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EBOOK

Improving Candidate Experience During Remote Tech Hiring Interviews With FaceCode

Introduction

Come the pandemic, recruiters and/or hiring managers have had to transition to an end-to-end virtual hiring process, halting all other conventional recruiting methods. Many elements of tech hiring are relatively easy to move online; digital assessment tools were used to initially screen candidates while face-to-face interviews were replaced with remote interviewing tools. The challenging part of the online hiring process lies in providing a top-notch candidate experience.

80-90% of the tech talent out there says that a positive or negative remote candidate experience will change their mind about a company.

This serves as reason enough for companies to invest in creating a memorable candidate experience if they want to hire the cream of the crop.

What is candidate experience and why does it matter?

Candidate experience can be understood as to how job seekers perceive and react to a company's recruitment cycle including attracting, sourcing, interviewing, onboarding, and upskilling.

A positive candidate experience leaves job seekers feeling like their time has been respected, and that the hiring process has been transparent and fair, regardless of the outcome. This means that even if the candidate isn't hired for the job, a positive candidate experience still affects their perception of your brand.

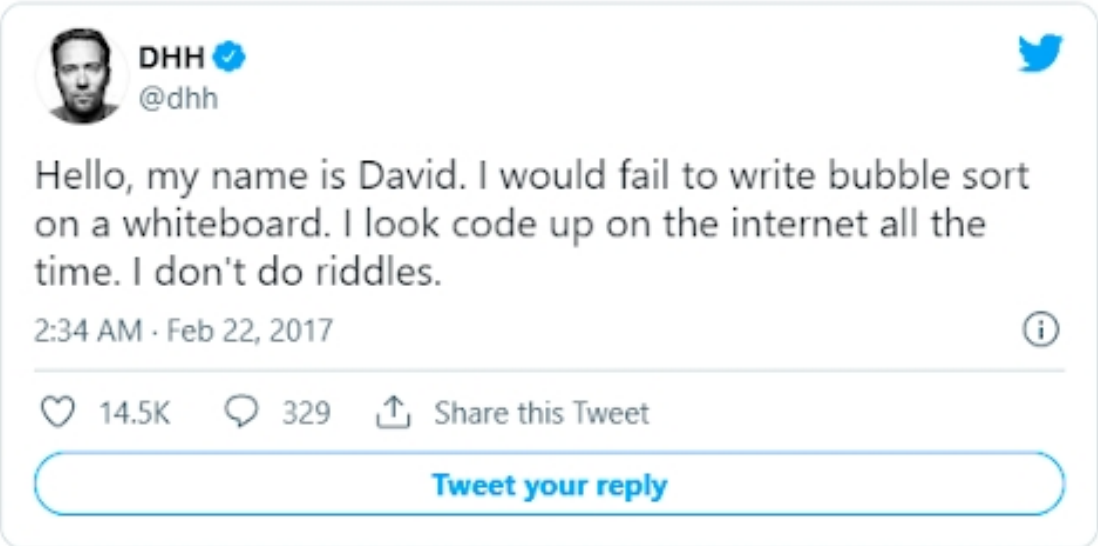
It is understandable that the vast majority of candidates you interview are not going to be hired. Therefore, how "non-hires" perceive your recruiting and interview process may carry the most weight in terms of your employer brand and reputation.

In fact, research states that as much as 67% of rejected candidates may still re-apply for a position at an organization if the recruiting experience has been positive.

The challenges of creating a positive candidate experience during remote tech interviews

Candidate experience is built up of micro experiences. How you engage with the developer community, the kind of customized assessments you send out to candidates, your company's D&I initiatives, and most importantly - how you interview. Tech interviews are notoriously long and tough. Acing an interview at Google is more difficult than getting into Harvard, for instance (Google only has a 0.2% acceptance rate against the Ivy's 4.9%).

To be fair, developers were complaining about this even before the pandemic. In 2017, many software engineers took to Twitter to confess that they would fail a whiteboard interview, led by David Heinemeier Hansson, the founder of Ruby on Rails.



Remote interviews have replaced whiteboards, but the problems still persist. After talking to members of our 6.5 million strong developer community, we made a list of the common issues that affect candidate experience during interviews:

Too many tools break the interview.

Conducting a technical interview is not at all easy in remote circumstances. You are juggling multiple apps to conduct an interview. Like Zoom for video, a code editor, a notes app and a diagram board in case you want to see their systems design skills.

Nobody talks about the stress of it all.

Interviews are inherently stressful. Sometimes, when even the best of coders are put on spot and asked to fix bugs and write complex code, they can make mistakes. There is a wonderful blog from a fellow developer Neil Sainsbury which delightfully explains why asking devs to code in stressful situations isn't a good idea.

Interviewers lack empathy.

In situations like the one described above, interviewers need to show empathy and put the candidate at ease. There are many interview techniques like pair programming, code reviews etc. that can be used to assess skills. It does not need to be a hazing ritual.

Tech interviews aren't always realistic.

