Unit 3 - Digital Publishing and Editing

Overview

The candidate can investigate some of the ways that publications are made for specific purposes and the designs and layouts used for achieving specific outcomes such as persuasion. Publications are investigated and commented on for these styles and techniques and then practical application of these is attempted on a range of publications. The candidates then comment on their work in relation to the research they have undertaken and look for areas of strength and weaknesses to improve or consolidate their publishing and editing skills.

A work activity will typically be 'non-routine or unfamiliar' because the task or context is likely to require some preparation, clarification or research to separate the components and to identify what factors need to be considered. For example, time available, audience needs, accessibility of source, types of content, message and meaning, before an approach can be planned; and the techniques required will involve a number of steps and at times be non-routine or unfamiliar.

Example of context – learners can create a suite of documents and templates for an organisation to use to having a **house style** so that they are consistent and professional looking.

Assessor's guide to interpreting the criteria

General Information

RQF general description for Level 2 qualifications

- Achievement at RQF level 2 (EQF Level 3) reflects the ability to select and use relevant knowledge, ideas, skills and procedures to complete well-defined tasks and address straightforward problems. It includes taking responsibility for completing tasks and procedures and exercising autonomy and judgement subject to overall direction or guidance.

- Use understanding of facts, procedures and ideas to complete well-defined tasks and address straightforward problems. Interpret relevant information and ideas. Be aware of the types of information that are relevant to the area of study or work.

- Complete well-defined, generally routine tasks and address straightforward problems. Select and use relevant skills and procedures. Identify, gather and use relevant information to inform actions. Identify how effective actions have been.

- Take responsibility for completing tasks and procedures subject to direction or guidance as needed.

Requirements

- Standards must be confirmed by a trained Gold Level Assessor or higher.

- Assessors must at a minimum record assessment judgements as entries in the on-line mark book on the INGOTs.org certification site.

- The work in the unit is recommended in order for candidates to have covered enough depth and breadth in the topic to successfully carry out their controlled assessment and take the external exam.

- When the candidate has covered as much of ths material as necessary to complete the controlled assessment element, they may be introduced to the topic

- This unit should take an average level 2 learner 25 hours of work to complete.

Assessment Method

This unit will be assessed synoptically via a controlled assessment and also through an external examination.

Expansion of the assessment criteria

1. Understand the tools and services available for digital editing and publishing

1.1 I list a range of digital publications

Learners will be able to gather and collate some examples to guide their own designs

Additional information and guidance

Learners need to be familiar with a wide range of digital publications so that they have a good idea of what is possible. They may not be able to complete the designs themselves, but it will give them a good sense of the different ways material is created. The more they can collect and make notes on, the better their own designs will be. If they are collecting mostly digital publications, it should be relatively easy to collate them in terms of an ePortfolio, otherwise, if they collect more traditional paper based publications, they need to at least reference these, though not actually share them for moderation purposes. It may be easier if assessors make a witness statement in this case to show that they have seen the learners collection.

If learners use an ePortfolio system, such as the TLM one, they can make notes on the linked materials to show their design features and purpose.

