Chapter 1
Overview and Benefits of Visual Assessments

ABSTRACT

This chapter presents a motivation for why it is essential that assessments move toward incorporating images, whether in conjunction with text, or instead of text. A discussion of the motivation stemming from a technologically savvy and media saturated generation with limited attention span general creates a need to update the thinking around assessments. This discussion is followed by an overview of what visual assessments are, and how they have been used historically. The benefits of visual assessments are detailed along with the limitations of visual assessments. A discussion of the power of images over text are presented along with familiar examples of how we use images to communicate information in a clear, concise and quick fashion are presented. The chapter concludes with examples of some visual assessments in use, although greater detail is reserved for Chapter 2.

WHY VISUAL ASSESSMENTS?

Online quizzes are all over the Internet. Anyone on social media has encountered quizzes named "Where should you live?" or "What kind of dog would you be?" These quizzes are extremely popular, and range from interesting to absurd. BuzzFeed is responsible for many of these popular quizzes, and even the most absurd ones get attention. For example, there is a quiz entitled "Pick A Disney Sidekick And We'll Predict When You'll Get Married." The most

popular story of 2013 in the New York Times was an article about the quiz designed to determine where you live based on how you pronounce certain words (Meyer, 2014). While most people likely understand that these quizzes are just for fun, and not scientific, it does not stop them from taking them, and sharing their results with their friends on social media. The BuzzFeed quiz "Which State Do You Actually Belong In" got over 40 million views (Associated Press, 2014).

Why are these quizzes so popular, even if they have no scientific merit? There are many blog posts that explore this question, and one important aspect of these quizzes being popular is the ability to share the results on social media (Associate Press, 2014). Some of the most popular quizzes are personality quizzes, with 70% of the top 100 quizzes being personality quizzes (Haynam, 2014). While personality quizzes are not new, their popularity and people's enthusiasm for them is. According to the New York Post, one of the reasons these personality quizzes are so popular is that "Those questions are easier to answer than a real personality test…It's very easy to say, 'This is the candy that I like, this is the movie that I like.' You can turn it into some information about yourself—without actually doing the hard work of really thinking hard about yourself" (Associate Press, 2014)

When tracking the most popular features of the top 100 quizzes, Haynam (2014) noted that 90% of them used images in the questions, and 100% used images in the results. Further, 75% of the traffic is from social media (Tamkin, 2014). Historically, personality quizzes, even in popular culture venues such as Seventeen Magazine, have been text-based questions rather than image-based questions, and were less interactive, since they were presented in print rather than on computer. The introduction of technology, making the quizzes more visually appealing, easier to answer with less introspection, and social media, allowing the results to be shared immediately, and with everyone, appears to have created a phenomenon that people just can't get enough of.

A New Generation

In addition to the new presentation of information as quizzes, people are changing along with the technology. There is now a generation of people who have been raised with technology, and are avid consumers of this technology. They are active on social media, and have become accustomed to the flair that it is provided through technology. According to InSites Consulting, Generation Y, or Millennials, belongs to 2.5 social media networks on average, and

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