



General Certificate of Secondary Education

**GCSE Applied Information and
Communication Technology
3851 (Double Award)**

3850/3 ICT in Society

Report on the Examination

2008 examination - June series

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Unit 3: ICT in Society

Introduction

June 2008 sees the fourth series of the revised examination for Unit 3. The revision to the examination reflects a desire to see students focus on the context given in the three tasks and produce more detailed analysis of the impact of ICT and Society.

AQA has continued to provide a large amount of support to centres. In the autumn term 2007 and the spring term 2008, a series of meetings was held around the country specifically aimed at centres about to commence delivery of the specification.

These meetings gave detailed information on the content of the specification and advice on its delivery and assessment. The meetings were well received by the centres that attended, with positive feedback on their usefulness, however attendance was disappointing with some meetings having to be cancelled due to having no delegates. The meetings that ran provided delegates with an insight into candidates' performances in previous examination series. Previous candidates' strengths and weaknesses were identified, and strategies for improving candidates' performances were suggested. A range of exemplar material was issued, with commentaries explaining where marks had been achieved by candidates.

In general, candidates sitting the June 2008 examination worked to the requirements of the three tasks and most centres used the full time allocation. It was still disappointing, however, to see that many of the same mistakes were still occurring. Centres should direct their candidates to the aspects of the examination which are accredited rather than producing superfluous material such as multiple copies of the presentation. It was evident that centres were utilising the checklist provided by AQA and so, in theory, the correct evidence should have been provided.

The *Candidates' Booklet* and *Instructions and Guidance for Teachers* clearly describe leave as is stages which combined together to form each task. Working through these stages allowed candidates to produce tasks which demonstrated the depth and range of knowledge and understanding required by this Double Award Specification. Centres are reminded of AQA's expectation that candidates are taught the ICT content for all five focus areas identified in Unit 3 prior to starting the assessed tasks. Evidence from Teacher Support meetings and questions raised by centres on ask-AQA suggest that a number of centres do not teach the content in sufficient depth or detail to provide their candidates with opportunities to achieve success. This assessed unit represents one-third of a double award GCSE qualification, and the teaching and study allowed should reflect this, both in the amount of time allocated and depth of preparation. It is clearly unreasonable to expect candidates who have been given insufficient teaching and study time to achieve similar marks to those who have received the 5-6 hours per week that would normally be allocated to two GCSEs.

Task One: Presentation on Law and Order

The requirement was for candidates to focus the content of their presentation, exclusively on the effects of ICT relating to Law and Order, on one identified group. Examiners were pleased to note that the number of candidates producing generic presentations without focus on the context were rare. Presentations of this type were unable to achieve more than a minimal number of marks, as responses were not sufficiently detailed.

A number of candidates mentioned and described a group, but then proceeded to list many different technologies, sometimes including technical detail, but failed to relate these technologies to the identified group. This again resulted in only minimal marks. Candidates must be able to identify how the group or individual uses, or is affected by, ICT in the area of Law and Order.

Many centres had candidates submitting a significant number of presentations that were quite similar, for example, they related to the same groups or areas of content. Centres are reminded that candidates must produce individual presentations and must work unaided whilst in the controlled sessions. Whilst it is expected that in delivery of the specification, teachers may discuss specific groups or individuals affected by the different context areas, when conducting research for the tasks students are expected to work independently and it is totally inappropriate for the teacher to influence the content of candidates' work in any way.

It is important for candidates to realise that the presentation must be produced for a specified audience, and must focus on the effects of ICT on the identified groups or individual. It is not sufficient for candidates to offer generic responses that do not relate to the identified groups. The presentation is essentially an opportunity for candidates to demonstrate that they are able to use ICT knowledge and understanding that they have developed through the teachers' delivery of the content and apply that knowledge and understanding to a new context.

Centres are asked to ensure that, where candidates use the speakers' notes section to incorporate a lot of text, the font size is not reduced to a point where the examiner cannot read it. Similarly, where text is coloured on a coloured background, the examiner will need to be able to read it if marks are to be awarded. If speakers' notes are separate from the slides, it is useful for candidates to identify which text relates to which slide.

Candidate identifies the audience for their presentation and ensures that the presentation is appropriate to the needs of the audience (2 marks)

A1 Identify audience

Examiners were pleased to see that only a very few candidates failed to identify an audience. Those who did not achieve this mark either did not identify an audience at all or highlighted unacceptably vague audiences such as 'adults', 'the general public' or 'everyone'. Audiences such as 'my ICT group' and 'new police recruits' were quite acceptable.

Candidates should not assume the audience is implied from the group they are discussing in B1, and should make a clear point to identify who they are aiming their task at.

A2 Format appropriate for audience

Most candidates who identified an audience could also be awarded the mark for appropriateness for audience which was judged in terms of content, language, appearance and format.

