

O*NET[®] OnLine: Interactive and Accessible for All...

[Outline of session provided by Mike Dymmel, Aguirre International, O*NET Project, for the MAPAC, January 2001 Conference, at the Philadelphia Personnel Department, Philadelphia, PA, January 18, 2001.]

O*NET is a powerful, comprehensive database system that helps people access key information about occupations in today's workplace. To capture changes in the workplace, O*NET is built on a flexible framework with over 340 descriptors of work and worker characteristics. O*NET offers occupational information beyond the traditional knowledges, skills and abilities.

Users of O*NET can compare their own experiences and competencies to the requirements on many occupations. They can also search for new occupations based on the interests, skills, values, or abilities that they identify.

At the MAPAC January Conference, Mike Dymmel, from Aguirre International and a member of the O*NET Team at the U.S. Department of Labor, provided background on the O*NET project and provided a guided tour of the new web-based application of O*NET, explaining the function and use of its features, its online links to occupational and career information and its extensive accessibility and accommodation features.

More information on the O*NET Project is available at <http://www.doleta.gov/programs/onet/> and to see how people at the State and local levels are using O*NET, visit O*NET in Action at <http://www.doleta.gov/programs/onet/oina.asp>. These U.S. DOL web sites are maintained by Aguirre International, the consulting firm that provides primary on-site coordination and technical support to the O*NET Project. To contact staff of the National O*NET Project, call: 202/693-3660; write: O*NET Project, U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Room N5637, Washington, DC 20210; or e-mail: onet@doleta.gov

Background

The Occupational Information Network, known as O*NET, was developed based on the extensive research and recommendations of the Advisory Panel for the Dictionary of Occupational Titles. In addition, guidance from a cadre of leading industrial and organizational psychologists as well as user feedback helped enhance the development process. O*NET is currently available on the Internet in two forms: the O*NET 3.0 Database and O*NET OnLine. The O*NET 3.0 Database contains occupational information for over 950 occupations. O*NET OnLine is a web-based application that is powered by the O*NET 3.0 Database.

Employers and front-line human resource staff will find O*NET OnLine useful for a variety of tasks—job analysis, job descriptions, and skill standards. They can use it to help with recruitment and training. While O*NET OnLine is directed at the professional community who can mine O*NET for detailed occupational characteristic information, other users will find O*NET OnLine useful as well. The O*NET 3.0 Database is directed at education and training planners and professionals engaged in career exploration and job search. The real power of O*NET lies in its integration into customized applications created by public and private developers for workforce development systems.

The O*NET OnLine and the O*NET 3.0 Database comply with the Office of Management and Budget's mandate for use of the new Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system by all Federal agencies that collect and disseminate occupational information. As one of the first

systems to align with the SOC, O*NET is serving as a model for other State and Federal programs implementing a similar transition. The database, using the new codes, titles, and definitions of the O*NET-SOC classification system is available as a series of flat text files that can be easily converted by developers, researchers and database users to any database format needed. They are available for free download from the National O*NET Consortium website:
<http://www.onetcenter.org/product/database.html>

The O*NET Career Exploration Tools™ are under development by the O*NET Project. These are self-assessment instruments that help people understand themselves more clearly in relation to today's workplace. The tools can help individuals identify their work-related interests, what they consider important on the job, and their abilities in order to explore the occupations that relate most closely to those attributes. The tools link results directly to occupations in O*NET 3.0.

Print versions of the Interest Profiler, Work Importance Locator, and the Ability Profiler will be available in Spring/Summer 2001 from the Government Printing Office. Electronic versions of the Interest Profiler and a Work Importance Profiler will also be made available. More information and links at <http://www.doleta.gov/programs/onet/>

O*NET OnLine Tour

The O*NET Content Model contains the following information:

- **Skills** ← 46 skills: **Basic Skills**, (Mathematics, Writing, Reading, etc.), and **Cross-Functional Skills** (Problem Identification, Resource Management, etc.).
- **Generalized Work Activities** ← 42 general types of job behaviors (Organizing, Planning and Prioritizing Work, Interacting with Computers, etc.) occurring on multiple jobs.
- **Interests** → Six work environments that can be connected with a worker's personal interests to indicate which occupations would be most fulfilling.
- **Work Styles** ← 17 work style characteristics that can connect what is important to a worker with occupations that reflect or develop those values, such as Initiative, Achievement, Recognition, etc.
- **Work Context** ← 46 physical and social factors that influence the nature of work, such as physical and structural work characteristics.
- **Organizational Context** → 51 organizational characteristics that influence how people do their work, such as the social processes and personnel resources.
- **Experience and Training** ← Five Job "Zones," that distinguish the levels of education and training connected to occupations. The details of licensing requirements, instructional programs, etc. will be provided through linkages to other databases.

