



O*NET

Since its introduction to the public in December 1998, the Occupational Information Network (O*NET) has evolved. It has been reconfigured, gone online, and will now have its own career exploration tools.

O*NET provides occupational information for the Nation. The O*NET database is a flexible, skills-based system that describes job requirements and worker attributes, as well as the content and context of work, using over 400 variables. It uses a standard occupational coding system and gauges the transferability of skills, making it easy to create job clusters and explore career paths across clusters. A spring 1999 *OOQ* article, "Replace with a database: O*NET replaces the Dictionary of Occupational Titles" defines the structure and content of O*NET.

This update on the status of O*NET has three parts. First comes a look at its realignment and plans for future data collection. Next, the spotlight shines on the new Web-based version of O*NET. Finally, the self-directed career exploration and assessment tools developed by Team O*NET receive special attention.

Shifting shape, adding data

O*NET's flexibility has already enabled it to change and stay up to date, and it will continue to do so. The current version, O*NET 3.0, reflects a realignment of all O*NET occupations that makes them conform to the new Standard Occupational Classification (SOC). As a result of the realignment, the number of O*NET occupations has dropped from 1,122 to 956.

In addition, some of the variables for which O*NET offers data will change. The database contains hundreds of variables that describe the characteristics of work in different occupations and of the

workers employed in these occupations. Changes in some of these variables should improve the future quality and usefulness of the data. The next version of O*NET, scheduled for release in 2002, will include much of the same data as O*NET 3.0, but it will have a new structure that reflects the changed data variables. The changes will make it easier to collect new data.

To remain current, the O*NET program plans to collect data on a continuing basis. Survey data collection began June 15, 2001. The O*NET program will begin incorporating new data for surveyed occupations into the O*NET database in fall 2002.

New online access

Users may now access the wealth of O*NET occupational information via the Internet using a Web-based application. The address is <http://online.onetcenter.org>. The site is best viewed with a Javascript-enabled Web browser that supports frames, such as Netscape 4.0 or Internet Explorer 5.0. However, low-vision and text-only versions of the application can be viewed using almost any Web browser.

O*NET OnLine allows users to do many things. Here are a few:

- ◆ Find occupations to explore, searching by title or keyword
- ◆ Browse job families
- ◆ Search for occupations that use particular skills
- ◆ Identify related occupations
- ◆ View occupational snapshots, including the most important characteristics of the worker and requirements of the work
- ◆ View details of occupations, such as skills, knowledge, interests, activities, and occupation-specific tasks
- ◆ Use crosswalks to find O*NET occupations corresponding to occupations in other classification systems
- ◆ Connect to America's Career InfoNet

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update

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for occupational characteristics, such as employment outlook and earnings.

Career exploration tools

Team O*NET has designed a set of self-directed career exploration and assessment tools to help workers consider career options, prepare for work, and make career transitions. Students moving from school to work will also benefit from the tools. They include an Interest Profiler, a Work Importance Locator and Work Importance Profiler, and an Ability Profiler. They will allow users to relate their interests, work values, and abilities to specific occupations.

O*NET Interest Profiler. This tool helps people discover the broad interest areas most relevant to them. Users apply their interest results to explore the world of work. The Interest Profiler measures six types of occupational interests:

- ◆ Realistic
- ◆ Investigative
- ◆ Artistic
- ◆ Social
- ◆ Enterprising
- ◆ Conventional.

The O*NET Interest Profiler thus reflects the Holland RIASEC codes included in the interest portion of O*NET. The Interest Profiler has many strengths:

- ◆ Extensive research history
- ◆ Wide acceptance by counselors
- ◆ Ease of use
- ◆ Client input during all stages of development
- ◆ Construct validity and reliability
- ◆ Results that link to over 900 occupations in O*NET OnLine
- ◆ Approximately 30-minute completion time.

The Interest Profiler can be self-administered and self-interpreted and is useful as a stand-alone or with other O*NET Career Exploration Tools. The Profiler has a user guide for workforce development professionals.

O*NET Work Importance Locator and O*NET Work Importance Profiler. These instruments let users pinpoint what holds importance to them in a job. The Locator is a paper-and-pencil product that includes a card sort activity. The Profiler is an electronic version of the Locator. These tools help people identify occupations consistent with six types of work values:

- ◆ Achievement
- ◆ Independence
- ◆ Recognition
- ◆ Relationships
- ◆ Support
- ◆ Working conditions.

The strengths of the O*NET Work Importance Locator and O*NET Work Importance Profiler include:

- ◆ 30-year research history
- ◆ Input from interested parties during all stages of development
- ◆ Construct validity and reliability
- ◆ Extensive pilot testing
- ◆ Results that link to over 900 occupations in O*NET OnLine
- ◆ Approximately 30-minute completion time.

The Work Importance Locator can be self-administered and self-interpreted and is useful as a stand-alone or with other O*NET Career Exploration Tools. The Locator also has a user guide for workforce development professionals.

O*NET Ability Profiler. Students and workers may use the Ability Profiler to identify their strengths and occupations associated with those strengths. The profiler also helps individuals identify areas in which they might want more training and education. It measures nine job-related abilities:

- ◆ Verbal ability
- ◆ Arithmetic reasoning
- ◆ Computation
- ◆ Spatial ability
- ◆ Form perception
- ◆ Clerical perception

- ◆ Motor coordination
- ◆ Manual dexterity
- ◆ Finger dexterity.

The Ability Profiler can be administered to individuals or groups. It has both paper-and-pencil and apparatus sections. Users may opt to take the paper-and-pencil sections only. The testing time for the paper-and-pencil portion is about one and a half to two hours. The testing time for the paper-and-pencil and apparatus portions combined is about two to three hours. Results are presented on computer-generated score reports, are easily interpreted, and can be linked to the over 900 occupations in O*NET OnLine.

The Ability Profiler was developed following stringent scientific procedures with help from users and experts in assessment research. It can be used with other assessment tools.

The O*NET Interest Profiler and the O*NET Work Importance Locator are now available from the U.S. Superintendent of Documents as paper-and-pencil products. The O*NET Ability Profiler is expected to be available by the end of 2001. Certain components of all three tools (score reports, master lists of occupations, and user's guides, along with documentation and supplementary reports) will be available for download via the Internet. In the future, complete versions of the Interest Profiler and the Work Importance Profiler will be available in electronic form.

For more information about the various components of each product, go to <http://www.doleta.gov/programs/onet/description.asp>. To order, follow the link to <http://bookstore.gpo.gov>. For additional information and updates on O*NET and related products, visit <http://www.doleta.gov/programs/onet/> or <http://www.onetcenter.org>.

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