Examiners' Report

Summer 2015

Pearson Edexcel

Level 2 Certificate in Digital Applications

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Principal Examiner's Report

Diploma in Digital Applications

DA201- Developing Web Products

This unit is mandatory for both the CiDA and DiDA qualifications and is worth either 25% (CiDA) or 12.5% (DiDA) of the total assessment.

The examination assesses each student's ability to create a website for a specified audience and purpose, using a client brief. The client for this examination paper was a new adventure park called *Escapade* and the purpose was to attract families and youth groups to the adventure park.

The most successful students were confident with both how to use the software tools available to them and with the process of developing a web product. Understanding the process of producing a website and command over the chosen web-authoring software and other software tools, means that students are in a 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. Although there are still some students who produced web pages in inappropriate file formats such as unpublished websites, active server pages or template pages, this was less evident this series than in previous examination series.

Students also need to be clear on how to create an appropriate folder structure within their user area so that their sites function correctly. There were many 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.

Although there were some instances of incorrectly or poorly labelled CDs and work that arrived with examiners very late, 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

Students are required to establish an overall site structure that meets the client's requirements and most students produced a website with the five specified pages.

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

Page Template

The requirements for the page template help to establish a consistent page structure and appearance. The majority of students set a suitable banner height and a width that spanned the whole width of the page. However, it should be noted that the mark for the banner was not awarded if it spanned the entire height and width of the page. In almost every case the logo was present within the banner, although in many 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.

The banner also had to include a suitable image. Students need to be aware that a small number of unsuitable images are always included within the ASSETS folder, which means that students can be assessed on their ability to select images that are relevant to the audience and purpose established in the client brief. Unfortunately many students included one of the unsuitable images in the banner, such as the image of the mountaineer (as shown above).

It was encouraging to see that the majority of students were able to set the specified background colours for the three buttons in the navigation bar, as shown on the left. As stated in the unit content, students need to be able to use both hexadecimal color codes and RGB values.

Part of the page design included a footer with a smaller version of the logo and the provided Facebook and Twitter icons. Two marks were awarded to

any student who included the logo and the icons at the bottom of one of the pages. However, if the footer was present across every page, this contributed to the marks awarded for the overall consistency of the website.

Images

When inserting images into web pages, students should be able to crop, insert and resize images in proportion. Essentially, students must understand that to be fit for purpose, images must be legible; for example the mark for inserting the HOW_TO_FIND_US image was not awarded if the map was too small or too distorted to read. Similarly, the front cover of the BROCHURE image had to be cropped and included on the activities page. It was encouraging to see that many students successfully included a rollover to another page of the brochure that was exactly the same size and position as the front cover, as shown on the right.

Some students, however, failed to pick up one of the three marks for creating the rollover because they did not include the rollover image on the activities page. Students should be reminded to read the client brief carefully so as to be able to fully meet the client's requirements.

Students had to convert all of the images they used to .png format and compress them to less than 250KB. Although students regularly completed one of the tasks, it was uncommon for students to pick up both of these marks. It is important that students are able to convert images to different file formats and compress images to a specified maximum file size.

Links

Most students provided an appropriate link from the activities page to the two child pages – Tree Tops Escapade and Junior Escapade pages. Marks were awarded to students who created appropriate links, which were mainly through text, images or buttons. Students should 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.

Creating email and functional external links is an area that, in general, requires further attention. Although some students added a functioning email link, many students either failed to include the *mailto* prefix or did not add a hyperlink at all. Students should also be reminded to check that they include the correct email address or the mark will not be awarded, as the link would not function as intended. Similarly, many students did not include the correct *http://* protocol to the external links to Facebook and Twitter and so the mark could not be awarded.

