Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2017

Pearson Edexcel GCE Applied in Information
and Communication Technology (6951)

The Information Age

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General comments

The majority work seen was appropriate and the candidates has good opportunities to meet the requirements of the specification. The work was seen to cover the full range of marks.

The aim should be to produce an e-book for an audience in 100 years' time. The higher achieving candidates includes an introduction on the first page, which outlined the audience and made it clear that it is for people in the future. This often helped the candidates to focus on the purpose of the e-book and helped to ensure it was fit for purpose.

Centres are reminded that the e-book should only use file formats that are listed in the Moderator's Toolkit, available on the Pearson Qualifications website. There were examples of work submitted in inappropriate file formats.

The e-book should be viewable in an internet browser.

Most centre 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

A good range of marks were awarded for this section, with some candidates scoring full marks.

Centres are reminded to use the specification to teach the topics required for this strand. There was some evidence of candidates spending a lot of time describing and evaluating topics that are not in the specification, this affected the marks that could have been accessed.

There were also examples of work copied from source without the candidate evaluating or commenting on the text copied.

More abled candidates produced very detailed descriptions where they described the purpose and functions of each of the services, supported by good examples. They also included evaluative comments, sometimes in the form of advantages and disadvantages of the service.

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.

It is important that the candidates provide examples and illustrations to support the points being made in their e-book, and to keep the reader engaged in the topic.

Strand (b) Life in the Information Age

This strand is about how the technologies available to us, impacts 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 more able candidates described how people's lives have been changed by the use of Information Technology, often using interviews with adults as a source of

information. Some candidates also take this as an opportunity to demonstrate recording skills by including brief sound files of the interview. Candidates should be encouraged to summarise and comment on the overall impact of ICT on life in the Information Age. This is essential to access the higher mark ranges.

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

In this section, it is essential that candidates use research from a range of sources and not just the internet, as was often the case, to gain marks above MB1. Candidates must use sources of information other than the internet. One of the main sources of evidence available to the moderator is the candidate's bibliography. Frequently this consisted of a list of URLs and nothing more.

Strand (c) The digital divide

An improvement in the coverage of this strand was noticed, there were some good examples of work in MB2 and MB3.

Candidates who achieved in the higher mark bands gave a detailed description of at least three factors contributing to the digital divide and went on to look at the impact of the divide and the measures taken to bridge the gap. At the lower end of the mark range, candidates tended to describe the factors but then fail to identify any measures taken to bridge the gap and, therefore, could not be awarded higher marks.

Some of the higher achieving candidates used specific examples of working projects both at home and overseas that attempted to bridge the divide. However, many candidates had focussed on projects for bridging the divide without considering their impact.

Candidates often gave a brief comment on factors such as wealth and environment but did not evaluate the impact or the extent. Government measures to bridge the gap were rarely mentioned.

Strand (d) What is an e-book?

The choice of software to produce the e-book has a major impact on this strand. Most candidates used appropriate software, although some centres still submitted a series of linked pdf files, which do not meet the specification requirements as an e-book.

The specification requires an e-book that can be read in a browser. The best approach is to use web authoring software, or other software that can create pages in html.

The e-book is intended for 100 years in the future, however, there were examples of language used in the e-book that did not match this purpose. There were also examples where the work appeared to be written as a report to the teacher or in the form of a class presentation. The inclusion of live internet links and YouTube videos which require a live link are not appropriate in the context of an e-book for the future.

Scrolling is becoming less of an issue, with higher achieving candidates using a variety of techniques to reduce scrolling or using frames and style sheets to reduce the effect of the reader. The most important thing is that the user is always able to navigate around the e-book and that vital links are not lost if the page scrolls.

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

Higher achieving candidates used suitable readymade components, which related to the topic discussed. Lower achieving candidates often included inappropriate multimedia, for example, in the form of un-necessary animated gif files. Occasionally, the candidates seemed to be unaware that the choice, positioning and mix of components had an effect on the e-books.

The use of original components is still rather weak. Candidates must use an adequate range of appropriate components to be awarded marks at the top end of the range. It is not sufficient to include components that are not in some way related to the page being look at.

Separate evidence of testing and design drawings are still often provided in the form of test plans, screen dumps, and page layout drawings. 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. No further evidence is required.

Strand (f) Evaluation

The higher achieving candidates attempted this aspect well and evaluated both their own performance and the performance of the e-book. They also incorporated feedback and made recommendations for improvements. In most cases, the evaluation had been placed correctly outside of the e-book.

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 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 to be used for strands (b) and (c).

General administration

The sample should be sent to the moderator on a single CD for each unit, the CD should contain all the candidates in the sample. The work of the highest and lowest scoring candidates should also be included as extras, if not already in the sample selected.

Samples should be submitted with folders clearly labelled with centre numbers, candidate number and first two letters of surname and first letter of forename. It would help if the e-record sheet naming convention is the same

[centre #]_[candidate #]_[first two letters of surname]_[first letter of forename].

The centre assessor should use the e-record sheet as an opportunity to help the moderator find the evidence required to agree the marks given. The comments by centres often contained only one line comments and, in some cases, no comments were provided at all. Some centres placed all units on the same CD, this can cause problems for the moderation team as samples of units frequently need to be sent to different people during the moderation process.