

# E-mail business 13844 flashcard



An Economic Comparison of Mail Communications New technologies and advances in electronics have always allowed big business to do things faster, more efficiently, and more professionally than ever before. Generally, every new technology is a step forward for speed, productivity and reductions in spending. But, despite this unwritten principle, the coming of the latest E-mail or (electronic mail) communications innovation has brought many pros and cons with the package. Electronic mail could be the greatest thing since sliced bread, but there are many who find flaws in it. We are now going to take a moment to compare the speed, ease, reliability, and expense of electronic mail with our general postal system and the economic advantages and disadvantages. The speed of transfer rate is an important part of the decision to send mail by either method. E-mail has a distinct advantage in this category. With the click of a mouse button, your message will be received in a period of 5 to 30 seconds. (Lichty 28) Whether you are sending e-mail to a person across the street or in Australia, the transfer rate is virtually the same. Also, data files and computer applications can be sent via e-mail; however, large files will slow upload & download time even though they are sent in seconds. Unfortunately, physical packages such as gifts or magazines cannot be attached to e-mail. On the other side of the spectrum, the postal service can send any kind of physical package, from a magazine to a pool table, for a price proportional to its size. The postal service can also transfer data if it is placed on a disk or a CD-ROM. Speed, however, is a problem. Even the smallest letter takes from two days to two weeks to deliver, depending on the locations of the sender and the receiver. Even sending a letter to the house across the street takes time due to unnecessary movement. The mail is taken to the nearest large post office,

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sorted there, then delivered to the post office closest to the destination, and delivered from there. In other words, mail that is sent across town sometimes has to travel out of town and back again to reach the final point. Another variable aspect of the two mail systems is ease-of-use, which can potentially be quite costly. E-mail has many disadvantages when viewed from this standpoint. For one thing, e-mail requires some knowledge of computer operation. Anyone who wishes to use e-mail needs to know how to use the software that it requires, and one can only send e-mail to other people with the same knowledge. This can cost businesses large amounts of money to train their employees to use E-mail which in turn will cost consumers. Secondly, a computer with various equipment is needed. Hardware includes: motherboard with processor (\$300+), hard drive (\$100-\$200), four megs RAM (\$60), video-card (\$80-\$200), fax modem (\$50-\$200), and monitor keyboard (\$200-\$450). The e-mail user also has to pay a monthly fee on his e-mail Internet account, generally ranging from \$8 to \$25 per month, whether the account is used or not. The only financial advantage to this system is that it saves valuable time and postage stamps are not required. General mail differs in that the only knowledge required is literacy, and the only equipment that is needed is an envelope (\$. 03) and a stamp (\$. 32). No monthly fee is charged on USPS users, and anyone can send and receive mail. These facts show that, in terms of expense, the postal service has an definite edge over E-mail. Another major economic benefit to the U. S. Postal Service is that it is the nation's largest civilian employer, with more than 730, 000 career employees, in nearly 40, 000 post offices across the nation. About one out of every 170 working Americans is employed by the United States Postal Service. (#3, 1 ) Adding to this fact is that Business are

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starting to get jealous of the Postal Service because of the great profits it is experiencing. The Postal Service is now making a major impact on the United States Economy. (#4, 1). Business are pointing out that in 1995 the Postal Service had records of \$1. 8 billion in net income and a 1. 7 billion dollar debt reduction (#5, 1). The \$54 billion revenue that the Postal Service is bringing in would put them in 12th place on the Fortune 500 list and 33rd on the Fortune Global 500, with the worlds largest corporations (#5, 1). Finally, we will review the reliability of each system. Because e-mail is run by a computer network, human error is impossible.(Lichty 31) Consequently, e-mail is always transferred to the correct address; it never is lost, stolen, and its contents are never removed. Thus in turn leads to better savings for companies wishing to use this form of media communication. Unfortunately, since humans do operate the network servers that transfer the messages, server operators have the power to read mail that is passing through. They also can copy files that are attached to messages, though the messages and files themselves are not damaged in any way. The old method of mail, on the other hand, has even more problems. First, since humans deliver the envelopes, error is not uncommon. Letters have been delivered to the wrong address on numerous occasions; checks and other items have been stolen out of packages by dishonest postal workers or even punk kids. In short, both e-mail and our traditional mail service can be unsafe. After viewing all of the details of each system, a statement that either manner of communication is better than the other would be a misconception. Each has its pros and cons. E-mail may be faster, but it is much more expensive. Mail may be easy to use, but it is slow. Each individual must choose which system fits his needs and is most comfortable for them. The only real disadvantage to both of

these systems that I see, is that you still receive junk mail. But in the end, the healthy competition between these two mail communications creates better product selections and better prices for all of us. Bibliography 1)

Lichty, Tom. "AOL INTERNET FOR WINDOWS". New York: Ventana Press, 1995. p. 25-63, This book provides an excellent description of how E-mail works and shows many of its benefits. 2)

Ellis, John. "The Ins and Outs of E-Mail on the Net." Gateway Magazine Spring 1996: p. 17 This article gave good insight into why E-mail is growing in popularity. 3)

<http://www.usps.gov/news/press/96/96002new.htm> This is an article from the archives of the United States Postal service web sight – It has many valuable statistics.

4) <http://nutcweb.tpc.nwu.edu/research/abstracts/i.2.htm> This is a short article on the economics of the postal system. 5)

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