



Small Medium Business (SMB)

2007 Small Business Awards: The Winners

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Anywhere Test Prep

PrepMe

Size: 5 employees
Headquarters: San Francisco
Key Tech: Managed hosting service
Business: Education
www.prepme.com



ENLARGE

One of the most stressful events in a student's life is taking the dreaded SAT for college admissions. An estimated 1.6 million students take the test annually, and many seek outside help to prepare. But some can't afford the time or money for a private tutor or regular class, so PrepMe offers an alternative.

"Most classes aren't tailored to a specific student's needs," says Avichal Garg, the company's CTO and a cofounder, "so we use technology to customize that to the student." PrepMe offers individualized online courses for SAT, PSAT, and ACT test preparation, as well as personal tutors online.

"We have tens of thousands of students all over the world, from Africa to Asia," Garg says. The benefit for those students is that no matter where they are, they can access the training tools and have access to a tutor. And it saves families money. A typical classroom test-preparation course can cost from \$800 to \$1,000, versus PrepMe's \$300 to \$500 fees. PrepMe claims that the average student experiences a 300-point increase on his or her SAT results.

To keep its services up and running around the clock, PrepMe relies on ServePath, a managed hosting and colocation provider. PrepMe's platform was built on open-source software, including Apache and MySQL, but is hosted by ServePath, which eliminates much of the IT overhead for the company and handles tasks such as load balancing to maintain reliability. It also provides additional security. Garg estimates that using a hosted service saves the company about \$50,000 a year in personnel costs. —next: Ten Minute Media >

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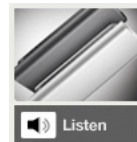
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