THE SKILLS YOU NEED GUIDE TO

LIVING THE 'NEW NORMAL' IN THE AGE OF COVID-19

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT GOING DIGITAL, WORKING FROM HOME, AND OTHER CHANGING ASPECTS OF LIFE DURING A PANDEMIC

SKILLSYOUNEED
Helping You Develop Life Skills

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Skills You Need

This is one of a series of eBooks
by Skills You Need available for sale at:

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Cover Illustration by Freepik Storyset

ISBN: 978-1-911084-30-3
Published by Skills You Need Ltd
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This version was published in January 2021

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INTRODUCTION

It has been almost a year since the first reports of a new form of pneumonia started to emerge from Wuhan, China. In that year, our lives have changed hugely in so many ways. In many countries, wearing a face covering is now either advised or mandatory in public places. There have been lockdowns both local and national in countries around the world, and most of us have spent time unable to visit or see our friends and family.

Our social lives changed enormously too. We learned the art of meeting online, at a distance and outdoors. We avoided shaking hands or air-kissing. Instead, 'elbow bumps' became the norm, allowing us to make contact, but at a distance. We routinely wash our hands when we return home, and everyone has a bottle of hand sanitiser in their car and bag.

We have learned much about ourselves and others in the past year. Some of us, for example, have learned how little we like following rules, or being told what to do, and we have certainly learned more about our own attitudes to rules. Many of us have also noted our ability to contradict ourselves without irony. For example, we applauded the lack of air pollution during lockdown—and then calmly and rationally went back to using our cars in droves to avoid public transport when we returned to work and school. Pragmatism has been the order of the day in many places and for many people.

We have also learned to appreciate the importance of social contact and exercise for both our mental and physical health. It is noticeable that the regulations for 'Lockdown 2.0' in the UK include provision to meet one person from another household, outdoors—an option that was not permitted during the first lockdown earlier in 2020.

Our 'normal' has changed almost immeasurably over the last six to nine months. Perhaps the biggest change, however, has been the speed with which we have 'gone digital'. Over the last few years, many of us have found that we have increasingly moved our lives online. We shop online, we bank and make payments using mobile applications, we work remotely, and we socialise with distant friends via social media. However, the coronavirus pandemic has emphasised and exacerbated this change, and moved it into new demographic groups.

PART

1

HOW TO GO DIGITAL: GETTING STARTED

Younger generations, especially those under about 40 years of age, have grown up in a digital world. They don't even remember a time before the internet, or mobile phones. They have laptops, tablets and smartphones—and always have. They are confident about using them—but they still don't know everything.

For older generations, the internet is a relatively new phenomenon. The world wide web went live on 6 August 1991: less than 30 years ago. And while the first smartphone was released in 1992, the smartphone as we know it did not really become mainstream until the late 2000s with the advent of the iPhone. There has been an exponential increase in use since then—but it is no wonder that some people are still only just acquiring their first smartphone.

This part of the book is aimed at those people.

If you already have a laptop, smartphone or tablet, and unlimited broadband, know how to buy apps, and understand how to stay safe—just move on, unless of course you want to check that you have covered all the basics.

This section outlines some ideas about how to choose your technology and get connected, including some proactive measures to stay safe. It also provides a glossary of some of the basic terms from the digital world.

The full eBook is available at

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