Higher National Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Digital Culture: Online Communication

Unit code: F86P 34

Unit purpose: This Unit focuses on using Web 2.0 applications for communication purposes. It gives an overview of the new literacies (ie define an information need, access information from multiple sources, evaluate information's accuracy and credibility, and use information effectively) and examines communication using social networking, collaboration, online publishing tools and virtual worlds.

On completion of the Unit the candidate should be able to:

1   Describe the new literacies.
2   Communicate using online collaboration tools.
3   Communicate using social networking tools.
4   Communicate using online publishing tools.
5   Communicate in an online environment.

Credit points and level: 1 HN Credit at SCQF level 7: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7*)

*SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.

Recommended prior knowledge and skills: Access to this Unit will be at the discretion of the Centre, however it is recommended that candidates should have previous experience of using IT and Internet Applications. This may be evidenced by the completion of relevant PC Passport units.

Core Skills: There are no opportunities to develop Core Skills 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.

General information for centres (cont)

Assessment: Evidence is required that candidates have achieved all Outcomes.

A candidate is encouraged to use the Internet in any research, etc., however, the evidence produced must be the candidate's own words. Assessors should ensure themselves of the authenticity of candidate's evidence.

Written and/or oral recorded evidence is required which demonstrates that the candidate has achieved the requirements of all of the Outcomes to show that the candidate has appropriate knowledge and understanding of the content of this Unit.

Outcome 1 should be assessed by analysis of candidate responses to topics proposed by the tutor in an online forum.

Outcomes 2, 3, 4 and 5 should be assessed by a series of short small-group practical exercises requiring candidates to communicate using a minimum of four different tools, with at least one being selected from each of the following categories: online collaboration, web conferencing, virtual worlds, social networking and online publishing. Where appropriate, these short tasks may be integrated to form larger projects.

Assessment for Outcomes 2, 3, 4 and 5 should have three components: self-assessment (10%), peer assessment (30%) and tutor assessment (60%).

Assessors should assure themselves of the authenticity of each candidate's submission. Where evidence for Outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the Knowledge and/or Skills section must be taught and available for assessment.

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The sections of the Unit stating the Outcomes, knowledge and/or skills, and Evidence Requirements are mandatory.

Where evidence for Outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the knowledge and/or skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Candidates should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

Outcome 1

Describe the new literacies

Knowledge and/or skills

♦ Define an information need
♦ Access information from multiple sources
♦ Evaluate accuracy and credibility of information
♦ Use information effectively

Evidence Requirements

Candidates must be able to demonstrate that they can respond to topics proposed by the tutor in an online forum.

Outcome 2

Communicate using online collaboration tools

Knowledge and/or skills

♦ Word Processing
♦ Spreadsheets
♦ Databases
♦ Project Management

Evidence Requirements

Candidates must produce performance evidence to demonstrate that they can communicate using online collaboration tools.

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Outcome 3

Communicate using social networking tools.

Knowledge and/or skills

♦ Personal social networking tools
♦ Professional social networking tools

Evidence Requirements

Candidates must produce performance evidence to demonstrate that they can communicate using social networking tools.

Outcome 4

Communicate using online publishing tools.

Knowledge and/or skills

♦ Publish text
♦ Publish images
♦ Publish video

Evidence Requirements

Candidates must produce performance evidence to demonstrate that they can use relevant Web 2.0 applications to publish text, images and videos online.

Outcome 5

Communicate in an online environment.

Knowledge and/or skills

♦ Establish and maintain contact with other users.

Evidence Requirements

Candidates must produce performance evidence to demonstrate that they can establish and maintain contact with other users in an online environment.

Administrative Information

Unit code: F86P 34

Unit title: Digital Culture: Online Communication

Superclass category: CD

Original date of publication: August 2009

Version: 02

History of Changes:

Version	Description of change	Date
02	Minor amendment to Outcome 5 - Communicate using virtual worlds, change to Communicate in an **online environment**	01/06 2018

Source: SQA

SQA acknowledges the valuable contribution that Scotland's colleges have made to the development of Higher National qualifications.

Additional copies of this Unit specification can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. Please contact the Customer Contact Centre for further details, telephone 0845 279 1000.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Digital Culture: Online Communication

This part of the Unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes 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

This Unit focuses on using Web 2.0 applications for communication purposes. It gives an overview of the new literacies (ie define an information need, access information from multiple sources, evaluate information's accuracy and credibility, and use information effectively) and examines communication using social networking, collaboration, online publishing tools and an online environment.