1.2 I can explain a range of tools used for digital publications

Learners will demonstrate their understanding of some digital publishing tools

Additional information and guidance

Learners will work as a class or team, as well as independently, to show the range of tools available to them for editing and creating digital publications. Once again, the wider range of tools the better and if they explore open source tools they will not need to invest any money in the material. One excellent open source tool for creating digital publications, which is a copy of a well used commercial product, is Scribus. This piece of software has most of the settings to create professional quality documents, flyers and brochures. The following shows some of the editing tools with this application.
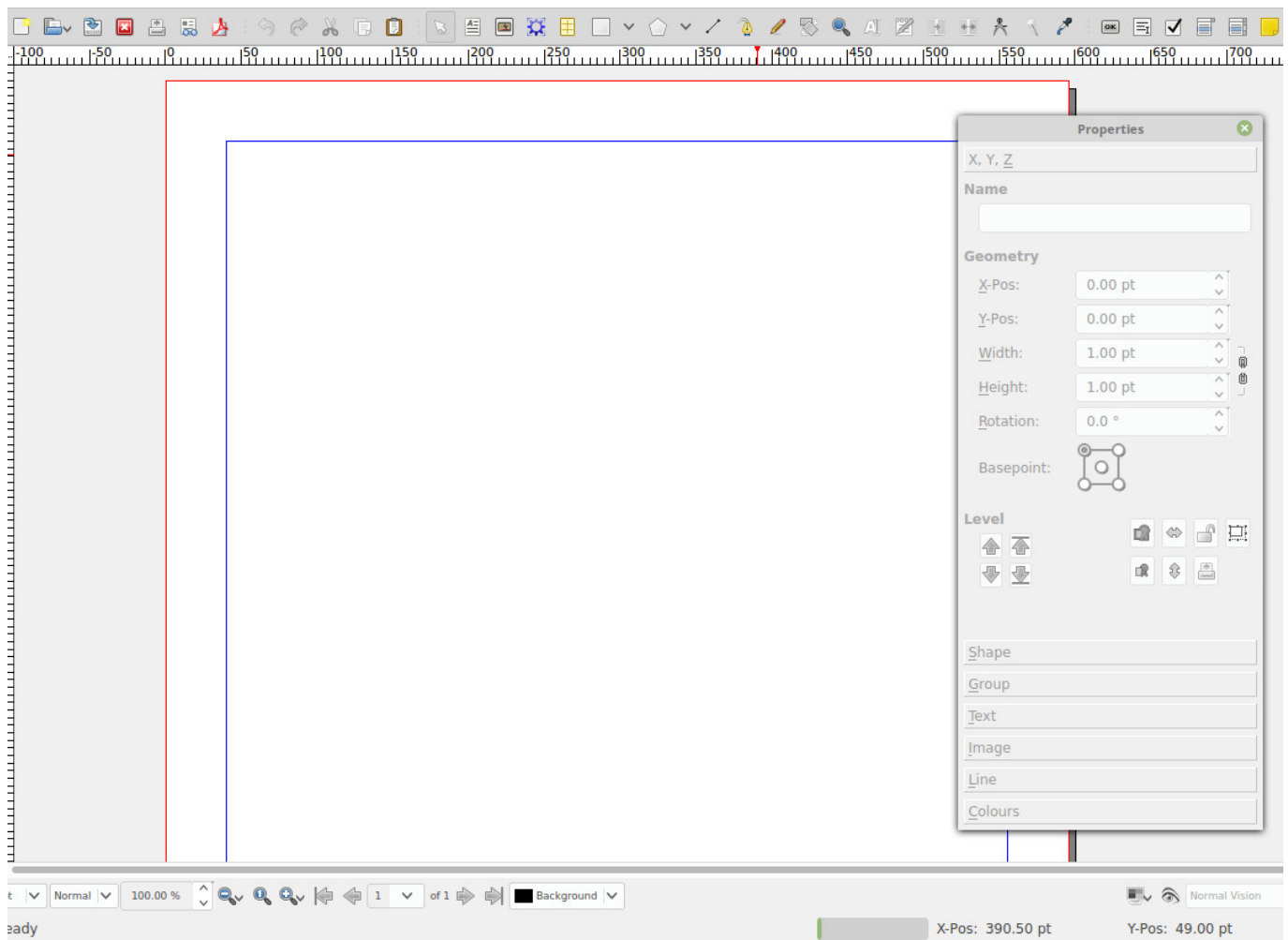
Each element has the pop out editing box shown which allows more fine grained editing of things such as shapes or text styles.

Note: For graphic manipulation, there is another excellent open source applications called Gimp (Graphic Image Manipulation Program). As above, it has an industry familiar interface. This is explored more in Unit 4 below.

In many cases, learners will be editing pages and graphics in those pages at the same time.

