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## A Talent Assessment Tool That Connects Many Eco-system Dots



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Innovation

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SUNDAY, 27 SEPTEMBER 2009 23:05

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*Across verticals, HR heads are grappling with the issue of tapping the 'right' kind of talent. Juxtaposed with this problem is that the number of the educated unemployed and under-employed youth in the country is rising alarmingly. Here's an innovative application aimed at overcoming the core issues responsible for this mis-match between industry needs and talent availability!*

*"I made my own assessment of my life, and I began to live it. That was freedom."*

—Fernando Flores, a Chilean politician, engineer and serial entrepreneur

An innovation is often aimed at addressing a problem in the eco-system. Focusing single-mindedly on solving a particular issue invariably leads to the evolution of tools and technologies that have the power to challenge the status quo.

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"There was a requirement for a

When those at [Aspiring Minds](#) (AM) conceived the Aspiring Minds Computer Adaptive Test (AMCAT)-an 'intelligent' talent

*tool that could assess the disparate, nation-wide human capital/talent against certain standardised benchmarks-acceptable to the corporate world at large. The realisation led to the creation of AMCAT."*

Himanshu Aggarwal, director, Aspiring Minds

assessment tool-they also had a similar agenda. Himanshu Aggarwal, director, [Aspiring Minds](#) shares more: "If you look closely, a paradox exists within the industry-not only in the IT industry but in pretty much every vertical. On the one hand, the industry persistently complains about the dearth of skilled manpower, and on the other, an army of unemployed and under-employed youth in the country struggle to get jobs matching their skill-sets.

"We felt that a gap existed in the eco-system, which needed to be addressed in a scalable and efficient manner. There was a requirement for a tool that could assess the disparate, nation-wide human capital/talent against certain standardised benchmarks-acceptable to the corporate world at large. Furthermore, a platform was required where these

assessment scores would be visible to recruiters any time, so as to enable them access to the large pool of available talent."

The realisation led to the creation of AMCAT. As the name suggests, AMCAT is a test that fresh graduates can take up, any time of the year, to get an assessment of how their skills compare against those required for different jobs in the market, explains Aggarwal. "This assessment is a standardised score, which is made transparent to all our clients on a portal. This way, the graduates get to highlight their skills to multiple companies and get the opportunities to land a job whenever they are shortlisted by our clients."

#### Multiple modes to reach a larger audience

AMCAT is a computer-based test, and can be delivered in both online and offline environments to ensure that no infrastructural challenge restricts its reach. Aggarwal says, "Although AM does have servers to deliver the test over the Web, due to infrastructure issues in campuses and remote parts of the country, the team thought it best to not rely only on the availability of the Internet and to come up with alternative ways to have the test conducted." A working computer is good enough to run the test, adds Aggarwal.

#### Intelligence embedded

Aggarwal shares details related to the mechanism that makes the test dependable, scalable and dynamic in real-time: "The product is based on the item-response-theory (IRT), an advanced statistical theory in educational measurement that makes the test adaptive and leak-proof. "IRT provides a framework to build mathematical models for questions vis-a-vis their difficulty, discrimination power and the guess probability," tells Aggarwal. These algorithms estimate the candidate's ability after delivering

#### AMCAT delivery platforms

**Over the Web:** Suitable for good, reliable connectivity, like in corporate environments.

As a LAN (local area network) application: "We have laptops that act like assessment servers, which are highly secure, encrypted environments providing the complete assessment framework. We plug these laptops in the LAN network of a college lab and the test becomes available across the college lab. The laptop acts like the server and ensures that all the assessment details are captured on the server.

These servers are then connected to the Internet to synchronise with our primary servers to upload data and generate detailed feedback. This LAN method of conducting the test is used extensively," explains Aggarwal.

**As a stand alone PC application:** This is a truncated form of the test

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## Tag Cloud

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By Zaragoza Clouds

every question and then provide a question with a difficulty level close to the estimated ability of the candidate. The test automatically 'content-balances' and makes sure that the candidate gets the appropriate number of questions from each sub-section.

"This allows a very accurate candidate assessment, with the final score depending on how hard a question the candidate answered correctly," says Aggarwal.

that can be installed on a standalone PC and the PC can then deliver the test. "This is not used extensively but in rare situations. The test application has more than enough content to dynamically deliver questions as per the user response. Again, the data from the PC application is captured and uploaded to the Internet using any available PC," says Aggarwal.


Another important aspect of the tool is the delivery and MIS (management information system) framework, which manages end-to-end delivery. This includes candidate registration, test delivery, result and feedback dispatch and finally the transfer of candidate scores on the Aspiring Mind's corporate portal with shortlisting and candidate-contact facilities.

Through another of AM's products, *TalentMap*, candidate scores are mapped against the criteria specified by the various registered companies. The application then shares leads with companies registered with AM on the resources that match their requirements. Candidates, on the other hand, are informed about jobs that they can apply for and where their chances of being selected are relatively higher.

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