

Technique to grade multiple-choice exams with any optical scanner

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What if there were a faster, easier way to grade exams? A DMZ-based startup has perfected the technology: Akindi, a browser-based system that allows professors to quickly scan and grade multiple-choice exams.

"Professors typically give feedback in the form of a final score, because that's really the easiest way," said Mahmoud Hashim, cofounder of Akindi. "They go through a long process, get the final grade, copy-paste it into a gradebook system, and then just publish it. But when you build a [digital platform](#) to process and grade these sheets, professors can send individualized feedback to students with one click of a button."

Akindi is positioned as an easier alternative to Scantron, which sells its own scanner. "They control the environment within which the scanning happens," said Hashim. "We have to develop the technology that takes a scan from any type of scanner, and make sure that we're accurately providing the results, regardless of where the input's coming."

Hashim, a graduate of Ryerson's Industrial Engineering program, launched the business in 2012 with cofounder David Wolever. It took two years to fine-tune the technology, but since the product was released in 2014, the business has grown through word of mouth. Akindi now boasts clients not only in Ryerson, but also at over 100 schools across North America. This summer, Akindi launched a mobile app, which allows instructors to quickly grade a sheet using a [cell phone camera](#).

Akindi is an example of Ryerson's culture of innovation and

entrepreneurship, especially in its business incubation and zone learning. When asked what advantages the DMZ offers an emerging startup, Hashim points to its location. "In the very early days, before we even got our first customer, it was validation and credibility," he said. "At the very beginning, having a downtown address and being able to meet potential clients here to show them around—to make them feel that this is real and you can trust us—that's definitely a major value."

He also praised the DMZ for offering a space where like-minded entrepreneurs can exchange information. "It's very valuable to be able to talk to other people. Let's say you're looking to use a new marketing tool: you can speak to two or three other people and they'll tell you what their experiences were. That support network of other peers is extremely valuable."

More information: To learn more about the DMZ, go to dmz.ryerson.ca.

Provided by Ryerson University

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