# Stepping into e-learning

Problem

"Modern training companies offer e-learning and e-assessment." It may not be an entirely reasonable expectation, but it is a view held by some customers. Moreover, some firms would like online diagnosis so that individual strengths and weaknesses can be identified without staff having to take any significant time out from work. They would like training to be focused on only those who need it. Likewise, customers want to see training outcomes, and may want some materials online so that staff can either acquire or refresh their skills without leaving the workplace where possible.

Yet, e-learning can be expensive and risky, involving whole teams of project managers, learning designers and developers. Added to this, the complexities of collecting and analysing results over an intranet or the internet can stretch even experienced e-learning developers. How can you step effectively into the e-world and ensure your success?

Solution

Question Tools EditorSuite offers an alternative to big-team, e-learning development. Trainers can design straight onto the screen. E-learning, including the usually complex parts such as questions and feedback, can be developed without programming, scripting or HTML skills. You get what you see — not what a programmer in a back room thinks you ought to have. When a customer wants a bespoke version of your materials you can make the changes in-house. You can even offer your customers the ability to alter the content themselves using Editor, or SimpleSet — our simple, text-only editor specifically created for users with little time or low IT skills/confidence.

Delivery via Question Tools NetSeries means that all your customers need is a modern web browser, such as Internet Explorer, Netscape Navigator, Opera, Mozilla or FireFox. You can offer your customers an online service over the internet, or a push-button install for intranet delivery. Added to this, the serial number schemes built into NetSeries can police use of your content on the customer's intranet.
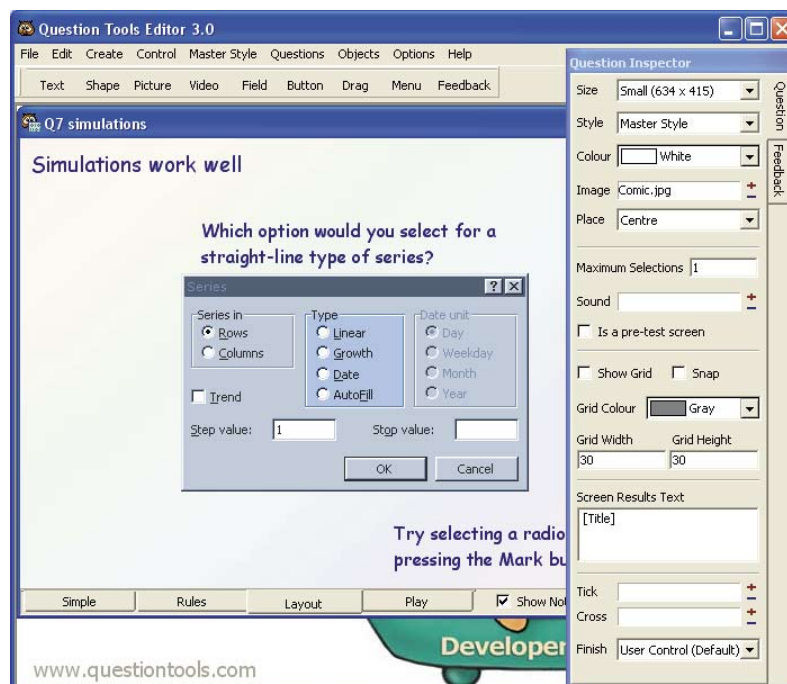
Outcome

- Impressive, online diagnostic testing & e-learning.

- Your brand, look and feel reflected throughout.

- A safe step into the e-learning and e-assessment world.

- You retain control of your materials, and capitalize on in-house skills.

Profitable e-learning

Problem

Corporate customers often expect a lot from e-learning development companies. In addition to the attractive presentation, graphics, animation and thoughtful learning design, they require controlled access for their staff. They need test results recorded, with both individual and group results immediately available. Some customers want to be able to edit or update content themselves, and even add to it. Others want sophisticated performance breakdowns, integrated results export, and the ability to add manual results from trainer-led sessions, not to mention the push-button easy server install for the IT department. Often, these expectations can be revealed after the project has started — they can turn a profitable project into a costly nightmare.

Solution

Question Tools Editor can be used by your learning designers — they can design straight onto the screen, leaving placeholder shapes for graphics, video and animations to be added later. Your designers can easily create interactive multiple choice, true/false, hotspot, drag and text questions (all with feedback if needed). Results are automatically collected and analysed.

You can even create project templates for your designers, and a style that matches your customer's corporate look and feel. The Flash interface in Question Tools Editor allows your developers to harness their existing skills and seamlessly integrate complex custom interactions and simulations into the e-learning.

