The Response Education And Training System (REATS)

Introduction

REATS was developed by R J Horton Solutions to assist in the process of easily developing and conducting training quizzes for staff of appropriate organisations. The system is easy to use from both the general staff perspective and also for Training or HR people who need to manage and keep records of courses or quizzes run through REATS, as well as other courses that staff may have undertaken.

Functions

There are two programs in REATS, one that conducts the quizzes and is used by general staff, and another for Administration.

REATS (for use by general Staff)

This program conducts the quizzes from prepared scripts developed using the REATS Admin program. It functions as follows:

- When the program opens, the user is required to enter their name. This is compared to a staff file which contains both the staff person's name and for additional security also includes the person's PC (or Network) logon details. If the person signing onto the Quiz is not in the staff file and logged onto the PC as that person, they are not able to proceed.

- A list of Quizzes is displayed for the user to select. Through the Administration program, there are a number of parameters that can be used to determine whether or not a quiz is listed for a particular person.

- After selecting the appropriate quiz, the first question is displayed. According to a pre-set parameter, an Image, Word Document, PDF, Video or Web Page attached to the question can be automatically displayed for the user to view or read before answering a question. This parameter can relate separately to each question.

- The four possible responses are displayed as options and it is a simple matter for the user to click the appropriate response and then click to the next question.

-       If the user quits the system before the final question has been answered, a message is provided regarding the number of questions still to be completed. If the user elects to continue to exit, details are appropriately recorded. The next time the user selects that quiz, it will advise them regarding the remaining questions and recommence at the point of previous departure from the system.

-       When a quiz has been completed the system records details of the quiz, and advises the user how many questions were answered correctly and how many incorrectly.

-       An administration option can be set so that users can be provided with details of which questions they answered incorrectly. This shows them the question and also the answer they gave, but not the correct answer.

-       When a person exits or completes a quiz, REATS automatically records the results. From the result files (later loaded to the database), it can easily be seen how many attempts a person had at a quiz.

-       A parameter can be set so that when a person completes a quiz, it no longer appears in the person's list of quizzes available.

REATS Admin (for use by HR or Training Staff)

This is the administration program that is used for a number of functions.

-       Preparing Quizzes
-       Working with Staff and Groups
-       Allocating Quizzes to Staff or Groups
-       Updating the Database
-       Recording External Training or Qualifications
-       Removing Quizzes
-       Setting Job Skill Requirements
-       Staff – Job Skill analysis
-       Database Reporting

Preparing a Quiz

-       For a new quiz the quiz name is entered. Existing quizzes can be obtained and amended.

-       The number of questions to be answered is entered. In some cases with might be all the questions in the quiz, but the option is available to have only a certain number selected from a total. (Note: the maximum set of an

individual quiz is 20 questions).

- The number to be answered to pass the quiz is also set. If 100% is required, then the number will be the same as the number of questions to be asked.

- An indicator is entered to state if questions are to be provided randomly to the user. For example if a quiz has 10 questions to be answered out of a total of 15 put into the quiz, then when the user first attempts the quiz, 10 questions out of 15 will be randomly selected. This can help to eliminate collusion by users.

- A number of days is set for renewal of the quiz. Zero is entered if the quiz is not to be renewed. If a date is set, the quiz will be renewed after the expiry of the number of days set.

- Questions can be related to a group, which corresponds to a group of people eg. Loans Staff. When the quiz is saved the questions and related answers are also saved into a list for that group. This means that when building a quiz, new questions can be entered, or existing ones selected from a store of questions.

- The first question is typed, and the four possible answers entered. The Correct answer is selected (or the question and answers can be selected from the question store).
Note: If questions are currently held in a Word document the question can be copied from the word document and pasted into REATS.

- If an Image, Word Document, or PDF is to be associated with the question, it can be found, and copied to the Image File. It can then be easily attached to the question.

- It is then a simple matter of clicking Next Question to continue entering questions until the quiz is complete.

