

Introduction from the President

As Peter Cook and Dudley Moore once put it, “now is the time to say goodbye, now is the time to yield a sigh”. It has been a pleasure to serve as the Vice-Chair, Chair and President of ALT (not all at once, of course!). One important aim of ALT is to facilitate collaboration between practitioners, researchers, and policy makers. As I step down from the Central Executive Committee let me briefly relate three activities that I have been involved in which I think may help contribute to this aim.

First, my work with the British Council and learning technologists in Palestinian universities started three years ago. This practitioner link-up culminated with a trip to East Jerusalem and the West Bank in June 2006. Seb Schmoller and I were invited to go on a fact-finding trip to the Palestine Territories by the British Council. We seem to have started something productive as the British Council is funding five colleagues from Palestinian universities to attend ALT-C this year. I hope you get the chance to meet them. Secondly, in the latter half of 2005 Seb and I were instrumental in setting up the new ALT Research Committee. We were delighted that Prof Robin Mason agreed to Chair this new committee. Following an open call we have populated the Research Committee with a diverse group of leading researchers. I have agreed to act as Vice-Chair for this exciting new committee, so ALT is not quite able to “yield a sigh” because it is not rid of me yet!

Thirdly, in December 2004 as Chair of ALT I acted as consultant on the Higher Education Policy Institute report to UK Vice-Chancellors about e-Learning after the UK’s e-University. Along with the report’s primary author, John Slater, Rhonda Riachi and I attended the report launch at a reception in House of Commons in February 2005. The chance to meet and talk to the Chair of the Education and Skills Select Committee and various Vice-Chancellors has provided me with an enduring insight into educational policy and politics.

When people look back at what ALT has achieved 10 years from now, I hope ALT will be seen to have acted as a key conduit between practitioners, researchers and policy makers. And let us not forget students, managers and industry. So “until we meet again, some sunny day”, goodbye.

John Cook, President, 2005-06

Chair's report

It has been my pleasure to serve as Chair of ALT in a year where ALT has grown steadily in terms of numbers, reach and influence.

In the ALT Office we have two new members of staff, an Administrative Assistant and a Projects Manager, to help us improve the efficiency with which we deliver membership services. This year we have also merged the membership and events committees, to create a new streamlined membership services committee with a remit to help ALT improve and develop the services it offers to individual and organizational members. I am also pleased to report that we have set up a Research Committee with a remit, amongst other things, to develop the ALT Learning Technology Research Strategy.

The main challenge for ALT has always been to offer high quality services to its current members alongside attracting new members. This requires us to continually examine our understanding of members existing and future needs and to adjust our strategy accordingly. This year we held a successful strategy away-day with our committee members, where we had a vibrant and wide-ranging discussion about ALT’s future mission and aims. I was really pleased to see so many enthusiastic new committee members at the event. We will be publishing our revised strategy shortly.

As I move on to take on the role of President of ALT for 2006-7 and hand over to my capable successor, Linda Creanor, I would like to thank all ALT staff and volunteers for their hard work and commitment.

Jane Seale, Chair, Central Executive Committee, 2005-06

Executive Secretary's and Director's Report

ALT continues to make strong progress on several fronts. Here we briefly highlight a few key developments which are not covered elsewhere. We have:

- finalised a formal partnership agreement with the JISC;

- completed our work with JISC infoNet, Greenwich University, Leeds College of Technology, Loughborough College, and Staffordshire University on the “Collaborative Approaches to the Management of Lifelong Learning (CAMEL)” project and, with most of the same partners, secured JISC funding for a longer term continuation project, eLIDA CAMEL, that will collect a series of individual and collaborative case studies on the implementation and evaluation of tools and systems to support design for learning in a range of post-16/HE contexts;
- run two successful medium scale conferences: the October 2005 *E-learning making it work* conference, run jointly between ALT and LSDA, and the April 2006 Spring Conference and Research Seminar, run in partnership with SURF and ILTA at the University of Leiden in the Netherlands;
- implemented the revised membership fee-structure for organisational members which we developed last year, so that the membership fee now varies according to the size of the member-organisation, and so that there is now a common renewal date that coincides with the start of ALT’s financial year;
- begun to play an active role in the Harnessing Technology Steering Group which has been convened by Becta for DfES, to give practical shape to the (English!) e-Strategy;
- strengthened our links with the British Council, as evidenced here by the presence of several delegates from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank;
- increased our paid staffing from 4.5 to 6 FTEs, with our new Projects Manager post particularly focused on the management and development of the CMALT scheme;
- accelerated our planning of future ALT conferences, so that for the first time we’ve been able to announce the majority of the keynote speakers for next year’s conference ahead of the current one.

