

SPB 2006 D201

SUPPORT NOTES FOR TEACHERS

Unit 1

Level 2

Introduction

Before tackling the SPB, students should have acquired the appropriate ICT skills, knowledge and understanding as specified in the 'What You Need To Learn' and 'ICT skills' sections of the Unit 1 specification. They should be familiar with the format of a range of on-screen and paper-based publications.


Section 1 Using the SPB

Access and Navigation

The SPB is a complete, integrated digital publication and is intended to be accessed on-screen. Although it may be useful to print off sections for reference purposes, students will be disadvantaged if they do not work from the interactive onscreen brief.


Although the links in the navigation bar are roughly in sequence, students should be reminded that one task often depends on one or more other tasks and that they should make use of the interactive nature of the brief. Where more than one page relates to a main task (such as the survey), the additional pages are only accessible via the first page for the task.

Mark Alerts

Indicated by the symbol  each Mark Alert is a series of questions with tick boxes. Clicking the symbol opens another web page and students may tick the questions onscreen or print the list and complete on paper. Students should check that they can tick each box to help them ensure that they have met the requirements and that their work is fit for purpose.


Each Mark Alert can also be accessed via the drop down menu at the top right of the screen.


Helpful hints

In addition to Mark Alert checklists, the SPB now features short hints and tips denoted by the symbol . The symbol appears at the end of the sentence or paragraph to which the hint relates. Clicking on the symbol opens a popup window in the top left area of the screen. The window must be closed by the student. Those using Internet Explorer can also view the hints by rolling over the symbol. All hints are also available in a separate document which can be accessed via the drop down menu at the top right of the screen.

Section 2 What, where, who?

What evidence is required?

Students do not need to submit evidence of everything they do during their work on the project. Evidence required is clearly indicated in the brief by the symbol  and there is a summary document attached to the eportfolio page.

Where work needs to be done but evidence is not required, this is indicated by the symbol . However, students should not be tempted to omit these tasks as they are crucial to success. A good example is the instruction to test the spreadsheet - the evidence will be in the form of a working spreadsheet so we do not require explicit evidence of the testing itself, but omission of this step could be disastrous!

It is not necessary for students to write long commentaries explaining how they achieved each task.

Students must ensure that they present the publications as clearly as possible. For example, the pages of the leaflet should be presented in one file and the order of the pages should be clear.

Moderators will view eportfolios on screen and will not be expected to print paper-based publications. However, the centre assessor may wish to do so and to include comments relating to the effectiveness of the document in their record sheets.

What additional resources are provided?

There are a number of files provided with the SPB, accessed via links within the brief. Where a task requires use of a file, for example the data items list for the database, students should save a copy to their user area before continuing.

Where does the work have to be carried out?

Work on the publications themselves must be carried out within the controlled environment and the teacher must be able to authenticate each student's complete eportfolio with confidence.

However, there is much that can be done away from the controlled environment. Acceptable activities include:

- reviewing and updating the plan - this will change the focus of the plan for the students and they are more likely to view it as an ongoing process rather than a one off task.
- commenting on progress - what is going well, what is not going so well - this could be a separate column on the plan or a separate document and will assist with the final evaluation.
- researching appropriate sources of information related to the scenario and publications, keeping records of where information was found and how it could be used.
- carrying out survey work
- initial design of publications and feedback from others on these designs
- prototyping of own, or others' products - gathering feedback from test users so that publications can be improved where appropriate
- reviewing final publications and the eportfolio

Who can help?

Although students must work independently at level 2, this does not mean that they are on their own!

Test users should be asked to try out and comment on publications under development. They can be peers, teachers or other adults. They should be chosen with care for their ability to offer constructive feedback. Time should be allocated on the plan to respond to this feedback.

Reviewers comment on final publications, including the eportfolio, and these comments will be used in the final review. Reviewers should also be asked to comment on the student's work on the project as a whole.

Students should check when suitable test users and reviewers are available for comment before including them in their project plan.

Section 3 Tackling the SPB

The Scenario

Students should explore the Make Space website (and related links) to gather information they need about the campaign.

