COMPUTER BASICS - UNDERSTANDING APPLICATIONS

COMMUNICATION & COLLABORATION > 2.1 INTERACTING THROUGH DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

TARGET GROUP	AGE GROUP	PROFICIENCY LEVEL	FORMAT	COPYRIGHT	LANGUAGE
Facilitators	N/A	Level 1	Background information, Video clip	Protected by United States and international copyright and trademark laws	English, French

This resource provides a basic introduction to applications, including some examples.

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Competence area	2 - Communication & collaboration
Name of author	GCFGlobal.org
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WORKSHOP DIRECTIONS

1 What is an application?

You may have heard people talking about using a **program**, an **application**, or an **app**. But what exactly does that mean? Simply put, an **app** is a type of software that allows you to **perform specific tasks**. Applications for desktop or laptop computers are sometimes called **desktop applications**, while those for mobile devices are called **mobile apps**.

When you open an application, it runs inside the **operating system** until you close it. Most of the time, you will have more than one application open at the same time, which is known as **multi-tasking**.

App is a common term for an **application**, especially for **simple applications** that can be downloaded **inexpensively** or even **for free**. Many apps are also available for **mobile devices** and even some **TVs**.

Watch the video below to learn more about applications.

2 Desktop applications

There are countless desktop applications, and they fall into several categories. Some are more **full featured** (like **Microsoft Word**), while others may only do **one or two things** (like a **clock** or **calendar** app). Below are just a few types of applications you might use.

- **Word processors:** A word processor allows you to write a letter, design a flyer, and create many other types of documents. The most well-known word processor is **Microsoft Word**.

Microsoft Word 2□1□

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- **Web browsers:** A **web browser** is the tool you use to access the **Internet**. Most computers come with a web browser **pre-installed**, but you can also download a different one if you prefer. Examples of browsers include **Internet Explorer**, **Mozilla Firefox**, **Google Chrome**, and **Safari**

the google chrome web browser

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- **Media players:** If you want to listen to **MP3s** or watch **movies** you've downloaded, you'll need to use a **media player**. **Windows Media Player** and **iTunes** are popular media players.

iTunes

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- **Games:** There are many types of games you can play on your computer. They range from card games like **Solitaire** to action games like **Halo**. Many action games require a lot of **computing power**, so they may not work unless you have a newer computer.

3 Mobile apps

Desktop and laptop computers aren't the only devices that can run applications. You can also download apps for mobile devices like **smartphones** and **tablets**. Here are a few examples of mobile apps.

  - **Gmail**: You can use the Gmail app to easily view and send emails from your mobile device. It's available for Android and iOS devices.

the Gmail app

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- **Instagram**: You can use Instagram to quickly share photos with your friends and family. It's available for Android and iOS.
- **Duolingo**: With a combination of quizzes, games, and other activities, this app can help you learn new languages. It's available for Android and iOS.

4 Installing new applications

Every computer and mobile device will come with some applications already built in, such as a web browser and media player. However, you can also purchase and install new apps to add more

functionality.