

**Disaster strikes!**

**D205 SPB 0909**

**SUPPORT NOTES**

**Issue 1**

## Introduction

Before tackling the SPB, students should have acquired the appropriate ICT skills, knowledge and understanding specified in the Unit 5 specification. Students must have access to a range of appropriate games authoring software.

The D205 SPB 0909 is valid for moderation in June 2009 (**pilot centres only**), and for all centres in December 2009, June and December 2010, and June and December 2011.



## 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, 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


Unlike other units, this SPB does not include mark alerts.


## 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. There is also a checklist linked to the evidence page in the SPB.

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 games.

### The D205 Moderator's Toolkit

This unit has its own Moderator's Toolkit. The D205 Moderator's Toolkit specifies the readers and players that all moderators will have available. It is each student's responsibility to ensure that their game and all supporting evidence can be viewed using only 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 evidence.

The D205 Moderator's Toolkit will be published on the DiDA area of the Edexcel website. It will be updated when necessary.

### .exe files

Files in .exe format will be accepted from pilot centres in May 2009.

**Where does the work have to be carried out?**

Work on the products themselves must be carried out within a controlled environment and the teacher must be able to authenticate each student's work with confidence.

However, there is much that can be done away from the controlled environment including:

- researching appropriate sources of information and assets related to the outcomes, keeping records of where information was found and how it could be used
- initial design documents for the game 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
- completing the Design and Development Log

**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 work in progress and this should be viewed as an ongoing process. Students should not wait until the game is 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 the final game, and these comments will be used in the game review.

## Section 3: Design and Development

### The scenario

This project requires students to develop a game where a new hero/heroine tries to save the planet from a disaster. Beyond this open-ended requirement, students may choose any related theme that would appeal to 12 year olds.

Students should explore existing examples before starting work on their own designs.

### General

Students should create a D205SPB folder which includes a Game folder for the final game, showcase and instructions and a Development folder for supporting evidence.

Design documentation 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 game and showcase.

Students should make use of feedback from well-chosen test users at different stages in the process.

Any suitable software may be used to construct the game and showcase. It must be possible to view the products using only the D205 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 a proposal to give an idea of their intentions for the game. The proposal is for initial ideas which will then be developed in the design log. Students must gain approval from the teacher before continuing.

The central focus of the proposal is a moodboard which is used to get feedback on their ideas. The moodboard should only cover the game and not the showcase. It should reflect the student's own ideas and not be a reference to other people's materials. The moodboard can be used to present the proposal and may be altered as a result of the discussion.

Evidence of the proposal may be in any suitable form such as annotated screenshots of the moodboard or a video/audio of a presentation to others. The evidence should include feedback received.

The colour swatch is the range of colours being used across the products - for example, Nintendo always use combinations of white, pale grey and pale blue for their Wii products. It could be as simple as a few pencil coloured squares or images from existing games or other sources. There are many examples on the Internet. One is here:  
[http://www.displaystand.co.uk/2004\\_colour\\_swatch.jpg](http://www.displaystand.co.uk/2004_colour_swatch.jpg).

Music/sound should only be included where appropriate.

Although in the real world moodboards are seldom digital, students may produce a single digital slide/page which could have links to items within the folder but must not include external links.

Teachers should discuss the evidence required on the moodboard and give examples of the kind of material that might be used. Students do not need an image for everything on the list and they may combine some of the items.

Students should be clear about the options for genres, gameplay, PEGI rating, etc before they embark on their proposal.

Whilst students should aim for an original game that offers the best playability and interactivity features for the target audience, they should not get too carried away with their ideas and should consider what can reasonably be done with the software and time available.

Students should consider how easy/difficult it will be to collect assets for their game. Assets will need to be produced by the students themselves or derived from copyright-free resources.

### **Design and Development Log**

Students are required to use a Design and Development log to show the development of their game and showcase from the proposal through prototyping and testing to the finished products. A template is provided but this may be modified if necessary.

