Examiner's Report

January 2016

Pearson Edexcel

Level 2 Certificate/Diploma in Digital Applications

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Certificate / Diploma in Digital Applications

DA201- Developing Web Products

DA201 is a mandatory unit for both the Level 2 CiDA and DiDA qualifications. 6692 students were entered for the DA201 external examination this series.

The examination paper is set out as a client brief and to be successful, students need to understand how to read a client brief in order to extract key information about the client, the target audience and the purpose of the site. The client brief for this examination paper required students to create a microsite for *grubalicious.org.uk*. The purpose of the site was to provide students who are living away from home at college or university with advice on healthy eating on a budget.

This unit requires students to engage with the project lifecycle of designing a web product and those students who understand the process of developing a web product and have appropriate command over the web-authoring software and other software tools available to them are in the best position to meet the specific requirements of the client brief.

General Comments

Students must save their web pages in .html format so that they can be viewed in a web browser. Unfortunately, some students submitted their work in inappropriate file formats such as unpublished websites, active server pages or template pages, which meant that their work could not be viewed in a web browser.

Students also need to be clear on how to create an appropriate folder structure within their user area so that their sites function correctly. Where students include inappropriate paths, links may not function or images may not appear as intended.

Administration

Centres are reminded of the importance of reviewing the Instructions for the Conduct of Examination document prior to the examination window and of sending the examination pro forma to ictschedules@pearson.com.

In most instances the CDs containing the students' work were appropriately labelled with centre and student numbers and were dispatched to examiners promptly after the close of the examination window. Many centres also included the pro forma for externally assessed units to specify the web browser that the students used to create and test their websites, which was highly supportive to the examination process.

Centres are also reminded that the attendance register should be included with the students' work.

Activity One: Design, build and test the website

Overall Site Requirements

Most students produced a site with three main pages, accessible through the navigation bar. However, to fully meet the client's requirements, users should have to drill down to the meals page to find the links to the two child pages within the body of the page, rather than through a drop down menu on the navigation bar.

Students need to be aware that the client will not always require a five page website at a resolution of 1024 x 768 pixels, and consequently, students need to be prepared to produce different site structures, page sizes and resolutions.

Page Template

All of the pages in the site must have some consistency and the requirements for the page template help to establish a consistent page structure and appearance. The majority of students included a banner within their page design, although many students lost marks because the banner was not 800 x 150 pixels, it did not include suitable text or it had not been centred within the page design. The mark for centering the banner was awarded even if the banner was the wrong size.

In almost every case the logo was present within the banner, although in some instances students had distorted the logo, which meant that the mark was not awarded. It is essential that students can use appropriate software tools, including image manipulation software tools, to resize the given logo in proportion.

Images

When inserting images into web pages, students should be able to crop, edit, insert and resize images in proportion. Most students achieved the marks for inserting the MICROWAVE_COOKING and JACKET_POTATO images into the specified pages, editing a suitable image onto 5_A_DAY and placing it onto the meals page and creating a rollover image out of the STUFFED_PEPPERS_INGREDIENTS and STUFFED_PEPPERS_METHOD images. Where students did not obtain one or more of these marks, it was usually because the images were heavily distorted and/or illegible and students need to understand that to be fit for purpose, images must be legible.

Where students complied with the requirement to create two thumbnail images to link to the child pages, as shown on the image on the right, it considerably improved the user experience. However, many students were not awarded this mark because the images were not edited to include the name of the page they link to. Students need to be able to undertake simple image editing techniques such as cropping, combining two images together and adding text to an image, as these are essential skills when preparing images for inclusion within web products.

A minority of students inserted the images into the wrong pages and students should be reminded to read the client brief carefully so as to be able to fully meet the client's requirements.

It is important that students are able to convert images to different file formats and compress images to a specified maximum file size. The client specified that all of the images used within the site had to be in .png format and less than 300KB. It was uncommon for students to pick up both of these marks and many students would benefit from further practice with compressing images and converting them from one file format to another.

Links

Most students provided appropriate links from the meals page to the two child pages – tip of the week page and meal of the week page. Marks were awarded to students who created appropriate links, either through thumbnail images, text or buttons. Students should, however, be reminded that to fully meet the client's requirements any child pages should only be accessible from the named main page rather than through the navigation bar.

Centres are reminded that students need to be able to create interactive components including internal, external and email hyperlinks, hotspots, rollovers and navigation bars.

