objectives	9
What is a digital profile?	9
Social media	9
Managing your digital profile	10
Online communication tools	12
EXERCISES	14
Exercise 1: Who sees whom?	14
Exercise 2: Dos and don'ts	16
Exercise 3: Call me	17
FURTHER READING AND RESOURCES	18
SOLUTION OF EXERCISES	19

LEARNING HOURS: [ALL UNITS LEARNING HOURS]

WORKLOAD: [ALL UNITS LEARNING HOURS + OVERALL TIME FOR THE EXERCISES]

SUMMARY

This module is designed to provide the user with the necessary knowledge related to online communication, channels and tools. Unit 1 is focused on setting up email accounts and creating, writing and sending emails, while Unit 2 deals with creating and managing digital profiles, with emphasis on popular Social media and online communication tools.

KEYWORDS

Online communication, email, email service provider, account, digital profile, social media, username, password, message, file, attachment, computer, smart phone, tablet, Internet, email address, recipient, online communication tools

MODULE OBJECTIVES

Actions / Achievements		
Acquiring and understanding basic knowledge about online communication tools and channels and developing basic skills for creating and managing email accounts and digital profiles.		
Knowledge	Skills	Competencies
Using an email	<p>Understanding what is an email and what are the advantages of using one</p> <p>Understanding what are email clients</p> <p>Skills for creating an email account</p> <p>Skills for creating, writing and sending emails</p>	<p>Confidence in work with an email</p> <p>Confidence in participating in active online email correspondence</p> <p>Identifying and working with programmes for email management</p>
Creating and managing digital profiles	<p>Understanding what is a digital profile</p> <p>Skills for creating and managing digital profiles</p>	<p>Confidence in creating and managing your own digital profile</p> <p>Having control over your online reputation</p>



Social media	Understanding what is Social media and its main characteristics	Identifying Social media channels
Online communication tools	Understanding what are online communication tools Distinguishing different types of online communication tools	Confidence in communicating online Identifying which online communication tools to use for which purposes

UNIT 1: USING EMAIL

Specific objectives

In Unit 1 you will learn what are the main advantages of using an email and how it works; what are email clients and how you can use them; how to create an email account; how to create, write and send emails.

What is an email?

The word “email (e-mail)” is short for electronic email. An email is used for exchanging online correspondence and information between two or more email users over telecommunications. The sending, storage and delivery of emails is operated across computer networks, which currently is primarily the Internet. This means that generally if you want to send or receive an email, you need to be connected to the Internet.

In order to communicate with someone via email you need to have an email address, which is unique for each user. The email may contain text message, files, images or other attachments sent to an individual or group of individuals using electronic devices (computers, tablets, smart phones). One email can be sent to more than one recipient at a time.

Advantages of using an email

- Sending or receiving an email is free of charge (apart from the costs for Internet usage)
- You can send an email to anywhere around the world
- The email is instantly sent and delivered to the recipient via the Internet
- You can send as attachment one or more documents, photos, audio files, etc.
- Emails are stored electronically which allows their storage over long periods of time

Email clients

Email program

To send and receive email messages, you can use an email program, also known as an email client, such as Microsoft Outlook or Mozilla Thunderbird. When using an email client, you must have a server that stores and delivers your messages, which is provided by your Internet service provider, or in some cases, another company. An email client needs to

connect to a server to download new email, whereas email stored online updates automatically when you visit the website.

➤ *Microsoft Outlook*

Outlook is an email software program by Microsoft that enables users to send and receive email on their computer. It is available as a part of the Microsoft Office package. Although often used mainly as an email application, it also includes a calendar, task manager, contact manager, note taking, journal, and web browsing.

➤ *Mozilla Thunderbird*

Mozilla Thunderbird is a free, open-source email client. Thunderbird can manage multiple email, newsgroup and news feed accounts and supports multiple identities within accounts. Features such as quick search, saved search folders, advanced message filtering, message grouping and labels help manage and find messages.

Email online

An alternative way of sending and receiving email (and the more popular solution for most people) is an online email service or webmail, such as Gmail, Outlook.com, Yahoo, etc. Many of the online email services are free or have a free account option.

