



National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Social Software (Intermediate 2)

CODE DW7J 11

COURSE

SUMMARY

This Unit is designed to enable candidates to locate and use social software, a term used to describe a range of software tools that promote interaction and collaboration. These tools include, but are not restricted to, e-mail, chat, newsgroups or forums, instant messaging, blogs, wikis and online communities. The Unit is suitable for candidates who wish to improve their knowledge and skills in the area of social software.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Describe the development of social software and the various types available.
- 2 Locate and review social software of various types.
- 3 Use social software to perform specific social tasks.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

Entry is at the discretion of the centre. No previous knowledge or experience of computers or the internet is required. However, it would be advantageous if candidates possessed basic IT skills which could be evidenced by possession of Unit D01D 10 *Information Technology* (or equivalent).

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit(s) at Intermediate 2 (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 5*)

**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.*

Administrative Information

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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

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CORE SKILLS

While there is no automatic certification of Core Skills in this Unit, there may be opportunities for developing aspects of Core Skills.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Social Software (Intermediate 2)

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 the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

OUTCOME 1

Describe the development of social software and the various types available.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Describe the historical development of social software correctly.
- (b) Identify the main types of social software correctly.
- (c) Describe the characteristics of social software correctly.

OUTCOME 2

Locate and review social software of various types

Performance Criteria

- (a) Identify the main providers of social software correctly.
- (b) Describe common uses of social software correctly.
- (c) Evaluate the use of various types of social software correctly.

OUTCOME 3

Use social software applications to perform specific social tasks

Performance Criteria

- (a) Define the purposes of the social software applications and their target users prior to their use.
- (b) Use social software tools efficiently and effectively.
- (c) Keep content up-to-date and relevant to its purpose and target users.
- (d) Ensure that social software applications serve as effective communication tools.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

Outcome 1

Performance evidence that the candidate can describe the development of social software and the various types available to the standards defined by Performance Criteria (a) to (c). This will be in the form of brief descriptions of at least five types of social software. Types must be selected from: e-mail, chat, newsgroups or forums, instant messaging, blogs, wikis and online communities. Characteristics must include: connecting, collaborating and interacting.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

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Evidence of knowledge and understanding will consist of answers to multiple choice questions relating to the performance criteria. Evidence is required to demonstrate that candidates meet all of the Outcomes and Performance Criteria.

Outcome 2

Performance evidence that the candidate can locate and review social software to the standards defined by Performance Criterion (c). This will be in the form of a review of at least one example of three different types of social software using the following evaluation criteria: design, usability; navigation; collaboration; links; quality of information; use of multimedia; topicality; frequency of update and archiving.

Evidence of knowledge and understanding will consist of answers to multiple choice questions relating to the performance criteria. Evidence is required to demonstrate that candidates meet all of the Outcomes and Performance Criteria.

Outcome 3

A written or oral statement of the purpose of three social software applications and their target users to the standards defined by performance criterion (a).

Performance evidence that the candidate uses social software to perform specific social tasks to the standards defined by performance criteria (b) to (d). Candidates should use three different social software applications which use a variety of media. Evidence will take the form of the URLs of the social software applications and printouts and/or screen dumps of their home pages.

Evidence of knowledge and understanding will consist of answers to multiple choice questions relating to the underpinning knowledge relevant to performance criteria (b) to (d). Evidence is required to demonstrate that candidates meet all of the Outcomes and Performance Criteria.

The assessment of knowledge and understanding can be combined into a single instrument of assessment.

The evidence requirements for performance evidence are as stated under the individual Outcomes.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Social Software (Intermediate 2)

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

Corresponding to Outcomes 1 – 3

The overall aim of this Unit is to introduce candidates to the use of social software applications. Although Outcomes 2 and 3 are overtly practical, every Outcome should be delivered with a broad theoretical foundation.

This Unit should ideally be delivered over an extended period of time to give candidates an appreciation of the skills required to use social software applications over an extended timeframe. Where this is not possible, it is permissible for candidates to use social software applications over a shorter time period but such use should involve a significant amount of activity.

Centres are encouraged to be imaginative in their selection of the social software applications to be covered in this Unit, rather than sticking to the more familiar applications.

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.

Social software is fundamental to some of the latest developments in the World Wide Web, often referred to as Web 2.0. Some of the main types of social software are listed below.

E-mail will already be familiar to most candidates. However it can be regarded as one of the earliest forms of social software, particularly with regard to some of its one-to-many communication features, such as the use of the cc: field and mailing lists, as well as the use of contact lists or address books.

Instant Messaging (IM) allows individuals to communicate privately with one another over a public network. Communications were initially text based but have now been expanded to include audio and video and clients can also exchange files.

Chat is an abbreviated name for **Internet Relay Chat (IRC)** which lets users join chat rooms and communicate with many people simultaneously. Users can join an existing chat room or create one of their own, on any topic of interest to them. Once in a chat room they can post comments and respond to the comments of others and invite other users to participate in private chats.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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Newsgroups or **forums** are the internet version of electronic bulletin boards, popular among computer users long before internet. A user can post comments on a topic and other users can respond. Messages are visible to all members of the group and some services provide extensions such as file storage and calendaring.

Weblogs (or simply **Blogs**) are generally on line journals for a particular person or group. Owners post messages periodically and allow others to comment on them. Topics can include everyday life, politics or just about anything else. Links to other weblogs, often on similar topics, are a significant feature. There are a number of variants on blogs, including photoblogs and audioblogs, a type of podcasting.

A **Wiki** is a group of Web pages that allows users to add their own content and permits others to edit the content. It provides a simple method of producing HTML content and is an effective medium for collaboration. The term is also used to describe the collaborative software, sometimes known as a wiki engine, used to create such a website.