Candidate describes an individual or group affected by ICT Systems (4 marks)**B1 Identify one individual or group**

Most candidates attempted to identify a group or individual. Police, Motorists, Criminals and Young Offenders were common. Some candidates persist on naming 'adults' or the 'general public' as their group. These remain unacceptable groups and do not result in the candidate gaining further marks for content.

B2 Describe the individual or group

Many candidates attempted to describe the groups mentioned in the above section. Simple descriptions are perfectly acceptable, and the majority of candidates who identified an acceptable group attained marks in this section.

B3 Relate the individual or group to ICT use

Some candidates simply produced a list of technologies and therefore did not achieve the marks for this section. Most candidates were able to relate their individual or groups to ICT use, however some failed to relate the groups to ICT at all by using generalised statements, for example, 'police use computers', with no supporting statements as to how they are used in relation to law and order. Candidates should be reminded that in this area they are able to identify a link with how an identified group or individual is affected by ICT, which is where groups such as Young Offenders could achieve a mark by being "captured on a CCTV camera when stealing".

Candidate considers consequences of lack of access to ICT and benefits available through use of ICT (6 marks)**C1 Describe in detail the benefits of the use of ICT**

Candidates are expected to provide detail of the benefits to the individual or group of using ICT in relation to the context. Benefits must be those related to the individual or group identified in B1. Often candidates failed to link the benefits of the technology to the individual, but rather generalised benefits. This discussion could have been rewarded if the candidate had completed the flow of discussion. For example, in relation to Police using the Police National Database, saying it makes finding criminals easier is not enough, students would need some further depth to achieve marks. The same depth of discussion is also required for the C2 section in relation to the consequences of lack of access.

Candidates often failed to achieve all the marks available in this section as they only gave one benefit which lacked sufficient substance to be awarded additional marks. Simple one-sentence answers are insufficient for three marks.

C2 Explains the consequences of lack of access to ICT

Candidates generally interpret a consequence as the opposite of a benefit, or make statements that the groups are unable to do certain things, for example, 'the Police would not be able to easily find information'. This section is intended for the candidates to identify how the group would be able to continue their working life without the use of ICT and the impact it would have on them. In this context it may well mean that the Policeman would not be able to find information in a file easily, and this would take more time, but this section is looking for a discussion of how the individual would function and what the lack of ICT would mean for them.

As in the benefits section, see C1 above, the consequences must be for the group or individual and not generalised consequences.

Candidate makes informed suggestions to show how ICT developments already in progress will affect their chosen individual or group in the near future (2 marks)**D1 Basic details of future effects**

This criterion requires candidates to interpret the information they have already researched and project that information into the future to make realistic predictions. A list of future technologies is not enough. A large number of candidates were unable to achieve marks within this section as they did not relate the future effect to their identified group. Candidates continue to make superficial statements regarding technologies being 'better' or 'faster', which is not sufficient for this section. Again the context should be for the group identified and topic of the series. Discussion outside the context will not achieve marks. Similarly, technologies which are already in widespread use within the environment of the individual described that had not been identified in B3 will not be awarded marks. For example, saying that the police will use better speed cameras or faster Internet connections is insufficient.

E1 Use of software features

Most candidates achieved the marks available for use of software features. Some candidates may have included a background, which could have been awarded a mark, but did not achieve that mark as their printouts were produced in black and white. There is no requirement for colour printing in this section but backgrounds often disappear when printed in monochrome due to the design of the software. A simple annotation by the candidate indicating that a background has been used is sufficient for the background mark to be awarded.

Very few candidates provided evidence of slide transitions or build effects, both of which would have earned marks. Again, a simple annotation or screen print of the transition setup window is sufficient for the mark to be awarded.

Task Two: Report on Personal Communications

Whereas the presentation focuses on the effects of ICT on identified types of groups or individuals, the report is concerned primarily with the available technology. The requirement is for candidates to focus exclusively on Personal Communications and to relate the content of their report to that area.

Candidates often viewed the report as something that could achieve marks with minimal detail, often trying to respond in a single sentence to the guidance in the Candidate Booklet. Candidates who simply wrote unrelated sentences in response to each mark criterion, rather than expanding on the task list of requirements, missed out on achieving many of the marks.

Candidates who used the marking criteria as side headings in their report often produced more structured evidence that included much more detail.

However, candidates must remember that they are required to discuss technologies in relation to their use for Personal Communication. In many cases they failed to do so and marks could not be awarded.

Candidate produces a basic description of two technologies available to access and exchange information and carries out transactions (4 marks)

F1 Identify two technologies

The vast majority of candidates identified two technologies. Some candidates lost marks by including technologies that were not relevant to Personal Communication, for example, identifying the Internet, but failed to relate this to its use for Personal Communication between friends, family or even for work. Instead, candidates discussed the technology in relation to online shopping which is outside the context of this report. Similarly, when discussing mobile phones, many candidates focused on the entertainment features of the technology as opposed to the purpose of communication via voice or text based messaging. Candidates are also still using brand names for technologies such as 'Skype' instead of 'Voice Over Internet Protocol'. If they do this they will not be awarded marks.

