

ICT

Chapter 7

Presenting information

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ICT

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Draft for pilot centres

Chapter 7: Presenting information

- Chapter 1:** Using ICT systems
- Chapter 2:** Safety and security
- Chapter 3:** Find and select information
- Chapter 4:** Using ICT-based information
- Chapter 5:** Entering, developing and combining information (Part A)
- Chapter 6:** Entering, developing and combining information (Part B)
- Chapter 7:** Presenting information
- Chapter 8:** Communicating using ICT
- Chapter 9:** Test preparation and progress track

How to use the Functional ICT materials

These materials have been developed to help you learn the skills that are listed in the Functional Skills Standards for ICT, which the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) produced in 2007.

How have these materials been structured?

The chapters follow the standards, and each chapter is divided into sections that cover the individual standards in sequence. You will find the standards at the start of each chapter, although we have adapted the language slightly to make it clear what you are expected to learn.

Just because the materials follow the standards in this way, it does not mean that your teacher will necessarily teach them in this order. They will organise your learning sessions to suit your individual needs.

Who are these materials aimed at?

These materials are for learners working at both Level 1 and Level 2. The content and activities have been written to be accessible to learners at both levels. Your teacher will know which activities are most suitable for you.

In functional skills, the difference between levels is more to do with what you produce than with the activities you are asked to do. The differences are measured by the **complexity** of the activities, your **familiarity** with the context you are working in and the task you've been asked to perform, how **technically demanding** the task is and how good you are at working **independently**. The materials, and their activities, have been developed with this in mind.

We hope that the materials will engage you in the learning process, and give you the opportunity to discuss what you

have learned and to see how other learners approach the same tasks.

What will you find in each chapter?

The chapters follow the standards and are divided into sections that cover what is laid out in the standards. Within each section you are asked to 'Learn the skill', which gives you information and facts for discussion and exploration; and you are asked to 'Develop the skill', with activities that let you practise the skills, test your understanding and take your knowledge further.

You will also find two other features on the pages that are designed to increase your understanding. These are electronic resources in the form of 'skills demonstrations' and 'assets'.

 Skills demonstrations are screen-based demonstrations of points made in the text, which you can click on for instruction or information.

 Assets are files of information provided or stored digitally, which may include photographs, sound clips, databases, spreadsheets, etc. These may also include material you will need to perform the activities (e.g. tables to complete).

We hope you find it easy to learn from these materials and that you enjoy using them.

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7 Presenting information

By the end of this chapter you should be able to:

- ▶▶ present information in ways that are fit for purpose and audience
- ▶▶ evaluate the selection and use of ICT tools and facilities used to present information

You will learn to:

- ▶▶ work accurately and proofread
- ▶▶ ensure your meaning is clear
- ▶▶ check calculations and ensure consistent layout
- ▶▶ evaluate the effectiveness of ICT tools
- ▶▶ produce information that is fit for purpose and audience
- ▶▶ use accepted layouts
- ▶▶ review and modify work as it progresses

A Checking your work

Publications must make sense to the target audience. What you put in them depends on who they are for, why they are needed and where they are to be used. You need to select the right type of publication and present the information in a style that suits the audience.

Even if you get all this right, there is still more to do. You must check that the publication has no errors and that it is fit for purpose.

Learn the skill

Proofreading

- ▶▶ **Proofreading** means checking for spelling or grammar mistakes. You must always proofread your work. Once you think your work is perfect, print off a copy and check it again. Ask someone else to read it and give you feedback. Make corrections and check again.

Spellchecker

- ▶▶ However useful it is, the **spellchecker** is *not* always right! Don't rely on it to find all your spelling mistakes, and don't trust it to suggest the right word. Sometimes the spellchecker won't notice that you have typed in the wrong word. Always ask someone to check your spellings. Even professional writers do this.



Ask others to give feedback on your work

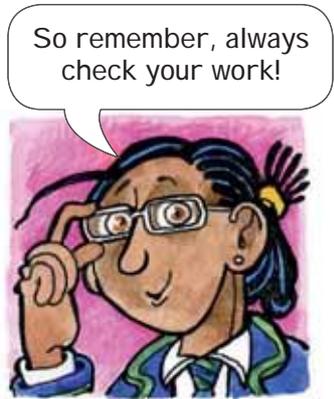
Testing a spreadsheet

Spreadsheets allow you to calculate totals and percentages (among other things), and to produce charts that can present results. But the results you get from a spreadsheet aren't necessarily correct. Use a calculator to check that all the calculations are correct; if you get a different answer from the one in the spreadsheet, check the formula.

