

Survey of Alaska Capacity to Access  
Web-Based Training on the Alternate Assessment

Technical Document No. 1

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Submitted by  
Gerald Tindal  
Dillard Research Associates

## Method

After considerable discussion about capacity of the local educational agencies (LEAs) to access the web-based training (see minutes from December 13 conference call), the decision was made to request that users from throughout the state log into the current system and determine if they could access the audio-video and navigation components. The outcome would help us determine, that, if a problem existed, it could be due to any of three sources and we could systematically resolve it. The problem could be:

1. End user knowledge and skill – Any problems here need to be resolved by DRA in the training and support systems that are provided (technical manuals, direct training, training materials, 800 number).
2. Local system capacity – Problems in this arena need to be shared by the local district (e.g. Ed Tech Director/Coordinator) and DRA (e.g., if the system is of such low quality, then DRA provides a paper-pencil solution).
3. The server and Internet Service Provider (ISP) – Problems that occur here need to be resolved by EdPProgress.

A survey was developed (see Appendix A) and distributed via email. The request for access was sent by EED staff to a number of technology coordinators, mentor teachers, and directors of special education. The survey was sent to 47 mentors, only 6 special education directors representing those districts we had listed as remote but without mentors. In this section, the original request and a re-submitted request is presented, then a list of remote sites is identified, followed by a list of technology coordinators and actual respondents.

### Original Request sent on December 22, 2005 (see Appendix A for Survey Preparation)

A new Alternate Assessment contract has been approved. We would like to start testing our state's technology capabilities as this new assessment will have online training videos.

Please take a few minutes to test the new Alternate Assessment online system for us and provide feedback. A one-page explanation of the process, plus four questions to respond to is attached. We anticipate that this test of the system should take about 10 minutes. Note: You will be logging onto a site outside of Alaska.

You may create your own logon and password, as prompted, or use the following one:

Logon: alenita\_danner@eed.state.ak.us

Password: eedtest

Please send your feedback to Gerald Tindal: gerald@uoregon.edu

Thanks so much!

Aran Malone Felix

Further Request sent on December 27, 2006

Greetings Technology Coordinators!

On behalf of Aran Felix, of the EED Assessment and Accountability Office, I am forwarding you the following information and attachment regarding the new Alternate Assessment. Though your district may have only had a few or no Alternate Assessments last year, Aran would still appreciate your participation so that they may test your district's capabilities with the new process.

Should you have any questions, please contact Aran Felix directly at [aran\\_felix@eed.state.ak.us](mailto:aran_felix@eed.state.ak.us) or by phone at 465-8437.

Thanks for your help,

Alenita

List of Technology Coordinators' and Districts.

Ted Berry – Lower Kuskokwim Schools  
Randy Hawk – Sitka Schools  
Randy Fleharty – Bering Strait Schools  
Bob Maurer – Klawock City Schools  
Tedi Sims – Wrangell City Schools  
Jim White – Kenai Peninsula Borough Schools

Additional Technology Coordinator's district that received the email request (Name, E-mail Address, District)

David Brannan – [david.brannan@nsbsd.org](mailto:david.brannan@nsbsd.org) – North Slope Borough Schools  
Jeff Worner – [jworner@tok.schoolaccess.net](mailto:jworner@tok.schoolaccess.net) – Alaska Gateway Schools  
Scott MacManus – [smacmanus@tok.schoolaccess.net](mailto:smacmanus@tok.schoolaccess.net) – Alaska Gateway Schools  
Steve Noonkesser – [snoonkesser@swrsd.org](mailto:snoonkesser@swrsd.org) – Southwest Region Schools  
Gus Perkins – [kjp5000@aol.com](mailto:kjp5000@aol.com) – Saint Mary's Schools  
William Cotton – [wcotton@aisd.k12.ak.us](mailto:wcotton@aisd.k12.ak.us) – Annette Island Schools  
Vance Cortez-Rucker – [vrucker@chatham.k12.ak.us](mailto:vrucker@chatham.k12.ak.us) – Chatham Schools  
Shirley Farmer – [sfarmer@hydaburg.k12.ak.us](mailto:sfarmer@hydaburg.k12.ak.us) – Hydaburg City Schools  
Pablo Cantu – [pabcan@yahoo.com](mailto:pabcan@yahoo.com) – Kashunamiut Schools  
Don Holmes – [dholmes@psgsd.k12.ak.us](mailto:dholmes@psgsd.k12.ak.us) – Petersburg City Schools  
Jenny Martens – [jmartens@psgsd.k12.ak.us](mailto:jmartens@psgsd.k12.ak.us) – Petersburg City Schools  
Ken Caron – [hoon44@hotmail.com](mailto:hoon44@hotmail.com) – Yakutat City Schools