Last year we reported that ALT “punches above its weight”, and we believe that this continues to be the case. Responsibility for this rests mainly with other people! So here we record our thanks for the committed and enthusiastic unpaid work of individual office holders and members of ALT, and the strong support ALT receives from many of our organisational members; and for the excellent work of Marion O’Dea, Operations Manager, Bob Green (who is skilfully covering Marion’s post during Marion’s absence on maternity leave), Hayley Willis, Events Administrator, Sue Garrett, Administration Officer, and Melanie Fox, Assistant Administrator.

Seb Schmoller, Executive Secretary, and Rhonda Riachi, Director

Membership Services Committee

The past year has been exciting for the Association, with the formation of the new Membership Services Committee from the former Events and Membership Executives. The new committee has been able to draw on the experience of the former Executives as well as being refreshed by new blood which we are sure will enable the MSC to meet future challenges in helping to take the Association forward. Notwithstanding these changes the committee and its predecessors have continued to contribute to the work of the association.

Over the past year we have seen the introduction of our new Organisational and Sponsoring membership structure, which provides a fairer approach to this class of member. We have also seen continued success with our Spring Conference in Leiden in partnership with SURF and ILTA; planning is already in hand for the 2007 Spring Conference in the United Kingdom.

In 2007 we expect to see a more developed workshop programme building upon the successes of 2006 with a strong focus on CMALT; a new package for individual members; and taking forward the work of our 2006 Strategy Day. Finally, 2006 sees the end of an era as Barbara Newland retires as co-chair of the Membership Services Committee. Barbara has been a stalwart of ALT committees for a number of years, her wisdom, insight and incisive wit will be missed by those who have worked with her. We all wish her well, and are sure that she will continue to contribute to the field of Learning Technology Practice.

John Phelps, Chair, Membership Services Committee, 2005-06

Further Education Committee

This has been a year of consolidation for FEC which has included determining the period of office for FEC members and agreeing a revised Terms of Reference. FEC membership was very well represented at ALT’s strategy day held in Glasgow and has continued to be a strong voice for ALT’s post-16 sector members.

Subjects which have been considered by FEC during the year included the following:

- The impact of the LSC reduction in funding to JISC – an English FE issue. A letter from ALT to the LSC was followed up by a constructive meeting between ALT and the LSC in November 2005.
- The range of e-learning related activity taking place in Scotland supported by the Scottish Funding Council. FEC has recommended that a dissemination event be organised in England to disseminate to the rest of the UK what has been learnt from the Scottish transformation projects.

- The trend towards mergers and new build activity in the post 16 sector and the need for ICT to be an integral part of the planning of such activity.
- The continued growth in the use of Moodle in the FE sector.
- Benchmarking activities – eg Welsh colleges have been requested by ELWA to use the Becta benchmarking matrix.
- Continuing to encourage post 16 members to contribute to ALT committees, events and publications.

ALT events and workshops have continued to come to the attention of FE members and result in increased FE participation. Of particular note this year was the success of the ALT/LSDA event 'e-learning making it happen', held in London on 13 October, 2005, which showcased some excellent work taking place in FE institutions. The event was very well attended and the feedback – both formal and informal – was excellent. Similar national post 16 events will be considered for the future.

Cathy Ellis, Chair, Further Education Committee, 2005-06

Publications Committee

In 2005-06 the activities of the publications committee have been focused on:

- continuing to develop ALT-J, in the run-up to the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise, and in particular assisting the preparation of the Terms of Reference for the Review of ALT-J to take place from September, to be run by the Chair of the committee but under the auspices of the Research Committee
- monitoring the success of ALT-N online
- overseeing the revised approach to Occasional Publications where a more international and FE focus is being taken, partly in conjunction with the ALT Spring Conference, within an overall brief of seeking additional external support for specific publications
- monitoring the updated Editorial Policy (the general principles which guide the work of all those involved in editing ALT Publications and ensure quality) in case further amendments are needed.

