

# [Computer technology in everyday life 3314](https://assignbuster.com/computer-technology-in-everyday-life-3314/)

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A man wakes up in the morning to the sound of his digital alarm clock and immediately checks his e-mail. He turns on the television, which has a V-chip to keep his children from watching what may be violent. He gets dressed, gets in his car, and drives to work where he works as the network administrator at a local steel company.

It is amazing all of the things this man uses in the morning alone that would not be possible if it were not for computer technology. From his alarm clock to his e-mail even to the job that pays his bills it has all been made possible by computer related technologies. This is the same situation with many people in American society today. Everything has to do with computers.

The very first things that we consider " computers" were nothing more than adding machines. " Perhaps the first example of this is the abacus, known in the Orient at least as early as 600 B. C."(Nunz 517). The abacus consists of a frame with rods that hold beads which depending on their position represent a different number. It is usually made of wood and the rods that were thought to one time have been made of bamboo. Users can add, subtract, multiply, and divide just like modern calculator (Fernandes).

It all started with calculating machines and has advanced to the fast microprocessors we have today. People use computers everyday in many forms from the computer that's in a car to a home PC. Computers have changed everyday life in the way society drives, communicates, and relaxes. Society has changed because of computer technology and it will probably never go back.

One thing that is very important to most people, especially in this area, which in most cases involves a computer, is the car. This is due mostly to the lack of effective public transportation in the area. Cars get people where they need to go from the mall to work and back home again.

For those fortunate enough to have year 2000 model cars there are some pretty amazing almost futuristic features. One of these is " adaptive cruise control" which monitors the car in front of the driver and brakes accordingly. This feature is in more expensive BMWs and the Mercedes-Benz S class (Car Go to the Store... 8). This should make it a little easier for those people who have to commute a great distance to and from work everyday. Ford's new Windstar has sensors in the front and rear bumper that beep at different frequencies when the driver parks their car so that the driver does not hit anything and damage it (Car Go to the Store... 8). Now that is a car that can protect itself. " New Volkswagen Passats come with moisture-sensitive windshield wipers that turn on by themselves when it rains, or when a driver gets squeegeed at an intersection" (Car Go to the Store... 8).

What does the check engine light really mean? Well it could mean nothing or it could mean that the car will never start again. There is a company called Embedded Planet that wants to help drivers find out. They have worked with the communication giant Motorola and even a bit with IBM to make a computer called the MobileGT. Embedded Planet, only a two-year-old company, has developed hardware that will communicate with the many chips in a car and give the user a clear definition of the problem. It uses a touch screen attached to the computer as an interface to control things like heating and cooling levels and even figure out why their car will not start. This could make it a lot easier for problems to be diagnosed and the demand for such a product will grow as computers advance further into society (Stacklin).

Something that lots of people do from their car is visit the ATM or Automatic Teller Machines. ATMs are a marvelous example of computer technology making society's life easier. It is much easier for someone to swipe a credit or ATM card through a machine to get money than having to go into a bank and deal with a person. An ATM is nothing but a data terminal and; like any other data terminal it is connected to, and communicates through, a host processor. The host processor is connected to the Internet, via a modem or a direct phone line, and that is how the cardholder reaches the different banking networks that may have record of their money (Bowen).

The ATM has three input devices the card reader, the keypad, and the deposit slot. The card reader obviously reads the account information on the magnetic strip on the credit or ATM card. The keypad is used to input the users PIN to tell the machine what kind of transaction they want; whether its withdrawal, deposit, or balance inquiry (Bowen). The deposit slot is used to insert deposit envelopes to be deposited in the cardholder's account.

There are four output devices on the ATM; the speaker, display screen, receipt printer, and the cash dispensing mechanism. The speaker gives feedback such as beeping to tell the user to remove their card, the display screen displays prompts such as which transaction the banker wants, the receipt printer prints out a receipt of the transaction, and the cash dispensing mechanism dispenses the cash being withdrawn from the account (Bowen).

All of these things are combined to help bankers communicate with their bank after hours or any other time when it's not convenient to deal directly with a person.

Although when people want to speak with others the cell phone is a great way to do so. " A cellular telephone is a movable telephone unit that allows people to communicate over a wide area by using a combination of radio, telephone, and computer technology" (Maxfield 340). Cellular phones are all around. It is no longer something that only the rich have but, something that everyone form teenagers to the elderly have. One question that many have about cell phones is whether or not they are dangerous. The concern is not only about the phone itself but also about the towers used to transmit the signal that lets callers communicate. These towers, as well as the phones that use them, put out radio frequency (RF) radiation. Studies have found that worries are unfounded and that the amount of RF radiation is not enough to cause adverse effects on anyone's health (Barnes 20). That fact must be very comforting to anyone who uses cell phones on a day-to-day basis.