Learners can take screenshots of different applications and explain one or two of the tools and what they might be used for.

1.3 I can describe the services used in digital editing and publishing

Learners will describe the main services on offer for publishing and editing

Additional information and guidance

Some of this will require learners to explore publishing and editing services, rather than the applications they work with. Some of these will relate to printing as it is unlikely learners will have access to professional publishing tools. Most people will have basic colour laser printers in their centres, though these will not have the facilities necessary for professional publications. It is hoped that learners will be asked by clients to produce publications for them and the client will then use publishing services to output their results, though learners could print out draft copies as a guide.

Other services may be around web based technologies and learners will need to describe what styles and sizes of publications they will need to develop to work with these environments.

Learners might be able to summarise some of the services they discover through their research.

Increasingly, it may be useful to use full online services which have templated designs that can be modified for local use or t least as a starting point. For example, they may use a basic template for a business card and then adjust it to suit a client's needs.

1.4 I can explain the principles of good editing

Learners will show a good knowledge of editing principles

Additional information and guidance

Good editing should make material easy to understand or get a certain viewpoint or opinion across. In most cases, **less is more**. In publication, the editor can make the difference between a good and a great publication. Learner's don't need to write millions of words to prove they know the subject and it will be better if they can get the point across quickly and efficiently. This may be a useful criterion to share the workload with colleagues from the English department. Some principles might include the following useful advice.

1. Understand who and why

2. Understand the text

3. Choose what to say

4. Slash everything else

5. Edit sentences

6. Put into logical order

7. Demolish walls of words

8. Use links in the right way

9. Rest it then test it

http://editingthatworks.com/principles.htm [1]

In simple terms, make sure it is clear and says what you want it to say Don't over complicate the message and check that others understand it as well as you think.

1.5 I can explain the way digital publications can persuade people

Learners can use examples to support their explanations.

Additional information and guidance

It is likely that most learners have some interest or hobby and have been strongly persuaded by

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particular messages in relation to products. A certain new smartphone product this year had the tagline: **Say hello to the future**. This message is very *loaded*, that is, it has lots of mingled messages. Presumably the smartphone will help you be the future now and be the future for you for some time to come. It also implies that it is the best product of its kind as it is the future and the competition must be the past. The message is a relatively selfish one to make you better than anyone else. Compare this with another product that claims to be more ethical.

https://shop.fairphone.com/en/ [2]

The tagline here is that a phone that is good for you and the environment, is even better. Presumably better for you and the environment with the play on words: **Good just got better**.

Learners can find other examples to illustrate their understanding. They can show an advert or publication that persuaded them to get something.

1.6 I can explain the best tools and services for digital publications

Learners will explain the tools and services they used to complete their projects

Additional information and guidance

It is likely that learners will not be able to answer this criterion until they have completed all of their work on this unit. If they are not familiar with a DTP tool such as Scribus, it may take some time to make it produce quality documents and publications. The same can be made on a word processor, which they are familiar with, but it may not produce professional results. A DTP tool will have built in elements to work with professional printing services, though a word processor might only work with generic printers. Printing a document from a word processor may result in changed colours as digital printers work to a different printing standard in terms of colours.

What was it about the tool or service that made it so effective, or was it more efficient? Is there a trade-off between the cost of a tool and the way it works? Are open source tools as good as proprietary ones, if not, what is the issue? What makes a good service and can it be improved.

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Unit 3 - Digital Publishing and Editing
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2. Plan and create a range of materials for different purposes and audiences

2.1 I can plan a series of publications for a specific audience

Learners will create a range of publications to demonstrate their understanding across a range of purposes

Additional information and guidance

Learners need to demonstrate they can use planning processes to track and improve their designs. They should start out by gathering data from their clients about what they require and what sort of message they are trying to convey. Is the publication to try and convince someone or just to make them aware of something. What is the difference in style and message for these. The wider range of materials produced, the better the demonstration of understanding of design messaging and principles displayed.

