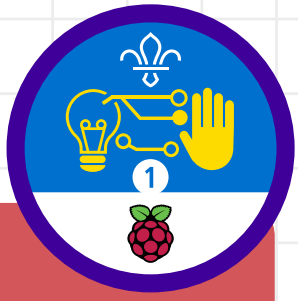
Computers in the real world



20–30 minutes

1 handout per young person, make sure you have enough adults to supervise the walk

Print handouts ahead of time

Outdoors, urban

Overview

This activity fulfills **Stage 1, Requirement 1** of the **Digital Maker Staged Activity Badge** (Show that you know what a computer is and understand that there are lots of uses for digital technology in everyday life. Think about where you see computer systems and technology in your day-to-day life, and about how digital technology helps make things better or easier) and **Requirement 3 of the My Adventure Challenge Award** (Go on a walk with a purpose).

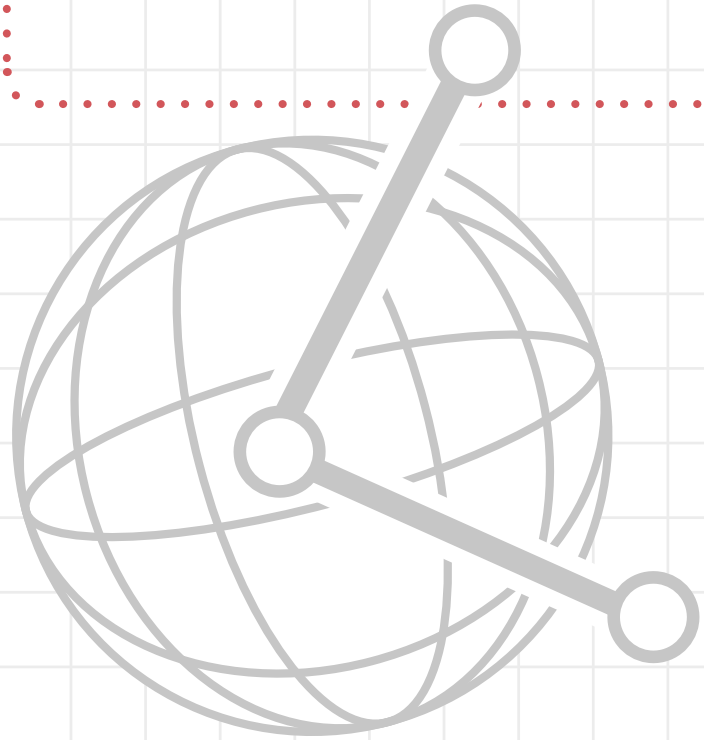
To complete the activity, Scouts will go for a walk outside, and identify different examples of how computers and technology interact with everyday life.

You will need:

- 1 printout of the 'Computers in the real world scavenger hunt' handout per young person/group
- 1 pen or pencil per young person

Key messages

- Computers and technology are everywhere.
- Computers interact with the real world, controlling many aspects of everyday life.
- Without computers, our world would be a very different place.



Computers in the real world

Leader instructions

1. Explain that in this activity, young people will be searching for objects which are either computers, or have a computer stored inside them.

2. Explain that computers are everywhere. They can sometimes be found in the most unlikely places.

3. Ask your Scouts: which of these objects is a computer?

   - Laptop
   - Tablet (e.g. iPad)
   - Cash machine (ATM)

4. The answer is that all of the objects above have computers inside them to make them work.

5. Explain that computers are inside most modern technology, and particularly in objects which:

   a. Are electronic
   b. Have buttons, a touchscreen or can be voice controlled
   c. Have a display, lights, speakers or make things move
   d. Can carry out instructions or tasks

For example, traffic lights have computers stored inside them. They wait for you to press the button before they change the lights, causing a real-world effect. The traffic light instructs drivers to stop their cars, and lets you know when you can cross the road.

Alternatives

- Use the blank template to create your own scavenger hunt, or challenge the young people to do it. You could include any examples of technology near you.
- If you are unable to go into a town, you could print out images of different forms of technology and hide them around your meeting place for young people to find and discuss.
- Search inside and outside your meeting place. Can you find any links to computers and technology? Remember: technology can be worn on your person or carried in pockets. Ask volunteers and young people if they have any devices on them.
- Challenge your group to count all of the computers in their home. How many can they find? Remind them that some examples may be less obvious than others.