Question Tools NetSeries enables the easy compilation of the e-learning ready for testing on any Windows PC — your customers can have the real thing to inspect and sign off. The end result is a push-button installation ready for your customer's IT department. Alternatively, it can be hosted on the internet. You can even present your customers with a customized version of Question Tools Editor or SimpleSet so they can add to or amend the content.

Breakdown by category

Category	Percentage
Market Info:	60.00 %
Procedures:	62.96 %
Product Specs:	73.33 %

Name: Dawn Davies		View
Started: 09:11 29/05/2004	Score:	17
Ended: 09:12 29/05/2004	Max:	19
Overall: 89.47 %		
Market Info: 100.00 %		
Procedures: 88.89 %		
Product Specs: 80.00 %		

| Name: Edward Egghart		View
Started: 09:13 29/05/2004	Score:	7
Ended: 09:14 29/05/2004	Max:	19
Overall: 36.84 %		
Market Info: 60.00 %		
Procedures: 22.22 %		
Product Specs: 40.00 %		

Export: List raw data in table

- List results in a table
- List results as comma-separated text
- List raw data in table
- List raw data as comma-separated text
- List question analysis in table

Name	Percentage Correct
Dawn Davies	72.00 %
Edward Egghart	28.00 %
Fred Freetime	88.00 %

Outcome

- Development time is reduced.

- The complexity, uncertainty and costs of creating user management, results recording and analyses routines are avoided.

- Customers can be promised and given control over their own content.

- Customers have the progress and performance data they need.

- You get a portion of the NetSeries licence fee.

New Product Training

Problem

Training for new product launches can often be late — the information provided by a pressured development team is not always as complete as it might be. Late changes often delay the process of devising training for staff. This process is often further complicated by the need to keep information regarding the product secure until launch.
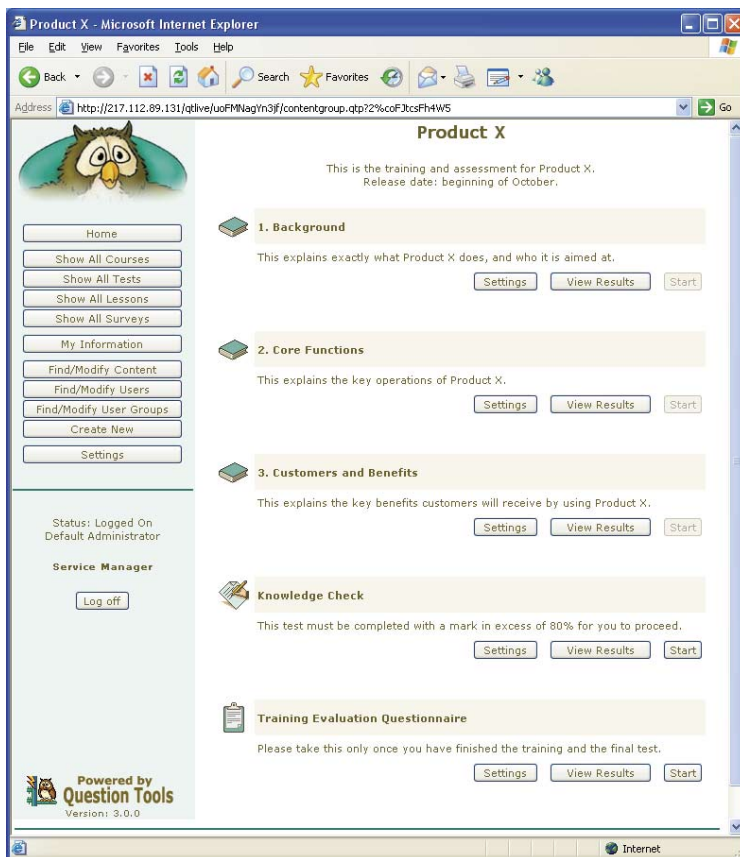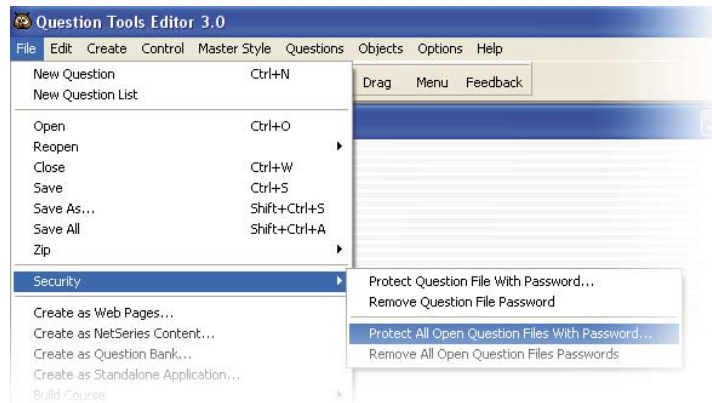
Solution

Question Tools Teamwork can be used to develop e-learning and online test materials prior to a product roll-out. The Teamwork suite is focused upon secure file sharing and features intelligent password protection combined with the automatic encryption of all source files. Question Tools Teamwork can also be used to produce approval reports, showing which product managers have approved which materials.

