

Assessment Council News (ACN)

President's Message

*By Michael Blair, Past IPAC President
(on behalf of Liz Reed, IPAC President)*



May 2015

Welcome fellow IPACers to another edition of our quarterly Assessment Council News! This edition brings you up to date on our annual conference plans and our new journal, as well as providing staple features like our Legal Watch and Personnel Assessment Challenges columns.

Inside the IPAC Board

The IPAC Board has been active in 2015 working on a variety of projects to benefit members, partners, and the broader assessment community. We recently expanded our website database capabilities to allow us to continue to grow and retain information on members, former members, conference attendees, and vendors. The Personnel Assessment Decisions (PAD) journal has added a practitioner focused paper section which will focus on best practices and innovations to complement the research driven content of the journal. The Board has been updating our policy and procedure manual to help future board members and committee chairs carry out their functions and ensure continuity from year to year. We are exploring a potential partnership with the Personnel Testing Council of Metropolitan Washington (PTCMW) to bring additional content and services to our members, while providing additional support for their organization. Finally, we have been discussing succession planning for our leadership and committee roles to better prepare IPAC for transition as terms come to an end and our volunteers move on to new activities.

IPAC 2015 Conference Registration

Registration for the 2015 conference is now open! Please register by June 21, 2015 to take advantage of the early registration rate. Visit the [conference registration page](#) for more information, including hotel accommodations. Registration for the pre-conference workshops is also underway. Early registrations for the workshops offer a substantial savings, so reserve your seat today via the [pre-conference workshop page](#).

IPAC 2015 Conference: Hot Topics and Cool Solutions

Our conference theme this year is *Hot Topics and Cool Solutions*. The theme showcases the innovation and leadership demonstrated by IPAC for I/O and HR practitioners, as well as playing on the summer weather in Atlanta. Prior conferences have set the bar high with great content, exceptional speakers, and fun networking and social events. The 2015 conference will continue this trend thanks to efforts of Matisha Montgomery, Rebecca Fraser, and the local host

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committee. The events planned for Atlanta this year will be an outstanding opportunity for students, assessment professionals, and HR practitioners to network, learn, and share information on hot topics and cool solutions in a friendly and fun environment. We have a terrific slate of plenary speakers, pre-conference workshops, concurrent sessions, and social events designed to encourage a wide variety of learning experiences. Read more below and access our [conference website](#) pages for complete details.

This year IPAC is bringing you seven exciting pre-conference workshops covering topics as diverse as legal trends, recruitment and selection, situational judgement tests, and successful teleworking. Full details can be found on the [pre-conference workshop page](#) or simply select a link below to register for a specific workshop.

- [Legal Update: What you need to know as a HR selection and assessment professional](#), half-day workshop Sunday morning, facilitated by Eric Dunleavy and Emilee Tison of DCI Consulting.
- [A Primer on Job-Relatedness and Reasonable Alternatives](#), half-day workshop Sunday afternoon, facilitated by Eric Dunleavy and Emilee Tison of DCI Consulting.
- [Know the Goal: How to Develop Performance Elements and Write Performance Standards](#), half-day workshop Sunday morning, facilitated by Rebecca Ayers and Amanda Custer, of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management.
- [Making Telework Work: Evaluating and Measuring Telework Program Success](#), half-day workshop Sunday afternoon, facilitated by Megan Arens and Kate McGrath of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management.
- [Integrating Affective Decision-Making Competence into Leadership Development](#), half-day workshop Sunday morning, facilitated by Magda du Preez of Informed Talent Decisions.
- [Getting the Right People on Board: Recruitment and Selection](#), half-day workshop Sunday afternoon, facilitated by Harry Brull of PDI Ninth House.
- [Situational Judgment Tests in Action](#), full-day workshop Sunday, facilitated by Ryan O'Leary and Greg Haudek of PDRI, a CEB Company.

Sunday evening, following the workshops, plan on joining IPAC President Liz Reed and the IPAC Board for the President's Welcome Reception and social hour. A fitting way to transition from the workshops (or the Atlanta airport) to the full conference starting on Monday morning. This year's conference includes [five plenary speakers](#) addressing a variety of hot topics:

- ***Changes in Workers and Work: Implications for Staffing Modern Organizations***, Brian Hoffman, Ph.D. Associate Professor, Chair I/O Psychology Program, University of Georgia (Mon 7/20/15 at 9:00 AM)
- ***The Predictor Method-Change Approach to Reducing Subgroup Differences: True Method Effects or Camouflaged Construct-Change Effects?***, Winfred Arthur, Jr., Ph.D., Professor of Psychology and Management, Texas A&M University (Mon 7/20/15 at 3:30 PM)
- ***The Federal Government: The Place to be for Hot Topics and Cool Solutions***, Ann Quigley, M.A., Deputy Chief, Strategic Workforce Planning, Office of the Director of National Intelligence (Tues 7/21/15 at 9:00 AM)
- ***Big Data and Big Challenges in Managing the Legal Risk of your Assessments***, Kathleen Lundquist, Ph.D., President and CEO, APTMetrics (Tues 7/21/15 at 3:30 PM)
- ***Gamification: Leveling Up to Personnel Selection***, Mike Fetzer, Ph.D., Global Director, Advanced Assessment Technologies, CEB (Wed 7/22/15 at 10:30 AM)

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For full conference details, including plenary speaker bios, workshop and plenary abstracts, and registration and hotel information, please see the [conference page](#) on the IPAC website (www.ipacweb.org).

