

# ATP Conference Report - Diane Huntsinger (Mar 11)

## Wild Wacky Certification Communities

Krista Wall, Sr Content Dev Mgr, Microsoft

Lenora Knapp, Knapp & Assoc

Taj Heniser, Content Publ Mgr, Microsoft

Stephanie Jordan, Proj Mgr, Microsoft

- Microsoft's IT Cert Community has 250,000 users/yr
- Supports skills development for learning partners, trainers, M/S cert program
- Definitions of a community:
  - o What: site for people with similar interests and goals
  - o When: physical or virtual place to gather
  - o How: stronger together than apart, with common goals and greater influence
  - o Why: for meaningful, relevant interaction
- What's in it for your program
  - o You can't control it but you can influence it
  - o Two-way communication = meaningful interactions
  - o Earlier customer feedback means earlier resolutions to problems
  - o Even if no resolution, customers like the ability to interact
  - o Customer evangelism: transform critics into supporters!
  - o Customers help each other
  - o Customers keep coming back
- What's in it for customers
  - o Builds relationships and networks
  - o Creates sense of identity and belonging
  - o Personalized help from each other
  - o Recognition from peers
  - o They can influence the program
- Community building tools
  - o Don't build from scratch: use Facebook, etc.
  - o Most are free and widely adopted
  - o Pull = facebook, blogs, newsgroups; push = twitter, RSS feeds, newsletters
  - o Forums, LinkedIn
- Biggest fears: Managing a community
  - o upkeep; misinformation/incorrect information and what to do about it; inappropriate postings; security (posting cheat sheets); no one cares, or don't come back
- Biggest challenges in building a community:
  - o Marketing staff does not defer to technical staff (internal coordination of oversight and disagreement of purpose)
  - o Credibility of the community (they will complain but not contribute)
  - o Continuous learning content that is relevant and not just marketing
  - o How to get SMEs and stakeholders involved – what to offer them
  - o Terms of use agreement; have community self-police

- Successful steps to building a community:
  - o Set the stage – define audience, internal/external stakeholders
  - o Set realistic expectations and educate the organization
  - o Agree on goals and purpose
  - o Ensure you have the commitment to build and support a community
- How to **kill** a community (things not to do):
  - o Forget to give them a reason to come and join
  - o Rely on it to manage itself (you must train moderators)
  - o Make it all about you (instead of them)
  - o Use it for marketing
  - o Clamp down on negative feedback
  - o Keep them in the dark about what you are doing
  - o Promise what you can't deliver
  - o Say you have the answer when you don't
  - o Set formal tone in all communications
  - o Don't let your personality shine through
- How to encourage active participation
  - o Invite them to other activities (surveys, web conferences, advisory councils, new programs, etc.)
  - o Enable volunteer groups (write test items, etc.)
  - o Incentives (contests, competitions, giveaways)
  - o Community recognition of people who help others
  - o Reinforce in other community vehicles
- Dealing with painful feedback:
  - o Don't hide, tell them off, or correct their grammar and spelling
  - o Do ignore the bad words, find the kernel of truth and address it, or let the community deal with it
  - o When attacked: don't get defensive; restate the problem, control the conversation, communicate the action plan
- Secrets
  - o These are opportunities, and there's power in how you respond
  - o Listen, know, care, solve
  - o When you don't know, say so; find answer, set deadline and stick to it,
  - o Thank them
- Audience input
  - o Community involvement falls off after a while
  - o Citrix mines the community for SMEs and scenarios
  - o Need for organic phone application, not computer sites (facebook is not professional enough)

### Should We Build it? Responding to perceived stakeholder needs

Tancy Stanbery, Exec. Director, Board of Cert for Emergency Nurses

Lawrence Fabrey, Psychometrician

- Setting: wanted validation mechanism
- Issue: no core competencies, curriculum, nor training

- Methods:
  - o market feasibility study,
  - o needs assessment survey,
  - o used key stakeholders as steering group, headed by a hired consultant
  - o focus group studies,
- § Focus groups = four sessions, 10-15/session, over a year's time
- § Process: ground rules, state purpose, take notes and analyze them, draft consensus document: is there a need?
- § State goal
  - o Determine best mechanism (test, portfolio, combo?)
  - o Fee?
  - o Target audience? Size?
- Considerations:
  - o Passing test would not give them discounts for malpractice
  - o Competing professional groups were not interested in a competing exam
  - o Cost to market the exam?
  - o Cost to develop and deliver?
  - o What to charge? What will market bear? Any return – breakeven price?

