IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

At the heart of technology lie two main or branches of technology: computing and telecommunication. The technologies covered are the computer system, Internet/electronic mail (e-mail), mobile phone, and fax machine.

Computers. Computers were originally used by scientists for calculating numbers, and have gradually become useful in offices and industries. In recent times, simplified models that can be used by almost everybody have become common in schools and homes for accomplishing many varied tasks and applications (Madu 2000).

Fapohunda (1999) lists the uses that computers are now commonly put to: writing letters, and reports, printing books, newspapers, and magazines, drawing pictures and diagrams, doing statistics, mathematics and handling financial records, controlling traffic lights, flying aeroplanes, making and playing music and video, sending messages anywhere in the world.

Internet. The Internet is a global collection of many types of computers and computer networks that are linked together. It is increasingly becoming the solution to many information, problems, information exchange, and marketing (Adesanya, 2002). Eseyin (1997) describes the Internet as a mixture of many services with the two most commonly used being electronic mail (e-mail for short) and the World Wide Web (www). It plays a significant role in education, health, political processes, agriculture, economy, businesses and newsgroups. Woherem (2000) states that with Internet connectivity, one can do business all over the world without physical contact with the buyer or the need for a business intermediary.

E-mail. Electronic mail (e-mail) is the exchange of text messages and computer files transmitted via communications networks such as the Internet (Nwosu, 2004). Fapohunda (1999) sees the e-mail system as the equivalent of postal mailing services, with the biggest difference being the time and cost involved. And not only written data, but all sorts of information in the form of video, audio, or photographs, can be sent via e-mail. Oketunji (2000) describes e-mail as an increasing popular method of communication, especially in the workplace.

Mobile Phones. Bittner (1989) defines mobile phones as a telephone system that can move or be moved easily and quickly from place to place. Mobile phones were once the tool of rich and busy executives who could afford both the luxury. Mobile phones are now the ICT that is reshaping and revolutionizing the communications globally. Its impact on the economic activities of nations, businesses, and small entrepreneurs is phenomenal. According to Marcell (2000), the availability of this new technology has been reshaping the material basis of the
Fax machine. Telefacsimile systems permit the transaction of images (photos, printed images, maps, drawings) and their reproduction on paper at a remote receiver. Facsimile (fax) is not a new service; however, advances in digital imaging technology and microelectronics have caused a sharp drop in prices with a significant increase in capacities (O’Brien, 1996). "Long distance copying" might be an appropriate nickname for this telecommunication process. Any document, whether it is handwritten, contains pictures, diagrams, graphs, charts or typed text can be transmitted at a great speed for relatively low cost. The fax system is widely available; most organizations have at least one fax machine. Communication technology is changing the world every day.

Education. Communication technology is drastically altering the field of communication. With advances in email, instant messaging, chat and moderated forums, educators and students have increased options when it comes to learning and correspondence. Email and instant messaging have given students the ability to contact their instructors at any time to ask for information or guidance, allowing them to fully understand the materials and assignments they are working with. Websites, forums and message boards have transformed the classroom, allowing learning to take place online. This has extended learning opportunities to more remote and isolated areas, giving increased access to would be students.

Business. Communication technology has become incredibly important for the world of business. Smart phones, internet work spaces and video conferencing has expanded the work place physically and length wise. Smart phones, such as Blackberry phones and iPhones, give business people the ability to call, text or email business associates any time from nearly any place.

Internet work spaces such as file sharing programs and collaborative message boards have given companies the ability to facilitate group work regardless of geographic location. Video conferencing has given businesses the opportunity to conduct meetings with people on opposite sides of the globe. The result of these advances have been an increase in productivity and a savings in transportation for both the company itself and the employee, making communication technology incredibly important to the world of business.

Politics. Communication technology is gaining in importance in the world of politics. A 24 hour news cycle and communication monitoring capacity contribute to this importance. First, the Internet has facilitated the creation of a 24-hour news service. Whether information is being communicated by reputable and recognizable news conglomerates or third party entities, news travels quickly, requiring politicians to respond to the public in an expedited fashion.

It also, theoretically, contributes to a more informed voting populous, making politicians more accountable for their actions. Second, communication monitoring is changing the way we protect homeland security. With the passing of the Patriot Act and the development of more sensitive communication monitoring technologies, the government is now able to pay closer attention to who is saying what to whom and when the conversation takes place. This allows them to screen more vigorously for potential threats, keeping the country safe.

Conclusion. New ICTs can offer real opportunities to improve the quality of community life. It is also important to deepen our level of reflection on community dynamics and on the constraints encountered when introducing and using ICTs for development. A healthy information society is concerned with getting reliable and timely information to its members. Making people aware of the benefits derivable from the use of ICTs will help to make the society a healthy one.

REFERENCES: