

Creativity and innovation – breakthrough online assessment

sparks is the first online assessment to identify those with the potential to innovate and be creative

Innovation: the holy grail of today's organisation

Innovation is seen as a critical factor in gaining competitive advantage whether it's through improvements to business processes, enhancements to products or services or by entering new markets. But to innovate requires creativity and the ability to put creative ideas into practical use. And businesses are now looking to identify those with the potential to be creative – and to innovate – in their initial online selection processes.

The challenge of assessing creativity

By its very nature creativity is hard to measure and pin down. Tests of creativity in the past have focused on problem solving where a single answer is sought – but this format seems to go against the concept of creativity as, once a test taker knows the correct answer, creativity is no longer measured but the ability to remember the right response! Business scenario problem-solving has also been used to unearth creativity but again the challenges of ensuring the scenarios' use is not compromised through exposure via the Internet makes this an impractical approach when used online.

Other tests of creativity have been more successful as they have allowed the generation of ideas and images but these too have limitations as have been dependant on the drawing skills of candidates and require time-intensive scoring resource of test administrators – again, impractical for online administration.

But the assessment landscape for creativity has changed.

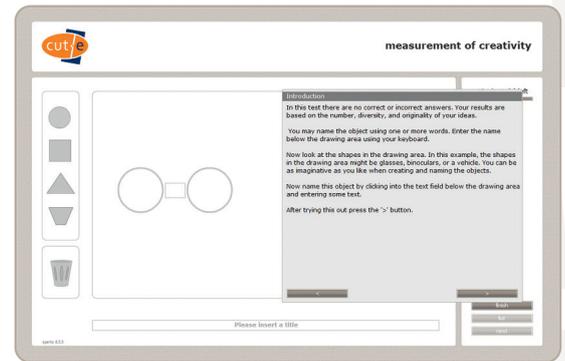
What makes sparks different?

We've looked at and researched what works and what doesn't when it comes to both assessing creativity and assessing online. We've combined this expertise to create *sparks* – the first online tool capable of identifying creativity during selection in a valid, reliable and practical way.

How sparks works

Presented with an object or shape on-screen, test-takers are asked to produce a picture or image by using some or all of a selection of other shapes given – and to then provide this created picture with a specific title, before moving on to the next set of shapes. The shapes can be re-sized, re-positioned and rotated – and it's a timed test so test-takers continue to work through the screens. It's straightforward, delivered online and completed in 15 minutes.

Scoring is immediate and carried out by various artificial intelligent (AI) components that interact with each other and image titles are checked for sense through an AI component interfacing to Google.



Screenshot: example of a sparks test by cut-e

What sparks measures

sparks provides the test user with norm-based scores for the three scales of:

- **Fluency** – Addresses issues with determination and works quickly; is able to develop many ideas and alternative solutions to a problem
- **Flexibility** – Adapts to new challenges; does not stop at the first solution, but finds others
- **Originality** – Does not let instructions and prerequisites restrict own thinking; follows own convictions; develops fresh ideas; makes uncommon connections

Using sparks alongside other tools to predict innovation

sparks measures creativity. But creativity alone does not lead to innovation and other factors play a role. Ideas need to be generated (creativity) but the practical, logical application of the ideas and the tenacity, initiative and communication skills to implement the ideas leads to 'innovation'. If *sparks* is being used in diagnostic decision-making – such as in selection situations – it's important that it isn't used in isolation and other tools from our Innovation Suite are used.

The Innovation Suite combines *sparks* with:

- a personality tool (*cut-e's shapes*) and
- a test of abstract, logical thinking (*scales 1st*).

With these three instruments together, you are able to obtain a score across all the stages of the innovation process.

Available languages & norm groups

sparks is available in multiple languages and additional language versions are being added as part of the development plan. The international and local sets of norm groups and language versions are continually updated.

cut-e is a world leader in the design and implementation of innovative online tests and questionnaires for recruitment, selection and development. *cut-e* helps companies identify people with the right capabilities and cultural fit to deliver optimal business results. *cut-e* carries out over 12 million assessments per year in over 70 countries and 40 languages.

