

ASSOCIATION OF COMPUTER PROFESSIONALS

DIPLOMA EXAMINATION

SPECIMEN PAPER

BUSINESS INFORMATION SYSTEMS

(TWO AND A HALF HOURS ALLOWED)

You have ten minutes to read through this paper before the start of the examination.

Answer a total of FIVE questions.

Each question carries 20 marks.

1. Within a business, information flows in various ways. The introduction of computer systems and Internet use can affect the flow of information in an organisation.
 - a. With examples, describe the information typically processed by:
 - (1) Junior managers and clerical staff.
 - (2) Middle managers.
 - (3) Senior management. [9 Marks]
 - b. Using a diagram, explain the different ways in which information can flow within an organisation. [4 Marks]
 - c. Explain how a modern hardware configuration can help the flow of business information. [3 Marks]
 - d. What types of information are readily available to businesses linked to the Internet? [4 Marks]

2. Standard application packages are widely available for the business user. These 'office software' packages usually contain several functions (word-processing, spreadsheet, database,...) and run in conjunction with standard system software.
 - a. Describe FOUR advantages of using standard application packages in the office. [8 Marks]
 - b. Suggest THREE disadvantages of using standard software. [6 Marks]
 - c. Give examples of THREE types of standard **system** software. [6 Marks]

3. Computers supplied to businesses are generally fitted with modems and CD-ROMs. Many systems have 'writeable' or 'recordable' compact discs - the 'CD-RW' or 'CD-R'.
 - a. Describe briefly FOUR business uses for the modem. [8 Marks]
 - b. Describe THREE uses for a CD-ROM in business. [6 Marks]
 - c. Suggest ONE limitation or disadvantage of the CD-ROM. [2 Marks]
 - d. Suggest TWO benefits of having a CD-RW or CD-R in a business computer. [4 Marks]

4. Having decided the requirements of a computer system, users are often advised to concentrate on the selection of software rather than hardware.
 - a. Discuss THREE reasons for following this advice. [6 Marks]
 - b. Suggest SIX important features of software intended for use in business systems. [6 Marks]
 - c. Describe TWO different methods of obtaining software from suppliers, mentioning the advantages and disadvantages of each. [8 Marks]

5. When selecting the supplier of a new computer system, a purchaser should follow a clear procedure. The steps in the process will be similar to those below (although not in the order shown):
- (1) Sign contract with supplier.
 - (2) Request proposals for the new system.
 - (3) Form a shortlist of suppliers.
 - (4) Negotiate terms with suppliers.
 - (5) Receive and check suppliers' responses.
 - (6) Create requirements specification.
 - (7) Rank responses using desirable criteria.
 - (8) Make final choice of supplier.
 - (9) Compile list of suitable suppliers.
 - (10) Eliminate responses which do not meet essential criteria.
- a. Arrange the steps in the order in which they are likely to be carried out. [6 Marks]
 - b. List the likely contents of a requirements specification. [7 Marks]
 - c. List the section headings of a typical contract to supply. [7 Marks]
6. Most businesses use a computer to manage their payroll. Some government tax departments encourage businesses to submit their payroll tax returns over the Internet.
- a. Suggest FOUR reasons for using a computer-based payroll in preference to a manual system. [8 Marks]
 - b. Describe briefly FOUR main tasks of a payroll system. [8 Marks]
 - c. Suggest TWO benefits in submitting tax returns over the Internet. [4 Marks]
7. Pencil-and-paper spreadsheets were used long before software packages became available.
- a. Explain the term Spreadsheet. [4 Marks]
 - b. Suggest THREE advantages of using electronic spreadsheets over manual (paper) versions. [6 Marks]
 - c. Describe briefly THREE common applications in businesses for spreadsheets. [6 Marks]
 - d. Suggest TWO practical disadvantages in using spreadsheets. [4 Marks]
8. Computer systems have traditionally helped businesses in terms of higher speed of working, improved accuracy, reduced costs,... The Internet has offered further benefits both to the business and its customers. However, Internet use has its risks and problems.
- a. With examples, describe THREE business activities which can be helped by the use of the Internet; mention any risks or problems for the business which may arise from Internet use. [10 Marks]
 - b. Suggest TWO benefits of e-commerce to the customer. [4 Marks]
 - c. Discuss THREE potential problems for the customer of purchasing through the Internet. [6 Marks]