### Rethinking Certification (focus group discussion)

Led by: Lenora Knapp, President, Knapp & Assoc.  
 Mike Niederpruem, VP Certs, Amer. Health Info Mgmt Assoc  
 Liz Burns, Juniper Networks

- What assumptions in certification industry still hold true?
- What has changed?
- What are trends?
- What are implications?
- Some findings, comments:
  - o Certifications exist to elevate status of occupation (not to protect public as originally conceived)
  - o KSAs change too quickly in workplace, so certs are too perishable
  - o Retiring boomers mean smaller market, fewer certs, less revenue
  - o More competition for cert exams mean decreased volume and revenues
  - o Decreased market value for cert exams
  - o More security breaches
  - o More social media means less candidate literacy
  - o Audience wants more spoon feeding
  - o Just-in-time learning means candidates don't know what skill sets are necessary for job
  - o Candidates don't want to spend time on exams, don't want to take different exams
  - o Candidates have too much to learn
  - o Increase in litigation
  - o Candidates want personal assessments
  - o Stakeholders are defining exams, not experts
  - o People want teaching to the test, instead of separation
  - o Certification can be a development partner, not just assess KSAs

- o Certification can be a business
- o Certification can lose its meaning with bad exams and rogue certification boards
- o Several companies **DO NOT certify competency! Disclaimer: “passing exam does not demonstrate competency”**

Off the record (private conversations):

- Novell charges stakeholders \$20K for developing M/C exams
- TIBCO:
  - o Architect exam is 5 days long
  - o 2 sections: Technical and biz solution
  - o Technical: make a tech solution work
  - o Defend business solution to a panel of judges
  - o Candidate pays own travel fees + \$10K test fee
  - o Panel of judges do not pay own travel (\$40K expenses)

### It's the Scoring, Stupid!

Clarence Chaffee, President, Calvert Group

Pat Grier, Lead Exam Clinical Specialist, ARDMS

- Testing objectives, not simulation technology, should drive problem development
- Are performance exams resulting in more info than an M/C test? (how many candidate judgments? Taking more time? Energy?)
  - Determining difficulty and reliability is difficult
  - Can scoring be done holistically instead of in pieces?
  - Problem design
    - o What do you want to test?
    - o Use appropriate method
    - o Test KSAs
    - o Have a context, scenario, problem statement
    - o Score all three
    - o State which tools and features are available
    - o Score and test design evolve together
  - Three ways to score advanced item types:
    - Computer simulation (but do not duplicate reality-it's just a test; sometimes simulation becomes just a fancy M/C test)
    - o Limit sims to 5 machine settings (out of 100) and limit active controls
    - o Don't test everything
    - Video/audio performance tests
    - Portfolio-based assessment (actual work products)

- o Two-part exam
- o Candidate must submit work products that match each JTA domain and indicate the location in each work product where content can be found
- o Candidate must submit a defensive argument
  - 4-pt grading scale: Pass, barely pass, barely fail, Fail
- o Panel of judges can be inconsistent, so train them, test them, calibrate them
- o If judges don't agree, change scenario until they do
- o Process should result in rationale for each judgment and score
- o Give partial credit
- o Hide the candidate's face to prevent judges from being prejudicial
  - Use JTA insights to drive market, use Biz goals, ROI: "profits sustain us but do not define us."

