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INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

<p>Paper 0418/01 Written Paper 1</p>
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General comments

Once again it was pleasing to see, on the first run through of the paper for most candidates, that so many candidates had done so well. Congratulations must go to the candidates and their Teachers for all the hard work which must have been put in to achieving these results. There was a wide range of marks, with many candidates gaining more than half marks.

There were areas of weakness shown by a number of candidates; these were mainly in Control and Measurement. Many candidates did not appear to be familiar with screen turtle programming, control devices in the home or the use of sensors to measure physical variables. Another area of weakness was the tendency by a number of candidates to give brand names when asked to name types of software such as databases, word processors, desk top publishing software and so on. The use of brand names usually gains little credit and should be discouraged.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Almost all candidates achieved full marks.

Question 2

The vast majority of candidates achieved full marks, although a small number thought that a car park ticket might contain personal data.

Question 3

Most candidates did well, although a number were confused about the uses of certain software.

Question 4

This question was not so well answered as the previous three. A number of candidates appeared to think that CD ROMs hold more data than hard discs and that hard discs are portable and CD ROMs are not. A possible confusion exists between hard discs and floppy discs. A small number of candidates thought that hard discs were square.

Question 5

The answers to this question caused some concern, as many candidates appeared to have little knowledge of basic programming. Candidates tended to know it well or not at all. There was little middle ground.

Question 6

Most candidates did well, although a number were unsure about OCR and DTP.

Question 7

A number of candidates wrote about the physical characteristics of a mouse rather than the features.

Question 8

Most candidates did well, although some appeared not to have come across the term 'virus' before and appeared to think that it was an illness that computers suffered from.

Question 9

Many candidates did well but a sizeable minority used brand or commercial names which could not gain credit unless qualified by the generic name.

- (a) Many candidates did well but a sizeable minority used brand or commercial names which could not gain credit unless qualified by the generic name.
- (b) A number of candidates gave uses of the software which were not related to the scenario of a school sports department. An equal number, however, gave reasonable examples.

Question 10

- (a)(i) Most candidates gave correct answers, although a small number gave incorrect answers and, from their answers to part (ii), it appeared that they were guessing.
 - (ii) Most candidates who answered part (i) correctly also gave the correct answer here.
- (b) Many candidates did not seem to understand the meaning of the term Boolean/logical.
- (c) Most candidates seemed to understand that age would change every birthday.
- (d) Most candidates gave 'passwords' as an answer but few gave 'encryption'. Many referred to the physical security of computers. Many candidates did not read the question properly. It referred to a school office where the data would obviously need to be available at all times. Consequently, solutions such as storing it on a floppy disc and wiping it from the computer would be impracticable.

Question 11

There were many good answers to this question including 'portability', 'the ease of stealing' or 'loss'. A number of candidates did, however, refer to cost. This referred to the use of laptops, the implication being that both types were already available. Others referred to size of memory which is no longer an issue with modern computers.

Question 12

Candidates gave a variety of answers to this question. Many used brand names of software, which did not entitle them to marks. A number gave 'thermometer' as an answer when 'temperature sensor' was required. Others gave plausible answers for hardware and software but failed to give a precise answer regarding their use.

Question 13

Most candidates succeeded with this question.

- (a) A small number gave answers where an amendment would have been more appropriate, such as moving to a new class.
- (b) A small number again gave answers where an amendment would have been more appropriate, such as dropping a subject.
- (c) The vast majority of candidates answered correctly.

Question 14

- (i) Many candidates named two appliances which use computer control.
- (ii) This part of the question was answered poorly, as most candidates failed to pick up on the word 'lifestyle' and gave vague answers such as 'making a person's life easier and more comfortable'.

Question 15

The majority of candidates appeared to have no concept of mail merge and answered this question poorly. A number confused mail merge with e-mail.

Question 16

- (i) A number of candidates re-phrased the question and said a modem was needed to connect a computer to the Internet. Not as many as expected mentioned the need to convert signals.
- (ii) Candidates tended to give answers referring to features of the Internet rather than advantages.

Question 17

- (a)(i) Most candidates gave a correct answer.
- (ii) Many candidates gave the corresponding correct answer, with the most favoured answer being the taking of breaks.
- (b) Most candidates gave one correct answer i.e. comparing speed, but struggled to give a second answer.

Question 18

Candidates once again failed to use generic names, but instead opted for brand names. This made it very difficult for them to gain marks. A number of candidates thought that everything could be done using Internet Explorer.

Question 19

- (a) This question was not as well answered as expected. Many candidates could name one factor but few managed to gain both marks. Some misread the question and gave answers about factors that would influence the choice of room.
- (b) Candidates did not on the whole answer this question well. Those who did referred to the need for a bigger server or extra disc space. A number merely re-worded the question and talked in terms of storage and storage space without being specific about the type of storage.
- (c) Many candidates managed to name a printer but failed to describe how it would be connected to the network.

