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Configurable Interview Simulator

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ABSTRACT

The interview process at technology companies, law firms, accounting firms, and in many other industries is highly specialized and may require special preparation. This can result in unexpected or unfair advantages for candidates that are highly connected within the specific industry and therefore have a thorough understanding of the process. This can cause even well-qualified candidates that are unfamiliar with the specific interview process being underprepared for their interview, and therefore not meeting expectations. This disclosure describes a configurable interview simulator that allows prospective candidates to explore various phases of an interview and to familiarize themselves with tools that are used during actual interviews. The simulator provides feedback and allows candidates to evaluate their performance. The interview simulator provides a scalable mechanism that is not resource intensive, is dynamic, and is accommodative of the schedules of employers and candidates. Prospective candidates can utilize the simulator to learn where the interview bar is for a particular employer.

KEYWORDS

- Job interview
- Skills evaluation
- Skills assessment
- Interview preparation
- Interview simulation
- Candidate appraisal
- Employment screening
- Standardized test

BACKGROUND

The interview process at technology companies, law firms, accounting firms, and in many other industries is highly specialized and may require special preparation. This can result in unexpected or unfair advantages for candidates that are highly connected within the specific industry and therefore have a thorough understanding of the process. However, many candidates that lack such connections or exposure to the interview process may not know the format or expectations of an interview (e.g., system design exercises, behavioral studies, or other kinds of interviews). Such candidates may also lack knowledge about the lifecycle of an interview. This can result in even well-qualified candidates being underprepared for their interview, and therefore not meeting expectations during interviews.

DESCRIPTION

An interview simulator is described that provides a phased approach that enables candidates to build familiarity with a predetermined interview process. The interview simulator can help candidates deep dive into a problem area and develop familiarity with the tools used during an interview. Further, the simulator can provide feedback to candidates about the answers they provide and help clarify where the bar is. The predetermined interview process may be tailored based on an employer's (e.g., a technology company, a law firm, a healthcare business, an accounting firm, or other employer) desired candidate attributes. The interview process can simulate interviews in multiple different formats.
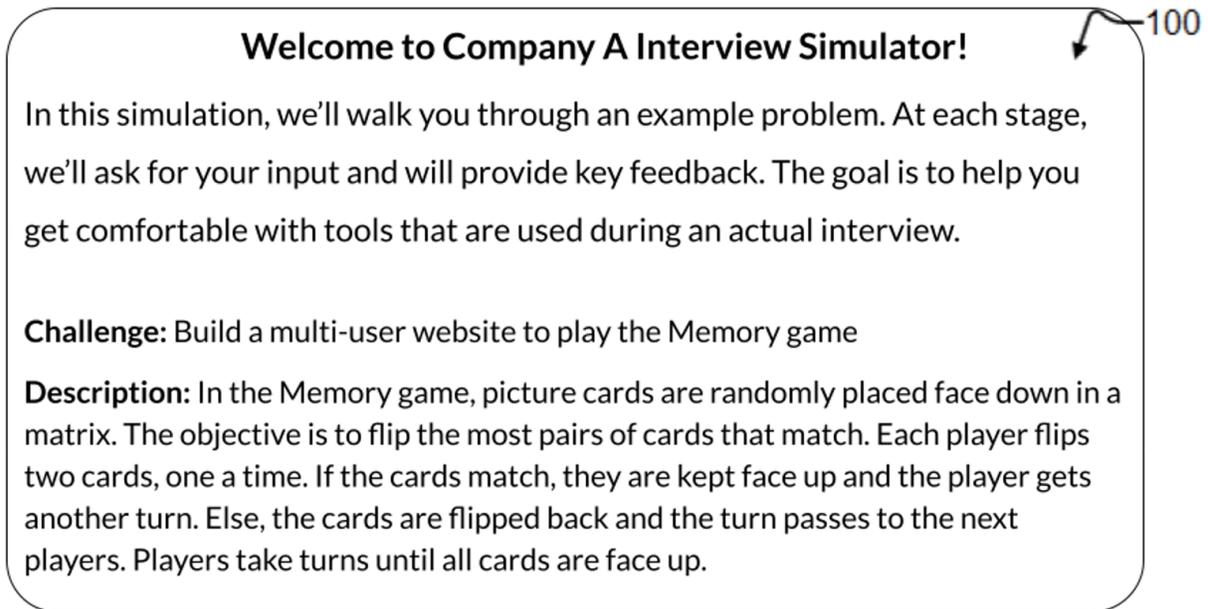
In this box:

Welcome to Company A Interview Simulator! ⟋—100

In this simulation, we'll walk you through an example problem. At each stage, we'll ask for your input and will provide key feedback. The goal is to help you get comfortable with tools that are used during an actual interview.

