

FACTFILE: GCSE DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY



Unit 2

DIGITAL AUTHORING CONCEPTS



Evaluating Digitally Authored Systems

Learning Outcomes

Students should be able to:

- Explain how to use an evaluation to ensure that a solution:
 - Meets the original design specification;
 - Is a full and complete solution;
 - Is an efficient solution; and
 - Operates on an appropriate platform

Content

- How to evaluate the solution
- How to write an evaluation

How to evaluate the solution

When evaluating if a solution has been created effectively it is best to start with the original design specification and user requirements. You should ask yourself “have you achieved what you set out to do? What do other people think? How is the system working? Does it do the job it was designed to do?”

To ensure that the solution is complete it must be tested by users not the developer, preferably a sample of users that the solution is created for. Feedback should be obtained from each tester and used to complete the evaluation. Any problems encountered with the solution should be investigated and, where appropriate, repaired.

Take each requirement in turn and test the solution to ensure that it meets each one. If there is a requirement that has not been fully met, justification should be given as to why this was not achieved.

If the solution has not been fully satisfied reasons must be given, for example:

- Were there time constraints that made it impossible to build a suitable solution?
- Were there hardware or software constraints that made it difficult to build a suitable solution? i.e when building a website did it need to work on multiple web browsers?
- Were there financial constraints?

At this point the developer must consider what the implications are for not having a fully functioning solution. Points to consider may include, could the present solution be used as a prototype to develop a better system. Perhaps the current solution is not good enough and needs to be re-thought; this would mean going back to the design stage.

Writing an Evaluation

Once your project is complete you must summarise how successful you have been in producing your final solution. You must discuss your **personal strengths** and **weaknesses** as well as the **strengths and weaknesses of your final system**. You should also discuss possible **improvements** to solution.

Your testing section will give you a lot of evidence showing how well the solution worked out. There will be lots of things that have gone well but there may be things that weren't entirely satisfactory. All of these points must be discussed in your evaluation.

Remember that you must refer back to what you set out to do and discuss how well your solution meets your original aim.

As a starting point you could use a table similar to the one below:
(Evaluative table based on a database created for a library)

User Requirement	Met (yes/no)	Evidence	Evaluation
Keep a record of all books belonging to the library	Yes	I have created a Stock form. The form allows the librarian to enter details of books in the library and stores them in a table.	The form is easy to use and has a save button so that the librarian can save any data entered
Keep a record of all members belonging to the library			
Keep a record of all stock rentals			

By taking each user requirement in turn and evaluating the outcome, it will give you a clear indication of whether or not you have achieved a good solution. However, if you evaluate just the user requirements individually, your solution will appear to be successful but the overall system less so.

You must ensure the whole solution is evaluated as well as the parts. This will indicate how efficient the solution is. You may have a working solution that does not meet all the requirements, a solution that meets the essential requirements but not the non-essential. Further development may be required but the solution is working and meets in part the requirements of this project.

The solution will have to be implemented on the user's current system, therefore it will be important to acknowledge the appropriate platform that the solution will operate on. The evaluation should include reference to the software version the solution was created on, the operating system and the hardware employed. Comment should also refer to alternative operating systems and hardware platforms the solution maybe compatible with.

