



NEWS

From Harcourt Assessment, Inc.

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HARCOURT ASSESSMENT ACQUIRES ORDINATE CORPORATION

Acquisition Adds Speech Recognition Technology and Automated Language Tests To Harcourt Portfolio

SAN ANTONIO – Leading test publisher Harcourt Assessment, Inc., announced today that it has acquired Ordinate Corporation, a privately held company that specializes in automated language proficiency assessments and provides test delivery and scoring services.

The acquisition immediately advances Harcourt's ability to offer technology-enabled English, Spanish and other spoken language proficiency assessments and testing services to its customers in the United States and globally. It also positions Harcourt for future growth in the field of technology-based assessment.

Headquartered in Menlo Park, Calif., Ordinate Corporation is the first company to develop a completely automated method for evaluating spoken language proficiency based on advanced speech recognition technology. Used by educational, commercial and government organizations worldwide, its tests can be administered anytime and anywhere, and score reports are available in a matter of minutes.

The company's flagship assessment is the Spoken English Test (SET), which is used to assess the listening and speaking skills of non-native English speakers. The 10-minute SET-10 measures language proficiency using five tasks – reading sentences aloud; repeating sentences; answering short questions; building sentences; and answering open-ended questions. SET-10 scores reflect spoken English skill levels in sentence mastery, fluency, vocabulary and pronunciation.

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Ordinate also offers a shorter, five-minute version of the SET-10, with fewer items and tasks. In addition, the company provides two Junior SET tests for younger learners, as well as a spoken Spanish test. The company is currently developing language proficiency tests in Dutch and Japanese, and it plans to offer additional languages, including French and German.

“Ordinate Corporation has been an innovator in spoken language assessment since its inception in 1996,” said Aurelio Prifitera, publisher of Harcourt Assessment, Inc., and president of Harcourt Assessment International. “With a highly educated workforce and a sophisticated, yet simple-to-administer line of language proficiency assessments, Ordinate is a perfect fit for Harcourt. We look forward to welcoming the company’s employees into the Harcourt family and working together to develop winning language-based assessment solutions for our customers.”

“It’s been a wonderful experience to create a company like Ordinate and to see it grow and prosper,” said Ordinate co-founder Jared Bernstein. “However, Ordinate will grow faster and innovate more widely when we have direct access to Harcourt’s established customer base, its broad product portfolio and marketing strength. I can’t think of a better corporate home for us than Harcourt.”

Ordinate and its approximately 25 employees will remain in the San Francisco Bay Area. Bernstein will remain as president of Ordinate and Harcourt vice president for advanced language systems. Ordinate’s other co-founder, Brent Townshend, will continue to serve on its advisory board.

The Ordinate acquisition is Harcourt Assessment’s third in as many years. Last December it acquired the Dutch testing company Swets Testing International, and in April 2002 it acquired Paris-based Les Editions du Centre de Psychologie Appliquée (ECPA).

Ordinate was advised in the transaction by Capital Run LLC. Terms of the acquisition were not disclosed.

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About Harcourt Assessment, Inc.

Harcourt Assessment is a leading provider of high-quality assessment instruments and testing programs. Its educational products include the Stanford Achievement Test series and the Otis-Lennon School Ability Test[®]. Under the PsychCorp[™] brand, it also publishes a wide variety of clinical products, such as the Wechsler[®] family of psychological tests and the CELF[®] family of speech and language tests.

Through the development of custom statewide educational testing programs, Harcourt is helping more than 20 states meet the accountability requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

The company is affiliated with the Harcourt book publishing companies, and together they form the global education brand of Reed Elsevier Group plc (NYSE: RUK and ENL) -- a world-leading publisher and information provider operating in the science and medical, legal, education and business-to-business industry sectors.

About Ordinate Corporation

Privately held Ordinate Corporation was founded in 1996 to develop advanced language testing systems based on new techniques for using speech recognition to score spoken language proficiency. Ordinate combines recognition of spoken utterances with analysis of the manner of speaking to determine language proficiency and other speaker characteristics. Ordinate's augmented speech analysis technology sets a new standard in language testing for speed, accuracy, cost and convenience.

On the Web

For more information, please visit the companies on the Web at www.HarcourtAssessment.com and www.ordinate.com.

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