

Press Release

Scottish Learning Festival 2008

Alta Systems: Hall 4 Stand D37

NOTE:

This press release focuses on Alta Maths for Schools – a fully adaptive, fully automated online e-assessment system for mathematics for schools following the Scottish 5-14 Mathematics Guidelines.

Its key features are:

- detailed mapping to the 5-14 guidelines;
- use of a wide range of adaptive question types which learners find enjoyable and challenging;
- the linking of mathematics to the real world;
- automated marking and immediate feedback;
- provision of reliable and valid outcomes;
- instant replay and model answers;
- high levels of learner engagement, motivation and autonomy;
- learner and class profiles of curriculum coverage, progress and achievement for teachers and learners.

About Alta Maths in Scotland

Alta Maths for Schools has been extensively trialled by Education Authorities in Scotland and has been very positively evaluated in Scotland by these authorities and by LTS. At least six trials are planned for 2008-09. The Western Isles Authority is already rolling the system out to all its schools. The system's primary purposes are to improve capability and achievement in mathematics and numeracy; support *Assessment is for Learning*; and to raise standards.

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For full press release and summary please read on

Press Release: Summary Version



Alta Maths for Schools gets best in class!

“There is nothing that I would like to change about Alta – I think that it is the best way of doing maths.”

This was the comment made by an Alta user in P6 in Eastern Primary School in Dundee during the evaluation by the Education Authority. While Alta will not stop improving its product, his words reflect the positive findings of this and other evaluations. In 2006 LT Scotland conducted an evaluation of Alta Maths for Schools based on a survey of teachers and pupils using the system at that time. The results were very positive: teachers liked it, pupils loved it and both felt that it improved the quality of teaching and learning. This year three local authorities – Glasgow, Dundee and West Lothian - conducted their own evaluations. All were again extremely positive.

In the past year customised versions of Alta Maths for Schools have been rolled out in the Western Isles, Isle of Man and in Northern Ireland where it is the recommended assessment tool of the recently re-launched Numeracy Strategy and is provided free of charge to all schools.

Alta Systems offer schools an innovative, world class, fully adaptive online e-assessment system for Mathematics customised for the current Scottish 5-14 Mathematics Guidelines. The system is fully automated with multi-instance items and has been updated to include even more relevant content. Content will be remapped to meet the Curriculum for Excellence requirements when implemented. It already meets all the requirements of *Assessment is for Learning* and has real benefits for all users.

...Summary End...

For full press release please read on

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Press Release: Full Version



Alta Maths for Schools gets best in class!

“There is nothing that I would like to change about Alta – I think that it is the best way of doing maths.”

This was the comment made by an Alta user in P6 in Eastern Primary School in Dundee during the evaluation by the Education Authority. While Alta will not stop improving its product, his words reflect the positive findings of this and other evaluations. In 2006 LT Scotland conducted an evaluation highlighting the effectiveness of Alta Maths for Schools: teachers found the system easy to use and were overwhelmingly positive; learners found the system engaging, enjoyable and motivating. Learners liked to be able to self-assess, manage and improve their own learning.

This year, three local authorities (Glasgow, Dundee and West Lothian) have evaluated Alta Maths for Schools and have endorsed the LTS findings. One P7 teacher in Glasgow commented she liked:

“... the fact that the children can see very readily where their strengths and weaknesses are and do something about it.”

Another teacher stated it was:

“A very useful learning and teaching /assessment tool (if used to its full potential) which allows the pupil to be in charge of his or her own learning in a non-threatening and enjoyable way.”

Alta Maths for Schools - improving attainment in maths in Scotland

In Dundee the learners said:

“I like using Alta because it is very simple to use and it shows what you are good at and what you are not good at, so you know what to do again.”

“I like Alta because every time I got a question wrong it was able to correct me and tell me the right answer.”

“...it improved my maths knowledge.”

“There was nothing that I didn’t like about using Alta. It was very fun.”

“I liked everything about Alta because it was better than doing it in maths text books”

An ICT Tutor commented:

“I believe that one of the main strengths for Alta maths is at the P7/S1 transition. I think it will come in to its own when 5-14 assessments are no more. Alta would allow for a standardised assessment for pupils entering secondary education.

*I also feel that its strengths lie in the **instant feedback to pupils**, informing them of their own progress and encouraging them to become more independent learners.”*

Rolling out Alta Maths for Schools

In the past year customised versions of Alta Maths for Schools have been rolled out in the Western Isles, Isle of Man and in Northern Ireland where it is the recommended assessment tool of the recently re-launched Numeracy Strategy and is provided free of charge to all schools. In each jurisdiction, the paramount aim is to raise attainment in Mathematics and Numeracy. Alta is confident it can help deliver sustained improvement.

What makes Alta work?