The process should show from the design concept and rough sketches through to the final designs which are signed off by a client. Each stage should have some notes explaining what is informing the next stage. Some possible documents will include business cards, advertising flyers, promotional posters, job adverts, infomercials, product brochures and flyers, press releases etc.

2.2 I can demonstrate a range of skills in editing

Learners will show a range of materials to demonstrate their editing skills.

Additional information and guidance

A real skill in editing is understanding when enough is enough and how to make an impact, either through the choice of words or the layout. Learners should be able to demonstrate they know that their editing has changed something for the better. It may be they show a before and after sequence and explain what words or images they modified and for what reason. They may take out an image as it makes the document too crowded or overpowers the message. Some of it may be the wording which is all important. A message which is over wordy may be distracting or off-putting for readers, but also insufficient information may be confusing. Some TV adverts are great to watch, but you never remember what it is they are actually trying to convince you to buy. What then is their value.

Most of this should be clearly visible in the submitted examples of works. However, it would not hurt to get into the habit of making notes on various drafts and versions of work to show the thinking and decision process.

2.3 I can describe the impact of different techniques

Learners will describe different techniques in terms of their effect.

Additional information and guidance

What makes an impact? Is it a fixed thing? Would the same image always convince people of something or is it very specific? Learners can look at classic images and describe how they create their effect and what that effect is. Are some words or phrases universal and are always understood, or does it all require a proper context to have meaning. If I use the following phrase without an accompanying image, does it have any meaning at all?

Freedom Calls

If you add an image of a smart watch, does it now make sense? What does it actually say and what is the message?

Describe a number of techniques in your materials and make sure you show a clear range with notes.

2.4 I can create publications to meet needs and expectations

Learners will demonstrate they understand how to deal with a client's needs and expectations

Additional information and guidance

In most cases, a customer will have a general idea of what it is they need. They may not have a clear idea of some of the fine points of publication or design, but it is likely they have seen something that they wish to replicate or get inspiration from. When they contact learners to ask them to produce materials, the learners need to be able to deal with their requests and expectations. In many cases they may need to make it clear to the client that they may not be able to fully implement the client's ideas and therefore manage their expectations so they are not disappointed when the final designs are produced. By showing many draft versions and involving clients in the process, much of this can be easily managed. Clients can be guided towards realistic goals that are achievable by the student but still meet much of their needs.

Learners could keep a reflective journal to document how they manage their customer's needs and expectations as this will be useful in their professional or academic life as they continue to work in the field of IT.

2.5 I can collect and respond to feedback on publications I create

Learners will implement some kind of sign off process and build feedback into their designs

Additional information and guidance

Some feedback may be more verbal and collected during the design and development process, but it would also be useful to use other ways of collecting feedback and using these to inform changes. For example, learners could use a questionnaire initially to ask the client what it is they require and to list some examples of what they like. This gathered data can be used to feedback to clients what they have designed and how it meets what they want. At the end of the process, they could create a sign off and feedback form to get formal feedback. This may be required before the final process to make sure the final designs are as close to what the client requires as possible.

It might also be useful to get some feedback from colleagues at the centre who are working on similar projects to see what they consider to be areas of strength and weakness.

2.6 I can produce some support materials for the tool I deploy

Learners will create basic user guides.

Additional information and guidance

Learners will need to create some basic support guides for their customers in case they want to modify the documents themselves as the learners might not be available. It will also show how skilled learners are in understanding their chosen tools. It could be something generated as a screen capture video, if that is easier to produce.

As a very simple guide, they could screenshot and describe the main toolbars of a publishing application tool they used such as Scribus.