Districts in which Special Education was sent the Technology Survey\*

North Slope – 5 AAs

Yukon Flats – 0 AAs last year, still want to test their district

Pribilof – did not have AA last year, still want to test their district

Kashunamiut – 1 AA

Iditarod – 0 AAs last year, still want to test their district

Southeast Island – 0 AAs last year, still want to test their district

*\*email contacts – [bmcupnorth@hotmail.com](mailto:bmcupnorth@hotmail.com); [jnygaard@sisd.org](mailto:jnygaard@sisd.org); [cwaruch@iditarodsd.org](mailto:cwaruch@iditarodsd.org); [malcolm@ak.net](mailto:malcolm@ak.net); [ypaez@yukonflats.net](mailto:ypaez@yukonflats.net); [cassie.wells@nsbsd.org](mailto:cassie.wells@nsbsd.org).*

Subject: RE: Remote Sites\*

Southeast Island School District

North Slope Borough School District

Lower Kuskowin School District

Yukon Flats

Pribilof School District

Kashunamiut Schools

Iditarod Schools

*\*I would suggest adding Bering Strait as they are a definite Mac district. Also, you might want to try a larger district like Kenai or Kodiak that has both urban and remote locations.*

Survey Respondents (Randomly Listed Not in Order of Responses)

Richard Baumfalk	Nenana City Schools	<a href="mailto:rbaumfalk@nenana.ncsd.schoolaccess.net">rbaumfalk@nenana.ncsd.schoolaccess.net</a>
Tedi Sims		<a href="mailto:tsims@wrangellschools.org">tsims@wrangellschools.org</a>
Julee Houlton		<a href="mailto:jhoulton@northstar.k12.ak.us">jhoulton@northstar.k12.ak.us</a>
Bob Hawkins	Fairbanks	<a href="mailto:bhawkins@yksd.com">bhawkins@yksd.com</a>
Theresa Owens	Dillingham	<a href="mailto:towens@swrsd.org">towens@swrsd.org</a>
Ted Berry	Bethel	<a href="mailto:ted_berry@lksd.org">ted_berry@lksd.org</a>
Sabrina Silvernale	Hooper Bay	<a href="mailto:ssilvernale@hpb.lysd.k12.ak.us">ssilvernale@hpb.lysd.k12.ak.us</a>
Street, Stacey	Kodiak	<a href="mailto:sstreet01@kodiakschools.org">sstreet01@kodiakschools.org</a>
Mandy Evans		<a href="mailto:evansm@mail.ssd.k12.ak.us">evansm@mail.ssd.k12.ak.us</a>
Barry Johnson		<a href="mailto:Barry.Johnson@matsuk12.us">Barry.Johnson@matsuk12.us</a>
Nancy Shultz		<a href="mailto:Nancy.Shultz@matsuk12.us">Nancy.Shultz@matsuk12.us</a>

### Summary of Findings

A total of 11 individuals responded and their verbatim reaction is listed in the next section. Basically, beyond the immediate load time, no problems existed for logging in, navigating through the various screens, or with any of the audio or video clips. Two individuals noted that “the video kept stopping the first time through” and “video streaming was a little broken up due to the connection speed so buffering was erratic.” One respondent failed to notice the requirement for Quicktime (#8), one had difficulty logging due to their confusion with their email account (#9), and one mentioned slow upload times.