Creating an email account

When it comes to creating a free email account, there are a huge number of options, so before doing it you need to consider a few things:

- ***Decide what you will use the email account for*** – Most free email accounts come with a limited amount of storage space. Typically, the free amount offered is more than enough for personal use, but if you plan to use it for business you may find that the storage is insufficient for high-volumes of emails. Most free email services can be upgraded with more storage for monthly payments.
- ***Check with your Internet service provider*** – Most internet service providers offer email accounts with your Internet package. However, if you feel like you might change service providers frequently, avoid using their email addresses for anything important. You may lose easy access if you change service providers.
- ***Consider using online email services*** – If you plan to use the email for personal use or even for business purposes, the most popular solution for most people is to use an online email service provider or webmail (e.g. Gmail, Outlook.com, Yahoo!, Mail.com, etc.)

The way of creating an email account in most providers and the information needed are more or less the same. Below is a practical description on how to create an email account:

- **Visit the website of email service provider** you have chosen (e.g. www.gmail.com, www.outlook.live.com, www.yahoo.com, etc.)
- Click the button **“Create an account” or “Sign up”**
- **Enter your personal information** – If you will use this email address to correspond with people you know and business associates, use your real first and last name because the name will appear in the emails you send
- **Choose a username** – This will actually be your email address (e.g. john.smith@gmail.com). If the username you enter is already taken by another user, you will see a message that you should enter another username and a list with suggestions of possible usernames
- **Choose a password** – Compose your password with a mix of letters, numbers and symbols. Make sure that it is strong but easy to remember so that you won’t have problems reentering it.
- **Enter the Captcha** – You might be asked to type in shown characters and/or numbers which is what the system uses to make sure that you are an actual person
- **Agree to the Terms of Service** – You can do this by ticking a small box

Writing an email

Regardless which provider you use for your email account, when composing an email you need to fill in several fields. To create an email you need to click on a button which depending on your email service provider will read “Compose (email)”, “New email”, “New message”, “Write”, “Create a new message” or similar. Once you do this a new message window will open where you should fill in the fields displayed and compose your message:

- **“From”** – this field should contain your email address
- **“To”** – here you should type the email address of the person to whom you would like to send the email. In the “To” field you can insert more than one email addresses of recipients. This person(s) will be the direct addressee(s) of your email. Cc: is simply for their information—with no expectation that they will take action on the email, other than receive it.
- **“Cc”** (Carbon copy) – in this field you can enter additional email addresses of people who are not direct recipients of your email (listed in the “To” field). For example, you can address an email to John (john.smith@gmail.com) and then put in “Cc” Maria (maria.jones@outlook.com) and Tom (tom.brady@yahoo.com). Although the email is addressed to John, Maria and Tom will also receive your message, and their email addresses will be visible to John, and to each other. This field is optional.
- **“Bcc”** (Blind carbon copy) – this field is similar to “Cc”, except the recipients are secret and not visible to each other. Each Bcc recipient will receive the email, but will not see who else received it. The email addresses you have put in the “To” and “Cc” field will remain visible to all recipients. This field is optional.

- **“Subject”** – in this field you should type the title of your email. It should consist of a few words giving summarised information about the content of the email. The “Subject” field informs the recipient on what the email is about, without opening and reading the full email. This field is optional.
- **“Message body”** – here you should type your message for the person or people to whom you would like to send an email. The format and structure of the email message depends on the email purpose and the type of relationship you have with the recipients – more formal or informal. Usually, an email should start with an address to the person (Dear John, Hi John, Hello, Good morning, etc.) and end politely (Greetings, Best wishes, Kind regards, etc.)
- **“Attach”** – this field could be also called “Attach files”, “Attachments”, etc. Usually, the attachments icon is in the shape of a paperclip. You can send as an attachment documents in different formats (word, excel, pdf, etc.), pictures, audio files or any other file stored on your computer. Keep in mind that most email providers have file size restrictions that would prevent any large files or programmes from being sent over email.