Creating email and external links is an area that, in general, requires further attention. Although some students added an appropriately functioning email link, many students either failed to include the *mailto* prefix or didn't even attempt to include the link. Similarly, many students did not include the correct *http://* protocol to the external link on the logo and so the mark could not be awarded. Students should also be reminded to check that they include the correct email address and url for external hyperlinks or the mark will not be awarded, as the links would not function as intended.

Other Content

Three marks were awarded to students who had converted the video into .mp4 or .m4v format, embedded it onto the meal of the week page and set the parameter to play on click. Only a minority of students picked up all three marks and students were not awarded any of the three marks if they provided a link to the original VIDEO.avi file, which then played automatically when loaded, as this did not meet any of the client's requirements. Centres are reminded that students need to know how to embed multimedia files onto their web pages, including video, audio and animation files and be able to control how users view or listen to multimedia assets.

The vast majority of students were able to create a box on the home page and set a suitable background colour and it was encouraging to see that more students than in any previous examination series picked up the mark for wrapping text around an image. This was most efficiently achieved by editing the code to position the image through the CSS float property, as shown in the image below.

Students who added the text and logo to a box using other software tools, such as image manipulation tools, were not awarded the mark for the task, as the text and positioning of the image should be editable through the web authoring software to fully meet the client's requirements.

Students' achievement in relation to adding a header using the <h2> tag and centre aligning it within the box varied considerably. Using HTML headings through the <h1> to <h6> tags adds structure and consistency to web pages and formatting text through headings and subheadings, alignment, style and colour is an area for further improvement for many students.

Structure and functionality

In order to fully meet the assessment criteria for structure and functionality, students must meet all of the client's requirements, which include a site with three main pages and two child pages. Although a minority of students produced a site with only some of the required pages, most students produced a five page website. However, where all five pages were accessible from the navigation bar or a drop down menu was used to access the child pages, the client's requirements were not fully met because users were not required to drill down to the meals page in order to access the two child pages.

Many sites were not fully functional, for example pages were seen with broken or missing links, and although marks are not awarded directly for testing, students should allow time in the examination to test that their website functions as intended and meets all of the client's requirements.

User experience

Students need to understand how to improve the accessibility of their sites by
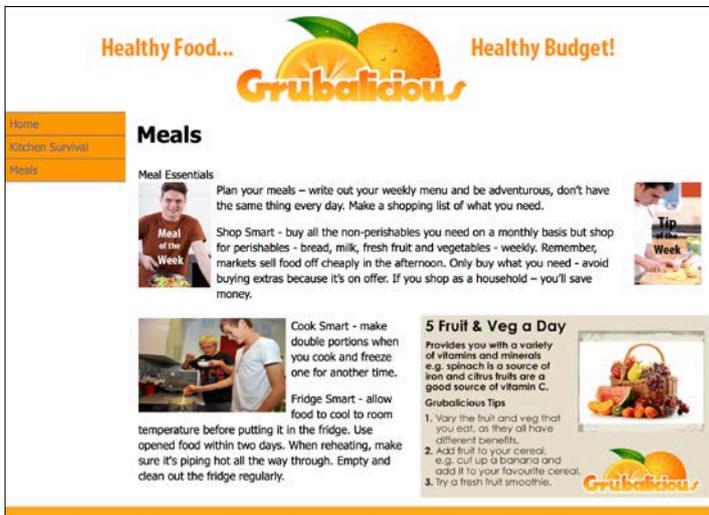
adding appropriate alt text to images, using a high contrast between text and background colours and ensuring that fonts are legible, such as in the example on the left. Unfortunately, poorly contrasting colour combinations and unsuitable fonts and font sizes adversely affected the accessibility of many sites and the effective use of accessibility features is an area where the majority of students would benefit from further understanding.

Students must also ensure that the user interface is easy to use, no horizontal scrolling is required to access the content and the overall user experience is enhanced through the elements on the page. Students who demonstrate an understanding of the audience and purpose of the site through the appropriate selection of engaging content and who successfully employ established design concepts such as the use of white space, balance, contrast and emphasis are much more likely to meet the Level 3 assessment criteria for this strand.

Content selection, preparation and presentation

Students must read the client brief carefully so that they understand the context for the website, its purpose and intended audience. There were a number of unsuitable images included within the ASSETS folder to enable students to be assessed on their ability to select images that are relevant to the audience and purpose established in the client brief and very few of these unsuitable images were included within students' sites.

Students should also be aware that although they are provided with the images and text to be used within their site, both the images and text should be carefully selected and edited to enhance their suitability for both audience and purpose.

Although every student could insert text and images within their web pages, only a minority of students could select appropriate content, prepare it fittingly and present it effectively. Many students are still not optimising images and resizing them in proportion, which are essential skills for preparing images for inclusion in a website.