Calling on Cars!

IPAC cannot exist without you, our members. For our organization to remain vibrant and grow, we need our members to actively participate throughout the year, not just at our annual conference. Opportunities abound including:

- Submit an article, column, or commentary, for publication in the Assessment Council News. ACN continues to bring us up to date, cutting edge, and innovative content that expands the field of assessment. It is a great venue to follow-up on a presentation or poster from a professional conference. For information on how to submit an article, see the *About ACN* section of this newsletter or the [ACN page](#) on our website.
- Submit a research article or practitioner paper for the official IPAC journal, *Personnel Assessment and Decisions*. The journal continues to take shape, but needs more content for the inaugural release scheduled for later this year. More information is available on the [official journal website](#).
- Join our members and readers in one or both of IPACs discussion forums. The [IPAC listserv](#), continues to be a viable outlook for communication and knowledge sharing in today's world of blogs and tweets and our [IPAC LinkedIn group](#) continues to offer a growing discussion format.

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Dennis A. Joiner and Associates

Helping employers identify the best candidates since 1977

916.967.7795 - www.joinertests.com - info@joinertests.com

SITUATIONAL JUDGMENT TESTS

candidates are given hypothetical situations and are asked to choose the best course of action.

PROMOTIONAL WRITTEN TESTS

assess candidates' knowledge of job related source material.

ASSESSMENT CENTERS

allow candidates to demonstrate job-related dimensions of performance in job simulation exercises that replicate important situations that occur on the job.

Additional information about these testing methods is available at www.joinertests.com.

LEGAL WATCH

*By Ryan O'Leary, PDRI a CEB Company
and Brian O'Leary, U.S. Government Retired, Independent Consultant*

SCOTUS Hears Oral Arguments in *EEOC v. Abercrombie & Fitch Stores, Inc.*

In February 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments challenging the 10th Circuit Court's reversal of summary judgment for the EEOC in *EEOC v. Abercrombie & Fitch Stores, Inc.* As previously discussed in this column, Abercrombie & Fitch allegedly refused to hire a 17-year old Muslim woman because her hijab (a veil often worn by a Muslim woman that covers the head and chest) violated the company's "look policy". The plaintiff in the case applied for a job and was wearing a hijab during the interview but did not say that, as a Muslim, she wanted the company to give her a religious accommodation that would allow her to wear the hijab once hired. The EEOC filed a Title VII lawsuit on behalf of the applicant in the U.S. District Court in Tulsa, Oklahoma arguing that Abercrombie & Fitch failed to provide a reasonable religious accommodation to the applicant. Employers are required to "reasonably accommodate" an employee's religious observances or practice unless such an accommodation would cause the employer "undue hardship". In July 2011 a jury awarded damages to the job applicant.

Abercrombie & Fitch appealed the ruling and in 2013 the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals reversed the ruling. The Court of Appeals found that Abercrombie & Fitch had not been informed of the applicant's religious beliefs in a manner sufficient to trigger its duty to offer an accommodation since the applicant never told the company, prior to its hiring decision, that she needed an accommodation for religious reasons, placing the burden on the applicant or employee to inform the employer both of the conflicting religious practice and of the need for an accommodation. Following the ruling, the EEOC filed a petition to the U.S. Supreme Court arguing that Title VII does not require an employee or applicant to explicitly state that a practice conflicts with his or her religious beliefs. At issue in the case is whether the applicant needed to explicitly say in the interview that she wore the hijab for religious reasons.

Numerous questions were raised during the oral arguments. Justice Alito stated "This is going to sound like a joke" and then asked the following question about four hypothetical applicants: "If a Sikh man wears a turban, a Hasidic man wears a hat, a Muslim woman wears a hijab, and a Catholic nun wears a habit, must employers recognize that their garb connotes faith – or should they assume that it is 'a fashion statement'?" In response to a statement made by Abercrombie's attorney suggesting that the com-

pany's dress code policy was applied neutrally and banned all head coverings, Justice Ginsburg indicated the policy's neutrality was the problem. She stated "Title VII requires them to treat people who have religious practice differently. They don't have to accommodate a baseball cap, they do have to accommodate a yarmulke." Many lay articles published in outlets such as the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *USA Today* report that the Supreme Court seemed sympathetic to the applicant's position that she should not have been required to make a specific request for religious accommodation to wear the hijab. However, as suggested by legal experts, it's hard to infer from oral arguments which way the Supreme Court will come down in its decision. So stay tuned!