On the job, coders use an IDE or a code editor to write code. But, when you ask a developer to use a word processor for writing code, you're asking them to do their best work with a handicap. It's like asking a deep-sea diver to jump into the sea without the right equipment.

Also, many times the questions asked during tech interviews are not relevant to the job at hand. Binary trees, for instance, are rarely used for front-end coding. But interviewers still insist on asking this question just because Google and other FAANG companies do, even if it's not important for the role.

Feedback isn't always forthcoming.

40% of the developers surveyed in our annual HackerEarth Developer Survey (2021) said that they do not like being ghosted by recruiters. This mostly happens when there is lack of alignment between the recruiting team and the hiring managers who are supposed to provide feedback.

How FaceCode Can Help You Improve Your Candidate Experience

HackerEarth FaceCode is our flagship intelligent coding tool that aims to make tech interviews simpler, easier, and skill-based. FaceCode has a host of features that weed out subjectivity and bias from every situation - whether you're conducting interviews in person or remotely. This allows recruiters and hiring managers to conduct objective, skill-based interviews with a prime focus on the candidate experience.

Single platform makes interviews easier to handle

Benefit:

Makes it easier for candidates to write code and replaces the need for multiple tools

Juggling multiple tools to write a single piece of code is extremely hard. With FaceCode's real-time coding interview tool, you can test a candidate's skills on the fly and then compile and run the code in real time, through a single platform.

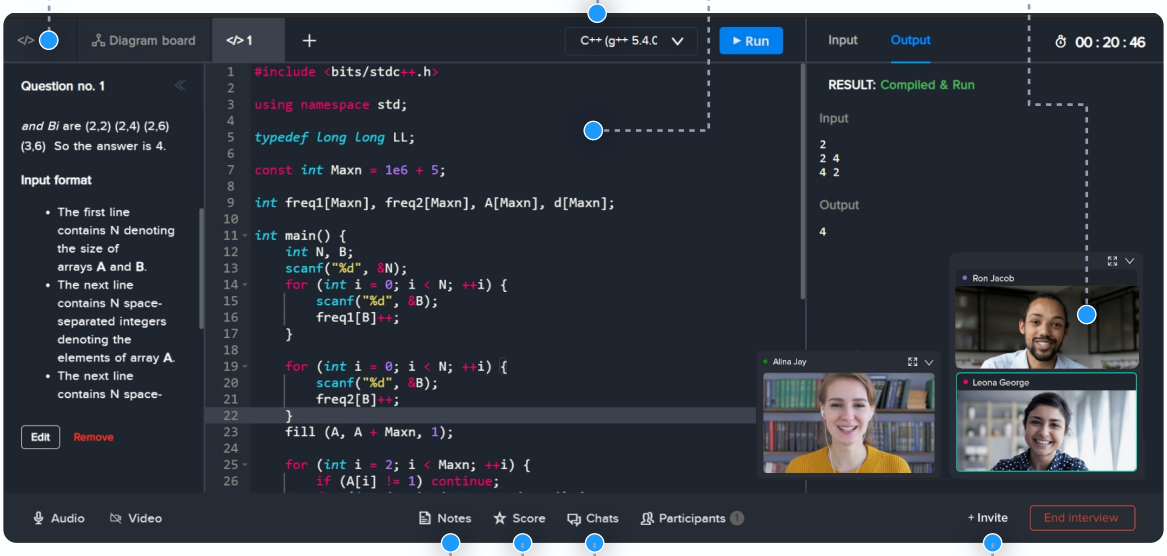
What Hosting Interviews On FaceCode Looks Like

Pick from a library of 300+ questions or ask custom questions

Get HD quality video and voice communication

Pick a language of choice from over 41+ programming languages

Collaborative, real-time code editor with built-in compiler



Score the candidate on objective evaluation parameters

Start a chat with the candidate or the panel

Notes taken are auto-saved

Invite additional panelists

The code editor also has a built-in compiler and an intuitive interface with a panel on the left displaying the problem statement, and a scratchpad in the center. Interviewers can use the tool for pair programming, editing code stubs, or even test for algorithmic questions using our Jupyter integration.

Familiar coding environment brings down stress levels and improves collaboration

Benefit:
Less stress = better code writing

In real life, coders don't use Google Docs to write code. They use IDEs (Integrated Development Environment), which enables programmers to consolidate the different aspects of writing a computer program.

