

ALT Strategy: February 2008 to January 2011 (revised May 2009)

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Version history

#	Author	Details	Notes	Date
3.3	Various	The 2007-2010 strategy	Approved by the ALT Central Executive Committee on 3/11/2006	November 2006
4	Various	Update to April 2011 Structure essentially unchanged. Minor alterations including revisions to dates. Takes account of changes in government structure and work completed by ALT and its committees.	Approved by the ALT General Purposes Committee on 14/5/2009	May 2009

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 Commission¹, and according to the terms of the ALT Constitution².

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 2008 – January 2011. 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.

¹ <http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/>

² <http://www.alt.ac.uk/docs/constitution2007.pdf>

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.

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 200 are members of ALT³);
- UK and international partner organisations (such as the British Council⁴, JISC⁵, the Sloan Consortium⁶, and ascilite⁷);
- 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 organisations⁸);
- standards and specifications bodies such as the British Standards Institution⁹ and the IMS Global Learning Consortium¹⁰, and regulatory/framework-setting agencies such as the Information Commissioner's Office, Awarding Bodies, and the UK Intellectual Property Office;
- Government agencies with a direct or indirect interest in learning technology, some of which are members of ALT (examples include Becta¹¹, DIUS¹², and the Scottish Funding Council¹³).

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

⁴ <http://www.britishcouncil.org/new/>

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://imglobal.org/>

¹¹ <http://www.becta.org.uk/>

¹² <http://www.dius.gov.uk/>

¹³ <http://www.sfc.ac.uk/>

ALT and its members operate in a complex environment. ALT members and the organisations that use or influence 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 research and development in academia), development in **the use of** technology to support teaching, learning, and assessment, is being driven forward not only in the business world but also in the public sector.

In addition, there is also ongoing and substantial activity in what is sometimes referred to as the "Free Culture movement", characterised, for example, by Wikipedia¹⁴, Creative Commons¹⁵, and Open Access.

ALT has to work across all these environments identifying common areas and helping to resolve dissonances at the intersection of a number of significant communities of practice.

Over the past year the economic environment has changed substantially. This brings new pressures and opportunities for the learning technology community which ALT needs both to understand and respond to in order to better support its members in the future.

4. Priorities, organised by aim

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

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| 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 whilst minimising risk from the points of view of quality, attendance, and finance. | 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 any significant changes are normally agreed 2 years ahead. | 1/2011 |
| 4 | Run a range of awards that are of value to our members, including an annual Learning Technologist of the Year Award. | Continuous |
| 5 | Redevelop the ALT web site to i) enable members more effectively 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) maintain a learning technology "subject repository", which will initially include ALT-J post-prints. | 11/2009 |
| 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 for inclusion content which requires minimal subsequent editing. | 11/2009 |

¹⁴ <http://en.wikipedia.org/>

¹⁵ <http://creativecommons.org/worldwide/uk/>

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

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| 7 | Continue to 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 partnerships, collaborations and projects, and develop new ones, 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 remains flexible, open, and transparent. | Continuous |
| 10 | Actively encourage the development, , activities and eventual dissolution of ALT Special Interest Groups, in accordance with the SIG policy adopted in 2006 ¹⁶ . | Continuous |
| 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 the approved minutes of each ALT committee to complement the membership and terms of reference currently present. | 7/2009 |
| 13 | Review this strategy annually. 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 the latter case a draft of the revised strategy will be issued for public comment within the learning technology community. | Ongoing |

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

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| 14 | Continue to publish a quarterly web-based practitioner-oriented Newsletter, taking account of feedback obtained in the biennial membership survey. | Continuous |
| 15 | Replace the print version of the Newsletter with a quarterly printed ALT Update, and develop this talking account of feedback in the biennial membership survey. | 7/2009 |
| 16 | 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 |
| 17 | Ensure that our overall programme of events, smaller conferences, workshops, and other events: caters for the varied and evolving 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 at least twice each year. | Continuous |
| 18 | Complete the initial production of, and then maintain 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. | Continuous |

¹⁶ http://www.alt.ac.uk/docs/special_interest_groups_20050623.pdf

This version approved by ALT Central Executive Committee, 14/5/2009

This document is available online at http://www.alt.ac.uk/docs/ALT_2008-2011_Strategy.pdf

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

19	Continue to develop the ALT Journal (ALT-J - Research in Learning Technology) in partnership with its publisher (currently Routledge), enhancing its standing and influence, taking account of the recommendations of the 2007 review.	Continuous
20	Ensure that the research community, including especially newer research workers, is well supported by events, and that there is significant Research Committee input into the overall ALT events programme.	Continuous
21	Continue to promote the Lab Group, an ALT-supported collaboration between leading academic and commercial labs that undertake research and development in learning mediated by technology.	Continuous
23	Revise the 2005 ALT Research Strategy.	12/2009
24	Ensure that the ALT Annual Conference (ALT-C) maintains a strong 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.	9/2007
25	Continue the biennial Research Symposia for leading researchers in the learning technology domain.	11/2010

Aim 5. Support the professionalisation of learning technologists.

26	Develop and promote CMALT, our voluntary, peer-based professional accreditation scheme, with holders of CMALT gradually taking greater ownership of the scheme and its development.	Continuous
27	Run regular workshops to support individuals undertaking CMALT, and to brief member organisations about CMALT.	Continuous
28	Consider and implement appropriate recommendations arising from the imminent evaluation of CMALT. These need to cover the requirements for keeping an individual's certification current.	11/2009
29	Investigate the feasibility and desirability of establishing a further level of certified membership, such as a Fellowship scheme.	1/2010
30	Establish a framework of professional values for learning technologists.	11/2009
31	Examine the feasibility of extending CMALT outside the UK, potentially in partnership with partner organisations.	10/2009

Aim 6. Contribute to the development of policy.

32	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
33	When time permits, issue members with the drafts of responses to policy consultations, for comment and subsequent amendment, prior to final submission.	Continuous
34	Utilise ALT Ambassadors to good effect in advising on policy matters and in influencing policy decisions.	Continuous
35	Convene an ALT Policy Board (which consists of representatives appointed by organisational and sponsoring members and which meets periodically to consider relevant policy issues and recommend actions for consideration by the Central Executive Committee).	9/2009
36	Develop a methodology for assessing the impact of our consultation responses on individual members, on member organisations, and more generally, using the biennial survey and otherwise. Test this methodology by evaluating the effectiveness of our policy work with respect to the development of the 2008 RAE.	11/2009