SCOTUS Rules in *Young v. United Parcel Service*

In March 2015, the Supreme Court issued a decision (6-3) in *Young v. United Parcel Service (UPS)*, a case involving a claim that UPS failed to accommodate in violation of the Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PDA) of 1978. The PDA, enacted as an amendment to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, prohibits discrimination on the basis of pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions. The act also requires that, for all employment-related purposes, employers treat pregnant women the same as other non-pregnant employees who are similarly situated with regard to their "ability or inability to work". It is this second provision of the PDA that was addressed by the Supreme Court. At issue was whether a policy that accommodates some non-pregnant employees with medical conditions but that does not provide such accommodations to pregnant employees with similar medical conditions violates the second provision of the act.

Peggy Young was a part-time driver for UPS. She became pregnant and as a result of her pregnancy was restricted by her doctor from lifting more than 20 pounds. The job of a part time driver required lifting of up to 70 pounds. UPS refused to give her light duties to accommodate her and placed her on unpaid leave in 2006. At the time, UPS policies provided accommodations to employees in three categories: (1) employees injured on the job, (2) employees who had lost their Federal Department of Transportation certification to drive, and (3) employees who had disabilities as defined under the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). Because Young did not fall into any of these categories, UPS denied her request for light duty. UPS claimed that its policies complied with the PDA and that it was a

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pregnancy neutral policy. Young claimed the accommodation was required under the PDA and UPS's refusal to provide the accommodation was in violation of the act. She presented evidence that UPS had provided light duty to non-pregnant employees with lifting restrictions. A Federal District Court granted summary judgment for UPS finding that UPS' policy equally denied accommodations to pregnant and non-pregnant employees who did not fall into one of the three categories included in UPS' policy. As such, Young could not establish that she was treated less favorably than similarly situated non-pregnant employees. On appeal, a unanimous three-judge panel of the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed the lower court's decision and dismissed Ms. Young's case. Young then appealed to the Supreme Court.

In the high court, Young argued that when an employer accommodates even a small number of non-pregnant employees due to a medical condition they must also accommodate all pregnant women with a similar inability to work even if other non-pregnant employees are not accommodated. Justice Breyer wrote the majority opinion of the court in favor of Young that was joined by all three female justices and Chief Justice Roberts (Justice Alito separately concurred in the 6-3 judgment). The Justices seemed to reject both Young's broad interpretation of the PDA as well as UPS's arguments of a natural policy. However, the court then created a new test for how a violation of the accommodation provision of the PDA can be established stating: "A plaintiff alleging that the denial of an accommodation constituted disparate treatment under the Pregnancy Discrimination Act's second clause may make out a prima facie case by showing, as in *McDonnell Douglas*, that she belongs to the protected class, that she sought accommodation, that the employer did not accommodate her, and that the employer did accommodate others 'similar in their ability or inability to work'." If an individual makes this showing, then under this new test, the employer must demonstrate that its denial of the accommodation was based on a legitimate, non-discriminatory reason. However, Justice Breyer states, "consistent with the Act's basic objective, that reason normally cannot consist simply of a claim that it is more expensive or less convenient to add pregnant women to the category of those (similar in their ability or inability to work) whom the employer accommodates".

The Supreme Court vacated the Court of Appeals decision and concluded that Ms. Young can "create a genuine issue of material fact as to whether a significant burden exists by providing evidence that the employer accommodates a large percentage of non-pregnant women while failing to accommodate a large percentage of pregnant workers". Based on the decision Ms. Young can go back and argue her case in the Virginia courts. It should be noted that after the Supreme Court agreed to hear the case, UPS decided to change its policy to offer light duty to pregnant women.

SCOTUS Rules in *Mach Mining, LLC. v. EEOC*

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) received a complaint from a woman who claimed Mach Mining, LLC (Mach Mining) denied her a job because of her gender and determined there was reasonable cause to believe that the company had discriminated against female applicants. The EEOC claimed that Mach Mining, an Illinois-based firm that employs approximately 130 miners, violated Title VII since it failed to hire any female for non-office jobs since beginning their operation in 2006 despite receiving scores of applications from women, many of whom were highly qualified. In addition the company did not have any bathrooms or changing facilities for female miners. The EEOC began conciliation, but the parties could not agree and the EEOC filed suit on behalf of female applicants.

The case before the Supreme Court centered on the EEOC's conciliation process and had not discrimination against female applicants. When an employee files a discrimination complaint with the EEOC and the evidence gathered during the investigation establishes that there is "reasonable cause" to believe that discrimination has occurred, the EEOC is required by law to attempt to resolve the complaint through an informal conciliation process before taking the employer to court. During conciliation, the EEOC investigator is to work with the charging party and the organization to develop an appropriate remedy for the discrimination. However, what this conciliation process should entail and whether the courts have a say in whether the EEOC has met its obligations in the process were the real questions before the Supreme Court.

