

Principal Examiners Feedback

January 2012

Applied GCE

6951 01 – The Information Age

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Unit 1: The Information Age (6951)

General comments

The majority work seen was appropriate and gave the candidates good opportunities to meet the requirements of the specification. It is still the case that many e-portfolios moderated do not give any indication that the content is to be read in 100 years time. Where candidates do make this clear from the start, the work is more focused and suited to both audience and purpose.

Marking by centres is becoming more accurate and good examples were seen at the higher end of the mark range.

The specification states the e-book will be available to people using World Wide Web, and so they must be accessible using a web browser. The best e-books were produced using web authoring software and often make use of frames or similar techniques to improve the visual appearance and navigation.

Most assessors made appropriate comments on the e-record sheets which were helpful, and showed how the marks were awarded. This often helps the moderator to agree the marks awarded by the centre.

Strand (a) On-line services:

In this section, candidates should research a range of topics to show how online services are used and how they function. The topics should be those listed in the specification and the e-book should contain at least five of the services listed.

Some good examples were seen in which candidates described the facilities and services available, and evaluated them in terms of their functionality. The best work uses illustrations in the form of screen shots, photographs and sometimes small video clips to show for example how email is used.

Candidates should be using their own words and should not cut and paste from internet sources. Specific websites should be used to illustrate how the service works, rather than comparing the websites in terms of functionality and features.

Strand (b) Life in the information age:

This section is about how the technologies available to us impact on personal life, social life and working life. The majority of candidates are now covering this section correctly; however there are some who still place too much emphasis on how the technology works.

The better candidates are able to see the difference between this strand and the previous one. Their work covers how these aspects of peoples' lives have been changed by the use of information technology. Most candidates

find it easy to describe how they are using the technology in their own life style, however only the very best candidates are able to use good examples of how others' lives are affected.

Some of the best work includes interviews with candidates' peers and other adults. There were some good examples where candidates used the opportunity to introduce a short video or audio interview, for example, someone describing their use of email.

Strand (c) Digital Divide:

The coverage of this strand has improved in recent series, however there is a tendency for candidates to copy and paste material from internet sources rather than write in their own words.

Candidates often demonstrated limited research. They often produce only a general discussion of the divide with very little specific detail at the three expected levels. Most candidates find it easy to look at the divide at an international level, but few look in any detail at the divide that exists nationally or locally.

The measures taken to bridge the gap were often only briefly considered. Some of the better candidates use specific examples of working projects both at home and overseas that attempting to bridge the divide.

Strand (d) The e-book:

The specification states the e-book will be available to people using World Wide Web, and so they must be accessible using a web browser. The best e-books were produced using web authoring software and often make use of frames or similar techniques to improve the visual appearance and navigation.

More candidates showed better awareness of audience and purpose by demonstrating that the e-book will be looked at in 100 years time, often a simple introduction or title page would make it clear that they had understood the brief. However the language used in the e-book often does not match this purpose, and there were still examples where the work appeared to be written as a report to the teacher or in the form of a class presentation.

Standard ways of working were not always observed in that filenames were not meaningful and external assessors had difficulty in finding the start of the e-book.

Strand (e) Components and structure:

This strand covers a number of aspects of the work.

Better responses included an adequate range of appropriate components and were awarded marks at the top end of the range. It is important to note that for higher mark ranges the components need to be appropriate and used effectively.

It was sometimes difficult to decide if the components were ready made or original. Better examples included an assets list as part of a bibliography, or referred to the component in the text in a way that identified its origin.

Separate evidence of testing is still often provided in the form of test plans and screen dumps. As stated in previous examiner reports, this is not necessary. Testing is demonstrated by the fact that a fully functioning e-book has been produced.

Strand (f) Evaluation:

Most candidates managed to make brief evaluative comments about their e-book and their own performance. Candidates solicited and recorded feedback comments, often in the form of questionnaires. The inclusion of completed questionnaires alone does not provide evidence that candidates have acted on or analysed the feedback.

Standard Ways of Working

In most cases, the only evidence the external assessors had for this aspect was the bibliography and the file structures and names used by the candidates. In some cases, it was difficult to locate the e-book or e-portfolios of candidates, as these were often not well named.

Bibliographies are the main source of evidence to support the range of sources of information used by the candidate; too many candidates still give "Google" "Yahoo" and other search engines as the source of the information, when clearly the source was a website found using them. Many candidates only quoted web sites. The specification requires a wide range of different sources for strands (b) and (c).

General Administration

Most samples were correctly submitted with folders clearly labelled with centre numbers, candidate number and first 2 letters of surname and first of Christian name. It would help if the e-record sheet naming convention is the same

The centre assessor should use the e-record as an opportunity to help the moderator find the evidence required to agree the marks given.

Grade Boundaries

Centres are reminded that the GCE in Applied ICT is an Awarded qualification. As such, grade boundaries are subject to review each series for both written paper and coursework units.

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

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