National Unit specification

General information

Unit title: Social Media Literacy (SCQF level 5)

Unit code: H7EB 45

Superclass:	CB
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Source:	Scottish Qualifications Authority
Version:	01

Unit purpose

This Unit is designed for non-specialists who want to acquire knowledge and skills in using and understanding social media.

The Unit covers practical skills in the use of social media (including how to use it safely) and provides a theoretical basis to its historical development, unique characteristics, current uses, and the opportunities and threats it poses. Learners will develop their knowledge of the different types of social media and be given practical experience of using social media for personal and community purposes.

A particular aim of this Unit, in addition to enhancing learners' digital skills, is to prepare learners for 'digital citizenship' so that they can fully participate in democratic and civil activities, access digital public services, and take advantage of the digital economy.

The Unit also covers the implications of social media for individuals and society so that learners may engage in debates about privacy, online safety and other issues surrounding social media such as big data.

On completion of this Unit, learners will possess intermediate skills in using social media and appreciate the opportunities and threats posed by it. They will have established a social media presence and be able to use social media for personal and educational purposes.

National Unit specification: General information (cont)

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Outcomes

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

1   Describe the personal, communal, commercial and societal uses of social media.
2   Explain the implications of social media for individuals and society.
3   Use social media for personal and communal purposes.

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. It is recommended that the learner has achieved *Social Media Literacy* at SCQF level 4 or equivalent.

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 Skill components in this Unit. For details refer to the Support Notes for this Unit specification.

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 Unit may be offered stand-alone or as part of the National Progression Award in *Digital Passport* at SCQF level 5. If offered as part of this Group Award, there may be opportunities to combine and integrate teaching and learning across Units. There may also be opportunities to combine Evidence Requirements and integrate assessments.

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

Describe the personal, communal, commercial and societal uses of social media.

Performance Criteria

(a) Describe the historical development of social media.
(b) Describe the types of social media.
(c) Define social production, social intelligence and social capital.
(d) Describe the uses of social media for individuals, groups, businesses and society.
(e) Describe the uses of personal learning networks.
(f) Descriptions and definitions use the correct terminology.

Outcome 2

Explain the implications of social media for individuals and society.

Performance Criteria

(a) Explain the rights and responsibilities of individuals when using social media.
(b) Explain social presence including digital footprint.
(c) Explain the potential dangers of social media to individuals including personal safety.
(d) Explain the societal issues raised by social media.

Outcome 3

Use social media for personal and communal purposes.

Performance Criteria

(a) Develop an appropriate social media presence.
(b) Participate in a social production in collaboration with others for a routine community purpose.
(c) Use a personal learning network for a routine learning purpose.
(d) Use of social media is mindful and demonstrates attention literacy.
(e) Use of social media is safe and responsible.
(f) Customise social media to reflect personal preferences including privacy and security settings.

National Unit specification: Statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Social Media (SCQF level 5)

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. Sampling may be used in certain circumstances (see below) where the sample is sufficiently random and robust to clearly infer competence in the complete domain.

The evidence for this Unit may be written or oral or a combination of these. 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.

A **holistic** approach to evidence generation is required. This will involve candidates undertaking an **investigation** relating to a contemporary issue surrounding social media.

The investigation must be a **social production** involving collaboration with other learners (Outcome 3, Performance Criterion (b)) and involve **new learning** (Outcome 3, Performance Criterion (c)). The results of the investigation must be presented using social media. The production must be written and presented appropriately to develop the candidate's social presence (Outcome 3, Performance Criterion (a)).

The contribution of each candidate to the production must be clear but it is not a requirement that each candidate satisfies every Performance Criterion. The **overall production must satisfy every Performance Criterion** (see below) and every candidate must make a worthwhile and significant contribution to the production.

In addition to explaining a contemporary issue with social media, the investigation must also satisfy the Performance Criteria relating to its historical development (1(a)), types (1(b)), concepts (1(c)), uses (1(d) and 1(e)), rights and responsibilities (2(a)), social presence (2(b)), dangers (2(c)) and societal issues (2(d)). These may be explained **in the context of the investigation** (and not exhaustively). For example, if the issue was privacy versus security, then the evolution of social media (1(a)) would be explained as it relates to this issue.

The completed production will be assessed against all of the Performance Criteria in the Outcomes of this Unit. Separate evidence of the use of a personal learning network (Outcome 3, Performance Criterion (c)) is **not** necessary since the production itself will be considered evidence of this.

