



National Unit specification

General information

Unit title: Computing: Weblogs (SCQF level 5)

Unit code: H60D 45

Superclass: CD

Publication date: November 2013

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 01

Unit purpose

This Unit is designed for learners who have an interest in following and posting information on weblogs (blogs). It is designed to enable the learner to create a high quality blog and post information on a specific subject over a period of time. Learners will be able to discuss the features which characterise high-quality weblogs, for example: usability; navigation; structure; connectedness and presentation. The learner will identify and track a variety of weblogs using specific software that allows multiple weblogs to be tracked easily (aggregation tools).

Outcomes

On successful completion of the Unit the learner will be able to:

- 1 Locate and review weblogs of various types.
- 2 Create a weblog to perform a specific task.
- 3 Track selected weblogs over a period of time.

Credit points and level

1 National Unit credit at SCQF level 5: (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 5)

Recommended entry to the Unit

Entry is at the discretion of the centre. However, it would be advantageous if learners possessed basic IT skills. This may be evidenced by the possession of:

F3GC 10 *Information and Communication Technology* or equivalent

National Unit specification: General information (cont)

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Core Skills

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the Support Notes for this Unit specification.

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill components in this Unit.

Context for delivery

If this Unit is delivered as part of a Group Award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the Group Award to which it contributes.

This is an optional Unit in the NC in Computing with Digital Media at SCQF level 5.

The Assessment Support Pack (ASP) for this Unit provides assessment and marking guidelines that exemplify the national standard for achievement. It is a valid, reliable and practicable assessment. Centres wishing to develop their own assessments should refer to the ASP to ensure a comparable standard. A list of existing ASPs is available to download from SQA's website (<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/46233.2769.html>).

Equality and inclusion

This Unit specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Further advice can be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements.

National Unit specification: Statement of standards

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Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the Unit specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to SQA.

Outcome 1

Locate and review weblogs of various types.

Performance Criteria

- (a) The main providers of weblogs are correctly identified.
- (b) Search tools are used effectively to locate specific weblogs.
- (c) The characteristics of high quality weblogs are correctly described.
- (d) Weblogs are correctly reviewed using given criteria.

Outcome 2

Create a weblog to perform a specific task.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Weblog creation tools are used efficiently and effectively.
- (b) The design of the weblog is consistent with its purpose and target readership.
- (c) The contents of the weblog are kept up-to-date and are relevant to its purpose and target audience over a period of time.

Outcome 3

Track selected weblogs over a period of time.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Tools for aggregating newsfeeds are correctly used.
- (b) A personal list of newsfeeds is created
- (c) A personal list of newsfeeds is maintained

National Unit specification: Statement of standards (cont)

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Evidence Requirements for this Unit

Assessors should use their professional judgement, subject knowledge and experience, and understanding of their learners to determine the most appropriate ways to generate evidence and the conditions and contexts in which they are used.

Evidence is required to demonstrate that learners have achieved all Outcomes and Performance Criteria. However, sampling may be used in certain circumstances where the sample is sufficiently random and robust to clearly infer competence in the complete domain.

The evidence for this Unit may be written, oral, performance based, product or a mix of these, generated under supervised, open-book conditions. Evidence may be captured, stored and presented in a range of media (including audio and video) and formats (analogue and digital). Particular consideration should be given to digital formats and the use of multimedia.

Whenever possible, evidence should be a naturally occurring by-product of teaching and learning. However, it must be produced by the learner without assistance. Authentication must be used where this is uncertain.

The three Outcomes can be taught in a holistic way that allows the learners to be assessed at their own pace as they are undertaking the Unit.



National Unit Support Notes

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Unit Support Notes are offered as guidance and are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

The purpose of this Unit is to introduce learners to blogs and develop skills in reviewing high quality blogs.

Outcome 1

The main aim of the Outcome is for the learner to demonstrate their ability to locate and review a range of blogs.

- ◆ The main providers of blogs can be identified and, regardless of provider, the similarities between blogs should be identifiable.
- ◆ The learner should be able to find blogs using specialist search engines rather than generic search techniques.
- ◆ The learner should be able to discuss the features which characterise high-quality blogs, for example usability, navigation, structure, and presentation. Learners should also know that social conventions and etiquette play an important role in this area.

Once the learners have identified what constitutes a high quality blog they can then adapt these skills to review their own blog, and the blogs they follow.

They will learn to identify the quality of blogs using the following criteria:

- ◆ Usability
- ◆ Navigation
- ◆ Structure
- ◆ Connectedness
- ◆ Presentation

Usability covers areas like ease of navigation, ease of finding information, visual appeal and ability to recover from errors.

Navigation includes backtracking, timeline navigation, search facilities and threading.

Structure includes concepts such as linear and hierarchical structures, timelines and semantic blogging.

National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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Connectedness is concerned with links, particularly to other blogs and newsfeeds, but also to the web in general.

Presentation covers the visual and typographical aspects of blogs.

Outcome 2

The main aim of the Outcome is for the learner to successfully create a blog to perform a specific task and maintain a blog over a period of time.

Learners should be aware of the wide variety of blog creation tools available, the differences between them and where they can be obtained. It would be helpful if the learner had an idea about target readership and purpose when creating the blog as this is required to select the most appropriate software.

The style of the blog will be dependent on the purpose and target readership, for example a blog advertising cupcakes would have a different style to a hard rock musician advertising tour dates.

Keeping the contents of the blog up-to-date and relevant to its purpose and target audience is important. A blog which is not updated as expected will lose followers quickly. Followers will also become disinterested when posts are irrelevant or off-topic.