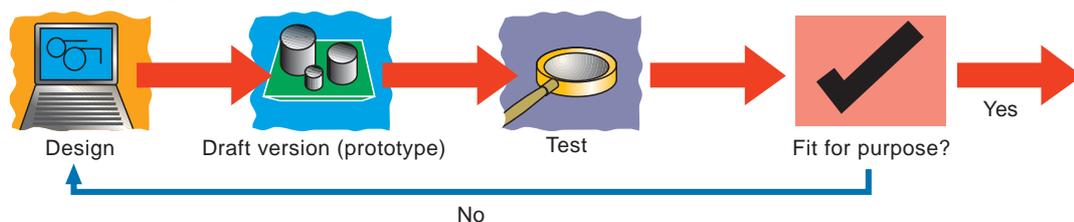
Review, review, review

Keep checking your work as you go along. Produce draft versions (or prototypes) and check them. Check draft versions of your work by asking the following questions:

- Is the text easy to understand?
- Is the style suitable and consistent?
- Is the layout clear?
- Are there any spelling or grammar mistakes?



This diagram shows the production cycle. Keep it in mind every time you develop a publication. Keep going back to the design stage until you have a publication that is fit for purpose.



Develop the skill

A1 Open the following table. Type each pair of sentences into a word-processing document and run a spellcheck. Does the spellchecker always help you?

Sentence One	Sentence Two	Which is the correct sentence? Did the spell checker tell you?
They said there team would win.	They said their team would win.	
The student could not here the lecturer.	The student could not hear the lecturer.	

A2 Complete the *try me* sections on the skills demonstrations on proofreading and spell checking.

A3 Open the file *Hollie Gray letter.doc*.

a Use the spellchecker to check the spelling in this document. How many spelling errors are there?

Hollie Gray
 16 Town Lane
 South Hikeham
 LN6 0MH

b Proofread the letter. There are **five** more errors in it. How many can you find?

B Fit for purpose

Producing an effective publication involves making decisions about:

- *Who* the publication is aimed at (the target audience)
- *Why* the publication is needed
- *Where* the audience is
- What your publication must include
- *How* to go about it (What type of publication is best? Will it be a poster, report, presentation, leaflet, web page or something else? What sort of language should you use?)



Different publications are designed for different audiences

Different publications suit different purposes. Here are some examples:

Purpose	Examples of publication
To attract attention	Posters
	Flyers
To make information available	Leaflets
	Websites
	Information points
To target individuals or groups	Presentations
	Letters
	Reports
	Newsletters

Choosing a presentation style

You can create a completely different impression by changing the language you use or the way you present information.

Different publications use different fonts, colours and layouts, depending on the audience and purpose of the publication. You need to think carefully about the style you will use. What are you trying to achieve? Should the publication attract attention, appeal to children, look professional, impress someone?



Design

Here are some general tips about designing posters, flyers and leaflets.

Colours

- Don't use too many colours – it can look messy.
- Use light pastel shades as well as bright or dark colours. They can be easier to read if you have text on a colour block.
- Choose background and foreground colours that work well together. The foreground and text should stand out.
- Headings can be highlighted by using different colour combinations.
- Be aware of people with colour vision deficiency when choosing colours.

Fonts

- Choose a font that is easy to read when printed.
- Use as few fonts as possible! Too many font types look messy.
- Choose the size according to the importance of the text.
- Do not use all UPPER CASE type in your posters. It can make the text difficult to read.

Choose a clear font	<i>Choose a clear font</i>	Choose a clear font
choose a clear font	<i>Choose a clear font</i>	Choose a clear font
Some fonts are clearer than others		

Images

- Images can be very effective at attracting people's attention.
- Put an image near the text that goes with it. Leave some space around the image and don't have the text too close to it.
- Use images that have a good resolution: they will look attractive when printed.



Borders

- Page borders sometimes look effective. However, if there is already a lot of information on a page, the border can make it look crowded.
- Borders and lines can also be used within a page to make a particular section stand out.

Layout

- Make the most of the space, but don't try to squash in too much.
- Don't place images and text randomly on the page. Think carefully about which items should be grouped together.
- White space is any empty space on a page. Don't be afraid to have plenty of white space. Use the space to help balance items on the page. It helps the reader see each part clearly.

Develop the skill

B1 Match an appropriate publication to each audience and purpose. Decide whether the aim of each publication is to:

- attract attention
- make information available
- target individuals or groups

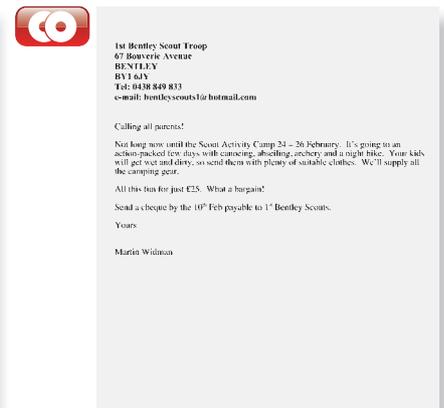
Audience and purpose	Publication	Aim
Informing a customer that his central heating is due for a service		
Informing office staff of the date of a Christmas party		

B2 Look at the posters. Are they fit for purpose?