### Raw Data

Response #	Comments
1	<p>I love the prospect of a standard assessment we can do instead of the current portfolio method. THANK YOU!</p> <p>Any problems logging in? No                      Any problems with navigation (e.g., broken links)? No                      Any problems with audio? No                      Any problems with video? Yes (it kept stopping 1st time through, but then worked fine)</p>
2	<p>I am an Alaskan Alternate Assessment Mentor, please find below the answers to your questions. I am using an Apple Power Book with OS10 through a satellite internet system.</p> <p>Any problems logging in? None                      Any problems with navigation (e.g., broken links)? None                      Any problems with audio? It was great!                      Any problems with video? Very clear no blips or hesitations in the video.</p> <p>Funny thing is, I had no errors bringing up the program, but apparently my server doesn't like the U of O e-mail server. Can you forward the message I sent to you back to the Gerald guy. Because apparently it would not go through to him.</p>
3	<p>I was asked by our Director of Special Ed and Alenita Danner from the State Department of Education and Early Development to test the access to extended training and respond to four questions.</p> <p>Log on was easy                      Navigation was good                      Audio was good                      Video was sharp and clear (nice filming job)                      We have complete access as far as I was able to go with no problems</p>
4	<p>I did not have any problems with logging in, navigation, audio or video. Everything worked fine.</p> <p>PS. The videos did take quite a while to load, however, and we have a broadband connection.</p>
5	<p>I tested a random sample of links, audio and video using Alenita Danner's login and everything worked very well. Our school district uses satellite links and so there is quite a bit of latency, even so everything was good. However, at present there are not many people at work and so there is not much competition for bandwidth. As far as content goes, it also looks very promising. No negative comment at all - keep up the good work.</p>
6	<p>I tested the online assessment site and everything worked fine. I am using a Mac G5 with Safari.</p>
7	<p>There was no trouble logging in or navigating. I tried several of the training links and tests. All worked well and seemed to function properly. Video streaming was a little broken up due to the connection speed so buffering was erratic.</p>

<p>8</p>	<p>I tried to navigate the sample of the AA. I didn't have any problems logging in, but after that I could not get any sound, or any of the tasks to work. I didn't get any video or audio.</p> <p><i>The most likely cause is Quicktime has not been installed on the compute. Quicktime can be downloaded (for free) from: <a href="http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/">http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/</a>. Double check other requirements to use the AA system, they are listed on the site at: <a href="http://brtgroup.org/exrwms/sys_requirements.php">http://brtgroup.org/exrwms/sys_requirements.php</a>. Let me know if I can be of additional help. Have a great day. Cheers-Aaron Glasgow.</i></p>
<p>9</p>	<p>I was unable to access the site but haven't been able to and haven't received a password yet as a new user and the email connection to the contact person came back unsendable. Soooooo I am still trying to get on the site.....I look forward to a new AltAssmnt (bet you do too!!)</p> <p><i>It looks like your real email address is: ___ (note the addition of 01). This would explain why you never received the login information - the system was sending it to the address you provided. I appreciate your help with this access test. If you have a chance, please try the info above. If you run into any trouble feel free to email me and I will be happy to help you. Have a great day. Cheers-Aaron Glasgow</i></p> <p>Should I try entering myself as a new user again and get my email address right this time to see if that will work? I am still unable to access the access test with the password and login info you passed along to me.</p> <p><i>Thanks for your email. I'm sorry to hear that you are still having trouble with access to the system. I've changed your account information to _____. I also verified that the login is working (at least from my computer). Please give this new login information a try and let me know if continue to have trouble. Here's a couple of hints that might help:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1. Cut and paste your login and password from above</i></li> <li><i>2. Use the Firefox web browser available for free from: <a href="http://www.mozilla.com/">http://www.mozilla.com/</a></i></li> </ol> <p><i>Cheers-Aaron Glasgow</i></p>
<p>10</p>	<p>I've completed some training modules for Alaska's new AA. The only problem I encountered was very slow loading times with the videos. Sound and picture quality are fine, no problems with links, just a long wait time for video.</p> <p><i>Thank you for helping. Out of curiosity, was this at your school on a high speed internet connection or something else?</i></p> <p>According to our MIS department, I'm using a high speed connection. Is there any specific download I'd need to use?</p>
<p>11</p>	<p>Here are my results from trying out the capabilities of my system for accessing the online training for Alternate Assessment. I also had our school computer apps teacher try it out to see if he noticed any problems. We both tried training and proficiency videos for various tasks...</p> <p>Any problems logging in? No          Any problems with navigation (e.g., broken links)? No          Any problems with audio? No          Any problems with video? No</p> <p>I attempted to send the message below to Gerald Tindal, but the message came back twice as undeliverable. If you could forward this to Gerald, or whomever, I would appreciate it! And again, thank you for your help on Friday.</p>

### Discussion of Issues

The issue of the first time download is likely due to a spotty network. One setting to look at is available via the Quicktime control panel (pc) or system preferences (mac): Under streaming set the instant on delay to "short delay." EdProgress plans to upload instructions and screen shots (for the mac) in the next few days and pc in a week or so (Response 1).