Question 20

The majority of candidates misinterpreted the question and wrote general answers about the advantages and disadvantages of networks over stand-alone machines.

Question 21

Many candidates appeared to be unaware that librarians actually had perfectly adequate systems in place before the advent of computers. They failed to mention differences of ease and speed of use of computers when compared to manual systems. They also failed to describe processes which computers now do automatically, such as the generation of overdue letters and fine calculation.

Question 22

Many candidates seemed to be unfamiliar with desktop publishing or the use of technical terms such as insert or import. Most candidates seemed to feel that a word processor would be adequate for this task but failed to describe the features which would be used.

<p>Paper 0418/02 Written Paper 2</p>
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General comments

Once again, candidates found this paper a lot more difficult than Paper 1. The wider range of applications included in questions on this paper meant that candidates were unable to gain marks unless they had revised thoroughly. In addition, there were many aspects of Systems Analysis which they appeared to be unfamiliar with. A much lower percentage of candidates achieved half marks than on Paper 1.

As in Paper 1, candidates were pre-occupied with brand names rather than the correct generic names, as listed in the syllabus. Examples include word processing, desktop publishing, database software, modelling. Naming particular brand names is not acceptable.

The majority of candidates seemed to be unfamiliar with expert systems. Candidates from a number of Centres seemed to be unfamiliar with video conferencing.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Almost all candidates achieved full marks.

Question 2

The vast majority of candidates achieved full marks, although a small number thought that a product bar code might contain personal data.

Question 3

Most candidates did well.

Question 4

This question was well answered, with most candidates gaining three or four marks. A number of candidates confused data logging with implementation.

Question 5

This was also well answered, although a small number of candidates answered 'Less chance of getting the wrong goods'.

Question 6

- (a) A mixture of answers were given. 'Evaluation' and 'questionnaires' were common wrong answers.
- (b) Most candidates gave two correct answers.
- (c) Most candidates gave the correct answer. Those that answered incorrectly gave 'director's name' or 'video title' as their answer.

Question 7

Many candidates gained three or four marks for this.

Question 8

Most candidates did not appear to know any features of CAD packages. This question was surprisingly poorly answered.

Question 9

- (a) Candidates did well on this question.
- (b) A number of candidates thought that 'RAM' was the correct answer.
- (c) Virtually every candidate answered this correctly.

Question 10

Candidates either knew this or they did not; there was little middle ground. They either gained both marks or no marks.

Question 11

- (a) Most candidates answered this correctly.
- (b) Most candidates answered this correctly.
- (c) Most candidates gained both marks.

Question 12

- (a) A sizeable minority did not understand the concept of a screen form. Of those that did, a number of candidates seemed not to realise the importance of leaving spaces, boxes or some other indication of field length on the screen. A small number failed to read the question properly and produced a form which required a signature. Most candidates also failed to include an appropriate number of fields.
- (b) A small number confused verification with validation, which meant that they could gain no marks. A number of candidates gained one mark, but tended to re-word their first answer for their second answer and could therefore not gain the second mark. Visual verification was by far the most popular answer.
- (c) Most candidates did not do as well on this question. A number gave 'hash total' and 'check digit' as answers. These would not be suitable for individual membership numbers of a smallish organisation like a tennis club.
- (d) This question was better answered than its equivalent in the summer. Some candidates, however, seemed to be obsessed with answers such as 'fraud'. These candidates tended to give three versions of fraud for their answers. This was despite the fact that only a good description of how this might constitute misuse would still only be worth one mark. An increased number of candidates gave the three answers required.
- (e) Many candidates did not appear to understand what test data is. Many came up with a variety of methods of testing a system, but few mentioned types of test data which was clearly required by the question. Very few candidates did well on this question.

Question 13

- (a) Most candidates gave incorrect answers, although a small number did give correct answers. A number of candidates referred to brand name software, which was unacceptable. Others used modelling or measuring applications which were not expert systems.
- (b) Many candidates gave input devices and output devices when the question clearly asked for the inputs and outputs to the system.

Question 14

Candidates showed a general lack of understanding of the processes involved in electronic funds transfer.

- (a) A number of candidates gave incorrect answers, such as PIN, amount on card and name. Most gave sensible answers.
- (b) The most popular answers given by the few candidates who gave correct answers were 'checking funds' and 'checking whether the card was still valid or stolen'.
- (c) The vast majority of candidates appeared to have little knowledge of this part of the system and gave vague answers. Some thought that the supermarket bank does not take the money straight away, but sends the credit card company or bank a bill at the end of the month. A small number wrote about 'transferring' money without describing what actually happens.