To meet the Level 3 assessment criteria, students must ensure that all content is effective, this was achieved by students who cropped images, edited the given text to improve its suitability, included presentational features such as headings and subheadings, underlining and emboldened text and who used coloured backgrounds and varied the font, font size and colour to create a suitable hierarchy, as in the example above.

The highest scoring students designed a website comprising effective combinations of assets across each page. In order to produce content that demonstrates a sound awareness of both a specified audience and purpose, students need a confident understanding of how to combine text and images, which can only be achieved through practice and experience.

Overall consistency

In order to meet the Level 3 assessment criteria, the layout and design of the pages not only needs to be consistent but consistently effective. Although students generally designed web pages with a consistent page size and resolution, banner and navigation bar, the most effective sites established an appropriate house style through the consistent use of a suitable colour scheme and font choice.

Text formatting features, such as the use of headings and subheadings, emboldening, line spacing, bullets, font and font size and alignment are not used widely enough by students and the pages on the left demonstrate how the effective and consistent use of text formatting can help to structure a page and create impact through emphasis.

The effective use of design concepts such as balance, contrast and visual hierarchy help students to create an effective page composition and structuring the page through the repeated use of page layout techniques such as white space, colour, columns and headings and subheadings to separate content are all techniques that were used to good effect by only a minority of students within this examination series.

It is important to note that pages do not need to be identical to be consistent, as subtle and deliberate changes in style or tone; for example, by adapting the layout or design of the two child pages or by accommodating the client's requirements for the meal of the week page can still result in a consistently effective layout and design.

Activity 2: Complete an evaluation of your website

To meet the Level 3 assessment criteria, students need to evaluate the effectiveness of the final web product and justify their design decisions in relation to the intended audience and purpose. However, students' evaluations did not generally explain how different design features, such as the colour scheme, font choice, page layout, visual hierarchy and image editing, were appropriate for the site's audience and purpose and the justification of important design decisions was often restricted to a rationale for the chosen colour scheme.

Students must also suggest possible improvements to their site and explain how these enhancements would improve the outcome. Appropriate suggestions included further recipes, the incorporation of social networking sites and further specific multimedia content, however, students often described the client's requirements that they had not met as future improvements, which were not valid within the context of the client brief.

DA202 - Creative Multimedia

Overall

A total of 354 students were entered for this unit, this being the final opportunity for moderation of work for the 0913 SPB 'In the News'. The majority of the work seen was of an appropriate standard for this level, with most of the requirements for the products being met.

Strand (a) – Design multimedia products

The most successful students produced detailed designs that demonstrated how the products would function. These students included detailed comments about design decisions and had taken time to present their ideas. Some of the best designs were hand drawn but, again, some of these suffered from poor scanning where much of the detail had been lost.

Less successful students presented sketch designs, often no more than outline boxes on the storyboard, which gave only a rough idea of likely user experience and how the products would function. In these examples comments on design decisions tended to be brief and few assets were identified.

Some examples of storyboards that appeared to have been produced in the minimum time possible were seen. Designs were also submitted which were not of the required type, as stated in the SPB and some students had not included all of the required design documents.

Assessment of this strand was often generous with several instances of high marks being awarded for evidence that was not presented to a suitable standard.

Strand (b) – Collect, edit and create digital assets

Most students included an assets table with information relating to the assets gathered for use in their products. Several comprehensive assets tables were seen, although there were also examples where students had missed primary audio and video assets.

The assessment grid for this strand refers to 'relevant information about the development process'. This was an area of improvement with most students including some direct evidence of important stages in development processes, covering multimedia assets in addition to images e.g. screen prints illustrating the re-sizing of video or editing of audio files.

Very few examples of students including copyright protected assets in their products were seen.

In some instances, marks in this strand were not agreed because no attempt had been made to prepare files to suit the recommended size restriction for the project.

Strand (c) – Develop multimedia products

The preparation and integration of original video assets into an overall product remains an area for further development. Centres need to consider the suitability of locations for recording e.g. background light and noise levels and make available equipment such as tripods to improve quality. Audio levels need to be adjusted to suit the video content and synchronised to suit both content and length. If a voice over is required this should be at a consistent and audible level.

Animation is the other main area for further development, although some excellent 'Flash' animations were seen. The use of motion and shape tweens should be encouraged, as should the use of assets comprising separate components to enable movement.

The following observations regarding the products for the 0914 SPB 'Spellbound' are based on the limited entry for this series;

- Splash screen – the SPB refers to an animated screen which captures the attention of the audience and includes motion, text and music. Some good use of audio was noted, but some of the splash screens seen lacked impact and relied on text effects for interest. A sequence which displays the splash screen and then opens the navigation screen should be provided.