Paul Bacsich, Chair, Publications Committee, 2005-06

Research Committee

The process of calling for members of the new Research Committee produced a very pleasing number and quality of respondents. The major focus of concern for the new committee centres on various ways of improving the quality of learning technology research: for example, through special issues of journals and through research-intensive workshops.

The first meeting was duly held in June, with four members also attending by telephone. The main discussion item was the existing ALT Research Strategy, which needs updating and reworking. The participants made many helpful suggestions and a revised version will be brought to the next meeting which takes place during the ALT conference in September.

Robin Mason, Chair, Research Committee, 2006

Members of ALT Committees 2005-06

Central Executive (Trustees and ex-officio staff members)

Paul Bacsich	Robin Mason
Gayle Calverley (Hon Secretary)	Barbara Newland
John Cook (President)	Marion O'Dea (ALT Operations Manager)
Linda Creanor (Vice-Chair)	John Phelps
Jay Dempster	Rhonda Riachi (ALT Director)
Cathy Ellis	Seb Schmoller (ALT Executive Secretary)
Tom Franklin	Jane Seale (Chair)
Bob Green (Acting Operations Manager)	John Slater (Hon Treasurer)
Dawn Leeder	

Events Executive (until March 2006)

Skip Basiel	Nick Jeans
Jane Charlton	John Phelps (Chair)
Lesley Diack	Rhonda Riachi (ALT Director)

Phil Riding
George Roberts

Steven Warburton (Vice-Chair)
Hayley Willis (ALT Events Administrator)

Further Education Committee

David Dyet
Cathy Ellis (Chair)
Rachel Harris
Iain Howie
Bob Green (Acting Operations Manager)
Christine McAllister
Marion O'Dea (ALT Operations Manager)

Kevin Palmer
Fred Pickering
Pete Richardson
Malcolm Ryan
David Sugden
Markos Tiris
Seb Schmoller (ALT Executive Secretary)

Membership Executive (until March 2006)

Linda Creanor
Bob Green (Acting Operations Manager)
Carol Higgison
Terri Kinnison
Barbara Newland (Chair)

Marion O'Dea (ALT Operations Manager)
Alison Robinson
Seb Schmoller (ALT Executive Secretary)
David Sugden

Membership Services Committee (from April 2006)

Skip Basiel
Lesley Diack
Bob Green (Acting Operations Manager)
Carol Higgison
Caroline Ingram
Nick Jeans
Barbara Newland (Co-Chair)

John Phelps (Co-Chair)
Teresa Prochazka (ALT Projects Manager)
Rhonda Riachi (ALT Director)
Geoff Rebbeck
Seb Schmoller (ALT Executive Secretary)
Steven Warburton
Hayley Willis (ALT Events Administrator)

Publications Committee

Paul Bacsich (Chair)
Gayle Calverley
Grainne Conole
Graham McElearney
Morag Munro
Martin Oliver

Susi Peacock
Rhonda Riachi (ALT Director)
Seb Schmoller (ALT Executive Secretary)
Jane Seale
Peter Sloep
Julie Voce

Research Committee

Bob Banks
Phil Barker
Frances Bell
John Cook (Vice-Chair)
Mike Keppell
Allison Littlejohn
Robin Mason (Chair)
David Nicol
Bill Olivier

Vanessa Pittard
Mike Prosser
Frank Rennie
Rhonda Riachi (ALT Director)
Gilly Salmon
Seb Schmoller (ALT Executive Secretary)
Mike Sharples
Josie Taylor
Brian Whalley

ALT Staff

Melanie Fox, Assistant Administrator
Sue Garrett, Administrative Officer
Bob Green, Acting Operations Manager
(until Oct 2006)
Marion O'Dea, Operations Manager
(on leave Mar to Oct 2006)

Teresa Prochazka, Projects Manager
Rhonda Riachi, Director
Seb Schmoller, Executive Secretary
Hayley Willis, Events Administrator

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