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## 2910323 E-commerce

### Examiner's report: Zone A

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#### General remarks

This paper was well answered in the bulk of cases. The range of marks had a normal distribution and most candidates performed well enough to achieve a pass mark. The view of this marking team is that the examination paper and associated guidelines were of a high standard. Furthermore, the marking team feels the examination represented an appropriate challenge to students of this course and was presented in a correct manner.

A few candidates achieved excellent marks when written work was clear and concise, and their knowledge and understanding of the information presented to them during the course was comprehensibly verified. They also demonstrated they had not restricted their reading to the subject guide only, but had explored the majority of the reading recommended for further study.

Candidates who did not perform well provided incomplete and unintelligible answers. They did not complete the required number of questions or parts of questions in the examination, or did not furnish the answers they gave with appropriate levels of information or examples. Some evidently have problems communicating their knowledge in adequate standards of English. Furthermore, others appeared not to have read beyond the subject guide, and thus lost marks. Students are advised to study as widely as possible to ensure they maximise their examination performance. The following points are provided for future candidates:

- Use clear and concise English.
- Extend study throughout the recommended reading lists, not just the subject guide.
- Answer all required questions.
- Balance attention throughout the examination equally to all required questions.
- Give real-world examples where appropriate.

A discussion of the aspects of the questions found in this examination follows, including potential revising strategies to aid future candidates.

#### Question 1

This was divided into three parts. In Part A, students were required to discuss the major milestones and developments during the evolution of the Internet and the world wide web. Part B asked for a brief comparison of five Internet protocols – other than TCP/IP. And Part C required candidates to describe Electronic commerce (EC) Mark-up languages and their evolution, including current languages and their accompanying software application development tools.

This question allowed some students to demonstrate their wide-ranging knowledge, for which they picked up extra marks. Future candidates should note that restricting reading to the subject guide only will restrict their mark potential.

### Question 2

This was divided into two parts. Part A asked candidates to explain key factors used to identify which type of software is most suited to a particular company, including in their answer a description of EC solutions and its main components. Part B required students to compare and contrast five revenue models: digital content; advertising-supported; advertising-subscription; fee-for-transaction; and fee-for-service.

Some candidates achieved very high marks in this question, as their answers were in clear and concise English, and were easily comprehensible. Other students lost marks when their level of English was not sufficient to attest to their level of knowledge. Future candidates should prepare and practice in advance where necessary.

### Question 3

This question consisted of three parts. In Part A, candidates were required to consider three strategies used to understand user experiences when interacting with websites, by describing the differences between behavioural segmentation, usage-based market segmentation and the five-stage model of customer loyalty. Part B asked students to consider how rational branding and affiliate marketing techniques could be used to promote a business brand on the web by comparing product differentiation, relevance to the user and perceived value. And Part C required candidates to consider the overall marketing strategy of a company which wants to break into the web by discussing the importance of search engine positioning, domain names, affiliate marketing and viral marketing Strategies.

Students lost marks when submitting incomplete or unfinished answers. Future candidates should note the importance of reading the questions carefully, and allowing appropriate time for each question or parts of questions.

### Question 4

Again, this consisted of three parts. Part A required a description of three web site and internet utility programmes used in EC. In Part B, students were asked to describe three encryptions algorithms EC uses. And Part C required candidates to compare and contrast the features of small, mid-size and large businesses' EC software design.

Some candidates performed very well answering this question, including describing the technical aspects. Others lost marks by submitting incomplete answers, thereby losing their chance of acquiring marks. Candidates should be reminded to choose their questions carefully and divide time equally between questions.

### Question 5

This final question was also divided into three parts. Part A considered online auctions. Candidates were required to describe four different types and outline any related services often used by them. In Part B, students were asked to compare advertising-supported, mixed-revenue and internal web portals. And Part C asked candidates to discuss ensuring channel secrecy to provide customers with secure communication channels by using encryption, including a comparison of public and private key encryption.

Candidates scored well when they weighted their answers in accordance with the potential mark for each part, and when appropriate and imaginative real world examples were used to illustrate their knowledge. Future students should remember that reading beyond the subject guide can vastly increase marks.