

Principal Moderator's Report January 2013

GCSE ICT 5IT04 01

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Introduction

In this assessment window, very few centres entered candidates and therefore the scope of this report is limited to comments based on the small amount of work seen. The majority of the work seen in this series was in the form of games, with one example of a web-based product. Centres should refer to the summer series report for a wider coverage of typical topics.

Unit 4, Creating Digital Products, is a practical unit, which gives the candidates an opportunity to apply the knowledge and understanding of digital design that they are taught in Unit 3 to produce an interactive digital product for others to use.

All candidates sat the only Controlled Assessment Brief (CAB) available in this session, 'People and Places'.

In this unit candidates can create one of the following four types of interactive digital product, related to this theme:

- a game
- an interactive multimedia product
- a database system with a customised user interface
- a web-based interactive product.

Regardless of the type of product produced, a copy of the fully functional product must be included in the candidate's e-portfolio on the CD. It is not sufficient to provide a link to a website for the moderator to view the final product as this does not comply with examination regulations.

For each different type of product, as stated in the assessment guidance for the unit, we would expect candidates to produce products that meet these minimum requirements:

Game: scoring system (ie rules to progress/win), single player at a time (or alternate plays for multi-players), sprite interaction (with other sprites and/or environment), some original assets.

Web-based interactive product: interactivity, working navigations (five screens are sufficient), accessibility features, different types of link (hotspots, hyperlinks etc), animation, range of different assets (animations, sounds, images etc), user-input (form, request for info, search feature, interactive quiz or questionnaire), viewable in a web browser.

In some cases candidates met these minimum requirements, however in others cases, simpler products were seen which limited the range of marks available.

In many cases the link to the theme 'People and Places' was vague and in some cases unconvincing. Centres need to provide advice and feedback to candidates at the start of the process so that candidates can produce work that is in line with the expectations of the theme.

For example a simple 'shooting' or 'target-based' game does not easily meet the requirements of the brief. Future briefs will be built around themes, such as the upcoming 'Sea and Sky' CAB, and these will be more clear cut. Failure to meet the brief will have an impact on the number of marks it is possible to award candidates.

Constructive feedback from teachers and test buddies generated improved outcomes. Candidates who responded positively to feedback generally accessed the higher mark bands because their work demonstrated a better understanding of the CAB and its requirements.

Where the Candidate Assessment Records (CARs) were completed in detail this aided the moderation process considerably and provided moderators with an insight into the rationale behind the marks awarded.

Some centres have narrowed the choice of digital products available to candidates too much by instructing all candidates to create the same product type.

Centres are advised to refer to the 'Centre guidance for submission of moderation samples' document available on the website when they prepare the work to send to the moderator. Centres should also be wary of including web-embedded content from the internet in products. As stated earlier all evidence should be stored locally in the candidate's folder on the submitted CD/DVD.

Reports on individual activities

Activity 1

In the work seen, candidates were successful in creating a product review that provided some evaluation of the product's strengths and weaknesses, user interface and its functionality. In order to access the higher marks, candidates have to have also evaluated the usability and accessibility of the product.

Some candidates had created and submitted more than one product review. This is not necessary. If candidates choose to review more than one product; they should then choose the best review for their e-portfolio.

Candidates were required to complete a proposal for their chosen product that outlined the purpose of the product, detailed the characteristics of the target audience and summarised the proposed content and features. This provides an opportunity to review the proposal and amend it to ensure it fits with the CAB theme.

Activity 2

This activity is all about the design and development of the product. The design process varies considerably depending on the type of product being developed. In this assessment window, the majority were games products and the standard of design varied greatly.

In developing a game the candidate should include how the user interacts with the game and therefore candidates must provide designs of the user interface as well as considering control and design of objects in the game.

Most candidates successfully gathered and prepared content for use in their digital products. However this was often simply a background and a sprite. To gain the higher mark ranges candidates need to have gathered and prepared a variety of appropriate content for use in the product. A number of candidates failed to record the source of the content they have gathered within their assets table and many also failed to document the editing or optimising of the content.

In order to achieve the higher marks, the assets table should contain all of the content prepared and gathered and should not be restricted to just images; candidates should be encouraged to source text and sound, which are used in the product.

The functionality of the products created in this assessment window varied considerably. It is important that centre assessors use the product and assess how effectively it works. A product cannot be awarded high marks if it does not work as the user would expect.

Finally, as part of Activity 2, candidates reviewed the design and development of their product and their own performance. Several candidates answered all of the questions outlining their decisions, as well as feedback and responses to feedback that they received, and this helped them when completing their evaluation in Activity 4.

Activity 3

The digital showcase provides an opportunity for candidates to demonstrate the quality of their product. Candidates are expected to repurpose appropriate content and features from their product to promote it to a target audience of their choice. The audience of the showcase does not have to be the same as that of the product. For example, the product might be a game targeted at children and the showcase could be targeted at their parents.

A number of candidates did not fully use the opportunity to showcase their product. In some cases it consisted of an image or a sequence of images. Some candidates used video capture software to demonstrate their game, providing a voice commentary to describe events. This was very effective.

Ideally the showcase products should include repurposed images, sound and text from the digital product, aimed at attracting attention and promoting the product's features.

Activity 4

Candidates were asked to evaluate the design and development of their digital product, their digital showcase and their own performance. In the work seen this was completed in most cases.

Preparing the evidence

Centres should submit only the final products and publications as listed on the evidence checklist. These should be organised into the activity folders as directed in the CAB.

The work of some candidates submitted in this window was not well organised. For example, some candidates submitted a single folder containing all their evidence or indeed multiple copies of the outcomes of some or all activities. This should be avoided in future series. Evidence must be checked to ensure it is accessible using the Moderator's Toolkit.

Once the evidence is copied onto the moderation CD, it must be thoroughly checked again. All the evidence for the required sample should be on one CD or DVD if possible.

The Candidate Assessment Record (CAR) should be completed and provided electronically as part of the submission. Comments should be directed to the moderator and should explain where the internal assessor has awarded marks and provide details of any professional judgment applied. The marks for each section should be clearly shown on the CAR.

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