



## **General Certificate of Education**

# **Applied Information and Communication Technology 8751, 8753, 8756, 8757 and 8759**

**IT01            ICT and Society**

## **Report on the Examination**

*2009 examination - January series*

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## Unit 1: ICT and Society (IT01)

This was the seventh series for the examination of this unit. Teachers new to the unit should also refer to previous reports.

### General comments

Candidates appeared to be very familiar with the topic of the scenario of this paper and most had carried out extensive research on their target audience. There were many examples of candidates who had prepared very well. These candidates presented their work extremely well and scored high marks. However, there were some candidates who were ill-prepared and struggled with the tasks. Centres should ensure that candidates have the necessary research, practical and evaluative skills required to succeed in this examination before attempting the task.

Most candidates submitted their work as required, i.e. in the order of the tasks set out in the Candidate Booklet, with the pages numbered. Some candidates submitted superfluous material, such as multiple copies of research questionnaires. Candidates should be reminded that it is only necessary to submit work that directly relates to the assessment criteria. It was pleasing to see that the majority of work was clear and easy to read, though some candidates did submit work that was not readable. Marks can not be awarded for work that is not readable.

Most candidates followed the guidance regarding presentation of work, securing their work with a single or double treasury tag. Plastic or manila folders should not be used.

### The task

The task given for this examination series was to design and produce a newsletter for parents and carers of 8 to 12 year olds, to inform them of the issues involved in their children's use of ICT, looking at six different potential areas of use. Candidates were also required to explain the relevance of the Data Protection Act to parents, carers and schools.

During the Controlled Conditions sessions candidates should have access to all their work for items (a) to (g) and item (n) only as **hard copy** plus their prepared research text and images in electronic format. The prepared research text may only be submitted as **basic text files**. Images must be stored as **individual graphics files**. Formatted text files of any kind are not allowed. Items (a) to (g) and item (n) must not be available in electronic format.

### Items (a) and (n)

This section was tackled well, with many candidates scoring full marks. However some candidates did not make clear what time was actually spent on planned tasks and reasons for deviations from the plan.

### Item (b)

The majority of candidates had done this extremely well, carrying out extensive research, stating clearly who their audience was and summarising the impact of their needs on the page requirements, both in terms of layout and content. These candidates were then able to refer to this throughout their assignment, often resulting in higher marks being awarded. However, a small number of candidates had put a lot of work into questionnaires and research without the candidates drawing appropriate conclusions. This lack of analysis limited the marks that could be awarded to them.

Candidates need to ask questions such as,

- 'Who is my audience?' and then describe them;
- 'What do they need?' and describe the effect of these needs in terms of page content and layout and style;

- 'How will I give them that in my newsletter?' and describe what the newsletter must contain and how it should be presented.

Sometimes candidates placed too much emphasis on such things as colours and fonts and too little on the overall style of writing and presentation and the content (what the audience wanted to know).

If candidates use a questionnaire to carry out research, they are reminded that they should only submit one example of the questionnaire with a summary of the results. Better candidates did not combing their questionnaires with those that they used for testing their designs in item (f).

### **Item (c)**

The evaluation criteria provided by many candidates were very weak. A significant number of candidates appeared to just re-iterate general criteria and did not relate them to the purpose of and audience for, the booklet, so could only be awarded one of the three marks available. Several other candidates did not show any understanding of what evaluation criteria were and instead described what they were planning to do, thereby gaining no marks in this section. In some cases these candidates had produced excellent responses for item (b) but did not use this to create sensible evaluation criteria. Better candidates had used their research for item (b) to create appropriate criteria to assess their newsletters and described how the evaluation criteria were arrived at.

### **Item (d)**

The majority of candidates quoted more than one type of source and followed the instructions in the Candidate Booklet, thus achieving the maximum three marks. A minority only quoted websites thus restricting themselves to a maximum of two marks. It was pleasing to see the number of candidates who quoted a variety of sources from a range of media.

Candidates should be reminded that search engines should not be quoted in the bibliography as they are not sources, but merely provide links to other websites. This is true of search results for both text and image files.

### **Item (e)**

Most candidates provided three, well annotated, sketches although few of these included notes about suitability for the audience that would have enabled them to gain the full three marks. Some candidates gave more detail here than in item (g) where it is required. The purpose of this part is to get feedback from the target audience as to the style of newsletter required to be developed in the final design.

### **Item (f)**

Candidates were expected to test their draft designs by showing them to a sample of their target audience, recording the feedback and then summarising their findings and the implications for the final design. Most candidates provided strong evidence of having done this well, with the better candidates using this information in the annotations of their final design. A minority of candidates did not draw any conclusions from their research, thus limiting themselves to the first mark.

### **Item (g)**

Most candidates had produced clear, hand drawn and well annotated designs showing font properties and giving measurements and design features beyond just the basic fonts. Most of the annotations, however, lacked sufficient justification of the choices of features. A few candidates gained maximum marks by explaining the range of facilities and layouts to be used for all their pages, including all measurements, in such a way that their designs could be implemented by another person. They then explained the features in relation to the audience and purpose and indicated how the set of pages would be implemented. Candidates do not

need to sketch out every page if all are to look similar, but must make it clear how the full set would be created. Similarly it is possible to draw designs to scale and clearly state this on their work.

