BS7988 - TIME FOR A REVIEW?

(CONTRIBUTION TO PANEL DISCUSSION ON 'THE ROLE OF STANDARDS IN CAA: SUCCESS OR FAILURE?')

Christine Ward, Steve Lay and David Keech

BS7988 - Time for a review?
(Contribution to Panel Discussion on 'The role of standards in CAA: success or failure?')

Christine Ward,
Ward Educational Consulting,
ward.education@btopenworld.com;

Steve Lay,
UCLES,
S.W.Lay@ucles-red.cam.ac.uk;

David Keech,
BSI,
David.Keech@bsi-global.com

Abstract

BS 7988, A Code of Practice for the use of information technology (IT) in the delivery of assessments, was developed during 2001 and published in March 2002. The relevant BSI panel is now considering the need for a revised version. This paper invites comments on the need for revision and poses some questions for discussion.

Introduction

BS 7988, A Code of Practice for the use of information technology (IT) in the delivery of assessments, was published as a Draft for Public Consultation in late 2001 and in its final version in March 2002. Since then there has been a rapid growth in the use of IT in testing and further development of the technology. The relevant BSI panel (which is a sub-committee of IST/43 Information Technology for learning, education and training) is now considering the need for a revised version of the Code of Practice.

This part of the Panel Discussion on the Role of Standards in CAA will provide an opportunity for members of the CAA community to put their views on the Code of Practice for consideration by BSI.

Some points for discussion are listed below, but all contributions to the debate are welcome. Comments are invited particularly from:

- those with experience of implementing BS 7988
- those who have decided that BS 7988 in its present form does not match their requirements.

BS 7988 – success or failure?

Is BS 7988 succeeding in its aim of:

- ensuring that delivery and scoring are fair to all candidates
- showing that the validity of an assessment is not compromised by IT delivery
- ensuring that delivery is secure, where this is necessary
- establishing consistency across awarding bodies?

Or is it inhibiting innovation?

Up to date?

Is BS 7988 up to date in respect of:

- technological developments
- developments in CAA methodology, for example types of assessment or item
- the ways in which CAA is used
- references to other standards and to legislation?

A need to extend the scope?

Does the scope of BS 7988 need to be extended in any way, for example to cover:

- other types of assessment; there have been some discussions with the British Psychological Society about the possible extension of BS 7988 to IT-delivered psychological testing
- earlier stages in the life cycle of an assessment, specifically the use of IT in test or item development
- automatic scoring of free text
- 'e-marking' (in which candidate scripts are scanned and distributed electronically for IT-based marking, by human markers); the Panel view is that inclusion of e-marking would probably be premature.

The authors

Steve Lay is chair of the BSI Panel for BS 7988. David Keech of BSI is Secretary to the Panel and to the parent committee IST/43. Christine Ward is a member of the Panel.