Materials are made available using Question Tools NetResult. Lessons and associated tests or knowledge checks can be delivered over an intranet or the internet via password-protected user accounts. Results are automatically collected, while the product team and staff who will receive the training need only a web browser, such as Internet Explorer.

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Outcome

- The costs and time of producing printed or photocopied materials is eliminated.

- Late changes can be more easily accommodated.

- The complications of trying to get all staff together for training sessions are greatly eased.

- Data on who has taken the training and how well they understand the new product is immediately available.

- Data on the effectiveness of the training is immediately available.

- The question analysis produced by NetResult allows common areas of misunderstanding to be identified and addressed.

Reducing Training Costs

Problem

Some training courses are provided to all staff. Some who attend courses do not need them, and this is a waste of resources. In addition, some staff who might benefit from training may not attend, and so an opportunity to improve performance is missed.
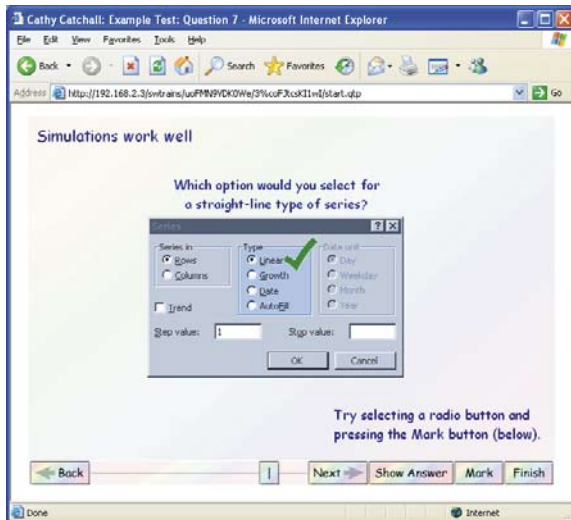
Solution

Question Tools Editor can be used to create varied tests, with questions broken down into categories. Question Tools NetResult can then be used to deliver a test to assess suitability for a course (or range of courses) over an intranet and / or the internet. Staff need only a web browser, such as Internet Explorer, to take the test. Results are automatically collected and analysed, producing individual and group scores. In addition, there is a breakdown of performance across the categories, again for both groups and individuals.

Outcome

- Fewer people need be trained as training is targeted on those who need it.

- The results allow both those responsible for training, as well as the individuals who perform well, to demonstrate competence to managers.

- Individuals who might have previously avoided training find such evasion harder.

- Staff are made aware of their own levels of knowledge and performance measured objectively, bringing confidence and true ability to perform a role closer together.

- The time and effort spent marking test results is reduced, with analyses such as performance breakdowns, providing data that was previously unavailable because of the effort involved in calculating it.

- Management information on performance across subject matter and across groups is immediately available, and can be exported from NetResult straight into a spreadsheet.

