

Possible barriers to communication

Considerations: How accurately can the message be transmitted? How precisely is the meaning conveyed? How effectively does the received meaning affect behaviour?

Sender	Message
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Over-familiarity with one system, ignore other possibilities• Ignore protocols (if there are any)• Assume recipient uses same system• Need to have evidence of recipient behaviour – observe• Copy everyone ‘just in case’• Flag everything as urgent (“cry wolf” – no one reads)• Too easy to hit Send on email without proof reading or checking sense• Use of jargon• Use of acronyms• Not empathising with recipients and how they will perceive messages• Insufficient knowledge of appropriate use of language for media – pdf, formal tone, writing for web, email etc• Laziness – copying text from reports/docs to eg web pages• Lack of overall communication skill• Refusal to use a standard method• Writing everything as if there is only ever one audience• Thinking “anyone can communicate” – not recognising it’s a specialism• Not conscious of cultural differences• Email tone can be misinterpreted• Technical versus user focused• Training expertise using technology• Cultural differences• No planning as to who/what/when before writing• Tone – eg sarcasm, humour, talk down – one size fits all• Assume recipient will ‘go and look’ eg follow loads of links	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Timeliness of message – is it still fresh/appropriate?• Volume – eg lots of email just seen as ‘noise’• Incomplete information• Too many messages – dilution• Appropriate subject line• Language used/terminology• Long URLs that aren’t clickable• Size of message – is it too long it won’t be read?• Is it ambiguous?• Does it give enough information?• Does it give the right information?• Does it tell the recipients what they need to do?• Is it likely to offend anyone?• Does it rely on the use of a particular piece of technology/software?• Can it be understood by eg the partially sighted?• Have alternative methods been made available?

Channel

- Any channel - no Guarantee will read/receive
- Can change personality in some channels eg email
- Lack of protocol documents to guide
- Chinese whispers – how direct is the channel?
- Limitations of technology (eg num chars in Twitter)
- Lecturers post PPTs to VLE – but students may not be able to print
- Assumptions of ability eg sight
- Applicability of the channel
- Using the VLE that students hate!
- Trying to target low-IT users by using IT!
- Assumption that Sent = Received
- Method of delivery may be down
- User may not be logged in
- Books and IT work together – not mutually-exclusive
- Technology = augmented reality
- ‘All staff’ emails – blanket approach ‘because you can’
- Use the latest ‘in’ thing as opposed to the most appropriate
- Different clients show different messages eg text as opposed to images
- Browser compatibility
- Shorten message too much to fit screen, browser, medium, size of paper etc
- No organisational primary channel so everything up for grabs
- Real time necessary?
- Connectivity issues
- Technological media – no body language to aid interpretation
- Submitting online forms that don’t have the fields you need
- Sustainability
- License cost – compatibility
- Paper – no need to wait to boot up
- Paper – interactive
- Technology – adverts annoying
- Paper – location specific
- Technology changing quickly
- Different media have different time expectations
- Reduction in open access of information

Recipient

- Variable interpretation
- Cultural differences – easy to offend
- Multi-tasking – attention span
- Can easily ignore
- Speed read -maybe pick out wrong bits as important
- Different practises in processing communication (eg emails read once a day/week/auto filter??)
- Language barrier
- Effectiveness can depend on who it’s from
- Information overload – constant noise!
- Frustration at poor choice of medium dilutes message
- “I don’t want to know this” versus “Why didn’t you tell me?”