



Case Study

The Right End-to-End Approach for RSA

Background

The Road Safety Authority (RSA) is Ireland's primary road safety organisation and the official government agency responsible for driver licensing and testing in Ireland. The group's mission is to reduce the number of deaths and injuries on Irish roads and make them safer for all users.

The RSA is responsible for:

- + Raising awareness of and promoting road safety through mass media campaigns and education programmes
- + Road safety research
- + Driver testing and licensing
- + Vehicle standards
- + Road haulage enforcement functions
- + Registration of driving instructors (Approved Driving Instructors – ADI)
- + Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (Driver CPC)

Challenge

Dating back to the 1970s (Ireland's worst decade for road safety) the country averaged 50 deaths per month caused by the following:

- + Roughly one-third of driving deaths were caused by excessive speed, and another one-third of all driving deaths were caused by alcohol and drug-related collisions;
- + While 56 per cent of driving deaths occurred by drivers operating cars, 44 percent of deaths involved pedestrians, motorcyclists, bicyclists and others;
- + Peak rates of fatalities occurred from Friday to Sunday and during evening hours;
- + Car driving deaths trended dramatically upward from ages 18 to 34, and peaked from ages 25 to 34. Additionally, pedestrian deaths emerged among people age 65 and over.



RSA Fast Facts:

Location: Ballina,
Co Mayo, Ireland

Challenge: To develop tailored exams, delivered nationally, that complement government efforts in reducing road fatalities and injuries.

Outcome: With flexible delivery and effective test development, the RSA's driving exams have contributed to improved road safety in Ireland, with fatalities declining by more than 50% over 10 years.

Strategy

To comply with new EU regulations, achieve better road safety, reduce the number of fatalities and support its four strategy pillars for improving road safety, RSA realised it needed to create and implement driving theory examinations while also making them easily available to Irish residents. In introducing the Driver Theory Test (DTT) in 2001, the RSA knew that it needed a testing partner who could provide a reliable, robust and recognised test development process, as well as the facilities to administer and schedule tests and the analytics capability for results reporting on thousands of test takers.

But while the RSA's original forecast was for 100,000 tests per year, the distribution pattern around the country was uncertain, given test requirements in the rural areas. The RSA knew it also needed a way to ensure that resources were deployed successfully against this unpredictable pattern of demand. Additionally, the agency recognised that test development expertise was needed to develop and refresh exam content reliably in multiple languages —upholding the validity and integrity of its programmes.

Solution

Since 2007, the RSA's comprehensive efforts to enforce, engineer and educate for safer roads in Ireland have been complemented by the test development and delivery solutions provided by Prometric, as the agency's exclusive authorized testing and assessment vendor.

RSA selected Prometric to deliver the DTT as well as further the agency's ability to create safer road conditions for both motorists and pedestrians with the development and implementation of specific tests while successfully facilitating the processing of candidates in an efficient and effective manner.

In close collaboration with Prometric, two new examinations were developed in addition to the DTT, including the Approved Driving Instructor Theory (ADI) and the Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) exam. Since then, Prometric has provided even more customised test development services, including the following:

Item Writing: Prometric's professional item writers created new exam items for both the ADI and CPC exams using proven item development procedures. All items were referenced to sources approved by the RSA while focusing on accuracy, relevance and security of exam content.

Item Review: Prometric's test development specialists reviewed all test items with subject-matter experts (SMEs) in the field and RSA decision makers prior to including them in the item banks – allowing the client a faster, easier way to either approve or reject any item before it appeared on an exam.

Item Translation: To accommodate the RSA's requirement that exams be presented in both Irish and English (and three other languages), Prometric oversaw the translation of each approved item.

Item Bank Management: Prometric's proprietary item banking system managed exam items securely while providing a collaborative environment. It tracked the progress and usage of each item while facilitating item editing to pro-actively account for any changes in published research and national policies.

RSA's 4 Pillars of Road Safety

+ Education

+ Enforcement

+ Engineering

+ Evaluation

Standard Setting: Prometric conducted standard setting studies with RSA staff and SMEs in the field to formulate statistically-supported passing score recommendations for each test.

Exam Creation: Adhering to the test specifications provided by the RSA, Prometric assembled valid, reliable exam forms for each test from the newly created item banks. The CPC exam was unique because it consisted of two parts: 1) a standard core section of multiple-choice questions; and 2) separate case studies for either buses or trucks with questions that applied to each case study.

Psychometric Analysis: Prometric's qualified psychometricians performed statistical analyses on test results to determine item performance and provide recommendations for future item development.

Programme Management: Prometric has collaborated with the RSA to meet programme objectives and maintained consistent communication/support with in-country and global account management and leadership staff.

For the DTT, as well as the ADI and CPC exams, the computer-based test format allows the RSA to flexibly deliver and update the exams in multiple languages to ensure that road safety reaches across language barriers.

Candidates are now able to access 41 conveniently located fixed and mobile testing centres nationwide for the computer-based portions of testing. The user-friendly computer format (touch screen or mouse and keyboard) and tutorial presented at the beginning of each test allow candidates to focus on the content of the material and accurately measure their knowledge of standard driving laws and class-specific content to earn specialised licensing. Online access to registration, study materials and frequently asked questions add another layer of convenience for candidates.

Outcome

For the Irish government and public, driving is safer now than at any time in the last 50 years. The RSA and Prometric fully implemented the large-scale testing programmes on-time and on-budget across all 26 Republic of Ireland counties. More than 1,500 ADI test candidates have been approved by the RSA as registered driving instructors, and more than 10,000 candidates have completed the CPC theory exam, which is required for bus and heavy truck operators.

Prometric's attention to detail and service excellence assisted the RSA in its successful launch and programme maintenance of the DTT, ADI and CPC exams, helping reduce by more than half the number of annual road fatalities in Ireland over the past decade.

Ireland's national police service, An Garda Síochána, reports the following statistics for annual road fatalities over the past 10 years:



2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
376	335	374	396	365	338	279	238	212	186

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