

Tell me a story

D202 SPB 0907

SUPPORT NOTES

Issue 2

Introduction

These notes should be read in conjunction with the Moderators' Report for D202 which offers feedback on the most recent moderation series.

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 2 specification.

Students must have access to a range of appropriate multimedia software (see pages 92/93 of the spec). Some suggestions can also be found at the end of this document.

The D202 SPB 0907 is valid for moderation in May and December 2008 and in May and December 2009.



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 may be disadvantaged if they do not work from the interactive on-screen 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 they should make use of the interactive nature of the brief.

Where more than one page relates to a main task (such as the eportfolio), they appear as a submenu from the main link.

The symbol  at the top of each page allows students to print the page. A new feature is indicated by the symbol  which allows students to listen to the contents of the page. This feature will be activated once the feedback period is over.

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 off each item to help them ensure that they have met the requirements and that their work is fit for purpose.


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.

The symbol  indicates a task to be done.

The symbol  indicates a stage where evidence must be saved for the eportfolio. There is also a summary document attached to the eportfolio page.

Students should not be tempted to omit tasks which are not preceded by the  symbol as they are crucial to success. A good example is an instruction to test a product. It is not necessary for students to write long commentaries explaining how they achieved each task.

Students must ensure that they present the products as clearly as possible, remembering that moderators will view all evidence on screen.

Copyright

Students should use copyright-free materials in their publications.

The review notes require them to consider whether they have fully met this requirement. If not, it is not sufficient to simply acknowledge the sources. They must demonstrate their understanding of copyright issues by explaining what would need to be done to make the publications fit for use in the public domain.

It is generally the case that suitable assets can be obtained from primary sources.

The Moderator's Toolkit

The Moderator's Toolkit specifies the readers and players that all moderators will have available. It is each student's responsibility to ensure that their eportfolio only includes files which can be read using the toolkit.

Some support documents are supplied as .rtf files. If students have made use of these documents, they must be converted to an acceptable file type for inclusion in the eportfolio.

The Moderator's Toolkit is published on the DiDA micro-site. It will be updated when necessary.

Where does the work have to be carried out?

Work on the products 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 including:

- reviewing and updating the plan after each session
- completing the project log - students may not have time during the lesson to complete the log so they should be encouraged to complete the day's activities at home while it is fresh in their minds
- researching appropriate sources of information related to the scenario and products, keeping records of where information was found and how it could be used
- initial design documents for the products and feedback from others on these designs
- prototyping of own or others' products - gathering feedback from test users so that products can be improved where appropriate
- reviewing final products and the eportfolio
- updating the assets table.

Who can help?

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

For planning, the emphasis is on the use of the plan throughout the project. It is better for students to have any help they need to produce an up-front workable plan which can be used effectively.

Test users should be asked to try out and comment on products under development and this should be viewed as an ongoing process. Students should not wait until products are complete when it will be too late to take advantage of any suggestions for improvements. There is no doubt that students who take careful account of feedback from reliable test users improve their chances of higher marks. Test users can be peers, teachers or other adults who can offer constructive feedback.

Reviewers comment on final outcomes and the eportfolio, and these comments will be used in the final review. It is often helpful to gather reviewers' feedback as work is completed but students must take care to record the feedback for later use. Reviewers should also be asked to comment on the student's work on the project as a whole.

Time should be allocated on the plan for gathering and responding to test user feedback and for gathering reviewer feedback. Students should check when suitable test users and reviewers are available for comment before including them in the plan.

Section 3 Tackling the SPB

The Scenario

Tell me a story requires the creation of a digital storybook. It is loosely based on the Digital Storytelling project which can be found at <http://story.e2bn.net/index.php>. The aim is to produce one final product, the storybook, which consists of a cover page, contents page, main story pages with two routes and two different animated endings.

Students need to be clear about their audience for the storybook and the purpose of each component. They should explore examples of digital stories before starting work on their own designs.

Planning

It cannot be emphasised too strongly that students must start out with a workable plan which gives them a clear overview of timings and objectives and allows them to monitor their progress during the project. Teachers should give as much guidance as necessary to achieve this as benefits can be expected throughout the rest of the project.

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.

Students must 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. If students are giving times as lessons, eg, 1 lesson, they must indicate somewhere on their plans how long a lesson is. Students should also build in some contingency time.

Interim checkpoints should be included on the plan when students will discuss progress-to-date with their teacher and make any adjustments that are necessary.

Students must agree their initial plan with their teacher before continuing. Teachers should offer feedback at this stage that will enable the student to formulate a workable plan which is easy to view on screen.

The eportfolio checklist indicates that an initial plan should be included as well as a final plan. Interim plans should only be submitted if they are really needed for clarification.

Using the plan

Students are required to make use of the plan throughout the project. They must use a project log to record their progress at the end of each session. This can be achieved by adding comments to the plan or by keeping a separate document. This log will help when carrying out the review at the end of the project and in producing commentaries. Reminders to update the plan and log appear throughout the brief.

Gathering assets

In producing the storybook, students will need to gather a variety of assets. Some of the assets may be used in more than one component of the product.