- Navigation screen – generally well done, with good use of roll-over effects to highlight navigational features. Students should consider providing a route back to the navigation screen from each of the other products.

- Meet the wizard animation – students should design and create their wizard character with features, such as moving arms, that will enable them to demonstrate animation skills. Some good attempts at lip synching the wizards were seen.

- Magic quiz – As in the previous series several very simple quizzes created in presentation software were seen. More successful examples adopted the magic theme and often included a help facility featuring the wizard character, in addition to other multimedia assets. Students should take care to relate the content of the quiz to the specified audience.

- Demonstration movie – the use of screencasts should be considered. Several students made effective use of captions or speech bubbles to present user feedback.

Strand (d) – Present evidence in an eportfolio

As in the previous series most students produced functional eportfolios, which were easy to navigate. Some students produced very effective eportfolios that had been well designed to suit the stated purpose of presenting work for assessment and moderation. In these examples there was differentiation in the emphasis given to the final products and the supporting evidence, together with

detailed commentaries explaining the context for the work. In other examples poorly chosen colour schemes and small serif fonts made the work difficult to follow.

Very few examples of links failing once the eportfolio had been transferred from the local network and very few moderators' toolkit issues arose, although spellchecking of commentaries remains an area for improvement.

Centres are again asked to note the importance given within the assessment grid for this strand regarding the use of appropriate multimedia assets to enhance the eportfolio pages. This should include assets in addition to thumbnails of the final products.

In many cases students retained redundant files within their folders, in particular raw video files, unedited audio files and pre-published animation files. These significantly increased the size of the students' eportfolio folders.

Strand (e) – Review the products

Where full marks were agreed for this strand the students had provided a detailed evaluation of the products, in terms of fitness for audience and purpose, and made specific and valid suggestions for further improvement of the final products, based on ideas arising from their consideration of end user feedback.

Less successful reviews tended to comprise lengthy descriptions of work done and processes followed with little evaluative content. Structuring the review to consider each product separately with specific suggestions for further improvement tends to help to focus this work.

DA203 – Artwork and Imaging

Overall

A total of 1718 students were entered for this unit, 1291 for the 0913 SPB (Heroes and Villains) and 427 for the 0914 SPB (What's the Attraction?)

In general, the work for both SPBs was leniently assessed by centres and the following points are put forward to assist centres to deliver the unit and assess students' work.

It was noted that most students used suitable software packages, which enabled them to produce some good work for this unit. However, there were others who used inappropriate software to create the products.

To gain marks for strands (b) and (c) students must have used drawing and bitmap tools to develop a variety of scalable and bitmap elements. Word processing and desktop publishing packages do not generally provide the correct range of tools to allow the student to achieve this.

Copyright requirements mentioned in both SPBs and the Support Notes give clear guidance about how the requirements of copyright should be met. It is not sufficient to simply acknowledge the sources of any copyright images used, however it was not uncommon for students to use images which were clearly subject to copyright and to quote the source on the elements table.

In some cases just the search engine was quoted as the source or it was stated that the image was primary, as it had been edited by the student.

Centres should encourage students to use primary sources wherever possible and students must use primary sources where it is a requirement of the SPB to do so. Due to the nature of this unit, students do not necessarily need to use any secondary sources as they can create their own elements. However, where secondary sources are used, students should use images with a Creative Commons license.

Strand (a) – Design and develop graphic products

In order to access the higher mark bands in this strand it must be clear how the student arrived at the final design for their products.

Students must have made detailed comments on their design decisions and justified them; this information was frequently missing from eportfolios. Students should start off with designs which they then develop into the final products. There must be evidence of these designs with comments explaining how they developed into the final products. There was evidence of more students completing design documentation in more detail than previous series.

Students should also check that their completed products meet the requirements of the SPB and that they are suitable for audience and purpose. Where the final products differ from the initial designs there should be comments explaining why.

Some students used the requirements of the SPB as a checklist but did not take into consideration the quality of the products presented in terms of suitability for audience and purpose.

Strand (b) – Develop scaleable images and artwork
Strand (c) – Develop bitmap images and artwork

Each product in the SPB is designed to allow students to demonstrate their ability to use graphic tools but some students failed to take advantage of the opportunities provided.

For example, representations are designed to be achieved by combining and editing graphic elements to produce the required image rather than by taking a photograph of the finished product.

