

Unit 61: Interactive Media Design

Unit code:	J/502/5680
QCF Level 3:	BTEC National
Credit value:	10
Guided learning hours:	60

● Aim and purpose

The aim of this unit is to develop learners' understanding of and skills in interactive media design. Learners will explore copyright, ownership and the various laws which apply to interactive media design work. They will learn how to apply design principles to create interactive projects.

● Unit introduction

The interactive media industry is one of the fastest moving media sectors. It creates a wide range of products for different purposes such as websites, apps, menus, kiosks and games. Those hoping to make a career in this sector will need creativity, a firm grasp of interactive media design principles and good planning skills. The qualities and skills developed in this unit are applicable to all of the various strands within the interactive media sector.

Understanding what makes a good interactive media product which complies with current legislation and best practice is fundamental to a successful career in the interactive media industry. Equally important is to know how to go about making a product on time to meet the client's needs. This unit deals with the practices and methods employed in the interactive media industry to meet these requirements. It will enable learners to develop the core skills and knowledge which will lay the foundation for further development in other specialised units which they choose to study.

By studying this unit learners will develop their understanding of the core ideas underlying the design of interactive media products. Examination of fundamental concepts of graphics with study of the interactivity and navigation present in interactive products will provide a solid foundation upon which to build the skills of other, more practical, units. To ensure that their final products from other units are both legal and ethical they will also learn about important issues such as copyright, ownership and the various laws which apply to interactive media design. They will learn how to devise professional products by applying established design principles and developing core skills to support authoring skills of other units. They will be encouraged to develop and apply creative thinking skills and will learn how to plan and manage projects to make sure that they become a reality on time. This unit will also develop learners' ability to reflect critically on their own work, as they will need this skill in their careers.

● Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit a learner should:

- 1 Understand the principles of interactive media design
- 2 Understand legal and ethical constraints applicable to the interactive media industry
- 3 Be able to apply interactive media design following industry practice.

Unit content

1 Understand the principles of interactive media design

Graphic design: colour theory; composition, eg rule of thirds, lead lines, focal point, hierarchy, structure; balance, eg negative space; typography, eg fonts and font families; aesthetic appeal; context, eg visual style, accessibility

Interactive design: audience, eg experience, age, accessibility, language and terminology; content (text, graphics, animation, sound, interactivity); semiotics (words, sounds, colours, images); form (uncluttered, consistent, continuity, amount of information presented, grouping and prioritising of information); user experience

Navigational design: use of navigation, navigation types, global, local and linking (primary, secondary, tertiary); visual cues, eg call to arms, highlighted text, attracting attention, identifying, prioritising; usability, eg simple, effective, tolerant (error undo, input redo)

Technology: interactive products; content platforms; application tools

2 Understand legal and ethical constraints applicable to the interactive media industry

Legal: intellectual property rights, eg copyright and fair dealing, trademarks, patents; permissions; public copyright licenses; libel; equality legislation; data protection legislation; accessibility; contracts, eg contract types, sub-contracting, outsourcing, working to a brief, penalties

Ethical: relationship with client (respecting client wishes, listening to needs); authorship and ownership issues; representation, eg race, gender, age; blasphemy; effects debates

3 Be able to apply interactive media design following industry practice

Analysis: stimulus, eg client brief, own brief; client communication, eg meeting notes, recording responses to questioning; final specification

Creative thinking skills: brainstorming; mind maps; storyboards; mood boards; flow diagrams; creative problem solving tools, eg attribute listing, morphological analysis, SWOT

Planning techniques: layout, eg sketches, storyboards, wireframes, script; information architecture; visual style; colour palettes; typography; workflow (shortcuts, working between programmes, efficient time management); deadlines (production milestones); management tools

Design management skills: purpose, eg treatment, specification; content, eg introduction, product size, product scope, visual style, storyboard, thumbnails, layout, concept art, script; structure, eg cover sheet, logo, contact details, summary, sections; style, eg tone of voice, technical language; quality, eg word processed, spellchecked, proofread

Industry practice: intentions (project brief, self-generated specification); planning (work breakdown, schedule, contingency); evaluation (feelings, work done, productivity achieved, monitoring, revisions made, contingencies employed); testing (self, others, record opinions, technical quality, aesthetic quality, against original intention); evaluate production skills (technical skills, workflow and time management skills)

Assessment and grading criteria

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria for a pass grade describe the level of achievement required to pass this unit.