Care should be taken in introducing young people to applications which may allow them to interact with people unknown to them and staff delivering this Unit may wish to consider whether access to the various types of groups should be restricted to groups formed within their own educational establishment or between collaborating establishments.

Outcome 1

This Outcome is about describing the new literacies. Candidates will be expected to define an information need, access information from multiple sources, evaluate accuracy and credibility of information and use information effectively.

The first stage in the process is being able to recognise an information need or a knowledge gap. Candidates should consider what they already know about the subject, what else they need to find out, what type of information is needed (eg depth, detail) and what sources might be useful.

The second stage is being able to access information from multiple sources. Candidates should be aware that information sources are available in a variety of formats including personal contacts, physical or electronic sources, libraries and generic or specialist sources. They should also be aware that it may be necessary to consult several sources in order to obtain the required information and that it is important to keep abreast of new sources. They should be able to locate/find suitable resources and to use appropriate strategies to find information within resources.

The third stage is being able to evaluate retrieved information in terms of the quality of the information source and the value of the search results in meeting the information need. Candidates should be aware of the need to reflect and evaluate throughout the information retrieval process.

The final stage involves being able to use information effectively. Candidates should be aware that it may be necessary to redefine search terms, consider alternative sources of information, summarise retrieved information and choose the most appropriate presentation format.

Outcome 2

This Outcome is about communicating using online collaboration tools. Candidates will be expected to use online tools for Word Processing, Spreadsheets, Database Management and Project Management.

Wikipedia provides an extensive list of collaborative software at:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_collaborative_software

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

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Collaborative software includes tools like email, calendaring, text chat, wiki and bookmarking. It can be distinguished from the more general social software tools, such as Twitter and Facebook, by the fact that it is normally used for work rather than leisure, often with the aim of creating a collaborative working environment. The more general social software tools can also be used for collaborative purposes, eg: Facebook groups can be used in a work context, or Twitter can be used to publish progress reports.

Modern collaborative tools, such as Google Docs and Microsoft Windows Live, tend to be Web 2.0 based and include functions such as document sharing, calendaring, instant messaging and web conferencing in addition to word processing, spreadsheets and database management.

Google Docs (http://docs.google.com) is a free application which allows users to create basic documents from scratch or start from a template. Its features include making bulleted lists, sorting by columns, adding tables, images, comments, formulas and hanging fonts and more. Existing files can be uploaded. Google Docs supports most popular file formats, including DOC, XLS, ODT, ODS, RTF, CSV, PPT, etc. Editing is straightforward. Toolbar buttons can be used to bold, underline, indent, change font or number format, change cell background colour etc. An overview is available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Google_Docs.

Google Docs provides an ideal environment for collaboration. Users can choose who can access their documents by entering the email addresses of the people with whom they want to share a given document and send them an invitation. Multiple users can view and make changes at the same time. It has an on-screen chat window for spreadsheets, and document revisions show exactly who made changes and when they were made. Google Docs also supports joint viewing of presentations, as anyone joined in a presentation can automatically follow along with the presenter.

Users can access their documents, spreadsheets and presentations from any computer with an Internet connection and a standard browser. Files can be organised into folders. Online storage and auto-save avoid problems due to local hard drive failures or power outages. Users can publish their documents online with one click, as normal-looking web pages. They can control who can see their pages and can un-publish at any time.

The **Zoho Office Suite** (http://www.zoho.com/) is a Web- based online office suite containing word processing, spreadsheets, presentations, databases, note-taking, wikis, CRM, project management, invoicing and other applications developed by ZOHO Corporation. It was launched in 2005 with a web-based word processor and additional products, such as spreadsheets and presentations were incorporated later.

The Zoho applications are an example of Software as a Service (SaaS) or Cloud Computing. The software utilities are hosted on remote servers rather than on personal computers and the user accesses them via a web browser. Zoho applications are free to use at the entry-level but require a fee for more extensive use. An overview can be found at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zoho_Office_Suite.

Microsoft Office Live is a set of Internet-based services designed for consumers and small businesses interested in creating a website or storing and sharing documents online. As of 2009, it consists of two services, Office Live Workspace and Office Live Small Business. An overview can be found at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microsoft_Office_Live.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Digital Culture: Online Communication

Office Live Workspace is a free service for storing and sharing documents online and is commonly used for work, school and home projects. Office Live Workspace requires web access and a compatible browser. Use of a workspace can be enhanced by installing Silverlight, a plug-in that makes it easier to upload multiple documents and collaborate with others on a workspace.