F2 Basic description of two technologies

Most candidates made an attempt to describe their technologies. Where candidates were not awarded marks for their descriptions it was mainly due to their responses being too simple or not demonstrating any degree of technical knowledge or understanding. For example, candidates still discussed instant messaging without any mention of the requirement for computers or the Internet.

More detailed description, including main purposes of technologies available, giving advantages and disadvantages (10 marks)

G1 Purposes of two technologies

Many candidates failed to identify the purpose of the technology being discussed and simply produced a list of its different features. Specifically in this series, candidates were able to identify that the purpose of a mobile phone is to enable people to make telephone calls in

relation to their personal communication, but found some difficulty in framing a similar purpose when it came to the Internet, with many candidates giving the main purpose as to entertain or shop. As the focus was related to Personal Communication this explanation was not acceptable.

G2 Advantages of the technologies

The main criterion asks for a detailed description which appeared to have been overlooked by many candidates who produced a bulleted list instead. The advantages and disadvantages section produced minimalist responses from many candidates. Candidates often overlooked the Personal Communication aspect of the task and gave general comments. Unless the commentary was linked into the context of the report, marks were not awarded.

G3 Disadvantages of the technologies

The disadvantages highlighted by candidates were often bulleted lists with no reference to the context of the report. Marks were not awarded without explanations and reasoning. Additionally, the disadvantages must be related to the technology in context. Candidates are still focused on mobile phone pricing plans and battery life. This is not a disadvantage of the technology yet the majority of candidates who discussed this technology focused on these areas, often giving detailed tables of the different tariffs available on the various networks.

Candidate produces a well-structured, well-organised report that is easy to read and understand (2 marks)

H1 Provides a well-structured, well-organised report

The majority of candidates could be credited with the organisation mark this year. Most marks were awarded due to candidates' uses of sub-headings and bullet points. Candidates could also have been awarded marks for the inclusion of an introduction and conclusions; however, although most candidates did start the report with an introduction, many failed to include a conclusion.

Task Three: Newsletter or Brochure on Legislation

This task is constant in each examination series in that it always focuses on ICT legislation as detailed in the specification. Candidates are required to produce a DTP document. This year it was for customers of a bank, discussing the purposes and effects of legislation related to ICT. Marks are awarded predominantly for content rather than DTP skills which are assessed in Unit 1.

Centres are again asked to remind candidates that the Acts discussed must relate to ICT. The Health and Safety at Work Act is particularly likely to suffer in candidates' elaboration, with many focusing on the non-ICT aspects of this piece of legislation.

Candidate produces a description of the main purposes of legislation covering working with, and using, ICT (4 marks)

I1 Simple descriptions of main purposes of four pieces of legislation

This initial section requires candidates to identify and describe the purposes of the various Acts, it does not require detailed and working knowledge of the contents of the Acts. Most candidates were able to describe the purpose of the Acts adequately.

Candidates who discussed the purpose of the Internet Code of Practice did not gain marks as this is not specific legislation but guidelines for on-line organisations. Another common error which is still occurring is the inclusion of legislation not specific to the UK, for example, US and Australian legislation. The focus of the newsletter or brochure should be UK-based legislation.

Candidate produces a more detailed description, which includes an explanation of implications for users of implementing the legislation (4 marks)

J1 Implications for users explained

This criterion is an extension of I1 and requires candidates to identify the implications for users, at any level, of two of the Acts they are considering. These implications could be related to working practices, efficiency, costs, for example, and may be different for different types of users.

In this section candidates were able to demonstrate an understanding on how the various legislations had an effect on employees of the bank. This was accepted as the newsletters were often designed for customers of a bank, giving information to them on how the business complied with ICT legislation for its employees.

Candidates tended to provide the most detail about the Data Protection Act and the Computer Misuse Act, demonstrating how banks protect customer's information. However, candidates struggled to get marks for the Health and Safety at Work Act when relating it to customers of a bank, often focusing on the non-ICT elements such as putting signs out when the floor was wet. As the marks are for ICT, no marks were awarded where this was the case.

Candidate produces a well-structured, well-organised newsletter or brochure that is easy to read and understand (2 marks)**K1 Well-structured description**

Some candidates produced word processed essays, rather than the required newsletter or brochure, and so could not be awarded marks for structure. Some candidates had used software templates or wizards, which is acceptable, but had selected a template which did not provide space for sufficient detail, meaning detail was lost and, possibly, marks. The majority of candidates, however, were able to structure their newsletter or brochure appropriately, gaining at least one mark. Many candidates achieved the additional mark for the appropriate inclusion of a structure feature, most often the use of bullet points.