Outcome 3

The aim of the Outcome is to provide the learner with the opportunity to track selected blogs over a set time period.

This Outcome relates to creating an aggregated newsfeed to track selected blogs. An aggregated news reader allows a learner to monitor and be notified of any changes to specific websites through the use of specialised application software or most internet browsers. This can be done through any device with internet access.

Learners should be aware of the variety of tools available and should select suitable tools to enable them to create and maintain a personal list as required. Once learners have identified a varied list of newsfeeds to follow evidence will be gathered by them tracking these over a set period of time.

Throughout this Unit, learner activities could be related to their personal or vocational interests. For example learners' work with blogs may be related to their academic interests, hobbies and pastimes, recreational and entertainment preferences or employment goals to stimulate their interest. The range of topics should be varied to allow learners to experience a variety of writing styles and topics.

National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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Guidance on approaches to delivery of this Unit

The overall aim of this Unit is to introduce learners to the practice of creating and evaluating weblogs. This Unit should ideally be delivered over an extended period of time to give learners an appreciation of the skills required to maintain a blog over an extended timeframe. Learners may use an existing blog for evidence of competence however, assessors are required to authenticate that the blog is the learner's own work.

There are opportunities to link this Unit with Core Skills Units, eg *Communications*, *Working with Others*, and with developing enterprise skills. The blog could be used as a diary of their progress throughout their course allowing the learner to evaluate their progress over time. It may be appropriate to have a course blog that learners could follow allowing them to track information relevant to their curriculum. This would allow the Unit to be assessed holistically and for learners to be assessed on demand.

The actual distribution of time between Outcomes is at the discretion of the centre. However, one possible approach is to distribute the available time as follows:

Outcome 1: 15 hours
Outcome 2: 20 hours
Outcome 3: 5 hours

Guidance on approaches to assessment of this Unit

Evidence can be generated using different types of assessment. The following are suggestions only. There may be other methods that would be more suitable to learners.

Centres are reminded that prior verification of centre-devised assessments would help to ensure that the national standard is being met. Where learners experience a range of assessment methods, this helps them to develop different skills that should be transferable to work or further and higher education.

A blog documenting tasks undertaken in the Unit using digital formats would be an ideal way of assessing learner knowledge and understanding. Within this project underpinning knowledge could be assessed by a series of short answer closed-book questions.

For Outcome 1, product evidence generated under supervised open-book conditions is required. Learners should locate and review a minimum of five blogs of various types using relevant search tools. They should identify the quality of blogs using the following criteria:

- ◆ Usability
- ◆ Navigation
- ◆ Structure
- ◆ Connectedness
- ◆ Presentation

Usability covers areas like ease of navigation, ease of finding information, visual appeal and ability to recover from errors.

National Unit Support Notes (cont)

Unit title: Computing: Weblogs (SCQF level 5)

Navigation includes backtracking, timeline navigation, search facilities and threading.

Structure includes concepts such as linear and hierarchical structures, timelines and semantic blogging.

Connectedness is concerned with links, particularly to other blogs and newsfeeds, but also to the web in general.

Presentation covers the visual and typographical aspects of blogs.

For Outcome 2, product evidence generated under supervised open-book conditions is required. Learners will use the criteria identified in Outcome 1 to create a high quality blog. Learners may use an existing blog for evidence of competence for Outcome 2. However, assessors are required to authenticate that the blog is the learner's own work and that the subject matter and previous posts are acceptable. The blog will have regular posts over a specified period of time.

For Outcome 3, evidence generated under supervised open-book conditions is required. Learners should create and maintain an agreed newsfeed over a specified period of time.

While the recommended assessment for this Unit will be undertaken through practical tasks online over an extended period of time with access to notes and online resources, it may be necessary to test underpinning knowledge. This could be achieved through some closed-book, short answer or extended response questions.

An assessor observation checklist could be used to record that all the tasks have been undertaken correctly by the learner. An assessor should endorse each checklist with the learner's name, their name, signature and date.

Centres are reminded that prior verification of centre-devised assessments would help to ensure that the national standard is being met. Where learners experience a range of assessment methods, this helps them to develop different skills that should be transferable to work or further and higher education.

Opportunities for e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this Unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by Information and Communication Technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or social software. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all learner evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. The most up-to-date guidance on the use of e-assessment to support SQA's qualifications is available at www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment.

National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

In this Unit learners will have the opportunity to gather evidence towards Core Skills. As learners are required to post on a regular basis on an agreed topic this may provide an opportunity for developing aspects of the Core Skill in *Communications*. Depending on the topic it may also be possible to develop aspects of *Working with Others*, and enterprise skills.

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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General information for learners

Unit title: Computing: Weblogs (SCQF level 5)

This section will help you decide whether this is the Unit for you by explaining what the Unit is about, what you should know or be able to do before you start, what you will need to do during the Unit and opportunities for further learning and employment.

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This Unit allows the learner to develop the skills to identify, through a set of criteria, the requirements of a high quality blog. You will be able to discuss the features which characterise high-quality blogs, for example: usability; navigation; structure; connectedness and presentation.

This is achieved by following a range of blogs using aggregation tools over a set time period. An aggregated news reader allows you to monitor and be notified of any changes to specific websites through the use of specialised application software or most internet browsers. This can be done through many devices with internet access. You will then use your knowledge and skills to create and maintain a high quality blog on a specific subject.

The majority of the assessment for this Unit will be undertaken through practical tasks online over an extended period of time with access to notes and online resources. You may also be required to undertake some closed-book, short answer or extended response questions.

You will be able to develop Core Skills in aspects of *Communication* and possibly *Working with Others*, as well as enterprise skills depending on your choice of topics.