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**AN EVALUATION OF THE
FORMATIVE FUNCTIONS OF A
LARGE-SCALE ON-SCREEN
ASSESSMENT**

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An Evaluation of the Formative Functions of a Large-scale On-screen Assessment

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The key stage 3 (KS3) information and communication technology (ICT) test is an on-screen assessment that is being developed by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) under contract to the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). It is intended that this test will be run on a statutory basis from 2008; providing a summary of every child's attainment in ICT at the end of the lower secondary phase on schooling.

The central output from this test is a national curriculum level for each pupil. However, the test also has a formative function; familiarisation and practice materials are available for teachers and pupils, and a formative report is generated for each pupil who completes two 50-minute practice test sessions.

This paper will report evaluations of formative aspects of the KS3 ICT test: findings from the literature into the formative use of e-assessment will be briefly reviewed. This review will contrast the key themes of researchers into e-formative assessment and those who are concerned with 'plain' formative assessment. This will, in turn, illustrate differences in approaches to formative assessment between secondary and tertiary education.

Next, the paper will report on opinions about the formative reports. Reported opinions will come from several sources:

- Minutes of Teacher Review Group and National Stakeholder meetings
- Findings from wide-scale questionnaire surveys
- Findings from a survey conducted by telephone interviews

The paper will conclude by stating a summary evaluation of the KS3 ICT test formative reports. It will also go further to consider the implications of the findings with respect to the KS3 ICT test for the wider use of e-assessment for formative purposes.