To achieve the higher mark bands for strands (b) and (c) students must have described their use of vector and bitmap tools in developing elements. Some students provided very good design logs in which they described their use of graphic tools in detail, but many students failed to do this and simply listed the software package and some of the tools used.

Students should record the main stages of development of their products and how graphic tools were used to achieve them. Annotated images are a particularly useful way of doing this.

Where there were comments on the use of tools, these tended to be for vector tools only. There were more instances, in this series, where evidence was provided on the use of editing tools for the various products.

Strand (d) – Exhibit work in an eportfolio

The recommended size for the eportfolio is 30MB as stated in the SPB, however it was not uncommon for centres to submit eportfolios that were significantly larger than this. In most cases this was the result of duplication of word processing and PDF files or image files, which had not been prepared correctly for inclusion in the eportfolio.

Centres should encourage students to organise files in a suitable folder structure so that the assessor and moderator can easily access the eportfolio. In some cases it was difficult to identify the 'way in' to the eportfolio.

Some centres submitted eportfolios containing files that could not be accessed by the moderator. The Digital Applications moderators' toolkit specifies the file types that all moderators can view. It is each student's responsibility to ensure that their eportfolio only includes files in the listed formats.

Eportfolios should include comments introducing their content. In most instances students included links to the evidence but there were few appropriate comments introducing the content. Some students provided comments that were more suited to the design log or comments that provided a narration of what was done to create the evidence.

Strand (e) – Review the products

To achieve marks for strand (e) students must make evaluative comments on their final products and include feedback from reviewers. Many students provided narrative reviews, which listed how the products were produced rather than commenting on how they thought their products met the requirements of the SPB.

Students should be provided with suitable feedback to enable them to produce appropriate responses. In some instances, feedback was limited or not relevant i.e. where products were weak the feedback stated they were good and no improvements were necessary where this was clearly not the case.

Assessment

Centres are encouraged to hold an internal standardisation of students' work before submitting it for moderation, especially where there is more than one assessor for the unit.

Centres should also check that Centre Assessor Sheets and eportfolios are named according to the conventions listed in the Administrative Guidance for internally Assessed Units document.

Marks recorded by the Assessor on the Centre Assessor Sheets must be checked to ensure the correct totals are included and these marks are then transferred online.

DA204 – Game Making

Overall

A total of 937 students were entered for this unit. A number of excellent games were seen and the majority of the work submitted for moderation had been completed to an appropriate standard for this level.

Organisation

The presentation of the eportfolios submitted this series generally used the specified naming conventions for the eportfolios and assessment record sheets. Some centres did not include the eportfolios of students with the highest and lowest marks and had to be chased by the moderator. In some instances the detail on the assessor record sheets did not match what was available for viewing on the CD. Centres should be reminded to check the work on the CD prior to despatch to the moderator.

Assessor Record Sheets

Generally centres provided detailed comments in the assessor record sheets. However a small number of students had assessor record sheets which were not fully completed, or the comments they provided were not beneficial to the moderation of the samples.

Strand (a) – Design and development work

Some centres continue to use and give students the old DiDA documentation and scaffolding documents to use for this process. Whilst this is acceptable, centres must understand the NG CiDA/DiDA is a different qualification with its own requirements and they are no longer fit for purpose.

Part of the requirements for this strand are that students produce a moodboard and an overview/proposal for their game.

Most moodboards seen this series were much better than has been seen in previous series, clearly showing the inspirations for the game the students would like to develop. These clearly demonstrated some research around their game idea and had annotations to illustrate how they would develop these ideas. However there were some moodboards which merely had one or two images on a PowerPoint presentation representing an aspect of the game such as genre or style with little or no annotation showing the development of ideas. Some students took photographs of their moodboards which were either too small or too blurred to see any detail on them. In a small number of centres it was clear that students did not understand the notion of a moodboard. The moodboard is merely a way of collecting together initial ideas and inspirations for the game and presenting them graphically.

Some centres had produced sophisticated character and level designs together with some extensive annotation as moodboards. This was clearly assessed by some centres as part of the moodboards. Whist credit was given for this work, they were not considered as moodboards because they were not a source of the inspirations, but an outcome of them. Students, as part of the design and developmental process, should have these fairly refined character and level designs as part of the evidence available in this strand.

In most instances a proposal/overview document was completed reasonably effectively but on some occasions these tended to be very limited. It was disappointing again to see that very few students showed evidence of feedback during this stage of the process. This is considered to be a very important step in the process of creating a game which is suitable for audience and purpose.

