

Briefing

Many workers in the IT industry will be involved with sourcing, comparing and selecting IT-related equipment and software. This unit provides the language for dealing with these tasks.

Students practise: comparatives and superlatives through product comparison; language used to talk about money when evaluating the costs of different IT equipment; asking polite questions when doing product research; making recommendations based on product summaries.

Web hosting

The main technological point in this section is web hosting. When a company has a website, it has to be stored ('hosted') on a server. There are several ways to do this. The cheapest is to use a commercial **hosting service** to store the website on its own computer along with several other companies' websites. This is called **shared hosting**. With this, each website may be quite slow because the server has to deal with many websites at the same time (especially if another website on the same server is heavily used). To overcome this problem, the company can buy its own server to put on its own premises. The downside is that the company is completely responsible for ensuring the server is working continuously. If a problem occurs during the night, an employee must be able to deal with it at short notice. Not every company finds it efficient to do this, so a common solution is to use a **dedicated hosting** service. This is similar to shared hosting, except that the company effectively hires a single computer in the hosting service's data centre, together with 24-7 support, and retains the speed advantages of having no other sites on the server. Hosting services are often priced according to the server specifications, bandwidth (maximum amount of data transfer allowed) and the number of IP addresses allowed. An **IP (Internet Protocol)** address is a sequence of numbers and letters that is unique to each server or website and which can be used to identify it on the internet.

IT costs

A task that many IT workers perform is to evaluate the costs of IT equipment to decide which is most cost-effective for their company to purchase. Usually, rather than just looking at the obvious upfront costs, consideration is given to **TCO (Total Cost of Ownership)**, the total of all the costs of owning something. For example, a smartphone may or may not come with an upfront cost, depending on the deal, but there will be usage costs such as charges for phone calls, data and messages (or, in some countries, a monthly charge which covers all of these up to certain limits). Other items that may contribute to TCO include training, maintenance, servicing, insurance, consumables such as printer ink, electricity and **warranties**.

Product research

Before high speed internet connections were common, software was generally sold in physical packages: for example, on CDs. This traditional method still exists but in most cases, it is also possible to download the software over the internet. Either way, generally, the user pays a price for the initial purpose, which allows usage of that version for as long as desired. Then every time there is a major upgrade to the software, the user can choose to pay an additional fee (usually significantly less than the initial purchase price). This pricing model is known as **traditional pricing**.

Nowadays though, as high speed internet connections are becoming the norm, new ways to price and sell software have appeared. Many new companies are providing their software only on the cloud, meaning that much of the processing done by the software occurs on the company's servers rather than the local computer, and data is stored on the software vendor's servers. This system is also called **software as a service (SaaS)**. Usually the user pays monthly rather than a one-off fee; this is called **subscription pricing**. There are often several levels of service, with higher levels carrying higher monthly fees. This is called **tiered pricing**. Sometimes the lowest level is free in order to tempt people to try it and upgrade later for more features; the pricing model where there is a free version as well as a paid version is called **freemium pricing**.

A final pricing model is to offer the software for free but to include advertisements within it to fund it. This is called **freeware** or, sometimes, **adware**.

Making recommendations

CAD (Computer Aided Design) software is used in a variety of industries, including engineering, architecture and filmmaking, to replace traditional hand-drawn technical drawings, blueprints and animations. It is often very versatile and in addition to two-dimensional representations it can also be used in three dimensions. Output can include technical drawings for builders and others to follow, though this feature is not so useful for graphic design. CAD software can often also work out the amounts of material that are needed and in some cases can send instructions to machines to make the components that it has been used to design, this function being especially useful for manufacturing uses. To do this, though, it needs to output data in a format that the machines can understand; **file format compatibility** is thus important here.

Business matters

In this section students make recommendations for hosting services and a web content management system (web CMS). There is work on the language of presentations, while students give presentations in which they make and explain recommendations.

Further reading

Use the following keywords to search the internet for websites which give more in-depth information about the topics covered in this unit: dedicated hosting, TCO, pricing models, CAD, web content management system.

Teacher's Notes

Warm-up

Ask students to discuss the notes they made for homework from the previous lesson about factors in their choice of recently purchased items of IT equipment.

Web hosting

Speaking

- 1 To introduce this section, ask students to discuss in small groups how much time they spend choosing between IT items that they want to buy: do they make quick decisions or spend time considering all options?

Vocabulary

- 2 Before reading the web page, find out how much students know about website hosting. If they know nothing about this, explain what it is (see Briefing section) and that one of these is being advertised here.