The evidence for this Unit will comprise a social production and a completed checklist.

It is likely that authentication may be necessary when some of the production is done outside of a controlled environment. The *Guide to Assessment* provides advice on methods of authentication.

The *Guidelines on Approaches to Assessment* (see the Support Notes section of this specification) provide specific examples of instruments of assessment.

National Unit Support Notes

Unit title: Social Media Literacy (SCQF level 5)

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 general context for this Unit is to consider social media as a communication and information platform, no different, in essence, from previous communication or information systems. As such, it is part of a long evolutionary process that commenced with writing, included the printing press, books, newspapers, TV and e-mail, and currently includes instant messaging, social networks, blogs, wikis and virtual worlds. However, its ubiquity, convenience, immediacy, ease of use, reach, richness and scale are unique and make social media an important 21st Century cultural phenomenon.

Social media is widely used in contemporary society but not widely understood. Its use has been largely self-taught, through trial and error, resulting in, sometimes, chaotic or unsafe practices. This Unit will provide a theoretical basis to social media and foster good practice in its use.

Throughout this Unit it is vital to present the implications of social media in a balanced way. At the time of writing, there is inadequate research evidence to make firm conclusions about the positive or negative effects of social media on individuals, communities or societies. For example, the political impact of social media is disputed and it would be inappropriate to present its political impact as unequivocally good (or malign).

Outcome 1 and Outcome 2 present the pros and cons of social media. Outcome 3 provides an opportunity to practice the use of social media and develop a social presence. Outcome 3 also covers how to use social media safely and responsibly.

A range of social media should be demonstrated and used. It is important that learners appreciate that social media is more than social networks and blogs. The selection of social media should reflect the interests and demographics of the learners. While all learners should be exposed to the most common types of social media (which include social networks and blogs), other types of social media may be better suited to specific types of learners. For example, mature learners may benefit from, and enjoy using, the more immersive forms of media such as virtual worlds; young learners may benefit from, and enjoy using, the more exciting forms of media such as games. The critical aspect is that all of these platforms (social networks, blogs, wikis, virtual worlds and games) are seen as social media.

National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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It is also important that learners appreciate that Facebook™ (or any other dominant social media service) is one instance of a social network that may, or may not, stand the test of time. Ideally, more than one type of each social media system should be explored (such as Facebook™ and Google Plus™) so that this is reinforced, and learners can compare services.

Outcome 1: This Outcome covers the personal, community, commercial and societal uses of social media. It is likely that learners will have previous exposure to the use of social media but may not have much (or any) knowledge of the background to, and theory of, social media. Their previous use of social media may be informal and self-taught and related to their family and friends, so the wider applications of social media may not be known.

The historical development of social media is introduced as part of this Outcome (Performance Criterion (a)). This should be presented in an evolutionary context, spanning non-digital and digital media. However, the huge surge in social media use prompted by recent technological developments should be emphasised.

Performance Criteria (b), (c), (d) and (e) relate to the types and uses of various social media, and are best delivered together. The types of social media include e-mail, web logs, instant messaging, social networks, social games, VOIP, wikis and virtual worlds. An in-depth knowledge of each type of social media is not required. But learners should know the names and distinct features of each type. For example, virtual worlds differ from other types of social media in their level of sophistication and potential for immersion and relationship building through their use of 3D graphics, embodiment (through avatars) and simulations.

Learners may be familiar with the personal uses of social media but may be less familiar with its other applications (Performance Criterion (d)). These include community uses (such as a local group's mailing list), business uses (such as relationship building with customers), and societal uses (such as political activism). The commercial uses should mention the emerging social economy.

The concept of personal learning networks (PLNs) should be introduced (Performance Criterion (e)). Leveraging social media for purposes other than informal social interaction may be new to many learners and will require careful explanation and exemplification.

Outcome 2: This Outcome covers the implications of social media for individuals and society. It is a counter-balance to the previous Outcome that, effectively, rehearses the benefits of social media. Although this Outcome is about the dangers of social media, it should be presented in a balanced way, which does not exaggerate the dangers posed by this medium.

Learners are required to know their rights and responsibilities when using social media (Performance Criterion (a)). At this level, learners should know the specific laws that protect or limit their online conduct. Only the main rights and responsibilities should be covered such as those that relate to sex, race, sectarianism, threatening behaviour and terrorism. The concept of social media as a publishing medium — subject to the same rules and regulations as any other publishing medium — should be explained. The permanency of the medium should also be emphasised.