3. Evaluate the effectiveness of digital materials

3.1 I can evaluate a range of digital materials collected for research

Learners will demonstrate their skills in evaluating material

Additional information and guidance

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Unit 3 - Digital Publishing and Editing

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Having collected a number of examples of different publications, learners should be able to show through their note taking and comments on the materials why they chose them and what attributes they demonstrate. This process should be used to inform their own designs and practice. Some of their comments will relate to general appearance and impact, other comments will be more specific and look at fine details, such as a word chosen or a colour used. They may be able to comment on a passage of writing to show that they can appreciate how it has been constructed and what message it is trying to convey, and importantly, if it works to that end. It may be useful to look at the way material is designed to cater for people with disabilities and to this end a look at sites such as the Plain English Campaign site.

http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/ [3]

It may also be useful to look at what is supposed to be offered for people with disabilities.

https://www.w3.org/WAI/intro/accessibility.php [4]

The site is focussed on web based publications, but the advice is very general for publications.

3.2 I can evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of my chosen tools

Learners will demonstrate an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their chosen tools.

Additional information and guidance

Through extended use and practice, it quickly becomes clear what works well, or easily, and what is something of a struggle. It is no surprise that certain software packages become very popular, while others are only used by dedicated people. Some office packages have tools that are never used, but they are still required by a small number of people so have to be part of the package. Some drawing packages have to be quite complex as they are trying to carry out very complex tasks. The interface for something like Blender is pretty daunting, but it has to be as it can make some very detailed and sophisticated designs.
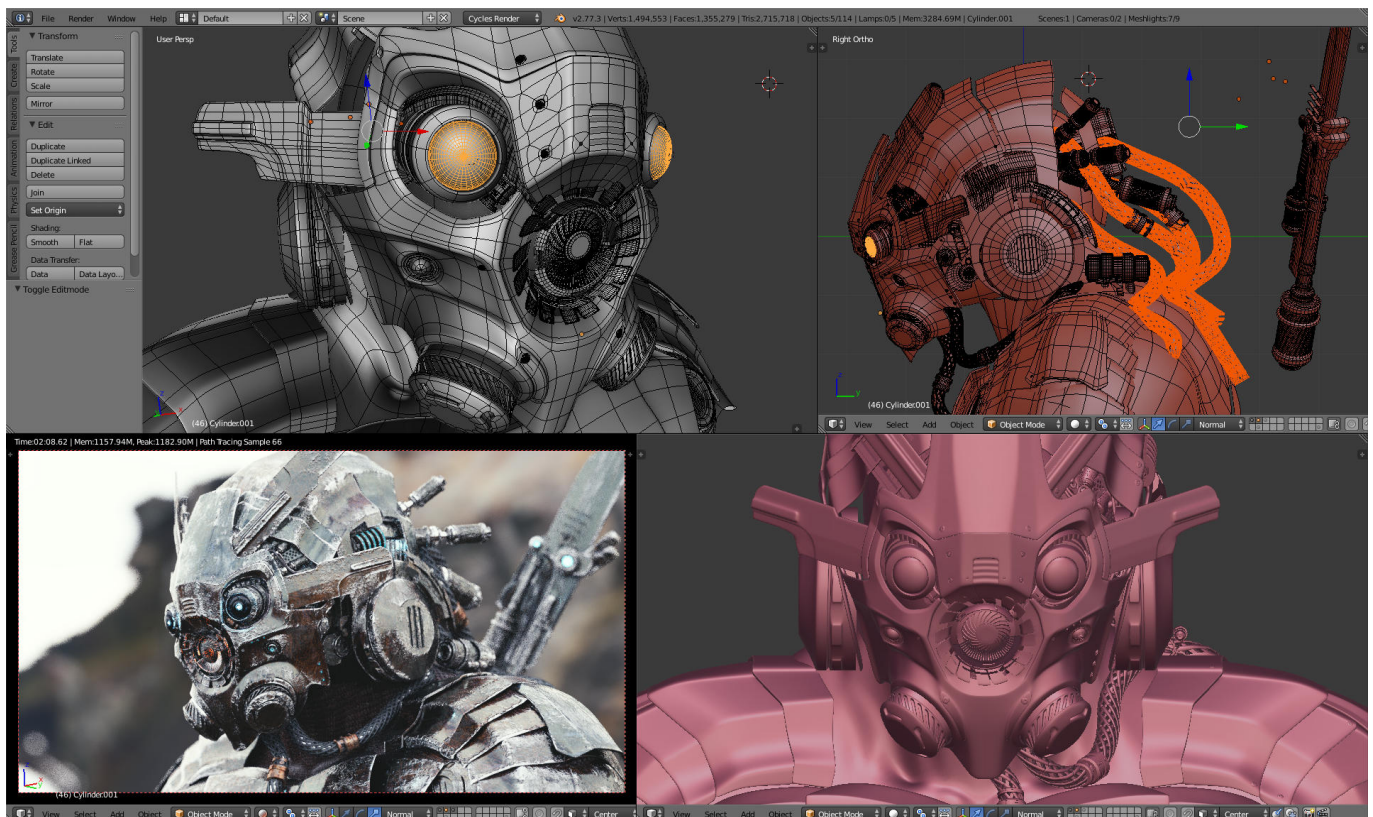
Image courtesy of https://www.blender.org [5] - with their permission.

