



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

ICT

INFO2

(Specification 2520)

Unit 2: Living in the Digital World

Report on the Examination

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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 grades A and E are described.

Question 1

It was pleasing to see that the majority of candidates scored full marks on this question. A number of candidates however, still confused data and information in their responses.

Question 2

The vast majority of candidates found this question very straightforward.

Question 3(a)

A number of candidates did not read the question carefully and listed types of data such as text and numeric. Very few candidates managed to score 4 or more marks. The most popular type of creditworthy answer described 'direct' and 'indirect' data collection. It was refreshing to see a good range of examples including census forms, surveys and questionnaires as well as supermarkets and loyalty forms.

Question 3(b)

Many candidates seemed to understand the reasons for coding and were able to apply them to the given scenario, thus scoring good marks. Some confused coding with encoding and went off at a tangent. Some weaker candidates incorrectly wrote 'easier to enter data' without explaining why and did not gain marks.

Question 4

A minority of candidates managed to score 3 or more marks on this question and very few achieved the full six marks available. Candidates need to understand that terms such as large area or small area have little quantitative meaning unless they are accompanied by a word such as geographical. Schools, colleges and businesses can be multi-site and they need the word site or campus as appropriate.

Question 5(a)

Many candidates scored half marks or less on this question. Most candidates knew the characteristics of users that needed to be considered but many of the expansions lacked the necessary detail to gain further marks. For example, when experience was given many candidates gave expansions such as 'the interface should be easy to use' without saying how this would be achieved. Where 'physical abilities' were stated, many candidates were able to give an acceptable expansion; for example 'deaf people might need subtitles to be provided on the console'.

Question 5(b)

A minority of candidates scored the full two marks for this question but others only scored one, being unable to explain the need for a dialogue between user and computer. Some candidates were not able to explain the type of processing required and consequently scored no marks.

Question 5(c)

Many candidates provided detailed and relevant responses to this question and some excellent answers were seen. Most candidates wrote in depth about various health issues caused by playing computer games and many candidates also gave detailed explanations of the social aspects of gaming. Effects on the economy were less evident, but even here there were some good answers which talked about employment opportunities and opportunities for retail sales of games. Even the

weakest candidates were able to say something about the effects of playing computer games and so often scored some marks.

Question 6

The weaker candidates showed little understanding of environmental problems; terms such as ozone layer, global warming and carbon footprint were dropped into the answer while showing little or no understanding of their meaning. For example, generalised statements such as 'burning fossil fuels destroys the ozone layer' were frequently seen. The stronger candidates often gained good marks. Most appreciated the need for recycling and the dangers of too much computer waste, for example hardware and consumables going to landfill. However it was the exceptional candidate who considered the question from both angles i.e. the impact of ICT on the environment **and** the impact of the environment on ICT.

Question 7

The weaker candidates simply wrote all they knew about legislation which included writing at length about the eight principles of the Data Protection Act and the three offences under the Computer Misuse Act, rather than trying to explain the effect of this legislation on their own lives. Where candidates had tried to apply the legislation to themselves they had often done so very well thus gaining marks in the high band. There was quite a lot of confusion between legislation and regulation. Perhaps not surprisingly, the Copyright, Designs and Patent Act came in for the most criticism and suggested reform. Many candidates thought that it should be legal to freely download software if it was required for coursework. Some common misunderstandings included that you could use Freedom of Information to find out about personal data stored about yourself and that visiting unsuitable sites when under 18 was covered by the Computer Misuse Act.

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