



Customer Stories

An online literacy and numeracy exam that paves the way to success for NSW Department of Education Year 7 students

The Brief

The NSW Department of Education (NSW DoE) selected Janison to build and deliver a new assessment under the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2017-2020, a four-year plan to ensure students have the essential literacy and numeracy skills they need for success in learning and in life.

The Department was looking for a specialist digital assessment provider to help it achieve the key aim of the new assessment: to quickly identify students at risk of falling behind and pinpoint what type of support they need. The window for the opt-in assessment, called Best Start Year 7, would run over 31 school days in February-March 2019, for more than 40,000 students across the state.

As well as offering government-grade reliability and security, the solution needed to be Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) that scales easily year to year and seamlessly integrates with all schools' existing systems. Examiners also required the ability to author and deliver a number of different question types to create an engaging test for school students.



Janison has worked collaboratively with the Best Start Year 7 team to successfully deliver an online literacy and numeracy assessment to NSW Department of Education students. Teachers administering the test found the system easy to use and the online format successfully engaged students to demonstrate their skills and understanding.

NSW Department of Education spokesman

www.janison.com/online-assessment

The Challenge

As acknowledged by former Minister for Education, Adrian Piccoli, in the strategy document, literacy and numeracy skills are the foundation for the next generation's success in learning and in life. It's critical for students to develop confidence in these skills, and falling behind can have devastating consequences for their secondary schooling.

The Department entrusted Janison to deliver technology that could provide precise evaluation of students' skills at a critical juncture in their education – the first weeks of Year 7 – and quickly provide intricate diagnostic data to inform teaching intervention.

As sophisticated as the technology needed to be, it also needed to be user friendly to cater to all levels of technical literacy among teaching staff. It also had to be built to operate seamlessly within greatly varying levels of IT infrastructure between the 321 schools across the state taking part.



41,000

students across NSW sat the inaugural Best Start Year 7 exam in 2019



>6,673

completions per day



75,000

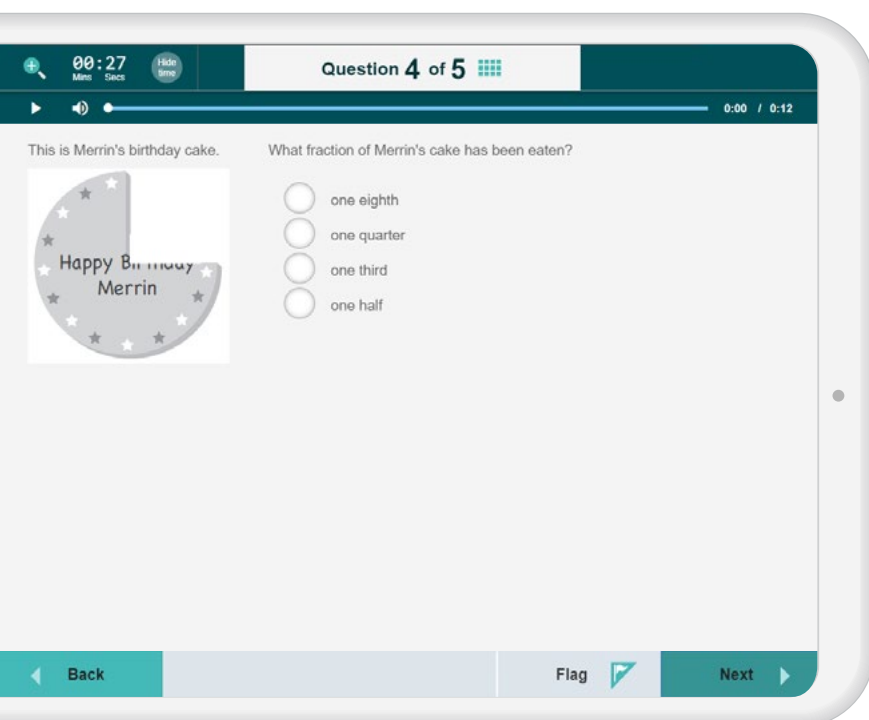
tests completed

Our Solution

Best Start Year 7 demanded a sophisticated online platform that could efficiently deliver and process a considerable daily number of student test completions and feed a large volume of real-time data into NSW DoE systems, making valuable analytical information available for teachers almost instantly.

Janison partnered with the NSW DoE and tailored our cloud-based platform, [Janison Insights](#), which delivers assessments for governments around the world, to deliver on these key needs.

Through collaborative weekly video conferences and conversations with key NSW DoE stakeholders, Janison's project team pinpointed the necessary features and adaptations to allow teachers to more easily perform tasks within the system, including authoring tools that allowed for a wide selection of question types. During the project meetings, Janison and NSW DoE clearly demarcated responsibility in managing the school IT networks, to allow for the smoothest possible running of the exam window.



Janison Insights's authoring tools and wide selection of question types allowed examiners to create and deliver an engaging test experience for students.

The Result

A NSW DoE survey of 293 early adopter schools who took part in a Best Start Year 7 professional training pilot, found that more than 95 per cent agreed that the exam will help to identify students requiring additional support in literacy and numeracy.

Janison hosted the live Best Start Year 7 assessment event over 31 school days, which comprised three streams: reading, numeracy and writing. We delivered the end-to-end online assessment solution to schools across the state, including the set-up, configuration, hosting, data extract, support and marking.

A total of 41,000 students sat these assessments, with an average of 2,400 tests completed daily. The highest number of tests in one day during the exam period was 6,673.

The system auto-marked the literacy and numeracy portions, enabling real-time data delivery to the NSW DoE, while the platform's discrete marking features streamlined the marking process for the teachers who marked the writing portion of the exam. The platform operated seamlessly with schools' existing IT infrastructure, including student devices such as laptops, desktops, PCs, Chromebooks, iPads and Android tablets.

Janison's operations team carried out real-time monitoring of the infrastructure and application performance throughout the 31-day window, to ensure that any potential issues could be dealt with instantly. There were no delivery problems or slowdowns reported and NSW DoE stakeholders commended the smooth end-to-end delivery of the assessment and analysis data.

Speaking of the assessment event, a Department spokesman said: "Janison has worked collaboratively with the Best Start Year 7 team to successfully deliver an online literacy and numeracy assessment to NSW Department of Education students."

"Teachers administering the test found the system easy to use and the online format successfully engaged students to demonstrate their skills and understanding."