

CAMBRIDGE TECHNICALS LEVEL 3 (2016)

Examiners' report

DIGITAL MEDIA

05843–05846, 05875

Unit 1 January 2023 series

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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 and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

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Unit 1 series overview

It was evident that centres had taken on board advice about the importance of using contemporary examples of digital media products to show understanding of different industry sectors and debates. Section A was answered well with many candidates able to interpret and explain data about use of social media channels, although there was evidence that candidates did not understand what a soap opera is. In Section B candidates were successful in terms of understanding how digital technologies could be used to advertise media products. Understanding of denotation and connotation and how meaning is created by production techniques was clear. Unlike previous sessions, it appeared that some candidates had not been prepared to answer a question about specialist media sector providers, ownership models or technological convergence.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally did the following:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally did the following:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • used examples of digital media products when required to in the question stem • used suggested key terminology and/or theoretical ideas appropriate for the extended response Questions 6 and 9. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • repeated the data for the 'explain' questions in Section A • could not identify a specialist media sector and providers for Question 4 • did not use examples of media products to support points made in Question 6.

Question 1 (a)

1 (a) Identify **three** interpretations about the relationship between age and social media use.

1

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2

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3

.....

[3]

Question 1 (b)

(b) Explain **one** of the interpretations that you made in **1(a)**.

Interpretation number from **1(a)**

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.....

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[3]

For Questions 1 (a) and 1 (b) candidates were, in the main, able to successfully interpret trends in how social media use was linked to age. The best answers to Question 1 (b) explained that Facebook was one of the first social media apps which is why it is preferred by older users, and why younger users preferred Snapchat as digital native technophiles.

Question 2 (a)

2 (a) Identify **three** interpretations about the relationship between different activities and social media use.

1

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2

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3

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[3]

Question 2 (b)

(b) Explain **two** reasons for **any** of the percentages for the 'Out socialising and shopping' activity.

1

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2

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[4]

For Questions 2 (a) and 2 (b) candidates were mostly able to successfully interpret trends about how and when users access social media channels. They were able to explain why, for example, YouTube was not often used regularly when out shopping and socialising due to it being a video-led content channel. The best answers referenced their own experience of using these channels during the activities to support points made.

Question 3 (a)

- 3 (a) Identify **one** interpretation that can be made about the devices audiences use to watch the most popular TV programmes.

.....
..... [1]

Question 3 (b)

- (b) Identify and explain **two** reasons that could account for the popularity of soap operas in the list of most popular TV programmes.

1

.....

.....

2

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..... [6]

For Question 3 (a) candidates were almost universally able to identify from the data that television was the device still used the most to watch programmes. The most successful responses explained that watercooler programmes, such as *Ant and Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway*, were better to watch on a big screen. For Question 3 (b) some candidates could not access the question due to not understanding the meaning of the term soap opera, and incorrectly referred to why audiences watched *Ant and Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway*.

Assessment for learning



Ensure that candidates fully understand the different types and genres of products available for audiences to access. This relates directly to discussions about how, for example, age and genders are targeted. A task could be given to compare the format and presentation of *Coronation Street* and *Match of the Day* to explore how and why different genders enjoy them.

Section B overview

Responses to Section B questions in this session demonstrated that candidates understood key concepts such as production processes, job roles, semiotic analysis (denotation/connotation) and methods of advertising. Less successful responses showed a lack of knowledge about ownership models and specialist providers and technological convergence.

Question 4 (a)

4 (a) Identify **four** specialist providers in a media industry you have studied.

Media industry:

1

2

3

4

[4]

For Question 4 (a) some candidates did not understand the term media industry, instead putting the name of a company and then listing personnel that might work in this company. For LO1 centres should encourage candidates to research companies within a variety of media sectors.

Question 4 (b)

(b) Referring to **one** of the specialist providers identified in **4(a)**.

Identify and describe **two** ways that the products they produce reflect their ownership model.

Specialist provider:

1

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.....

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2

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.....

.....

[4]

For Question 4 (b) the best answers discussed the ownership models of conglomerates such as Disney using terms such as synergy, or for independent companies such as Warp understood joint ventures. Many candidates did not use key terms such as vertical or horizontal integration, with those choosing to discuss games companies focusing on genre and not ownership. Centres should allow candidates the opportunity to look at ownership patterns within a variety of media sectors and products.

Misconception



Ownership is not purely focused on the type of products made when subsidiaries are part of a conglomerate model.

To teach this centres could look at [Sony sales by business segments 2012-2021 | Statista](#) and compare the different types of products made by Sony as a cross-media company and how different sectors operate and are advertised.

Question 5 (a)

5 (a) Using a **different** media industry to the one used to answer **Question 4**.

Identify **two** production processes that are used when creating products in this media industry.

Media industry:

1

.....

2

.....

