

not return home. By contrast, there are also substantial advantages for career advancement from international work and for exciting, adventurous lives.

—Phyllis Tharenou

See also Expatriate experience, Globalization and careers, Multinational organizations, Virtual expatriates

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INTERNET CAREER ASSESSMENT

Career assessment through the Internet is an emerging though complex endeavor based on multiple methods;

it is under continuous development. This relatively new approach, which has emerged along with the rise of the Internet as an alternative communication tool, is still characterized by limited investigations. Thus, its use, though becoming gradually pervasive, is generally based on users' experience rather than on validity research. Specific methods employed for Internet career assessment are influenced in part by the purpose of the evaluation, the variety of Internet communication channels and modalities, and the technological tools available. Continuous technical development, as well as initiatory research in the area, implies that current procedures relate to limited possibilities but that future procedures will be quite revolutionary.

The most developed, frequently used Internet application exploited for career assessment is online testing, mostly psychological in nature. *Online testing* refers to a general procedure by which an individual take tests of various types using a personal computer connected to a Web site that presents a test, provides instructions for filling it out, and usually scores and provides interpretation for it. Although online tests generally reflect the variety of test types and formats available offline, quite a few variations of this general procedure have been used, with differences in questioning sophistication, responding formats, scoring methods, and ways and depth of interpreting the test results. In addition, because publishing on the Internet is easy, generally rewarding, and essentially costless, online tests differ greatly from one another in terms of their levels of professionalism. This means that numerous tests published online and offering assessment to the public in various domains have been created by nonprofessionals for various reasons and do not fulfill accepted standards of test construction. This creates a major problem, as most Internet users cannot distinguish between "good" and "bad" tests and thus might be misguided in their serious attempts to gain help by means of Internet resources and make wise career-related decisions.

Parallel to offline (paper-and-pencil) testing, online tests differ in their focus of measurement, whether intelligence, specific aptitudes, attitudes, personality, or the like. Also parallel to offline testing, there are various formats for online tests: multiple choice, rating scales, and open-ended questions. However, because of the advantage of computerized scoring, online tests employ the first two formats; open-ended tests, which need human involvement, are rare. Usually, too, an online test is designed in such a way

that the user can respond easily through mouse clicks and the scoring procedure is automatically conducted. Online tests take advantage not only of computerized scoring (and preplanned interpretation) but also of the convenient capability of integrating multimedia-enhanced components (e.g., use of color and animation, audio, and video), automatic time watching, and more. A special advantage of online tests is the ability to tailor tests to test takers according to preestablished individual characteristics. Likewise, adaptive testing (in which an individual's success on an earlier test item determines the difficulty of the subsequent item) can easily be integrated into the system.

Research in a variety of assessment areas has typically found much support for the validity and reliability of measurement through online tests; they are, in fact, very similar to their offline counterparts. This has encouraged the use of such tests for a number of career-assessment purposes, including school guidance, career counseling, and employee selection. Online testing in each of these activities can provide specific and partial information for the test taker and/or assessor to be integrated in a broader assessment process. For instance, a client involved in career decision making may go through face-to-face counseling sessions while, in between these sessions, also taking online tests suggested by a counselor. Such integration of different channels of communication and interaction is cost-effective and convenient for many, as tests may be taken individually by clients at optimal timing without exploiting other resources. Other advantages include (a) centrally executed, easy, and quick modification of tests for editing of items and instructions and updating scoring procedures; (b) convenience in time and place of testing; (c) rapid and accurate scoring and interpretation according to preassigned theoretically and empirically grounded algorithms; and (d) the possibility of quick, detailed feedback.

Disadvantages and problems should not be overlooked, however. These include (a) publishing of countless unsupervised, nonprofessional tests that, in many cases, look like professional tests; (b) direct and immediate conversion of an offline test to an online version without the necessary adjustments, which might damage valid measurement; (c) use of test norms based on offline test-taker populations, which is known to be erroneous (online raw scores, in many tests, are elevated relative to the offline scores of the same test); (d) lack of a close human being to support the client's acceptance of disappointing results;

(e) use of online assessment that supports social injustice in providing testing opportunities to wealthier people (related to the "digital divide"); and (f) difficulties in identifying and verifying test takers and surveilling their conduct.

