

## Beware of Harmful Career Tests on the Internet!

Yes, it is true. You can be harmed by career assessments on the Internet. They can tell you that you are one thing when you are actually something else. Worse, they can match you with jobs, training programs, or college majors that don't fit you.

For example, the test might report that your highest score is for the Artistic personality type when actually it is Enterprising -- a very different personality!

This is exactly what happens to people taking a career test by the Department of Labor called the O\*NET Interest Profiler. How do we know this? It is what [their research shows](#).

Can you imagine how those Enterprising people feel when they take the Interest Profiler and they are told that they should consider Artistic careers? What happens if they actually follow the Profiler's direction and choose to enter an Artistic career or training program that does not fit them?

The problem with the Interest Profiler is that it does not measure what it is supposed to measure. Experts would say it lacks test validity.

Unfortunately, the Internet is loaded with measures like this. They go by a variety of names, like: sorter, finder, quiz, and survey. They are also a part of web-based career guidance systems sold to schools and other organizations.

Valid career measures are the result of years of scientific study. The results of these studies are reported in scientific journals and a professional manual for the test. This takes time and money. But all of this is ignored in the rush to profit on the Internet.

### What can you do?

1. Check to see if there is a professional manual online, like [The Career Key™](#). That is usually a good sign. If they don't, avoid using it.
2. If you or your child is in a school that subscribes to an Internet-based educational or career guidance system, ask the principal or school counselor if the career measure meets professional standards for test validity. Many do not.  
  
Unfortunately, some educators and counselors do not understand its importance even though their ethical standards require it.
3. Be wary of endorsements by professional organizations or links from their web pages. Unfortunately, they are often unreliable.
4. Keep in mind that no test can tell you what to do. They can help you:
  - Learn about yourself,
  - Identify promising careers, training programs, or college majors; and
  - [Make a good decision](#).
5. Seek the help of a [professionally trained career counselor](#) who recognizes the importance of test validity.
6. Contact authorities to show your concern.

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