Something that many people use on a day-to-day basis is the Internet. " The Internet is the interconnection of computer networks that enables connected machines to communicate directly. The term popularly refers to a particular global interconnection of government, education, and business computer networks that is available to the public" (Rutkowski). Many people today have access to the Internet and a new way to have access this wonderful resource is through a cell phone. Cell phone owners can now do everything from check stock quotes to check their e-mail all from their cell phones. New cell phones are coming with microbrowsers that can help users access the Internet (Emrich B1).

Most people have to sit in front of a PC to use the Internet but that's not all bad. There are many very useful things that can be done on the Internet. One man named Viktor Yazykov must think that the Internet is very useful. His life was literally saved because he had access to the Internet and his e-mail. He was in a 27, 000 mile long sailing race called Around Alone. It is called this because all racers go on the fantastic journey by themselves. He had been at sea for 40 days on this eight-month race when he realized that there was a problem. He had a deadly infection in his arm. He needed surgery and he knew it and his only connection to the outside world was his laptop computer and his e-mail. His boat had lost all power and he had no light except for a miner's light strapped to his head. He had to perform surgery on his own arm with nothing but his e-mail to guide him. Miraculously he survived and kept his arm (O'Neill A1). The Internet is a very valuable means of communication.

A very valuable use of the Internet for all consumers and vendors alike is electronic commerce (e-commerce). E-commerce is just like regular commerce, " the buying and selling of commodities on a large scale involving transportation from place to place" (Brian), except it is done electronically over the Internet. This has its advantages for customers and merchants. Customers have the advantage of being able to sit at home and purchase virtually anything as well as being able to compare product prices without having to leave their chair. Merchants have the advantage of not having to hire people to work in an actual store or to answer phones like in a mail order company, which saves them money. When companies save money they tend to lower prices. When prices are lowered consumers are more likely to buy a product. That means that e-commerce seems to be good all around. It makes merchants more money as well as saving consumers money (Brian).

A great example of how the Internet and e-commerce can change lives is the DotComGuy. This is a man in his twenties who has been living through the Internet since the beginning of the year and plans to do so until the year comes to an end. He actually changed his name to DotComGuy. He communicates with a cell phone ordered online. He gets his food online, pays bills online, and buys every product he needs from furniture to exercise equipment all online. The house started out completely unfurnished except for his computer and the box that it came in. Everything in the house came from an e-commerce merchant. People seem to really support him while others think he's crazy (About DotComGuy). This is a great example of what the Internet can do for the common American and how the Internet can be used as a major means of communication.

The Internet has not only effected communication but has dramatically effected the way people relax and entertain themselves.

Something that is very relaxing as well as entertaining is playing video games. Video gaming isn't just for men as it used to be. " According to the fourth annual Video and PC Game Industry Trends Survey more women are buying and playing games than ever before. Thirty-five percent of those who play console games, such as the Sony PlayStation, are women and; more then forty-three percent of those who play PC games are women. This is a slight increase from last year's results. Women are purchasing more game software as well. In 1999 women purchased forty-nine percent of the PC game software and fifty-one percent of console game software" (Diamond 64). It seems now that women have caught on to how great video games can be. There are now more women buying console games then there are men. Companies such as Sony and Nintendo must be very happy about that (Diamond 64).

One of the most commonplace things involving computer technology that people use to relax is the compact disc (CD) player. Many do not know how the CD player actually works. The CD, first of all, is a thin metal disk coated in plastic with a three-mile long groove with high and low points that represent binary numbers (1 and 0). The CD player uses a laser that scans the groove and uses the binary code to reproduce the music on the CD (Carter 67).

Almost all music lovers have CD players but the lucky people who own a year 2000 Jaguar S type have a voice activated CD player. All the listener has to do is tell it what CD and what track and it will play it (Car Go to the Store... 8).

This is only a sign that computer technology is still advancing and will continue to advance. Computers have changed the world in almost everything that almost everyone does from the way people buy things to the way they listen to music. Computers have changed everyday life in the way society drives, communicates, and relaxes. Computers have made it possible for a man to live comfortably without ever leaving his home. Computers have made it possible and the possibilities are endless.

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