Students read the web page and match vocabulary from it to definitions. The first of these (*dedicated hosting*) is important because it is key to what the advertisement is about. For item 3 you could elicit from students what they think the opposite is (*downtime*: time when the service is not working, something the provider would want to minimise).

1 dedicated hosting 2 guarantee 3 uptime
4 minimum 5 bandwidth 6 IP address

Reading

- 3 Now that students have the vocabulary needed to understand the advertisement, they answer some comprehension questions.

- 1 We can send our specifications to them.
- 2 guarantees: will replace hardware within twenty-four hours; 99.99% uptime; support: 24-7 (available any time)
- 3 Yes, we can use our current server OS licence.
- 4 Yes. With all plans, you can have an unlimited number of websites on the server.
- 5 No. Plans are for a minimum of six months.
- 6 It depends on the plan: up to 2 TB, 5 TB or 25 TB.

Language

Most students at this level will be familiar with basic comparative and superlative structures. Here, this knowledge is extended by looking at *as ... as*, *less*, *the least* and comparison of nouns.

- 4 For controlled practice, students complete the gaps in the product comparison, using the words in brackets and grammar from the Language box. Before they begin, make sure they are aware that more than one word goes in each gap.

1 the most powerful 2 more drives than
3 the same uptime 4 less bandwidth than
5 the most bandwidth 6 the same set-up fees
7 higher than 8 the highest 9 the most expensive

Pronunciation

- 5  23 Students listen to four sentences containing language from the Language box and mark the stressed words. This activity also prepares students for Speaking Activity 6.

- 1 Dedicated hosting is more secure than shared hosting.
- 2 The Basic plan gives you more bandwidth than the Superior plan.
- 3 Websites run faster on dedicated servers than on shared servers.
- 4 Of the three, the Basic plan has the least powerful processor.

Speaking

- 6 In pairs, students use the language from the Language box and the prompts given to ask and answer questions about the hosting service in the HostElite advertisement. Remind them to use appropriate stress. During feedback, you could ask a more confident pair to model for the rest of the class. An example may be useful:
A: *Which plan has the largest disk capacity?*
B: *The Premier plan. It has a larger disk capacity than the others.*

Extra activity

Ask each student to make a list of specifications of their mobile phone. Then, in pairs, they compare each other's specifications.

Alternatively, they could use equipment other than mobile phones (especially if they can prepare, perhaps for homework, by looking up specifications in manuals or brochures or by checking them online).

Listening

- 7 ▶ 24 Tell students that they are going to listen to two workers in an IT company talking about the dedicated hosting service advertised in Activity 2. Ask them to read the questions in preparation. This activity practises listening for specific information and also, in a small way, for inference.

When students have finished, you could ask them, in pairs, to discuss which plan is most suitable for the company. They should be prepared to give reasons for their answers.

1 b 2 b 3 b 4 c 5 a 6 b

Question 2: Students know from earlier that dedicated hosting isn't cheap, so the company is unlikely to be small.

Question 6: The fact that they had over 10,000 customers in the previous month indicates that the customers are more likely to be individual consumers than other companies.

Extra activity

To consolidate the work in this section, ask students to write an email to their manager, explaining the most important differences between HostElite's hosting services and recommending one plan for the company in the recording. They should give reasons for their recommendation.

IT costs

Speaking

- 1 This activity, the lead-in for this section, asks students about the electronic devices that they own and would like to own. Consider running this activity with books closed so that students do not use clues from the next activity. The questions can be written on the board or even form a running dictation.

Vocabulary

- 2 Students match words to form collocations relating to IT accessories, costs and services. Make sure they are aware that more than one answer is possible. Some of the words will have already come up in the last part of the previous activity. Also, some of the vocabulary, such as *licence*, is review from earlier units but check that students know *extended*, *charger* (*recharger* came up in Unit 3), *reader*, *battery* and *spare*.

1 internet 2 card 3 USB 4 training
5 spare 6 battery 7 purchase
8 technical 9 memory 10 software
11 extended

Note that other answers may also be possible but are less common or are weaker collocations. Examples include: extended cables, technical course, extended battery, USB charger, spare charger, training cost, software cost, extended support, software support, spare card, extended licence, training licence, battery warranty, memory warranty.

Speaking

- 3 Students apply the vocabulary from the previous activity to the devices they discussed in Activity 1 by discussing the questions in small groups or with a partner.

Listening

- 4 ▶ 25 Tell students that they will listen to a manager talking about costs. The first time they listen, they simply work out from inference the kind of gadget she is talking about.

a digital camera

- 5 Students listen again, this time for specific information, and complete the sentences.

