

Title: **Case Study**  
**Information & Communication**  
**Technology in the West of England**

**Aidan Guy** chose to take an Advanced Apprenticeship instead of the traditional route to university after his A levels.

He's glad he did. Now aged 21 when many of his peers are looking for work after graduating from university, Aidan has a good job as an IT support engineer with Milsom Industrial Designs Ltd in Bath.

His employer is also sponsoring him to study towards a degree, which means he doesn't have to pay tuition fees. He is taking a part-time Foundation Degree in Computing at City of Bath College, after which he could move on to take the final year of a full honours degree.

"I will be 25 by the time I finished the course," he says. "But I will have eight years experience in a job and a degree. I wouldn't have been in this situation if I had gone straight to university after leaving school."

Aidan was a pupil at Norton Hill School in Midsomer Norton where he gained A levels in IT, Business Studies and PE.

He joined Milsom Industrial Designs straight from school as a trainee IT technician earning £6.50 an hour. He served his apprenticeship in his workplace with his training assessed by Brunel and Gordano Training Group Ltd, Bristol.

The company also sent him to college on day release, where he completed a National Certificate in Installing and Supporting IT Systems.

Training in an apprenticeship allowed him to learn his subject while also gaining practical, hands-on experience. "The stuff we did at school was all theory based. But doing the college course and then coming to work to do it made learning a lot easier," he says.

Aidan thoroughly enjoys his job. He is the only IT support engineer on site, which keeps him very busy. Responsibilities include building 'desktops' for new staff, maintaining the firm's network and offering general IT support for its main Bath office, and other sites in Weymouth and Yeovil.

He hopes gaining a degree will help him eventually progress into management. What qualities do you need to do his job?

"You need to be keen, and flexible with your time," he says. "A lot of the work you're doing, messing about with cabling and servers, can't be done during the day when other staff are working.

"Some nights I don't leave here until 7pm or later and you have to work the occasional weekend. So if you only want a nine-to-five job, I wouldn't recommend IT. You have to be self motivated and be prepared to work on your own."