Association of Test Publishers Presents Second Annual Conference Focusing on Computer-Based Testing

For the second consecutive year the Association of Test Publishers successfully presented a computer-based testing conference, with this year's focus on "Emerging Technologies and Opportunities for Diverse Applications." The conference was held at the Sheraton El Conquistador in Tucson, AZ and provided keynote addresses and panel presentations for a sold-out audience of more than 350 attendees.

"The positive response to last year's Computer-Based Testing conference in Carmel, California was so overwhelming that we doubled the size of both the program and capacity for this year's conference," said ATP Executive Director William G. Harris, Ph.D. "Computer-based testing continues to be a topic that cuts across all facets of the assessment community, Whether your focus is education, industry, certification or clinical testing or any of the myriad of related professional arenas," he added.

The Conference was kicked off on Tuesday, February 27th by Keynote speaker Donald E. Melnick, President of the National Board of Medical Examiners ("NBME") with an address titled "Technology-Based Testing: Panacea or Placebo?"

Content Sessions included such topics as: Ethical and Practical Issues in the Use of Computerized Tests for Employee Selection; Psychological Issues in Computer-Based Testing; Combining Technology with Content to Unlock the Potential of Electronic Testing in K-12 Schools; Accreditation of Computer-Based Tests Used in IT Certification; and many others.

The conference concluded on Wednesday, February 28 with a keynote address by Kurt Landgraf, President and CEO of the Educational Testing Service ("ETS") entitled: Changing Paradigms in a Changing Environment.

This year's conference also included Pre-conference workshops presented by Platinum Level sponsors: ACT, ETS/ Chauncey Group International, Computer Adaptive Technologies, Inc., Galton Technologies, Inc., Kroll & Associates, Prometric and VUE.

ATP Chair Dave Foster of Galton Technologies gave special recognition to Reid London House for loyal service to the Association in providing support and staff particularly in the area of legislative and legal advocacy. Accepting the award on behalf of Reid London House's Vice-President and former ATP Chair Stephen Coffman, was ATP's General Counsel, Dr. David Arnold, also of Reid London House.

The Association of Test Publishers also held its annual meeting Tuesday morning, February 27th. Both members and non-members heard from ATP Executive Director, Dr. William G. Harris and ATP Chairman, Dr. David Foster of Galton Technologies, who provided an update on ATP's activities including legislative and legal advocacy, public relations, membership recruitment and plans for future conferences and learning opportunities.

There was also a special presentation on Internet liability protection by Mack and Parker, Inc., ATP's Insurance, Risk Management and Consulting firm.

This year's ATP conference was sponsored, in addition to the Platinum level sponsors, by Gold level sponsors which included: Mediatec Publishing, Question Mark and Vantage Learning; and by Silver Level Sponsors which included: Buros Institute for Assessment Consultation and Outreach, The College Board and D' Squared Assessments, Inc.

Next year's conference will be held at the La Costa Resort in Carlsbad, CA (outside of San Diego) February 4 -6, 2002. Stay posted to the ATP website at www.testpublishers.org for more information

Association Notebook

ATP Welcomes its newest members...BAPTA, CompTIA, Ericsson, Intellinex and Karson & Karson Reports

The next board meeting of the Association of Test Publishers...will be held Friday, September 14, 2001 at Lake Tahoe. Members can have business placed on the agenda by emailing the ATP Board of Directors: lauren@testpublishers.org or wgharris@testpublishers.org.

The next General Meeting and Computer Based Testing Conference of the Association of Test Publishers...will be held February 4 -6, 2002 at the La Costa Resort and Spa in Carlsbad, CA (just north of San Diego). For information stay posted to the ATP website at www.testpublishers.org.

ATP congratulates those individuals elected (or re-elected) to Division Leadership Positions... Certification/Licensure: Chair - Jim Olsen of Alpine Media, Vice Chair - Linda Waters of Chauncey Group International. Clinical: Chair - Pamela Becker-Dean of Riverside Publishing, Vice Chair - Chris Gruber of Western Psychological Services. Educational: Chair - Amy Schmidt of The College Board, Vice Chair - Kathleen Williams of American Guidance Service. Industrial: Chair - Wade Gibson of Psychological Services, Inc., Vice Chair - Michael Segovia of Consulting Psychologists Press.