In the lower court, Mach Mining claimed the EEOC did not make a "good faith" attempt at conciliation as required by Title VII and argued for a federal court review of conciliation efforts. The EEOC responded that its actions before filing a lawsuit were not subject to judicial review and moved for summary judgment on whether failure to conciliate in good faith is a viable defense to unlawful discrimination. The district court denied the motion and held that courts may review the EEOC's informal settlement efforts to determine whether reasonable efforts were made by the EEOC to negotiate.

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The April 2015 decision by the high court was unanimous. Justice Kagan, authored the opinion stating in part, “By its choice language, Congress imposed a mandatory duty on the EEOC to attempt conciliation and made that duty a pre-condition to filing a lawsuit. Such compulsory prerequisites are routinely enforced by courts in Title VII litigation. And though Congress gave the EEOC wide latitude to choose which ‘informal methods’ to use, it did not deprive the courts of judicially manageable criteria by which to review the conciliation process.” She also wrote that Congress rarely intends to prevent courts from enforcing its directives to federal agencies.

However, the ruling sets a fairly low bar for the EEOC. The EEOC must notify the employer of the specific allegations in the complaint and make an attempt to resolve them either through meetings or letters. Justice Kagan writes “A sworn affidavit from the EEOC stating that it has performed these obligations should suffice to show that it has met the conciliation requirements.” On the other hand, if an employer has evidence that it never received notification or an opportunity to address a complaint, a court can intervene and conduct what Justice Kagan termed a “barebones review.” There seems to be mixed interpretations of this unanimous decision. Employers see the ruling as a victory for them while the EEOC see it as a victory since the courts may conduct only a “relatively bare-bones review” of its pretrial efforts.

City of Pittsburgh Settles Police Hiring Suit for \$1.6 million

In May 2015, the ACLU of Pennsylvania announced that it settled a class action suit against the City of Pittsburgh’s Bureau of Police. The lawsuit, *Foster, et al., v. City of Pittsburgh*, filed in 2012 on behalf of five African-American applicants who had been rejected for entry-level police officer positions, alleged the city had a long standing pattern and practice of discrimination against African-Americans in entry-level police officer screening and hiring. The City of Pittsburgh is approximately 66% White and 26% African American. The police force is approximately 85 % White. Since 2001, only about 4% of new hires were African American even though approximately 20% took the recent officer exam. The suit alleges the low percentage of African American hires is due to entrenched problems in the screening and hiring process including favoritism toward applicants with family and friends who are already on the police force (e.g., obtaining correct answers in advance of the exam, running alongside and cheering for favored candidates during physical fitness testing) and decisions based purely on subjective criteria (e.g., ratings based on dress, looks, and manner of speech).

In the spring of 2013, the parties agreed to suspend litigation and bring in an outside expert, Dr. Leaetta Hough, to review the hiring process and prepare a report. Her report indicated that “the overall system has an adverse impact on African-American applicants” and that “the system should be revised and improved”. The settlement agreement establishes a committee (composed of city officials, Dr. Hough, and plaintiff’s attorneys) to work for three years to correct the problems identified in the report and to address racial disparities in the city’s hiring process. The committee will examine each step in the selection process, including the: written test, oral boards, background checks, appeals process, and psychological review. The settlement also provides for the city to pay \$985,000 to African American applicants who took the police exam between 2008 and 2014 in addition to plaintiffs’ attorney fees.





2015 IPAC Annual Conference Atlanta, Georgia from July 19-22!

It's all about *Hot Topics* & *Cool Solutions* this year, and we have an exciting ensemble of keynote speakers:

- **The Predictor Method-Change Approach to Reducing Subgroup Differences: True Method Effects or Camouflaged Construct-Change Effects?** Winfred Arthur, Jr., Ph.D., Professor of Industrial/Organizational Psychology, Texas A&M University
- **Gamification: Leveling Up to Personnel Selection** Mike Fetzer, Ph.D., Global Director - Advanced Assessment Technologies, CEB
- **Changes in Workers and Work: Implications for Staffing Modern Organizations** Brian Hoffman, Ph.D., Associate Professor & Chair of the Industrial/Organizational Psychology Program, University of Georgia
- **The Federal Government: The Place to be for Hot Topics and Cool Solutions** Ann Quigley, M.A., Deputy Chief, Strategic Workforce Planning, U.S. Government
- **Big Data and Big Challenges in Managing the Legal Risk of your Assessments** Kathleen Lundquist, Ph.D., President and CEO, APTMetrics

In addition, IPAC is pleased to present a line-up of seven Pre-Conference Workshops to be held on July 19th. Through these workshops, attendees will be provided with insights into *Hot Topics* and practical tools for implementing *Cool Solutions*.

