

13 Facts and figures

Learning objectives in this unit

- Talking about numbers and trends
- Asking for and explaining factual and numerical information
- Talking about news at work
- Reporting back

Case study

- Reaching target markets

Starting point

Discuss these questions. Choose one of the answers (if you disagree with the options, give an answer of your own).

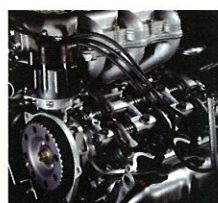
- 1 When is the best age to retire?
50 60 65 70
- 2 How long should the working week be?
20 hours 45 hours
35 hours 60 hours
- 3 What is a fair total income tax rate?
10% 25% 40% 60%
- 4 What proportion of a year should working people have as holiday?
 $\frac{1}{2}$ $\frac{1}{3}$ $\frac{1}{4}$ $\frac{1}{5}$
- 5 What was the most interesting decade to be born in?
the 1890s the 1970s
the 1940s the 1990s

Working with words | Numbers and trends

- 1 Look at the three pictures in the text. These are all examples of 'killer' technologies. Why are they called this? Read the text quickly and find out.

'Killer' technologies

When the steamship was introduced, it was known for blowing up. Eventually, however, the technology improved and it mostly replaced its predecessor, the sailing boat. Then along came the internal combustion engine, and the steamship in turn became redundant.



The petrol engine proved to be by far the most important technology of the early 20th century and car ownership grew by approximately 50% each year between 1910 and 1930. As

well as replacing what came before it, this 'killer' technology revolutionized the entire world economy in just over 20 years with its impact on transport, trade, road-building and oil.

In the second half of the 20th century, the transistor experienced a similar extremely fast growth. The number of transistors produced in the world has reached 10^{18} , compared to just over a million in 1955. The average price per transistor has fallen steadily from $\frac{1}{10}$ of a cent in 1975 to about one ten-millionth of a cent this year. In addition, chips* critical dimensions have shrunk

from 5,000 nm* to slightly less than 90 nm since 1974 and are continuing to fall.

The combustion engine and transistor were core technologies that changed society. They led to thousands of new developments, including mass tourism and television respectively, but as they opened new opportunities, they also destroyed older industries.



increased substantially. We have moved rapidly from 28.8 kbps connections to broadband, and in Europe, there was 206.2% growth in Internet usage between 2000 and 2007, thus reaching fractionally less than 40% of the population, or somewhere in the region of 322,000,000 people.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the Internet promises to bring about as much change as anything in history, and is developing fast. Internet speeds have

* chip = silicon chip which contains invisible transistors * nm = a nanometre = one billionth of a metre

- 2 Read the text again. Which of these statements are made or implied?

- 1 The steam engine was not a reliable technology initially.
- 2 The petrol engine was the dominant technology between 1900 and 1950.
- 3 Transistor production peaked in 1955.
- 4 The transistor was indirectly responsible for mass tourism.
- 5 Internet connection speeds were slow to improve.

3 What do these numbers refer to in the text? How do you say them?

- | | |
|------------------|----------------|
| 1 10^{18} | 6 20th |
| 2 28.8 | 7 206.2% |
| 3 1910 | 8 21st |
| 4 2007 | 9 5,000 nm |
| 5 $\frac{1}{10}$ | 10 322,000,000 |

4 Match the words / phrases in **bold** in the text to these words / phrases with a similar meaning.

- marginally: _____
- a little more than: _____
- a great deal: _____
- just under: _____
- roughly: _____
- about: _____

5 Work with a partner. Ask and answer questions 1–5. It is unlikely you will know the exact figures so use the words / phrases in 4 to give an estimate.

- What's the average price of a car (economy, mid-range, luxury) in your country?
- How much does your family spend on travel costs each month?
- What percentage of items in your home contain electronic chips?
- What Internet connection speeds are currently available?
- How many emails do you get in a week? What percentage of these are useful?

6 51▶ Listen to an Irish music producer being interviewed about music downloads on the Internet. What does he say about

- downloads of singles in Ireland?
- sales of singles in music stores in Ireland?
- sales of albums in music stores in Ireland?
- the Internet being a threat?
- the Internet being an opportunity?

7 Where would you put these phrases from audio 51▶ on the line?

grow gradually crash rise substantially drop slightly
stay the same grow rapidly a significant drop



8 Where on the line would you put the phrases in *italics* in these sentences?

- Oil price *shoots up* by 30% on Middle East worries.
- Gold *plummets* to all time low.
- There are worrying signs of *a significant increase* in unemployment.
- Doctors express concern at *a noticeable rise* in teenage smoking.
- We'll see *a slight fall* in house prices as mortgages rise.
- All quiet as FTSE *levels off*.
- A substantial drop* in exports predicted as euro rises.
- Cost of borrowing *rockets* as interest rates double.

» For more exercises, go to Practice file 13 on page 126.

