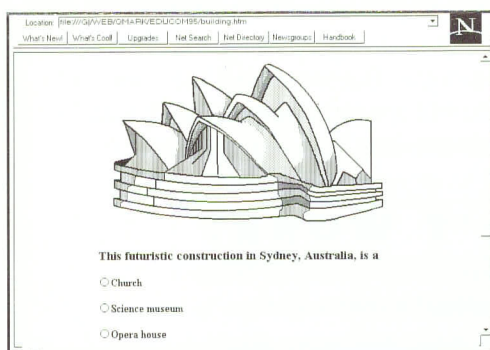


FALL 1995

Question Mark™ NEWS

WHAT'S NEW



QM Web offers a low-cost, easy way to run tests and surveys on the World Wide Web – and it is now available to anyone who uses Question Mark for Windows.

QM Web is the first commercial product for administering quizzes, tests and surveys on the Internet, which means people involved in business training, education, market research and personnel selection are able to make their questions instantly available around the globe.

INSIDE

Practical Pointers



QM Guardian Update



News From Our Users



Question Mark Reviews

QM Web quizzes, tests and surveys on the Internet

Question Designer's easy-to-use Windows interface enables you to update and maintain your question files just as you would normally do, then simply convert them to HTML format using QM Web. This means tests can be put on the Web in a matter of hours!

Users who do not have their own Web sites can arrange with us to rent the space on the Web for their questions. If you would prefer to e-mail questions to

Please turn to WEB, next page

Question Mark's Expanding Role

With colleges and universities well into their fall semester, we at Presence Corporation are finding more and more educators turning to technology to help them reach their goals. They



Question Mark

•S•O•F•T•W•A•R•E•

are investing in hardware and software that reinforces what is said in the laboratory, lecture hall or classroom, and Question Mark is an important part of that trend.

But this is just one of the areas in which Question Mark is making a difference. Insurance companies, banks, transport authorities, and manufacturers have a growing need, not only for computerized testing but for on-line surveys, questionnaires and other information gathering tools.

As you will see from this issue of Question Mark News, applications for this software are limited only by the imagination of each person who uses it. As more creative uses for Question Mark are surfacing, so are increasingly imaginative means of distributing surveys and quizzes. With QM Web, people who need to distribute questions further than their local area network can run them on the Internet. And those concerned about regulating access to tests now have the convenience and assurance of QM Guardian.

We hope you enjoy reading our news, and that you will contact us with any questions you might have.

Eric Shepherd
President

ericsh@questionmark.com

OUR USERS: A LONG SEARCH

At the University of Alabama School of Nursing, the search for the right testing software took three years. The result of that search, which involved reviewing about a dozen packages, was the selection of Question Mark for Windows™.

"What drew me to Question Mark was the fact that in our tests we often present the student with a patient scenario that requires a fair amount of text," recalls Robert Cummings, director of the school's Learning Resources Center. "Every other package we'd look at would only give us enough space for two or three lines of text, and we needed two or three paragraphs! That's what Question Designer could give us. It's great to know you have the capacity for a brief essay if you need it."

Another attraction was the user-friendly software. I was immediately struck with how intuitive it was," Cummings explains. "In three or four hours, I was able to generate a test from scratch. This was important,

because I knew it would have to be easy to learn or it would be an immediate turnoff to faculty members."

But what about those members who balk at the idea of computerized anything, much less on-line testing?

"For people who are very intimidated, you have to provide some intensive one-on-one help, and you can't just show them a whiz bang dog and pony show; you have to demonstrate how the technology makes their job easier, in the context of their daily work."

Cummings plans to help faculty initially by getting a copy of their tests, then importing them into Question Mark. He and his team have developed a check sheet based on the parameters in the initial test set-up screen so that authors can indicate their preferences for screen color, font size and so on.

"Initially we will be doing a lot of the work for them," Cummings says, "But we expect there will be some people who will get so turned on they'll want to start doing this themselves." △

OUR USERS: IN A HURRY? DON'T WORRY

Time was of the essence this summer after the Department of Kinesiology at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada learned that the VAX system that had been delivering its computerized tests was to be closed down. What to do? Change over to another VAX? Or opt for something that could operate on the PCs in the university's computer lab? And if the latter, what software to use? Given the setup of the computer lab's server, would the tests be up and running in time for the autumn term?



Some of the university's computing services department had heard about Question Mark, so it was quickly decided to try it, and after some deliberations everyone agreed that Question Designer would meet course needs, and QM Guardian would help the department meet the university's security regulations.

The software was installed on the university's network on July 7. Just two months later Dr. Gail Frost was delighted to see the 280 students in her first year Anatomy and Physiology course take the first of 26

weekly quizzes using Question Mark.

"It's hard to believe that everything is going so well when we had to work so quickly," remarks Dr. Frost.

One element that sped everything up was Question Mark's ability to import text from other files – in this case the old test files from previous years. Dr. Frost, who was asked to teach the course for one year, was able to augment these questions with some of her own. Using QM Guardian she ensures that each student take each 20-minute quiz only once, during a predetermined time slot at the end of the school week.

In response to interest from other departments on campus, Dr. Frost has already given an informational seminar on Question Mark to faculty. Through not an expert yet, the ease with which Question Mark can be learned has allowed her to set up her own program and show others how the software might meet their needs as well.

"Now that our testing program is in place," says Dr. Frost, "I'm looking forward to exploring all of Question Mark's other options." △

Web From Page 1

specified individuals instead of using the Web you can easily do so because of the compact structure of Question Mark™ files.

People can answer questions using

their standard browser on any kind of computer, then have their answers marked instantly for quick feedback or saved for marking at a later date. Results can be kept for subsequent analysis. Question and answer files are all encrypted to prevent unauthorized access.