Half-Day Morning Workshops

- **Legal Update: What you need to know as a selection and assessment professional**
Eric Dunleavy, Ph.D. & Emilee Tison, Ph.D., DCI Consulting
- **Know the Goal: How to Develop Performance Elements and Write Performance Standards**
Rebecca Ayers, Ph.D. & Amanda Custer M.S., U.S. Office of Personnel Management
- **Integrating Affective Decision-Making Competence into Leadership Development**
Magda du Preez, Ph.D., Informed Talent Decisions

Half-Day Afternoon Workshops

- **A Primer on Job-Relatedness and Reasonable Alternatives**
Eric Dunleavy, Ph.D., & Emilee Tison, Ph.D., DCI Consulting
- **Making Telework Work: Evaluating and Measuring Telework Program Success**
Megan Arens, M.S. & Kate McGrath, M.S., U.S. Office of Personnel Management
- **Getting the Right People on Board: Recruitment and Selection**
Harry Brull, Ph.D., PDI Ninth House

Full-Day Workshop

- **Situational Judgment Tests in Action**
Ryan O'Leary Ph.D. & Greg Haudek, Ph.D., PDRI, a CEB Company

Please visit the 2015 Conference Home Page at www.ipacweb.org/2015 to find additional information. "Like" our Facebook page, follow us on LinkedIn or Twitter @ipacweb! #IPAClanta

Continuing Education at IPAC – SHRM & HRCI

IPAC has been designated as a Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) preferred provider. IPAC will offer Professional Development Credits (PDCs) for recertification for the new SHRM-CP and SHRM-SCP credentials.

To learn more about obtaining a SHRM certification visit:
www.shrm.org/certification



The 2015 IPAC Conference program and all Pre-Conference workshops will be submitted to the HR Certification Institute (HRCI) for review and pre-approval. This will allow IPAC to offer attendees continuing education (CE) credits toward their existing HRCI certification.

To learn more about obtaining an HRCI certification visit:
www.hrci.org

Registration & Hotel Information

We are excited to announce that registration is now open for the 2015 IPAC Conference! Register by June 21, 2015 to benefit from early bird registration rates. We invite you to join us for invaluable learning, career development, and networking opportunities. IPAC offers engaging, practical workshops, concurrent sessions, renowned keynote speakers, and fun social events. This unique conference experience shouldn't be missed!

Don't miss the any of the *Hot Topics* and *Cool Solutions* at the 2015 IPAC Conference in Atlanta, GA. Register today!

Visit the 2015 Conference Home Page and stay up-to-date on all the latest news and announcements.

The JW Marriott Buckhead will host the 2015 IPAC Conference. The hotel is located in the heart of a vibrant business, shopping and entertainment district. The JW Marriott Buckhead is connected to an upscale shopping center, Lenox Square, and is conveniently situated across the street from the Lenox MARTA station. The hotel's luxurious environment in Buckhead, Atlanta has been crafted for approachable leisure - located mere steps from Phipps Plaza, Legoland, fine dining, Buckhead spas and nightlife.

IPAC has negotiated two low rates for conference attendees. Public sector attendees will receive the GSA approved rate of \$135/night; all other attendees may reserve for \$169/night. To book your reservation, select the appropriate rate link at: www.ipacweb.org/hotel

R for Assessment Professionals

By Steven Tseng and Dennis Doverspike

A common issue that many assessment professionals struggle with is how to do more advanced statistical analysis on a very limited budget. My usual answer has been – buy SAS or SPSS. However, the usual reply is that purchasing such programs is beyond the limited budget of the city or relevant government jurisdiction. Most of us have access to Excel, but performing statistical analyses of tests using Excel can be clunky (a term of art if I have ever heard one) at best and can also lead to results that do not match those obtained from dedicated statistical software. There are a number of programs offered for free online, but they tend to have limited documentation and, again, may lead to results of questionable credibility.

However, for a growing number of researchers, especially the incoming generations of graduate students and professionals, there is a new answer – R. Although I am still an advocate of SPSS and SAS for many uses, I believe R is the future and also has features, such as being free, which are likely to appeal to many public sector assessment professionals.

In my personnel selection class, I require the graduate students to compete projects such as analyzing data for adverse impact and writing a summary, and analyzing test and criterion data to construct a validation report. Instead of using common statistical packages, they have used R to accomplish these basic tasks required of assessment professionals. So, R can be used to accomplish the type of activities that assessment professionals are asked to perform on a regular basis.

Therefore, I thought a short introduction to R was in order. I will note that this is not intended as an R primer, it is more of a brief teaser.

Being past my personal prime, I asked one of my graduate students, Steven Tseng, to join me in writing this issue's ACN column on R. I hope you find it informative. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

Why R? Why Not!