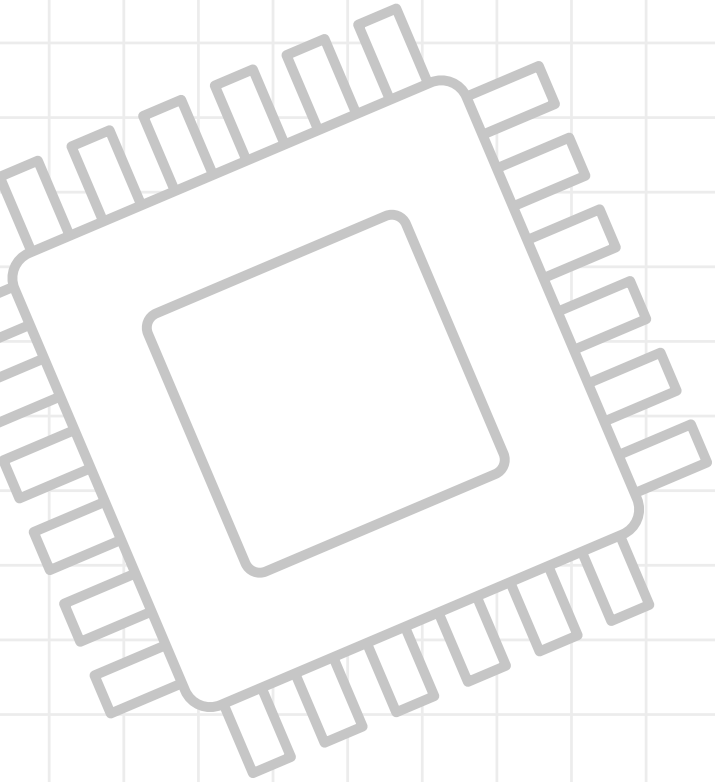
Computers in the real world

6 Ask your Scouts what they think the world would be like without computers and technology.

7 Recap that computers and technology affect all aspects of our lives. Without them, life would be very different.

Activity

8 Hand out the 'Computers in the real world scavenger hunt' sheets, and ask your Scouts to tick off each object they can find. Once they've located each object, ask them: 'How does this technology make things better or easier for people in their everyday lives? What job does it do?'



Adaptability

As an extra challenge, can you come up with ideas of how you could use a computer to solve a real-world problem, e.g. an alarm system for a tent, or a tree identification camera.

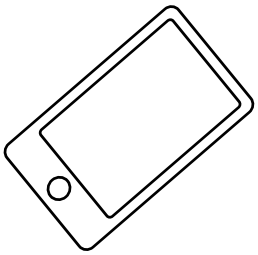
Community and Sharing

Young people should have the opportunity to describe why they think the objects they have found improve our lives or make it easier. They should be able to work in groups and hunt for the objects together.

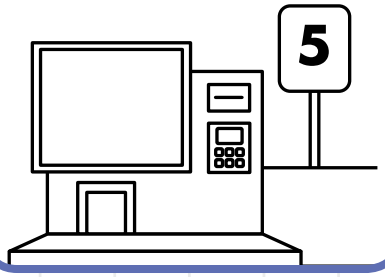
Computers in the real world scavenger hunt

All of the items below rely on computers and technology to work. Go outside. How many can you find?