Question 15

A large number of candidates appeared to have little understanding of methods of implementation. Many wrote about specific brand name packages and how databases or word-processing would be involved, thereby failing to answer the question. Those that did write about methods of implementation did not appear to understand them fully and were unable therefore to give disadvantages.

Question 16

Many candidates seemed to be unaware of the existence of different types of documentation which accompanies a new system. Many focused on the word 'documentation' and described various methods of producing documents, again concentrating on a particular brand name. Very few candidates provided correct answers. Those who did know about documentation seemed to be more familiar with why user documentation is required than why technical documentation is needed.

Question 17

Many candidates gave at least one good answer, but very few went on to add others. Candidates tended to describe in great detail one specific point. Four marks were available for this question and so at least four different points should have been made.

Question 18

A sizeable minority of candidates appeared to be unaware of what video conferencing is. They appeared to think that it was the process of using a video camera to film a conference and then send copies of the videotape to other people.

- (a) Those candidates who understood video conferencing managed to mention at least one of the three answers required, though several omitted to mention the need for a computer.
- (b) A number of candidates did not read the question properly and compared electronic conferencing with ordinary conferences. The majority of candidates who understood the principle of video conferencing failed to gain the three marks as they thought that it only involved two people.

<p>Paper 0418/03 Practical Test</p>

General comments

The general performance of candidates in this examination was mixed. Nevertheless, a large number of Centres and individual candidates performed well on this paper, with many scoring high marks. There was a full spread of marks and the paper performed well.

The text files were written and checked in UK English. If candidates have machines with default windows settings to US English (or other similar settings) then some of the words would be identified as spelling errors. In these cases the spelling should not be corrected (although candidates were not penalised if they did so).

Many candidates who performed very well on the more complex questions on the paper often made simple errors like failing to change the font to a different style in **Question 14**.

The vast majority of candidates completed the paper. Those candidates who did not tended to be the weakest candidates who may not have had the practical skills and underlying knowledge to attempt the questions, rather than failing to complete because of a lack of time.

Comments on specific questions

Question 5

There was no requirement for candidates to change the font of the file. Candidates were not penalised if they did change the font on the body text, providing it was consistent throughout the document (apart from the specified changes like **Question 14**).

Question 8

This question did not specify the use of a header and footer. This was not included in order to enable candidates to use a wide range of packages to complete this paper. It should have been obvious to candidates using, for example, Microsoft Word that this task would be easier using headers and footers. The placing of the name and date must be completed within the document. Several candidates wrote these elements onto the page and were penalised for this. Several other candidates did not place the date on the page as specified.

Question 9

This question seemed to cause more problems than any other on the paper. Many candidates left the margin settings to the default settings of the machines within the Centre. Even making allowances for paper feed errors, a surprising number of candidates did not get this question correct. This practical skill was poorly covered in task **D**, when in **Question 33** the candidates were required to change the margin settings. Some candidates set the margins to 3.5 inches rather than 3.5 centimetres.

Question 11

A number of candidates set the paragraph alignment to centre aligned or fully justified text.

Question 15

Several candidates failed to add bullet points to the list.

Question 16

A large number of candidates from some Centres failed to indent the bullet points by at least 2 centimetres.

Question 18

The spell checking and proofreading should only check that the candidates have introduced no errors into document (see general comments). There is no need for candidates to grammar check the assignment.

Question 21

There were a number of errors in the accuracy of data entry for the three records specified.

Question 23

There were a number of errors in this question. Some candidates failed to produce the correct search. Some candidates produced two individual printouts, one for Acer and one for Betula, rather than using an OR operation (query in Access, or AutoFilter in Excel). There were a number of candidates who did not sort the data into the descending order of years.

Question 25

There were a number of errors in this question. A number of candidates failed to produce the correct search. A number of candidates either omitted or failed to complete the sorting of this data.

Many candidates failed to use a calculated control (or calculated cell for those using Excel) to work out the average rating. Candidates were not penalised for format or decimal places shown in this calculated control, but still only a few managed to complete this question correctly. A number of candidates failed to place the name in the specified place on the report.

Question 27

There were a number of errors in this question. A number of candidates failed to produce the correct search, many searching for Europe being greater than, rather than greater than or equal to, 65 or years equal to 10. Some candidates had too many fields present when they imported this report into the final document in **Question 40**.

Question 32

A number of candidates failed to move the page numbering to the left hand side of the page.

Question 33

Many candidates left the margin settings either to the default settings of the machines within the Centre or to those set during **Question 9**. Some candidates set the margins to 2 inches rather than 2 centimetres.

Question 37

In general the placing and layout of the table was good. However the accuracy of the data entry, in terms of spelling and capitalisation, was weak. As this was only a copy-typing exercise this seemed a little surprising. These errors should have been spotted in **Question 42** as well, when the candidates proofread the document.