The Make Space campaign is aimed at 11-16 year olds but students who are older than 16 may extend the range to include their peer group.

Students must come up with ideas for activities that could be offered, as a result of their research. They are free to choose any activities that interest them and which they think would be popular. The activities need not necessarily take place on the premises of the Make Space Club.

'Where you live' refers to the local area - this may be interpreted as town, city, village or a wider area if appropriate.

Planning

As students are reading the SPB, they may find it helpful to write notes on what is required to help them understand what the objectives of the SPB are and what they are required to do. From these notes they will be able to generate their plan. Remind them that if it takes time, it should be in the plan.

There is much that students can do outside of the controlled environment - for example, planning, research, design and prototyping. This should be built into their project plans. One possibility would be to create two columns, one for class work and one for homework.

We would expect students to give an indication of time for sub-tasks. They will need to estimate this in order to calculate time needed for main tasks and it is often an adjustment of some sub-tasks that needs to be carried out to stay on track.

Students should discuss their initial plans with their teacher and check that they have selected appropriate tasks for completion as homework. These tasks should be clearly shown on the plan. Teachers should offer feedback at this stage that will enable the student to formulate a workable plan, bearing in mind that it is perfectly acceptable to make adjustments later.

We recommend that students identify interim checkpoints on their plan when they will discuss progress-to-date with their teacher and make any adjustments that are necessary.

The eportfolio checklist indicates that an initial plan should be included if necessary. If a student is able to provide a complete picture of all tracking, monitoring and adjustments on the final plan, then this might be sufficient. Interim plans should only be submitted if they are really needed for clarification. A comments column is a very good way of indicating decisions and changes made. Students might also consider using text boxes or a separate project.

Whilst there is no requirement to use particular software for project plans, students are restricted to the list of acceptable file formats when it comes to the eportfolio. They must therefore use methods of recording progress which can be viewed in any common browser by the moderator. For example, comment boxes in Excel will not be visible if the spreadsheet is converted to pdf.

Research

Students should carry out research that is likely to produce useful information and should not feel compelled to investigate further just for the sake of it. If they follow the brief and ensure that their publications are fit for audience and purpose, they will have gathered and selected sufficient relevant information.

It is likely that they will need to use secondary sources to find out more about what is on offer, what can be offered and they will need to access information related to the Make Space campaign and associated organisations. They will, of course, also need to use the database.

Students should be quite clear about the need to acknowledge sources they use, both primary and secondary. Where appropriate they should acknowledge sources within the publications and should create a bibliography giving details of sources and an indication of where the information has been used. Students should take particular care to indicate use of primary sources in order to gain credit for this.

We do not require the information itself stored separately or descriptions of how the students obtained it.

Database

There is more guidance than previously on how to create the database - remind students to use the hints and mark alerts.

Teachers (and students) should not attempt to analyse the data set in detail prior to students creating the database. The data set is real, formats such as caps/non-caps and postcodes are as given. There is no need to eliminate postcodes with full stops.

Students should be working independently to create a structure based upon the information given in the data items list. It is up to them to apply simple validation where they think it is appropriate. They may end up with differing results. The list of ID codes is intended to assist students in identifying invalid records if they first sort their imported table into code order. A form is provided to record the identity of rejected records, students should indicate the relevant codes, the remaining columns are optional.

The indication of the maximum number of rejected records is intended to discourage them from over-validating and to check that their validation is appropriate. They should certainly not attempt to identify and remove invalid data before importing the data set. There is a danger of a disproportionate amount of time being spent on attempting to find the 'right answer' at the expense of quality data entry forms, queries and reports.

It is always possible that hyperlinks will become invalid if sites are moved but students do not need to concern themselves with this. Obviously, no validation rule can pick up on this problem. They may, if they wish, update invalid links but they are not required to do so.

The database structure includes a hyperlink field - students can be assisted in setting up this data type if necessary. If students are using software that does not allow the field to be set to hyperlink they should use an appropriate type such as text and indicate this in their commentary.