This strand is also important for the key design documentation such as storyboards, assets table and rules table. Some centres assessed this strand very generously. Marks in some instances appeared to be awarded for the presence of evidence rather than the quality of it. It was disappointing again to see that some centres had awarded high marks in this strand for what was almost entirely retrospective design work.

A number of storyboards were clearly retrospective, with some again, being merely screenshots of the final game - particularly those students who opted to use Scratch. These make no contribution to the game design process.

An initial set of basic rules needs to be created before commencement of building the game. Rules should not be created as the game is built but pre-planned and therefore the student also has a test plan to work to later in the process. Some students did this very effectively and created an extensive general rules table with specific rules associated with different levels of the game. They also made it clear in their evidence where these rules had changed in the final game because either the original rule hadn't worked or different elements had been added to the game which had necessitated a change. Some students had created their rules table retrospectively as they had the activators identified as objects. Some students only provided screenshots of the rules within the game software.

It was good to see that students were using essentially primary and/or copyright free material this series. However in many instances assets from secondary sources seemed to have been used in their entirety, with only basic cropping and resizing having taken place. Some students simply gathered assets and made no attempt at preparing or repurposing them for the game, for example making all sprite characters a standard size. Evidence of editing assets was also often poorly recorded.

Strand (b) – Game functionality

Paper 02/03
The games seen during this moderation window were again generally of a good quality with some excellent games being seen. The very best games were almost exclusively made in either GameMaker or Multimedia Fusion.

Games often worked as intended and were fun to play. A small number of students however did not produce games which were suitable for the target audience or related in any way to the back story.

In this strand instructions should go further than just the controls, they should, for example, include how to play the game, e.g. how many lives, who are the enemies, how to win, etc. Some of the best games had built in user instructions but also had a user-guide as a separate document. Some students produced excellent user instructions, both within the game and also as separate booklet, many of which looked very professional with the presentation matching the theme of the game.

However, the quality of the user instructions varied greatly, and it was disappointing again to see that a small number of games had no user instructions at all. This was particularly apparent in some Scratch games.

Whilst there were some very good examples of testing evidence seen this series generally the process of testing and making modifications/changes/enhancements to games was poorly recorded this series with some students providing little evidence of the process of creating their game and sorting out any glitches, bugs and problems they had encountered. In some instances the testing evidence had only four or five tests identified with everything indicated as working 'OK'. Very little feedback had been gained to improve the quality of the game and ensure that it worked correctly. Also some students had no explicit evidence of testing. In some cases the games could not be fully played as there were serious errors or bugs which actually stopped the game play, such as the player character getting stuck in a maze or on a platform. Some centres continue to use and give students the old DiDA test log to use for this process. Whilst this is acceptable, centres must understand the NG CiDA/DiDA is a different qualification with its own requirements. Students should use the 60 guided leaning hours to learn how to keep a record of progress in developing games, including recording the key development decisions that they make throughout the process. It is important that students not only record the summative testing at the end of the game but also the formative testing – that is, how they corrected errors themselves as they built the game. It may be helpful to include 'before and after' screenshots to show what they did to solve a problem.

Some games created, particularly some created in Scratch, were far too simplistic for the standard of work required at Level 2. Some of the games encountered, were over very quickly. Some merely had a character moving around a maze collecting items but there was no scoring system attached to these.

Paper 03
It was disappointing again to see that some centres whose students attempted this SPB appeared to adopt a 'class based approach'. The games were very similar in construction and style apart from the educational content. Centres should again be reminded that they should use the 60 guided learning hours to teach game authoring skills and then allow 30 guided learning hours for students to complete the SPB individually under controlled conditions. This aspect will continue to be closely monitored.

Many of the games produced for this SPB were again poor both in design and execution. Some games were clearly far too difficult for the audience stated in the SPB or as stated in the overview if the audience had been narrowed in some way.

Nevertheless there were some very good games by individual students which were novel spins on old or 'retro' games with an educational focus.

Strand (c) – User experience

Not only does the game have to work correctly, it has to provide the player with a positive experience. There are many aspects which can make a game play well and be enjoyable for the player. A good game was sufficiently long enough with a number of levels which got progressively harder. The controls were easy to use and intuitive and if you failed you wanted to go back and try again. Whilst in others there seemed to be little differentiation in difficulty between different levels or there were errors which spoilt the game play, such as characters getting stuck.

Some games seen were very good in that they provided the player with a good user experience and you wanted to try and get to the end of the game no matter how long it took. They detailed your progress throughout the game with a score, lives, health or a combination of these. Some had high score tables at the end where you could endeavour to beat your own score or that of a friend.

