



Sian

Oh, hi there! Just waiting to get through to IT support.

"Your call is important to us, please wait and you will be connected soon... you are number 199 in the queue"

I've been waiting for twenty minutes already! "Please wait and you will be connected soon" I've got a problem with my computer and I need to get IT support to fix it. Trouble is it takes a long time to get through to them. "Your call is important to us" I wish I knew more about computers so I could troubleshoot my technical problems.

"...you are number 199 in the queue"

Well, that took a long time. Turns out my computer has a virus and needs to be cleaned. So that's what I want to talk about today: troubleshooting problems and avoiding pitfalls when working online.

So what are some of the digital problems we can face as distance learners? One issue that all digital distance learners need to be aware of is keeping their work safe. Imagine working for hours on a project and then to lose it all! That's enough to make anyone mad! So always make sure you save and back up your work. Backing up means 'saving your work in at least two separate locations so that if you lose one the other one is safe'. It's a good idea to back up your work to the cloud. That's an online place to store files, so if something happens to your computer, you can always find your work again. Get into the habit of backing up your work: it could save you a lot of trouble if you do!

So what other dangers do we face online? As a distance learner you will be using the internet a lot to complete your studies. And a big threat to all of us online is infecting our computers with a virus or other malware. These are programs specifically designed to attack your computer and make it unusable or hand control of it over to somebody else. We all need to be careful to avoid this happening as there are thousands of virus programs out there trying to get onto your computer. The best way to protect yourself from digital attack is to have good security software on your devices.

Make sure you have up-to-date anti-virus software installed on your machine and scan your device regularly. You can also use a firewall. A firewall will block other computers trying to take control of your computer. And always make sure you keep your device's operating system updated – that way you get all the latest security updates you need to keep them safe.

Those programs will help protect your computer, but the way you behave is also important. Never install a program on your computer unless you are sure it is safe to do so. And always be careful when opening attachments in emails. Do you know the person who sent it to you? Have you scanned the attachment with anti-virus software?

Those are a few tips to help you avoid making the same mistakes I did! Usually, your distance learning provider's digital platform will be secure, but you can never be too careful when working online. So be careful out there!