CAMBRIDGE TECHNICALS LEVEL 3 (2016)

Examiners' report

DIGITAL MEDIA

Unit 1 January 2019 series

Version 1

Contents

Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates. The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report. A full copy of the question paper can be downloaded from OCR.

Unit 1 series overview

It was again pleasing to see that a number of centres had used the online resources provided by OCR to support the teaching and learning of Unit 1 for candidates. However, it is also clear that some centres would benefit from referring more closely to the teaching guidance in both the specification and delivery guide about the importance of guiding candidates to discuss specific digital media products and their target audiences when answering questions. In this session, it was also evident that key concepts about media industries, such as vertical and horizontal integration, were often not understood by candidates, with many instances of incorrect responses. Centres also need to ensure that technological convergence in the areas of media production, distribution, advertising and marketing and consumption are taught as a foundation to ensure that candidates could fully access all low and medium mark questions. It was pleasing to note, however, that some wider theoretical ideas and key terminology were used appropriately in answers to both the extended response questions on genre (Q8) and the relevance of moral panics (Q11).

Section A overview

Candidates were able to analyse effectively the data provided on the Insert. Overall, they also showed some good awareness of modern technological change and the impact this has had on audience access to streaming services. Some candidates seemed only able to discuss services that they themselves used and were perhaps not aware that the same features appeared on other services too; eg, the ability to download music on Spotify also exists on Apple Music.

Question 1(a)(i)

1   **Use Fig. 1 and your own knowledge to answer the following questions.**

(a) (i)   Identify **two** interpretations that can be made about the devices used by audiences to access television programmes from 2010 onwards.

1 ....

2 ....

[2]

Candidates were able to answer successfully this question using the data provided from BARB. Many were able to show clearly that they understood the trends in the increase in the use of smart technologies. The least successful answers were one-word responses with the name of a brand, eg Netflix. Such responses did not answer the question sufficiently and therefore could not be credited with any marks.

Question 1(a)(ii)

(ii) Using evidence from Fig. 1 to support your answer, explain **two** reasons that may account for one of the interpretations that you have identified above.

1 ....

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2 ....

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[4]

Candidates were able to explain their interpretations made in Q1(a)(i) making good use of their understanding of key terminology such as convergence, digital natives and video on demand. Knowledge of modern television consumption had clearly been taught and candidates used personal experience to support points made.

Question 2

2 **Use Fig. 2 and your own knowledge to answer the following questions.**

The data presented in Fig.2 suggests that Netflix is more popular than Amazon as a VoD service.

Explain **one** reason why this may be the case. Use your wider knowledge of digital media products to support your answer.

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....**[2]**

Candidates understood that the USP of Netflix as an established VOD brand was directly linked to why it might be more popular than Amazon Prime. Many answers cited Netflix's concentration on the production and distribution of 'Netflix Originals' films and television programmes as being one valid reason why the brand has a large consumer base.

Question 3

3   Use Fig. 3 and your own knowledge to answer the following questions.

(a) Identify and explain **one** difference in the way males and females use On Demand services. Use your wider understanding about digital media products and examples to support your answer.

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[3]

(b) Suggest **one** possible reason for the difference between Live Streaming habits of men and women. Use your wider understanding about digital media products and examples to support your answer.

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....**[3]**

Successful responses to this question clearly demonstrated that candidates had been taught about stereotypical gender roles and consumption of media products, and how that might have contributed to the viewing habits presented in the Insert. Soaps and Reality TV were cited as being genres of programming traditionally enjoyed by women and that these types of programmes were often accessed via On Demand services. Television programmes such as *EastEnders* and *Love Island* were given as effective examples that candidates had experienced female members of their family 'binge' watching. In contrast, Live Streaming services such as BBC iPlayer and Sky Go were said to be accessed more by men owing to featuring genres such as News and live sporting events. Less successful answers confused On Demand and Live Streaming or did not include example of distribution channels or programming to support answers.

Question 4(a)(i)

4   Use Fig. 4 and your own knowledge to answer the following questions.

   (a) (i) Explain **one** reason why Spotify is the most successful streaming service.

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....**[2]**

Question 4(a)(ii)

      (ii) Identify and explain **one** possible reason why Amazon Music has become the third largest individual streaming service. Use your wider understanding about digital media products and examples to support your answers.

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....**[3]**

In question 4(a)(i) many candidates were able to explain that Spotify was successful owing to the free and premium subscription options offered and the most successful answers demonstrated understanding of the joint ventures between Spotify and other technology companies such as Hulu. Other companies, such as Uber, were also believed by some candidates to have created awareness owing to the similar target audience, demonstrating candidates are very aware of new technologies.

In question 4(a)(ii) some candidates interpreted the fact that Amazon Music was the third largest streaming service according to the data as a negative for the company. Candidates were not penalised for this and any relevant explanation focusing on Amazon's conglomerate structure and e-commerce background was rewarded. The majority of candidates, however, did understand that it was positive for Amazon that their Music service was growing in popularity and there were some excellent responses citing Alexa and bundle packages as being central to this growth.