Some candidates had carried out design work in the software that they were to use for the final newsletter. Centres are reminded of the instructions given in the Teachers' Notes regarding this.

**Item (h)**

Most candidates had provided screen shots of their files as required. A small number of candidates showed no evidence of research text, while others showed only the folders. These candidates gained no marks.

**Item (i)**

Candidates were asked to produce a template for their newsletter. A significant number ignored this requirement and just described creating their pages, and were not awarded the marks available. However, the majority of candidates presented labelled print outs or screen shots of their template showing the range of facilities used. Of these, only a small number gave reasons for including them in their newsletters, which limited the marks awarded. Most candidates showed evidence of using software facilities but did not relate them to the audience and purpose.

**Item (j)**

This section was mainly well done with many candidates providing extensive records of development, though only a small number showed how enhancements had been made. Some candidates submitted screen shots showing every minor development and alteration made. This is not necessary and such detail can be conveyed in fewer, well annotated pages. Candidates are expected to review their newsletter and make appropriate adjustments to improve it, which some did. A high number of students also produced detailed evidence showing how all the content was related to the files of research material. This was best done as a separate annotated set of screen shots. Some did not gain the full marks by neglecting to reference their images as well as the textual content.

**Item (k)**

The task set this session appeared to provide candidates with topics that were easier to research thus enabling them to score well on this section. Candidates had clearly researched the topics of the scenario and the majority produced well informed pages. They had also considered their audience and most of the newsletters produced clearly addressed the people for whom they were intended. Most candidates were able to identify the key points in each section but only a few could present a balanced view to the target audience in order to gain the third mark. Weaker candidates used very poor language or gave over-technical descriptions that were inappropriate for the target audience. Candidates who appeared to have just copied and pasted from the Internet gained few marks as their descriptions and discussions were not suitable for the context of the task.

For each topic the first mark was awarded for a short description of an ICT example; the second mark for either describing its benefits and drawbacks, or for providing a variety of examples or for a more detailed explanation; the third mark for producing a balanced view of the example, addressed to, or appropriate for, the target audience. The examples were expected to be relevant to 8-12 year old children.

**Health** This was well executed with a significant number of candidates describing the physical problems associated with operating a computer and relating these to the children. Better candidates also described ways in which ICT could benefit children's health, referring to such examples as fitness programs and equipment and health websites.

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**Education** The responses in this section varied widely. Some weaker candidates assumed the audience was familiar with the topic and so gave little explanation while others concentrated on obscure facts. The majority described some appropriate examples such as virtual learning environments (VLEs), Internet research, interactive whiteboards, educational websites or educational computer based games. The better candidates were then able to discuss the merits of these with the problems they present such as plagiarism or slower development of language.

**Leisure** There were many examples that included gaming, downloading music and social networking. The positive and negative aspects were well understood by a large number of candidates who were able to discuss them in context and gain the full three marks.

**Security** The majority of candidates were aware that security is about keeping data safe and protecting it against unauthorised access. There were several good descriptions of systems such as antivirus software, firewalls, backups and passwords and most of these were directed to the target audience. Better candidates were able to explain how a child's use of ICT might make a computer more vulnerable and put their advice to the target audience in the context of this.

**Safety** The dangers for children in using the Internet were well understood. Some very good examples and excellent advice for the target audience were seen.

**Communication** Again there was a tendency to make assumptions about the audience's knowledge and then give little or no explanation of the ICT example. It was expected that candidates would describe facilities such as email, messaging, chat rooms and social networking websites and then discuss their benefits and drawbacks for the 8-12 year old children. Mobile phones were given credit where the ICT aspects of their use, such as texting, address books or digital photography was clear.

**Legislation** Candidates were required to explain the relevance of the Data Protection Act to parents, carers and schools. This section was generally done badly, with few candidates appearing to understand the law or its implications for the target audience. Too many examples of DPA definitions with no explanation were seen. However, some did place their example in context and were able to explain to parents and carers their rights. The majority of better descriptions included data held on their children and the implications for the audience as representatives of the children.

Many candidates failed to reference the sources of their research within the content and many of those who did so omitted to reference the sources of their images. These candidates did not gain the marks allocated for this referencing.

### **Item (l)**

This item was well executed by the majority of candidates who explained how they had met their evaluation criteria (or how they had deviated from them) and easily gained two marks. Some were able to do this in depth and produce a comprehensive evaluation that clearly demonstrated suitability for both audience and purpose and so gained the third mark. A few candidates combined item (l) and item (m), which in many instances restricted the marks awarded.

### **Item (m)**

Most candidates were able to explain problems or comment on their own performance but then were unable to refer to item (j) to illustrate the problems, thus restricting themselves to the first mark.

Very few candidates provided detailed explanations, cross referenced to their time plan item (a) and item (n) and the development of the pages item (j), that would have gained the third mark.

**Item (n) – see (a) and (n)**

**Item (o)**

This section was carried out well by most candidates who clearly showed which research files they had added or amended, or had stated that there were no changes to the list of files. A significant number of candidates only supplied screen shots of folders, or did not distinguish their research files from their development work and so gained no marks.

**Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.