ALT Strategy: February 2007 to January 2010 (adopted November 2006)

Contents

Version history

#	Author	Details	Notes	Date
3.3	Various	The 2007-2010 strategy	Approved by the ALT Central Committee on 3/11/2006	November 2006

1.   Approach and purpose

The Association for Learning Technology (ALT) is an independent educational charity. ALT's charitable object is "to advance education through increasing, exploring and disseminating knowledge in the field of learning technology for the benefit of the general public".

ALT is governed by its elected and co-opted trustees, and run by its active lay members and its paid staff. ALT operates within the framework of regulations and guidance provided by the Charity Commission[1], and according to the terms of the ALT Constitution[2].

Within these constraints, ALT will pursue its vision and mission ethically and openly, with flexibility, commitment, and flair, supported by a staff team that is led and managed well, has the right mix of staff and skills, and is organised efficiently.

This document sets out our strategy for the three years February 2007 – January 2010. The strategy is reviewed annually. Its main purpose is to:

- translate ALT's single charitable object into a practical strategy;

- provide people and organisations inside and outside ALT with an overview of ALT's approach;

- set priorities to shape the work of ALT's committees, office-holders and staff.

2.   Vision, mission, and aims

Learning technology is the broad range of communication, information and related technologies that can be used to support learning, teaching, and assessment. At the centre of ALT are people who are actively involved in managing, researching, supporting or enabling learning with the use of learning technology.

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[1] http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/
[2] http://www.alt.ac.uk/docs/constitution2005.pdf

Our **vision** is for ALT to be the UK's leading independent organisation in the learning technology domain, providing leadership in policy, practice, and research, and to be so recognised nationally and internationally.

Our **mission** is to ensure that use of learning technology is informed by research and practice, as well as grounded in an understanding of the underlying technologies and their capabilities.

Specifically, we **aim** to:

- represent and support our individual, organisational, and sponsoring members, and provide services for them;

- facilitate collaboration, networking, and dialogue between practitioners, researchers, and policy makers;

- spread good practice in the use of learning technology;

- raise the profile of research in learning technology, establishing learning technology as a discipline in its own right;

- support the professionalisation of learning technologists;

- contribute to the development of policy.

3.   The environment in which ALT operates

ALT works alongside a wide range of organisations. These include:

- public, private, and third sector providers of research, education and training (of which over 150 are members of ALT[3]);

- UK and international partner organisations (like the British Council[4], JISC[5], the Sloan Consortium[6], and ASCILITE[7]);

- other membership organisations in the same domain as ALT, including several with which ALT has established membership exchanges;

- large and small suppliers of technology, services, and content (some of which are ALT member organisations[8]);

- standards and specifications bodies such as the British Standards Institution[9] and the IMS Global Learning Consortium[10], and regulatory/framework-setting agencies such as the Information Commissioner's Office, Awarding Bodies, and the UK Patent Office;

- Government agencies with a direct or indirect interest in learning technology, some of which are members of ALT (examples include Becta[11], DfES[12], and the Scottish Funding Council[13]).

ALT and its members operate in a complex environment. ALT members and the organisations that use, or affect the use of, learning technology are increasingly linked together through formal and informal networks that transcend organisational and national boundaries, with new methods of knowledge generation and dissemination playing an increasingly important role. Secondly, whereas **development of** technology is taking place primarily in the business world (albeit strongly influenced by the Open Source community and by R&D in academia), development in **the use of** technology to support teaching, learning, and assessment, is being driven forward both in the business world and in

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[3] http://www.alt.ac.uk/corporate_members.php

[4] http://www.britishcouncil.org/

[5] http://www.jisc.ac.uk/

[6] http://www.sloan-c.org/

[7] http://www.ascilite.org.au/

[8] http://www.alt.ac.uk/corporate_members.php

[9] http://www.bsi-global.com/

[10] http://imsglobal.org/

[11] http://www.becta.org.uk/

[12] http://www.dfes.gov.uk/

[13] http://www.sfc.ac.uk/

the public sector. There is also substantial activity in what is sometimes referred to as the "Free Culture movement", characterised, for example, by Wikipedia[14], Creative Commons[15], and Open Access.

4.   Priorities, organised by aim

Aim 1. *Represent and support our individual, organisational, and sponsoring members, and provide services for them.*

1	Maintain and develop our membership base (individual, organisational, and sponsoring), with a particular focus on increasing our membership outside HE and FE.	Continuous
2	Ensure that the ALT Annual Conference (ALT-C) continues to evolve in a fashion that is attractive to the membership at large, and minimises risk from the points of view of attendance, finance, and quality.	Continuous
3	Undertake every other year a comprehensive survey of our individual, organisational, and sponsoring members and potential members, and use the results to i) inform the long-term development of this 3 year strategy, ii) shape the benefits and costs of individual, organisational, and sponsoring membership, ensuring that these are carefully distinguished, that overlaps are minimised, and that changes are normally agreed 2 years ahead.	03/2007
4	Develop and implement an overall communications, media, and public relations plan.	03/2007
5	Redevelop the ALT web site to i) enable members to network with each other, including making public their areas of expertise and their research interests, ii) clearly summarise ALT publications and services, iii) provide a UK-wide summary of forthcoming events concerning learning technology, iv) support communities of practice in the learning technology domain, v) provide a learning technology "subject repository", with ALT-J preprints and postprints.	09/2007
6	Develop the fortnightly emailed Digest to take account of feedback obtained in the annual membership survey, and so that i) a web-based archive of past issues can be easily generated, ii) members can conveniently submit content for inclusion which requires minimal subsequent editing.	09/2007