Assessment professionals whose work involves analyzing data and conducting statistical tests on a regular basis are probably familiar with well-known statistical packages such as SPSS and SAS. These commercial software packages have been a staple for data analysis in organizations, but recently, the open-source R has begun to take the spotlight. R is a programming language and open-source software package for statistical computing that has become a hot topic. Various disciplines in the sciences and social

sciences have started using R for research, and more organizations are recognizing the potential of R for analysis. This article briefly introduces the uses, advantages, and disadvantages of R in assessment and HR professions.

The capabilities of R are comparable to that of commercial software such as SPSS and SAS, and these capabilities are extended by a growing database of user-created add-on packages. These R packages are basically a collection of code that users wrote to perform certain tasks and shared to the public. As long as there is a package for some desired function, R can perform that function. Moreover, if there is no existing package for the desired function, the user can write the code and create the function themselves. With or without packages, R can be used to perform simple calculations and statistical functions such as correlations, regression analysis, significance testing, and more. It can be used to perform more complicated tasks as well, such as complex statistical modeling, and there are usually packages available for these advanced functions.

In applied settings, R code can also be written to evaluate adverse impact and assess reliability and validity of a selection test. Essentially, R calculates and returns answers to the written code and commands provided by the user.

Advantages of R

Why use R if it serves the same purpose as other commercially available packages? R has several advantages compared to its counterparts. One advantage is cost – R is free to use!

While organizations might spend a sizeable amount of money on software licensing for SPSS and SAS, R is available for use at no cost. This alone could be enough reason to consider R, especially for smaller organizations that may have a difficult time affording the popular commercial software.

Another advantage to R is the fact that it is open-source – users can share R packages that they wrote to the public for others to use, critique, and contribute. The combination of being free and open-source might explain the large, and still increasing, user base and the burgeoning of available packages. As a result, R currently has one of the largest, if not the largest, online communities for discussion and support on the internet. There are other, more technical, advantages to R as well, such as the availability of powerful graphics packages and the flexibility of the programming language, which will not be discussed here.

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Disadvantages of R

R is not without its disadvantages. Its command line interface and lack of graphical user interface requires users to be proficient in the programming language even for writing simple functions, making the learning curve for R quite steep. Becoming skilled enough to write R code for esoteric, field-specific functions often requires significant experience or training.

Beyond this and other technical aspects, there are some concerns and words of caution regarding R in applied settings. Due to the open-source aspect of R, there are doubts about the accuracy and trustworthiness of its user-created packages. On one hand, the open-source aspect of R makes it difficult to validate the accuracy of a package written by a stranger. On the other hand, it is advantageous that the code is publicly available and open to scrutiny, but this presupposes the availability of time and the expertise to understand both the programming language and the statistical procedures involved.

These concerns could make the acceptability of R in court and legal situations questionable. That being said, however, some regulatory agencies have openly expressed acceptance of R for analytical purposes. Nevertheless, professionals that choose to use R should exercise caution and ensure a complete understanding of the code and statistical procedure that they choose before proceeding with their work.

In sum, R is a developing alternative to other statistical software and a powerful tool that, with some effort in learning, can be used to enhance professional work involving data analysis. Getting started – go to the R home page at <http://www.r-project.org/>.

Notes

Steven Tseng is a first year Ph.D. student in the Industrial/Organizational Psychology program at The University of Akron. He attended and received his B.A. in Psychology from the University of California, Berkeley, where he was first exposed to R programming for research in the sciences. He is an enthusiastic user and a continuing learner of R and other statistical programs. Steven can be reached at stwt seng@gmail.com.

Dennis Doverspike is the Chair of the IPAC Professional and Scientific Affairs Committee. He is a Full Professor of Psychology at the University of Akron, Senior Fellow of the Institute for Life Span Development and Gerontology, and Director of the Center for Organizational Research. He holds a Certificate in Organizational and Business Consulting from the American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP) and is a licensed psychologist in the State of Ohio. He is a long term public employee and university professor. He can be reached at dennisdoverspike@gmail.com.





Don't miss these and many other amazing sessions at the upcoming 2015 IPAC Conference!

Participate in discussions around *Hot Topics* across the public and private sectors and learn about the *Cool Solutions* planned for the future or already underway. This year's concurrent sessions cover assessment development, video-based and online testing, legal issues, leadership assessment, talent management, and much more.

What *cool solutions* are your colleagues implementing? Screening programs, entry-level assessment centers, innovative physical abilities tests, and more. Don't miss this year's conference to learn more! Check out, *Calling all Stakeholders: Strategic Collaboration in HR System Development*.

Building a case for candidate assessment? Communicating ROI for human capital initiatives? Attend this year's concurrent sessions to hear the success stories, lessons learned, and recommendations from other professionals in personnel assessment. Don't miss, *Presenting a data driven business case for candidate assessment*.

Time to brush up your legal knowledge? The 2015 conference includes presentations on criterion validation, predictive efficacy of selection systems, and the latest testing standards, such as, *Optimal selection: Predictive efficacy and diversity fairness using Pareto-optimal selection systems*.