- A quiz can be saved at any time. After saving, it can be re-opened to continue to add questions, or to amend existing questions.

- There is a spell check function, which will spell check the question and possible answers currently on the screen, if required. This uses the Spell Checker in Microsoft Word, so it will automatically allow for any colloquial words you may have added to the dictionary.

Recording Details of External Training or Qualifications

-    The Administration program provides a facility to record details of other
     training or qualifications attended by staff. This directly updates the
     appropriate tables in the database.

-    A staff member is selected. Clicking on **View Current Entries** lists any
     currently recorded external training or qualifications. Clicking on an entry
     will show details of that entry. Details can be amended and the database
     updated.

-    New entries can be added, by filling out the appropriate boxes. If a
     number of staff have completed the same external course, after one entry
     has been completed, the details remain on screen, so that another staff
     member can be chosen, and only minimal entry is required before saving
     the data.

-    Where a renewal date is set, the system can put a reminder in the
     operator's Microsoft Outlook that this training or qualification needs to be
     renewed.

The database becomes a register of training undertaken by staff.

Working with Staff and Groups

- REATS maintains its own file of staff. Staff can be easily added or removed from the staff file. The staff file includes the person's name and PC logon. This is so the client program used by staff to answer quizzes can verify that the person answering the quiz is the same person logged onto the PC.

- Staff can be allocated to Groups – eg. Loans Staff. A person can be a member of up to four groups. This is so that quizzes can be allocated to groups, making the allocation process quick and easy. Quizzes can also be added to individual people, if required.

Allocating Quizzes to Staff or Groups

- These functions allow the control over which quizzes are available to which staff.

- It is a simple matter to add, or remove, quizzes to groups of staff or individual staff.

Uploading Quiz Results to the Database

- In order to ensure the system will operate effectively over slow to medium speed wide area networks with minimal impact other critical network traffic, a strategy of using simple small files is used for quizzes and staff results.

- For analysis purposes these results need to be loaded to a database, which is provided with the product (Microsoft Access 2000 or later is required to be available on the HR or Training Manager's PC).

- Clicking one button in the Administration program will cause the database results to be updated.

Database Reporting

Clicking one button opens the database (or register). A number of standard reports are provided, but others can be developed by the credit union concerned, or prepared by R J Horton Solutions on request at an appropriate cost.

Reports are produced simply by clicking on the appropriate button. Specific reports can be related to Staff, Group and Course by selecting from the drop down box, then selecting the required report.

Reports can be exported to Microsoft Excel, so that graphs can be prepared, if required.

Setting Job Skill Requirements

For larger organisations REATS provides the function to be able to define Jobs in terms of skills required. The skills set for a job can be a combination of internal skills defined by the completion of Quizzes developed and deployed in REATS, and external courses and qualifications, that would be recorded in the database.

Staff – Job Skill analysis

Where jobs have been defined in REATS, it is a simple matter to check individual skills held by specific staff against the skill required for a specific position. Using this facility any gaps in skills required can be viewed and a report printed. This assists in developing career paths and succession plans.

Altering The System Colour

It is understood that credit unions may prefer to use their own preferred background colour for the system, or alter the colour from time to time for interest sake.

To achieve this, a function to allow the colour to be selected has been provided. Once set, then next time a person uses REATS the appropriate colour will be used.

It is not appropriate to alter the system colour where thin client systems are in use, due to the restrictions to the number of colours available in these environments.

Other Features

A configuration settings file (stored in the PC Windows folder) is used to determine where the central files will be held (usually on a Server in the Head Office).

This file can also be used to obtain the credit union's logo for display on the REATS screen. R J Horton Solutions will assist in ensuring that the logo provided is an appropriate size for the screen.

The configuration file is also used to specify whether images are to be automatically displayed, or not, and whether the staff member is given the option of viewing details of questions answered incorrectly.

Conclusion

The REATS package provides a powerful yet easy to use training response system, as well as providing a register of training activities at a reasonable cost.

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