Assessment and grading criteria		
To achieve a pass grade the evidence must show that the learner is able to:	To achieve a merit grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, the learner is able to:	To achieve a distinction grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, the learner is able to:
P1 summarise accurately the principles of design applied to interactive media products with some appropriate use of subject terminology	M1 explain principles of design applied to interactive media products with reference to detailed illustrative examples and with generally correct use of subject terminology	D1 critically assess principles of design applied to interactive media products with supporting arguments and elucidated examples, consistently using subject terminology correctly
P2 describe legal and ethical constraints that apply to interactive media products with some appropriate use of subject terminology	M2 explain legal and ethical constraints that apply to interactive media products with reference to detailed illustrative examples and with generally correct use of subject terminology	D2 comprehensively explain legal and ethical constraints that apply to interactive media products with elucidated examples and consistently using subject terminology fluently
P3 apply interactive media design following industry practice, working within appropriate conventions and with some assistance. [CT; SM]	M3 apply interactive media design to a good technical standard following industry practice, showing some imagination and with only occasional assistance.	D3 apply interactive media design to a technical quality that reflects near-professional standards following industry practice, showing creativity and flair and working independently to professional expectations.

PLTS: This summary references where applicable, in the square brackets, the elements of the personal, learning and thinking skills applicable in the pass criteria. It identifies opportunities for learners to demonstrate effective application of the referenced elements of the skills.

Key	IE – independent enquirers CT – creative thinkers	RL – reflective learners TW – team workers	SM – self-managers EP – effective participators
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Essential guidance for tutors

Delivery

This unit is intended to enable learners to develop an understanding of current interactive media design practice and to apply it to their own working.

As the unit provides the core design knowledge and skills necessary for many other units it is recommended that it should be included early in the programme. An alternative strategy might be to teach it in parallel with other units which could then be used as a source of evidence of the application of practice.

Learners should be allowed to develop an understanding of interactive media product design through investigation of existing products. To enable this it would be sensible to cover principles of interactive media design at the start of teaching. There could be initial tutor-led teaching backed up with individual or group work. Good practice here would be to use case studies to explore the effectiveness of designs. A helpful approach may be to interweave principles and practice wherever possible, showing the impact of developing good practice by applying principles. Learners could then investigate a range of existing interactive media products and evaluate the design principles observed (layout, use of colours, fonts, interactivity etc). In addition to evaluating the products, learners would be gaining experience of research of existing products and could be asked to record details of ideas they have picked up which could be used in future projects. The assessment could include presentations in which learners highlight their key findings; this will serve to develop important skills such as summarising and presenting information.

Learners should be able to demonstrate their understanding and knowledge of interactive media design practice through the production of appropriate interactive media products. This could be through work produced for other units in the pathway or through a discrete product completed as an exercise.

A typical approach to teaching of interactive media practices might be to use the first part of a session to explain the rules or how to perform a particular activity; the remainder of the session should be used to actually develop the skills (for example, teach rules of brainstorming and then provide examples for learners to practise). It is appropriate to encourage group work when possible, particularly for the creative thinking exercises, and it is recommended to rotate group membership to encourage the sharing of ideas throughout the whole course group. Peer evaluation of practice should also be promoted (for example, obtaining feedback from other learners on the design of a screen layout or the composition of a digital image). At all times learners should be made aware of professional practice and how legal and ethical constraints affect their work.

This unit could also be taught through a series of workshops. These workshops could be integrated into other units in this pathway, allowing learners to demonstrate their understanding and knowledge of interactive media practices.

It would be beneficial to invite interactive media professionals to demonstrate and discuss their work and working practices with learners, and for learners to visit interactive media practitioners.

Outline learning plan

The outline learning plan has been included in this unit as guidance and can be used in conjunction with the programme of suggested assignments.

The outline learning plan demonstrates one way of planning the teaching and assessment of this unit.

Topic and suggested assignments and activities
Introduction to unit and unit assessment.
Introduction to principles of interactive media design.
Tutor-led case study examinations of good and bad design.
Group work investigation of existing interactive media products, noting evaluative comments, ideas observed and comment on potential for future use.
Assignment 1 – Interactive Media Design: What You Need to Know Learners will write an article on principles of interactive media design for an online media careers ezine. The article must cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• graphic design• interactive design• navigational design• technology• usefulness of this understanding for work.
Introduction to legal and ethical constraints. Learners: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• receive lectures and conduct guided investigation and research into legal constraints in the interactive media industry• receive lectures and conduct guided investigation and research into ethical constraints applicable in the interactive media industry.
Assignment 2 – Legal and Ethical Constraints in the Interactive Media Industry Learners will write an article on legal and ethical considerations relevant to working in the interactive media industry for an online media careers ezine. The article must cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• intellectual property rights• permissions and clearances• libel and issues of sensitivity to other social groups• relevant acts of parliament• relevant employment law• relationship with client• representation• effects debates.