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Costs Reduced

1 Fewer people are trained.

2 Those who may have previously evaded training are targeted, reducing the sometimes expensive mistakes they make.

3 The costs of manually marking test results is eliminated.

4 The costs of producing management data is reduced.

Regulatory Requirements

Problem

The need to demonstrate that staff understand various regulations and legislation can be an expensive training burden. Training all staff is one common, but expensive solution. These costs are increased by the requirement that all staff be tested, records kept, with even individual answers to questions made available to regulators and inspectors.
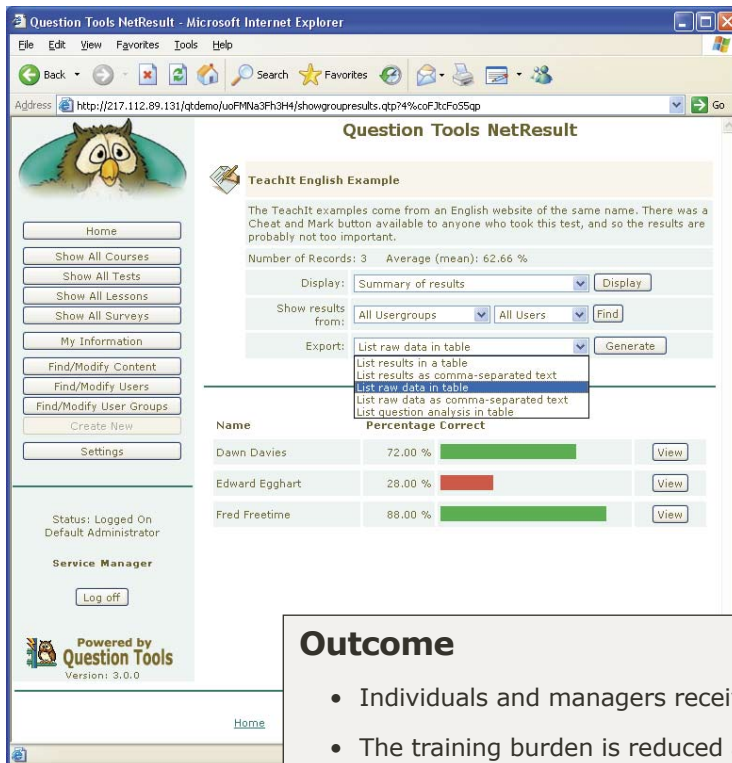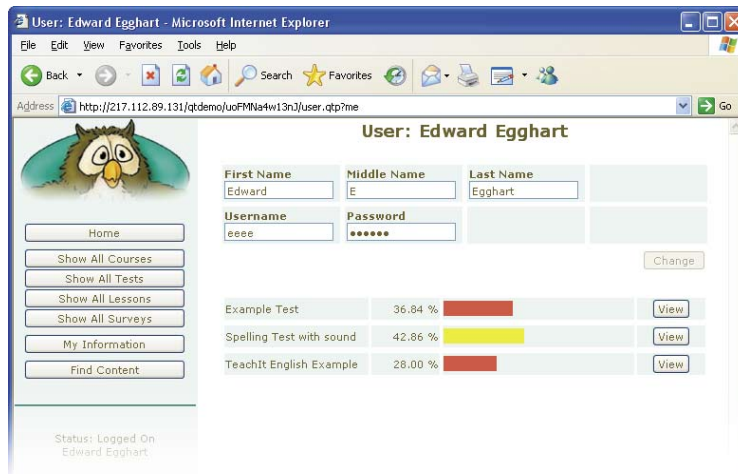
Solution

Question Tools Editor can be used to create tests where questions are selected at random, thus ensuring that no employee receives the same test. The tests can be delivered using Question Tools NetResult across an intranet or the internet, while staff need only a web browser such as Internet Explorer. Individual and group results are automatically collected and analysed. Relevant e-learning can also be delivered using NetResult.

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Outcome

- Individuals and managers receive immediate results.

- The training burden is reduced as only those who fail are trained.

- Operational costs are reduced as fewer staff need to be absent from their posts for training.

- The tests provide an incentive for staff to revise and use any relevant e-learning that is present, thereby increasing the pass rate.

- The data needed for management and the regulators is immediately available in a simple graphical display, while both results summaries and even users' detailed answers can be exported straight into a spreadsheet.

- If inspected, any user's test can be viewed in the order in which the user saw the test, complete with their marked answers.

Problem

Addressing skills issues amongst staff can be difficult. Most workers feel embarrassed by mistakes they make, while well-educated professionals, such as engineers or hospital consultants, are likely to be particularly resistant to assessment. However, basic skills, such as calculating percentages and dealing with statistics, can be lost if not practised. Moreover, organizational procedures and operating practices can be missed by some employees.
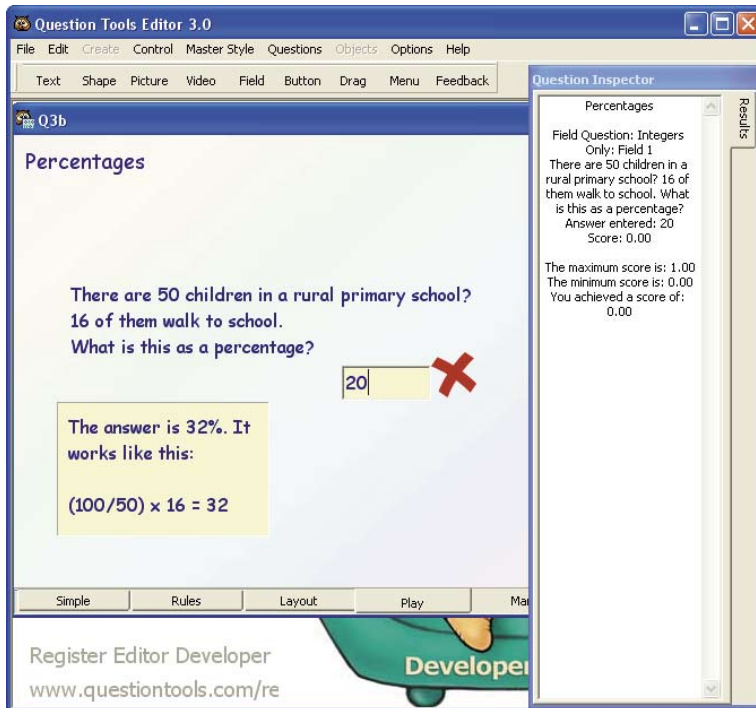