Students should be quite clear about the need to use copyright-free material from secondary sources.

An assets table is required where students must give details of all assets from both primary and secondary sources. They should be reminded that search engines such as Google should not be cited as sources.

They should be advised to complete the first section of the assets table with details of all assets they might use but that they only need complete the remaining details (columns shaded grey) for assets they actually use in the storybook. As indicated on the template, where more than one asset is from the same source, they only need to record details of the source once.

It is important that students indicate how they have prepared assets for use in their products. This can be achieved in the assets table. We do not require a narrative description of the process itself.

Project review

Students should aim to produce a detailed evaluation of all aspects of the project listed in the review notes document (now linked from the review page), avoiding long narratives of what they did and how they did it. They should make specific and valid suggestions for improvement.

Students are expected to incorporate feedback from their teacher and other reviewers. This feedback should be sought once products are finalised and should help to identify improvements that might be made another time. This should not be confused with interim feedback received from test users during development.

Students should be reminded to address any copyright issues.

Section 4 The Storybook

General

The storybook consists of a cover page, contents page which allows access to key points in the story, the main story pages which include a choice of two routes, each leading to an animated finale.

The complete storybook must keep members of the target audience occupied for a reasonable length of time including interactivity and the animations. The user must be able to decide when to move on so there should be no automatic page turning.

The number of pages will vary depending on the target audience and the nature of the book. We would expect the complete book including interactivity and animations to occupy the reader for between 3 and 5 minutes.

All assets must be embedded on the pages of the storybook.

Students should create a storybook folder (with sub-folders as required) to store all components of the storybook as they go along. They should create additional folders for supporting evidence.

Storyboards should be sufficiently detailed to clarify ideas, allow constructive feedback and facilitate implementation. Students should also show how testing, acting on feedback and refining their designs influenced the finished product. They should be reminded that retrospective designs will not gain credit.

As each component is designed and produced, students should make use of feedback from good test users to refine and improve their products, but some components such as the contents page will not be working at this stage. Students should also show how testing and acting on feedback has influenced the finished product.

Any suitable software may be used to construct the storybook. Students are free to make use of software features such as wizards. However, they should be clear that wizards are only intended to help them, not do the job for them. They should customise the output from wizards to ensure that the products are fit for purpose. It must, of course, be possible to read the story using only the Moderator's Toolkit. Students should not assume that further readers will be added to the toolkit before their work is moderated although additions to the toolkit will be notified to centres registered for email alerts.

Students should not underestimate the importance of accuracy and suitability, and should remember that credit is not given for demonstration of skills but rather for producing products that meet the requirements of the brief and are suitable for the intended audience and purpose.

The proposal

Students must complete the outline proposal to give an idea of their intentions. They must gain approval from the teacher before continuing.

Students are free to identify the age range of the audience but should make their choice clear in their design documentation and in their commentary. They should bear in mind the need to get feedback from test users able to represent the target audience.

Students should choose a theme which interests them and which will appeal to the target audience.

This theme must run throughout the story so it is important that students select a topic that allows them to create a complete story with a choice of routes and animated endings.

The story must be the student's own and must adhere to legal requirements. Assistance may be given to develop a suitable story line - this is not considered as guidance in terms of assessment.

Students should consider how easy/difficult it will be to collect assets for their chosen storyline. Any characters will need to be produced by the students themselves or derived from copyright-free resources and they should be reminded that they will not be able to use copyright characters such as 'The Simpsons'. They may adapt fairytales and legends using characters from them.

The story should be linear apart from one point where users can choose one of two routes, each of which leads to an animated finale (see below). Students who choose to offer more than two routes through the story must ensure that all routes lead to one of the two animated endings.

At this stage, students only need indicate the type of animation they intend to use, with an indication of what each ending will do.

Design

Candidates who produce detailed up-front designs and use feedback from others to refine them are most likely to produce outcomes that are fit for purpose.

Students need to create a script which is a complete story, with a beginning, middle and end. It must allow for the effective use of multimedia assets and alternative routes and animated endings. There is no need to produce a separate script for the endings. The script then needs to be divided up into sensible chunks. Students may simply divide straight into separate screens or they may first break down into sections or chapters. Either way, they need to be clear about when and how the script will move from one page to the next and must indicate this on a simple flowchart. This flowchart need only show the structure, not the detail expected on storyboards.

A detailed storyboard must be produced for each page. Students need to be clear that storyboards will enable them to develop their ideas about the 'look and feel' of the product, eg colour schemes, fonts, placement of assets, number and types of asset to be used, navigation etc. Storyboards should be sufficiently detailed to clarify ideas, allow constructive feedback and facilitate implementation.

Students may use any method to produce their storyboards, the quality of content is what matters. For example they may create a digital template, use an existing one or scan in hand-drawn designs.

Retrospective 'designs' are totally unacceptable. Students should be aware that it is not necessary to include images/thumbnails on the storyboards.

The story

Students who produce a set of detailed storyboards are more likely to develop a set of consistent pages that tell the story in an effective way.

All assets, including movies, should be embedded on the pages of the storybook.

