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## Mobile assessment: Make it fair for everyone

*There's a growing demand for mobile testing but the tests have to be accurate, fair and compatible with the right devices, says Dr Achim Preuss.*



**cut-e Group**  
Großer Burstah 18-32  
20457 Hamburg  
Germany

www.cut-e.com  
E-mail: info@cut-e.com  
Phone: +49 40-3250 3890  
Fax: +49 40-3250 3891

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www.cut-e.com

## Mobile assessment: Get it right and mobile assessment can help you engage with wider talent pools and recruit your talent faster.

If you were asked to complete an online assessment test, would you take it via your computer, your tablet or your smartphone? The answer for most people would be the computer. But with the exciting prospect of mobile assessment, this could be about to change.

In today's organisations, there's a clamour to make everything accessible via mobile devices. Recruitment is no exception. According to a survey by [Glassdoor](#), 9 out of 10 job seekers now use a mobile device to search for jobs. And more employers and jobsites are making it easier for candidates to apply for roles directly from their phone or tablet.

The logical next step for employers is to allow candidates to take psychometric tests via mobile devices. This means that assessments can be completed much faster, which helps employers to identify and recruit high potential staff before their competitors. Increasingly, job seekers want the convenience of mobile assessment and employers are keen to put candidates in control and make it easy for them to complete their assessments whenever they want. However, two key challenges need to be overcome before this can happen. These are:

- **Compatibility:** The consumer marketplace is flooded with an ever-increasing number of phones and tablets, so each assessment will have to work equally well on every device. Regardless of whether someone is using an old iPhone or the latest android, the test has to be fair for all participants. The quality and responsiveness of their device should have no impact on the final test result. To achieve this, test providers must convert their online assessments to HTML5 (the web-page language standard) from Adobe Flash, which is not compatible with Apple iPads and iPhones.
- **Standardisation:** In assessment, the user experience is a deciding factor in whether a candidate engages with a potential employer. It's a delicate balance to create an aesthetic user experience on a mobile device, that doesn't compromise basic testing principles. There are so many variables, such as different sizes of screen, choices of orientation that affect the display of text and different ways to navigate and 'swipe' the screen. The implication here is that some tests may be unsuitable for smartphone screens as they have too much information to display. For example, time-critical ability tests, such as verbal and numerical reasoning.

These tests could, however, be delivered on tablets. These devices are still portable but they have a bigger screen, they're easier to type on and therefore more likely to provide an experience that's similar to a desktop.

It's therefore important to specify which devices candidates can use for each test. Just because you 'can' deliver your assessments on all devices doesn't mean you 'should'.

The goal with assessment is to gain accurate predictive analytics on a candidate's behaviour or cognitive ability so you can match them to a job objectively. We would argue that mobile assessment - on both phone and tablet - can successfully be used for many applications, such as for personality questionnaires, situational judgement questionnaires, 360-degree feedback, realistic job previews or career choice support.

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For example, we've helped a multinational organisation to develop an online assessment which analyses the preferences and strengths of school leavers and helps them choose the right apprentice training programme. 120 different programmes are available, so the results guide young people by suggesting which programme is best suited to their strengths. The assessment is not timed nor is it 'scored' in any way, making it highly suitable for mobile use.

If you're using assessments as part of your selection process, you have to give your candidates the fairest possible chance to succeed. That means there has to be a level playing field. Candidates should only be allowed to take assessments on devices that will provide comparable results. That way, you're not penalising people or jeopardising anyone's chances if some candidates complete the test via a computer and others use their mobile phone.

The beauty of using a mobile device for assessment is that candidates who are 'on the move' can complete the test when and where it is convenient for them. However, employers need to think carefully about what they're trying to achieve and consider the reality of how people use mobile devices. Get it right and mobile assessment can help you engage with wider talent pools and recruit your talent faster.



### About the author Dr Achim Preus

Since beginning his career 1989 in business psychology and applied computing science, Achim has run successful HR consultancy and IT-development projects for companies like Beiersdorf, Credit Suisse, DaimlerChrysler, L'Oreal, 3M and Siemens. Today Achim Preuss is managing director of international assessment specialist *cut-e*.

His main areas of expertise are job analysis, knowledge engineering, and e-HR with bespoke online assessment and development solutions. Over the years, he has published a number of articles and white papers on knowledge engineering, prediction methodologies and e-HR. Achim regularly speaks at psychometric and psychology conferences all over the world.

*cut-e* is world leader in the design and implementation of innovative online tests and questionnaires for recruitment, selection and development. *cut-e* helps companies identify people with the right capabilities and cultural fit to deliver optimal business results. *cut-e* carries out over 4 million assessments per year in over 70 countries and 40 languages.