Aim 2. *Facilitate collaboration, networking, and dialogue between practitioners, researchers, and policy makers.*

7	Actively involve individual members, and the representatives of organisational and sponsoring members, in working for ALT, and promoting ALT's activities.	Continuous
8	Maintain existing, and develop new partnerships, collaborations and projects, with relevant UK and international organisations in the learning technology domain.	Continuous
9	Ensure that ALT committees have an appropriate mix of membership, and that the process for identifying and appointing members of committees is flexible, open, and transparent.	Continuous
10	Actively encourage the formation (and consider the dissolution!) of ALT Special Interest Groups, in accordance with the SIG policy adopted in 2006.	Continuous

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[14] http://en.wikipedia.org/
[15] http://creativecommons.org/worldwide/uk/

11	Seek, and utilise for the benefit of members, representation on key bodies responsible for technology-supported learning, providing appropriate advice to members who are active on such bodies.	Continuous
12	Include on the ALT web site i) details of all past Trustees of ALT, ii) the memberships of each of our 4 main committees, iii) the approved minutes of each ALT committee.	02/2007
13	Review this strategy annually. From 2007 the annual review will alternate between a review by ALT's General Purposes Committee, informed by the results of the biennial membership survey, and an "away-day review" by the members of ALT's main committees. In each case a draft of the revised strategy will be issued for public comment within the learning technology community.	09/2007

Aim 3. **Spread good practice in the use of learning technology.**

14	Continue to publish a quarterly print and web-based practitioner-oriented Newsletter, taking account of feedback obtained in the biennial survey.	Continuous
15	Continue to produce timely and relevant publications for learning technology practitioners, oriented towards the diverse range of ALT members, and making use, where appropriate, of collaborative authoring environments such as Wikimedia.	Continuous
16	Ensure that our overall programme of events, smaller conferences, workshops, and other events: caters for the varied needs and interests of members in the three areas of policy, practice, and research; is consistent with ALT's aims; makes appropriate use of learning technology in its delivery; is planned on an 18 month rolling basis, and is publicised biannually.	09/2007
17	Subject to the availability of funding, commission the production and subsequent maintenance of a number of "what research has to say for practice" guides, using Wikimedia technology (or equivalent) to facilitate the input from the wider learning technology community.	03/2008

Aim 4. *Raise the profile of research in learning technology, establishing learning technology as a discipline in its own right.*

18	Continue to develop the ALT Journal (ALT-J - Research in Learning Technology) in partnership with its publisher (currently Routledge), enhancing its standing and influence, and taking account of the outcome of the formal review.	Continuous
19	Ensure that the research community, including especially newer research workers, is well supported by events, and that there is Research Committee input into the overall ALT events programme.	Continuous
20	Continue to promote the Lab Group, an ALT-supported collaboration between academic and commercial labs which undertake research and development in learning mediated by technology.	Continuous
21	Complete the formal review of ALT-J initiated during 2006.	03/2007
22	Revise the 2005 ALT Research Strategy.	06/2007
23	Ensure that the ALT Annual Conference (ALT-C) develops a stronger research component, for both new and experienced researchers, and that the ALT Journal (ALT-J - Research in Learning Technology) carries some of best research papers from ALT-C.	09/2007
24	Run a biennial Research Symposium for leading researchers in the learning technology domain.	09/2008

Aim 5. *Support the professionalisation of learning technologists.*

25	Develop and promote CMALT, our voluntary, peer-based professional accreditation scheme.	Continuous
26	Run regular workshops to support individuals undertaking CMALT, and to brief member organisations about CMALT.	Continuous
27	Commission an external evaluation of CMALT, to inform the scheme's future development.	09/2007
28	Investigate the feasibility of establishing a further level of certified membership, such as a Fellowship scheme.	09/2008
29	Establish a framework of professional values for learning technologists	03/2009
30	Examine the feasibility of extending CMALT outside the UK.	09/2009

Aim 6. *Contribute to the development of policy.*

31	Respond consistently to policy consultations and other developments relating to learning technology, bringing to bear our cross-sectoral, UK-wide, and research-informed perspectives.	Continuous
32	When time permits, issue members with the drafts of responses to policy consultations, for comment and subsequent amendment, prior to final submission.	Continuous
33	Establish a new role within ALT of "Ambassador", whose role is to act as an advocate or advisor (critical friend) for ALT.	03/2007
34	Convene the ALT Policy Board (which consists of representatives appointed by organisational and sponsoring members and which meets periodically to consider relevant policy issues and recommend action for consideration by the Central Executive Committee).	03/2008
35	Assess the impact of our consultation responses on individual members and on member organisations in the biennial survey.	03/2009