Challenge: Build a multi-user website to play the Memory game

Description: In the Memory game, picture cards are randomly placed face down in a matrix. The objective is to flip the most pairs of cards that match. Each player flips two cards, one a time. If the cards match, they are kept face up and the player gets another turn. Else, the cards are flipped back and the turn passes to the next players. Players take turns until all cards are face up.

FIG. 1: Introductory screen with an example challenge

As shown in FIG. 1, the simulator may initially present a welcome message 100, such that a candidate may understand that the interview simulation is starting. In this example, the introductory screen includes a problem in the website development domain - building a website that supports a multiuser memory game. For interviews in other industries, suitable problems can be included. For example, a law firm may provide a problem statement relating to a particular domain of law, an accounting firm may provide a problem statement relating to specific accounting topics that are to be tested, a semiconductor design firm may provide a problem statement related to circuit design, etc.

The rest of this document utilizes the example problem in the website development domain to describe other features of the interview simulator. The simulator is built with flexibility such that users can provide example problems (and further associated information) that are well-suited to other domains and for various positions for which recruitment is carried out.

The simulated interview can proceed in multiple phases, similar to a real interview. For example, in the context of an interview simulation for a software development position, such phases can include a prioritization phase, a problem/ question exploration phase, and a review/ completion phase.

In the prioritization phase, the simulator presents the candidate with the problem (as seen in FIG. 1) and requests the candidate to provide their input related to the main considerations for that problem that will have to be explored later, during the interview.
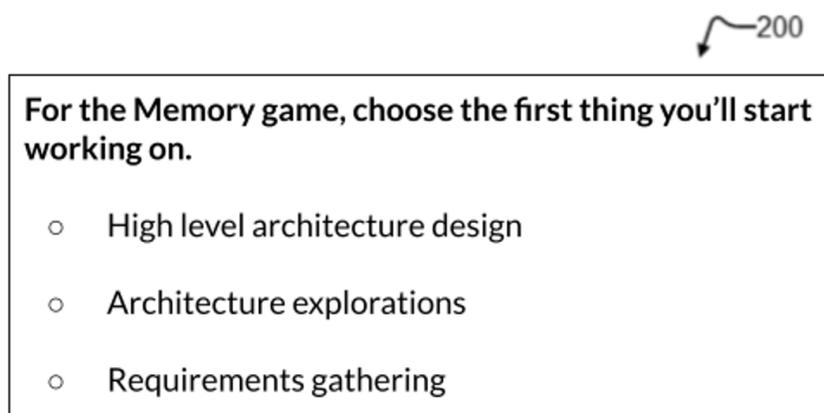
Prioritization phase

FIG. 2: Example question in a prioritization phase

As seen in FIG. 2, in the prioritization phase, an example question related to the problem is presented with a message 200 that requests the user to select from various prioritization options (shown as a bulleted list). The candidate can select among the prioritization options and the simulator records how the candidate prioritized between the different options. While FIG. 2 shows a multiple-choice answer format with a single selection option, other types of interfaces can be utilized, e.g., ranking the different presented options, grouping the options into priority groups, etc. The candidate's selection of priorities is indicative of the candidate's proficiency in

the domain. During the problem exploration stage, hand-curated hints from the prospective employer can be provided to help the candidate get a start.

Problem exploration phase

In the problem / question exploration phase, the simulator can provide different types of questions, including multiple-choice, freeform text, ranking, freeform drawing, and/or other questions to simulate the experience of an interviewer asking such questions. For example, in multiple-choice and/or freeform text questions, the candidate may select answers or type answers directly into text-input fields in an interface presented by the simulator. The ranking questions may be formatted like the prioritization options of FIG. 2, such that a candidate may rank different options. For freeform drawing, the candidate may be provided a drawing tool, such as an open-source drawing tool, such that diagrams, sketches, and other graphical answers may be given by the candidate.
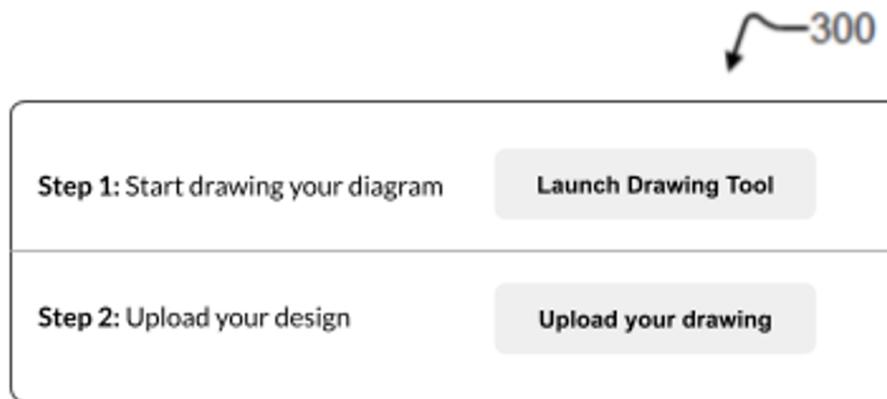
—300

