



## **General Certificate of Education**

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

**IT01            ICT and Society**

## **Report on the Examination**

*2009 examination – June series*

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## **Unit 1: ICT and Society (IT01)**

This was the eighth series for the examination of this unit. Centres new to the unit should also refer to Examiner's Reports for previous series.

### **General comments**

The standard of responses to the task set varied enormously. A high proportion of candidates presented their work extremely well and gained high marks; however there were also a significant number of candidates who appeared to struggle with the tasks. Some candidates submitted large quantities of material that was not necessary for assessment.

It is expected that candidates will have sufficient experience of the research, practical and evaluative skills necessary to succeed in this examination before receiving the Candidate Booklet.

Centres should remind their candidates to check the requirements of the examination paper carefully and to ensure that the examples given are relevant.

Candidates should be encouraged to submit work in the order of the tasks in the Candidate Booklet and to number all pages consecutively. The candidate's name, examination number and centre number should also be on every page. Some candidates submitted unnecessary material, such as multiple copies of questionnaires, for which a summary would have been sufficient. Candidates should be encouraged to be discriminating in the evidence that they present and should be discouraged from confusing quantity with quality.

It should also be stressed that screenshots or pages that cannot be seen or read by the Examiner will not gain marks. The most common causes of this occurrence were small screenshots, unsuitable font styles and the use of inappropriate colour combinations in the pages produced. The issue of readability is particularly important in item (k) where there are 24 of the 70 marks available.

There were a number of administrative lapses where the required documentation was not submitted with the candidates' work. All portfolios should have a Candidate Record Form, correctly signed by both candidate and supervisor, securely attached. The work from the centre should be accompanied by the attendance list, Centre Declaration Sheets and Record of Controlled Conditions, thus avoiding unnecessary delays.

### **The task**

The task set for this examination series was to design and produce a set of web pages for a local community, showing them the opportunities available for using ICT to support residents and local traders in the community. The purpose was to inform them of the effects that ICT is having on various local issues affecting society. Candidates were required to give examples of how ICT may be used in the provision of local services, tourism and communication within the community and to support people with particular needs within the community. They also had to include details of how one piece of ICT-related legislation could affect people in the local community. It should be noted that this task asks only for a set of web pages, rather than a complete website. Some candidates appeared to spend a disproportionate amount of time on advanced website design features that did not gain additional marks, at the expense of completing tasks that would have gained them higher marks.

## **Tasks carried out during Investigation Time**

### **Items (a) and (n)**

Many candidates gained full marks on these tasks, explaining the changes well. However some candidates appeared to be using templates with headings such as 'start date', 'end date', 'completed yes/no?' rather than actual date/time spent against estimated date/time for a task and this allowed them only to achieve the first mark.

### **Item (b)**

The majority of candidates stated clearly who their audience was and then carried out good research on their target audience, mainly through questionnaires. They were able to refer to this research throughout their assignment. These candidates then summarised the impact of their audience's needs on the web page requirements and the better candidates demonstrated a full understanding of the impact of the needs of the audience on layout and content of the web pages.

Some candidates did not understand that the responses gathered from a small sample of the population may not reflect the population as a whole. However, other candidates had obtained age analyses of their local populations and were able to draw sensible conclusions from them. Candidates are reminded that they only need to submit one copy of any questionnaire used, along with a summary of the overall results. Many candidates had also analysed several community websites and this had helped them in deciding on layout features.

### **Item (c)**

A significant number of candidates did not relate the evaluation criteria to the purpose of the web pages and the needs of the audience. Many candidates included generic criteria which did not relate to the specific task, so limiting the marks achieved. However, the majority of candidates used their research for item (b) to create appropriate criteria and described how the evaluation criteria were arrived at. Better candidates produced criteria that were well designed to assess the suitability of the content, design and layout of the created web pages in terms of their purpose and audience needs.

### **Item (d)**

The majority of candidates quoted more than one type of information source and followed the instructions in the Candidate Booklet thus achieving the maximum three marks. A minority only quoted search engines which can not be regarded as sources of information and as a result achieved no marks.

### **Item (e)**

Many candidates carried out this task well and provided three designs that were well annotated and included notes about suitability for the audience. These candidates were able to achieve three marks. Candidates whose designs showed little apart from the general layout of text areas, links and pictures were awarded one mark.

### **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 annotation of their final design. Other candidates

included questionnaires that were very generic and did not relate to the different drafts they had produced. Candidates are reminded that one completed copy and a summary of results is sufficient evidence of the use of questionnaires.

### **Item (g)**

Some designs submitted were clear, hand drawn and well annotated. Too few candidates, though, included sufficient detail to access all the available marks. Most candidates showed font properties to be used on their design work. Few candidates provided measurements on their designs, or showed design features beyond the basic fonts, image positions and hyperlinks. Annotations of the designs were usually weak, with few candidates explaining all the features in their design.

To achieve maximum marks candidates needed to explain a range of facilities and layouts to be used, include all measurements, justify them in relation to the audience and purpose and indicate how the set of pages would be implemented. Where candidates draw designs to scale this should be clearly stated.