9 Work with a partner. Using as many different phrases from 7 and 8 as you can, talk about changes in the cost of living in your country in the last ten years.

10 Work with a partner. Prepare and present a short talk about a company. Turn to File 27 on page 144 for instructions.

① » Interactive Workbook » Glossary

Tip | by and from ... to

Use *by* to refer to a difference.

Car ownership grew **by** approximately 50%.

Use *from* to refer to an initial figure and *to* to refer to a final figure.

The price has fallen steadily **from** $\frac{1}{10}$... **to** about one ten-millionth of a cent.

Business communication skills

Context

Caroline Rodgers works for SurAuto.com, a motor insurance company specializing in affordable insurance for young drivers. The company is considering new ways of reaching its target audience and Caroline recently attended a seminar on online advertising.

Exchanging information | Asking for and explaining factual and numerical information



- 1** Do you look at the ads and pop-ups that you see on websites or do you ignore them? How influential are they?
- 2** **52▷** Read the *Context*. Listen to Caroline reporting back on the seminar. What do these figures refer to?

1 18–30 2 198.4% 3 81.4% 4 \$300.4 m 5 154.4%

- 3** Match 1–10 to a–j to make phrases.

- 1 Could you fill us ... ____
 - 2 Apparently, a recent ... ____
 - 3 What's that ... ____
 - 4 Simon claimed ... ____
 - 5 Roughly ... ____
 - 6 So how should we ... ____
 - 7 Can we look ... ____
 - 8 According to a recent ... ____
 - 9 So the bottom line ... ____
 - 10 The overriding trend ... ____
- a in terms of growth?
 - b is that user-generated media will be our new advertising platform ...
 - c speaking, by 2010 it'll only be 39.7%.
 - d interpret this drop?
 - e in on the most relevant information from the seminar?
 - f is for technology, car and media brands to use this.
 - g that last year blog advertising accounted for ...
 - h at the figures?
 - i study shows a huge increase in advertising investment via this media ...
 - j survey, total projected expenditure ...

- 4** **52▷** Listen again and check your answers.

- 5** Put the phrases in **3** into these categories.

- a Asking for factual or numerical information: _____
- b Reporting factual or numerical information: _____
- c Summarizing findings / trends: _____

» For more exercises, go to **Practice file 13** on page 126.

Tip | supposedly and apparently

Use *supposedly* when a fact is not proven and to add an element of doubt to the claim.

Supposedly, podcast advertising will be the front runner over the next four years.


Use *apparently* to quote or repeat something you have heard from someone else.

Apparently, a recent study shows a huge increase in advertising.

- 6** Work with a partner. You and your colleague have been researching the popularity of blog advertising and have collected some information. Student A, turn to File 26 on page 143. Student B, use the information below. Read your information and report it to your colleague. Request the missing information 1–8.

Student B

	Facts and figures	Comments
No. people surveyed	1	
Type of people	Professional, global companies, different jobs / industries / segments	Provide reliable results – a good cross section
Survey results		
read blogs	2	3
read blogs once a week	51% (approx. 2,300)	
read blogs weekly for business information	53%	Need more information about who these people are and which blogs
read weekly on technology topics	4	
pass on information or content from blogs	5	6
indicate that blogs influence their purchase decisions	53% (approx. 2,385)	Very important information for us!
are thinking of starting their own blogs	7	8

 » Interactive Workbook » Email

Key expressions

Asking for factual / numerical information


Could you fill us in on ...?
 Can you give us the low-down on ...?
 Can we look at the figures ...?
 So what are the facts and figures?
 How do these figures compare ...?
 What's that in terms of (growth)?
 How should we interpret (this drop)?

Reporting factual / numerical information

According to (a recent survey), ...
 Apparently, a recent study shows ...
 Supposedly, ...
 Roughly speaking ...
 (Simon) claimed that ...
 (Simon) assured us that ...

Summarizing findings / trends

The bottom line is ...
 The overriding trend is ...
 In general, ...
 Overall, things are looking positive / up / gloomy.

 » Interactive Workbook
 » Phrasebank

Practically speaking | Talking about news at work

- 53▶** Listen to three short conversations about news at work. Which one is about
 - relationships? ____
 - a missing item? ____
 - leaving the company? ____
- 53▶** Listen again. Which of these phrases can you use to introduce the topic of news, repeat news you have heard or respond to news?
 - Rumour has it ...
 - Surely not!
 - I spoke to (Robert) and he told me that ...
 - Did you hear the latest about ...?
 - According to (Sam), ...
 - That's nonsense!
 - (Anna) says that ...
 - Have you heard the news?
 - Apparently, ...
 - You'll never guess what I heard ...
- 3** Work in groups of four. Each person thinks of two pieces of news. Work with a partner and share your first piece of news. Change partners and share your second piece of news. Refer to the *Useful phrases* on page 135.