1 cost 2 spent, on 3 was, for 4 pay
5 in
total cost over one year: €694

Language

This Language box covers lexical aspects of talking about money that are often confused by students at this level. One way to introduce this is to ask students, in pairs, to work out a question for each item in Activity 5, then compare their questions with the information in the Language box. For example:

- 1 How much did it cost?
- 2 How much did you spend (on the memory cards)?
- 3 How much was it/the case?
- 4 How much do you pay (a month)?
- 5 How much is it/does it come to/does it cost in total?

- 6 For controlled practice of the language focus, students use the prompts to ask and answer questions about what they spend on various aspects of IT. If there is a possibility in your teaching context that this might be a sensitive issue or if students are too young to be spending their own money on such gadgets, students can instead make up their own figures. If you choose this option, give them time to prepare their figures before the pairwork begins.

- 1 How much do you spend on your internet connection?
- 2 What was your total spending on software last year?
- 3 How much do you pay for your mobile phone service?
- 4 What was the purchase cost of your computer in total?

Speaking

- 7 In this activity, each student has some details about costs for a particular item, as well as a TCO (Total Cost of Ownership) calculation worksheet with a column for both students' items. They share their information and then help each other to complete the worksheet. Before starting the activity, make it clear to students that they should use the language in the Language box and check that they know what *initial* means in *initial purchase cost*. Many students are likely to have mobile phones with a calculator function built in, so it is unlikely to be necessary to provide calculators.

One way to make clear the meaning of TCO is to ask students to think about their mobile phone. Ask them how much they spend on it in a year, including all the items associated with it that they mentioned in Activity 1, question 3. Then ask them to compare this with the initial purchase cost (if any). Finally, you could ask them about other items, such as printers and software, to elicit other items that can contribute to TCO.

This activity recycles the language of calculations from Unit 4, so consider reviewing this language area. For example, some basic calculations such as those that came up in the

activity in the previous paragraph could be elicited in open class before commencing the book work. If further practice is needed, ask students, in pairs, to work out the TCO of other equipment they own (for example, a laptop computer). They can make up their own figures if necessary.

Samiba DR750

Initial purchase cost: \$540
 Software costs: \$379.95
 Warranty: \$0.00 (included in purchase cost)
 Technical support costs: \$0.00
 Training: \$0.00 (not required)
 Other items: \$79.80 (spare battery)
 Total cost of ownership: \$999.75

Sundai TB10.6

Initial purchase cost: \$499.90
 Software costs: \$295 (\$45/year x 3 years + \$160)
 Warranty: \$39.90 (free for 2 years; \$39.90 for an extra year)
 Technical support costs: \$0.00
 Training: \$179 per person
 Other items: \$35.75 (case)
 Total cost of ownership: \$1049.55

- 8 In pairs, students talk about the differences between the items in the previous activity, thereby recycling the language of comparisons from the previous section.

Writing

- 9 Using the model email, students work in pairs to identify some useful features common to many text types in English: the topic of the email (usually at the beginning) and discourse markers (words showing the relationship between ideas) for adding a similar idea, adding a contrasting idea and indicating a summary.

With stronger students, you could ask them to think of other words with the same functions as those they identify in questions 2 and 3 (possible answers: *and*, *in addition* and *furthermore* for adding similar ideas; *but*, *in contrast* and *on the other hand* for adding contrasting ideas; *in summary* for indicating summaries).

- 1 the first sentence
- 2 also, however
- 3 overall

- 10 Students write an email incorporating the features they discovered in the previous activity. This also recycles language of comparisons from the previous section.

Extra activity

Students choose one device they talked about in Activity 1 and write down estimates of the costs of each item associated with it. They then work in pairs and ask their partner about their list. They should use language from Activity 2 and the Language box.

Product research

Speaking

- 1 In the first section students were asked about how quickly they made purchase decisions for electronic items. Now that they have the vocabulary from the previous two sections, they expand on this point by talking about the factors they consider during these deliberations. In their responses, students may mention reliability and performance, among other things.

Reading

- 2 Students read a web page about pricing models commonly used for software and match them to the features listed.

1 freeware 2 subscription pricing
3 traditional pricing 4 tiered pricing/freemium pricing
5 subscription pricing 6 freemium pricing

Extra activity

Ask students to work in small groups and think about software they have bought or used. What pricing model(s) did they use? They should be prepared to explain their decisions.

Listening

- 3 ▶ 26 Students listen to three salespeople describing software that they sell and decide which of the pricing models from the reading each person describes.