With clear descriptions of the requirements of work, the characteristics of workers on the job and the context of the workplace, O*NET users can easily understand what skills are needed in their current jobs, how existing skills may transfer to new jobs and what new skills will be required to make the transition.

Features of O*NET OnLine Include:

- Find Occupations – This is one of the main ways to explore occupational information in O*NET. Users can search for an occupation using O*NET Titles or keywords in the title or definition of the occupation. They can search for occupations by O*NET-SOC code or the old DOT code. In addition, users can search by browsing job families. This feature categorizes occupations into 23 families as identified by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. From these broad job families, users can drill down to find an occupation of interest for exploration.
- Skills Search – This feature allows users to search for and explore occupations that use their skills by reviewing and selecting skills that they think they have or are planning to acquire through education and/or training. Once the user has selected their skills from the six general skill areas (Basic Skills, Complex Problem Solving Skills, Resource Management Skills, Social Skills and Systems Skills), a list of occupations is displayed for further exploration.
- Related Occupations – This feature allows users to find occupations related to a selected occupation. A list of up to 10 occupations with characteristics most similar is shown. The characteristics compared include: knowledge areas, skills, abilities, work context, and general work activities.
- Snapshots – This feature provides a summary level overview of important aspects of an occupation. The information is presented from the six domains of the Content Model (Worker Characteristics, Worker Requirements, Experience Requirements, Occupation Requirements, Occupation Specific Information, and Occupation Characteristics) and helps provide an understanding of what it takes to perform a particular occupation.
- Details – This feature provides specific information about all the variables associated with an occupation. The variables include: abilities, knowledges, skills, work activities, and work context, tasks, interests, and work values. The variables are based on Importance or Level scores and Frequency scores for some characteristics that are needed to perform the occupation.
- Crosswalk – This feature allows the use of other classification systems to find the corresponding O*NET-SOC occupation. Currently, two Crosswalks to the O*NET-SOC structure are available. These include the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT); and The Standard Occupational Classification (SOC). As crosswalks are developed by other Federal programs or systems to the new SOC structure, these may be added to the O*NET OnLine application.
- OnLine Resources – This section provides links to other related O*NET sites and information as well as to the America's Career Kit (America's Job Bank, America's Learning eXchange, America's Career Information Network, and America's Service Locator). O*NET is helping Federal, State and local partners under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) to better serve customers in the nation's One-Stop Employment Centers. The link to America's Career Information Network allows users direct access to State Labor Market Information. The link to America's Job Bank allows users to search for a job as part of their career exploration efforts. Also

of key importance is the link to the National O*NET Consortium site where users can download the O*NET 3.0 Database files for free.

- Job Accommodations – O*NET OnLine has made great strides toward assuring that occupational information is accessible to all. Extensive linkages are available on the main page of O*NET OnLine to disability resources, job accommodation features and workplace issues information. As part of this effort, the guidelines of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) were followed. In addition, O*NET OnLine also meets the accessibility tests of the Center for Applied Special Technology and is proudly 'Bobby Approved'. O*NET OnLine can be accessed as a Text Only Version as well as a Low-Vision Version.
- Low-Vision Version – This version increases the font size and screen contrast for improved readability.
- Text Only Version – This version is useful for individuals and organizations that use screen reader technology.
- Help – O*NET OnLine's context-sensitive "Help" allows users to understand the uses of its functions and features. O*NET OnLine was designed to be user friendly.
- O*NET in*it – In addition to the direct access provided by O*NET OnLine, the O*NET 3.0 Database enables vendors, software developers and others interested in using O*NET data to build specialized or value-added applications to do so. However, the O*NET Project is requesting that applications and products display the logo "O*NET in*it" when O*NET data is used.

Comments and suggestions for improvements are welcome and should be sent to the National O*NET Consortium at: o*net@esc.state.nc.us

To take a tour of the new web-based application of O*NET visit: <http://online.onetcenter.org>