

Case Study

Korean World Cup Organizing Committee

The Need for a Spoken Language Test

The Korean Organizing Committee for the 2002 FIFA World Cup Korea/Japan was responsible for one of the world's premier sporting events. The first Asian-hosted World Cup was expected to draw over 1.5 million attendees from around the world. To run the event, the Organizing Committee needed more than 16,000 volunteer workers at ticket counters, parking lots, stadiums, information kiosks, and first-aid stations. Many of these workers would need to communicate with visitors in a language other than Korean, and the Committee designated English as the event's second language.

Requirements

To assign the appropriate workers to the most English-intensive tasks, the Committee needed a test to measure the English speaking and listening abilities of its volunteers. The challenge seemed overwhelming: the Committee had only one week to test thousands of volunteers who lived across Korea. They needed quick results, but did not want to sacrifice accuracy for speed. Human rated tests were judged to be overly time consuming, too expensive and subjective.

The Solution: The Versant Test

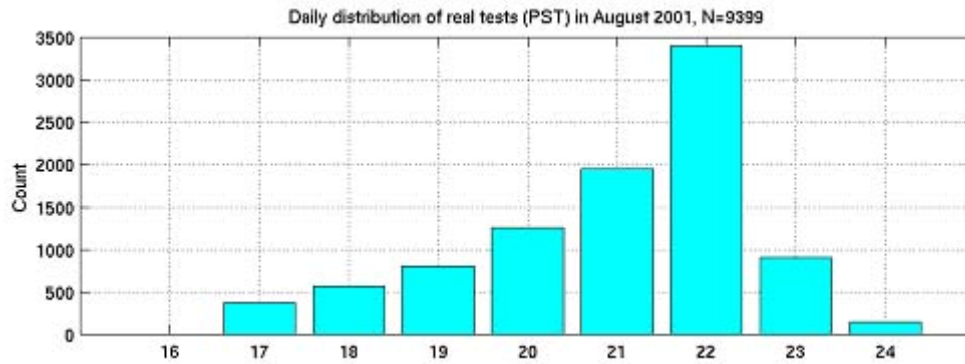
The Organizing Committee found its solution in Versant – a fully automated, cost effective, highly accurate test that could be taken at any time from any phone in Korea. Versant tests are easy to implement: a candidate makes a toll-free phone call and interacts with an automated voice response system. In minutes, Versant technology makes thousands of measurements of the candidate's spoken responses to determine the candidate's ability to understand spoken English and speak it at a native conversational pace. Scores are available within minutes of completing the test, and are as accurate as any other spoken English test available.

Test Administration

The Organizing Committee selected a one-week period in which the testing would take place. Local members distributed materials to volunteers at 10 locations in the Republic of Korea. The tests were provided in numbered administrative batches, so that local committees could manage the distribution of test materials and carefully track the testing process. Because the test papers were printed with instructions in Korean and practice tests were made available on demand to all candidates, test administration was simple and straightforward, with minimal support required from the Versant team and its Korean distributor.

Testing Infrastructure

The Committee carried out the entire testing process in Korea, including printing the test materials, managing telephone call traffic, maintaining the Versant Test Delivery System (TDS), and managing and posting scores. Telephone traffic was handled by two TDS servers, each attached to a 30-line E1 digital service line from Korean Telecom. The graphs illustrate that about 90% of the volunteers with command of English were tested in the scheduled six-day period (17-22). Six days were set aside for testing, but one-third of the volunteers waited until the last day to take the test. Despite the particularly heavy load, the Versant testing system handled all calls without a problem. All test scores were returned on the day of test administration.



Conclusion

With Versant, the Korean World Cup Organizing Committee was able to administer 15,000 tests to their geographically dispersed volunteers within one week. Candidates completed the calls with a minimal time investment, and the Committee did not have to spend excessive amounts of money on proctoring or human grading and felt confident that the scores they received were completely objective and accurate. The range and distribution of scores formed a clear and reliable basis for assigning volunteer workers. Following the successful use of Versant by the Korea World Cup Organizing Committee, Versant tests have been used for hiring and screening for numerous other international events including the 2002 Asian Games in Busan, South Korea and the 2005 World Expo in Aichi, Japan.