Topic and suggested assignments and activities

Introduction to forms of enhancing and recording creative thinking and planning; by lecture, demonstration and practical work, both group and individual, using paper and electronic methods for:

- brainstorming and mind-mapping
- note taking
- mood boards
- storyboards
- attribute listing
- SWOT.

Workshops on development of practical interactive media design skills with formal brief introductory lecture at commencement of sessions covering skill to be developed in session:

- planning techniques
- generating a specification document (treatment)
- conducting reflective practice.

Assignment 3 – My Interactive Media Design Work Portfolio

Learners will create a portfolio of interactive media design skills materials (some of which may be prepared for other units) supported by explanatory notes and tutor observational annotation covering:

- analysis of a creative brief
- creative thinking
- planning
- a specification document for an interactive media product
- application of reflective practice
 - ◊ intended outcome
 - ◊ plan
 - ◊ diary or log
 - ◊ test
 - ◊ evaluation.

Unit learning and assessment review.

Assessment

Evidence for assessment

Evidence for the achievement of learning outcomes 1 and 2 may comprise presentations, written reports and examples from interactive media products.

Evidence for the achievement of learning outcome 3 may be in the form of annotated examples of learners' interactive media design practice backed up by tutor observations. This could either be from a project set for this unit or from evidence produced for other units being studied in the pathway.

Presentations must be recorded for the purposes of internal and external verification. If assessments are based on conversations recorded in writing (as witness or observation reports) care must be taken to ensure that at least 50 per cent of such assessments are subject to internal verification.

For some elements of this unit, and for some learners, a formal viva voce assessment might be appropriate. When more than one learner in a cohort is assessed in this way, care must be taken to ensure that all learners are asked equivalent questions, and that all are given equal opportunities to expand or clarify their answers. Interviewers must also ensure that questions are not phrased in such a way as to provide or suggest an answer. Formal vivas should be recorded for the purposes of internal and external verification and at least 50 per cent of such assessments must be internally verified.

Application of grading criteria

When applying the grading criteria tutors should follow the advice given below. Please note that any examples of evidence given here are indicative only. This advice is not inclusive and the examples need not be included in a learner's work in order for that learner to achieve the exemplified grade.

Pass

To achieve a pass grade, learners must achieve all the criteria at pass level. For each of the criteria learners must present evidence that addresses each italicised sub-heading of the content for the learning outcome.

P1: learners will give accurate and substantially complete descriptions of what an interactive media product is in general terms and how interactive media design principles are applied to enhance products. They will discuss only the main concepts and will use some appropriate technical terms in their explanation. When describing an interactive media product, a learner might note, 'The interactive media product includes interactivity, good use of colour, easily readable black text on a white background and effective navigation.'

P2: learners will give accurate and substantially complete descriptions of what legal and ethical constraints are in general terms and how they might apply to their work. They will discuss only the main concepts and will use some appropriate technical terms in their explanation. A learner might note, 'It is important to observe copyright when selecting assets to be used in an interactive media product.'

P1 and P2: evidence will show a basic understanding of technical terminology but learners will generally be unsure about this vocabulary and will make fairly frequent mistakes when they do use it.

P3: learners will evidence some creative activity using some of the tools listed in the content. In terms of the aesthetic or imaginative qualities of their work, learners will not move beyond the conventional, but the conventions applied will be appropriate to the form or genre within which they are working. Pass grade learners will have evidenced only basic analysis of the brief and planning techniques but will demonstrate that these plans have been used to guide their productivity. Their design management will be minimal and will show a basic level of competence only; language may be poor and thoughts not fully developed. For this grade, although the task will be completed, not all issues will be resolved. Learners' outcomes will show some reflective technique. Only superficial comparison with existing products will have been made and only vague references made contrasting final product with their intentions within testing. Learners will typically need frequent assistance and support, though they will take note of and make use of this help when it is given. If they are in frequent need of such help but fail to make positive use of it, they should not be considered for a pass grade for this unit.

Merit

To achieve a merit grade, learners must achieve all the pass and all the merit grade criteria. For each of the criteria learners must present evidence that addresses each italicised sub-heading of the content for the learning outcome.