National Unit Support Notes (cont)

Unit title: Social Media Literacy (SCQF level 5)

There is an opportunity to explain the steps that can be taken if learners feel that they are the victims of inappropriate behaviour and the authorities that they can turn to for assistance.

While most learners may have previous experience of using social media, many will be unaware of the concept of social presence (Performance Criterion (b)). Learners should be exposed to 'positive' and 'negative' social presence, and be made aware of the implications of having a poor social presence on such things as future employment or relationships. There is an opportunity to help learners to develop a positive social presence (see the next Outcome).

Learners should be exposed to the potential dangers of social media (Performance Criterion (c)). At the time of writing, the main dangers of social media to the individual include: personal privacy, identity theft, fraud, cyberbullying, stalking, and grooming. This is linked to the previous Performance Criterion since a learner's digital footprint can be used to identify and locate victims. Other, less apparent, dangers should be discussed such as the social isolation that can (paradoxically) be fostered through the over-use of social media ('over-sharing') when it is used in place of genuine social contact. Young learners, in particular, may not value their personal privacy and need help to appreciate its value. The particular dangers posed by 'temporary social media' (such as SnapChat™) should be discussed.

Performance Criterion (d) relates to the societal issues surrounding social media. These are wide ranging and include: the tension between personal privacy and state security, the potential for mass surveillance made possible by the 'data exhaust' generated by social media, the growing income inequality generated by technology, the 'datafication' of human activity made possible by social media and the associated big data applications, and the business models of social media companies. The last example may require particular explanation since learners may not appreciate the value of their data and may not realise that the free service is using their personal data to generate large profits. Some commentators have proposed alternative business models (some of which reward users for their data) and these can be a useful basis for discussion.

Outcome 3: This Outcome relates to the use of social media for personal and community purposes.

While it is likely that most learners will have already established a social media presence (Performance Criterion (a)) they may have done so unwittingly and may be unaware of their digital footprints. This Performance Criterion requires learners to improve their social presence. While it may not be possible to remove previous online activity that damages their online identity, they can begin to cultivate an improved identity through good online practices.

Learners are required to participate in a social production in collaboration with others (Performance Criterion (b)). The production can be straight-forward such as the collaborative creation of a web page, a contribution to a wiki or the creation of a group blog. Similarly, the learning Outcome may be straight-forward (Performance Criterion (c)) such as using their personal learning network (PLN) to help with their homework or receive advice about travelling abroad. The key aspect of these criteria ((b) and (c)) is not their complexity but that learners are made aware that social media can be used for these purposes.

National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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Attention literacy (Performance Criterion (d)) relates to the mindful use (or non-use) of social media. At its most fundamental, it means deciding whether or not to use specific forms of social media at all (it is unlikely that making no use of any social media is sensible). More commonly, attention literacy relates to deciding when, where and how often to engage with social media. There is a growing (but inconclusive) body of evidence that social media is affecting attention and attention spans and that its use can be chaotic and disruptive. This Performance Criterion requires learners to demonstrate mindfulness in their use of social media.

Learners' use of social media must be safe and responsible (Performance Criterion (e)). Young learners, in particular, may need help with their use of social media, being occasionally guilty of over-sharing and engaging in potentially dangerous practices (such as sharing information with strangers). Mature learners may need to be encouraged to be less afraid of social media and learn to share more. Learners should be made aware of the distinction between safe use and responsible use.

Attention literacy (Performance Criterion (d)) is linked to customisation of social media applications (Performance Criterion (f)). Most social media applications permit users to customise their notifications, ranging from constant real-time notifications to manual on-demand notifications. The notification setting is one of many that learners should become familiar with. The others include privacy settings and security settings. Some social media services (such as Facebook™) have sophisticated privacy and security settings that can be difficult for learners to understand. At this level, learners should know what these settings are and how to change them to match their requirements.

Within a school, college or training organisation there may be restrictions on access to various social media which might limit the learner's choice but it is within the scope of this Unit to enable and encourage learners to use social media outwith their educational institution. In that case learners should retain evidence of their work using, eg screenshots; URLs; photos which can then be authenticated by their assessor.