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

Other Content

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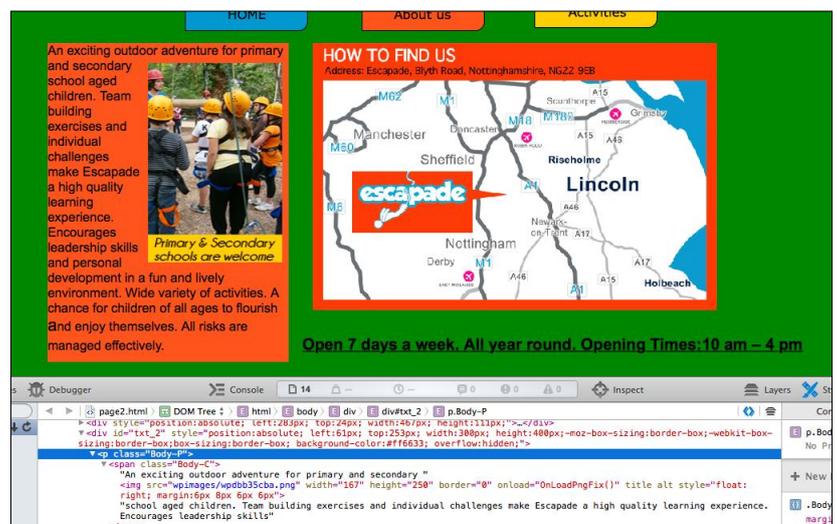students were not awarded any of the three marks if they provided a link to the original VIDEO.avi file, which then played automatically when loaded, as this did not meet any of the client's requirements. Centres are reminded that students need to know how to embed multimedia files onto their web pages,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

On the about us page, students had to create a box and then make simple changes to the code to set the dimensions of the box, colour the background and position an image. Many students picked up one of two of these three marks but rarely all three. The mark for creating a box 400x300 pixels was achieved using a variety of methods by students, which included creating a <div> element, a cell in a table or using an image manipulation software package to size the box and inserting it into the web page as an image. Setting the background colour was the most successful aspect of the task for most students, who appear to be more proficient at using hexadecimal colour codes than in previous examination series. The mark was also awarded to students who set the correct background colour using other software tools and imported the image into the web authoring software. However, the final mark for positioning the SCHOOL_TRIPS image on the right of the text had to be

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accomplished through coding, as shown in the example above where the student used the CSS float property.

Students who added the text and image to the box using other software tools, such as image manipulation tools, were not awarded the final 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.
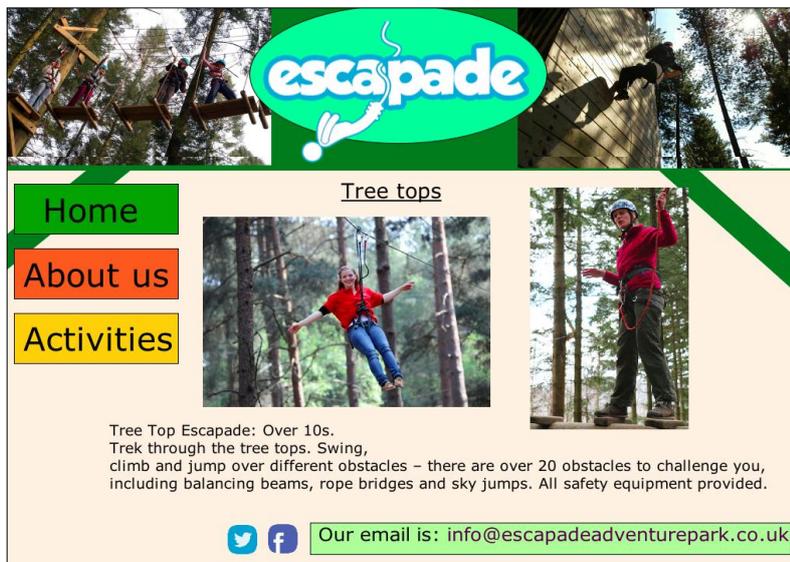
Structure and functionality

Although there were instances where students only produced some of the required pages, the majority of students were able to meet the requirement to produce a website for *Escapade* that contained three main pages with two child pages. Only a minority of students included all five pages within the navigation bar, which did not fully meet the client's requirements, as users were not required to drill down to the activities page in order to access the two child pages.

