

## Where to look for help

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There are a whole range of resources available to help you if you know where to look.

**No Internet Access?** Although much of this guide is based upon the assumption of having Internet access, there are resources available to those without Internet access. For example, Community Education Centres and libraries often contain hard copy resources as well as Internet facilities for public use. In addition, resources for troubleshooting specific problems such as equipment manuals or technical support phone numbers for individual companies may provide invaluable information.

### Search Engines

If you have access to the Internet, search engines such as Google are a great source of technical information for basic troubleshooting. If you have a problem, any problem, the chances are that you are not the first, and someone has had the same problem before. Searching on that problem in an Internet search engine such as Google can be a very effective way of finding a solution. For example, if you receive a cryptic error message and you do not understand what it means, entering the error message into a search engine will hopefully provide further information on it.

Please note that all search engines use keywords to filter out the information you are looking for. Search engines ignore common words and characters such as "where" and "how", as well as certain single digits and single letters, because they tend to slow down your search without improving the results. Google will indicate if a common word has been excluded by displaying details on the results page below the search box.

**Technical Information Sites** There are a lot of websites providing technical information, guides and troubleshooting sections. These generally fall into two categories; those that provide information on a single specific topic, such as networking (for example, [practicallynetworked.com](http://practicallynetworked.com)) and those that provide information on a broad range of ICT topics such as the ICT Hub .

**Manufacturers Websites** Manufacturers websites can be a great source of information when troubleshooting a particular piece of hardware equipment. They often contain electronic versions of documents such as manuals, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) or troubleshooting guides on topics such as installing and using the equipment in addition to software updates and driver downloads. Manufacturers also often provide an email support service for their products.

### Internet Service Provider

Your Internet Service Provider (ISP) is another good resource for help and information relating to Internet and email problems. They will most likely provide telephone support, but in some cases this can be expensive so it is a good idea to check to see if the information you require is available on their website before calling them.

ISPs will often have Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) and guides for common tasks such as setting up your email account provided by them. Support by email is normally available too.

## Forums

A forum is an online equivalent of a public meeting place where people can ask questions and receive replies from other community members. Forums can often provide a useful mechanism for seeking support or technical assistance when other methods have failed to resolve the problem or issue. They can fall into a number of categories such as those provided by and staffed by a company who's assistance you may be seeking (for example, Microsoft), or community forums that aren't directly associated with a company but offer community support for a particular product (or products). Finally, there are general technical forums that will aim to cover all aspects of ICT. They may be used at two distinct levels, you may search the contents for similar problems and/or solutions or you may ask a question on the forum seeking help on a specific topic.