1 traditional 2 freemium 3 tiered, subscription

- 4 In preparation for the language work that follows, students listen again and complete the questions.

1 how much it costs 2 if there's a 3 what the price is
4 how many

Language

When researching products for potential purchase, IT workers will often have to speak with people they have not previously met in order to obtain information. As they are representing their company, they have to pay more attention to politeness than normal. Indirect questions, such as those they just heard in the listening, are useful for this.

With books closed, ask students, in pairs, to work out the rules for forming indirect questions by looking at the sentences in Activity 4. Then ask them to read the Language box to check.

Pronunciation

- 5 ▶ 27 Play the recording and ask students to mark the intonation as rising or falling in the audio script on page 76. Then ask them to practise asking and answering the questions (or indirect questions they generate themselves) with a partner, paying attention to their own and their partner's intonation.

1 ↗ 2 ↗ 3 ↗

Reading

- 6 Students read two specification sheets for databases and answer some questions about them. A further question for stronger students could be to decide whether each is cloud-based software or software to be installed on individual computers (cloud computing for Microforce Hypernamic – monthly pricing is feasible for cloud-based services but not for locally installed software; locally installed software for Jozo Premier – it has a fixed price per version).

1 Microforce: Freemium; Jozo: traditional
2 Microforce: depending on the plan, on the internet, by email and/or by telephone; Jozo: on all plans: web, telephone and/or email
3 a one location b one location

Speaking

- 7 In pairs, students look at three different people or organisations – a freelancer, a small company and a large government department – and discuss which of the packages they just read about is most suitable for each.

Suggested answers

a freelance person: Microforce's Free plan, because of the low cost and because features are likely to be OK for one person.
a small company: Again, Microforce's Free plan as three users at one site are allowed. If larger features are required, the Microforce standard plan is still likely to be cheaper at \$120/year than Jozo at \$699 until an upgrade is needed.
a large government department: The choice is between Microforce's Enterprise plan at \$300 per year or Jozo at \$699 until an upgrade is necessary. Microforce will probably be better if the department has more than one site, as the price includes unlimited site licences.

- 8 In pairs, students practise the language from the Language box by roleplaying a customer and a software provider's representative. They ask and answer questions about the software in Activity 6.

Reading

- 9 Students read an email about the freelance person mentioned in activity 7. They find and correct a mistake. In addition, to review the writing work from the previous section, you could also ask them which sentence introduces the topic of the email (it's the first sentence).

They have a free plan which allows up to three users at one site.

Writing

- 10 Students write an email to the manager of the government department or the small company mentioned in Activity 7, advising on which package is suitable. Alternatively, they could write emails to both. They should make sure that the topic of their emails is indicated clearly through a topic sentence.

Extra activity

For homework, students could be asked to find an item of software that matches each pricing model in Activity 2. In the next lesson, they can compare the results of their research in small groups.

Making recommendations

Speaking

- 1 This section begins by asking students to think of a device or a software package they have used and tell the rest of their group whether or not they would recommend it to others, with reasons (what they say is picked up again in the extra activity at the end of this section).
- 2 If your students are likely to already know what CAD (*Computer Aided Design*) is and does, elicit as many of the things it can do as they can come up with, providing vocabulary as necessary. If your students are unlikely to know, the Course Book provides a glossary explanation of CAD. Either way, make sure that the items in the box are covered (note that *OCR*, *audio*, and *browser* are recycled from earlier in the book). Ensure that students understand the meaning of all the vocabulary in the box.

These features would be useful for CAD: 2-D drawing tools, 3-D drawing tools, good compatibility with file formats from other software, network capabilities. Opinions may vary about the others.

Listening

- 3 ▶ 28 Students now listen to three people talking about their companies' requirements for CAD software. On this initial listening, they simply identify how large each company is.

- 1 small company (1 person)
- 2 small company (14 people in total)
- 3 medium-sized company

- 4 There are two stages to this activity. First, play the recording again and ask students to take notes on each company's CAD requirements. Depending on your students, you may want to play it twice, with an opportunity for pairs to compare and modify their notes in between.

When students have satisfactory notes, draw their attention to the CAD product summary. Discuss with them how useful such summaries are when evaluating software or hardware. Check that they understand the vocabulary; some of it, such as *licence*, *open source*, *support* and *forums*, is recycled from earlier in the book. Then put students in pairs and ask them to use their notes to decide which software is best for each company. Note that they are not expected

to express their decisions as recommendations just yet. The important point is not that students choose the answers given below but that they can justify their decision well.

Suggested answers

(To reflect thinking through answers. Use as a guide only.)