Solution

Question Tools Editor can be used to devise online tests for these basic skills. Staff need only a web browser such as Internet Explorer to access the tests anonymously across an intranet or the internet. Question Tools NetResult can deliver these tests, while automatically collecting and analysing the results. Questions can be categorized so that group performance across different topics can be analysed. The performance data, and even the answers to each question, can be easily exported into a spreadsheet or integrated into a management system.

Outcome

- There is no marking burden.
- Anonymity guaranteed.
- Staff are quickly but discreetly made aware if they have lost certain basic skills, or are unaware of key facts, or procedures.
- Professionals are given the information they need for objective self-diagnosis.
- Management information is immediately available, including performance breakdown into categories.
- NetResult's automatic question analysis can reveal common misunderstandings.
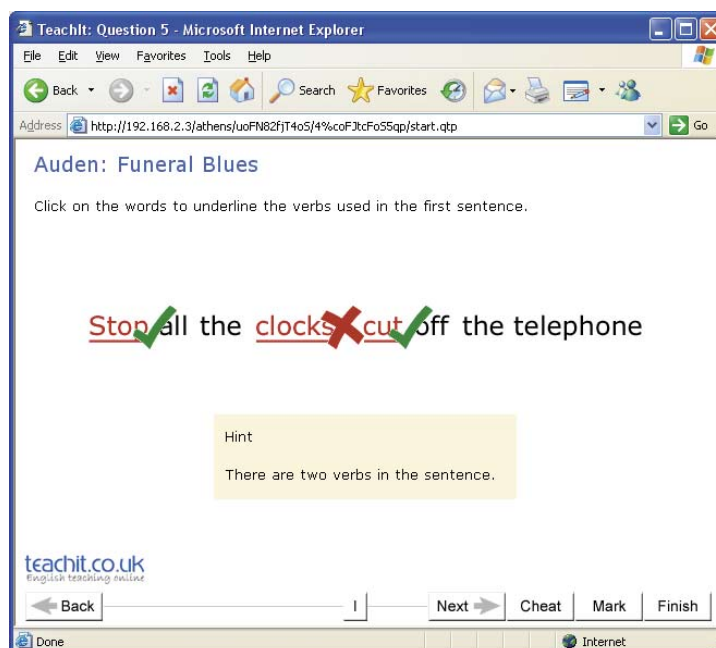
Streamlining Induction

Problem

Managers in many organizations often believe all their new recruits' training needs should be dealt with during induction. Yet, the limited time available for induction restricts what can be taught. While diagnostic testing can be used to stream new recruits, it is limited by the marking effort required.
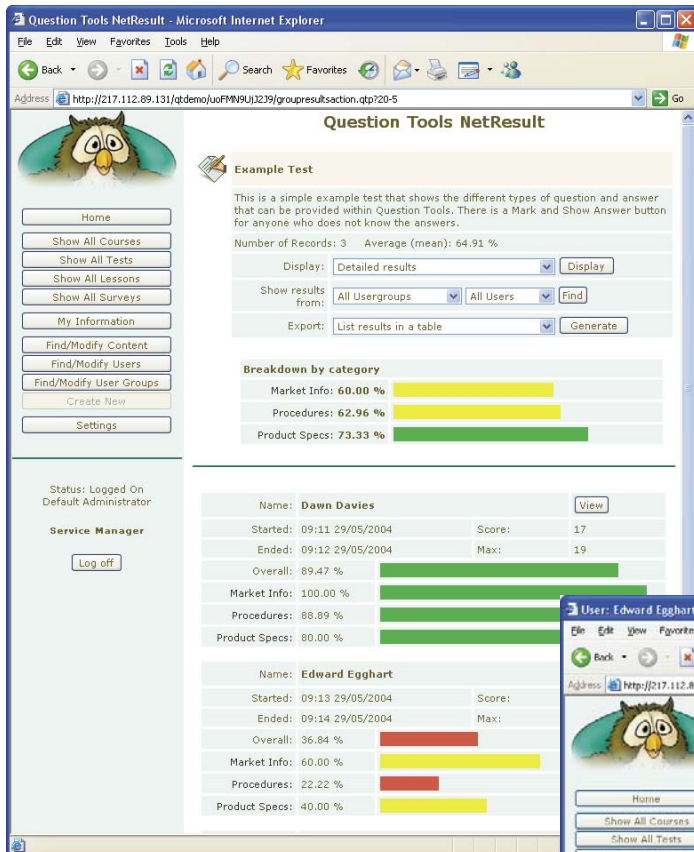
Solution