Another vehicle that the Internet makes possible for use in career assessment is online interviewing. Similar to telephone interviews, online communication—synchronously via Instant Messaging (e.g., ICQ, Windows Messenger), chat (e.g., LivePerson), and webcam and asynchronously via e-mail—enables interviewing from a distance. Although this procedure has several obvious advantages (e.g., cost, convenience, storage of written dialogues, augmented interviewee openness caused by the online disinhibition effect), it also has disadvantages (uneasiness for some interviewees owing to the lack of eye contact, loss of important physical and nonverbal communication cues, and difficulties in identifying the interviewee). This approach might therefore be used for initial screening or for career counseling by specifically trained interviewers.

An emerging online assessment approach that has recently been proposed adopts ethnographic and anthropological methods in observing people's behavior in Internet-enhanced environments (e.g., forums, chat rooms) while interacting in group situations or individually in any number of possible virtual stimulations. Although validity research is still lacking, this approach is promising in light of recent technological developments (e.g., enriched multimedia, sophisticated 3-D virtual reality, integrated video-audio tools) and growing research. This way, observation and appraisal of individual behavior in cyberspace could either complement face-to-face evaluations in an integrated assessment center or serve as preliminary screening of job applicants.

Online career assessment is still in an embryonic stage. Much research and development ought to be put into this area to make it routinely available for use in assessments for career counseling or employee selection.

—Azy Barak

See also Personnel selection, Technology and careers

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INTERNET RECRUITMENT

Since the early 1990s, there has been a dramatic change in the process of employee recruitment due to the emergence of the Internet as a significant means of exchanging employment information. The Internet is used today around the world by organizations of all sizes and in every industry. Job seekers can leverage the Internet using a variety of online avenues to pursue almost any kind of job, from entry level to senior executive, from trade work to professional services. The emergence of the Internet has spawned a new industry intent on helping organizations find and select candidates for available jobs using various Web-enabled methodologies. At the same time, substantial research efforts have tried to better understand how job seekers use the Internet to search for jobs and the value of such endeavors in actually finding employment. At the intersection of business practice and research lies significant debate around defining the value of the Internet for attracting and ultimately selecting the right kinds of candidates.

The Internet has emerged as a significant mechanism for employee recruitment because it offers unparalleled promise for facilitating applicant flow to employment opportunities and subsequent decisions regarding the fit between a job candidate, an employer, and an available job. *Internet recruitment* has enhanced the abilities of organizations to advertise employment opportunities to a global audience. Within the World Wide Web, there are a number of sources for finding available jobs. Job seekers can

search online job boards that contain millions of job advertisements, utilize Web sites of professional organizations or niche job boards that may contain more targeted opportunities based on professional interest, or visit the employment Web pages of almost any organization, where information about a company, its people, and its job opportunities can be reviewed and applications can be submitted. The ease with which job opportunities can be found on the Internet has expanded the conceptual definition of a job seeker to include both active and passive candidates. Active job seekers are those who are currently unemployed or employed in positions from which they wish to depart. This concept of the job seeker is consistent with traditional notions of job applicants. Passive job seekers are those who are currently employed, not engaged in active job search, and might not even be thinking about changing their current employment. However, the Internet has provided passive job seekers with a more time-efficient mechanism for exploring job opportunities and has empower organizations with new tools for finding and communicating with this kind of individual.

Because the Internet presents so many options for employment search, research on Internet recruitment has focused on two primary areas. The first area has evaluated the impact of the Internet on the job seeker's search and the subsequent quality of an organization's selection decisions. This perspective most closely maps to the interest of employers trying to determine how best to invest their employment-marketing budgets. The second area focuses on analyzing how job seekers experience and use the Internet to find jobs. This perspective blends the interests of job seekers and employers in the hopes of creating a better online employment search experience.

EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF THE INTERNET

The demand for demonstrating the value of the Internet as a recruitment source has increased with the size of organizational investments in online recruitment. From an employer's perspective, there are several major sources of online candidates, including Mega Job Boards, Niche Job Boards, Company Web Sites, and Virtual Networking Communities. A challenge for companies is determining the right investment strategy so that sources can be leveraged for maximum return with regard to the quality of applicants, performance of