When you have composed your email, you need to click the button **“Send”** and your email will be sent to the chosen recipients. You also have the option to compose your message and send it later. In this case, your message will be stored in the folder **“Drafts”** and you can come back, review your email and send it at a later stage.

UNIT 2: CREATING AND MANAGING DIGITAL PROFILES

Specific objectives

Unit 2 provides information on what are digital profiles, what to consider when creating a digital profile and how to manage your digital profile. Here you will also find information on what are Social media and their main characteristics as well as on different types of online communication tools that can be used both for personal and professional purposes.

What is a digital profile?

A digital profile is the information available about a person online. Everything you post on the Internet – blogs, tweets, photos and videos, likes, links, comments and shares on Social media – contributes to the image you create of yourself and your online reputation. And anyone who discovers this information will form opinions about you, based on what they see. Everyone from potential employers to clients, bank employees, creditors or simply family, friends and romantic partners, can check you out by searching for those digital traces you leave behind.

Before you create a digital profile, ask yourself who you would like to see this information and for what purpose. Do you want to get online to connect with family and friends or do you want to create a professional digital profile of yourself in order to look for new employment opportunities.

Social media

Social media are interactive instruments of communication operated on digital devices (computers, tablets, smart phones) which are used for creating, sharing and exchanging information, pictures, videos, events, employment opportunities, etc. via virtual communities and networks. Popular Social media include Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, etc. The main characteristics of most Social media include:

- They are ***interactive Internet-based applications***
- Their ***content is generated by the users through text posts, comments, photos, videos, etc.*** and the data is generated through all online interactions
- The ***users create their own profiles*** on the Social media website or app which are designed and maintained by the Social media organisations
- Social media facilitate the ***development of online social networks*** by connecting a user's profile with those of other individuals or groups

Managing your digital profile

The moment you join a Social media or any other online communication channel, you have already created your digital profile. From this point on it is up to you to manage correctly the information available about you online, depending on your needs and on what you're aiming to achieve – whether you want to create a personal social image or a profile for professional purposes. Regardless of the purpose, if you want to have control over your online reputation and create and manage a strong and positive digital profile, here are some things you need to consider:

➤ ***Research yourself online***

- Find out what's already out there about you in the virtual space
- Type your name into several different search engines and see what comes up
- Type in other things about you – your school or college, clubs you are or were a member of, places you've lived, the company you work for and previous employers
- Look for images, photos and videos
- Search websites you visit often, such as online directories, online grocery stores, public record websites, shopping websites, etc.
- Search social media website and blogs – both personal and professional. Explore what other people have said about you, photos they've tagged you in or comments they've made. Look at your friends' personal pages as well as your own.
- If you have a business website, look at the reviews given and comments made

➤ ***Evaluate your digital reputation***

- Consider what all the online information you've found says about you
- Review whether your online information really reflects who you are and how you want to be seen
- Ask yourself whether you would be happy for anyone else to see your profile – spouse, friends, employer, business associates and clients, etc.
- Consider separating your profiles for personal use and those for professional use
- Check how public or private are your profiles

➤ ***Think before you post***

- Be mindful of how your online activities affect your digital profile – and that of others
- Aim to do and say things that benefit your online reputation and don't do anything that might damage anyone else's

- Before you share, think about the consequences – ask yourself what would your employer, partner, children or friends would think
 - If you're feeling angry, hurt or upset, don't post – you might later regret it
 - Monitor your digital profile regularly
 - From time to time review your social networks circle, pages you like, people and groups you follow and newsletters you subscribe to
- **Think about the privacy**
- Keep personal information private
 - Ask permission before posting personal details and photos of other people
 - Keep passwords, usernames and account numbers to yourself
 - Manage your privacy settings to set appropriate levels of access for friends, family and the general public, particularly on social media
 - Familiarise yourself with the privacy settings and terms of service
- **Fix what you can**
- Delete old, inactive accounts
 - Hide or delete embarrassing, controversial or offensive posts
 - If you feel it's necessary, use a professional service to clean up your digital image
- **Focus on the positive**
- Create a digital profile that promotes the most positive and best aspects of you
 - Create positive, up to date, quality content
 - Keep up with current affairs so that you can comment constructively and knowledgeably; Join online forums
- **Be accurate – check spelling and grammar in your profiles and posts**
- Take time to check that your profile information and posts include correct spelling and grammar
 - It's important to remember that poor writing, no matter how casual the communication, can be a big turn-off to someone checking up on you
- **Choose your contacts**
- Don't feel the need to connect with people you don't want or need to just because they have sent you an invitation