As in previous examination series, there were many examples of websites that did not function as intended, for example pages with broken or missing links. Although marks are not awarded directly for testing, students should allow time in the examination to test that their website is fully functional and meets all of the client's requirements.

In order to meet all of the Level 3 assessment criteria for structure and functionality, students must include all of the required internal, external and email hyperlinks.

User experience

Usability testing should also be carried out during the examination to ensure that the user interface is easy to use, no horizontal scrolling is required to access the content, accessibility features are effective and the overall user experience is enhanced through the elements on the page.

Students who demonstrate an understanding of design concepts such as composition - for example through the use of colour, balance and contrast - and layout - for example through the use of titles, white space, alignment and minimising scrolling - will be better able to meet the Level 3 assessment criteria, such as in the example shown.

Only a minority of students made consistent use of accessibility features for visually-impaired users throughout their website. The selection of poorly contrasting colours, small font sizes and inappropriate alt text was common. Students need to understand the importance and function of using a high contrast between text and background and adding meaningful alt text to images.

## Content selection, preparation and presentation

Students should 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 edited to enhance their suitability for audience and purpose.

When selecting images, students should decide on the most appropriate images for each page. There were a small number of unsuitable images included within the ASSETS folder and unfortunately many students chose to include these images within their site. Students must read the client brief carefully so that they understand the context for the website, its purpose and intended audience.

Many students are still not optimising images and resizing them in proportion, which are essential skills for preparing images for inclusion in a website.

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. 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 sub headings, bullets, emboldened text, coloured backgrounds and varied the font, font size and colour to create a suitable hierarchy, as in the examples on the right.

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.
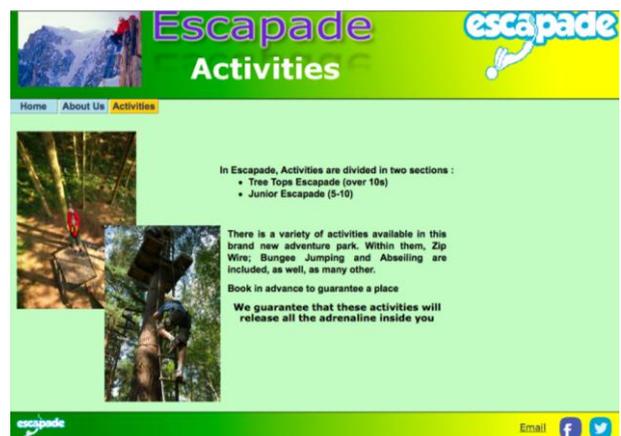
Overall consistency

Students generally designed pages with consistency in regard to the style and position of the banner and navigation bar, the colour scheme and choice of font. Many students were also able to produce a page layout with a consistent footer.

In order to be considered effective, students must employ appropriate design and layout concepts when designing and structuring their pages. The most effective sites consistently made effective use of design features such as balance and contrast, visual hierarchy, headings and sub-headings and the use of white space. However, the pages were not identical, as the student was able to introduce appropriate changes in style or tone; for example, by adapting the layout or design of the two child pages or to accommodate the client's requirements for the about us page, as shown on the right.

Some students are still using the default font rather than creating an appropriate house style for the site that includes colours, fonts, headings and sub-headings, which would better enable them to meet the Level 3 assessment criteria.

Activity 2: Complete an evaluation of your website

Although in the main students made a valid justification for their choice of colour scheme, once again, only a minority of students made valid justifications for a range of design decisions. Students need to be encouraged to evaluate the effectiveness of the final product and justify their design decisions in relation to the intended audience and purpose.

Students should also suggest possible improvements to their website and explain how these enhancements would improve the outcome. Too often, students were still describing what they had done in the exam and listing the client's requirements that they had not met as future improvements.