Question 39

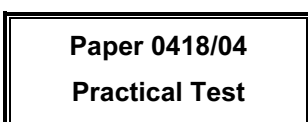
A considerable number of candidates failed to resize the image as required by the question. Many images were placed but not enlarged (maintaining their aspect ratio) to fill approximately a quarter of the page, despite being given a diagram on the question paper to help them.

Question 41

A number of candidates left widows, orphans, split tables or bulleted lists split over two pages.

Question 42

The spell checking and proofreading should only check that the candidates have introduced no errors into document.



General comments

The general performance of candidates in this examination was mixed. Nevertheless, a number of Centres and individual candidates performed well, with many scoring high marks. The paper performed well, with a full spread of marks.

Some Centres commented that some candidates did not have enough time to complete this paper. This was evidenced by the number of incomplete submissions from candidates. There were vast differences from Centre to Centre. Many candidates found the data analysis section difficult; many others found the website authoring section difficult and from the presentation authoring section several candidates could not use or print presenter notes. Some candidates failed to printout the html code for the website authoring or the formulae for the data handling. In both cases it was impossible to award many marks to the candidates without the evidence of their structure and syntax. The largest reason for poor performance was the lack of knowledge of html. Many candidates whose scripts were otherwise very good produced few marks on the web authoring area of the paper.

A number of Examiners commented on the attention to detail shown by many of the candidates on this paper.

Comments on specific questions

Data analysis

Question 2

Many candidates showed no indication of having named the range of cells 'cut'.

Question 3

This formula was frequently entered erroneously. There was a variety of wrong answers, with some candidates trying to add additional parameters to those required. Some candidates attempted to answer without using a lookup formula. Several candidates correctly attained the lookup element of the formula but omitted the division by the value in the Carat column.

Question 5

This question caused a surprising number of errors, with some candidates multiplying all the values together and some adding all the values.

Question 6

Several candidates did not format all the specified columns either as currency or to two decimal places.

Question 8

A significant number of candidates did not change the page orientation, leading to several pages of printouts.

Question 9

A number of candidates did not print out the formulae view of the spreadsheet.

Some candidates did not ensure that all the formulae were visible after they had selected the formulae view of the spreadsheet and others did not force the printouts onto a single printed page.

Question 10

A significant number of candidates did not enter the data into the spreadsheet accurately. There were errors in both numeric data and labels.

Question 12

Several candidates could not filter the data from the given criteria.

Question 13

Several candidates could not filter the data from the given criteria.

Website authoring

Question 2

A large number of candidates failed to set up a stylesheet as specified in this question. Many of those who created the stylesheet did not apply it as an external stylesheet to each web page as they created it (even when reminded in **Question 15**). Those candidates working in html performed better on this element than those working from applications packages that create the html code for the user.

Question 3

Some candidates created frames but, when printing out the html, only printed out the main frame, forgetting to print the sections for the menu choices and the title.

Question 6

A very large number of candidates did not open the file in a new target window called EXTERNAL. Many used the default settings of their web authoring package (for example _blank from FrontPage) and had not edited this in the html code. This appeared to be the question on the paper that the candidates found most difficult.

Question 10

Some candidates found the placing of all the elements in the correct table cells difficult. Of those who did, several omitted to apply the styles from the stylesheet.

Question 11

A significant number of candidates did not change the size of the graphics image.

Question 13

A large number of candidates failed to convert the Homeicon.jpg into a smaller size and then into a more compressed format as a gif file. Some of those candidates who did convert it did not create the hyperlink from the image to GEHOME.htm

Question 15

A large number of candidates did not print out the web pages (or all frames) in html format. Failure to do this led to the loss of a large number of marks as it was not possible to verify that the correct commands, syntax and techniques had been applied.

Presentation authoring

Question 1

The use of the master slide was poorly completed. Many candidates placed their name at the top left of each page rather than placing it as specified in the master slide. Similarly the page numbering and placed graphic were not always present.

Question 1 and Question 2

The colour schemes chosen for this paper allowed for good distinction when printed in black and white. However some candidates used colour choices for the styles which made marking more difficult. Candidates must ensure that if the Centre is using a black and white printer the colours selected give suitable contrast.

The alignment of the styles also created problems, with many candidates using the default alignments of packages like PowerPoint rather than those defined within the styles.

Question 5

A significant number of candidates did not use presenter notes (or did not place the notes on the slide).

Question 7

A significant number of candidates did not use the data given to use the chart creation tools within the package to select and create a chart.

Question 9

Several candidates failed to draw the line as specified.

Question 11

A significant number of candidates did not use presenter notes (or did not place the notes on the slide).

Question 15

A significant number of candidates did not use presenter notes (or did not place the notes on the slide).

Question 18

A significant number of candidates did not print the slides in notes view to enable examination of the presenter notes.