

70 years of the MBTI® assessment

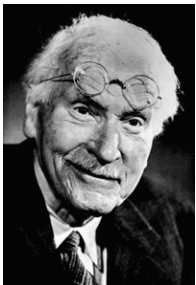
The MBTI® tool has a long and prestigious history, all of which lead to its huge success as the world's most widely used and recognised personality tool.

Katharine Briggs and Isabel Myers: the creators

The MBTI questionnaire, first published in 1943, was originally developed in the United States by Katharine Cook Briggs and her daughter Isabel Briggs Myers. Katharine Briggs was inspired to start researching personality type theory when she first met Isabel's future husband, Clarence Myers. Whilst Clarence was a very eligible match for her daughter, Katharine noticed that he had a different way of seeing the world to her and her family, and was intrigued enough to start an extensive literature review based on understanding different temperaments. It was shortly after Carl Jung's publication of *Psychological Types* (1921; 1923 in English) that Katharine realised how closely his theories resembled hers, and how much more developed they were.



Inspiration from Carl Jung



Carl Jung was a renowned Swiss psychiatrist, and is still seen by many, along with Sigmund Freud, as one of the founding fathers of modern-day psychology. His theory of psychological types proposes that people are innately different, both in terms of the way they see the world and take in information, and how they make decisions. Briggs and Myers thought that these ideas were so useful that they wanted to make them accessible to a wider audience.

Translating the theory into a practical tool

Driven by a desire to help people understand themselves and each other better in a post-war climate, Isabel Myers set about devising a questionnaire that would identify which psychological type a person was. To do this, she enlisted the help of more experienced psychometricians, and her work was later endorsed by professors from the Universities of California, Michigan and Florida. Isabel's subsequent writings on type and self-development remain utterly resonant today, both in professional and personal life.

Making the Indicator publicly available

The MBTI questionnaire was first published by the Educational Testing Service, before being taken over by Consulting Psychologists Press (CPP), who still publish the instrument today. After using the questionnaire for some of his earliest development work, Dr Robert McHenry, Professor of Experimental Psychology at Oxford University, set up Oxford Psychologists Press (OPP), which became the European distributor of the MBTI questionnaire. Since its foundation in 1989, OPP has published fully validated translations of the questionnaire in 14 languages, and completed a significant body of research into its validity, ensuring that it remains a robust tool for users across Europe.

An explosion in popularity

The MBTI questionnaire is now used in situations as diverse as marital counselling and executive development, and has become the world's most popular personality instrument. Its positive approach to understanding differences is appreciated by the two million people who complete the questionnaire globally every year.