GCSE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

ICT

JANUARY 2017
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ICT
General Certificate of Secondary Education
January 2017
UNIT 1 - UNDERSTANDING ICT

Comments on individual questions

Q1.  (a)  (i) This question was well answered by most candidates and many achieved the full two marks available. Most candidates were able to identify two items of data that could be added to the poster.

   (ii) This question was mostly well answered by all candidates. Candidates could identify different formatting features that could be used to improve the poster. Where candidates lost marks was by repeating formatting features already shown on the poster.

   (b)  (i) This question was well answered and most candidates identified that mail merge was the technique that would be used to automatically insert names and addresses into the letter.

   (ii) The purpose of a spellchecker was explained well. Many candidates did not describe the purpose of a thesaurus well and instead were giving the purpose of a dictionary.

   (c)  (i) The tick box format made this question accessible to almost all candidates and was well answered.

   (ii) This question was quite poorly answered by many candidates. Sound was correctly given as an answer by some candidates and at least one mark was achieved by some candidates for this question.

   (iii) This question was poorly answered by candidates.

Q2. This question was extremely well answered by most candidates and the tick box format made it accessible to all candidates.

Q3. Well answered by most candidates with most candidates achieving at least two out of three marks here. Where marks were generally lost was where candidates gave an answer for output such as sound and the question asked for an output device - such as speaker.

Q4.  (a) This was fairly well answered with candidates mostly achieving 1 mark out of the available 2. Marks were lost due to candidates repeating advantages already stated in the question such as attaching documents and the speed of delivery.

   (b) Well answered by most candidates with many achieving at least one mark for giving anti-virus software as the correct answer.
Q5.  (a) Most candidates found this question accessible and the correct answer was given by most candidates.
(b) This question was very poorly answered and only a minority of candidates correctly identified that there was just one field with a number data type. As there were also numbers in other fields, candidates incorrectly thought they were also number data type fields.
(c) This question was very well answered with most candidates achieving full marks for identifying that the Student ID field differentiated the students and this made sure that each record was unique.
(d) This was poorly answered with candidates giving any field name and example data. Many candidates did not give answers that described a Boolean field.
(e) Candidates answered this question correctly. This question had three field names and three sets of search criteria and similar questions in the past have asked for just two. Candidates dealt well with this. Search criteria spelling was very good and many candidates achieved the full three marks.
(f) Very well answered with almost all candidates able to state the problem with the database. Many candidates achieved at least two marks here with marks being lost for either not stating the range for the drop down list or range check.

Q6.  (a) Very well answered by most candidates – many candidates gave the correct answer of data.
(b) Well answered by most candidates.
(c) Unfortunately this question was extremely poorly answered by all candidates with many achieving 0 marks out of the available 2 marks. Many candidates simply gave the name of the student with the lowest and highest attendance. It was also not attempted by many candidates.
(d) Well answered by some candidates. The mark was lost with candidates not using brackets correctly in their answer.
(e) Very poorly answered by most candidates. The IF statement needed to include absolute cell referencing and this was not given by most candidates.
(f) Some candidates were able to describe a “what if” scenario and achieve 1 mark out of the available 2, however did not then go on to describe the results of the investigation.

Q7. Extremely well answered by all candidates.

Q8.  (a) Very well answered by most candidates. Marks were sometimes lost with candidates incorrectly identifying voice recognition as a specialist input device that could be used by students with disabilities.
(b) This question was quite poorly answered, with candidates describing non-emerging technology such as projectors and VLEs. Some fantastic answers were given by a few students that described smart body technology, virtual reality headsets that enabled different countries for Geography lessons to be visited and the use of drones.
(c) (i) Quite well answered although marks were lost with candidates giving advantages of online tutorials instead of features.

(ii) Fairly well answered by most candidates. Marks were lost by repeating the answers already given in the question.

(d) This question was quite well answered by many candidates and most candidates seemed knowledgeable on the MIS topic. Many candidates were able to achieve marks here even if full marks were not achieved.

(e) Fairly well answered. Popular answers included students checking their timetables and uploading work to teachers. Marks were lost with candidates identifying how a teacher could use a VLE e.g. teachers emailing students or uploading quizzes for students to complete.

Q9. This question was answered fairly well by many candidates. Some fantastic answers were given by many candidates that gave a use of ICT for home entertainment and followed with correct and different advantages and disadvantages. Popular answers included gaming and social networking. Marks were lost by either repeating advantages and disadvantages for both uses or identifying incorrect uses of home entertainment such as school work.

Q10. Surprisingly, this question was not answered well by many candidates. When answered well, answers were very impressive and detailed. The correct terminology was used by almost all candidates who attempted this question and there were very few spelling, grammar and punctuation errors. The majority of candidates attempted this question.