If you would like to read more about QM Web™, you will find technical information and some samples on our World Wide Web page, <http://www.questionmark.com> or e-mail us at info@questionmark.com. We'd be happy to talk to you about QM Web too. Just call 800-863-3950. △

PRACTICAL POINTERS

Some answers to our readers' latest queries from the Question Mark™ technical team.

Q: *I want to call my own security program at the start of a test which will check that the student is authorized to do the test. For example I might write a program in Visual Basic that asks the student to call a central station and get a registration number. I want the test to be done if the security program authorizes this. How can I do this with Question Mark?*

A: Make the first block in the test an external test call that calls the security program. The security program should return a score of 0 if the security test fails, 1 if it succeeds, then put a jump after the external test, jumping to the end of the test if the score is 0. This way the user can only do the test if the external program returns a score of 1.

Q: *I need to put a date embargo on certain types of tests so that students can only take them before a certain time. Is this possible?*

A: Yes, if you buy QM Guardian. One of its most attractive features is that it gives precisely this capability along with a far greater degree of control over the way in which tests are taken over a network.

Q: *I'd like to jump between question sets when I write tests on Question Mark for Windows. This means I could go to different questions according to the answer given to a*


particular question. How do I do this?

A: If you want to jump within a test, you may wish to go forward or backward depending on the score for a particular question, block of questions or the entire test so far. To do this, just set "Allow Jumps" in the control page and then add jumps with "Build 1 Jump."

If you want to jump to other tests, you can build several tests in the same test file, but this gets unwieldy. So suppose you want to call another test and come back to the original one. The score for the other test can be brought into the current test and acted on with jumps in this test. If you like this approach, use "Build 1 External Test" to recall PRESENT.EXE with the new test. This is the best way to jump to other tests. The down side of this is that it requires a separate test and answer file as well as a second call to presenter.

The occasion may arise for calling another test from within a question. You make a multimedia call in a question to re-call PRESENT.EXE with the new test. This gives you the flexibility to be able to jump at different points in the question. However, the student's name is not passed to the test called, nor is the score returned back.

QM Guardian enables you to build up a series of linked tests that have to be done in a set order. This is particularly useful when people are going to be taking breaks between tests.

• Remember, you can always contact our Presence customer support team for help. The most interesting queries will be published in the next issue of Question Mark News. 

QUESTION MARK REVIEWS

Since our last issue of Question Mark News, two very positive product reviews have appeared – one in *PC Today* and the other in *HR Magazine*. We were so pleased with these reviews we would like to share some excerpts from them with our readers:

From PC Today: "No 2 pencil makers, watch out. Question Mark for Windows is changing the nature of computerized Questionnaires, testing and assessment.

"Question Mark is best suited for companies or educational institutions that need

to ask easily quantifiable questions of large groups of people. Managers administering an employee training program, for example, can save countless hours that otherwise would be spent recording the information manually.

"...If there's a compelling reason to buy this product, it's the Presenter. For the person taking the test, it's easy to use and its automatic scoring and reporting features saves time for the person administering the test."

And according to HR Magazine: "The need for adequate test-

ing is a problem as old as education itself, but computers and new software have brought a solution. Question Mark for Windows, from Presence Corp. in Stamford, Conn., allows you to automate the otherwise tedious process of creating, administering and marking examinations...Creating tests should always have been so simple..."

– We couldn't agree more with that last statement! We thank these publications for taking the time to look at Question Mark and verify what we have always said, that this is the most practical answer around for people who need to ask questions of others by way of computers.

...exhibition news...

This year's EDUCOM, which was held Oct. 31 to Nov. 3 in Portland, Oregon, was one of our best exhibitions yet. We demonstrated all of our Question Mark products including QM Web, the first commercial product for administering tests on the Internet.

We were happy to see many of you at our booth and hope that, if you have further questions about what you saw there, you will get in touch with us.

How to reach us

By E-mail: info@questionmark.com

By Fax: 800-399-3944 or 203-358-3944

By Phone: 800-642-3950 or 203-358-3950

WWW: <http://www.questionmark.com>

Can you help? We are in the process of creating a Board of Advisors to provide us with guidance about Question Mark – the product itself, the way we market it and other issues such as distribution, publicity and technical support. If you are interested in helping us in this way, please get in touch with Eric Shepherd (ericsh@questionmark.com).

QM **Guardian** **Taking** **control** **of testing**


Teachers and trainers: Imagine being able to set up all your tests and exams right at the beginning of each term.

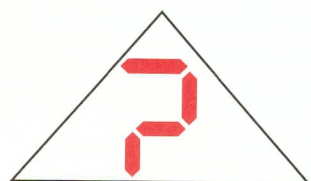
You would never have to pass out any papers, collect any papers, or even worry about getting into the computer lab to put your test on-line. Just keep to your class plans and let the tests take care of themselves. Thanks to QM Guardian, you do not need to imagine this any longer.

QM Guardian, which was just released this summer, is helping educators take complete control over who takes what test, when they take it, and how many times

they take it.

In situations where test authors or distributors need to be compensated according to the number of times a test is taken, QM Guardian provides a practical solution. Organizations which run a test or survey for multiple users can purchase a pre-determined number of single execution passwords for the disks that they send out.

Additional passwords can be purchased as needed. The use of the tests can also be limited to a certain number of days, after which time more passwords must be purchased from the test originators. 



Question Mark

•S•O•F•T•W•A•R•E•

5 Hillandale Avenue
Stamford, CT 06902-2800

BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID

PERMIT No. 102
Stamford, CT

•P•R•E•S•E•N•C•E•