Additional marks that may be gained in any one of the three tasks (20 marks)**Candidate provides details of their sources of information. At least one source to be validated and one to be evaluated (10 marks)****L1 List of their sources of information**

One mark is available for each list of sources the candidate provides. Most candidates did achieve marks in this area, however those who failed did so for a few specific reasons. Firstly, a list of sources requires more than one source. Secondly, the sources must be identifiable. Sources such as 'the Applied ICT book' are not acceptable. Similarly, the Internet cannot be credited. Full names and details of books and addresses of specific websites are required. Thirdly, if candidates repeated the same list three times with no identification as to where the sources were used they would only be awarded the L1 mark once.

L2 Includes a range of sources of different types

Most candidates are still scoring only two of the three available marks as they only provide details of a suitable website and textbook. Third marks were rare and were awarded for relevant identifiable people, such as specific police officers, for use in presentation on law and order, videos and questionnaires.

Class notes from the teacher are not acceptable as a source of information; however they are still being referenced by some candidates.

Candidates commonly named Internet search engines as sources. Centres are reminded that such websites are content free. They are merely tools to identify other sites and so cannot be considered as sources.

L3 Validation of one source

More candidates are achieving marks in this section. It is helpful if candidates identify what they are validating with a comparison piece, quoting sections from the textbook or Internet site used. Validations stating, 'I checked source A with source B and it was the same', were not successful in gaining marks. Candidates must identify what information was checked if they are to be awarded marks.

L4 Evaluation of one source

Many candidates produced acceptable evaluations required for the task, discussing ease of use in finding the information and how the source was useful to them in completion of the task. Marks were awarded for evaluations beyond the 'it was helpful' or 'it was clear' type of statements. Evaluations must be based on one of the sources used in L3.

Candidate's work includes evidence of the use of ICT to search for, select and organise information (4 marks)**M1 Use of ICT to search for and select information**

Candidates were required to search for, select and organise information in one of the three tasks. Most candidates achieved one mark through the use of an Internet search engine showing relevant search criteria with a list of hyperlinks. Candidates achieved a second mark if they had then gone into one of the results of their search and printed this.

M2 Use of ICT to organise information

The majority of candidates achieved both the organisation marks. The most common organisational features used were a table, or the use of bullet points, in the presentation.

Candidates who included a table as part of the sources were not awarded marks here, nor were marks awarded for graphs or charts that had been pasted in from a published source. Insertion of charts taken from a published source could, however, be awarded an E1 mark.

Candidate produces a detailed evaluation of their work for one of the three tasks (3 marks)**N1 Provides a detailed description of one of their tasks**

A large number of candidates attempted to evaluate their work. Candidates, however, found difficulty in justifying why a particular feature was a strength or weakness. Candidates are expected to be able to outline a strength, a weakness and a possible improvement to the document they produced, which could take the form of, for example, the appropriateness of format, content or language in relation to the intended user. The key to success in this criterion is the link back to the purpose of the document. Candidates should focus on explaining how each element they are discussing links with the document's fitness for purpose. It is disappointing to note that a large number of candidates still used this section to describe what they produced, rather than link the document to the suitability to its audience, and so could not be awarded marks.

Candidate recognises and explores ethical and moral implications of access to ICT in one of the three tasks (3 marks)**O1 Considers ethical and moral issues within one of the three tasks**

This section must be part of one of the three tasks. Some candidates continue to complete a separate essay on ethics and moral issues. In these cases, if there was a clear link to any of

the three tasks then marks were awarded. If this material had no relevance to any of the documents being produced then no marks were awarded.

Successful candidates were able to demonstrate an understanding of how ICT has provided some moral dilemmas within the context of whatever task they were expanding. Questions raised, such as, 'is it right that..', and then a discussion of, for example, the government powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act, are more likely to gain a mark than basic statements such as, 'computer games make people more violent', and 'you can see pornography on the Internet', without a link to the context, which gained no marks.

Centres should note that this mark is available only in one task. Candidates who gave ethical and moral considerations in all tasks were only rewarded in the task which secured the highest number of marks.

Conclusion

Many centres have taken on board elements of the advice offered by AQA at the Teacher Support meetings, and candidates have grasped how to structure their assignment in order to attain marks for simplistic level skills, which is encouraging.

Centres are strongly encouraged to take note of the comments within this report when preparing candidates for Unit 3 in future examination series.

AQA provides support to centres through meetings and the Portfolio Advisor email service. Centres are encouraged to seek advice or clarification from AQA on the areas candidates are researching (aqagcseappictpa@aqa.org.uk) or from ICT Subject Support at AQA (ict-subjects@aqa.org.uk).

The web-link to the statistical data and information on the grade boundary ranges is www.aqa.org.uk/over/stat.html