Question Tools Editor can be used to produce a range of diagnostic tests, from basic skills through to customer service and general product knowledge. By categorizing the questions in Editor, Question Tools NetTest not only provides a score for each individual, it also displays areas of strengths and weakness from just one test. Tests can be delivered over an intranet or the internet, while recruits require only Internet Explorer installed on their computers.
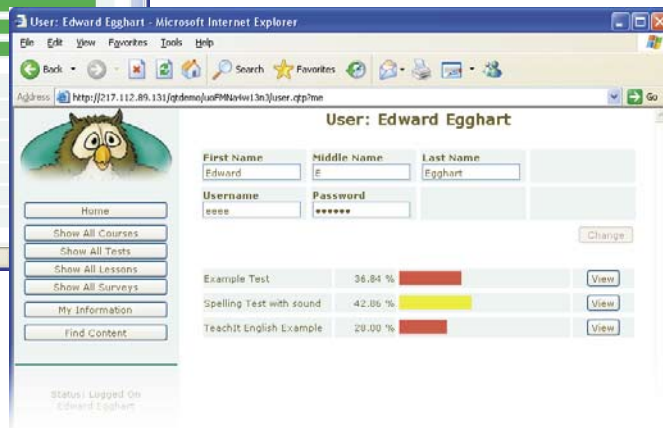
Outcome

More relevant training is provided for each new recruit. New staff are less bored as they did not have to sit through courses on subjects they understand well. At the end of induction the new recruits can be provided with skills portfolios showing initial diagnosis and outcome data. This latter information demonstrates effectiveness, as well as the relevance of the induction process to departments and the organization as a whole.
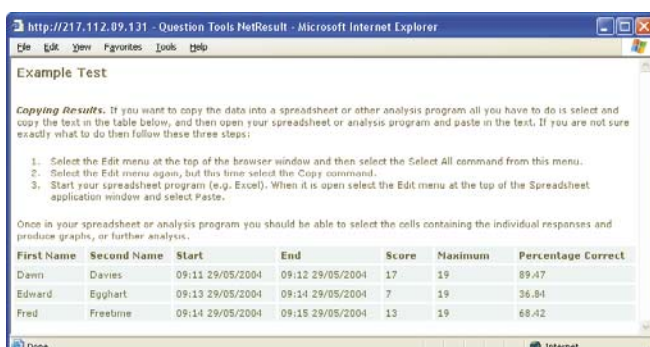
Benefits

1 The marking burden is reduced.

2 The results from tests are immediately available.

3 A greater range of diagnostic information is available.

4 Training can be streamlined, focusing on an individual's areas of weakness.

5 A skills portfolio can be easily assembled, showing initial diagnosis and final outcome.

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Problem

The numbers of students leaving a course is sometimes viewed as a measure of teaching quality. A high wastage rate also results in reduced funding. A significant proportion of failing students are unaware of the extent of their weaknesses and likely performance in tests and examinations. The number of failing students can be reduced if they have opportunities to test their knowledge, and receive feedback and links to resources to help them improve. However, such testing and individual feedback is expensive, and the often heavy burden of teaching and marking limits the resources available to improve this situation.
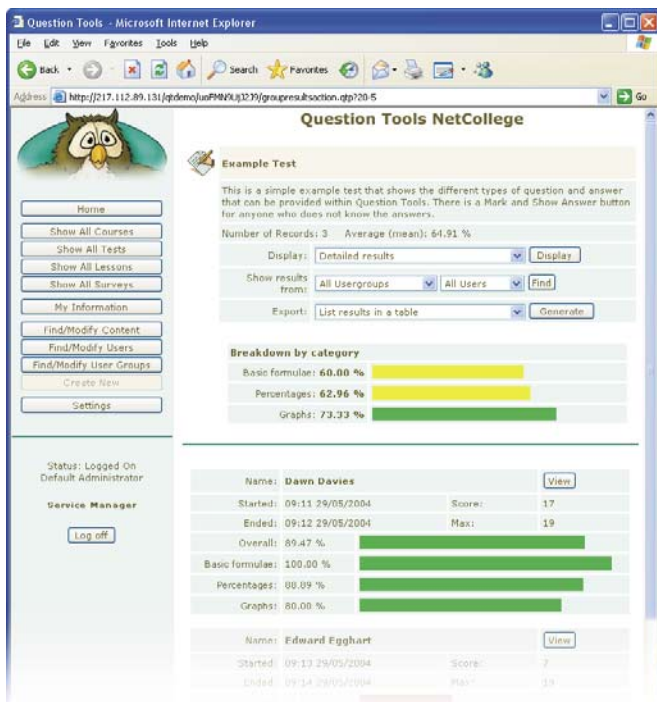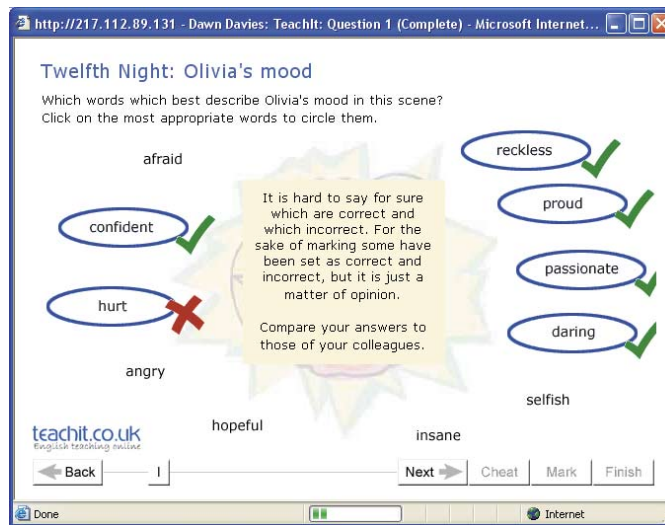
Solution

