



**General Certificate of Education (A-level)  
January 2011**

**ICT  
(Specification 2520)**

**INFO3**

**Unit 3: The Use of ICT in the Digital World**

***Report on the Examination***

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## **General Comments**

Centres are reminded to read this report in conjunction with the published mark scheme that includes sample answers and the section in the Specification where the expectations of candidates performing at grade A and E are described.

The examination consisted of two parts: Section A - structured questions based on pre-release material; and Section B - questions requiring extended answers. Centres are reminded that all candidates should be familiar with the pre-release material supplied to them prior to the examination. This pre-release material should be used as the basis for further study and the content investigated. However, analysis of results showed that, for some candidates, there were significant differences between the marks gained for Section A compared with Section B. Higher marks in Section A suggested that the pre-release had been studied in depth whilst higher marks in Section B suggested this essential preparation had not taken place.

There was some evidence that candidates had not always studied the question requirements and had consequently failed to maximise their marks.

## **SECTION A**

### **Question 1(a)**

Whilst many candidates found this a straightforward question, some did not provide the required description of the difference between the two services.

### **Question 1(b)**

Candidates had little difficulty with this question but some failed to provide the requested explanation.

### **Question 2(a)**

On the whole, this question was answered adequately, although some answers demonstrated a lack of preparation or understanding of the pre-release material. Some candidates confused processes with information flows. Where the answers inferred that information flows were intended credit was given. For future questions of this type, the examiners will be seeking specific references to data flows.

### **Question 2(b)**

Few candidates gained the maximum available marks. Many showed a lack of knowledge of E-R diagrams and were not able to describe a relationship correctly. As practically all candidates used plural entities, rather than the accepted singular, the mark scheme on this occasion was relaxed to accept plural entities.

### **Question 3**

The question required candidates to **identify** security issues and **describe** security measures. Although some candidates gained high marks, others provided confused and inaccurate answers that omitted the descriptive content required by the question; thus they were unable to gain all the marks on offer.

#### **Question 4**

Training methods were generally understood but many candidates failed to correctly identify the main groups of users, in particular the customer group.

#### **Question 5**

For a complete answer candidates were required to **compare** iterative and linear development methods and then **recommend** and **justify** the most suitable method. Often, some or all of these requirements were omitted, with candidates confining their answers to descriptions of the two methods, thereby failing to gain the maximum marks available.

### **SECTION B**

#### **Question 6**

Candidates did not always appreciate the strategic role of the CIO; many incorrectly included tactical and operational level tasks in their answers.

#### **Question 7(a)**

Candidates identified some technology issues but often these were not expanded. The requested examples were also missing. Overall, marks were surprisingly low for such a straightforward question.

#### **Question 7(b)**

Although this question enabled candidates to discuss benefits and/or drawbacks, most candidates confined their answers to benefits. This was generally a well-answered question, although some candidates wrote at length about bespoke software, which could not be credited as it did not form part of the question.

#### **Question 8**

Many candidates wrote exclusively about legislation with few, if any, referring to the impact on procedures or policies; when these were mentioned, there was rarely any meaningful link to legislation. However, there were some very good answers that demonstrated both knowledge and understanding.

#### **Question 9**

Many essays were in the good mark range, with only a small proportion reaching the high mark range. Some candidates wrote exclusively about new technologies and social networks, but made little or no reference to digital networks and thus they did not gain the higher marks available.

The quality of written communication was better than that in past examinations, although there is still room for improvement. A few essays were well planned, with paragraphs carefully linked and firm conclusions based upon reasoned examples.

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

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