Survey

Students are required to conduct a survey of young people. The Make Space campaign is aimed at 11-16 year olds but, as indicated earlier, students who are older than 16 may extend the range to include their peer group.

We would expect students to construct a questionnaire with at least 10 questions.

In addition to the final questionnaire, a prototype should be included with evidence of feedback from test users. This may be in the form of annotation or a separate document.

Group data collection

For the purpose of collecting data, students may either work on their own or in a group of up to four.

If working in a group, there are several possibilities.

The group may agree exactly what they want to find out and what types of answers they will accept. Since they must carry out research related to their three activities individually, the questionnaires must include relevant questions for each student. Students must design and test their questionnaires individually, using the agreed questions, and check that all group members will collect the same data. They must then use their own questionnaire to gather data to be shared with the group.

Alternatively, each member of the group may independently construct a questionnaire, collate a set of questionnaires for the group and then collect data for themselves and for the others. If they choose this option, they may wish to consider sharing an introductory section of generic questions to avoid repetition.

Each student must contribute to the data collection, e.g. in a group of 4, each student will need to approach ten people. This can be achieved by a variety of methods - email, interview, telephone, etc.

Data Analysis

Students must use spreadsheet software to analyse the data. They must each design and create their own spreadsheet.

Evidence of testing of the spreadsheet is not required, but students should be aware that moderators will be looking at their use of spreadsheet tools to generate relevant information.

Review

Students should be reminded to keep notes of comments they receive on their publications and the way they work to avoid having to rely on memory at the end. A document such as a project diary will aid this process.

Section 4 The Publications

General

The publications required are database reports, an information point and a newsletter.

Students should take careful note of the requirements for each publication - number of pages/screens, content, etc - as well as the audience and purpose.

Students are free to make use of software features such as wizards. However, they should be clear that wizards are intended to help them, not do the job for them. They should customise the output from wizards to ensure that publications are fit for purpose. For example, titles, column headings, layout

Database reports

The database reports are intended to be screen-based so that the links to websites work. Students should export their reports to html - they can be given help to do this - and should be encouraged to try out the links. These html reports can then be included in the eportfolio without further conversion or screenshots.

Information Point

The storyboard may be produced electronically or on paper, in which case it must be scanned in to create a digital file.

Storyboards should be sufficiently detailed to clarify ideas, allow constructive feedback and facilitate implementation. It may help to look at the SPBs for D202/D102 for examples.

Students are not expected to produce more than six screens, and will not be credited for including more. However, they may do so if they are confident that they are improving quality rather than quantity.

Students may use any suitable software to create the information point - for example: web authoring software, presentation software or mind mapping software. They should be free to make independent choices about the software they will use.

A student aiming for a pass might, for example, use presentation software to create an information point that has minimal interactivity - allowing users to move from screen to screen and back to the beginning by clicking the mouse. Students aspiring to high grades might use web software to create a fully interactive information point. However, these are just examples and there is no reason why a student who is proficient in presentation software should not use it to create the information point and be eligible for marks in the top range. The choice is theirs.

Newsletter

Students who take time to design the newsletter before creating it are likely to produce a higher quality publication. Much of the specified content for the newsletter can be used for other purposes.

Producing additional material such as a puzzle is optional but is, of course, an acceptable homework activity.

Students should include a completed reviewer's checklist with additional comments as appropriate.

eportfolio

Any suitable software may be used to construct the eportfolio - specialised web authoring software is not essential. However, the eportfolio must be viewable in any common browser.

Students should aim to produce eportfolios that meet the criteria, including an appropriate user interface. Good design plays a crucial part in this process.

There must be an easily recognisable home/index page giving key information including: student name and candidate number, centre name and number, unit name and number and date.

There is no need to include evidence of testing the eportfolio. It should be possible to infer that testing has occurred and to judge its effectiveness by the quality of the product.

There is a link to an eportfolio checklist which includes most, if not all, of the items that students should include. Additional items should only be added if these are necessary for assessment to be effective.

Students must take care to convert all evidence to acceptable file formats. However, other necessary files generated by the software such as .css may be included.