Online communication tools

There are numerous tools which can be easily and successfully used to collaborate and communicate online with other people. Most of these online communication tools are only used in real-time settings. There are different types of online communication tools, which include but are not limited to the following:

➤ ***Email***

The email is among the old online communication tools. It allows users to exchange messages, transfer photographs, send files and receive news from any part of the world

➤ ***Chats***

Chats can be described as online text conversations that happen in real time. You can chat with someone both through a downloadable messaging programme on your smart phone or tablet (e.g. Skype, WhatsApp, Viber, Facebook Messenger, etc.) or through web-based chats on your computer (e.g. the chats of Gmail, Facebook, etc.)

➤ ***Voice over IP (VoIP)***

Voice over IP (VoIP) refers to a voice conversation which is conducted over an Internet connection instead of over a traditional phone line. VoIP calls are audio-based. Some good example of VoIP as online communication tools are Skype, WhatsApp, Viber, etc.

➤ ***Forums***

The forums can be described as places where all users are allowed to post either comments or post questions. Other users of the forums are permitted to post replies to posts so as to create a kind of online discussion.

➤ ***Video conferences***

The video conferencing services have become one of the top types of online communication tools. They are mainly used for business purposes. Businesses benefit from video conferencing through meetings. This is because meetings allow for the discussion of business progress and the collaboration of ideas.

Below you can find more information about a few online communication tools which can be used for chats, audio and video calls.

Skype

Skype is an online communication tool that enables people to make free video and voice calls with individuals or a group of individuals, send instant messages and share files with other people on Skype. You can use Skype on your mobile phone, computer or tablet.

Skype is free to download and easy to use. However, if you want to extend the Skype offer to call phones or send SMS, you need to pay a small fee.

To start using Skype, you need to download the application and create an account by providing your email or phone number and creating a username and password.

WhatsApp

WhatsApp is an instant messaging app which offers simple, secure, reliable messaging and calling for free, available on phones all over the world. WhatsApp supports sending and receiving a variety of media: text, photos, videos, documents and location, as well as voice calls. The messages and calls are secured with end-to-end encryption, meaning that no third party including WhatsApp can read or listen to them.

The app works on nearly all smart phone models and is also available for computers, and works on Wi-Fi, 3G and 4G networks.

To start using WhatsApp, you need to download the application on your smart phone. Once installed, you are presented with a greeting screen, asking you to continue. Then you enter your mobile phone number, which is the handle through which the service identifies you. This saves you from having to log in each time with a username and password, and from even registering for the first time. You are sent an access code through SMS which you have entered as proof that you are the rightful owner and user of the phone number you entered. Then the app integrates your contact list and sorts out whom among your contacts are already WhatsApp users.

