

## Problems and complaints

### Foundation – Technology and environment

*Situation: You work in the Sustainability department of an international computer manufacturer. You reply to a comment about technology and the environment on a web forum.*

#### 1 READING ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

*You attend a workshop on information technology and sustainability. To start you off, the trainer asks your group to brainstorm the influence IT has on the environment.*

**Sustainability**

- development of non-harmful materials and technologies
- replacing harmful materials

**Consumption**

- non-renewable resources are used to produce technological equipment
- resources used to generate electricity for technology
- some renewable resources being used faster than they can renew

**Waste**

- manufacturing technology causes climate change
- pollution through used computers and electronic waste
- special disposal requires a lot of energy use

**Research**

- experts from all fields and locations can share research
- better, smarter solutions for disposing of waste and feeding the planet
- improved understanding of medical problems
- access to huge amounts of data from anyone, anywhere at anytime

**Paperless**

- email and online payments reduce the amount of trees used
- office printing often not needed

**Disrupting ecology**

- animal habitats destroyed by data centres / manufacturing plants
- pollution contaminates the food chain
- CO<sub>2</sub> consumption contributes to climate change

**Health hazards**

- toxic materials in computers & smartphones = health hazard
- people addicted to their smartphones
- technology addiction leads to obesity and physical problems

**Intelligence**

- smarter technologies respond to how we use them
- adjust themselves to reduce climate change
- we understand that we have an impact on climate change

A With a partner, organize the headings into positive and negative impacts.

B Describe in your own words how the following areas are being influenced by IT:

- health

- ecology

- climate

#### 2 UNDERSTANDING A PRESENTATION

*The trainer talks about how much energy some everyday technologies consume.*

A Before you listen, match the German words (1-6) to the English words (a-f) in the list.

- |                   |                               |                    |                  |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| 1 Akku            | 4 CO <sub>2</sub> -Fußabdruck | a battery          | d dissolve       |
| 2 (sich) auflösen | 5 in Zahlen bestimmen         | b carbon dioxide   | e greenhouse gas |
| 3 CO <sub>2</sub> | 6 Treibhausgas                | c carbon footprint | f quantify       |

B Read the statements below. Then listen to the presentation and complete the notes.

*The energy used by a single email can multiply quickly:*

- an ordinary email uses 4g of CO<sub>2</sub>.

- a 1 MB attachment pushes CO<sub>2</sub> emission up to 19g

- the forwarding and storage of the attachment could use as much as 50g of CO<sub>2</sub>.

- A traditional 4-page letter, sent by post, generates roughly 30g of CO<sub>2</sub>.

According to Netflix, the average customer has a carbon footprint of 300g per year, which is about 0.007% of the typical American household use.