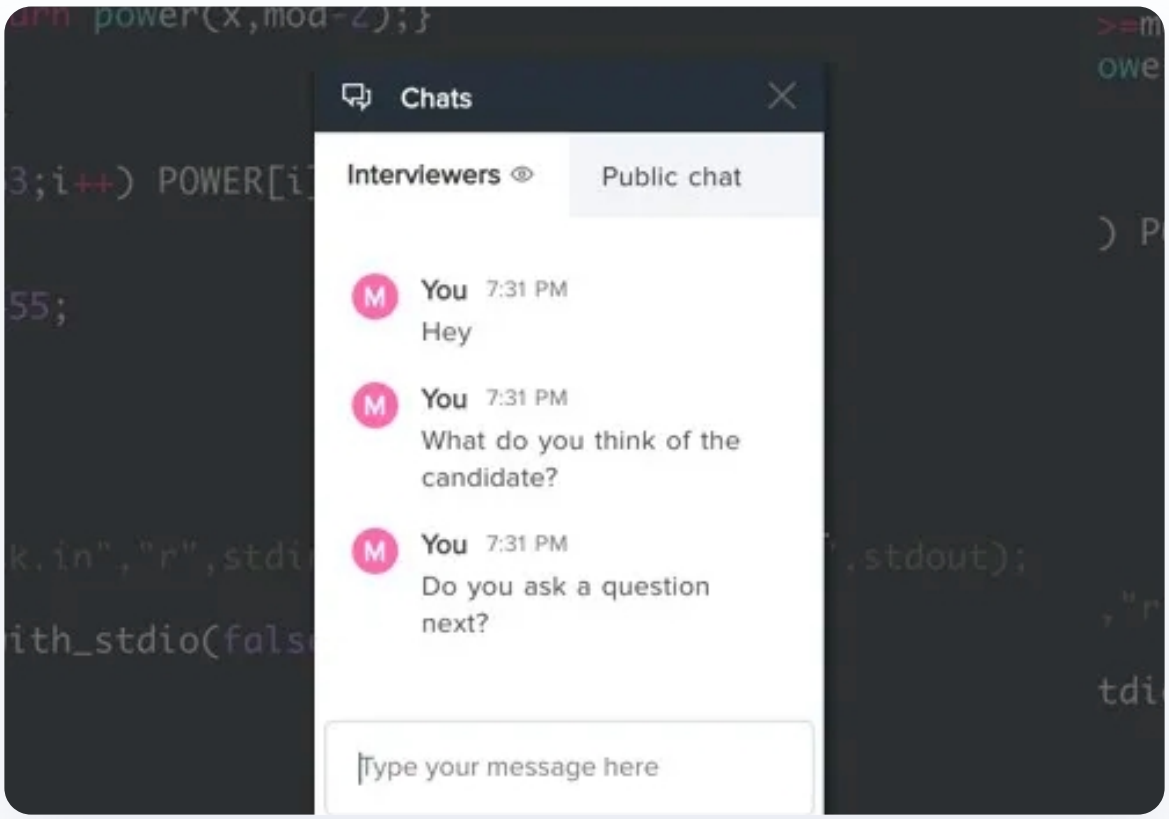
Using an IDE also makes it easier to collaborate during a tech interview. Building a product is a collaborative endeavor, and tech interviews are meant to test a candidate's ability to communicate and work in tandem with other developers. This is much easier done using a familiar tool.

Support for panel interviews helps you streamline the process

Benefit:

Consolidating multiple interviews into one reduces candidate fatigue

You can use FaceCode for one-on-one interviews, or add more interviewers to your panel. The panelists will be notified via an email to join the interview. You can also see a list of all the panelists who are attending the interview.



We understand that panelists might want to share notes during the interview. So, we have a built-in chat feature with two modes. The default mode is meant for a ‘private chat’ between interviewers, and the ‘public’ mode is for chatting with the candidate. This is also helpful if you’re facing issues with audio.