Viber

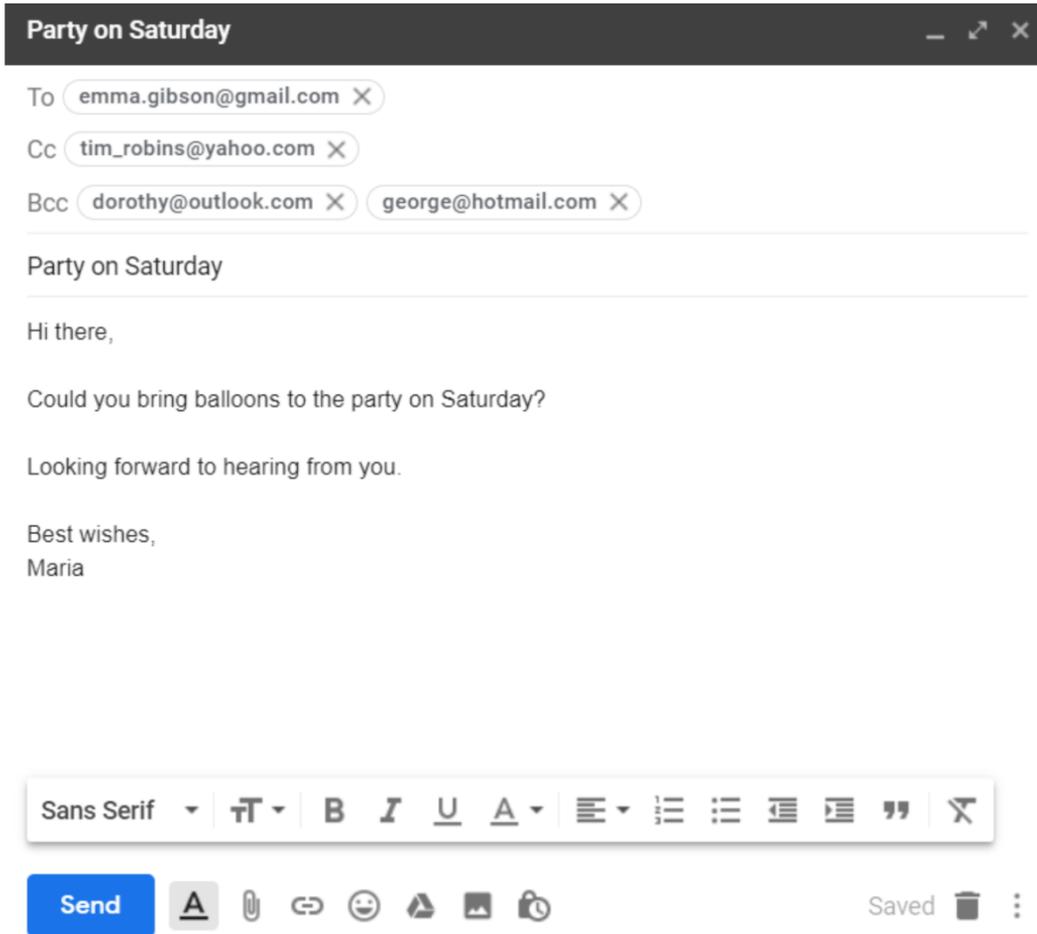
Viber is a calling and messaging app that allows users to exchange audio and video calls, stickers, group chats and instant voice and video messages. It works on both mobile phone and computer and can be used to connect with people around the world. All Viber calls and chats are protected by built-in end-to-end encryption, so you can be sure that your conversations are always secure.

The app can be downloaded directly to your phone or computer. You simply need to enter your phone number to get started. Viber uses your mobile phone as your identity. To verify your account, Viber will send you a PIN via SMS to activate your account. Once activated, the app links to your contact list to find and connect with friends.

EXERCISES

Exercise 1: Who sees whom?

Take a look at the email which Maria sends to her friends and answer the questions below. Only one answer is possible for each question.



The screenshot shows an email composition window with the following details:

- Title:** Party on Saturday
- To:** emma.gibson@gmail.com
- Cc:** tim_robins@yahoo.com
- Bcc:** dorothy@outlook.com, george@hotmail.com
- Subject:** Party on Saturday
- Body:**

Hi there,

Could you bring balloons to the party on Saturday?

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes,
Maria
- Rich Text Editor:** Shows font settings (Sans Serif), bold (B), italic (I), underline (U), text color (A), list (bulleted, numbered), indent, quote, and link icons.
- Buttons:** Send, text color, link, emoji, insert, and lock icons.
- Footer:** Saved, trash, and menu icons.