ATP launches career advertising on the website...ATP members and non members can now advertise or seek employment on the ATP webpage. Check it out under Careers at www.testpublishers.org

Have you compared your existing rate for Errors and Omissions insurance with ATP's policy?... As an ATP member you have access to competitive rates for Group E & O insurance being offered by Mack and Parker, Inc. This coverage has been customized to meet the needs of our unique industry. For information contact Angelo Frieri at 800.432.2558 ext. 4660 or email afrieri@mackparker.com ATP Members can also go to the Inside ATP section of the ATP website at www.testpublishers.org and download a copy of the Professional Liability Application for a free estimate.

Legal/Legislative Updates...

A law student applicant claiming he was unable to take the Law School Admission Test ("LSAT") because of the nature of his disabilities, filed a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights ("OCR") under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. The plaintiff stated that the university should waive the LSAT and allow him to present his educational background and work experience as the exclusive indicators of his abilities.

The university claimed, however, that in order to be accredited by the American Bar Association ("ABA"), law school applicants must "take an acceptable test for the purpose of assessing the applicants' capability of satisfactorily completing its education program." And, if a law school does not use the LSAT, it must "establish that it is using an acceptable test." Since the LSAT "is an essential tool in ... predicting an applicant's ability to perform...", the OCR concluded that the plaintiff's background and experience were not standardized and too difficult to measure. Thus, the OCR found the university in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Following are some legislative initiatives being monitored by ATP's General Counsel Dr. David Arnold at Reid London House. For a more complete list ATP members can log onto Legislative Updates at www.testpublishers.org. To receive a copy of any of these bills, contact lauren@testpublishers.org

> CA Senate Bill 204 Which would require the State Board of Education to establish standards for new computer software and modifications to existing computer software to facilitate the ability to monitor the academic achievement of pupils on the annual statewide achievement tests and other measure of pupil progress over time;

CT House Bill 5753 Which would provide a $1,000 tuition credit at a public institution of higher education for high school students who pass three of the five sections of the tenth grade mastery examination ("CAPT") and provide a $5,000 dollar tuition credit to such an institution for students who pass all five sections of the test.;

HI House Bill 4 Based on the finding that Hawaii public school students achieve average verbal and math scores that are lower than the national public school average, this bill seeks to have public high schools implement Scholastic Assessment Test ("SAT") preparation courses as elective courses;

NJ Assembly Bill 2351 Would not allow a student to participate in any survey, assessment, analysis, evaluation or comprehensive guidance and counseling values clarification program that concern certain issues (e.g., potentially embarrassing psychological problems, illegal and demeaning behavior, sexual behavior and attitudes) unless the school district has obtained proper written informed consent from that student's parent or guardian. This bill was vetoed by Gov. Christine Todd Whitman, on January 16, 2001 and has been sent back to the legislature with her recommendations for reconsideration; and

NV Assembly Bill 64 Which would allow for parents to exempt pupils from taking certain achievement and proficiency examinations administered in the public schools upon the written request of a parent. D. Arnold noted that this bill also includes language which would require notification that opting not to take examinations may result in exclusion from certain schools.

In Arizona...ATP submitted an amicus brief, with the assistance of Legislative Counsel Alan Thiemann, in response to Phoenix Newspapers, Inc. vs. Keegan, et al., a case in which a state trial court had rendered a decision allowing for the disclosure of certain test items on a state minimum competency graduation exam.

ATP files an amicus brief in Arizona; And, in Indiana, the work continues as ATP gains time to formulate strategy.

