



## JEUX SANS FRONTIERES

*In 1941, Frank Whittle's first jet aircraft took to the skies on its maiden flight, marking the start of a new era. The first jets were thirsty and tricky to fly, but they flew higher and faster than propeller aircraft could ever hope to achieve. "Fascinating, but how does this help me"? I hear you cry. Read on, and I will get to the point.*

ARTICLE BY CHARLES MARTIN, CEO - IPSEMET

What the jet engine story tells us is that there are rules to new technology adoption. Know them and you can better judge what's best for you and your company. Jet engines versus propellers follows a classic pattern; high-potential, low-maturity new tech, challenging low-potential, high-maturity old tech. So, this is the first question to ask; "am I looking at a technology based on some fundamentally superior method"? If not, chances are you're looking at a fad. If yes, then your job just got easier. Very likely you will want to adopt it - but you need to get the timing right. Most technologies that aren't fads start out like jet engines - they're patchy. They set new standards in one or two capabilities but they're behind the field on everything else. Usually that means they lag on things like compatibility, ease-of-use, cost and so on. The adopter's job is to catalogue which things the new tech is good at and what it's not so good at - and then compare that with their own organisation's needs. Where it has an edge, does it coincide with a factor your business must get better at? If it lags on factors you need, say, compatibility issues, how fast is it catching up? So, there's the framework. Let's apply it to reality.

Games enter a field that psychometric questionnaires (PQs) have largely had to themselves for a generation. They consequently have an impressive service record; in the traits they measure, PQs predict in-job outcomes with solid reliability. Games, being new, have less historical data. But what they do have instead is 'realness'. Games don't ask you, as PQs do, what you think you would do, they record what you *do* do. Games fall in the 'jet engine' camp. PQ's advantages are of the kind accrued through long usage, while games' stem from the addition of new dimensions to the measurement tool. For some, PQs will always be fine - just as propellers remain adequate for small aircraft. For more demanding users, the question becomes "when should we adopt"? Games are developing fast, but how do they stack up against PQs right now?



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This is how game-based assessment stacks up today against traditional questionnaires, and indeed there is a marked difference between the two platforms. Considering what is being measured; PQs support self-report question responses, whereas games deal with observed behaviour and task performance. In terms of depth of historical data, via questionnaires, it is of course, extensive, as the format has been the main provider to businesses for a long time. As for games, of course they haven't been around for that long so what they have yielded is limited. However in time, you should expect solid test data, and in-field results will develop. For big-company backup, questionnaires is well established of course, and key providers are multi-nationals with large customer bases, whereas for games it's early days; providers are small, but you do get extra-mile support, as companies fight to establish themselves in the market. Looking at Fundamental technology, of course, questionnaires have long reached their zenith, whereas gaming is at its dawn, and already, the immersion available through games can sidestep key limits of psychometric questionnaires, so expect this to enable games to appeal more to demanding users as the technology matures. PQs are reliable, but bounded by the format, whereas games are expanding, can measure the same traits, but also new traits, e.g. learning agility and resilience. Finally, and a very important concern, candidate experience: For psychometric questionnaires, has often been seen as a chore; and some candidates believe PQs can be manipulated, whereas games are rapidly winning plaudits, particularly the under 30s. Though the old format has served us well for generations, like Frank Whittle's roaring jets, the future is somewhat inevitable, as technology drives change, and dominates our world and the way we operate it. ●

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