**TECHNOLOGY ADVANCE**

Products have made huge advances in recent years, particularly electronic devices. This has been influenced by a number of factors, such as the ones mentioned below.

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| **Factor** | **Description** |
| **Increased functionality** | Most electronic devices now have several functions as opposed to one or two. For example, mobile phones now have a camera, video recorder, mp3 player, calendar etc. incorporated into them rather than simply being able to just make calls and/or text. |
| **Miniaturisation (portability)** | Circuit boards and internal components have become smaller and smaller over the years which has made products much more portable. E.g. the iPod shuffle - plenty memory but an absolutely tiny product in relation to its memory capacity. |
| **More powerful/faster operation** | Circuit boards have become much more powerful and much faster at operating therefore can power much more sophisticated technology. |
| **Durability of materials** | Modern materials have been developed which are much more durable and long lasting than in previous years. |
| **Planned obsolescence** | Products are designed to “break down” within a certain time scale and are difficult or impossible to repair. Companies incorporate this into their designs in the hope that the consumer will go out and purchase another one of their products - perhaps the new and improved version which has just been released. This means people hang on to their products for much less time than in the past.  It also means that companies have to come up with new designs and release them into the market much quicker than would perhaps have been necessary previously. |
| **Environmental considerations** | Many more people are conscious of the environment nowadays therefore companies are sometimes influenced by making sure their products are “green” or environmentally friendly – be it the packaging or the product itself. As well as this, they must consider the disposal of the product at the end of its lifespan. |
| **Costs reduced due to improved manufacturing methods** | Manufacturing methods have become much more sophisticated therefore the cost of manufacturing products has reduced. |
| **Fashion issues** | Fashion moves at a very fast pace nowadays and for many people it is important for them to keep up with the latest trend. This has had a huge impact on the design of products as companies now have to ensure that their products are “the latest thing” and completely up-to-date in order to sell them.  This means they have to constantly evaluate their products against the latest fashion and design around this. |