Wm. Brett Richardson, attorney in the law office of Thiemann, Aitken, Vohra & Rutledge reports, "The facts behind this case are very disconcerting for the industry. The Phoenix newspaper has been extremely critical of the whole test development process, mostly focused on the test itself as a "failed" "flawed" "unsuccessful" test. We needed to show that the test development process anticipates changes, even changes in items, as a prototype changes to match the level of content and performance that the State eventually decides to assess. Not only that, but the paper has tried to sell the court that one form of the test alone should be disclosed, as though the next request by anyone seeking to disclose a separate test would be treated differently. Thus, proposed release of any State-required outside test, paid for by the State, creates a situation where many other commercial tests, as well as teacher-made tests, could automatically be at risk under the lower court's decision. ATP, and the State, separately pointed out that the sweep of the lower court decision could cover any national standardized test, including the SAT and ACT, diagnostic tests for special ed purposes and vocational ed tests. Finally, the lower court's decision to handle "anchor items" differently from other items that were also supposed to be reused Ð and therefore secure Ð was a distinction ATP could not allow to go unchallenged."

"A favorable judgment in this case would establish a useful precedent for test security and test disclosure under state open records laws that do not contain express exemptions for tests and test materials," Richardson added.

(To see a complete version of the amicus brief, go to the ATP website at www.testpublishers.org and click on Legal/Legislative Updates. Or, contact Lauren Scheib at lauren@testpublishers.org or call 717.755.9747.)

In Indiana...where the State Board of Psychology attempted to restrict the use of more than 200 tests to licensed psychologists and other exempt groups, the Attorney General of Indiana has declared that the Board of Psychology had not followed the law by not allowing a 60-day notice. This means that the rule making process has to begin anew. ATP, which has stayed on top of this issue, testifying before the Board and mobilizing members with a letter writing campaign, will use the time to continue formulating effective strategy on this issue.

[Editor's Note -- For those checking into the ATP Website, you will have noticed that the ATP Webmaster, Pete Wohlmut has been working on reformatting the pages which are best viewed by "enabling your Java." But before doing so, a number of ATP members - this editor included - had to ask -- what is Java? Following is an interesting "assessment" which tests your knowledge of the web -- and, most importantly, gives you the answers...]

WEB WORDS: Test your knowledge of the world wide web vocabulary -- then... ...enable your Java...by Richard G. Ensman, Jr.

The Web has become omnipresent today. You see the familiar "www" prefix in print and broadcast ads. You jot Web addresses in your day planner and on napkins. And, of course, you use the ever-expanding potpourri of Web resources for business and pleasure. But just how familiar are you with the Web vocabulary of the early 21st century? To find out, complete this quiz. Match each of the Web terms presented here with the brief definitions that follow. Answers are presented at the end of the article.

(a) Adjacency Operators	1. A code-based technique for displaying multiple boxes on a Web page, each with distinct content and graphics.
(b) Algorithm	2. Suffix of a Web address (.gov, .com, or .edu, for example) that indicates the host classification of the site.
(c) Archie	3. List of commonly used or "favorite" Web sites, stored through a browser program.
(d) Bitmap	4. Code that enables Web authoring software to accommodate interactive tools, such as fill-in-the-blank boxes.
(e) Boolean Search	5. Pieces of data sent over the Internet containing their address and content.
(f) Browser	6. The first "page" or document typically viewed by a Web site visitor.
(g) Common Gateway Interface	7. Powerful computer language frequently used on the Web.
(h) Cookie	8. Organization that coordinates and registers domain names.
(i) Domain	9. Set of precise search instructions using mathematical or symbolic operators, such as "+," "NOT," and other expressions.
(j) Firewall	10. Visual items embedded in Web documents.