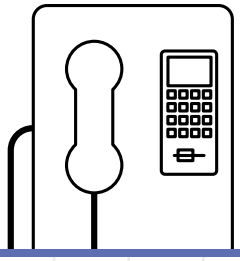
- [ ] **Smartphone**



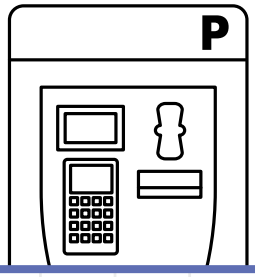
- [ ] **Supermarket self-checkout**



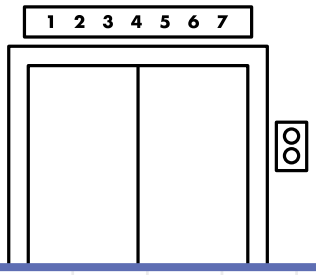
- [ ] **Payphone**



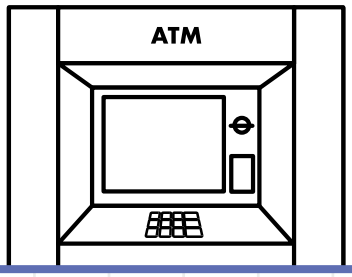
- [ ] **Car park ticket machine**



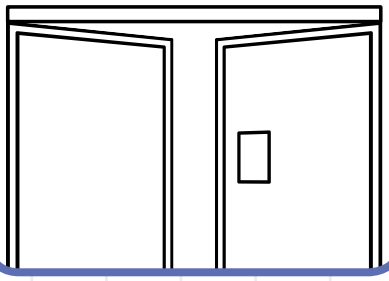
- [ ] **Lift**



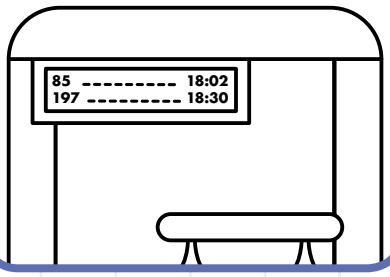
- [ ] **Cash machine (ATM)**



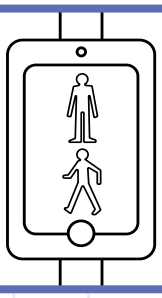
- [ ] **Automatic door**



- [ ] **Bus stop**



- [ ] **Pedestrian crossing**



Trivia

Did you know the first automatic traffic lights in Britain where installed in Princes Square, Wolverhampton in 1927?

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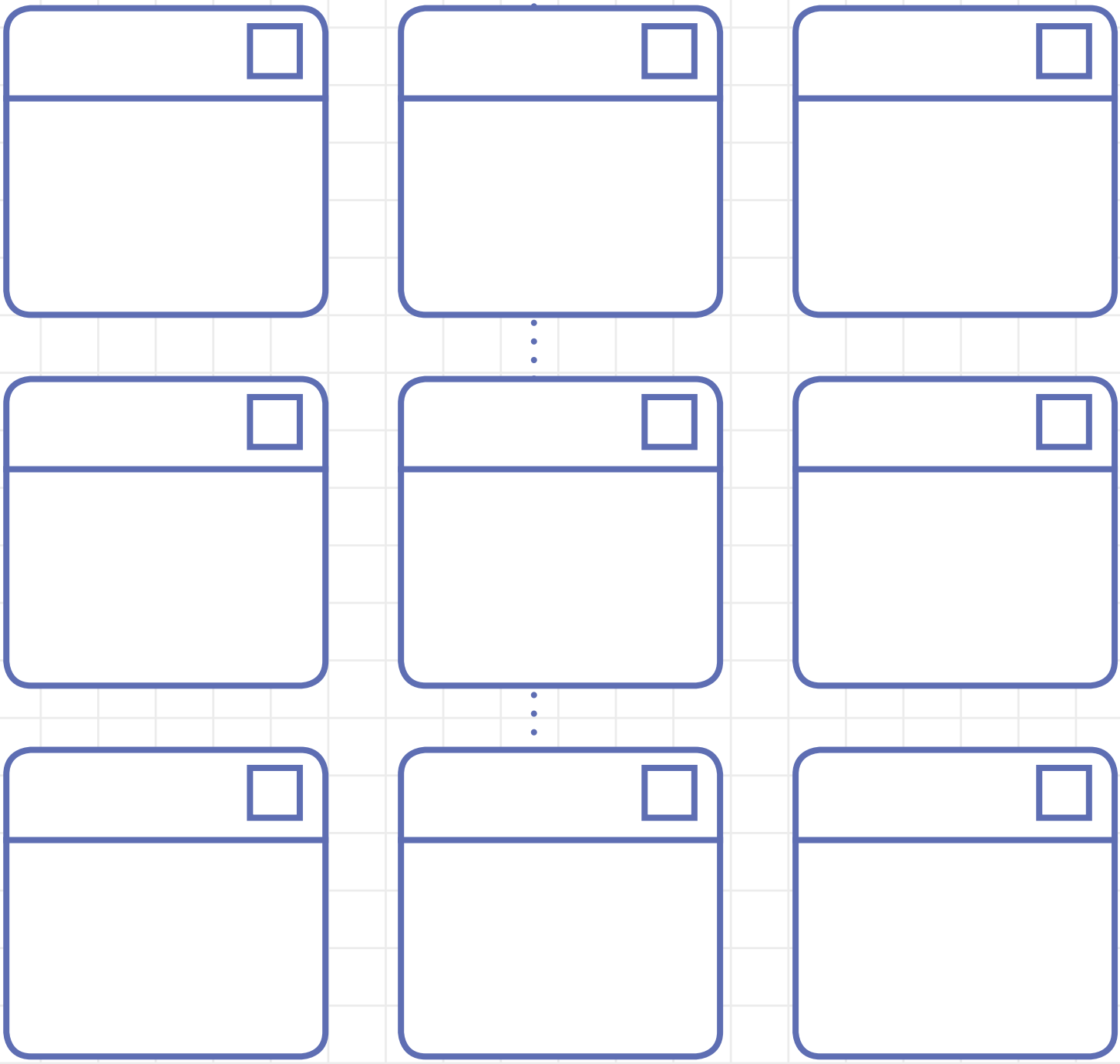
Create your own scavenger hunt!