Want to hone your skills in assessment development? This year's conference offers numerous opportunities on topics such as assessment centers, in-baskets, and job knowledge tests! Gather best practices in sessions such as, *In-baskets: Development, Validity, and Utility*.

Wondering what's *hot* in online testing? Don't miss sessions discussing online testing practices, internet-based testing challenges, and mobile assessments, such as *Apples to oranges? Use and comparative scores for mobile and non-mobile selection assessments*.

Developing leadership talent in your agency? The 2015 conference provides a sampling of numerous leadership assessment, development, and talent management programs, such as, *The Development and Validation of "Leader" Profiles: Assisting the Canadian Armed Forces Talent Management Efforts*.

Curious about the latest and greatest survey development? Check out, *Three Text Analytics Techniques That Can Change Your Life—Or at Least Improve Your Surveys*.

All this and more July 19-22nd in Atlanta!



A sneak peak at some of our amazing sessions at the upcoming 2015 IPAC Conference!

Hiring in the Fast Lane (Walker, K., Ross, B., & Johnston, G., U.S. Secret Service)

The U.S. Secret Service utilizes an intricate hurdle hiring system to ensure it selects the most qualified applicants for entry level Special Agent and Uniformed Division Officer positions. This hurdle system has multiple steps and can take up to 12 months for some applicants to endure. Through the implementation of an Entry-level Assessment Center (ELAC) the U.S. Secret Service has expedited its hiring to fill triple the amount of classes in half the amount of time with qualified applicants. The ELACs provide the U.S. Secret Service with an influx of best qualified applicants that can then be further screened for best organizational fit by competency, ability to obtain security clearance, and meet the medical and physical requirements.

Recent Developments in the Application of Ideal Point Measurement Models for Personality Assessment (Carter, N., Williamson, R., Guan, L., & Siedor, L., University of Georgia)

Recent research suggests that ideal point measurement models are more appropriate for use in personality assessment in selection scenarios due to their ability to more correctly rank-order applicants. This talk will summarize research showing the advantages and disadvantages of using these models in personnel applications.

The Test is valid because I say it is valid (and other ways to lose in court) (Kuthy, J. & Patchell, H., Biddle Consulting Group, Inc.)

Test developers frequently assume the validation reports they produce demonstrate a practice, procedure, or test is "job related and consistent with business necessity" (Griggs v. Duke Power Co., 1971). However, they are often surprised when their evidence is found to be problematic when challenged in court. For example, we frequently review validation studies that inappropriately rely on techniques related to validity generalization or the "transportability" of content-related evidence, neither of which has been traditionally accepted by the courts. Other reports skip important steps in the validation process, while still others inappropriately rely on the test creator's reputation as evidence of its validity. During this session we will go over the process we use when reviewing the appropriateness of job analysis and validation studies to determine whether they address the requirements of the federal Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures, which is the standard that the EEOC and courts rely on.

An Innovative Succession Planning Program in the Federal Aviation Administration (Marrelli, A. & Patsfall, M., Federal Aviation Administration)

Formal succession planning is rare in Federal agencies. Regulations specific to government pose challenges that the private and non-profit sectors do not face. This paper will describe an innovative succession planning program developed by the Federal Aviation Administration and the structured assessment methods employed to ensure an objective, merit-based process.

Developing Knowledge-Based Written Exams – How to Maximize Reliability and Validity, and Minimize Challenges and Group Differences (Gotlib, T., Ergometrics)

This session will cover best practices for the development of knowledge-based multiple-choice written exams with the intent of educating attendees on how to maximize reliability and content validity, while minimizing challenges and group differences. The session will also give attendees an opportunity to practice writing test questions with the knowledge gained during the session and receive feedback.

Upcoming Conferences and Workshops

May

May 28-31 Labor and Employment Relations Association. Annual Meeting. Pittsburgh, PA. Contact: www.leraweb.org

June

June 2-5 American Association for Access, Equity, & Diversity. Annual Meeting. New Orleans, LA. Contact: www.aaaed.org

June 4-6 Canadian Psychological Association. Annual Convention. Ottawa, Canada. Contact: <http://www.cpa.ca>

June 8-12 University of Connecticut. Workshop. "Structural Equation Modeling." Storrs, CT. Contact: <http://www.datic.uconn.edu>

June 10 PTCMW. LATE AFTERNOON MEETING (3:30 - 5:00 pm). Speaker to be announced. McCormick & Schmick's Restaurant, Crystal City, VA. Contact: www.ptcmw.org

June 10 NY Metro Association of Applied Psychology. Dinner Meeting. Dr. Charles Scherbaum, Baruch College, CUNY. Topic to be announced. New York, NY. Contact: <http://metroapppsy.com>

Jun 17-19 University of Connecticut. Workshop. "Meta-Analysis." Storrs, CT. Contact: <http://www.datic.uconn.edu>

