

Development skills put to the test

The software development team from Intrinsicca is part of the biggest revolution ever seen in examination systems.

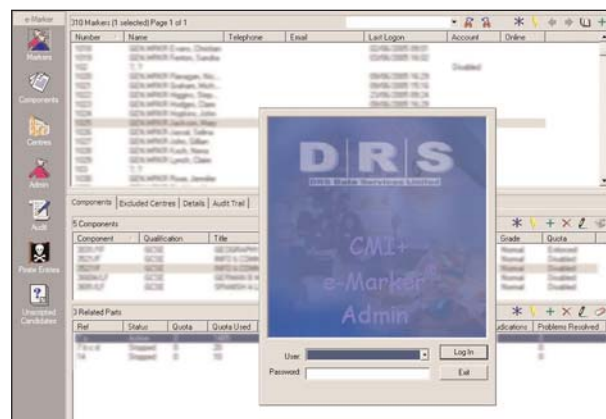
Working with DRS Data Services Ltd, the team has helped to produce the electronic marking technology which is transforming the way examiners are marking student exam papers.

DRS provides automated data capture solutions, products and services all over the world for education, government and commercial organisations. It has more than three and a half decades experience in working with UK and international examination and assessment bodies, colleges, universities, schools and professional institutions.

When the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) – the largest unitary awarding body in the UK – took the strategic decision to modernise the examination process and explore the use of technology, it invited organisations, including DRS, to bid in 2003. DRS proved to be the best provider and was chosen as AQA's technical partner and preferred supplier to provide electronic marking services.

Intrinsicca had already worked with DRS on other projects and was asked to help with software development for the pilot stage of the project. By using existing, proven software, Intrinsicca was able to speed up the development process which enabled DRS to reach the pilot stage much quicker.

Working in partnership with DRS to deliver the best solution for its customer AQA, the Intrinsicca team helped to both define and deliver the requirements.



Ease of use for examiners within a secure online environment was prerequisite

Taking an incremental approach, Intrinsicca developed a series of systems, each time adding new features to give greater control and flexibility in the electronic marking process.

The end result of the collaboration has been the sophisticated software needed to operate the pioneering DRS e-Marker® solution – a simple and easy-to-use modular system that supports the awarding bodies, examiners and the marking process.

Not only does the technology improve the accuracy and quality of marking, it also reduces the vast amount of paper-based administration and bureaucracy that is involved in the process.

During summer 2005, 4,500 examiners logged onto the e-Marker® system and recorded over 25 million marks from 2.3 million scripts.

During summer 2006, 6,400 examiners logged onto the e-Marker® system and recorded over 65 million marks from 4 million scripts.

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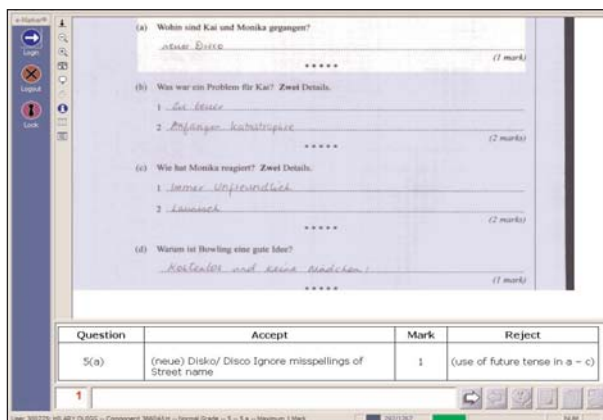
The innovative e-Marker® system speeds up the transfer of marking and also provides invaluable management information enabling real time monitoring. e-Marker® enables the electronic verification of data entry, automatically calculating rule-based candidate marks. This de-risks transcription and summing errors and reduces the amount of processing and checking required.

e-Marker® offers AQA, and other awarding and assessment bodies a variety of electronic marking methods, some where questions are marked on screen and others where examiners continue to mark scripts manually, but capture the marks electronically.

Once the marking is completed, the results are automatically collated ready for the examiner to transfer and upload them to the secure AQA extranet site.

In January 2005, in the first operational use of e-Marker® for AQA, 300 examiners recorded over 1 million marks from 30,000 scripts. During summer 2006, 6,400 examiners have logged onto the e-Marker® system and have recorded over 65 million marks from 4 million scripts.

Paperless marking save costs and reduces risk



Paper paper paper.. cost cost cost!

DRS technical director Steve Beats said the development team from Intrinsic had played a key role in delivering the e-Marker® solution.

Intrinsic have a very structured approach and we have developed a very good collaborative working relationship

“They have worked very closely with the DRS core team throughout the development programme,” he said. “They have integrated into our business for this project and we have used them as an extension of our own development capability.

“Having worked with Intrinsic before, we decided to approach them when we were appointed by AQA. They have a very structured approach and we have developed a very good collaborative working relationship.”

Intrinsic has now been working with DRS on the e-Marker® solution since 2003 and DRS is planning on continuing to develop the electronic marking service for other markets in line with its strategic plan.