In general, very few students included references to audience and purpose in their evaluations and it is clear that students require considerably more support and guidance if they are going to be able to meet the Level 3 assessment criteria for this assessment strand.

DA202 - Creative Multimedia

Overall

A total of 3020 students were entered for this unit, 2300 for the 0913 SPB 'In the News' and 720 for the 0914 SPB 'Spellbound'. This was the first opportunity for moderation of work for the 0914 SPB.

A number of excellent multimedia products were seen and the majority of the work submitted for moderation had been completed to an appropriate standard for this level.

Strand (a) – Design multimedia products

The most successful students produced detailed designs that were carefully presented and demonstrated how the products would function. These students identified the assets they would need for implementation and included detailed comments about design decisions, arising from consideration of alternative ideas. Some of the best designs were hand drawn although some of these suffered from poor scanning where much of the detail had been lost.

Some students used their up-front designs to gather valuable feedback from others. This process was most successful where design documents had been developed to present initial ideas clearly.

Less successful students presented outline designs, which gave only a rough idea of likely user experience and how the products would function. In these examples comments on design decisions were brief and few assets were identified. A small number of students produced design documents that were clearly retrospective and therefore should not have been awarded marks.

As in previous series, several examples of storyboards that appeared to have been produced in the minimum time possible were also seen. Such documents need to be considered as a means of communicating design ideas and need to be presented accordingly.

Assessment of this strand was sometimes generous with examples 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. Many students correctly acknowledged their sources although search engines or 'The Internet' were again often quoted as secondary sources.

As previously emphasised the assessment grid for this strand refers to 'relevant information about the development processes'. Most students included descriptive evidence of the development of images in their assets

tables and an increasing number of students provided direct evidence of selected stages in the development of the assets, covering multimedia assets in addition to images e.g. screen prints illustrating the re-sizing of video or editing of audio files.

As in the previous series, some students had used copyright protected assets in products despite the SPBs stating clearly that the work should comply with copyright restrictions. Some students included statements of what their responsibilities would be should the products be used commercially. This approach should not be used for main assets and, when used, students should deal with the issue of copyright for each asset individually and not rely on a blanket statement to cover all copyright protected material.

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 and in other examples because of the standard of the assets used, particularly distorted images and low quality audio and video.

Strand (c) – Develop multimedia products

A clear improvement in the overall quality of the final products was noted, although the following comments from the summer 2014 report remain relevant.

The preparation and integration of original video assets into an overall product is generally 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. Video clips need to include action to support editing and maintain interest. Audio levels need to be adjusted to suit the video content and be synchronised to suit both content and length. If a voice over is required this should be at a consistent and audible level.

Animation remains 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. Some students had presented products that could not be classified as true animations, with objects simply following motion paths in presentation software.

Observations regarding the products for the 0913 SPB 'In the News';

- Opening and closing sequences – these sequences were often very well done, although several students would have benefited from an analysis of professionally made sequences for similar purposes before designing their own.

- Welcome video – generally well done, although care is needed in the control of background noise and the selection of a suitable backdrop.

- Headline story – video content in addition were too staged, interviews should be considered.

- Weather forecast – students should take the opportunity to design and animate a series of original weather symbols. The animation should go beyond simple movement across the chart.

Observations regarding the products for the 0914 SPB 'Spellbound';

- Splash screen – the SPB refers to an animated screen which captures the attention of the audience and includes motion, text and music. Many 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 rollover 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 that will enable them to demonstrate animation skills.

- Magic quiz – 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 e-portfolio

As in the previous series most students produced functional e-portfolios. Some very effective e-portfolios that had been well designed to suit the stated purpose of presenting work for assessment and moderation were seen. In these examples there was differentiation in the emphasis given to the final products and the supporting evidence and detailed commentaries

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

There were few moderators' toolkit issues arising, although the use of appropriate multimedia assets to enhance the e-portfolio pages and the spellchecking of commentaries remain areas for improvement.