(k) Forms	11. Software package allowing a user to view Web pages.
(l) Frame	12. A menu-driven tool used to obtain information from the Internet in pre-Web days.
(m) Friction-free Transaction	13. Internet code that allows people to talk with one another "live."
(n) Gopher	14. A document placed on a Web site.
(o) Graphic Interchange Format	15. Sophisticated instructions given to a search engine specifying the relationship of search terms to each other.
(p) Home Page	16. Tiny file placed on a user's computer, often without his or her knowledge, which identifies the user's browser and Web destinations to a Web site owner.
(q) Hot list	17. Technology that quickly and flexibly reroutes Internet traffic in the event of electronic barriers or overuse
(r) Hypertext Transfer Protocol	18. Type of program used to create and format content for the Web.
(s) Image Map	19. Sequence of behind-the-scenes computer code that solves a problem or executes a task, such as finding the right entries in a Web search.
(t) In-line Image	20. General term referring to patterns of dots used to create an image on the Web.
(u) InterNiC	21. A computer that holds the code for a Web site and manages all interactions with Web site visitors.
(v) Java	22. Popular code used to create and display visual images.
(w) Joint Photographic Experts Group (JPEG)	23. Behind-the-scenes selling costs minimized through technology.
(x) Knowbot	24. A Web service that identifies sites of interest according to a subject term or criteria that a user specifies.
(y) Line-Mode Browser	25. Graphic code used to create special effects.
(z) Markup Language	26. A series of Web sites all focusing on the same subject matter and linked to each other in sequential order.
(aa) Mirror Site	27. Popular visual format, often used to compress large, complex images on the Web.
(bb) Node	28. Program that "surfs" the Web behind the scenes, collecting content information on behalf of search engines.
(cc) Packets	29. Programs that link a Web server with other programs, allowing site visitors to obtain automated responses or requests from information at the site.
(dd) Page	30. Automatic delivery of Internet material to consumers, often initiated as the result of a request made at a Web site.
(ee) Plug-In	31. Term referring to near-instantaneous exchange of information, such as electronic communication, delivery of live photos, or a variety of other images.
(ff) Portal	32. Web site that enables users to conveniently access other parts of the Web, often containing a variety of extra services such as weather data, stock quotes, and news.
(gg) Push Technology	33. Host computer on the Internet.
(hh) Ray Tracing	34. Duplicate Web site that accommodates a heavy volume of traffic and user interaction.

(ii) Real Time	35. Code that enables computer users to retrieve Web pages.
(jj) Relay Chat	36. Program that cataloged Internet sites prior to the emergence of the World Wide Web.
(kk) Rerouting	37. Visual item on a Web page hyperlinked to other content or graphics, accessible by clicking.
(ll) Ring	38. Software that enables a browser to display multi-media content it normally cannot support.
(mm) Search Engine	39. Web browser that displays text only.
(nn) Server	40. System of security, consisting of hardware and software, that separates publicly accessible materials (such as Web pages on a server) from internal or private networks.

Answers at the bottom of this page

About the author...Robert Ensman is a freelance writer in New York specializing in Association issues.

ATP FOCUS ON...THE STANDARDS FOR EDUCATIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTING

ATP Get Its Groove on the New Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing... A perspective by Chris Gruber of Western Psychological Services, Chair of the ATP Standards Committee and Vice Chair of the ATP Clinical Division.

In 1995 the American Psychological Association ("APA") along with American Educational Research Association ("AERA") and National Council on Measurement in Education ("NCME") began the process of revising their Standards for Educational and Psychological Tests ("Standards"). They sponsored an open meeting where many organizations, including ATP, were invited to express their concerns. Ira Manson, President of ATP at the time, asked me to go to that meeting and present ATP's view that the Standards should include a strong statement about the need for test users to maintain legally appropriate copyright protections. The initial results of that meeting were mixed. On one hand ATP achieved standing as a recognized organization. We were invited to become an official reviewer for drafts of the new Standards. On the other hand our concerns about copyright were dismissively (if informally) rejected. Despite the clear legal status of existing copyright protections, the meeting sponsors who heard our proposed Standard defining test users responsibility to respect copyright protection in any form of test use told us, "Oh, you'll never get anything like that. It's insulting and pointless to tell people that."

Frankly, it was not a promising beginning and it got harder. APA submitted two major drafts of the complete Standards to us (and other reviewers) over the next three years. For our part, the ATP membership took the review task very seriously. Each time we collected comments from over 40 staff professionals in our member companies. And each time we collated them and prepared a complete commentaryÑliterally scores of pages of finished comments. Our comments were comprehensive, consistently thoughtful, and reflected our reviewing professionals' broad range of experience in the field of commercial test development.