1. Who is/are the direct addressee(s) of the email?

- Emma and Tim
- Emma
- Emma, Tim, Dorothy and George
- Tim, Dorothy and George
- Emma, Dorothy and George

2. Whose email address(es) is Emma going to see when she receives the email?

- Only Maria's
- Maria's and Tim's
- Maria's, Tim's, Dorothy's and George's

3. Whose email address(es) is Tim going to see when he receives the email?

- Only Maria's
- Maria's and Emma's
- Maria's, Emma's, Dorothy's and George's

4. Whose email address(es) is Dorothy going to see when she receives the email?

- Only Maria's
- Maria's and Tim's
- Maria's, Emma's and Tim's
- Maria's, Emma's, Tim's and George's

Exercise 2: Dos and don'ts

Look at the table below and decide what you should (Do) and should not (Don't) do in each situation when managing your digital profile. Tick the respective box on the right.

Managing your digital profile	Do	Don't
You have written your username and password on a piece of paper and left it on your desk at work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
You delete an embarrassing picture of yourself posted on Facebook; You plan to run for mayor at the next elections	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
You always sign out of your profiles on Social media when you are not on your computer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
You post a picture of yourself from the Bahamas; You are currently on a sick leave from work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
You "tweet" (post on Twitter) a racist comment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
You comment online on the latest tendencies in ultracrepidarianism; You are quite sure that it sounds familiar...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
You type your name from time to time in different search engines to see what information about you is available online	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Exercise 3: Call me

Through which of the following online communication tools can you make a call to a friend of yours over the Internet? Multiple correct answers are possible.

- Skype
- Whatsapp
- Email
- Forum
- Viber

FURTHER READING AND RESOURCES

Unit 1. Using email

<https://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/e-mail-electronic-mail-or-email>

<https://www.computerhope.com/jargon/e/email.htm>

Creating an email account

<https://www.wikihow.com/Create-an-Email-Account>

<https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/free-email-accounts>

Unit 2. Creating and managing digital profiles

Digital profiles

<https://uk.norton.com/norton-blog/2015/08/how-to-create-a-great-digital-profile>

<https://careerservices.princeton.edu/undergraduate-students/resumes-letters-online-profiles/online-social-profiles>

<https://www.intellichq.com/resources/how-to-create-a-great-digital-profile/>

<https://au.hudson.com/career-advice/how-to-manage-your-digital-footprint>

Social media

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_media

<https://www.lifewire.com/what-is-social-media-explaining-the-big-trend-3486616>

Online communication tools

<https://www.lifewire.com/what-is-skype-3426903>

<https://www.skype.com/en/about/>

<https://www.lifewire.com/whatsapp-messenger-review-3426448>

<https://www.whatsapp.com/>

<https://www.viber.com/about/>

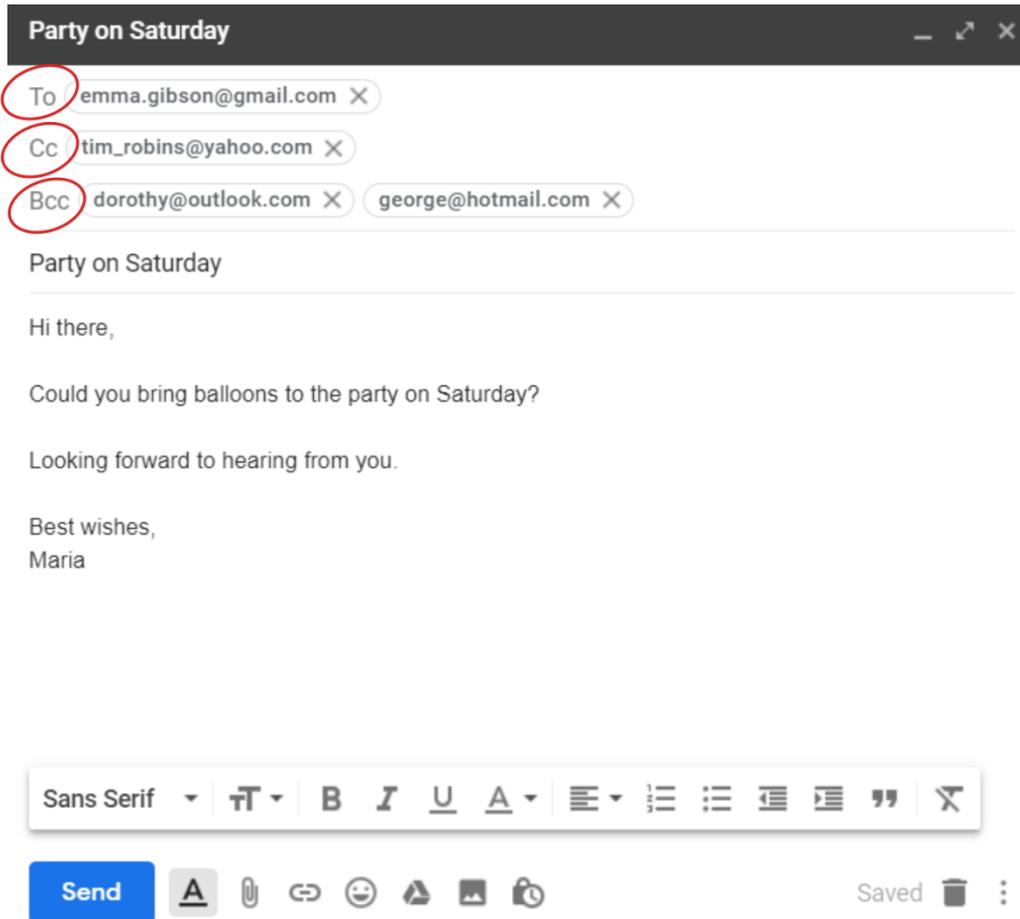
<https://www.webwise.ie/parents/what-is-viber/>