Section B

Question 5(a)

5 (a) Explain the difference between horizontal and vertical integration in media. Use examples to support your answer.

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....**[4]**

This question was not answered as well as in previous years, with many candidates not understanding the difference or importance of horizontal and vertical integration in the digital age. Marks were commonly credited for an understanding of vertical integration with an appropriate example, such as Disney. However it was evident that there was limited awareness overall of horizontal integration and how cross media sectors and subsidiaries can be used successfully to promote products.

Question 5(b)

(b) Explain **two** advantages of being a cross media company. Use examples to support your answer.

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2..

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[6]

For this question there was more awareness of the basic advantages of being a cross media company, with answers such as increased profit and awareness cited. The best answers discussed the opportunities for synergy. However, a lack of examples of companies and products meant that some candidates dropped marks and centres are encouraged to teach key concepts with reference to relevant and up to date digital media institutions and successful products that can be discussed in full.

Question 6

6 Identify **two** products and their target audiences produced by two independent companies that you have studied.

1 ....

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2 ....

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[4]

Overall, there was a good identification of independent companies and their products, such as Warp Films and *This Is England* and Sumo Digital and *Forza*. However, errors such as only mentioning a product or a company and not both, meant that the full demands of the question were not always met by candidates. In some responses, candidates gave answers that featured large conglomerate companies, such as Fox and Sony, indicating that the concept of an independent company had not been fully understood.

Question 7

7   Digital media institutions recruit personnel for the development of specific products because they have expertise that they require.

For two digital media sectors, identify **one** specialist job role in **each**. Explain why each sector would specifically require the particular expertise, based on the content they produce.

1 Sector:...

Specialist job role:...

....

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2 Sector:...

Specialist job role:...

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[6]

Overall candidates demonstrated a good awareness of specialist job roles in different media sectors with successful answers clearly citing two different sectors and roles, with examples of personnel who worked on specific media products. Less successful answers offered only one sector and two job roles, or mistakenly referred to pre-production/production/post-production as separate media sectors.

Question 8*

8 * 'The genre of a product does not contribute to its success'. Discuss the statement with reference to a digital media product you have studied. Use examples to support your answer.

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....**[12]**

It was pleasing to note that some centres had taught candidates relevant and appropriate genre theory such as Altman's genre pleasures, Phillips' genre as comfortable reassurance and Bordwell's approach to theme and genre. Candidates were also often able to discuss other aspects that might make a film a success such as actors, narrative and advertising as a way to open up discussion in relation to the statement. Successful responses covered a good range of examples from action and horror films, video games, teen soaps and women's magazines and linked directly to genre. Less successful responses did not discuss production techniques and conventions, with a discussion of mise-en-scene, camerawork, editing and sound only present in the top answers.

Question 9

9 Identify **three** ways that audiences can interact with the producers of digital media products.

1 ....

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2 ....

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3 ....

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[3]

Candidates were generally able to identify three ways that audiences can contact and interact with producers in the digital age. Social media, events such as Comic Con and bespoke screenings were popular answers. Other answers also discussed online reviews and ways in which audiences can feed back through interactive media. The best answers also featured specific products and many candidates used personal experience to support points. Less successful responses were often vague, and covered methods discussed in Unit 2 to contact clients rather than producers such as direct email or a survey.

Question 10

10 Explain **two** reasons why, when launching a new product, media producers use social media marketing in conjunction with traditional advertising methods. Use examples of digital media products you have studied to support your answer.

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2 ....

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[6]

Overall, there was a good awareness of why social media is used by media producers alongside traditional marketing when launching a new product. Candidates were able to identify, for example, that Twitter posts can be shared, and that billboards feature hashtags to allow audiences to access more information. However, some candidates either discussed social media without commenting on traditional marketing methods, or simply discussed why traditional methods were good. Less successful responses suggested that leaflets could be used to promote media products without specific examples or case studies. More successful answers cited case studies where social media marketing had clearly supported traditional methods, such as with the *Assassin's Creed* franchise and *Deadpool*.

Question 11*

11 * Discuss the relevance of the concept of moral panics based on digital media products you have studied. Use contemporary examples and theoretical ideas to support your answer.

[20]

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As with Q8, there was a clear improvement in the use of theory in this extended response question with theories from Gross and Gerbner, Adorno, Gauntlett and Anderson cited. Many candidates explained the idea of media effects very well and it is clear the theories had been taught using case studies of the media products that are associated with violence. However, the concept of moral panic, although clearly attributed to Cohen in answers, was not entirely understood. Some candidates often explained it as the effect of media on the audience rather than the amplification of the threat of something through how it is represented and reported in the media. Once again, there was also a lack of contemporary digital media products. *GTA*, *The Human Centipede* and *Call of Duty* worked well. However, there were still far too many answers discussing the James Bulger case and *Child's Play 3,* which is not an approach that allows candidates to engage with contemporary issues. There were also case studies that centres studied that are not suited to the topic of media effects or regulation. Answers from centres that discussed *The X-Factor*, *Jurassic Park* and I*, Daniel Blake* were problematic because they did not lend themselves to this aspect of the specification.

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