The following aspects were noted during this moderation series:

- A number of games were very short indeed and consisted of only one very brief level where the game was over very quickly.
- The game provided very little challenge for the player, even as part of the target audience.
- Awkward control selection which made the games difficult to play.
- The game was very repetitive in terms of challenge and also the graphics and layout of the levels.
- Lack of difficulty in progression throughout the levels.
- Some games created in Scratch were very simplistic in terms of layout and playability, also the game play tended to be very sluggish.
- Some games created in Scratch had assets which had clearly been created by the student but they were inconsistent in size which not only made the game look very odd but also on occasions made the game difficult to play.

- In some cases the game could not be fully played because of major errors or bugs in the game. Therefore it was difficult to judge the user experience in these cases.
- Some games had very little differentiation between the different levels of the game. Either they were very difficult from the outset and the player soon lost interest or the game was very easy throughout the levels and therefore the player would be unlikely to want to play the game again.

Explicit usability testing (playability, interactivity) was weak in most students' portfolios. Ideally, students need some of the testers to be part of the target audience. Feedback from testers needs to be documented and any changes made as a result. They should also acknowledge when a change was suggested but ignored, and give the reason.

Strand (d) – Promo for the game

For this strand, students are required to create an onscreen Promo, such as a Flash intro or movie trailer/advert to promote their game, attract interest and encourage people to want to play.

Some excellent promos were seen this series, not only using assets from the game to create their promotional product but also adding effective content. The best promos had good screen captures from their game, appropriate titles and captions to promote their game and also a soundtrack to enhance the mood or genre of the game. In the very best examples not only did the transitions between scenes work well but also the addition of well chosen or original supplementary content added to the notion of persuading people to play the game

A number of students also used copyright music in their promos, which should be discouraged.

Strand (e) – Game review

Students in this strand were expected to produce a review which was suitable for publication in an on-screen computer games magazine. There were some very detailed reviews seen this series with students making comprehensive evaluative statements about the strengths and weaknesses of the game and also thorough feedback from others written in a game review style.

Most students could generally provide some evaluative comments about the strengths of the game, but sometimes failed to provide a balance between the strengths and weaknesses of the game. Some students merely had a few short bullet points for both strengths and weaknesses, a review written in a magazine style would be expected at Level two.

Some students produced a review which did have some evaluative comments on the game and also feedback from others but the review did not look like a review which was suitable for on-screen publication.

Some students produced a detailed review, which in essence was a narrative of the process of creating the game. This is not required.

DA205 – Coding for the web

This unit is mandatory for the DiDA qualification. This unit introduces students to the main programming languages involved in frontend web design: HTML, CSS and JavaScript.

The examination assesses students' ability to create a web page from a client brief and a given wireframe. The client for this examination was *Crawdale Valley Wildlife Trust*, a conservation charity.

The most successful students were confident in their use of HTML, cascading style sheets (CSS) and JavaScript to create a web page with a range of interactive elements using a given wireframe.

General Comments

Students need to be familiar with the skills listed in the specification. The examination can cover any of the content of the specification. It appeared that, on a centre basis, some students were unfamiliar with some sections of content and were, therefore, not able to develop their web pages to reflect the requirements of the wireframe.

Students also need to be clear on how to create an appropriate folder structure within their user area so that the web pages functioned correctly. There were instances of inappropriate paths, which meant that either links did not function or images did not appear as intended.

Administration

Centres are reminded of the importance of reviewing the Instructions for the Conduct of Examination document prior to the examination window and of sending the examination pro forma to ictschedules@pearson.com.

Centres are also reminded that the attendance register should be included with the students' work.

The Task

Students were required to use HTML to build the overall structure of their web page. However, the design and layout of the site should be controlled through the use of Cascading Style Sheets (CSS).   Students were required to use JavaScript to create the dynamic, interactive elements of web pages. Students needed be able to incorporate JavaScript into their pages to add functionality. In this examination they were asked to add an image slider to the page. They were also required to write JavaScript to validate the input to a form.

Overall web page requirements

Most students were able to include the main structural elements: DOCTYPE, html, head and body. However, only a minority of students included an appropriate <title> or <meta> elements as shown below:

```
1  <!doctype html>
2  <html>
3  <head>
4  <meta charset="utf-8">
5  <meta name="Author" content="Crawdale Valley">
6  <meta name="keywords" content="Crawdale Valley, Charity, Wildlife, endangered species">
7  <meta name="description" content="Crawdale Valley Wildlife Trust is a conservation charity
8  <title>Crawdale Valley Wildlife Trust</title>
9  <link href="mystyles.css" rel="stylesheet" type="text/css">
10 </head>
```

Header

Almost all students were able to set up a header section of the correct width although a minority used an incorrect height for the section.