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

Strand (e) – Review the products

Students should carry out a comprehensive review of the project, evaluating the products, in terms of fitness for audience and purpose, and drawing on the feedback they receive from end reviewers. Sensible suggestions for improvements should be included.

Most students were able to make some relevant comments about the products and many recorded interim feedback received during the testing of prototypes.

Where full marks were agreed for this strand the students had provided a detailed evaluation of the products 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 with little evaluative content. Structuring the review to consider each product separately with specific suggestions for further improvement should help to focus this work.

DA203 – Artwork and Imaging

Overall

A total of 7954 students were entered for this unit, 7054 for the 0913 SPB (Heroes and Villains) and 900 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 some students appeared not to have used suitable software packages, which would enable them to produce the level of work required for this unit.

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 licence.

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 e-portfolios. 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.

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.

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Strand (b) – Develop scalable 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 few instances where editing tools had been mentioned even though there was some evidence they had been used.

Strand (d) – Exhibit work in an e-portfolio

The recommended size for the e-portfolio is 30MB as stated in the SPB, however it was not uncommon for centres to submit e-portfolios that were significantly larger than this, in some instances e-portfolios were over 150MB. 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 e-portfolio.

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

Some centres submitted e-portfolios containing files that could not be accessed by the moderator. The CiDA Moderator's Toolkit specifies the file types that all moderators can view. It is each student's responsibility to ensure that their e-portfolio only includes files in the listed formats.

E-portfolios 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 e-portfolios are named according to the conventions listed in the Administrative Guidance for internally Assessed Units document.

Marks recorded on 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 1667 students were entered for this unit.
In most cases, the samples work arrived on time and in appropriate packaging. However in a number of cases work arrived late with the moderator. Some centres also sent work with inappropriate packaging so CDs arrived broken or damaged.

Organisation

The presentation of the e-portfolios submitted this series generally used the specified naming conventions for the e-portfolios and assessment record sheets. Some centres did not include the e-portfolios 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.

Tech Specification

There was little evidence that could not be viewed via the moderator's toolkit during this series. However some students did not export their game project files and these, unfortunately, could not be moderated.

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

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

It was clear in some of the work seen that a number of students did not understand the notion of a mood board. The mood board is merely a way of collecting together initial ideas and inspirations for the game and presenting them graphically. Most mood boards seen this series were better than has been seen in previous series, clearly showing the inspirations for the game that 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 mood boards 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 mood boards which were either too small or too blurred to see any detail on them.

Some centres had produced sophisticated character and level designs together with some extensive annotation as mood boards. This was clearly assessed by some centres as part of the mood boards. Whist credit was given for this work, they were not considered as mood boards 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. Centres must be careful not to award high marks on retrospective design work, it should really be work produced at the time of the exam.

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 good quality with some excellent games being seen. They 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 relate 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 a separate booklet, many of which looked very professional with the presentation matching the theme of the game. Nevertheless the quality of the user instructions varied greatly, and it was disappointing to see that a number of games had no user instructions at all. This was particularly apparent in some Scratch games. The user instructions can be part of the game or as a separate document but must be a little more extensive than for example just explaining the arrow keys for movement and space bar to fire.

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 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 test log often 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 the maze or on a platform.

Some games 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. They may have had a character moving around a maze collecting items but there were no 'enemies' or scoring systems attached to these.

Paper 03
It was disappointing to see that some centres whose students attempted this SPB appeared to adopt a 'class based approach'. Centres should be reminded that they should use 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 be closely monitored during the next series by the Principal Moderator and Chief Examiner.

Many of the games produced for this SPB were very poor both in design and execution. Some games clearly could not have been completed by the

audience stated in the SPB or as stated in the overview if the audience had been narrowed in some way.

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 other games 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.
- The game was very repetitive in terms of challenge and also the graphics and layout of 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.

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 effectively not only using assets from their games 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 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 2.

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 an 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.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:
http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx

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