



WEARABLE

COMPUTERS

If a new piece of technology appears, it always seems strange at first. The science fiction writer Arthur C. Clarke said that advanced technology is just like magic to people who haven't seen it before. However, we soon get used to it. We shop at supermarkets every day and hardly notice what happens at the checkout as a laser scans our products. In the 60s, though, when the barcodes that make it possible were introduced, people thought it was an amazing idea.

The same is true of many things being developed today. If you knew what technology companies are working on, you would be surprised. One area where progress is being made very quickly today is wearable computers. **1** And a number of scientists and inventors are trying to find new ways to build them into clothes, watches and headsets. If they succeed, it will mean a new era in computing.

One exciting idea is the EyeTap. This is a kind of computerised camera which is worn over one eye.

2 It's far more, though, than just a digital camera connected to your head. The computer can also add images or information to the scene you are looking at. This could have many different uses and completely change the way people use computers.

Imagine, for example, that you are at a football match. If you are wearing an EyeTap, you can do a number of things. You can look at information and statistics on the player you are watching at that moment. You can read comments from other spectators which their EyeTaps transmit instantly around the stadium.

3 And you can do all this without missing a single moment of the action on the pitch. When the match gets a bit boring, you and your computer are already online so you can check your email and surf the internet without leaving your seat.

There are many other uses for this technology. Travel becomes a different experience. Information on timetables, tickets and possible delays is constantly available. You can leave your guidebook at home because you have instant access to any information you like about the sights you visit. You might even send live pictures from your headset to the internet.

4 The days of showing people your holiday photos when you get back home might be gone forever!

The EyeTap also means that learning languages changes. At the moment, learning a foreign language



means many hours of hard work. **5** If you need to know a word or phrase, the EyeTap will instantly display it for you. You might even be able to program your wearable computer to speak for you. Of course, people will still learn languages for all sorts of different reasons, but tourists need never be stuck for words again.

The EyeTap is just one example of how computers are becoming a part of every moment of our lives. It's not without its problems, though. **6** Will we need other people's permission to record them every second? Do we really want to be connected to a computer and to the internet every minute of every day? There's a danger that we might come to depend on this technology to help us in almost every aspect of our lives. That will probably be fine, as long as everything works well. But what happens when we get to the point where we need this technology for even simple tasks and then things start to break down?

3 Read the article again. Six sentences have been removed from the article. Choose from the sentences A-G the one which fits each gap (1-6). There is one extra sentence which you do not need to use.

- A** The whole idea of wearable computers raises a number of difficult questions.
- B** From machines the size of rooms, computers have got smaller, cheaper and smarter.
- C** Many people claim that this is unlikely to happen in the near future.
- D** Friends and family around the world can experience exactly what you are experiencing.
- E** You can still see through it while a computer records everything you look at.
- F** With a wearable computer, all that effort becomes unnecessary.
- G** Your own opinion can be added for everyone to read and respond to.

Word BOX



4 Find words or phrases in the article to match the definitions. You've been given the first letter to help you.

- 1** s..... f..... (n) imaginary stories about the future
- 2** c..... (n) place in a supermarket where you pay
- 3** l..... (n) special kind of bright, powerful light
- 4** b..... (n) small paper labels on products for identification
- 5** p..... (n) development
- 6** s..... (adj) more intelligent
- 7** t..... (v) send by radio waves
- 8** o..... (adj) connected to the internet
- 9** s..... (v) look at pages on the internet
- 10** b..... d..... (phr v) stop working because of a fault