### Score Reports: the good, the Misinterpreted, and the Misleading

Russell Smith, Psychometrician, Alpine Testing Solutions

Sharla Nielsen, Program Manager, Alpine Testing Solutions

- Appropriate interpretation and use of test scores is at the core of validity
- Many programs want to provide detailed score reports in addition to pass/fail, but these can be misinterpreted or be misleading
  - So, do:
    - o Tell candidates about the different weightings between sections to prevent confusion
    - o Balance items at the section level per relative difficulty
    - o Establish different cut scores (one for each section)
    - o Provide subscore reports: Doesn't meet expectations/Meets expect'ns/Exceeds expect'ns, etc.
  - Do not:
    - o Don't tell candidates how many items/section
    - o Don't tell candidates how many they got wrong/right
    - o Do not report raw scores
    - o Do not have too few items (reduced validity)
  - Some companies give different reports: one for pass, one for fail
  - Some have delayed pass scores to check for cheating

### Low Volume Testing

Michael Yoes, Sr Psychometrician, Amer. Registry of Radiologic Technologists

Mark Raymond, Dir. Of Psychometrics

Ben Babcock, Psychometrician, Amer. Registry of Radiologic Technologists

- Almost all psychometrics are based on high volume samples, so small volumes are a challenge
  - o Just as expensive as high vol tests
  - o Very specialized, so low revenue
  - o Difficult for psychometrics, legal defensibility
  - o Difficult to conduct a JTA
  - o Increased political issues
  - Complications for low volumes:

- o is continuous testing appropriate?
- o Small homogenous groups = less variables
- o Are results skewed? Unstable statistics? (Babbage: "Using inadequate data is worse than no data at all.")
- o Difficult to evaluate changes, equate tests, establish performance standards
- o SMEs are critical: need proper tools, structured process for eliciting, collating, and evaluating judgments
- o Ideal JTA: large survey 200<N<2000; KSAs, work activities, blueprint but use alternative methods for low volume: analyze existing docs, JTA of similar occupations, small sample surveys, committee-based JTA, or combination of above
- Developing forms:
  - o Make similar in content & difficulty, word length, pictures, calculations, etc.
  - o Build to blueprint
  - o Item cloning strategies:
    - § Multiple correct answers (same stem, but diff correct answers on diff forms)
    - § Multiple incorrect answers (same stem, but diff incorrect answers on diff forms)
    - § Swap correct answer with the stem
    - § Use item shells (vary multiple factors)
  - o Make forms comparable – use item statistics analysis
  - o Don't make test available on daily basis – just a few days/month or year
  - o Delay passing scores, esp. for CBT exams
  - o Use a large committee (20) for standard setting

### Migrating Live Testing to an Interactive Computer Simulation

Lynn Andersen, Exec. Dir. JCAHPO

Michael Miller, Interactive Concepts

Andrew Nelson, Prometric

- Considerations:
  - o Scoring protocols
  - o Test design
  - o Tutorials (if audience is computer-naïve, such as medical personnel)
  - o GUI, algorithms
  - o Test administration and delivery
- Biz case for Simulations:
  - o standardization,
  - o increased reliability, fidelity
  - o decreased need for evaluators,
  - o decreased costs, litigation
- Simulation challenges:
  - o Fidelity
  - o Must give candidate ability to make mistakes
  - o Scoring
  - o Programming issues
  - o Validation
- Scoring design : Process II Step II Criteria II right/wrong/end state II Score

- o Allow them to try dials, but not out of order
- o Score after completing each section
- o Allow them to review and revise
- o Give them a start over feature
- Scoring solutions
- o Process score – weighted
- o Results score – accuracy of result
- o Combine process and results scores
- o Cut score
- Test validity
- o Review panel of SMEs
- o Do multiple pilots for usability, realignment, realism, face validity, computer scoring, use tracking mechanism (keystrokes, video, etc.)
- Recommendations
- o Need a dedicated team: psychometrician, sim developer, test admin, etc.
- o Ask if simulation is reasonable
- o Is it high fidelity?
- o Get agreement on judging criteria
- o Is it cost effective?
- o Is there good candidate PR?
- o Repeated validation?
- o Test development and programming expertise
- o Create algorithms for tracking both process and results
- o Score in blocks; some blocks must be completed before moving on
- o Tell them if they missed a step, but not what to do about it
- o Full help function available
- o Use multiple scenarios in exams, use multiple exams
- o Some M/C can be embedded
- o Determine what to do if they accidentally click on wrong things (and what is trigger mechanism?)
- o Starting values should allow candidate to start exams independently of each other (don't make one starting value depend on another)