Guidance on approaches to delivery of this Unit

A practical hands-on approach to learning should be adopted to engage learners and exemplify key concepts. However, all practical activities should be underpinned with appropriate knowledge before learners commence these activities.

It is recommended that learners gain hands-on experience of as many types of social media as possible. Where there are institutional restrictions on access to social media, learners should be encouraged to gain experience of social media out with their formal learning environment while, at all times, adhering to appropriate safety and etiquette guidelines.

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: 10 hours
♦ Outcome 2: 10 hours
♦ Outcome 3: 20 hours

National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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Throughout this Unit, learner activities should relate to the personal and community uses of social media. In order to engage and stimulate, the learners' interests should be reflected, as far as possible. For example learners should use, and teaching be exemplified using, social media relating to their personal interests and community based activities that they are already engaged in.

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.

The assessment for this Unit must involve an investigation into a contemporary issue relating to social media. This could take the form of a **project** requiring the candidate to investigate a specific issue. For example, candidates could investigate the tension between personal privacy and national security.

The candidate would work with one or more other candidates to carry out the investigation. The results of the investigation must take the form of a **social production** such as a blog or a wiki. In the case of a blog, the candidates would research the topic, recording their activities on the blog. Each candidate would contribute posts to the blog. Using the above example, a candidate might post a message about a specific piece of legislation that seeks to protect online privacy; another post might relate to a story about a privacy breach.

The 'social production', in this example, would be the completed blog, which would comprise a large number of posts, contributed by all candidates over an extended period of time, that collectively satisfy the designed Performance Criteria.

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)

Unit title: Social Media Literacy (SCQF level 5)

Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

This Unit provides opportunities to deliver some of the following Core Skills:

♦ *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* (SCQF level 5)
♦ *Communication* (SCQF level 5)
♦ *Working with Others* (SCQF level 5)

Several of the Core Skills in *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* can be addressed in this Unit. There are opportunities to select and start application software, enter and edit data, locate and integrate information, evaluate information, and keep data secure.

Several of the Core Skills in *Communication* can be addressed in this Unit. There are opportunities to pick out important ideas and supporting detail, chose a format, vary sentence structure, paragraphing and vocabulary, highlight the main points, and use spelling, grammar and punctuation accurately.

Several of the Core Skills in *Working with Others* can be addressed in this Unit. There are opportunities to work with others, organise your own role, make/accept suggestions, proactively seek and offer support, contribute to decision marking, and receive and consider feedback.

In addition to Core Skills, this Unit provides opportunities to develop citizenship skills.

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

General information for learners

Unit title: Social Media Literacy (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.

This Unit aims to improve your knowledge of, and skills with, social media. It will also help you to appreciate the importance of social media in the modern world.

This Unit is about using and understanding social media such as Facebook™ and Twitter™. While most people use social media to some extent, the background to social media (what it is, how it came about, etc) is little known. Also, the implications of the use of social media are not well understood. These implications can affect your employment or relationships. There are some extravagant claims made for the influence of social media (such as Twitter-inspired revolutions) and this Unit seeks to put those claims into perspective.

It also shows how social media can be used for a variety of purposes, beyond simple status updates, including the educational potential of the medium.

The social media studied includes a wide range of modern media including, but not limited to, social networks (such as Facebook™), blogs (such as Twitter™), VOIP (such as Skype™), and virtual worlds (such as Second Life™).

The Unit covers a wide range of knowledge and skills including:

♦ the historical development of social media
♦ types of social media such as social networks, blogs, wikis, virtual worlds and games
♦ the personal and community uses of social media
♦ your rights and responsibilities
♦ how to improve your social media presence
♦ what's meant by 'social intelligence', 'social production' and 'social capital'
♦ when to use (and not use) social media
♦ how to avoid the dangers of social media
♦ how to protect yourself
♦ the emerging social economy
♦ dos and don'ts of using social media
♦ using social media for learning
♦ how social media makes money
♦ the implications of social media for society

The Unit involves a 'social production' that involves you, in collaboration with others, in producing new knowledge using social media. This will take the form of an investigation into a social media development. Your findings will be presented using social media, such as a blog or a wiki.

The key goal of this Unit is to teach you to be a knowledgeable, responsible and active user of social media so that you can confidently use it for personal or educational purposes.

This Unit is part of a series of Units on social media. You may progress to the next Unit in the series (*Social Media Literacy* at SCQF level 6) on completion of this Unit if you wish to improve your knowledge and skills in this area.