Alta believes in combining informative assessment with interesting and challenging multi-instance items to engage and motivate learners. The system is mapped to the 5-14 guidelines and provides automated marking

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Alta Maths for Schools - improving attainment in maths in Scotland

and immediate feedback linked to replay and model answers. It provides teachers and pupils with formative and diagnostic information which enables dependable and comparable summative assessments and meaningful discussion of progress and achievement between teacher and learner.

Learner and class profiles record automatically curriculum coverage, progress and achievement and present the information in an easily accessible and useful format. (See below.)

Example of a Learner Profile

The screenshot displays the Alta Maths for Schools interface for a learner profile. The main content area shows a table of test results for Fiona McCann, with columns for Date, Level, Type, Result, and a grid of progress indicators (a-z). The interface is annotated with several callout boxes:

- Historical Record:** Points to the 'History of all tests' link in the top navigation bar.
- Curriculum Links:** Points to the 'Scotland 5-14 Mathematics' dropdown menu.
- Progress Colour Coding:** Points to the 'Well Done', 'Good', 'Uncertain', 'At Risk', and 'Alert' legend on the right.
- Current level at which learner is working:** Points to the 'Level' column in the test results table.
- Assessment Mode:** Points to the 'Type' column, with a legend below stating 'P = Practice' and 'L = Confirm Level'.
- Click here to replay full assessment activity:** Points to the 'Detail' link in the table.
- Strengths & difficulties specifically identified. Reads horizontally and vertically for trends:** Points to the grid of progress indicators.

This winning combination of critical features leads to increased levels of engagement, motivation and, most importantly, autonomous learning.

Benefits for all

Alta Maths for Schools is a unique teaching and learning tool which provides educationally sound information for teachers **and** learners. Learners themselves become very involved in developing their mathematical capability and can do so at a pace which suits them. For teachers and pupils Alta ticks all the boxes of *Assessment is for Learning*.

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Alta Maths for Schools - improving attainment in maths in Scotland

Teachers can also pass on to and receive from colleagues valid and reliable assessments. The historical record and data produced by Alta ensures a meaningful transition from class to class and from primary to secondary. (See comment of ICT tutor above.) Used across an educational authority Alta will provide comparable data based on accumulated learning rather than one-off tests. The system provides an educational sound alternative to National Assessments.

New CfE Guidelines for Maths

Alta accepts that the implementation of the new Curriculum for Excellence guidelines for Numeracy and Mathematics presents a real challenge. It will meet this challenge by re-mapping its assessment of mathematical operations and processes to the new framework and levels and will be able, through its adaptive approach to assessment, to demonstrate progress and attainment within the new levels – a key concern of teachers. Alta Maths for Schools will ensure that all students are ready to meet the challenge of the Numeracy Awards when implemented.

Scholar

Alta looks forward to the challenges of the next few years and to developing its new working partnership with Scholar to promote effective online assessment in schools in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

In Short

Alta Systems offer schools an innovative, world class, fully adaptive online e-assessment system for Mathematics customised for the current Scottish 5-14 Mathematics Guidelines. The system is fully automated with multi-instance items and has been updated to include even more relevant content. Content will be remapped to meet the Curriculum for Excellence requirements when implemented. It already meets all the requirements of *Assessment is for Learning* and has real benefits for all users.

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To find out about Alta Systems please read on.

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About Alta Systems (NI) Ltd

Alta Systems ((Adaptive Learning Teaching and Assessment) is an innovative, education driven company specialising in online assessment. It has developed a rigorous end-to-end methodology for designing, creating and delivering assessment solutions which have been validated and endorsed by educationalists and teachers. While its main products focus on mathematics, the “Alta System” is independent of subject matter and can be adapted to classroom practices and teaching policies.

Alta solutions are informative assessment solutions. The system is unique in providing detailed, educationally valid and reliable assessment information and feedback which can be used formatively, diagnostically and summatively. The combination of multi-instance questions, full replay and model answers provides stimulating and engaging experiences for learners which will lead to improvement in attainment. It meets all the challenges of assessment for learning by engaging and empowering the learner.

Alta Maths for Schools - is an online interactive assessment package for Numeracy and Mathematics targeting ages 5 to 14. Its key features are:

- detailed mapping to the 5-14 guidelines;
- use of a wide range of adaptive question types which learners find enjoyable and challenging;
- the linking of mathematics to the real world;
- automated marking and immediate feedback;
- provision of reliable and valid outcomes;
- instant replay and model answers;
- high levels of learner engagement, motivation and autonomy;
- learner and class profiles of curriculum coverage, progress and achievement for teachers and learners.

Alta has recently initiated a partnership with Scholar to promote effective online assessment in schools in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

To learn more about Alta Systems and Alta Maths for Schools visit Stand D37 and our website www.alta-systems.com

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