**3.1** **I can review the benefits and drawbacks of IT tools and systems used in terms of productivity and efficiency**

When communicating with others, the use of email can be very helpful for a number of reasons. Information is recorded on both the sender’s and receiver’s device, and sometimes the cloud. The same information can be sent to many people simultaneously, and a variety of different attachments can be added to increase what is being shared. This is much more efficient than using another means of communication to tell people individually.

As a method of communication it is not however without its drawbacks. Notably, the maximum file size of attachments which can be added is sometimes too low, meaning one has to adapt by sending more than one email or choosing another method of communication. In addition, the sharing of personal information to the wrong person becomes a lot more easy if not careful. Finally, if the message being shared is short and temporary, the time taken to type and send an email may be more than necessary if they are a phone call away.

In place of physical meetings, using an application like *Microsoft Teams* can make it a lot easier to have meetings all over the world. If the basis of work is on Teams it also means organisations can have people working for them which are based from far away. Many people can join a meeting simultaneously, and the possibility of having cameras on can makes it less of a remote feeling than it is. Documents can be quickly added and shared in different teams, and several meetings may be going on simultaneously if needed. All of this being said, if people aren’t using cameras and are distracted with things around them then this can be less productive than in person, and it’s much harder to use physical props or items of support when not physically around people so is less efficient. Teams requires a good internet connection which some people may not have, and some systems might not be able to handle it.

Similarly social networking may be a great means of generating new business or means of communication with potential and existing customers. Staff using a social networking site however may need careful supervision to make sure they were not distracted, and there are other instant-messaging software around that don’t have this trouble.

Finally for a system, Apple computers and devices are popular for a number of reasons. They work well with other Apple devices and may be known for being stylish and mostly functional. They are however much more difficult to update than alternatives, and the number of available programs which work on them may be few compared to Android and Windows alternatives. Many apps are only available off the Mac, and some that are do not work well. A final drawback is their relative expense compared to alternatives, making them a potentially non-viable option for a small business.