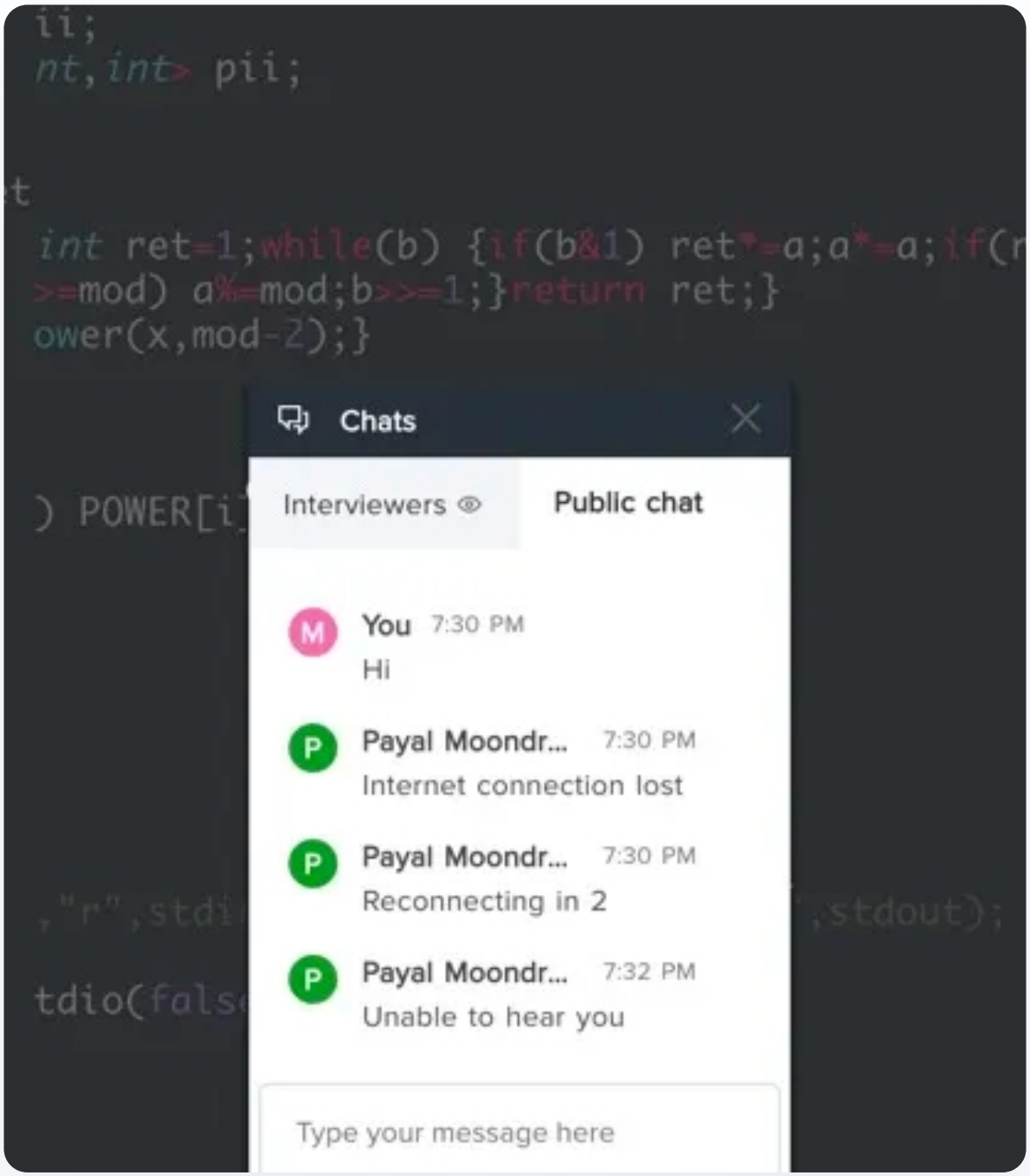
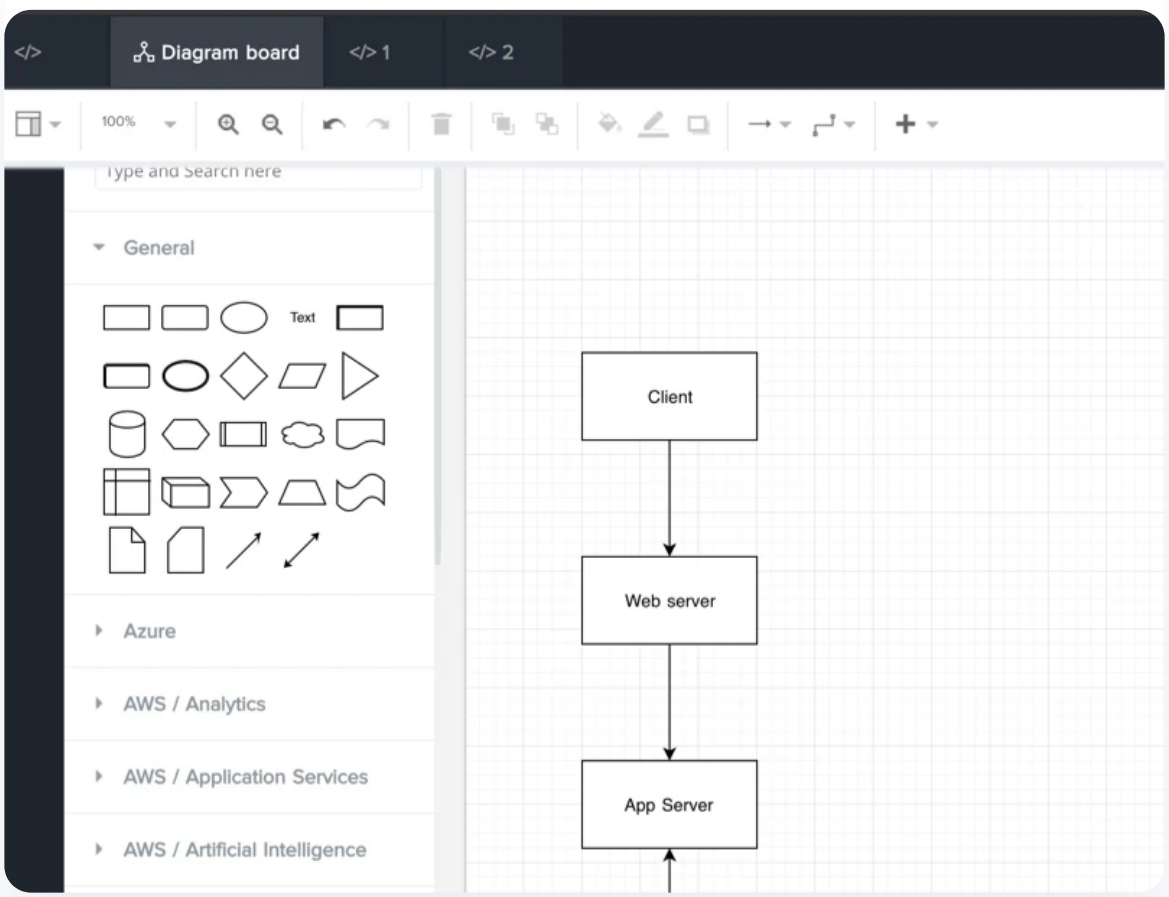


