

The O*NET System for Career Development Professionals

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The US Department of Labor has produced a comprehensive, updated, and high-quality system of occupational information and supporting tools. These tools are available without cost to career educators, career development facilitators, career counselors and their students/clients.

O*NET has several components. It is a database of about 1000 occupations along with very detailed characteristics about the occupations that are supplied by employees and employers. The database is dynamic in that each year, about 15-25 percent of the information is updated. The database is in English and Spanish.

For ease of use, the database information has been transformed into a user-friendly, Internet-based system called O*NET Online. O*NET Online identifies occupations and their characteristics through keyword searches, occupational title searches, skill searches, and searches by job family. The occupational information provided on this website includes tasks, skills, knowledge, abilities, work activities, work context, job zones (amount of education, training, and experience required by the occupation), interests, work styles, work values, related occupations, and wages and employment. O*NET Online can be accessed via <http://online.onetcenter.org>.

As part of the system, three, high quality career exploration assessment tools have been produced – the Interest Profiler, the Work Importance Profiler, and the Ability Profiler. The Interest Profiler measures a person's interests according Holland's Vocational Personality Theory. The Work Importance Profiler measures six areas of importance according the Dawes' and Lofquist's theory of work adjustment. The Ability Profiler measures several constructs of importance to workforce skills. It includes psychomotor and non-psychomotor assessments. These assessments come in paper-and-pencil format and two of the three instruments can be downloaded in computerized form from the O*NET website.

Other supporting tools of interest to career development professionals include:

- a resume tutorial which takes a person through the development process of a skills-based and chronological resume. It also provides information on how to transfer a curriculum vita into a resume;
- a resume builder that helps a person create and store various resume versions that are tailored to different jobs and occupations; the resumes can be retrieved, updated, and used as necessary;
- instructions on how to develop cover letters for one's resume;
- a contact manager that helps a person keep track of the people met and contacted in the process of a job search;
- a financial aid search which indicates if a person will qualify for financial aid and where to find this assistance;
- a college search that allows a person to specify criteria such as geographic location, type of

program, type of school, and uses that information to link to information about the colleges or universities that meet those criteria;

- a job bank that generally holds about 1.3 million job openings with the opportunity, in many cases, to apply online;
- a job scout that will provide an electronic notification of jobs that meet a person's criteria;
- a job description writer that makes it easy for workforce development professionals and employers to create a function-based job description tailored to a particular job opening and based on established skills and tasks of an occupation;
- the availability of 450 high quality videos, each providing an overview of the occupation, its requirements, and its importance to the US economy;
- information on wages and the occupational outlook for states and the nation as a whole;
- a skills gap analysis that allows a person to specify their skills, the degree of proficiency of their skills, and then compare that information to the requirements of any occupation resulting in identifying training needs where applicable; and
- a scholarship search that can link a person to available financial aid for use in further education and training.

Webinars (Internet seminars) are offered each month to help people learn how to use these tools. All you need is Internet access and a telephone. Webinars that are periodically delivered include:

- Whole Person Assessment (provides an overview of all three assessment instruments)
- How to Download and Use the Computerized Interest Profiler and Work Importance Profiler (helps career development professionals download the computerized instruments for use on their own machines)
- Preview of the O*NET Ability Profiler (an overview of the Ability Profiler)
- How to Administer the Ability Profiler (specification on the particulars for administering this standardized instrument)
- How to Interpret and Use Ability Profiler Results (a review of the score report and how the information links to occupations)
- O*NET Tools for Job Seekers and Students (a review of various job and career tools)
- O*NET Tools for School Counselors (various components that can be used by school counselors)

There are many websites related to these products and services. Start with <http://online.onetcenter.org>. This portal will eventually bring you to many of the services and tools mentioned above. If you wish to receive notifications of the webinars as they are scheduled, submit your name, email address, and organization name to Bob Jacques at bjacques@mahernet.com. These webinars are delivered by NCDCA member, Dr. Janet Wall (sagesolutions@earthlink.net).

Dr. Janet E. Wall is President of Sage Solutions, a small company that offers consulting services in the areas of career development, career and educational assessment, program evaluation, and technology. She is author of "What Do I Like to Do?: 101 Activities to Identify Interests and Plan for Careers" and is co-editor of "Measuring Up: Assessment Issues for Teachers, Counselors, and Administrators" both published by Pro-Ed, Inc. She has been instrumental in developing the ASVAB Career Exploration Program and DISCOVER. Contact her at sagesolutions@earthlink.net.

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