Given the process by which the Standards are developed, ATP's impact on the end results were surprising. The Standards are the product of authorship by committee (many committees in fact) and our impact on different chapters was far from uniform. Yet standard by standard, draft by draft, I can, in retrospect, find literally scores of points where language of the final Standards changed in direct response to ATP comments. As the professional utility of the ATP comments became clear to them, you could sense the changes in the attitudes of those drafting the Standards.

ATP's active and affirmative involvement in the drafting process has yielded major value and benefits to every member of the ATP. Nowhere was this more obvious than in the final language concerning copyright. Draft by draft, we went from no relevant standards, to one vague and oblique reference, to this final standard in the chapter on Test User Responsibilities:

Standard 11.8 Test users have the responsibility to respect test copyrights. Comment: Legally and ethically, test users may not reproduce copyrighted materials for routine test use without consent of the copyright holder. These materialsÑin both paper and electronic formÑinclude test items, ancillary forms such as answer sheets or profile forms, scoring templates, conversion tables of raw scores to derived scores, and tables of norms.

It is hard to imagine a clearer statement of the requirement that each test user must protect a test publisher's copyright. It is made particularly useful by the explicit listing of the specific materials covered by copyright. The statement is every bit as strongÑperhaps stronger for having been reviewed and clarified in the drafting processÑas our original proposal, the one dismissed as something we would "never get." Those who are interested in additional areas where ATP had a significant impact on how the final Standards address copyright protection may also want to look at Standards 11.9 and 12.11, in which the necessity of protecting copyright and the integrity of test materials is also usefully specific.

Many other minor successes emerged from our collective efforts as an organization and even our failures had useful results. Perhaps the clearest example of this last is in Chapter 7 of the Standards "Fairness in Testing and Test Use." There we made extensive arguments, asking that references to vague, undefined "special groups" that appeared in the early versions be replaced by clear reference to "statutorily identified and protected subgroups." Although this change was never implemented, it did become clear that our concerns were being heard along with those of many others. The final published version of the chapter was vastly improved over early drafts. In particular the final version reflects a focused combination of idealistic and objective reasoning that identifies spurious arguments about the presence of bias in testing. I encourage you to read that chapter because the language in it, like that in the copyright standard above, is a useful reference point for dealing with the difficult issues related to bias that can arise in the development and marketing of tests.

In summary, this project involved a great deal of work by a very broad group of ATP member organizations. It clearly demonstrated the willingness of many member organizations to commit their staff resources to the serious time and effort required to perform this task. I'll particularly thank WPS, my employer, and the other members of the ATP Standards committee during that time, Jack Jones at London House and then NCS, and Gary Robertson at Wide Range, for their consistent and patient work collating and revising the contributions of so many others; G Harris and Lauren Scheib in the ATP offices for helping us deal with document management problems and various deadlines we faced; and finally Steve Coffman at Reid London House and Dave Smith at NCS, who

succeeded Ira as ATP President, both of whom were generous in their support for this work.

Was it worth it? When I ask myself this question, my thoughts immediately go to Ira Manson, whose vision for the ATP was instrumental in bringing us to where we are today. I am confident that he would have been proud of what we did with this project. Those who knew Ira know that acknowledging success, even or perhaps especially his own, never came easily for him. But in this case, however, I am pretty sure that even he would have nodded (and perhaps even enjoyed a slightly wry smile) as he took satisfaction in how much we have evolved and how effective we have become as an organization.

The answers: 1 (l); 2 (i); 3 (q); 4 (k); 5 (cc); 6 (p); 7 (v); 8 (u); 9 (e); 10 (t); 11 (f); 12 (n); 13 (jj); 14 (dd); 15 (a); 16 (h); 17 (kk); 18 (r); 19(b); 20 (d); 21 (nn); 22 (o); 23 (m); 24 (mm); 25 (hh); 26 (ll); 27 (w); 28 (x); 29 (g); 30 (gg); 31 (ii); 32 (ff); 33 (bb); 34 (aa); 35 (z); 36 (c); 37 (s); 38 (ee); 39 (y); 40 (j)