The question asked for advantages and disadvantages of companies selling their products using online shopping websites. Unfortunately, many candidates did not read the question correctly and their entire answer consisted of advantages and disadvantages of online shopping to the customer. If the question had been asking about the advantages and disadvantages to the customer, candidates were extremely knowledgeable and would have gained high marks. The question was looking for answers relating to the company and it was a shame to see so many candidates had misread the question.

Where the question had been interpreted correctly and the candidate had answered relating to advantages and disadvantages to the company, some fantastic answers were seen and in some cases were well above the GCSE required standard. Some well written advantages to the company included being able to sell their products worldwide to a global market place and lower costs compared to opening up a shop and paying rent. Disadvantages to the company were answered well too and some popular and well explained answers included describing global competition, the fact that customer details could be hacked leading to a loss of reputation and the ability to leave bad reviews could take away custom from the company.
Q.1 (a) Almost all candidates attempted this question and most did well. Where pupils lost marks it was often for naming a device that was ruled out in the stem.

(b) As above, where pupils lost marks it was often for naming a device that was ruled out in the stem.

Q.2 (a) The majority of candidates could name three network topologies. A minority lost marks for naming a line topology and a bus network topology as separate types.

(b) Most candidates made a reasonable attempt at this question and gained a few marks. The minority of candidates were able to describe the difference between a LAN and a WAN and give examples of both to gain full marks.

(c) The majority of candidates were able to correctly identify the intranet but the majority seemed to have difficulty in identifying the network components.

(d) A minority of candidates were able to identify the role of the bridge as a device that connects separate LANs together to form one large LAN / joins together two networks that use the same base protocols.

(e) About half of the candidates were able to describe the internet as a global computer network / a network of networks / interconnected networks.

Q.3 (a) This question was answered well by almost all candidates.

(b) (i) The majority of candidates were able to gain a mark for the ease of use / intuitive but struggled to gain the second mark.

(ii) A minority of candidates were able to list a disadvantage of a menu-driven interface. Some candidates were listing disadvantages of using the device that was pictured and did not answer the question.

Q.4 (a) Most candidates were able to understand the purpose of the multimedia features but were not able to correctly name the multimedia feature, with hyperlink being the exception.

(b) A minority of candidates were able to fully describe a Golden Triangle as the area that the eye focuses on first on a webpage after a search. The candidates that did usually recognised the advantage of this being increased traffic to the website.
Q.5  (a) This question was well answered. Some candidates lost marks for choosing features within the standard tools (bold font) as oppose to naming the standard tool.

(b) The majority of candidates were able to correctly describe a vector graphic.

(c) Most candidates were able to identify at least one advantage of using a vector graphic for a logo but some candidates would have gained further marks by fully answering the question using full sentences.

(d) (i) This question was answered poorly. A minority of candidates were able to fully understand what optimising a graphic involved and how this could be done.

(ii) Due the lack of understanding what optimising meant, the majority of candidates failed to gain marks for listing the advantages.

Q.6  (a) The majority of candidates were able to identify the Expert System from the description.

(b) A minority of candidates were able to list advantages of expert systems. Some candidates had confused expert system with the use of robots.

(c) As above, only a minority were able to list disadvantages of an expert system.

Q.7  (a) This question was generally answered well by the majority of candidates. Where candidates lost marks, it was generally for trying to answer with only one or two words.

(b) Most candidates were able to gain some marks for this with a minority gaining 3 marks.

(c) Answered reasonably well by most candidates with a few candidates giving three distinctive disadvantages to earn full marks.

Q.8  (a) (i) Only a minority of candidates were able to identify a parity check as the correct check.

(ii) The majority of candidates that attempted the question were able to identify double-keying as the correct answer.

(b) Answered relatively poorly. Less than half were able to describe data validation and data verification correctly.

(c) This was the question with the least amount of attempts on the paper. Only a few candidates were able to gain full marks for fully understanding the difference between hash totals and batch total, and being able to show that understanding through use of calculations using the data provided. Some candidates showed an understanding that a hash total would use meaningless data but did not give any further explanation or use the data given to provide an example.
Q.9  (a) Generally well answered by the majority of candidates that attempted the question.

(b) Only a small minority of the candidates were able to identify cryptographic services in the UK or the legal status of electronic signatures as being areas covered by the Electronic Communications Act 2000.

Q.10 The majority of candidates were able to gain some marks on this question, with most gaining around 3 marks. Marks were generally gained by explaining the use of common hardware such as microphones and speakers or for explaining the use of WAV/MP3 in storing music. Very few candidates were able to list or describe sequencers, notators or sound wave editors. A number of candidates listed “brand names” when attempting to answer the software element of the question and no marks were awarded for this.