

## Getting online and using digital equipment

Want to know more about how to use digital technology such as the internet, computers, tablet devices, mobile phones and find out what this technology could do for you? You've come to right place! There's lots of support available in Newcastle to help you to get online, learn new skills, access technology and try new things.

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### Digital skills support and computer classes

There are many courses available in the city for all levels ranging from drop in sessions for beginners , to weekly classes for more advanced computer skills.

**Get Online Newcastle** support adults living in Newcastle, to learn digital skills. They run courses at Newcastle City Library. You can book a place online, phone or visit your local library for more information. Courses include:

- Basic Computer Training: learn the basics of using a computer
- Introduction to Office, Word, Excel and PowerPoint: learn the basics of Microsoft Office
- Techy Tea Party: bring along your own device and learn how to use it securely

For more details on courses and drop in sessions read more on InformationNOW on:

- [Computer Classes and IT Support](#)
- [Lifelong Learning](#)
- [Digital Unite](#)'s guide on [using the Internet](#) takes you through the basics including getting connected, searching and browsing and much more.

[Digital Unite](#) have some very helpful [online guides](#), introducing you to various computer basics including emailing, smartphones and tablets, creating documents, Internet security and social networking.

[Ability Net](#) support disabled people to access and use technology to meet their needs.

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### Free computer access in Newcastle

There are many other organisations that offer computer access and computer skills sessions too.

[Newcastle Libraries](#) have 14 libraries across Newcastle where you can access computers, Wi-Fi and the internet for free.

[Online Centres Network](#) offers access to computers and classes. They provide people with the skills and confidence they need to access digital technology. Search for the nearest centre to you on their website.

[Newcastle Carers](#) has computers available for carers to use at their centre in Byker. You can book a computer by contacting them.

[Pottery Bank Community Centre](#) has an IT Suite where you can use their computers.

[Newcastle City Council](#) has created an interactive map to search for places in Newcastle where you can get free or low cost access to computers, training and support.

[Read more about internet, Wi-Fi and broadband on InformationNOW](#)

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## Free internet, Wi-Fi and data

Newcastle City Council offers free Wi-Fi in many public buildings and locations, including [Newcastle libraries](#), [North East Museums](#), and outdoor areas.

[The National Databank ran by Good Things Foundation](#) offers free sims with mobile data to adults with little or no access to the internet, who have a low income. You can use their website to find support in your area.

[Read more about internet, Wi-Fi and broadband on InformationNOW](#)

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## Types of digital equipment

There are lots of different types of digital equipment and devices to choose from. The main types of digital devices are:

- **computers** – can be a PC that sits on your desk or a laptop that is portable. You can use computers to create documents, presentations, videos, send emails, play games, browse the Internet or use specialist computer software for many other tasks..
- **smartphones**: While basic mobile phones can mostly be used to make calls or text other phones, Smartphones allow you to browse the internet, use social media, send emails, take photos and much more. They usually have a touchscreen so only have buttons to switch it on and off. You can also download 'apps' (short for applications), which you can use to play games, get directions, access news, weather, mobile versions of computer software and more.
- **tablet or iPad**: are small portable devices that let you do many of the same things a computer can do, but are most often used to browse the Internet, read email, and watch videos. They are roughly the size of a book and have a touchscreen, so only have buttons for switching on and off.
- **e-book readers**: such as a Kindle, are portable devices used for reading books electronically. They are larger than a mobile phone but smaller than a tablet, and can store a large number of electronic books. They also allow you to read in large print
- **games consoles** not only play videogames but they can be used to access online TV channels, Social Media, video streaming services and the internet

