Facet – a new system for a new way of testing.
College voor Toetsen en Examens (CvTE) and Cito

Who we are
The “College voor Toetsen en Examens” (CvTE) is the Dutch Exam Board responsible for the national tests and exams in the Netherlands. The CvTE is part of the ministry of Education, Culture and Science. We have both high stakes summative national exams as well as diagnostic formative tests for school to use. Our candidates are of ages 10 through 20. Cito – The Dutch National Institute for Testing – is the main content provider for the exams as well as the tests.

Our vision
We believe that computer based testing (CBT) has many advantages over paper based testing. For one, CBT provides the schools with more flexibility in scheduling, allowing them to use several versions of one test. We also think that with smart adaptive testing and items that test on several aspects of a diagnostic skills profile, tests can be shortened, allowing schools to spend more time on education. Lastly, we believe that items should be as authentic as possible with items that directly address the skills to be tested, giving the candidate the best opportunity to show their competencies and knowledge.

Our challenge
A large and growing number of tests is being delivered as CBT. We expect 2.5 million CBT deliveries in 2020. All in a country with 17 million inhabitants. For this, we needed a new, robust and future proof testing system, that is scalable, multi platform and that can handle innovative item types and advanced ways of adaptive testing.

Our solution - Facet
The Dutch ministry of Education has decided to develop a tailor made testing system, together with partners like Cito. By developing it ourselves, we have more control over the look and feel of the items and can ensure the right level of security. The name of this system is Facet.
Facet is a test scheduling, delivery and reporting system that can be used both online and offline. It contains an online practising environment that students can use in schools, but also from home.

The impact on learning
A highlight of Facet is the vast amount of advanced items types that can be scored automatically. These items can be included in adaptive tests and provide a more authentic testing experience. Using these advanced item types, more data can be collected from a single item delivery, reducing total required testing time. Facet also has several ways to accommodate users with special needs, for example with a Text-to-speech-module and a spell checker.

From the beginning, we have had the idea to make (parts of) the Facet system broader available than the national tests and exams, created by Cito. For this reason we chose QTI (and its profile DEP) as the interoperability standard for the test content, so other content providers would also be capable to deliver innovative content to Facet. We also have developed the system as an Open Source system, in order to be able to share it with the community.

Our goal is to incorporate the necessary extensions included in DEP into newer versions of QTI and thereby ultimately phase out the profile. Besides this effort, the CvTE and Cito also advocate the use of open standards like QTI to make sure an open platform is created that can be used to exchange test content between schools and universities. This way, we help to enhance the QTI standard and with that, the entire testing industry.