

Communicating online – from Skype to Periscope

What is communication?

Communication is the act of giving, receiving, and sharing information - in other words, talking or writing, and listening or reading. Good communicators listen carefully, speak or write clearly, and respect different opinions.

What is online communication?

There is no real difference between online and offline communication, although online communication can be varied, be so much more public, and have a greater audience. In both online and offline environments strong communication skills can help learners interact both face-to-face and in the online world. Texting, chatting, and posting responsibly depends on understanding how words and images affect others. Learners need to develop their communication abilities and to use social media responsibly; we all need to encourage and model positive and healthy communication.

We may be concerned that the use of social media, texting, and other digital tools are harming communication skills. As the world becomes more dependent on these tools, learners will need to have strong online communication as well as face-to-face skills.

In the last five years we have seen a huge increase in sophisticated apps that allow face to face communication, allow easy access to downloading and uploading self-generated content; and apps that allow live broadcasting. The most popular apps include Facetime, Skype, Oovoo, Whatsapp, Kik, Periscope, Google hangouts, Snapchat and Facebook Live.

Schools and colleges

What can schools and colleges do to support their learners' use of these tools and guide them to collaborate effectively and for their own and others' benefit.

Hwb has a series of playlists and resources for learners, for education practitioners and for parents and carers, which give learners tips on how to communicate safely and responsibly, which give parents and carers links to some basic safety tips on communication apps, and which give practitioners some insight into this new world. For practitioners this includes the research into the ways children and young people are using the technology, access to guidance around the use of communication apps, and access to resources to use in classrooms to support learners in learning safe and responsible online communication.

Below are the links to these resources and playlists:

For learners

- [Primary – Communicating online safely](#)
- [Secondary - Communicating online](#)

For parents and carers

- [Communicating online](#)

For education practitioners

- [Education practitioner introduction to communication online](#)

There are many other resources available to practitioners on Hwb, including links to lesson plans around Relationships and Communication from South West Grid for Learning's [online safety](#) resource. There are also many websites that support the responsible use of communication apps, and the UK Safer Internet Centre's [Professionals Online Safety Helpline](#) is a useful source of information about any of the technologies and apps mentioned.