- **webcams** short for 'web cameras' are a digital camera that you can connect to your computer. It can send live video recording from your computer to another location by means of the internet and they sometimes have a built in microphone so your video recording also has sound. Webcams are commonly built into laptops, tablets and mobile/smartphones.
  - **smart watches** are a wearable device that looks like a wristwatch. They often sync to your smartphone and you can answer phone calls, read email and [text messages](#), get weather reports, listen to music, dictate email and text messages, ask a [digital assistant](#) a question.
  - **smart speakers and smart screens**: Devices such as Amazon Alexa, Google Nest and others allow you to use your voice and/or a touchscreen to interact with a digital assistant programme. You can set reminders and calendar appointments, search for information online, play music and videos, and many similar features to a smartphone. These devices also link to other smart devices that can be used to control things in your home, you can change your heating temperature, turn lights on or off, view cameras that are connected to your device,
  - **smart doorbells** are an internet-connected doorbell that lets you know someone is at the door through an alert on a device, it may also have a camera and microphone that allows you to view and speak to somebody from your device.
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## The Internet of things (IoT)

**Digital assistants** are built into many 'smart' digital devices. It is a software program that listens to what you say, understands your question or command, works with other online services, apps or websites, and then gives you a spoken answer through a device. To use a digital assistant using your voice, a wake up word might be used such as "Hey Siri", "Hey Google", "Hi Alexa". Digital assistants learn to understand your voice and dialect.

Some digital assistants also work with video and image recognition. Google Lens can be used on smartphones or other devices with cameras to translate text by camera or search the internet for an item you have taken a photo of.

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## Help to buy computer equipment

It can be expensive to purchase new computer equipment, however once you have bought the equipment you could save money when [buying things online](#), or [accessing cheaper energy rates](#). There are some organisations that can help you purchase electrical equipment and access affordable credit.

[National Device bank is ran by the Good Things Foundation](#) provides refurbished laptops, mobile phones and tablets to people who may not have access to a device. Devices are donated by public and private sector organisations. Use their website to find support in your area.

[Good Things Foundation Map](#) shows where you can get help with digital skills, access computers or digital devices, data and Wi-Fi for free.

[Getonline@home](#) offer new customers a low cost refurbished PC, laptop or tablet, when you sign up to a new broadband and phone deal from their providers. Prices start at £49 for people on low income benefits or £119 for everyone else. The Laptop or PC is despatched 90 days after your new Supplier has confirmed that your broadband service is active. Simplifydigital can help you find the best value broadband service that's right for you. This services is ran by Microsoft,

Currys, Simplifydigital and Computer Recyclers UK to help people to get online.

[Happus.eu](#) provide access to affordable equipment helping everybody buy a PC, laptop or tablet so they can get online and be part of our ever changing world.

[SmarterBuys](#) may support you to buy products if you live in social or Council housing

[Affordable credit](#) may be an option to you if you need to make a big purchase for a laptop or mobile device.

[Affordable electrical items](#) are available. You may be able to purchase a second hand or refurbished device online. Some mobile phone providers offer refurbished handsets at a lower price. Online sellers such as Ebay, Facebook Marketplace or Gumtree may offer cheaper options too. However be careful when purchasing second hand items from individuals online.

[Turn2us](#) is a charity where you find charitable funds and grants to apply for, when you need money for essential things in life. For example, furniture, household items, white goods, electrical items, studying, bringing up children, experiencing life changing circumstances and more. They have a telephone helpline, benefits calculator and online information.

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## Using the Internet

Using the internet can open up a whole new range of opportunities to you, allow you to connect with family and friends, save money and time and learn new things. For example you could order your food shopping online, watch TV, listening to music and talk to your friends.

Read more on InformationNOW on:

- [What you can do online](#) – including shopping, watching tv and reading the news
  - [Keeping in touch with friends and family online](#) – including sending and receiving emails, and using What's App and Zoom.
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## Other useful information

[Staying safe online](#)

[Making your mobile phone easier to use](#)

[Digital Candle](#) provide free digital advice for charities.

[Digital Pathfinders](#) helps SMEs, charities and social enterprises across Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland become more successful and resilient by adopting digital technology.

[Digital Voice](#) works with people and communities to access the internet and online information

[Digital Unite](#) have a range of [free guides](#) to help you use digital technology and get online. They also have a [free course on staying safe online](#)

Good Things Foundations have [digital inclusion activity topic cards](#). Each card explains the benefits of an activity, the social and digital skills it supports, and how you might run an activity with a group or person.