- Why has each of the posters been produced?
- Who is the target audience for each poster?
- How does each poster attract attention?
- Is the information clearly presented?
- Which poster do you think does its job best? Why?



B3 Compare these two versions of Martin's letter. What impression does each give? Which is most suitable for the intended audience and purpose?



B4 Look at each of these leaflets. Which leaflets do you think are the most effective, and why? Consider the:

- audience and purpose
- size of paper
- orientation
- colours
- numbers of folds
- layout and use of white space



C Which ICT tool do I use?

Modern user applications for desktop and laptop computers are well-developed tools that can often do more than the main thing they were designed to do. Word processors often include simple drawing tools, and some can do automatic calculations on numbers in tables, like a spreadsheet. Spreadsheets can search and filter database information; they also have drawing tools and can display images. Some drawing programs have such good text-handling abilities that they are used instead of desktop publishing tools to create complex pages.

Some tools are limited in what they do, but do that very well. Two examples of such tools are mind-mapping software and audio-editing software.

This sometimes makes choosing the right tool for the job a little difficult.

Learn the skill

Consider the following things when choosing a tool for a job:

- ? Is there a tool that I know well that will do the job effectively?
If yes, use that tool. If you don't know, you may have to do some research to see if a tool exists – and then learn how to use it.
- ? Is there a tool that is designed specifically for the job? If yes, it may be worth taking the time to learn how to use the tool effectively – particularly if you want to do a lot more work of the same kind. And a tool that is designed for the job will probably produce a better result with less effort.

Before you put time and effort into learning a new tool, and perhaps spending money on it, think about what it provides.

- ? Is it capable of doing not just what I want now, but also what I might need to do in the future?
- ? Is it a one-job only tool, or can it do a range of things?
- ? Can the output be used in other applications?



Have you ever seen a message like this when trying to open a new file? If not, then you are lucky!

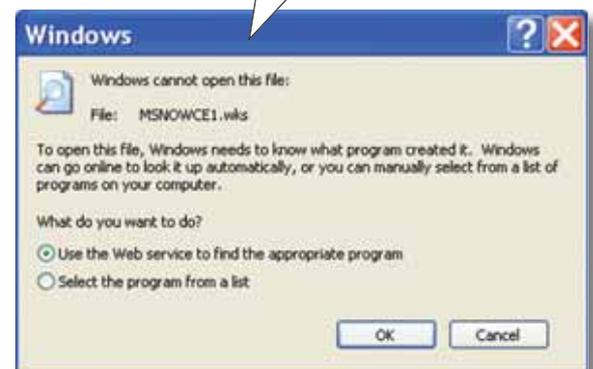
File formats

All word processors produce document files, but not every type of document file can be opened by every word processor. The same is true of other applications.

If someone sends you a file that was created in software that you don't have, you may not be able to open it – it depends on the file format or the file type. You can tell the file type by the extension in the file name: here .wks tells me that the file was created using a Lotus spreadsheet, which I don't have.

Common file formats

There are some file formats that can be opened by just about everyone. The html format which is used for web pages can be read using any web browser. Rich text formats (rtf) documents can be created from word-processing or desktop-publishing files and can be read by other software.



Transferring information

Files are often transferred from one place to another. On a network this is often to and from the network server and is likely to be a fairly quick process, even for quite large files.

Files can also be moved on portable media such as CDs or memory sticks.

Files can also be transferred over the internet. Files may be **downloaded** from the internet, often from a website, or **uploaded** to a website or other location.

The speed of data transfer over the internet is much slower than for local networks; even a broadband connection is not very fast. Actual broadband speeds depend on how many people are using the website and sharing your connection at that time. It is usually possible, though, to download even a large file – a video, say – in minutes rather than hours.

Uploading the same video file would take a great deal longer. Upload speed is much slower than download speed and is often only about 250 kilobits per second.



Develop the skill



C1 You have a project that involves organising people and resources over time. What would be the most suitable type of tool to use?

Explain why the tool is the best choice and list some of the facilities that make it suitable for the work.

C2 Find the names of at least two commercial pieces of software for creating animated gif files.

Compare them and decide which one is the most versatile and has the best facilities.

C3 Find out the type of application that can be used to open files with each of the following file extensions:

a pdf **b** html **c** xml **d** csv

What do these different types of file have in common?