Diagram Boards for systems interviews

Benefit:

Design problems can be assessed without navigating away from the interview interface

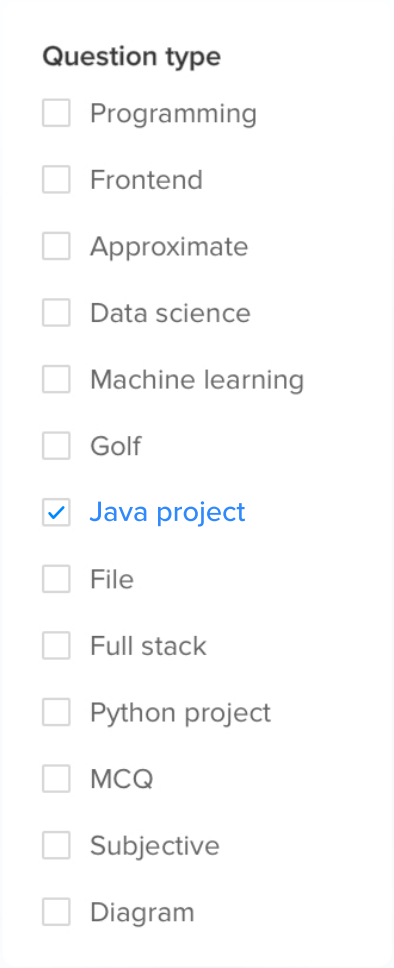
System design problems are a necessity in most senior developer interviews. Our collaborative, real-time diagram board helps you evaluate this skill seamlessly for back-end, cloud engineer and other roles.



Library of role-based questions for more realistic interviews

Benefit:

Makes the interview more relevant and personalized, and reduces time spent on generic questions



Our platform comes prepped with a custom library of 300+ questions. This means that interviewers won't have to waste time on googling questions ahead of the interview - they can find a relevant one in seconds on the FaceCode library.

Interviewers can also add their own custom questions to the library, making the interview highly curated and giving the candidate a sneak peek into what their typical workday may look like. This also helps the candidate understand how their skills will be employed at the job, and how they fit into the role.

Automated interview summary with deep insights for improved feedback

Benefit:

