A stakeholder is someone who has an interest in a business. Usually due to either having an affect or being affected by the business decision.

We use modern technologies to communicate with business stakeholders. Common examples include websites & social media.

When communicating with others through modern technologies like websites, the inclusivity and accessibility of this communication is important. It's not ethical or illegal for us to ignore a group of people due to an individual characteristic like a disability.

Thankfully, modern technologies have many features that aid inclusivity & accessibility.

As mentioned, a stakeholder is someone who has an interest in a business. Examples of stakeholders include:

- Directors

- Employees

- Customers

- Owners

- Suppliers

All these people have a vested interest in a business and we will often need to communicate to them information, such as financial results, orders, goals/targets, an upcoming product release, and much more.

There are many different methods of communicating with a business, and selecting the right one is important. Below we'll look at some example communication platforms and some reasons for using it.

Platform	Reasons
Websites	Very public, so viewable by everyone. Once shared online, can be considered permanent as even deleted it can still be spread through screen captures. Good for sharing all kinds of content, including very detailed information and alternative media like videos. A good way of communicating with many types of stakeholders.
Social Media	An even larger audience as huge numbers access social media. Very public, and also can be considered permanent. Generally good for shorter and informal communications and wouldn't be appropriate for serious business communications. Generally, this would be used for communicating with customers, such as informing them of an upcoming product release.
Email	Quick to reach your target stakeholders, and more private than previous communication methods mentioned, though any email could be forwarded & shared. Best for a smaller number of people, like suppliers or directors, but could be used for a larger customer base if they've opted into receiving emails.
Voice Communication	Very private when compared to other methods as no record is stored and shared with others (unless recorded). However, there is no record for later reference where needed and generally can only be used for communicating with a very small number of people. Meetings with employees, owners or directors may use this through video conferencing.

Further Thought

What other methods of communicating with stakeholders might not have been considered here? Where might you use these other methods?

2. Aiding Inclusivity & Accessibility

There is an ethical and legal responsibility to ensure that a business takes appropriate actions to make themselves inclusive and accessible to all. Thanks to modern technologies, this has become increasingly possible.

Interface Design

Interface design is about the layout & formatting of the visual elements (e.g. text & images) of a page (e.g. a web page). Decisions made in regards to the interface design of pages will have a big impact on accessibility. For example:

- **Layout** – easily to locate menus and predictable, consistent positioning of elements make things more accessible. For example, someone with a cognitive disability will find it easier to navigate a layout that is consistent and simple.

- **Font type & size** – different fonts have different levels of readability. Highly decorative ones may look fancy but could be difficult to read, particularly for those with visual disabilities. Of course, the size of the text will also have an impact on the readability of the text.

- **Colours** – low contrast colour schemes can be very problematic for those with visual disabilities, such as someone with colour blindness. High contrast colour schemes may perhaps look garish, but are usually more accessible.

Thankfully modern technology allows us to adapt interfaces to our needs. The user interface of our operating system can be adapted with larger text & high contrast colour schemes, but we can also allow people to easily adapt our web pages and other software we provide.

Accessibility Features

Modern technology aids inclusivity & accessibility through the built-in accessibility features commonly provided by computer systems. Some examples of this include:

- **Screen reader support** – screen readers are software that will read out what appears on the screen. We can ensure our interfaces are created in ways that better support screen reader software. On websites, this might involve "alt-text" attributes for images and "lang" attributes for text.

- **Alternative text** – images are very problematic for visually impaired users as screen reader software cannot automatically describe them. We can assign alternative text to images so the screen reader can read that out instead.

- **Adjustable font type/size** – providing the ability for users to change the font typeface and size will allow visually impaired users to adapt text so that is readable by people with limited vision, without the need of screen readers.

- **Text-to-speech** – rather than designing the interface to support screen reader software, we can build in a text-to-speech feature of our own into our websites and software to allow people to listen to the page.

Flexible Work Hours/Locations

For some people with disabilities, particularly those with mobility disabilities, the time and location of work can be a major barrier between them and performing their job.

As we've learnt in previous lessons, modern technology, such as cloud storage, cloud computing & video conferencing has made it possible for individuals to work where they want and even when they want.

This is hugely beneficial for accessibility. If it is very difficult for someone to leave their home and get to work on a daily basis from 9-5, we can allow them to work from home and at a time that suits them.

Further Thought

What legislation makes it a requirement for businesses to make themselves accessible? Is there a limit on what businesses must do to meet this law?