Many students were able to create a navigational bar with the correct background colour. Fewer students were able to create functional links to the other parts of the page.

A minority of students experienced difficulties in locating the logo as shown on the wireframe. However, most students were able to include the image VALLEY.png in the header below the navigation bar. Many of the images were the correct size. Very few students were able to include the required text as shown on the wireframe.

Gallery

Most students were able to create the gallery section with the correct background colour and correct dimensions. The placeholder for the slider images was usually present and set to the correct dimensions. Many of the students were able to create a functional image slider. However, few students were able to style the text box in the CSS as required with rounded corners and a solid border. A significant number of students were not able to use HTML to present the text in an unordered list.

News

Many students were able to create the news section with the correct background colour and the correct size. The majority of students were able to create the required boxes with many of these boxes being the correct dimensions and displaying the correct text. However, most students were not able to space the boxes as required by the wireframe.

Many students were able to insert a form into the update box although some did not edit the HTML to include only the name and email input boxes.   A minority of students were able to write the JavaScript required to validate the input of data.
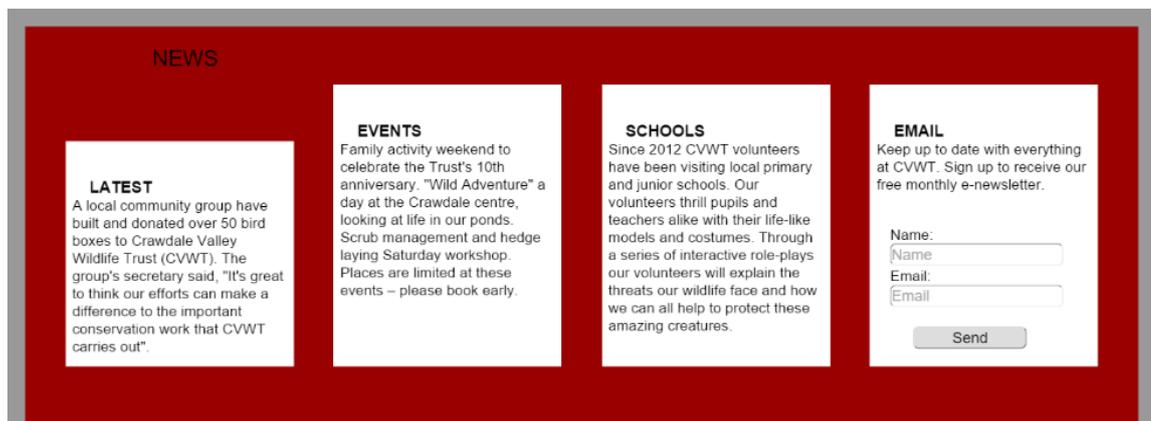
Shop

Most students were able to include the four images and relevant text in the shop section. However, many students were not able to present the images and text as shown on the wireframe. Many students were able to set the title bar to the correct colour and dimensions. Fewer were able to include the title text set to the correct colour.

Footer

Most students were able to include the SILHOUETTE.png image but fewer were able to include the resized logo in the position shown on the wireframe.

Writing and editing HTML

Most students were able to make use of HTML to structure their web pages. Many students were able to position images as shown on the wireframe with the exception of the revised logo in the footer.

A significant number of students were able to create links to sections of the page although fewer were able to include a functioning email link.

Writing and editing CSS

Most students created external style sheets that included the properties given in the question paper. Many students were able to add to the given properties with a minority coding comprehensive style sheets that created a layout that matched the wireframe.

More competent students created different styles for the text elements shown on the wireframe and applied them consistently throughout the site. They were able to style boxes to conform with the requirements of the wireframe, position and style images and style links as required.

Creating a form

Many students were able to include the given form in the news section having edited the code to display the input boxes as shown on the wireframe. However, fewer students were able to style the input boxes as shown on the wireframe. Most students who included the form on their web pages were able to include the correct form controls.

Writing JavaScript

A minority of students were able to write the JavaScript needed to validate the input to the form. When students were able to create the code they were able to link to the external JavaScript.

Incorporating interactive elements

Most students attempted to incorporate interactive elements in their web pages. Many students were able to fulfil some of the requirements of the client brief with links to the JavaScript for the image slider being inserted into the source code.

Many students were able to use HTML and CSS code to meet the client's requirements with the elements functioning as intended when viewed in a web browser.

Grade Boundaries

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

http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/results-certification/grade-boundaries.html?Qualification-Family=Digital-Applications