**Activity 4: Characteristics of end users   
exam-style question**

Question

Peak Demand Estate Agents are developing a virtual reality (VR) system for viewing houses in the buyer’s own home if they cannot travel to a property.

Evaluate how the characteristics of end users can impact on the development of a digital product.

[9 marks]

# Answer notes

# Characteristics of end users

* Age
* Skills
* Education level
* Internal (part of organisation)/external (customers, external users) audience
* Level of technical knowledge
* Additional needs (e.g. users with sight or hearing loss)

# Impact on digital product – linked to characteristics

**Positives:**

* Many users may be familiar with technology; they may have used VR for gaming with their family.
* VR is easy to use; users can look and move around freely.
* Familiarity with gaming elements reduces the need for skills training and the ability to solve technical problems themselves.
* If the system is compatible with users’ own devices, there is no need to loan equipment.
* A VR system means users with limited movement or disabilities could 'virtually' visit a property from home, as long as they can access the equipment.

**Negatives:**

* Older users may not be familiar with technology, especially VR.
* Training may need to be provided and if users do not have access to technology, will it be provided? This means a cost and potential equipment damage.
* If the system fails, a lack of technical knowledge may prevent the system from being used until support is provided.
* The system may not be compatible with some shapes of glasses or hearing aid users. Those with severe visual impairment will not be able to use VR.

**Conclusions**

* New digital products can have a great impact if the characteristics of end users are always considered.
* End users are not all the same and can have a range of needs. With lots of support, a digital product can be made available to as many people as possible.
* Not every digital product will suit all users and sometimes more than one version should be created for different user groups.
* If the characteristics of users are not considered, they will quickly become unhappy with a product, and this will have a negative impact on the organisation and its reputation.