| Step 1: Start drawing your diagram | Launch Drawing Tool |
| Step 2: Upload your design | Upload your drawing |

FIG. 3: Tools can be utilized in the interview simulator

As shown in the user interface 300 of FIG. 3, tools can be utilized in the interview simulator. For example, a drawing tool (built into the simulator or a third-party tool) can be invoked to respond to a question that requires the candidate to draw a diagram. Other types of

tools can also be invoked depending on the type of question. For example, a law firm interview simulator may provide a legal research tool utilized by the firm, an accounting firm interview simulator may provide a bookkeeping tool utilized by the firm, a semiconductor design company may provide an electronic design automation (EDA) tool, etc. The provision of a simulator that includes tools that are used within actual interviews enables candidates to become familiar with such tools prior to an actual interview. The simulator can also include a space for the candidate to keep notes as the simulated interview progresses.

Continuous feedback

The interview simulator can optionally provide real-time feedback to candidates by showing them an ideal answer after each question or a subset of the questions. To evaluate certain types of answers such as freeform text or drawings, suitably trained machine learning models are incorporated in the simulator.

Further, based on candidates' answers to the interview, the direction of the simulation can be automatically adjusted, similar to a real interview. For example, additional questions of a specific type or directed to specific topics can be automatically determined based on candidates' responses to previous questions.

Notes

Similar to an interview, the interview simulator can also provide candidates with a space to keep notes as the interview progresses.

<u>Answer review phase</u>

Upon completion of the interview (end of problem exploration phase), in an answer review/ completion phase, the simulator provides candidates with answers as well as additional

resources that are dynamic and based on candidates' responses. In addition, the interview simulator can enable candidates to indicate their preparedness to track their growth. This phase can also enable candidates to provide a self-evaluation (how they thought they did in the interview simulation) and to provide feedback on the usefulness of the interview simulator in preparing for an actual interview.

While the foregoing description refers primarily to text interfaces for questions, and text/drawing/ other types of responses from the candidate, the interview simulator can also optionally provide prerecorded video and/or audio questions presented by a real interviewer. In this way, a candidate can listen to a human voice present the questions in a cadence, turn of phrase, and manner that is more similar to an actual interview conversation. The candidate can provide a recording of their answers to such questions. An additional feature can include conversation recordings where two people act out an example interview via a videoconference and candidates can ask follow-up questions. Another additional feature can include pre-recorded mock interviews between an interviewer and a mock candidate.

The interview simulator can be made available to prospective candidates that visit a career or jobs portion of an employer's website, as well as to candidates that have been selected for an actual interview. The interview simulator provides a scalable mechanism that is not resource intensive, is dynamic, and is accommodative of the schedules of employers and candidates. Prospective candidates can utilize the simulator to learn where the interview bar is for a particular employer.

Further, while the foregoing description refers to application of the interview simulator to help prospective candidates build knowledge of the interview process, the described simulator can also be used for pre-screening prospective candidates, as an automated screening tool during

actual interviews, for evaluations within a classroom setting, for skill assessment for placement within a company.

CONCLUSION

This disclosure describes a configurable interview simulator that allows prospective candidates to explore various phases of an interview and to familiarize themselves with tools that are used during actual interviews. The simulator presents candidates with a simulated interview based on an employer's hiring goals and other considerations. The simulator can present the simulated interview in multiple phases that are adapted based on a candidate's responses. The simulator provides feedback and allows candidates to evaluate their performance. The interview simulator provides a scalable mechanism that is not resource intensive, is dynamic, and is accommodative of the schedules of employers and candidates. Prospective candidates can utilize the simulator to learn where the interview bar is for a particular employer.