



**General Certificate of Secondary Education**

**GCSE Information and  
Communication Technology  
3527 Short Course**  
*Specification A*

**3527/F      Foundation Tier**

**Report on the Examination**  
*2007 examination - June series*

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## **General Comments**

The standard of performance from the candidates in this paper was similar to last year. As was stated last year, it must be remembered that in this specification there are elements of the theory that are difficult to teach through the practical coursework and these may be best taught in separate theory lessons.

As in previous years, most of the paper appeared accessible to the majority of candidates with the vast majority achieving 21 marks or more.

Considering the highest grade that can be awarded on the Foundation Tier is grade C, quite a few candidates scored very high marks on this paper. Unless these candidates performed poorly in the AQA Set Assignment, entry at the higher tier should have been considered by some centres.

### **Questions 1 to 7 (Multiple Choice Question)**

Overall, these multiple-choice questions were well answered with many candidates scoring well on this introductory part of the paper.

In question 1, most candidates were able to identify that a hard disk drive was not an input device.

In question 2, most of candidates were able to identify that a microphone was not an output device.

In question 3, the vast majority of candidates were able to identify that a touch sensitive screen was not a storage device.

In question 4, just over half of candidates were able to identify that RAM lost its contents when the computer is switched off.

In question 5, a sizeable majority of candidates were able to identify a description of a search engine.

In question 6, just over half of candidates were able to identify that merging files was not a method used to restrict access.

In question 7, only a quarter of candidates were able to identify hard copy as printed output.

### **Question 8**

For this paper, candidates showed a good understanding of the spreadsheet in this question.

Parts (a), (b) and (d) were very well answered, with correct answers being given by the vast majority of candidates.

Only just over half of the candidates could identify the correct formulae used in part (c).

Half of the candidates could identify the correct disadvantage of using a spreadsheet. A common wrong answer was that the formulae could be wrong, which of course could also be true of a calculator.

### **Question 9**

Over the years, questions relating to DTP and word processing have tended to be well answered and this year was no exception.

Parts (a) and (b) were very well answered and the vast majority of candidates scored one or two marks for each part.

Part (c) was also well answered but some candidates could not give a feature of software that could be used to check the accuracy of text.

Part (d) was quite well answered with most candidates being able to fully describe the cut and paste process.

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**Question 10**

This question was reasonably well attempted by many of the candidates, as this is now a familiar style of question. However, this year two of the most obvious answers were already given in the question and many candidates struggled to give enough additional fields other than telephone numbers. Full marks were surprisingly few but most candidates gained at least one mark. Candidates who did not score well on this question usually did one or more of the following: -

- They gave too few boxes (or similar) to fill in each part of the form.
- They did not give enough fields to score well on this question (much of a page was left for the answer and the question was out of four marks – indicating the candidate needed to give at least four more suitable fields)
- As in previous years candidates gave some fields that were wrong/irrelevant e.g. National Insurance Number, Name of doctor. Whilst this did not directly lose any marks it did not gain marks.

**Question 11**

Logo style questions have been a common feature in this paper over the years and it is surprising that only around half of the candidates scored full marks in part (a). This was usually due to lack of precision or failure to complete the commands needed to draw the shape.

Candidates were better at drawing the correct shape and a pleasing number of candidates gained full marks in part (b).

However, it was disappointing to see some candidates scoring no marks at all for parts (a) and (b).

**Question 12**

Despite being an important element of the coursework, the concept of data validation is still not well understood by many candidates.

Even most of the “tick box” elements in part (a) which describes how data validation works, were not well answered. Most candidates answered ‘software’ correctly but few identified ‘input’ and even fewer as ‘it is reasonable’ as correct.

In part (c) only a small minority of candidates gained 1 or 2 of the possible marks for explaining how a range check could be used to validate an examination mark.

**Question 13**

Although around two thirds of candidates could identify at least one advantage of the doctor using a database only a minority could give two reasons.

Over the years the term virus seems to have been well understood by candidates, so it is a little surprising in part (b) that only a few candidates could select both descriptions of a virus from the list given.

**Question 14**

On the whole this question about information and data was quite well answered. In part (a) most candidates chose the best explanation of the difference between data and information.

In part (b) just over a half of the candidates scored full marks and the vast of candidates gained at least one mark.

**Question 15**

Parts (a)(i), (a)(ii) and (a)(iii) of this question were extremely well answered with candidates showing a good understanding of the process of ordering groceries on the Internet.

Similar questions on advantages/disadvantages of using the Internet have been asked on previous papers and candidates answers overall have improved. However, a number of candidates still try to give vague answers such as faster, cheaper and easier with little if any qualification.

In part (b), most candidates were able to gain at least 1 mark for giving advantages of using the Internet to order groceries but relatively few were able to gain both marks.

In part (c) most candidates were able to give a suitable disadvantage of ordering their groceries on-line.

**Question 16**

Candidate's understanding of health issues has improved over the years and this question was well answered by many candidates. In part (a) nearly all candidates could pick a least one step that could taken to reduce the chances of a back problem.

In part (b) just over half of the candidates could give at least one other potential health problem because of people using computers for long periods.

**Question 17**

Almost all candidates were able to link at least one term to the correct definition but very few were able to score all four marks.

**Question 18**

Most parts of this question were also well answered and many candidates were able to transfer their knowledge of ICT systems to a given application.

Although part (a) was well answered, in part (b) it was disappointing that just over half of candidates could not give another suitable input device such as a digital camera.

Part (c) was very well answered with most candidates giving the correct answer.

In part (d), the majority of candidates gained at least one mark but only a minority gained both marks. A number of candidates gave brief answers such as e-mail. This gained one mark only as they also needed to give more detail, such as by an attachment to an e-mail.

**Question 19**

Part (a) - the Data Protection Act part of this question was well answered with many candidates scoring at least 1 mark for this part of the question (but only a minority of candidates scored all three marks). The most common wrong answer was "Information must be changed at the request of the customer".

Overall, part (b) of this database related question were well answered and this could relate to the increasing number of candidates who attempt a system project in their coursework, centred round a database solution to the problem.

Part (c) was reasonably well answered and a little under half of the candidates could suggest a sensible additional table.

Foundation candidates found part (d) very difficult and very few could give a suitable reason such as the reduction in redundant data.

**Question 20**

This question was looking for generic pieces of application software as outlined in the specification. For example, in part (c), the answer spreadsheet was only given by around a third of candidates. Too many candidates gave brand names such as Excel.

**Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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