Social network services allow people to meet on line around shared interests or causes. In some cases it is only possible to join a social network by being recommended by an existing member. An offshoot of this area is **social network search engines**, which allow people to find each other according to their XFN social relationships.

Social guides recommend places to visit in the real world such as coffee shops, restaurants and WiFi hotspots.

Social bookmarking sites allow users to post their list of bookmarks or favourite websites for others to search and view. The object is for people to meet others with whom they share a common interest.

Social Shopping applications allow group members to make recommendations and give product reviews.

Virtual Worlds and **Massively-Multiplayer On line Games (MMOGs)** are places where it is possible to interact with other people in a virtual world.

Folksonomy is the name given to the informal classifications (sometimes called tags or keywords) that internet users invent to categorise the objects with which they interact on-line. Social software makes these classifications available to other internet users, so folksonomy can be viewed as a distributed classification system.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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Outcome 1

This Outcome relates to describing social software applications of various types. The types of social software applications that candidates should be familiar with are defined in the associated Evidence Requirements. The Performance Criteria define the standards which should be applied to candidate activity.

Performance Criterion (a) relates to describing correctly the historical development of social software. Candidates should be aware that the term social software is used to describe a range of software tools that promote interaction and collaboration.

Candidates should also know that social conventions and etiquette play an important role in this area, in parallel with technical features. They should be aware of the role of social software in developing virtual communities.

Performance Criterion (b) relates to identifying correctly the main types of social software. They should be aware of the common factors which link all of the providers and the special features and facilities which distinguish between them.

Performance Criterion (c) relates to describing the characteristics of social software. Candidates should be able to discuss the features which characterise social software, communication, collaboration and interaction. It is important to note that these features operate at a group level: communications between members to establish and maintain a group, interaction (often one-to-many or many-to-many) within that group and collaboration on the development of products, often the result of the shared knowledge of the group.

Outcome 2

This Outcome is about locating and reviewing social software of various types.

Performance Criterion (a) relates to correctly identifying the main providers of social software, many of whom are identified in the list of types of social software given earlier. Owing to the pace of development in this area providers are likely to change rapidly as old ones fade and new ones arise. The examples suggested should be regarded as indicative, rather than being a definitive list.

Performance Criterion (c) relates to evaluating social software correctly using given criteria. The evaluation criteria that candidates should be familiar with are defined in the associated evidence requirements, i.e. design, usability; navigation; collaboration; links; quality of information; use of multimedia; topicality; frequency of update; archiving. The quality of information relates to the following attributes: (1) relevance; (2) accuracy; (3) clarity; (4) brevity; (5) depth/detail; (6) timeliness. Information is relevant if it relates to the subject under investigation; information is accurate if it is factually correct, or at least known not to be factually incorrect; information is clear if it is written well, clearly and simply; information is detailed if sufficient information is provided to give the reader a clear understanding of the subject matter; and information is timely if it is provided at the right time. Note that some of these attributes conflict — there is a tension between brevity and depth, and it can be difficult to maintain.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Social Software (Intermediate 2)

Performance Criterion (c) relates to correctly describing common uses of social software including the pooling of group knowledge and information and the generation of products based on that shared knowledge.

Outcome 3

This Outcome is about using social software applications to perform specific social tasks. The Performance Criteria define the standards which should be applied to candidate activity.

Performance Criterion (a) relates to defining the purposes of the social software applications and their target users prior to their use. Candidates should know the purpose and target readership of the social software application before using it. The purpose may influence the selection of an appropriate creation tool, eg to what extent are collaboration facilities required. It may also influence the overall style of the product — a product intended for corporate or professional use is likely to be more formal than one for hobbyists or enthusiasts.

Target readership is also an important consideration as this is likely to influence the design of the application. One critical aspect to be considered here is readability.

Performance Criterion (b) relates to the efficient and effective use of social software tools. Efficient use of tools means that candidates will be able to use the tools within an acceptable time scale and without too many attempts. They are also expected to use the tools effectively, without assistance. Candidates should be aware of the wide variety of social software tools available, the differences between them and where they can be obtained or used.

Performance Criterion (c) relates to keeping content up to date and relevant to its purpose and target users. Candidates should be aware that one of the most important features of social software is currency. A site or application which is out of date can rapidly become useless.

Performance Criterion (d) relates to ensuring that social software applications serve as effective communication tools. Candidates should be aware that a social software application can be regarded as an effective communication tool when it succeeds in reaching the target audience, which could be defined by demographics, location, interests or many other variables and communicating the desired information, whether factual or opinion.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR 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:	10 hours
Outcome 2:	10 hours
Outcome 3:	20 hours

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

It is recommended that centres combine the assessment of knowledge and understanding into a single multiple choice question paper. Re-assessment should be undertaken by re-assessing the specific Outcomes that have not been passed. Centres are free to select from a range of multiple choice question types. This type of assessment is well suited to e-testing.

Evidence of practical competence should be stored in a portfolio. At the completion of this Unit the portfolio should contain a range of evidence, drawn from the Evidence Requirements for each Outcome.

This material may be stored in paper or electronic format. Centres may choose to store candidate evidence in an electronic portfolio (e-portfolio).

Opportunities for the use of 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 e-checklists. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all candidate evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. Further advice is available in *SQA Guidelines on Online Assessment for Further Education (AA1641, March 2003)*, *SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools (BD2625, June 2005)*.

DISABLED CANDIDATES AND/OR THOSE WITH 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.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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History of changes:

Version	Description of change	Date
02	Evidence Requirements changed from restricted response to multiple choice questions for all three Outcomes	02/07/2010