For workspaces to be accessed directly from Office, users of Word, Excel and PowerPoint must install an Office Live Update. Files cannot be edited from within workspace, but clicking on 'edit' will open them in Microsoft Office. The workspace doesn't offer offline collaboration — instead documents are 'checked out' and 'checked in, ' but the service does integrate with SharedView for real-time screen sharing.

Office Live Small Business is an Internet-based service designed to assist non-technical users with the creation of a professional-looking website. It includes Web site design tools and hosting, domain name registration and business e-mail, a Contact Manager, a Document Manager and a Team Workspace which creates a project website for posting information to share with customers, employees or business partners.

Online project management is a rapidly developing area with many project managers opting to use online tools such as Basecamp (http://basecamphq.com) or Zoho Project (http://projects.zoho.com), as an alternative to traditional project management tools like Microsoft Project.

Outcome 3

This Outcome is about communicating using social networking tools. Candidates will be expected to communicate using personal social networking tools, such as Facebook, MySpace and Bebo, as well as professional social networking tools such as LinkedIn. Candidates must produce performance evidence to demonstrate that they can communicate using social networking tools.

A January 2009 survey ranked Facebook (http://www.facebook.com) as the world's most popular social networking site. It allows users to add friends, send them messages and update their personal profiles to keep friends informed about what they are doing. Users can also join networks organised by city, workplace, school or region. Facebook has sometimes been controversial. It has been blocked at times by several countries and has been banned at many educational establishments and places of work to discourage students or employees from wasting time.

The second most popular network is MySpace (http://www.myspace.com), which is owned by News International. MySpace profiles contain sections for About Me, Who I'd Like to Meet, Interests and Details. Profiles also contain a blog, which has standard fields for content, emotion, and media. MySpace supports the uploading of images, including a default image that will be displayed on the profile's main page, search page, and alongside the user's name on comments, messages, etc.

Bebo (http://www.bebo.com) is a social networking site owned by AOL which has become particularly popular with British teenagers. The name is an acronym for 'Blog early, blog often'. Bebo profiles must include a comment section where other users can leave a message, and a list of the user's friends. Users can add additional modules. When an account is initially created the users' profile is private, meaning that it can only be viewed by their friends, but users can opt for a public profile if they wish to do so.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Digital Culture: Online Communication

LinkedIn (http://www.linkedin.com/) is a business-oriented social networking site launched in May 2003. It is mainly used for professional networking and was reported in October 2009 to have more than 50 million registered users in more than 200 countries. The main purpose of LinkedIn is to allow registered users to maintain a list of contact details of people, known as Connections, whom they know and trust in business. This 'gated-access approach', where making contact with a user requires either an existing relationship or the intervention of a contact, is intended to build trust among the service's users.

Outcome 4

This Outcome is about communicating using online publishing tools. Candidates must be able to demonstrate that they can use relevant Web 2.0 applications to publish text, images and videos online. A whole range of tools can be used to publish online content, including blogging platforms (WordPress and Blogger, video publishing sites (YouTube) and picture publishing sites (Flickr).

WordPress (http://wordpress.org) is an open source blog publishing application which started out as a blogging platform and has now developed into a full-scale content management system. WordPress blogs can be created at www.wordpress.com or hosted on your own server. WordPress sites are based upon editable themes and can be customised using plug-ins and widgets. WordPress also features integrated link management, a search engine-friendly permalink structure and support for categories and tagging.

Blogger (http://blogger.com) is probably the most popular blogging platform around. It was initially produced by Pyra Labs, but was bought by Google in 2003 and is integrated with Google's Picasa photo publishing tool and Google Adsense. Blogger is highly versatile. Users can modify the standard templates to create unique themes. Blogger is extremely easy to use, making it an ideal choice for first-time bloggers. Blogger offers a free hosting service at www.blogspot.com, but many users prefer to host their blogs on their own domain.

YouTube (http://www.youtube.com) is a video sharing website owned by Google which allows users to upload and share videos. It uses Adobe Flash technology to display a range of user-generated video content, including movie clips, TV clips, and music videos, as well as amateur content such as video blogs and short original videos. Most of the content has been uploaded by individuals, but some media companies also upload material. Unregistered users watch videos, but only registered users can upload them.