In testing mode, it might be that people are not watching the videos, only making sure they fully load. Because we are targeting people who will actually be watching the video, the speed might be acceptable. For example a 3 min video taking 30 seconds to load is a painful 30 seconds for someone who is just checking to see if it loads, however with caching my guess is that same 3 min video would start playing within 8 seconds and play for all 3 minutes which would be just fine for a person viewing the video (Response 4).

It is clear the users need to attend to the requirements posted on the assessment website: It is possible that they do not *Quicktime* installed on their computer. *Quicktime* can be downloaded (for free) from: <http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/>. Double check other requirements to use the AA system, as listed at [http://brtgroup.org/exrwms/sys\\_requirements.php](http://brtgroup.org/exrwms/sys_requirements.php). (Respondent 8).

All interactions with the assessment system need to be exact in the log in or the system cannot be accessed. Often mistakes are made in typing information into the log in. One way to avoid this is copy and paste login and password; also, the browser may pose problems; if a Macintosh is being used, *Firefox* web browser may work better and it available for free from: <http://www.mozilla.com/> (Respondent 9)

## Survey of Web Site Technology Access for Alternate Assessment

Thank you for taking the time to access the following web site (<http://brtgroup.org/exrwms>) and try it out. Your goal is to access it and try out various features that are available (e.g. the video and sound in particular). You are NOT being asked to review the content. At this point, we are interested primarily in determining if the local systems being used in Alaska are sufficient to access this training to be eventually employed in training teachers for the Alternate Assessment. This survey should not take much time and should help us identify any access problems as well as get the web site properly situated for the entire state. Please note that the site you are testing was designed for the state of Oregon and will be changed to Alaska as we customize the alternate assessment.

Please begin by selecting 'System Requirements' (if you do not satisfy these requirements, please try another computer system that is satisfactory or just email a description of the system you are operating).

Realize that when you get onto the site, you should select the option as New User? (located under the Password box). This will take you to another page where you will be asked to enter information used to create an account for you – at that time you will be given a password via your email. Then you can officially log in. N.B. 'User options' on the top menu allows you to change your password to something you can easily remember.

Once logged in you can select (a) training, or (b) proficiency. Once you log on to these two main page, you should see audio and video clips with a 'play' and 'stop' button on the left that toggles; for the video, a fast forward and rewind also is provided to the right).

*Training* provides audio and video material to learn how to administer a series of assessments in reading, writing, math, or administration tasks (various ways to interact with students during the testing). Just click on various play buttons for the audio and video and/or move directly to learning how to score this task or test your proficiency.

*Proficiency* provides a series of tests to determine if you can score students' performance correctly. At this point, do not worry about being correct – just score the student example responses by pulling down the points in a somewhat random manner (and don't worry: you should not pass and that's OK for now).

In the end, please respond to the following four questions:

- Any problems in logging in?
- Any problems with navigation (e.g., broken links)?
- Any problems with audio?
- Any problems with video?

Please send any feedback to Gerald Tindal: [geraldt@uoregon.edu](mailto:geraldt@uoregon.edu)

Thank you for helping us move this system forward.