Language at work | Reported speech review

1 Work with a partner. Discuss how you could report these things your manager said to you using *say*, *tell* or *ask*.

- 1 'Contact Helen immediately if you have any problems.'
- 2 'Could you come back a little later? Is that OK?'
- 3 'Do you know when Jan is getting back?'
- 4 'Have you seen Mr Smith?'
- 5 'I always feel a bit nervous when I get on a plane.'

2 We can use other reporting verbs that summarize what people said. Discuss how to report the following in as few words as possible. Use the summarizing verbs in brackets.

- 1 'I'm really grateful for your help.' (thank)
He thanked me for helping him.
- 2 'Go on, apply for the promotion.' (encourage)
- 3 'I'm afraid I haven't finished the report yet.' (apologize)
- 4 'No, no – this mistake was not my responsibility at all.' (deny)
- 5 'I won't do your shift on Friday.' (refuse)
- 6 'I can reduce the price by €200.' (offer)
- 7 'OK. I see your point and I'll look at the terms and conditions again.' (agree)

» For more information and exercises, go to Practice file 13 on page 127.

3 **54▶** Work with a partner. Listen to four extracts from a meeting at a cable company.

- 1 Student A, make notes on what the speakers said in extracts 1 and 3. Student B, make notes on what the speakers said in extracts 2 and 4.
- 2 Ask and answer questions about the meeting. Student A, ask about extracts 2 and 4. Student B, ask about extracts 1 and 3.

Extract 1

- a What did John say about Lisa?
- b What excuse did Peter give for missing the meeting?
- c What did Anna say about the airport?

Extract 2

- d What did John ask Peter?
- e What did Peter say about the Europe figures?
- f What did Peter say about the Venezuelan issue?

Extract 3

- g What did Anna ask Peter?
- h What did Peter say about the US figures?
- i What did Peter promise to do?

Extract 4

- j What did Anna want to know?
- k What was Anna's main complaint?
- l What did Peter guarantee?

4 Work with a partner. Take turns to report a conversation you have had, saying who said what. Choose one or two of these situations (or think of your own situations).

- a difficult situation with a customer or colleague
- an encounter with a policeman or someone in authority
- a misunderstanding with a colleague or friend
- a meeting you attended that a colleague has missed
- a piece of exciting / interesting news from a friend or family member

i » Interactive Workbook » Exercises and Tests

Reaching target markets online

Background

New venture at MPS

Digital music sales will more than double in the next few years and the majority of the revenue generated will be from the ringtone industry. According to business analysts, personalized data services for mobile devices, from ringtones to screensavers, are currently a \$20-billion global business. However, competition is strong in this area and companies have to be willing to pay premium prices to advertise on websites which will attract their target market.

MPS is based in Germany – one of Europe's biggest markets for personalized mobile phone accessories. Its core business is

acting as a 'middleman' between the music industry and the mobile phone companies. MPS negotiates rights for music recordings with the music industry and then enters into contracts with the mobile phone service providers who in turn offer the music as downloadable ringtones on their corporate websites.

MPS is aware how huge the ringtone industry has become and has decided to set up a division dedicated to offering ringtones direct to the end-user. Their Internet platform is ready to do business, but they need to decide where to advertise.

The Expert View

Consumers are no longer the passive recipients of advertising messages delivered through TV, radio and print media. Many advertisers try to reconstruct the old, one-way mode of communication over the Internet by using banner advertising, email campaigns, pop-up adverts and text messaging. But in the new media environment, communication is increasingly interactive and controlled by consumers, who direct their own information searches, participate in online communities, use RSS feeds and create blogs. The challenge for advertisers is to adapt their approach, to create a real dialogue that meets consumers' changing expectations.

Dr Stan Maklan, Senior Lecturer in Strategic Marketing
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Discussion

- 1 What is the target market for mobile phone accessories?
- 2 Is it 'ethical' to encourage people to spend their money on these types of accessories?
- 3 What sort of websites would provide the best advertising platform for ringtone companies?

Task

Work in groups of three. You have each researched facts and numerical information about one Internet site which could be suitable as an advertising platform for MPS. Student A, turn to File 28 on page 144. Student B, turn to File 35 on page 146. Student C, turn to File 44 on page 148.

- 1 Read your information. Decide how the facts and figures may influence your decision to advertise on the site (e.g. continuous growth of visitors = more exposure to potential customers). Make notes under these headings.
 - Name of site
 - Facts
 - Figures / Trends
 - Interpretation / Comments
- 2 Report the facts / figures / trends to the rest of your group.
- 3 While you listen to your colleagues, record the information under the same headings as in 1.
- 4 Check you have understood everything correctly. Ask for interpretation of the facts / figures where appropriate and add these to your notes.
- 5 In your groups, decide which site would be most suitable for MPS to advertise on and why.
 - Is the website well established?
 - Will it survive and be worth investing in?
 - Does it attract enough visitors?
 - Do its visitors fit your customer profile?
 (Read between the lines!)

Case study