- 1 SuperCAD, as it's free (and he is looking for something low-cost). Most of his work is in 2D and as he is not certain he will need 3D in the future, it's not necessarily a good idea to pay for it. This package does have limited 3D tools, though. SuperCAD does not have good training but this isn't a problem because he is good at working out how to use software by himself. The only problem might be if he needs support; the forum may provide quick answers but might not. As he is working by himself, networking capabilities are not so important.
- 2 CADmium Pro. This and CAD 8-8-8 would both be reasonably suitable but as the company does not have a lot of money at the moment, the pay-per-month solution might work best. It does everything they need but their main issue is training. CADmium Pro has plenty of that.
- 3 Their main issue is file compatibility. CAD 8-8-8 has the highest ranking for this. As for cost, she says they are happy to spend money if necessary.

Language

Many students will have seen some of the language of recommendations previously. One way to present this is to ask students to try to express recommendations from Activity 4, writing what they say on the board and eliciting corrections as necessary. While doing this, make sure that all the language in the Language box is covered. Students may come up with other ideas as well.

Speaking

- 5 Using the language from the Language box, students roleplay conversations with the speakers from Activities 3 and 4, making recommendations for the best CAD software. Depending on your class, it may help to ask students to prepare by writing out the conversations, possibly in pairs.

Writing

- 6 Students write an email to a person of their choice from this section's listening, giving their recommendations for CAD software.

Extra activity

Students choose a device or software, perhaps the one they spoke about in Activity 1. They then roleplay recommending it to a partner. At your discretion, students can change partners and choose additional devices or software.

Business matters

This section focuses on presentations. Students read some information about a company and its website needs, listen to an example presentation and extract some presentation skills from it and, finally, give their own presentations.

Speaking

- 1 Put students in groups and ask them to discuss presentations they have previously heard or given. While doing this, they should come up with three items of advice for presenters. Then, in open class feedback, you could build up on the board a list of advice from each group. If circumstances allow, you could do this by asking a representative from each group to write their ideas on the board and then discuss them as a class.

Suggested answers

Speak clearly so the audience can hear you.
Prepare well.
Leave time for questions at the end.
Use notes.
Don't memorise the talk word for word.
Make sure you know the topic well.

Reading

- 2 Students read information about a fashion company and two services that it might benefit from: web hosting and a web content management system (web CMS). When they have done this, put them in pairs or groups to discuss which systems to recommend. Do not give feedback just yet; they will hear one view of the answers in the next activity.

Accept any answers that students can justify.

Listening

- 3 ▶ 29 Play the recording. The presenter is an IT consultant to the company mentioned in the previous activity. Recommendations are given about the web server and the web CMS. Students compare their recommendations from the previous activity with what they hear.

Server: option 2 CMS: option 2

- 4 Explain to students that there were three stages to the presentation: the introduction (which gives the topic of the talk and usually lists the main points), the main body (which gives more detail about each main point in turn) and the conclusion. Then play the recording again, this time so that students can complete the middle column of the table. With weaker or less confident students, it may help to play it through once before this, asking students to listen out for each stage.

Finally, put students in pairs and ask them to compare what they wrote. Stronger students could also be asked to complete the final column of the table with other suitable expressions.

Expressions in presentation

Introduction: First I'll give ..., Then I'll talk about ...

Body: Let's look at ... first, As for ...

Conclusion: So, in conclusion, ...

Suggested answers for further ideas

Introduction: First, I'll look at ..., Finally, I'll ...

Body: Let's talk about ..., Now ... is our next topic

Conclusion: To conclude, ...

Speaking

- 5 Students read a company profile for a new company. Then, in pairs, they decide which server options and web CMS systems from Activity 2 to recommend.

Suggested answers

(Accept any answers that students can justify.)

server: option 2

This is cheaper. There is no need for extra power. As the website content is mostly small files, large bandwidth is not very important. The company wants to keep costs low.

CMS: option 1

This has a lower cost. There is no need for the extra feature of option 2.

- 6 Using the information from the previous activity, students prepare a presentation. How you organise this will depend on the size of your class and the time available for the presentations (note that the presentations do not have to be completed before starting the next unit). Options include only selecting a few students to present, asking students to present to small groups or having students prepare in groups but having only one or two people from each group present, perhaps jointly.

It is important to give students a task while listening to others' presentations: in this case, they could be asked to note down the recommendations.

Preparing for the next unit

In preparation for **Unit 6**, ask students to list all the ways they communicate electronically and to think about how each of these could be used within an organisation, before the next lesson.