



## **TechTip #17 - Test Timing (All Users)**

Occasionally, the question arises as to whether performance-based tests for applications (e.g. Word, Excel, etc.) should be time limited.

To answer this conundrum, let us consider the following;

Two candidates are both taking the Word 2003 - Standard test which has 35 tasks (questions) ranging in approximately equal numbers in beginner, intermediate and advanced skill levels.

Test timing is set at 17 minutes. When this amount of time has elapsed, the candidate will be “kicked out” of the test regardless of whether or not they have finished.

### **Candidate A**

This person completes all 35 tasks in the allotted time.

The report shows the candidate took 16 minutes 36 seconds and achieved a score of 97% overall (34/35), 100% on beginning level tasks (14/14), 100% on intermediate level tasks (11/11) and 90% on advanced level tasks (9/10)

### **Candidate B**

This person completes 21 tasks in the allotted time.

The report shows the candidate took the full 17 minutes and achieved a score of 60% overall (21/35), 71% on beginning level tasks (10/14), 64% on intermediate level tasks (7/11) and 40% on advanced level tasks (4/10).

### **Comparing Candidates**

Which candidate is better? Not a question easily answered. The results of the two candidates cannot be compared as they have not taken the same test.

If Candidate B had completed all 35 questions, their score might have been as good as or very close to that reported for Candidate A.

While setting a time limit for applications such as Word, Excel and others has merit, it also has dangers.

### **Another Solution**

When a reduction in the time required for performance-based testing is required, a better solution may be SkillCheck TimeSolver.

More information on this specialist product is available on the SkillCheck website at <http://www.skillcheck.com.au/products/prodsaver.asp> or ask for an online demonstration of SkillCheck TimeSolver.