Flickr (http://www.flickr.com) is an image and video hosting website which allows users to share and embed personal photographs. It is also used by bloggers to host images embedded in blogs. As of October 2009 Flickr claimed to host more than 4 billion images. There are two types of Flickr accounts: Free and Pro. Free account users are limited to uploading 100 MB of images a month and 2 videos. If they upload more than 200 photos they will only be able to view the most recent 200, but the others remain stored on the site and can still be linked from blogs. Pro account users can upload an unlimited number of images and videos every month and receive unlimited bandwidth and storage. Images are organised by means of tags, making it easy for searchers to find images related to particular topics.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Digital Culture: Online Communication

Outcome 5

This Outcome is about communicating using an online environment. Candidates must demonstrate that they can establish and maintain contact with other users in an online environment such as:

Web Conferencing – online collaboration for web seminars, presentations, online training, online meetings and video conferencing. Real-time communication between users, make use of text, sharing files, visual gesture and sound.

Google hangouts (https://hangouts.google.com/)

Skype (https://www.skype.com/en/features/group-video-chat/)

A virtual world - a computer-based environment which allows users to interact via avatars. The computer presents perceptual stimuli to the user, who can manipulate elements of the modeled world. Modeled worlds may have rules based on the real world or a fantasy world, eg gravity, topography, motion, real-time actions and communication. Communication between users can make use of text, graphical icons, visual gesture and sound.

Second Life (http://secondlife.com) is a popular virtual world developed by Linden Research. Its users, known as 'residents' can interact with each other through avatars. They can explore, meet other residents, socialise, participate in individual and group activities, and create and trade virtual property and services or travel throughout the world.

The software incorporates three-dimensional modeling tool based around simple geometric shapes that allows a resident to build virtual objects. More complex three-dimensional objects, textures for clothing or other objects, and animations and gestures can be created using external software.

There (http://www.there.com) is a virtual world which provides a venue for socialising with less role-playing than usually found in virtual worlds. It offers a shared experience that allows people to interact in an online society. New members must choose a unique name and a male or female avatar. These cannot be modified, but other attributes such as hair colour and style, head and body shapes, skin and eye color, clothing, etc. can be changed as desired.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

A practical, hands-on approach to learning should be adopted. The emphasis should be on learning-by-doing. Terminology and underpinning knowledge should be introduced in a practical context.

The actual distribution of time between Outcomes is at the discretion of the centre. However, the following distribution is suggested:

Outcome 1: 8 hours
Outcome 2: 8 hours
Outcome 3: 8 hours
Outcome 4: 8 hours
Outcome 5: 8 hours

Throughout this Unit, candidate activities should relate to their personal or vocational interests. For example candidates should use social software applications relating to their professional or academic work, hobbies and pastimes, recreational and entertainment preferences or other topics that can genuinely stimulate their interest.

Evidence of practical competence should be stored in an electronic portfolio, which may be implemented using a blog or another appropriate platform. At the completion of this Unit the portfolio should contain a range of evidence, drawn from the Evidence Requirements for each Outcome.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Digital Culture: Online Communication

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

There are no opportunities to develop Core Skills in this Unit.

Open learning

If this Unit is delivered by open or distance learning methods, additional planning and resources may be required for candidate support, assessment and quality assurance particularly for Outcome1 where the closed-book assessment should be delivered in a supervised environment. A combination of new and traditional authentication tools may have to be devised for assessment and re-assessment purposes.

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Unit title: Digital Culture: Online Communication

Candidates with disabilities and/or additional support needs

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering whether any reasonable adjustments may be required. Further advice can be found on our website **www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements**

General information for candidates

This Unit focuses on using Web 2.0 applications for communication purposes. It gives an overview of the new literacies (ie define an information need, access information from multiple sources, evaluate information's accuracy and credibility, and use information effectively) and examines communication using social networking, collaboration, online publishing tools and an online environment.

There are five Outcomes in this Unit and upon completion you should be able to:

1   Describe the new literacies.
2   Communicate using online collaboration tools.
3   Communicate using social networking tools.
4   Communicate using online publishing tools.
5   Communicate using an online environment.

In Outcome 1, you will learn about the new literacies. You will be expected to define an information need, access information from multiple sources, evaluate accuracy and credibility of information and use information effectively.

In Outcome 2, you will learn about communicating using online collaboration tools. You will be expected to use online tools for Word Processing, Spreadsheets, Database Management and Project Management.

In Outcome 3, you will learn about communicating using social networking tools. You will be expected to communicate using personal social networking tools, such as Facebook, MySpace and Bebo, as well as professional social networking tools such as LinkedIn. You must produce performance evidence to demonstrate that they can communicate using social networking tools.

In Outcome 4, you will learn about communicating using online publishing tools. You must be able to demonstrate that you can use relevant Web 2.0 applications to publish text, images and videos online.

In Outcome 5, you will learn about communicating using an online environment. You must demonstrate that you can establish and maintain contact with other users in an online environment, such as web conferencing or a virtual world.