Re-ordering a text

In the following text on the influence of technology, the paragraphs are not in the correct order. Can you rearrange them so that they make more sense?

1 Another example of the linguistic impact of computers on our daily lives is a term just opposite in meaning to online, and that is “offline”, which, not surprisingly, means turned off or removed from circulation. Thus, a manager’s direction to ‘take something offline’ would mean to turn it off, remove it from circulation, or to stop it altogether.

2 As we enter the 21st century, it is becoming increasingly clear that technology exerts a very significant and inevitable influence on our lives. We may define technology as the methods and materials used to achieve industrial, commercial, and social objectives. Technology is ubiquitous, and can influence our lives in the most unexpected ways. In fact, one might be surprised to learn that technology, and in particular the computer, has even had an impact on our language. Four examples will be provided to demonstrate such a linguistic influence.

3 In conclusion, technology, and the computer in particular, have a pervasive impact on our lives, even to the extent of influencing the way we use language from day to day. It is not difficult to find examples which demonstrate this reality. It is perhaps too early to determine whether this is good or bad but it is probably advisable to remain aware of the process.

4 The first example of the linguistic influence of computers on our daily lives can be seen in the term ‘online’. In the field of computers, the term ‘online’ is taken to mean that the computer is on; is up and running. It is common to hear managers use this term when they want to convey to their employees the need to have a project finished and ready to be used by a certain time, as in the example, “This project needs to be online by the end of September”.

5 The linguistic influence of computers on our daily lives can be seen in yet another example. In the 1970’s a science fiction serial entitled “Lost in Space” was popular for a number of years. One of the protagonists of the series was a computerised robot who would respond to impossible or difficult situations by exclaiming, “It does not compute!” over and over again to mean that he, or it, did not understand.

6 The way in which computers have influenced our language can be seen in one final example, the term ‘downtime’. This term is, of course, used to denote the time during which a computer is no longer working or functioning, because it has been turned off for one reason or another. It is not uncommon these days to hear people proclaim that they are in need of downtime, meaning that they need a rest or to remove themselves from a situation for a time.

Activity: Were your answers correct? Can you work out how you knew? Which words or expressions helped you make your decision?