[2]

For Question 5 (a) many candidates misread the question and did not discuss a different sector to the one used in Question 4. Centres are reminded to practice techniques that allow candidates to fully read questions correctly, such as highlighting techniques for a question stem and understanding key command words.

Question 5 (b)

(b) Identify **one** job role in the industry identified in **5(a)** and explain how this role contributes to the production of a digital media product.

Job role:

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..... [3]

Question 5 (b) was answered well by many candidates with job roles identified for the sector discussed in Question 5 (a). Candidates were not penalised for Question 5 (b) if they used the same sector as discussed in Question 4, with credit fully given to their understanding of the purpose and importance of roles such as, for example, coder, director, runner, photographer and journalist.

Question 6*

6* Discuss how the denotation and connotation of media production techniques create meaning for audiences.

Use examples to support your answer.

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..... [15]

Question 6 responses showed understanding of how denotations of production techniques were used by media producers to create specific connotations for audiences, with action films, rom coms, posters and video games referenced the most. Examples of case studies included the James Bond franchise, the Marvel franchise, *Up*, *Get Out*, *Shaun of the Dead*, *Black Panther* marketing and *GTA*.

It was clear that many candidates understood that the nature of the question meant that they could use all theory learned for LO3 to support answers. Typically, these included representation theory from Hall and Mulvey, genre theory from Altman and Neale and narrative theory from Levi-Strauss, Todorov and Barthes. Knowledge of how key production techniques such as diegetic and non-diegetic sound created connotations was clear. Less successful answers did not refer to specific media products when discussing connotations. Centres are reminded that candidates should be encouraged to relate learning for LO3 to a range of products.

Question 7 (a)

7 (a) Identify **one** difference between a mainstream and a niche audience.

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..... [1]

Question 7 (b)

(b) Identify **two** niche digital media products and explain how the content appeals to their target audiences.

Use examples to support your answer.

1

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2

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..... [4]

For Question 7 (a) candidates were generally able to understand the difference in definition between mainstream and niche. For Question 7 (b) candidates incorrectly labelled products as niche simply because they were of a specific genre. Examples of these include candidates citing *Stranger Things*, *It*, *Emmerdale*, *The Sun*, *Vogue* and Snapchat as niche products. The best answers looked at niche products that have limited audience reach or narrowcast channels or circulation figures. Examples of these included *Trout and Salmon* and *Classic Cars* magazines, *I, Daniel Blake* and music by Tito Gomez.

Misconception

 Mainstream products have a mass audience reach and feature populist content. Niche products do not, and this is not always focused on genre.

To encourage students to understand the difference a task could be set to look at the differences in form, content and style of *Empire* magazine and website and *Little White Lies* magazine and website.

Question 8 (a)

- 8 (a) Explain how the use of 'pop-up' advertisements relates to the concept of technological convergence.

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..... [3]

Question 8 (b)

- (b) Identify **one** method of traditional advertising. Explain why this method of advertising is still relevant today.

Method of advertising:

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..... [4]

For Question 8 (a), the term 'pop-up' advertisements was not fully understood with some candidates referring to physical 'pop-up' desks in train stations and airports. It was also evident that some candidates did not understand technological convergence with a number of no response marks for this question. Centres are reminded that key terms under i.e., in all areas of LO2 should be fully considered and applied to contemporary methods of advertising and distribution. For Question 8 (b) many candidates understood traditional marketing, with explanations of the uses of billboards and posters in today's digital age being the most common responses.

Question 9*

9* 'The self-regulation of digital media products in the digital age can adequately protect an individual audience member.'

Using your knowledge about the media effects debate and regulation, discuss the accuracy of this statement.

Use examples to support your answer.

[20]

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Responses to Question 9 testing knowledge of LO6 demonstrated that many centres had taught the core concept of self-regulation and practiced how to answer a statement-based question with candidates. There were some excellent responses that focused on the potential problems of self-regulation amongst young people using case studies from social media such as TikTok and Instagram. Such responses cited how social media channels have the potential to cause self-harm, body image problems and cyberbullying, using passive audience theories from Packard, Adorno and Horkheimer and Gross and Gerbner. As a counter-argument responses also recognised that many audiences are active, citing theories from Hall, Blumler and Katz and Gauntlett, and that the mass media creates moral panics to scare people as part of sensationalism. This structure was similarly applied to films such as *The Dark Knight* and *It*, and video game case studies such as *Doom*, *GTA*, *Hatred* and *Manhunt*. The role of regulatory bodies and censorship v. free speech was also applied well. Other contemporary case studies that were pleasing to see included Elon Musk and Twitter and Andrew Tate's use of YouTube and TikTok as promoting harmful rhetoric and ideology. Less successful answers did not use examples from real media products or theories. Centres are reminded to encourage candidates to look at contemporary and relevant examples that can be applied to both the media effects debate and regulation to allow all potential questions to be accessible.

OCR support



To further support teaching and learning for Unit LO6 please refer to the [OCR delivery guide for Unit 1 Media products and audiences](#)

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