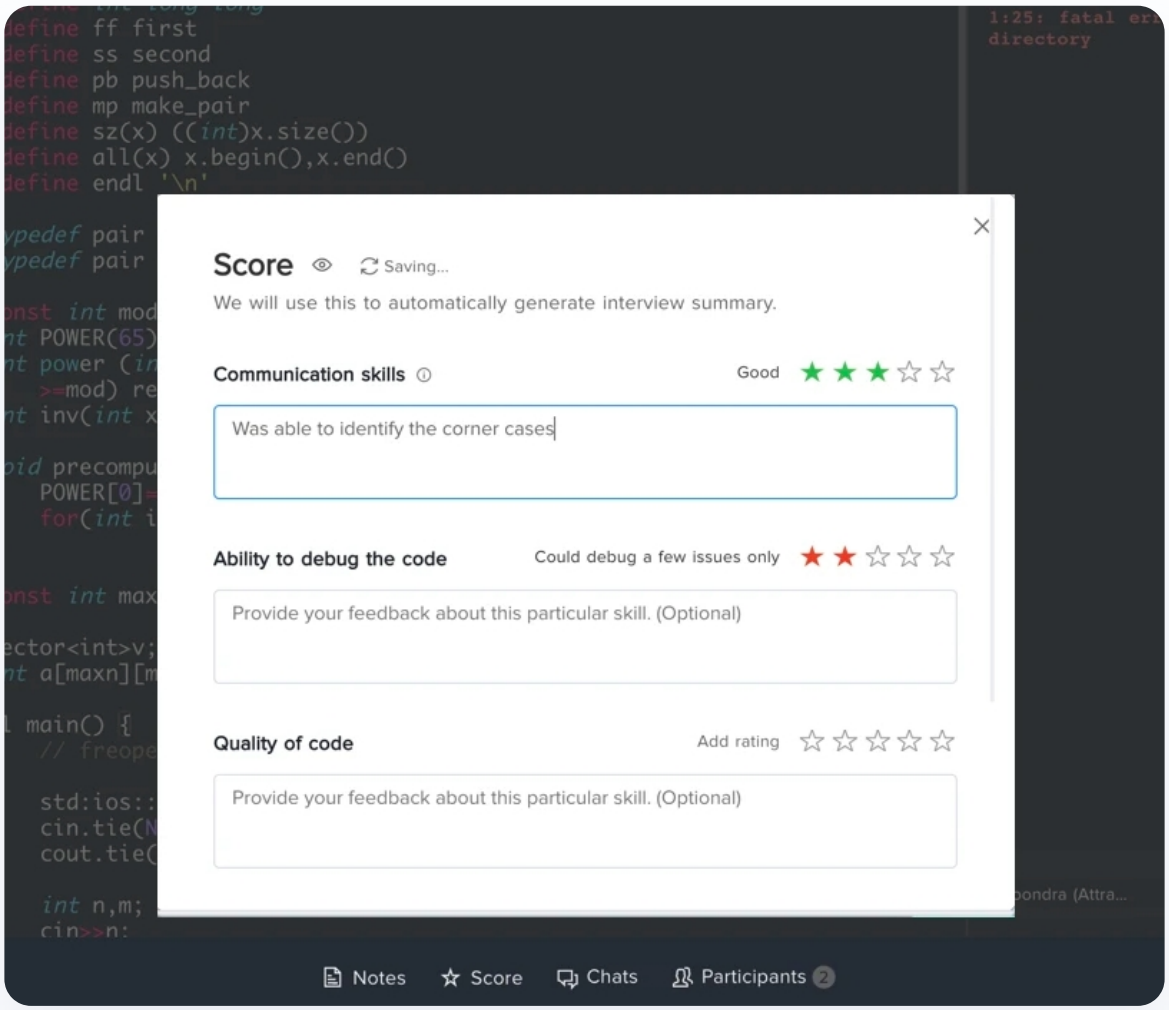
Makes it easier to create objective, standardized evaluation parameters. Makes scoring and feedback super-easy

A sore point between tech recruiters and hiring managers is the intelligence gathering that happens after an interview is over. As we discussed above, many times, managers leave this to the last minute which causes a ‘recency bias.’

Recency bias is a cognitive bias that favours recent events over historic ones. So, if the manager has interviewed a bunch of candidates in a day, they are more likely to remember the details of the last interview than the one that happened earlier in the day. The notes will also reflect the same.

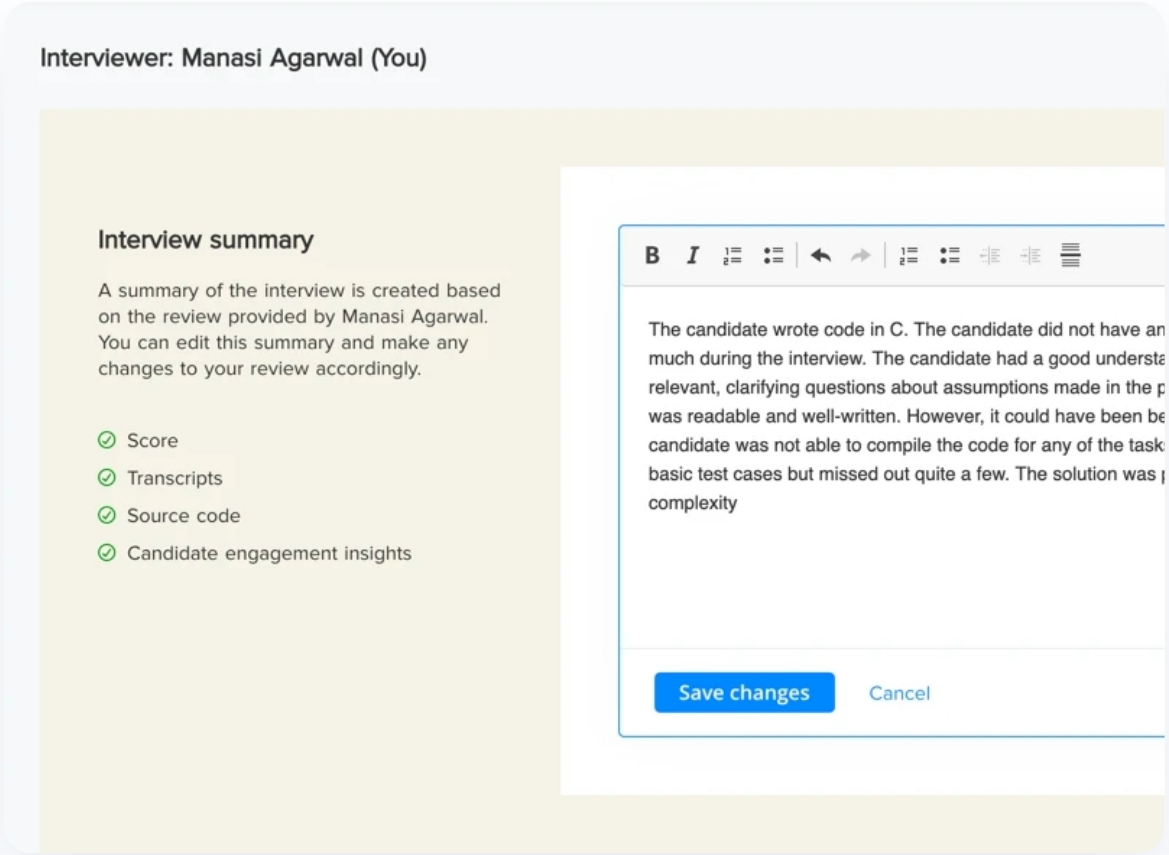
FaceCode solves this problem by actively prompting interviewers to fill out a scoring sheet as soon as the interview ends. The scorecard can be set using an automated HE-approved template, or you can create a custom scoring grid when you schedule the interview.