<https://www.eztalks.com/unified-communications/online-communication-tools.html>

SOLUTION OF EXERCISES

Solution of Exercise 1

Take a look at the email which Maria sends to her friends and answer the questions below. Only one answer is possible for each question.



The screenshot shows an email client interface. The title bar reads "Party on Saturday". The header fields are: "To: emma.gibson@gmail.com", "Cc: tim_robins@yahoo.com", and "Bcc: dorothy@outlook.com, george@hotmail.com". The email body contains the following text: "Party on Saturday", "Hi there,", "Could you bring balloons to the party on Saturday?", "Looking forward to hearing from you.", "Best wishes,", "Maria". At the bottom, there is a rich text editor toolbar with options for font style (Sans Serif), text color, bold, italic, underline, text color, bulleted list, numbered list, indent, outdent, quote, and link. Below the toolbar is a "Send" button and a row of icons for text color, link, emoji, insert, and lock. On the right side, there is a "Saved" status and a trash icon.

1. Who is/are the direct addressee(s) of the email?

- Emma and Tim
- Emma
- Emma, Tim, Dorothy and George
- Tim, Dorothy and George
- Emma, Dorothy and George

2. Whose email address(es) is Emma going to see when she receives the email?

- Only Maria's
- Maria's and Tim's
- Maria's, Tim's, Dorothy's and George's

3. Whose email address(es) is Tim going to see when he receives the email?

- Only Maria's
- Maria's and Emma's
- Maria's, Emma's, Dorothy's and George's

4. Whose email address(es) is Dorothy going to see when she receives the email?

- Only Maria's
- Maria's and Tim's
- Maria's, Emma's and Tim's
- Maria's, Emma's, Tim's and George's

Solution of Exercise 2

Look at the table below and decide what you should (Do) and should not (Don't) do in each situation when managing your digital profile. Tick the respective box on the right.

Managing your digital profile	Do	Don't
You have written your username and password on a piece of paper and left it on your desk at work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
You delete an embarrassing picture of yourself posted on Facebook; You plan to run for mayor at the next elections	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
You always sign out of your profiles on Social media when you are not on your computer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
You post a picture of yourself from the Bahamas; You are currently on a sick leave from work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
You "tweet" (post on Twitter) a racist comment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
You comment online on the latest tendencies in ultracrepidarianism; You are quite sure that it sounds familiar...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
You type your name from time to time in different search engines to see what information about you is available online	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Solution of Exercise 3

Through which of the following online communication tools can you make a call to a friend of yours over the Internet? Multiple correct answers are possible.

- Skype
- Whatsapp
- Email
- Forum
- Viber