Students may choose the number of pages in the storybook.

The animated endings

Each of the two routes through the story must end with an animated finale of at least 20 seconds. Although these must be different, one can be based on the other by altering some of the frames.

These endings **MUST** be animated, irrespective of the nature of the rest of the book. A movie with still images and animated text certainly would not count.

The endings may not be consistent with the rest of the storybook - this would be quite difficult unless the whole book was completed in Flash or similar software. However, the animations should end the story well and students should bear this in mind when designing the complete storybook.

Students may use any software capable of producing an animation that is fit for audience and purpose which may or may not be animation software. They should refer to the animation notes in the SPB. These notes are reproduced at the end of this document.

Software such as PowerPoint could be used but applying custom animations to photographs or clip art is not sufficient. One way would be to create a background then use animated gifs and apply motion paths to them. Effective animations can be produced in this way.

Students are required to produce an original soundtrack for the animations. This does not have to be music, it could be verbal or other sounds but it must be suitable for the content and the audience. Sound is often of poor quality when recorded using a digital camera or phone. Students might consider recording and editing the soundtrack separately.

Groups may work together to record the raw sound so long as they edit the material individually. However, only those involved in the recording may use it. It is also acceptable to gather and edit existing sound files, provided that students have the necessary permission bearing in mind the intended audience and purpose. It is not, however, acceptable for teachers to supply the original sound files.

Students should not underestimate the importance of the timeline storyboard, both in terms of development and in terms of assessment. If a timeline is constructed as part of the design process, students are more likely to create a product that is within the acceptable limits.

The contents page

The contents page must link to key points in the story (such as the point at which users can make a choice). The links must be graphical and should be related to the story or the theme. Apart from that, students are free to design the contents page in any way they wish.

The cover page

Students should aim for a cover page which attracts the attention of potential users and persuades them to read on. It can be tested in isolation as it only leads into the contents page.

Accessibility

The story may be signed or subtitled for accessibility.

Section 5: The eportfolio

The maximum size for the eportfolio is 30 MB

Any suitable software may be used to construct the eportfolio but it must be viewable using the Moderator's Toolkit.

Students MUST specify on the home page which browser it is best viewed in.

Students should ensure that they provide working links to all the specified items of evidence even when the eportfolio is viewed on a standalone machine. If students have access to a standalone computer which only has the Moderator's Toolkit installed then they will also be able to check that their eportfolio conforms to the technical specification.

Students should try to make the eportfolio a showcase for their storybook, incorporating multimedia assets where appropriate. They should, however, avoid inappropriate assets which are not relevant to the audience and purpose.

There must be an **easily recognisable home/index page in the main folder**. This should include candidate name and number, centre name and number, SPB name and level. It must also indicate the browser used to test the eportfolio.

Students should allocate sufficient time to the design of the eportfolio, aiming for consistency of presentation and good layout using colour schemes that are conducive to on-screen viewing.

Students should aim to produce detailed commentaries contextualising the evidence. The storybook should be the central focus of the eportfolio and students should aim to draw the moderator's attention to it from the outset.

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 are expected to remove redundant and duplicated work before submission.

Some possible software choices

Movie Maker, Producer, Flash, , Matchware Mediator, Adobe Premier Elements, Ulead Video Studio, Mediator, SWiSHmax, Sothink SWF Quicker, Dreamweaver, Fireworks, Freehand, FrontPage

Dance EJ, Audacity, Magix Music Maker, Garage Band

IClone, Stop Motion Pro, Toon Boom Studio, Tales Animator 2.0 (free), Pivot Stick Figure Animator (Free)

Appendix

Animation notes as they appear in the D202 SPB

There are many ways that you might go about creating your animations and can be as easy or difficult as you want to make it. But, the principle behind them is the same. An animation is simply a series of still images which are played one after another at a speed which is fast enough to trick the eye into thinking it is a moving image.

A simple example might be an animated .gif image. These are normally quite short in duration, perhaps only a second or two long, so only a small number of individual frames are required. You will have seen examples of these on many websites.

Creating an animation is a three-step process:

- make up your mind what you want to do.
- create a good storyboard.
- create your animation.

You really don't need expensive software or equipment to produce a good animation. You can use timeline-based software or shoot still images using a webcam or digital camera to create the individual frames. You can also create the content for your frames using graphics which are computer generated or your own hand drawn artwork which is scanned in. Perhaps you could have a go with some sort of flexible modelling material, such as Plasticine or use figures such as Duplo or Stikfas.

You might also want to consider other software packages that allow you to create frame by frame animations using simple character in the form of stick figures or 3D characters. This site has some examples:

<http://www.stopmotionpro.com/gallery1.htm>

Here are some other examples created by primary school pupils:

<http://www.downs.kent.sch.uk/thewebteam/animations/animations.shtml>

Remember we are **not** looking for the sort of animation that you would include if you were allowing text to spiral onto the screen as part of a presentation. Presentation software, however, can be used to produce very good animations. Look at this site for some very good examples of animations created in presentation software:

<http://pptheaven.mvps.org/>