

## The digital economy – Its impact today and in the future

The digital economy is a term for all economic processes, transactions, interactions, and activities based on digital technologies. However, the digital economy is different from the internet economy as the internet economy is about internet connectivity, and the digital economy is about any of the numerous digital tools utilised in the economic world. The digital economy penetrates all aspects of society (such as the way we interact with others, our economic landscape, and the skills we need for a job) and is referred to as the fourth industrial revolution. It is and has the potential to change the way we live our lives, the opportunities we get, and the economic growth of a nation. This can be observed in Kenya; where mobile data is being used to recognise malaria infection pattern and locating hotspots which guide the government eradication efforts.

For me, the pandemic has provided an opportunity to approach school learning from a completely different perspective. Digital tools have been essential in supporting and facilitating my educational needs. Apps and websites like Kerboodle, Quizlet, Duolingo and My GSCE Science aid in my learning and help me revise for my exams. These websites also enable me to research and learn about topics I don't particularly understand. The app Teams has enabled me to communicate more efficiently with my teachers and participate in virtual lessons. This allows me to make comments and ask questions during the lesson, rather than having to email the teacher and have to wait a long period of time until they get back to you, making both your and your teacher's life easier. Teams also help me to stay organised as it comes with a calendar feature and sends me notifications whenever a meeting starts, or when one of the members of a team posts a new message.

Overall, the digital economy has had a positive impact on developing my learning skills, especially during the pandemic. It also has enabled the inclusion of support from my parents who have a much more efficient means of tracking my school progress digitally. However, on a more social level I have found that the limited access to smart devices such as mobile phones has presented social barriers and, in some cases, limited interactions with my peers.

In my opinion, the future of the digital economy needs to evolve to take stake of different cultural values and the ethical discussion/communication and dissemination of information. There are often stigmatism with social media platforms which can have a destructive impact on society on a national and international level. Recent examples of Donald Trump's tweeter feed have brought the USA to the brink of civil war, were as other examples such as Greta Thunberg have brought the younger generations together for a common cause. There is much debate that still needs to be had on freedom of speech and how this is balanced with what is ethical or factual to what is an indoctrinated thought or movement.