M1: when explaining how interactive media design principles are applied, a learner will select specific appropriate examples to demonstrate good or bad practice. The explanation will be comprehensive and use appropriate terminology to describe the advantages of applying design principles. Learners will talk about procedures and techniques in such a way as to show how or why they are used. There will be relevant examples given to support what is said, but the learner will not elucidate these examples to show how they illustrate the point they support. A learner might note, 'Website X is well designed using harmonising colours which link to the company's logo. The Arial 12 point black font stands out clearly against the white background.'

M2: learners will produce accurate explanations of what legal and ethical constraints are by referring to specific examples using appropriate terminology. They will offer reasons as to why these constraints exist, but will not elucidate their examples to show how they illustrate the points they support. A learner might note, for example, 'The screenshot on the following page taken from my website shows an example of where I have acknowledged copyright by including a reference to the original source.'

M1 and M2: learners will use technical vocabulary for the most part correctly, but may make mistakes or be unsure about usage at times.

M3: learners will show facility and some confidence in relation to skills and the handling of equipment. Work will be approached methodically and with adequate preparation, ideas will be worked out and mostly resolved. Processes will be undertaken with care and, generally speaking, thought will be put into the work. Learners will still be working within recognisable generic conventions, but there will be some imaginative thought behind the work so that technical skills and codes and conventions will be employed with some inventiveness. They will need occasional support, particularly when dealing with more complex technology or trying to apply more sophisticated techniques. Like the pass grade learner, they will benefit from such support. Learners will evidence a reflective technique which examines product quality as well as production process. Comparison with existing products will have been made and references made which contrast a final product with their intentions. Learners will make reflective comments to explain what they have tried to accomplish and how they have worked to achieve their product. They will explain decisions made and exemplify these explanations through relevant and detailed reference to their own work, though the examples they give will not be further elucidated.

Distinction

To achieve a distinction grade, learners must achieve all the pass, all the merit and all the distinction grade criteria. For each of the criteria learners must present evidence that addresses each italicised sub-heading of the content for the learning outcome.

D1: learners will critically assess why the principles of interactive media design should be used, citing specific examples for justifying their assessment. They will draw out of an example precisely what it is about it that exemplifies the point it illustrates. The arguments made by the learner will be clear and expressed using fluent technical language. When explaining why interactive media design principles have been applied, a learner might note, 'Unlike the designers of website X, the designers of website Y have chosen a clear, consistent layout throughout the site with navigation sensibly located at the top of the screen to ensure that users can quickly find what they are looking for within three clicks. It is an established fact that users return to sites regularly only if they can find information within a few seconds.'

D2: learners will provide full explanations of legal and ethical constraints and will cite specific examples of where they have complied with these requirements including giving justifications for their approach to these matters in their own work. Fuller and more extensive explanation, better application of examples, and provision of argument to support points made, plus the higher quality expression, will discriminate between this grade and the merit. A learner might note, 'When sourcing the images for the home page of my website I decided not to make use of existing resources on the internet as they are protected by copyright and to obtain the rights would either be costly or time-consuming. Instead I took my own original images based on some of the ideas I had observed, as it is only the image which is protected under copyright law, not the idea.'

D1 and D2: technical vocabulary will be secure and used correctly and confidently at all times.

D3: learners will demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of how interactive media practices are applied through work in which technical and production skills are beginning to approach professional standard and which is carried out independently. Learners' work will show the effective management of interactive media design processes, approaching near professional standards. The term 'working independently' means that they are able to work on their own initiative and do not need constant support or supervision, give the work their full commitment, work positively and cooperatively with others, and meet deadlines. In other words, they have the kind of self-management skills that would be expected of them in a professional context. Note also that this criterion should not be taken to mean that learners do not seek advice or that they work without discussing things with their tutor, but rather that they are not dependent upon the support of others and that when they take advice they weigh it carefully for themselves. Learners will reflect upon their own work in the context of professional practice, assessing their own achievement with detailed reference to elucidated examples taken from their production work. They will address fitness for purpose and their choices in selecting production techniques, commenting in detail on how they have developed their initial ideas to become their near-professional product.

Programme of suggested assignments

The table below shows a programme of suggested assignments that cover the pass, merit and distinction criteria in the assessment and grading grid. This is for guidance and it is recommended that centres either write their own assignments or adapt any Pearson assignments to meet local needs and resources.

Criteria covered	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment method
P1, M1, D1	Assignment 1 – Interactive Media Design: What You Need to Know	Contribution to online media careers ezine – article on principles of interactive media design.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All preparatory notes. Report document as word-processed or electronic presentation.
P2, M2, D2	Assignment 2 – Legal and Ethical Constraints in the Interactive Media Industry	Contribution to online media careers ezine – article on legal and ethical considerations for work done in the interactive media industry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All preparatory notes. Report document as word-processed or electronic presentation.
P3, M3, D3	Assignment 3 – My Interactive Media Design Work Portfolio	Creation of portfolio of applied design skills for job interviews.	Personal interactive media design portfolio containing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> design briefs all ideas notes, sketches and drafts planning documents formal specification document reflective practice log.