Question Tools Editor can be used to devise online tests, including feedback and links to relevant resources. Question Tools SimpleSet can be used to achieve the same ends, and is well-suited to staff whose IT skills are less advanced. Tests and online lessons can be securely delivered across an intranet or the internet using Question Tools NetCollege. Students who need only a web browser, while results are automatically collected and analysed by NetCollege. Questions can be categorized so that both individual and group performance across different topics can be analysed. The performance data, and even the students' answers to each question, can be easily exported into a spreadsheet or integrated into a management system.

Outcome

- Results are immediately available to staff and students.

- Performance breakdown data is available in a graphical format, while question analysis allows common misunderstandings to be identified.

- Marking is eliminated for these tests.

- Students receive individual feedback, both overall, in terms of their performance in different areas, as well as on each question.

- Students are made aware of the result they can expect to achieve without further action.

- Failing students can be identified, with detail on the areas where performance is weak.

Improving Pupil Performance

Problem

Schools and teachers will continue to be assessed against a range of indicators, chief amongst which will be pupil performance, as measured in national tests. Raising individual pupil performance requires individual diagnosis, feedback and help. While some students lack confidence, others are unaware of their weaknesses. Yet, the burdens of teaching and marking make this expensive option one that is difficult to implement in the available time.
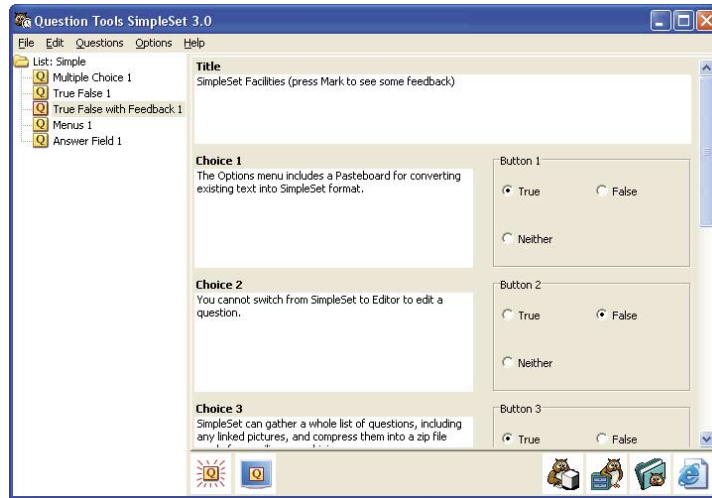
Solution