We also have a ‘Notes’ tab which makes it easy for interviewers to pen down thoughts as they surface during the interview. These ‘Notes’ automatically become a part of the final feedback.

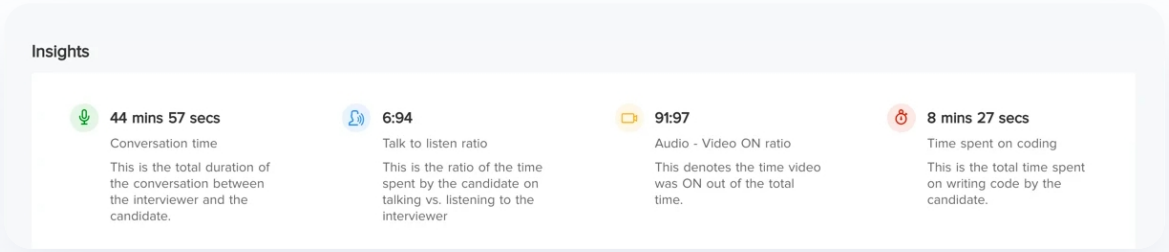


Once the interviewer finishes scoring, our automated ‘Report’ section generates a summary of the interview consisting of the scorecard, the compiled notes, the voice and audio transcripts of the interview (if these features were used), snapshots of the IDE screen for every final answer, and other good-to-have information about the interview.

In fact, FaceCode literally writes the interview report based on your one-click inputs; thus saving precious time for both.

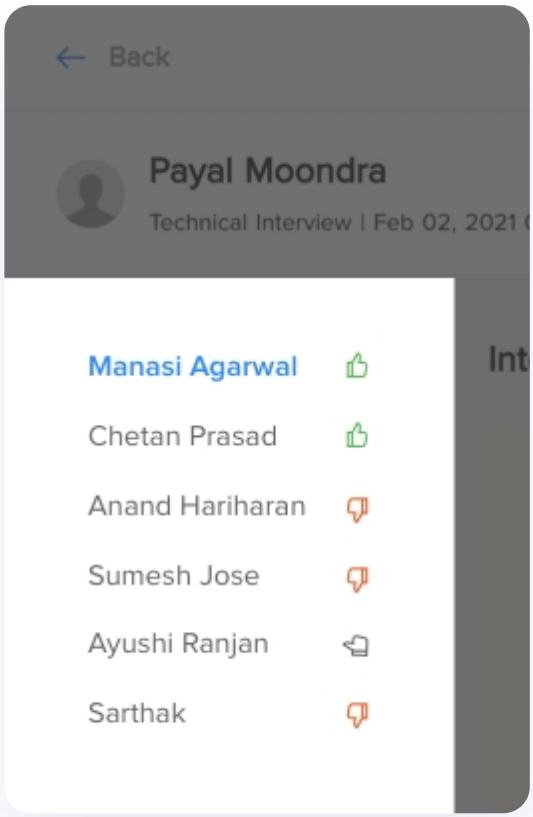


The feature titled ‘Insights’ shows metrics that can help with understanding the candidate better. For instance, you can check the time a candidate spent coding and compare it against a benchmark.



If managers have used an automated template for scoring, they can always edit the auto-generated interview feedback to add in more relevant text which will make the report comprehensive.

There is also a link to the last assessment that the candidate took on HackerEarth, and a snapshot of highlights so that all of the candidate's test information is stored in a single place, and decision-making becomes easier.