Candidates should be discouraged from creating designs in the software that they will use for implementation of the final web pages.

### **Tasks carried out under controlled conditions**

During the Controlled Conditions sessions candidates should be provided with all their preparation work carried out for items (a) to (g) and (n) as **hard copies**, plus their research text and images in electronic format. Items (a) to (g) must **not** be made available in electronic format.

Text must only be stored as **basic text files**. Images must be stored as **individual graphics files**. Microsoft Word and similar formatted files are not permitted. Candidates are permitted to add to their research material during the period of Controlled Conditions by following the procedures in the Teachers' Notes.

### **Item (h)**

Most candidates provided clear screen shots of their files, as required, although a significant number of candidates did not show all of the files of textual material that were necessary for them to complete the examination.

### **Item (i)**

It was pleasing to see many, well explained, screen shots showing a range of facilities used and the reasons for including them in the web pages. A smaller number of candidates were also able to justify their use of software facilities in terms of the target audience and purpose, and so achieved the highest marks. A significant number of candidates did not explain many of the features used and achieved very limited marks.

### **Item (j)**

Many candidates provided extensive records of the development of their pages and the better candidates clearly showed how they had enhanced the pages after the initial implementation. However, a significant number of students did not understand how to present their record of development, giving screenshots of each individual change, step-by-step. This is not appropriate and leads to enormous numbers of pages printed which show the examiner little

about the process. Screenshots at significant stages of development for each page, well explained, justifying the decisions made, are most appropriate for this item.

Many candidates also produced detailed evidence showing how all the content of the pages was related to the files of researched material. The best candidates provided this explanation as a separate annotated set of screen shots. Those who did not reference their images, as well as the textual content, were unable to access the final available mark.

### **Item (k)**

There was good evidence that candidates had carried out good research into their own, as well as a wide range of other, communities and gained a strong insight into potentially useful ICT systems. A significant number of candidates did not respond to the requirement for “how ICT may be used in the provision of local services, tourism and communication within the community”, instead giving general examples that did not relate to the scenario and so were not able to access the marks available.

A wide range of appropriate examples was given, including:

- library issue and return systems
- local authority websites
- tourist information kiosks
- electronic bus information points at bus stops
- organisations’ text messaging, e.g. bus/train information and school information for parents
- EPOS in local shops
- Satellite navigation for taxi drivers and deliveries
- various database systems
- desk top publishing and presentation software for publicity
- Internet shopping from **local** shops and supermarkets
- email for a variety of community applications
- community forums
- spreadsheets for costing community events.

The majority of candidates described these fairly well and were able to state some benefits and drawbacks for the first two marks. Few were able to explain how the systems might benefit local residents and/or traders, or explain any possible drawbacks for them, clearly and so were unable to access the third mark.

Candidates frequently appeared to misread the requirement for “an example to show how ICT can be used to support people with particular needs in the community”. Many gave, instead, an inappropriate description of facilities available to help people with special needs to use ICT. What was expected was that candidates would give an example such as using the Internet to enable people with limited mobility to carry out everyday tasks such as shopping; or the use of systems involving optical character recognition which is then output via speakers for the partially sighted; text or electronic messaging for the hearing impaired; or text-to-speech voice generators for people with speech impairments. Those candidates who did describe appropriate examples were generally able to explain the benefits and drawbacks well.

A variety of pieces of legislation were presented, with the Data Protection Act being the most popular. Those who were able to explain the chosen legislation clearly, in a manner fitting the scenario, were able to access the highest marks. Weaker candidates found it hard to explain the implications of the chosen legislation for people in the local community. Many candidates were only able to access the first of the three marks available because they did not explain the law in the context of the scenario.

Most candidates presented clear, readable pages. A few candidates did not ensure that their work could be read when printed. Where it was not possible to read the pages it was not possible to award marks for the content. A useful method of ensuring clarity adopted by some candidates was to print their pages on A3 paper with landscape orientation so the text was clear. Candidates who concentrated on one system, for each area described, generally achieved higher marks than those who did not have this focus.

Better candidates gained the marks available for reference to the source of their research by including reference to the source of their images as well as the textual information used.

### **Item (l)**

The majority of candidates explained how they had met their evaluation criteria (or how they had deviated from them) and easily gained two marks. Very few were able to make truly evaluative comments or produce a comprehensive evaluation that clearly demonstrated the suitability of their web pages for both audience and purpose. Those who did were able to access the third mark.

### **Item (m)**

Many candidates gave a reasonable description of their own performance, or described how they had overcome a problem, accessing 1 of the 3 marks available. A significant number also explained how they had overcome problems in sufficient detail to access the second mark. They did this by using screen shots, or referring to those created for item (j). Very few candidates provided detailed explanations, cross referenced to their time plans, items (a) and (n), and the development of the pages in item (j). This would have enabled them to access the third mark. The evaluations of weaker candidates often resembled a log of events rather than evaluative comments.

### **Item (n) - see (a) and (n) above**

### **Item (o)**

The majority of candidates produced screenshots of their files, but many did not make it clear which files contained their research material.

## **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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