Students should aim to clearly communicate the entire process using appropriate methods including detailed storyboards, flowcharts, images, etc. They should illustrate the key parts of the game, such as the opening screen, different rooms and what instructions will appear to help the user to move through the different levels/rooms.

Students should also show how testing, acting on feedback and refining their designs influenced the finished product.

Annotated images may be used where appropriate to clarify designs and decisions.

Students are reminded to update the log at various points in the project.

### **Gathering assets**

Students producing the game and showcase will need to gather a variety of assets. Students should be quite clear about the need to use copyright-free material if they choose secondary sources.

An assets table is required as part of the Design and Development Log. Students must give details of all assets from both primary and secondary sources. They should be reminded that search engines such as Google or 'The Internet' should not be cited as sources.

Students need to be encouraged to give details of any assets they create and justify why they think they fit with the audience and purpose or if they use ready-made assets, what changes they have made. For example, if they take a ready-made character and make changes to its size, appearance, etc or they take an image and make it animated. They may take a sound and crop it or they may overlay some speech over some music. The key part here is explaining WHY they have developed or edited these items. This can be achieved in the assets table in the Design and Development Log. We do not require a narrative description of the process itself or a series of detailed screenshots.

## **Rules**

Although even a simple game will have quite a few rules, students will need to be careful about the overall number of rules. They need to understand that the more they add, the more there is that needs to be documented and tested. Do they have time? There may be a need for compromise on time versus perfection.

## **Development and Testing**

Students must only submit the final version of their game so it is essential that they record major development issues related to interim versions in their Design and Development Log. It is important that they justify steps in development - how each is intended to improve the game.

The Design and Development Log must include a test plan and details of free and planned testing, feedback received and how the student took account of it. They should acknowledge when a change was suggested but ignored and give the reason.

Students should think carefully about who they choose to be test users. Ideally they need to be part of the target audience, but they need to consider how easily they will be able to show them their game and how often.

## **Instructions**

The game must include clear and comprehensive user instructions. Students are free to choose the format and method of access to these instructions. They could be in the game (sound, pop ups, animations, videos, help file etc), in a printed supplement, or a combination of these.

Students should be careful to use appropriate language for the target audience and should ensure that the instructions are thoroughly tested by appropriate test users.

## **The Showcase**

The showcase should attract attention and persuade members of the target audience to try the game. It should use appropriate assets, re-purposing from the game where appropriate.

Students should investigate trailers and/or current promotional media for existing games, to get an idea of what to create.

## **Game Review**

Students should be encouraged to study the content of a range of onscreen game reviews before gathering material for their own. They should be encouraged to practise writing magazine style reviews for existing games to help them with this. Some useful links are provided in the brief.

Students should make full use of feedback from test users and reviewers to ensure that comments and any ratings are realistic and valid.

A template is provided but students may wish to develop their own format. The review need not be limited to one page. The rating at the top of the page is to give a score to the different features of the game; the one at the bottom is for an overall recommendation. The scores don't need to come from a survey, although this is one acceptable option.

## **Section 4: The evidence**

An eportfolio is not required for this unit.

Students must create a single, easily recognisable index page in the main folder. This should include candidate name and number, centre name and number, SPB name and level. It must allow access to the game, instructions, showcase and all supporting evidence as listed in the checklist. Comments to introduce the evidence are not required.

Students are expected to remove redundant and duplicated work before submission.

Students should ensure that they provide working links to all the specified items of evidence. This can only be done effectively when the work is viewed on a standalone machine. If students have access to a standalone computer which only has the D205 Moderator's Toolkit installed then they will also be able to check that all their evidence conforms to the technical specification. It is often the case that absolute links are not picked up until moderation with a resulting disagreement of marks.

### **Software**

Students may use any suitable games authoring software. Possible choices include:

Mission Player, Gamedemaker, Scratch, Platform Studio, Flash, Director, Mediator