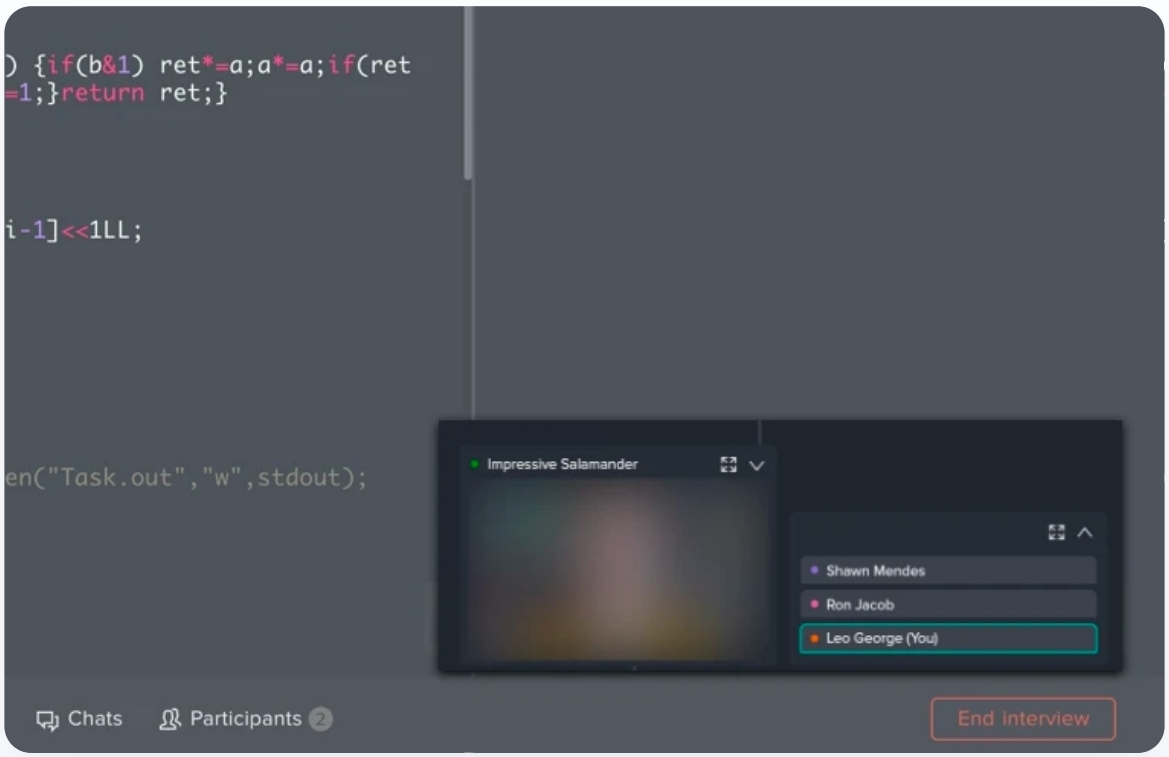
The report section has two views. A 'Super Admin' (usually the one who sets and schedules the interview) has access to all the reports along with a visual summary of each. Individual 'Admins' will only be able to access their own reports ensuring that they don't end up influencing another's report inadvertently.

Diversity Hiring Mode - Hides PII (Personally Identifiable Information)

Benefit:

Bye bye bias!

FaceCode interviews come with an anti-bias feature. As a hiring manager, if you would like to keep your interviews bias-free you can do so by switching this feature ‘ON’ when you schedule an interview. This hides the candidate’s PII (Personally Identifiable Information) and masks their name with an alias.



To Sum Up

We started this piece by listing out the flaws in the tech interview process. Here's how FaceCode makes it better:

01 FaceCode is a video interview platform with built-in features like code editor and diagram boards. You don't have to juggle multiple apps to conduct an interview anymore!

02 FaceCode was created by developers, for developers. Candidate experience is at the heart of this product, and we have made every effort possible to ensure interviews on FaceCode are as close to real-life coding as possible.

03 No more using docs, text editors, or other tools for tech interviews. FaceCode ensures hiring managers can provide a realistic experience for all candidates through a robust IDE and create an interview that resembles real-life job scenarios.

04 With FaceCode, we also have weeded out delays in feedback and subjective biases that come with it. The platform is built with the core promise of objective and skill-based hiring that HackerEarth is known for.

And we leave you with this...

In 2017, reports from Virgin Media said the company was losing $5 million annually because of bad candidate experience during interviews. While this may sound like an old statistic, providing a compelling candidate experience is no longer just an option; it is a business imperative with very real consequences.

From a candidate's perspective, interviews are a scary, anxiety-inducing experience. It's in your company's best interests to create a warm and welcoming environment so the candidates feel comfortable expressing who they are and what they're capable of, and you increase your chances of hiring the best fit for your company.

HackerEarth FaceCode was built with the aim of making interviews less stressful than they need to be. We hope you try it out today and make your tech interviews experience better.

Happy hiring!

About HackerEarth

HackerEarth is a global company that helps large enterprises source, screen, interview, upskill and continuously engage with developer and data science talent. HackerEarth for Enterprises is an integrated suite of solutions that empower companies to manage the entire developer lifecycle, start a skill-based hiring practice, and speed up their recruitment cycle. HackerEarth is also a leading facilitator of online hackathons and coding challenges, where its community of over 5 million developers can upskill and practice for interviews, and companies can attract and source top developer talent globally. HackerEarth was founded in 2012 and is headquartered in San Francisco with offices in the US and India. For more information, visit http://www.hackerearth.com.

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