Question Tools Editor can be used to devise online tests, including feedback and links to relevant resources. Question Tools SimpleSet can be used to achieve the same ends, and is well-suited to staff whose IT skills are less advanced. Tests and online lessons can be delivered by Question Tools NetSchool across an intranet or the internet to students who need only a web browser. Results are automatically collected and analysed. Questions can be categorized so that both individual and group performance across different topics can be analysed. The performance data, and even the students' answers to each question, can be easily exported into a spreadsheet or integrated into a management system.
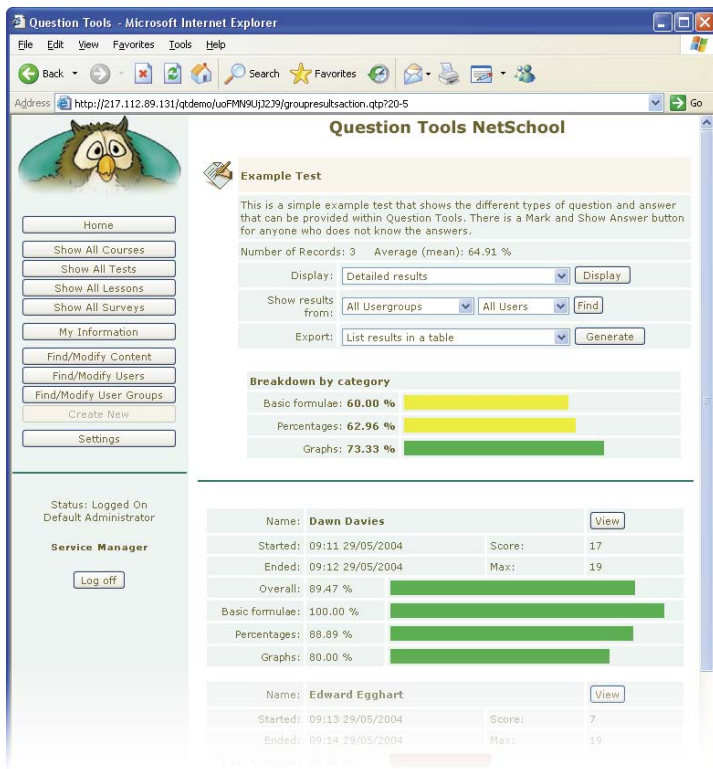
Outcome

- The burden of marking is eliminated for these tests.

- Results are immediately available to staff and (if appropriate) students.

- Performance breakdown data is available in a graphical format, while question analysis allows common misunderstandings to be identified.

- Students can receive individual feedback, both overall, in terms of their performance in different areas, as well as on each question.

- Students are made aware of the result they can realistically expect to achieve without further action.

- Failing students can be identified and targeted, not just as individuals, but in terms of the areas where their performance is weak.

Collecting Online Survey Data

Problem

Collecting survey data is expensive. Printing and distributing the survey is costly in terms of budget and staff time. Organizing the collection of completed surveys can be time-consuming, while manual coding of responses is expensive and can introduce error. Finally, results take time to emerge, and it is difficult and sometimes impossible to obtain quick or interim analyses.

Solution

Surveys can be produced to match an organizations look and style using Question Tools Editor. Surveys can be delivered using Question Tools NetSurvey across an intranet or the internet, while NetSurvey automatically collects and analyses the results. Respondents need only a web browser such as Internet Explorer. NetSurvey can host multiple surveys, and these can be easily accessed via direct links from an ordinary web site. Respondents can have free access to a survey, or access can be restricted using a username and password.
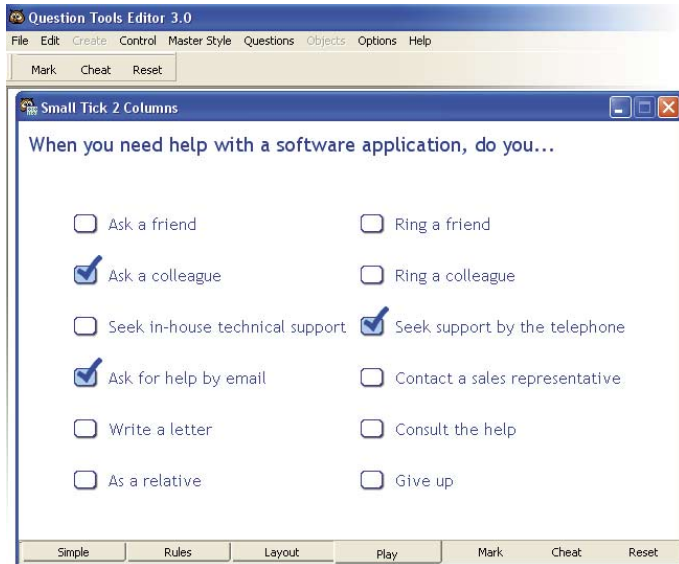
Outcome

The password system, if it is used, means that surveys are only completed by those who should be consulted. An immediate and up-to-date analysis is available at any time of the day.

Benefits

- Print costs and time delay are eliminated.

- Distribution and collection costs and time delay are eliminated.

- Response coding costs and time delay are eliminated.

- Immediate results are available, including interim analyses.

- Both analyses and raw data can be quickly and easily exported to a spreadsheet for further analysis.

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