

What is TopCoder

Weekly Online Competitions

[Weekly Online Competition]

TopCoder is a competition much like any major league sporting event. Every week, in an online and automated format, individual matches called Single Rounds are held. The focus of these competitions is programming. The competition, or Single Round Match, is designed to bring developers together to square off head-to-head, demonstrate their skills and potentially earn cash prizes.

[Objectivity]

This is an entirely new approach to programming competitions. Instead of a forum where individuals or teams submit to a panel of judges, TopCoder devised an objective approach that challenges a developer's skills and brings a known definition of "competition" to the technology community. Competitions are designed to pit an individual's intellect and skill against another's. The measure of each individual's abilities and outcome of a match is based on time and accuracy.

[Time Online]

Time is the key determining factor for an individual's potential score. Score ultimately affects a coder's ratings and ratings determine potential tournament seed. Time is also what brings these coders back on a weekly basis to compete. There's no waiting for a panel of judges to declare the winner days or weeks later.

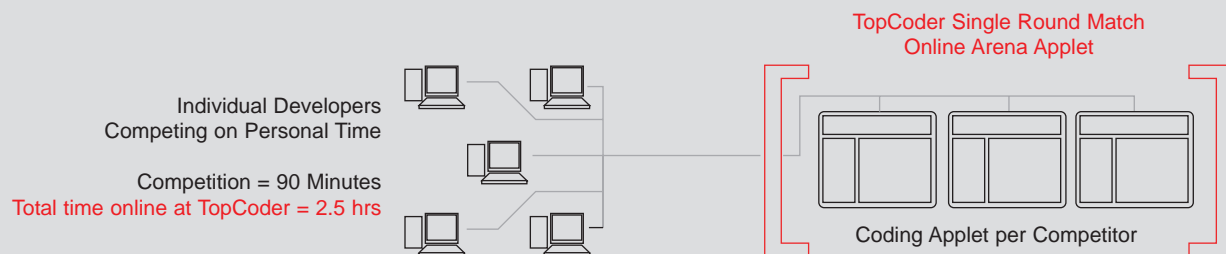
Additionally, each Single Round Match has a defined start and stop time with results being immediate. Thus, the time spent by a coder is not time wasted considering that each match takes place in the evening hours on an individual's free time, not work time.

[Active Membership]

Being part of TopCoder is first and foremost about the competition. Members realize that the TopCoder venue provides them with an opportunity to demonstrate their skill, interact with peers, gain exposure to employers and possibly earn weekly or tournament cash prizes. Members look forward to the weekly competitions much like a home audience looks forward to their favorite show. The competition provides a venue that is fun, interactive, rewarding, and can be done on a continual basis instead once or twice a year.

[Competition]

Each match is crucial to members. In order to advance to a tournament, a member must be rated high enough to make the initial elimination field. Accomplishing such a rating requires ongoing competition. (Some tournament prize purses can equal \$250,000). Thus, the Single Round Match is the very core of how TopCoder attracts, retains, and rewards members.



Member Demographics

Targeting Technologists

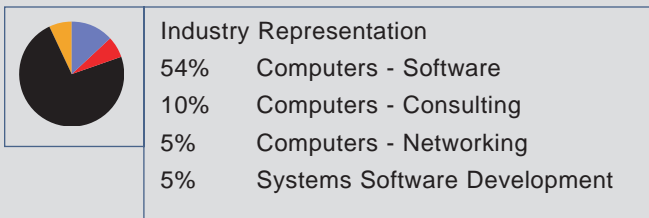
TopCoder's online programming competitions provide sponsors with a venue to target a much desired professional and student developer demographic via TopCoder's website, the competition applet, and opt-in match announcement and match summary/results emails.

Overall, members are the biggest driving force behind new membership in TopCoder, with word of mouth accounting for over 30% of weekly new membership. Emails forwarded from Faculty accounts for more than 12% of weekly growth.

Competition is the primary interest of both the student (48%) and professional (62%) demographic in comparison to cash prizes and employment opportunities.

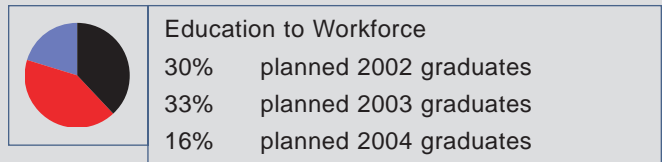
[Professional Profile]

- ∴ Influence and IT Spending
40% recommend technology direction and product purchasing for their organization.
- ∴ 22% of professional member's organizations spend \$10 million or more annually on Information Technology.
- ∴ Primary Interest
68% are focused on Software Development both personally and professionally. Game Software Development, Networking and Web are other primary interests.



[Student Profile]

- ∴ School Penetration
TopCoder's student membership represents 380 schools with an average of 36 members competing from the top schools.



Single Round Match

Automated and Online

A Single Round Match (SRM) is the very heart of TopCoder. Each match offers members the chance to compete, improve their rating and potentially earn cash for top placement in their assigned room. Objectivity is a primary driver in match participation as scores are based on time, accuracy, and points.

[Weekly Competition]

Held twice weekly, each SRM is comprised of three stages; Coding, Challenge, and System Testing. Each match lasts 90 minutes where coders tackle 3 problems of ascending point value. The coder with the most points wins their assigned room. Rooms are comprised of up to 10 coders per room. Ratings are the key factor for room assignment.

[Competition Process]

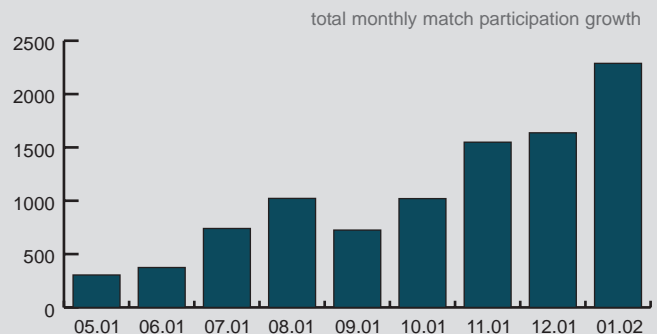
Each match runs for approximately 90 minutes and is comprised of three phases. The goal of the **Coding Phase** is to submit solutions in the least amount of time and to submit for all three questions. During the **Challenge Phase**, coders attempt to "break" each other's solution in an effort to take the lead in points. The **System Test Phase** signals the end of a match and winners, points, and ratings are finalized and posted.

[Building Ratings]

Just as each Single Round Match is the heart of the competition, ratings are the determining factor for any coder who wants to participate in a major tournament. A Single Round Match is the principle means of building ratings and repeat participation is a coder's only chance at getting to a tournament and the grand prize cash levels.

[Time Spent Online]

Members log into the [TC] Arena Applet in advance an average of 1 hour prior to start time. Members use this time to discuss previous match results, difficulty of the questions, strategies and more. On average, members will spend an additional 1.5 hours online in the [TC] Arena Applet discussing the match and results.



Represents total Sponsorship Time for a Single Round Match, Average time spent online at TopCoder: 2.5 hours