Addendum: Technology Problems Encountered in Pilot Testing

<p>Teacher 1</p>	<p>One of our tech personnel came to help me today and we couldn't open either the writing or the math sessions of the training for the Alternate. We could open the writing however.</p> <p>He said that it was a difficulty on your end. If that could be corrected he will look at my inability to open the video sections of the training and proficiency.</p>
<p>Teacher 2</p>	<p>I have finished the items in Math, Reading, and Writing. I noticed, though, that anytime I tried to get proficiency in a task that called for CWS or CLS, the first task was always rejected with a note that I had already tried that task (and I'd never even seen the task before). It was very frustrating and I began just entering any old thing and submitting it so that I could go on to the 2nd task and have my scores accepted.</p> <p>I also had trouble with the Quicktime movie in items 14 and 15 in the math section - scoring proficiency. It never came up. All I saw was the giant blue Q. I finally guessed the scores and managed to "gain proficiency" even though I never actually saw or heard the student perform. I was able to get all other Quicktime movies.</p> <p>Hi there. When I went into the alt. assess. pilot site to do some training today I get server error messages for the Reading and Math tasks. It doesn't seem to be any of the other areas on the site. I talked to ___ to see if she was having the same problems and she did.</p> <p>I tried using Safari, Int Exp, and Firefox on the Mac and then switched to a Dell and tried Int Exp. I got the same error messages.</p> <p>This is pretty frustrating and knowing the special ed teachers in our district as I do, this would be beyond frustrating to many of them.</p> <p>Hi there. Just wanted to give you a heads up that we've been having problems loading the videos needed to finish the scoring proficiency. I hadn't cc'd you with the emails that I've sent regarding the problems. Josh Geller has reported that they are working on compacting those videos to make them easier to access. ___ was persistent in working on hers and ended up going to our public library where the videos would load a little faster. What I've experienced is it taking up to 30 minutes for the video to load and then when I take the test and go to put in my answers, the site logs me out due to lack of activity. Just giving you a heads up because this will be a HUGE problem next fall if it's not fixed.</p> <p>Hi there. I went ahead and ran the verify Systems Requirement just to see what would happen. It ran just fine. The video worked okay too, only took a few minutes to load.</p> <p>I do have our tech guy who knows the sped machines going to be working with me soon to just make sure that our network is set to run your site as a priority like we do the IEP programs.</p> <p>Okay, now I can't get logged on. I was able to log on last week but now it won't let me. Thanks. My log on user is ...</p>
<p>Teacher 3</p>	<p>Aaron, ___ forgot her PASSWORD and tried clicking on the link "Forgot Password?" Something didn't work. Will you send her the password or assist her in getting reconnected. Thanks for any assistance you can give.</p> <p>I believe I finished on Friday (the 14th). I did not have any trouble logging on. I did consider it a nightmare to complete. I have limited time as I am a Coordinator and am really expected to deal with day-to-day concerns of staff as well as emergencies in a timely fashion. My sessions were shut down regularly with impeccable timing, usually right before I touched the submit button. I found it almost impossible to load the videos in anything less than 30-40 minutes complicated by the fact that the session kept shutting down and I would have to start all over again. This took hours and encouraged me to simply guess instead of complete the training videos. All of this made the little annoyances such as the program telling me my answer was incorrect, even though it was the same as their correct answer, even more upsetting.</p> <p>Unless, these issues are dealt with, I shudder to think what our staff will do to us next year when we expect them to do their "training."</p>

Teacher 4	<p>I am trying to email Gerald but his email keeps getting sent back to me. Could you forward this email to him and see if it makes it. Thanks.</p> <p>Hi Patricia, once again my emails are being sent back for some reason. I am finishing up the proficiency part of the math and am not able to get Task 14 or 15's movie to pull up on the testing portion of the task. I have tried both safari and firefox and neither will pull up. Without that I am unable to take those two tests. Please let me know what you think. My new email is ...</p>
Teacher 5	<p>Man, I don't know why I am having such problems with this!!! I have just printed up the Training and Proficiency Program Manual January 2006 for Extended R/W/M Assessment off the test web site. It is for the AK Dept. of Ed. buttttttt where do I get the actual testing materials/pages to print up to use when administering the pilot? This manual I just printed up is where I score the student responses as I am giving the pilot, correct....thanks for your help,</p> <p>Lordy Aran, I can't believe it took me this long to finally get into the new Alternate Assessment web site to try it out. I do not know who to pass info along to since email to Gerald Tindal is not going through soooooo I will pass along my impressions to you. Very slick set up. Impressed with the audio/video portions and training sessions set up. I did have trouble initially logging on and after repeated attempts had to have someone from the test center enter me and send me a password to use. Once they took care of that on their end it worked fine each time I logged on. I did not note any problems with navigation, audio, or video. I did have some questions regarding their scoring on certain items in certain sections which I feel did not make sense using the models they provided (i.e. giving 1 point for saying a picture of a cat is a dog but then in the practice scoring giving 0 points for a picture of a plane being a kite).....but, hey, that's just me.....see you in Anchorage sometime soon. Hope the icy streets have improved!</p> <p>I am able to access the web site and tests now with the last email and password you sent me. I cannot access the video portion of the test in any of the test areas. Any ideas? Thanks.</p>