Links to other BTEC units

This unit forms part of the BTEC Creative Media Production suite. This unit has particular links with the following units in the BTEC Creative Media Production suite:

Level 2	Level 3
	DVD Menu Design and Authoring
	Interactive Media Authoring
	Web Animation for Interactive Media
	Web Authoring

Essential resources

Learners will need appropriate hardware and software of industry standard, and should have access to relevant software manufacturers' manuals, textbooks, the internet, and a range of examples of current interactive media practice.

Employer engagement and vocational contexts

Centres should develop links with local media production studios which could be approached to provide visiting speakers, study visits or samples of typical products.

ScreenSkills, the Sector Skills Council for the creative media sector, has a substantial section of its website dedicated to careers, including job descriptions.

Delivery of personal, learning and thinking skills

The table below identifies the opportunities for personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) that have been included within the pass assessment criteria of this unit.

Skill	When learners are ...
Creative thinkers	generating ideas for an interactive media product trying out different ways of creating their interactive media product, following ideas through to complete a functioning product adapting their ideas as circumstances change
Self-managers	planning the production of an interactive media product seeking out challenges or new responsibilities and showing flexibility when circumstances change dealing with competing pressures, including personal and work-related demands responding positively to change, seeking advice and support when needed.

Although PLTS are identified within this unit as an inherent part of the assessment criteria, there are further opportunities to develop a range of PLTS through various approaches to teaching and learning.

Skill	When learners are ...
Independent enquirers	carrying out research into principles of interactive media design carrying out research to develop ideas for their own interactive media product
Reflective learners	setting goals with success criteria for their design and production work inviting feedback on their own work and dealing positively with praise, setbacks and criticism evaluating their learning and experience to inform future progress
Team workers	if working in a group to produce an interactive media product, taking responsibility for their own role managing their personal contribution to and assimilating information from others in discussions to reach agreements and achieve results.

● Functional Skills – Level 2

Skill	When learners are ...
ICT – Use ICT systems	
Select, interact with and use ICT systems independently for a complex task to meet a variety of needs	generating interactive media products implementing graphic design principles
Use ICT to effectively plan work and evaluate the effectiveness of the ICT system they have used	planning for the production of an interactive media product
Manage information storage to enable efficient retrieval	managing digital source files captured for their interactive media product
Follow and understand the need for safety and security practices	generating interactive media products implementing graphic design principles
Troubleshoot	generating interactive media products implementing graphic design principles
ICT – Find and select information	
Select and use a variety of sources of information independently for a complex task	creating and finding media design evidence for a portfolio
Access, search for, select and use ICT-based information and evaluate its fitness for purpose	conducting web-based research on legal and ethical constraints
ICT – Develop, present and communicate information	
Enter, develop and format information independently to suit its meaning and purpose including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • text and tables • images • numbers • records 	building and presenting their portfolio of interactive design material showing their creative thinking and documenting their plans preparing report documents on design principles and considering legal implications
Bring together information to suit content and purpose	
Present information in ways that are fit for purpose and audience	
Select and use ICT to communicate and exchange information safely, responsibly and effectively including storage of messages and contact lists	checking intellectual property rights and obtaining permissions and negotiating brief with client for an interactive media product

Skill	When learners are ...
Mathematics	
Understand routine and non-routine problems in a wide range of familiar and unfamiliar contexts and situations	using estimation and calculation to plan screen layouts
Identify the situation or problem and the mathematical methods needed to tackle it	using estimation and calculation to work out timings for editing of sound or video clips for integration into a product
Select and apply a range of skills to find solutions	
Use appropriate checking procedures and evaluate their effectiveness at each stage	
Interpret and communicate solutions to practical problems in familiar and unfamiliar routine contexts and situations	
Draw conclusions and provide mathematical justifications	
English	
Speaking and listening – make a range of contributions to discussions and make effective presentations in a wide range of contexts	taking part in brainstorming sessions to generate ideas as a response to a creative brief
Reading – compare, select, read and understand texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions	studying books, journals, papers to research legal and ethical constraints applicable to work in the interactive media industry
Writing – write documents, including extended writing pieces, communicating information, ideas and opinions, effectively and persuasively	creating their personal portfolio incorporating ideas, notes, planning documentation, logs, testing and reflective comment.