D Reviewing and modifying work

It is very tempting to go straight to your computer and create your publication without stopping to think. But before you create any publication, you must design it.

You should not expect to get it right first time. Produce a prototype – a draft version – test it yourself and ask others for comments.

Learn the skill



Designing and prototyping

When developing work that is going to be read or used by other people, you need to focus very clearly on these questions:

- 1 The audience – does the work meet their needs?
The same topic will need different treatments if you're aiming it at a group of adults and a group of children.
- 2 The purpose – what is the work intended for, and does it do the job?
It's easy to wander off the point. As the content is developed, keep asking the question 'Is this right for the purpose?'
- 3 The content – is it complete? Is there anything missing? Is there anything there that's not needed? Your aim should be to include everything that's essential and exclude anything that's unnecessary. You may have to make hard decisions to get this right!
- 4 How it will be used – is the format right? Can it be read easily?
A topic presented as a slide show should be treated very differently from the same topic dealt with in a report. Detail is best left out of a slide show, but can be vital in a report.

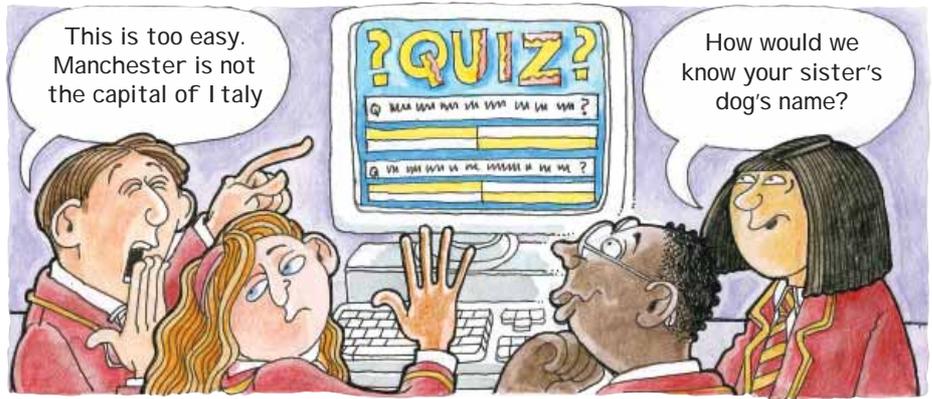
Test it yourself

Check that your publication matches your design. Check for accuracy and consistency – use the spellchecker and proofread the publication carefully. Read aloud what you have written as if you had an audience present. If anything sounds clumsy or too long, or boring, then have another look at the way you have written it. Check that all other content – including images and other components – is fit for purpose.

Get others to test it

As you develop a publication, you should ask suitable people to comment on your prototypes. These people will include:

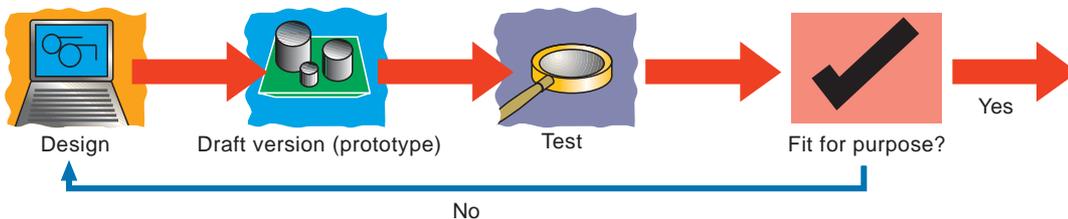
- Test users who are similar to the target audience
- Your peers
- Your teacher



You must make sure you get the feedback you need – tell your test users what you want them to comment on. Tell them that you want the truth; it won't help you if they are just being nice. You could help them with their feedback by producing a questionnaire or form to complete. If the publication is designed to be read by your audience, get someone to read it and tell you what they think of it. If it is designed to be presented to an audience, ask someone to comment on how you have presented it.

Once you and others have tested a prototype, go back to your design to incorporate feedback and make changes as necessary. Keep going back to the design until you are absolutely sure that it is fit for purpose and you are ready to publish the final version.

Remember the production cycle.



Develop the skill

D1 Imagine that you have to organise work experience for yourself for a period of two weeks next term. Decide where you would like to work and write a formal letter asking for a placement.

Make sure that you use a formal letter layout and that you include enough information about yourself and what you want. Your aim is to persuade the employer to take you on.

Work in pairs and review each other's letters as if you were the employer. Record your reviewer's comments and the changes you made. Try out different methods for recording the feedback. Go through the production cycle as many times as necessary until your letter is fit for purpose.

D2 Look at these newsletters. Describe them in terms of their:

- Audience and purpose
- Colours
- Number and size of pages
- Use of images
- Title
- Writing style
- Content
- Layout