If you are competent with this interface, then it is undoubtedly a strength, but if you are new to this type of design, then it is a weakness as it is too complicated to start on.

What are some of the useful and effective tools that are part of your publishing applications and why are they so "good"? Is there something that doesn't work quite as well as it should and could be improved?

3.3 I can describe the best practices in editing techniques

Learners will describe their most effective practices.

Additional information and guidance

What is the most effective method when creating and editing your various materials? Most people on computers generally want to chase to the "good bits" and never spend enough time on the "boring bits" of planning and practising. In most cases, the more you plan and practice, the better the end product will be. It doesn't matter how good you are with an application, it is always better when you are more prepared.

Why do you think a piece of work you created worked so well? Was it the time spent with the customer trying to find out exactly what they wanted? Was it the time spent on researching and evaluating what other designers have done on similar jobs that informed you of the way? Was it the time you spent on plans to make sure you used time effectively and used SMART targets to get to the end goal successfully? Did you ask for advice during the process to make sure it worked well? Did you correct for spelling and grammar as you went, thus slowing you down, or did you wait until the end when the design was complete? Answering some or all of these questions should help towards achieving some clarity in this criterion.

3.4 I can describe the export needs of different customers

Learners will demonstrate an appreciation of different export needs

Additional information and guidance

Different final publications will require different file types and formats, as well as sizes and resolutions. If you are using a high end camera to capture materials for your publications, they are likely to be very large and very high resolution which will mean big files. These will be suitable for posters and other mediums, but possibly be unsuitable for web based materials, especially if the target audience is in countries that do not have broadband Internet connections. If learners are creating digital material for clients that will need to be used on multiple formats and page sizes, then they may need to export the material as Scalable Vector Graphics so that they can be easily resized and managed without the loss of quality. Some materials that are destined for a professional printing service will require that files are output in industry standard print colours, rather than the usual colours on most office based applications. The following shows the colour selections on Scribus for producing publishing materials.
