



Pearson VUE: Exchanging Testing Materials with Partners Using the IMS Question and Test Interoperability Specification

Case Study



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Company Overview

Pearson VUE is Pearson's computer based testing business, serving the Information Technology industry and the Professional Certification and Licensure markets. From operational centers in the United States, Australia, Japan, the Netherlands, and China, the business provides a comprehensive set of services to the electronic testing market.

Currently serving over 145 countries, Pearson VUE operates more than 3,700 Pearson Authorized Centers in its rapidly expanding network. Pearson VUE also owns and operates 202 Pearson Professional Centers throughout the United States and its territories, and 150 testing sites in the UK, serving professional licensing and certification sponsors.

Business Situation and Problem Definition

Program sponsors typically develop their own exams and provide them to Pearson VUE for delivery. As in any business or industry, proprietary formats for content or communications can quickly stifle interoperability and cause significant developmental delays and overhead costs. Customers typically suffer the most because of these technical limitations. Without an established standard for

sharing exam content between content developers and test delivery vendors, the exchange of content can introduce unnecessary delays, errors, and costs.

Business Problem and Solution

The emergence of the IMS Question and Test Interoperability (QTI) specification was developed as an open standard by an international consortium of industry stakeholders. QTI gives the testing industry a common format and structure to interoperate.

Pearson VUE recently experienced the benefits of using the QTI specification first-hand. In this particular project, Pearson VUE worked with an independent test development vendor that provides services such as assessment, research, information, and program management. The project required Pearson VUE to create and deliver a comprehensive program to the customer that included a massive number of exams.

From the start of the project, Pearson VUE and the customer discussed the exchange format needs of the project. It was agreed that the QTI Specification offered the most functionality and business value. As a result, the customer provided all of the necessary data in the standard QTI format.

What is QTI?

The Question and Test Interoperability specification describes a data format for the exchange of information about questions and tests and their component parts (items) and it describes how systems present items to users.

The QTI Specification was developed by an open, international consortium of consumer, vendor, and educational organizations.

The v1.0 QTI specification was published in June 2000. The current iteration, v2.0, was published in January 2005.

The QTI specification is made available to adopters and developers at no cost.

Pearson VUE used the customer's QTI content to import the data into the requisite delivery systems.

Gopal Krishnan, Test Delivery Services Product Manager at Pearson VUE states, "Pearson VUE believes test publishers should require vendors to import a common testing format, and the IMS QTI Specification is the obvious choice. With QTI as the established standard, test publishers can better choose between partners, augmenting the quality and kinds of services they are able to offer and reducing the costs and overhead associated with proprietary formats."

Resulting Benefits

The QTI Specification was instrumental in making the execution of this project a success for both Pearson VUE and the third-party vendor. Without the QTI Specification the project would have required the creation of a custom data converter to allow the exchange of content from one format to another.

The avoided development costs and other related time-intensive activities saved Pearson VUE an estimated \$100,000 and weeks of production and developer time normally associated with such a large project.

The use of the QTI Specification within the test publishing industry reduces the barriers for adding or changing test delivery vendors and increases the ease of partnering and sponsoring with other vendors and customers. Often sponsors or clients outsource, rather than maintain internal departments, so

using QTI as a standard for exchanging content makes interacting and interoperating with a variety of contact points easier. As QTI use broadens, test publishers will rely less on proprietary data formats (and save more on data conversion costs), enabling them to provide a wider variety of services that benefit customers and improve the industry as a whole.

About

About Pearson VUE

Pearson VUE (www.pearsonvue.com) is the electronic testing business of Pearson Education, which in turn is part of Pearson (NYSE: PSO; LSE: PSON), the international media company. Pearson's primary operations also include the Financial Times Group and the Penguin Group.

About IMS/GLC

The IMS Global Learning Consortium promotes the use of elearning by developing and supporting the implementation of open specifications, that improve interoperability. International participants from government agencies, educational institutions, content providers, and technology suppliers develop IMS/GLC open specifications. These specifications and related publications are made available to the public at no charge at: www.imsglobal.org

No fee is required to download or implement IMS/GLC specifications.

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