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## Useful Organisations

### Newcastle Carers

**Email:** [info@newcastlecarers.org.uk](mailto:info@newcastlecarers.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.newcastlecarers.org.uk](http://www.newcastlecarers.org.uk)

**Telephone:** 0191 275 5060

**Address:** 135-139 Shields Road, NE6 1DN

### Newcastle Libraries

**Email:** [information@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:information@newcastle.gov.uk)

**Website:** [www.newcastle.gov.uk/leisure-libraries-and-tourism/libraries](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/leisure-libraries-and-tourism/libraries)

**Telephone:** 0191 278 7878

**Address:** Newcastle City Library, NE1 8AX

### Digital Unite

**Email:** [du@digitalunite.com](mailto:du@digitalunite.com)

**Website:** [www.digitalunite.com](http://www.digitalunite.com)

**Telephone:** 0191 278 7878

### Learn My Way

**Email:** [hello@goodthingsfoundation.org](mailto:hello@goodthingsfoundation.org)

**Website:** [www.learnmyway.com](http://www.learnmyway.com)

**Telephone:** 0191 278 7878

### BrowseAloud

**Email:** info@browsealoud.com

**Website:** [www.browsealoud.com](http://www.browsealoud.com)

**Telephone:** 028 9442 8105

**Address:** Lucas Exchange, BT41 2RU

## AbilityNet

**Email:** enquiries@abilitynet.org.uk

**Website:** [www.abilitynet.org.uk](http://www.abilitynet.org.uk)

**Telephone:** 0300 180 0028

**Address:** Acre House,, NW1 3ER

## Smarterbuys

**Email:** info@sbstore.org

**Website:** [www.smarterbuys.org.uk](http://www.smarterbuys.org.uk)

**Telephone:** 0300 500 0975

**Address:** Craghead Village Hall , DH9 6AN

## Getonline@home

**Email:** info@computerrecyclersuk.com

**Website:** <https://www.getonlineathome.org/>

**Telephone:** 0300 500 0975

## Digital Voice

**Email:** julie@digitalvoice.org.uk

**Website:** <https://www.digitalvoice.org.uk/>

**Telephone:** 01207 566 866

**Address:** Chopwell Community Centre, NE17 7HS

## Digital Candle

**Email:** hello@digitalcandle.org.uk

**Website:** <https://www.digitalcandle.org.uk/>

**Telephone:** 01207 566 866

## **Citizens Online**

**Email:** info@citizensonline.org.uk

**Website:** <https://www.citizensonline.org.uk/>

**Telephone:** 0808 196 5883

**Address:** The Exchange , GL5 1DF

## **Media Savvy CIC**

**Email:** info@mediasavvycic.co.uk

**Website:** <https://www.mediasavvycic.co.uk>

**Telephone:** 07873 176 145

**Address:** 27 Norfolk Street, SR1 1EE

## **Digital Pathfinders**

**Email:** hello@digitalpathfinders.uk

**Website:** <https://www.digitalpathfinders.uk/>

**Telephone:** 0191 716 5085

**Telephone:** 0191 716 5085

## **Get Online Newcastle**

**Email:** Getonline@newcastle.gov.uk

**Website:** <https://new.newcastle.gov.uk/libraries/getting-help-digital-skills>

**Telephone:** 0191 277 8842

**Address:** Newcastle City Library , NE1 8AX

## Pottery Bank Community Centre Ltd

**Email:** [info@potterybankcc.co.uk](mailto:info@potterybankcc.co.uk)

**Website:** <http://new.potterybankcc.co.uk/>

**Telephone:** 0191 224 2349

**Address:** Yelverton Crescent, NE6 3SW

## Good Things Foundation

**Email:** [hello@goodthingsfoundation.org](mailto:hello@goodthingsfoundation.org)

**Website:** <https://www.goodthingsfoundation.org/>

**Telephone:** 0191 224 2349

**Address:** PO Box 6063 , S11 0GU

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## Related Articles

[Internet, WiFi and broadband](#)

[Lifelong Learning](#)

[Digital support](#)

[Getting online and using digital equipment](#)

[Staying safe online](#)

[Keeping in Touch Online](#)

[Social Networking](#)

[Making your computer or mobile device easier to use](#)

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