Pauline Foster

Which single technology has most helped changed your life? How?

10 years ago - was it so little time ago? - I was offered a fantastic new job the other end of the country - what to do? We had been reading about a phenomenon sweeping America - e-mail and the "world wide web". Nervously, we ordered some modems from the States and set up a system. In order to transfer any data we had to prearrange a time to go on line at exactly the same moment. 12.01 precisely - the excitement to see that first Excel file coming through and it only took 4 minutes! Later CompuServe arrived and a system where we could go on-line and pick up our e-mails at any time. It only crashed two or three times a session and cost about £50 a month – bargain! It took about 5 minutes to get the system "on-line" each time - but hey, that was time to make a cup of coffee. Suddenly I could work with colleagues in London, Sydney, New York, as well as Bristol, whilst sitting in my pyjamas feeding the baby. The world opened up and work and a young family were suddenly a feasible possibility.

P.S. That baby (now 7) now e-mails friends and relative's regularly, frequently uses the phrase "just Google it", sends instant message texts, is constantly showing me "better ways to do it" and wants her own web site.