Jun 22-29 Human Capital Institute. Conference. "Strategic Talent Acquisition." Boston, MA. Contact: www.hci.org

**Jun 28-
July 1** Society for Human Resource Management. Annual Conference. Las Vegas, NV. Contact: www.shrm.org

July

July 19-22 International Personnel Assessment Council. Annual Conference. Atlanta, GA. Contact: www.ipacweb.org

July 22 PTCMW. LATE AFTERNOON MEETING (3:30 - 5:00 pm). Dr. Kathleen Kappy Lundquist, APTMetrics, Darien, CT. Topic to be announced. McCormick & Schmick's Restaurant, Crystal City, VA. Contact: www.ptcmw.org

July 27-29 Human Capital Institute. Conference. "Employee Engagement." San Francisco, CA. Contact: www.hci.org

July 28-31 Industry Liaison Group & OFCCP. National Conference. New York, NY. Contact: <http://nationalilg.org>

(Some of the information in this calendar was reprinted with permission from the PTC/MW Newsletter calendar which was compiled by Lance W. Seberhagen, Seberhagen & Associates, sebe@erols.com.)

Upcoming Conferences and Workshops

August

- Aug 6-7** American Psychological Association. Annual Convention. Toronto, Canada. Contact: www.apa.org
- Aug 7-11** Academy of Management. Annual Conference. Vancouver, Canada. Contact: www.aonline.org
- Aug 8-13** American Statistical Association. Annual Convention. Seattle, WA. Contact: www.amstat.org
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September

- Sept 15-16** Hogan Assessments. Workshop. "Hogan Advanced Interpretation." Atlanta, GA. Contact: www.hoganassessments.com
- Sept 15-19** International Association for HR Information Management. Conference. "HR Management Strategies." Atlanta, GA. Contact: <http://ihrim.org>
- Sept 16-18** Human Capital Institute. Conference. "Learning and Leadership Development." Chicago, IL. Contact: www.hci.org
- Sept 17-19** Council on Licensure, Enforcement & Regulation. Educational Conference. Boston, MA. Contact: www.clearhq.org
- Sept 26-30** International Public Management Association for Human Resources. Annual Conference. "International Training Forum & Expo." Denver, CO. Contact: www.ipma-hr.org
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October

- Oct 2-3** Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology. Leading Edge Consortium. "Performance Management and How to Build High-Performance Organizations." Boston, MA. Contact: www.siop.org
- Oct 7-9** Society for Human Resource Management. Conference. "Emerging Leaders." San Antonio, TX. Contact: www.shrm.org
- Oct 13-15** Society for Human Resource Management. Conference. "Diversity & Inclusion." New Orleans, LA. Contact: www.shrm.org
- Oct 17-20** Organization Development Network. Annual Conference. Portland, OR. Contact: www.odnetwork.org
- Oct 18-20** Organization Development Network. Annual Conference. Portland, OR. Contact: www.odnetwork.org/?page=FutureConferences
- Oct 18-21** Human Resource Executive. HR Technology Conference & Exposition. Las Vegas, NV. Contact: www.hrtechnologyconference.com
- Oct 23-24** University of Tennessee. River Cities I/O Psychology Conference. "Performance (Good, Bad, Ugly)." Chattanooga, TN. Contact: www.utc.edu/psychology/rcio
- Oct 26-28** Society for Human Resource Management. Conference. "Diversity & Inclusion." Boston, MA. Contact: www.shrm.org
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If you have an item to add to the calendar, please contact the Editor at johnf@us.net or (202) 254-4499.

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About the ACN

The ACN is the official newsletter of the International Personnel Assessment Council, an association of individuals actively engaged in or contributing to the professional, academic, and practical field of personnel research and assessment. It serves as a source of information about significant activities of the Council, a medium of dialogue and information exchange among members, a method for dissemination of research findings and a forum for the publication of letters and articles of general interest. The Council has approximately 300 members.

The ACN is published on a quarterly basis: January, April, July, and October. Respective closing dates for submissions are December 1, March 1, June 1, and September 1.

Submissions for Publication: Prospective authors are invited to send in their articles, research reports, reviews, reactions, discussion papers, conference reports, etc., pertaining to the field of personnel research and assessment. Topics for submission include, but are not limited to:

- Technical
- Practical – lessons learned, best practices
- Legal
- Technology/Tools
- Statistics/Measurement
- Book reviews

Articles and information for inclusion should be submitted directly to the Editor via e-mail, at johnf@us.net. Articles will be accepted only by electronic submission (Word compatible). Submissions should be written according to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 5th edition. The editor has the prerogative to make minor changes (typographical/grammatical errors, format, etc.); substantial changes will be discussed with the author. Submissions more than 1500 words should include an abstract of maximum 100 words, preferably with three keywords.

If you have questions or need further information, please contact the editor.

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