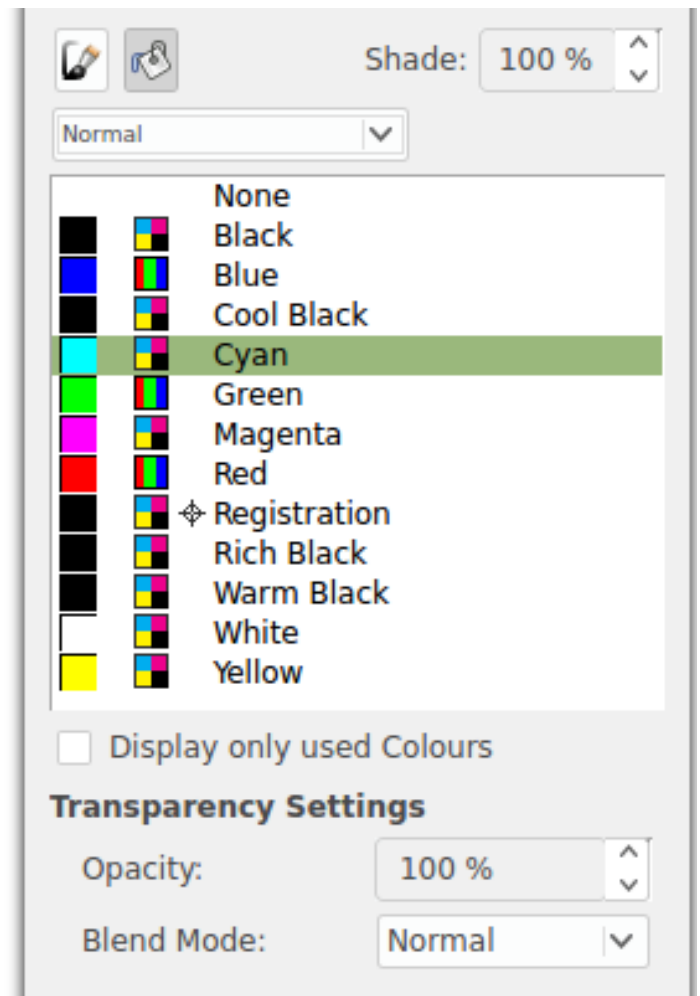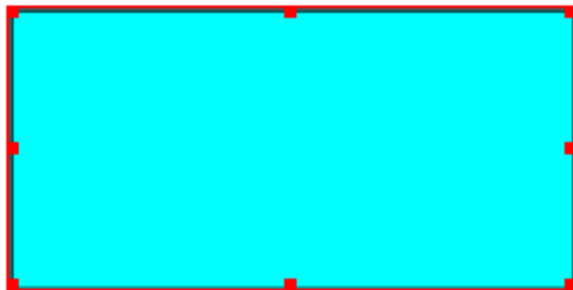
There are not a huge range of colours here, but they can be adjusted by using the Shading and Opacity options.

Learners should have a wide enough range of materials to be able to demonstrate an understanding that there are different file types and export requirements as a result.

3.5 I can analyse collected feedback and use this to improve designs

Learners will reflect and comment on collected feedback and use this to inform future designs

Additional information and guidance

Most people will freely give feedback, so collecting this should not be an issue. However, the quality and nature of the feedback will vary and only some of it will be useful to inform future practice. Learners need to become skilled in understanding what feedback is useful and what is not. Some feedback will need clarification. For example, a client may comment on an early draft of a design and the learner will know that this will be improved in subsequent revisions. In some cases, they may understand that their skill set is such that further improvement is not possible and this will need to be relayed to the client. It will be useful if learners can demonstrate this process, perhaps with their own notes and feedback from a client that leads to a final design and sign off. In all cases, feedback should be received graciously, even when it is considered rather harsh.

3.6 I can analyse my performance against objectives

Learners will demonstrate the skill to gauge their own performance

Additional information and guidance

Unit 3 - Digital Publishing and Editing

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Learners are entering a world of work where more than ever they will be constantly evaluated by others and expected to do this for themselves. Setting clear objectives at the outset allows learners to have a clear journey to reflect back on and therefore to improve on later. If they were clear that they could complete their design in a week but it took 3 weeks, what was the issue and how could they make sure this did not happen again? If they constantly receive negative criticism from a client, is it the client who is at fault, or are they not understanding the client's needs well enough or becoming too personally involved? No-one is perfect and lifelong learning and improvement are always the goal.

Source URL: https://theingots.org/community/sil2u82x

Links
[1] http://editingthatworks.com/principles.htm
[2] https://shop.fairphone.com/en/
[3] http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/
[4] https://www.w3.org/WAI/intro/accessibility.php
[5] https://www.blender.org/