



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

ICT

INFO3

(Specification 2520)

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 grades A and E are described.

The examination consisted of two parts:

- Section A - structured questions based on pre-release material
- Section B - questions requiring extended answers.

Although centres are required to ensure that candidates are familiar with the pre-release material supplied prior to the examination, some of the Section A answers suggested that little or no study of this material had taken place.

There was evidence that in some cases candidates had not paid sufficient attention to the question requirements, in particular question 2(b) and question 7.

SECTION A

Question 1(a)

The majority of candidates found this to be a straightforward question, although there were some who confused “hot desking” with hot and cold spots in an organisation.

Question 1(b)

Many gained marks for this question but some candidates confused purging with archiving. Others failed to understand how the purging of data would save energy.

Question 1(c)

This question differentiated between candidates and produced a full range of standards of responses. Some clearly understood what was meant by server virtualisation whilst others displayed little knowledge.

Question 2(a)

Candidates were required to describe common business activities where packages could be used as replacements for bespoke systems. It was reasonably well answered with answers ranging from in-depth responses about two business activities, such as Payroll and Personnel management, to a range of business activities with simple examples of package software.

Question 2(b)

Generally, this question was poorly answered. Many candidates incorrectly discussed **hardware** rather than software, indicating that they had not read the question carefully. Few candidates gained full marks, although many gained two marks for giving a description of the software scrappage scheme, with only some accruing additional marks for describing how the scheme would assist a move towards green computing.

Question 3

This question was well answered, with many candidates gaining maximum marks. Typical initiatives discussed included: manual switching off of ICT equipment when not in use, automatic switching off of ICT equipment when not in use, financial incentives by the Government to reduce energy consumption (including tax breaks), the use of posters and advertising campaigns.

Question 4

There were some good responses to this question, with the better candidates linking the approaches described in the magazine articles to an organisational context. However, others ignored this aspect and merely listed the points given in the pre-release, with no further enhancements, limiting marks to the medium mark range.

SECTION B

Question 5

Some candidates gained maximum marks by providing comprehensive answers, including factors such as available finance, shelf life of consumables, quantity discounts, storage considerations and matching stock to demand. However, other candidates discussed organisational strategy and other issues unrelated to the stock control of printer consumables and gained no credit for their efforts.

Question 6

Candidates who gained the highest marks discussed the issues of scale and complexity involved in testing large systems and/or the testing techniques that may be used. Other candidates confined their answers to a description of testing methods for small scale systems, such as unit testing, but failed to discuss or make any reference to the issues involved in testing large systems.

Candidates who gained the highest marks discussed the issues involved in testing large systems such as volume testing, multi-platform testing and the use of test harnesses.

Question 7

The highest marks were gained by candidates who named the various factors to be considered when determining support for bespoke systems and then discussed appropriate support options that might be suitable for each factor. However, this question was not particularly well answered by the majority of candidates, who simply described a list of support options. Some candidates incorrectly discussed support options such as user groups or forums which would be applicable to packages rather than to bespoke systems.

Question 8

The essay question provided candidates with plenty of scope to display their knowledge of ICT systems and organisational use of systems. Although there were some excellent answers, this question was generally answered poorly, the main reason being a lack of understanding that any discussion of systems should include an organisational context. Frequently candidates confined their answers to descriptions of systems types, with no discussion as to how these systems enabled organisations to function effectively.

The weakest candidates concentrated on just one system type or used the whole essay to discuss backup and recovery procedures, without making any mention of the systems being secured.

A few essays were well planned, with paragraphs carefully linked and firm conclusions based upon reasoned examples, but these were the exception rather than the norm.

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

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