

**Usability  
Report for  
writeon.ie  
October 2011**

# NALA

The National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) was established in 1980 and is an independent membership organisation, concerned with developing policy, advocacy, research and offering advisory services in adult literacy work in Ireland. NALA has campaigned for the recognition of, and response to, the adult literacy issue in Ireland.

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## Acknowledgements

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In particular, we would like to thank the 15 learners, who took part in the usability testing on 28th September, 2011 for their valuable input. Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to Bernadette Cogan, Divisional Librarian, Central Library, ILAC Centre, Dublin 1 and the staff of the library where the usability testing was carried out.

# Background

The National Adult Literacy Agency has been running a Distance Learning Service since 2000. This service uses mass media, particularly television, to highlight literacy issues, outline the support that is available, motivate people to return to education, and provide opportunities for learning in the privacy of a learner's home. It has been ground-breaking but challenging work.

A primary aim of NALA's Distance Learning Services is to provide high quality free distance learning opportunities targeted at improving literacy regardless of social, economic and cultural backgrounds and taking account of all levels of technical ability. In NALA, Distance Learning is defined as occurring when learners and tutors are separated by either space or time. This is a broad definition, which reflects the fact that distance education can involve people studying in a range of personal contexts using a number of learning or communication technologies.

The service strives to ensure that technology is best matched to purpose and that these uses are complementary. So television and radio are used to broadcast the key messages that learners with reading and writing problems are not alone and that help is available. Once people have been motivated to call our Freephone number, telecommunications provides the initial link between NALA and learner. Telephone is then used to provide learning support and tutoring, which is supported by postal and online distribution of learning materials. The Internet is further used to simplify and standardize accreditation. Administration is facilitated by use of internet telephony, web-accessed databases and instant messaging.

Since 2000, NALA has developed twelve prime time television series, two radio series, seven workbooks, several referral leaflets and operated a continuous Freephone support line. To date, an average of 150,000 people, approximately 13% of the total viewing public, have watched the TV series each year. This has resulted in just under 50,000 phone calls being taken by free phone tutors since 2000 and over 230,000 workbooks being distributed to individuals and learning centres. In 2010, NALA received over 4,000 phonecalls to the Freephone number, 650 people engaged with the Distance Tutoring team over the phone, via the post and online in improving their skills, while over 18,000 learning outcomes have been set up on [www.writeon.ie](http://www.writeon.ie).

# Online Accreditation and Blended Learning

Since the launch of [www.writeon.ie](http://www.writeon.ie) in September 2008, NALA has facilitated the awarding of minor and major awards at Levels 2 and 3 on the Irish National Framework of Qualifications, broken down as follows:

Level	Number of Learners	Minor Awards	Major Awards
2	872	4,298	394
3	205	629	47

Level 2 accreditation is offered by the Write On 2 aspect of the site, while Level 3 accreditation is facilitated through Write On 3. Write On 2 was launched in September 2008, while Write On 3 went live on October 18 2010.

Many of the awards have been achieved through a blended learning pilot project run between NALA and a variety of learning centres across Ireland. This pilot project ran initially with 12 centres:

- Return to Learning Kenmare, Kerry Education Service
- Co. Meath VEC Adult Literacy Scheme,
- Leitrim Education for Adults Programme,
- Co. Sligo VEC Adult Learning and Education Centre,
- An Cosán, Tallaght, Co. Dublin
- Offaly Read and Write
- Dublin City South West Reading and Writing Service (Crumlin)
- Coolock/Darndale Adult Literacy Service, Dublin
- Co. Limerick VEC Adult Literacy Service
- Warrenmount CED Centre, Dublin
- Mallow Return to Education Centre, Co. Cork
- Belmullet/Westport Basic Education and Literacy Service.

In this project, tutors in the classroom used [www.writeon.ie](http://www.writeon.ie) to provide consistent learning opportunities to students interested in using computers and the Internet. In some cases, students did additional work from home after the class. One main benefit of the site to centres has been the simplification of the accreditation process as all students were approved through NALA's FETAC validated programmes. Learners followed 5 steps to accreditation:

1. Learners completed diagnostic assessment exercises which identified strengths and gaps in learning.
2. They completed personalized learning plans depending on the results of this diagnosis.
3. Following satisfactory repeat demonstration of skills and competencies across specific learning outcomes, they then became eligible for a post assessment.
4. Completion of this assessment allowed them to apply for a minor award by printing out a form, filling in some details and attesting the work was their own.
5. NALA's internal verification and external authentication processes then completed the accreditation process.

Since this pilot project, [www.writeon.ie](http://www.writeon.ie) has been used by 63 different learning centres across Ireland.

Despite the large numbers of learners and centres using [www.writeon.ie](http://www.writeon.ie) for accreditation purposes, the vast majority of learners use the site for learning and do not apply for any awards. This is evidenced in the fact that to date, almost 18,000 learning accounts exist and yet just over 1,000 learners have applied for accreditation.

A quick review of site usage provided by Google Analytics reveals some interesting aspects of site usage:

<b>Overview of <a href="http://www.writeon.ie">www.writeon.ie</a> performance</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>Totals to Date</b>
Total Visits	5,081	24,105	61,511	90,697
Unique Visitors	1,632	7,468	15,921	23,893
Average time spent on site	3 mins, 40 secs	11 mins, 16 secs	22 mins, 03 secs	18 mins, 09 secs
Bounce Rate	65.03	42.64	12.49	23.45%
<i>Source: Google Analytics Jan 2012</i>				

# Usability report 2009

The 2009 usability study of writeon.ie was conducted by National College of Ireland (NCI) and usability testing took place in NCI's usability laboratory, the National E-learning Laboratory (NELL). The study covered only the initial writeon FETAC Level 2 site, as NALA had yet to develop its online awards for Level 3.

The NCI study concluded that

'overall, learners found www.writeon.ie a very relevant, interesting and engaging website. They liked the design; found the audio support helpful and felt that content was at the right level for them. However, testing also revealed that learners could not chart their overall progress in the system and when asked to re-start the lesson, all ran into difficulty. Nor did learners fully understand the feedback process.'

A full copy of the NCI's 2009 usability study can be found online here:

<http://www.nala.ie/publications/writeon-usability-testing-report-nala>

Several improvements were made to www.writeon.ie following this testing including:

- A **redesigned home page**
- A change in the **Text-to-Speech voice** to make the audio clearer
- A revision of the **introductory sequence** explaining the differences between level 2 and 3 and allowing learners to select the one that most closely matches their level and expectations
- The division of the site between Level 2 or Level 3 and a **separate login process** for each level
- Making the **initial assessments less complex**, by ensuring that each initial assessment corresponded to a single award (e.g. Writing) rather than, as before, a group of awards (e.g. Words)
- A revamped '**Lesson**' page which showed a path for each award along which learners could progress. allowing them to see at a glance how they were doing and which lessons were completed or still to be completed
- The introduction of a **Feedback Wheel** which appears after a learner has attempted an exercise and graphically illustrates his or her score
- Creation of **help videos** to highlight the main features of the site and the distinctive elements of WriteOn 2 and level WriteOn 3
- The introduction of **new exercise types** (e.g. Odd one out and Sequencing) and the removal of the Marking and Editing exercises which had caused problems for learners at level 2
- The **republishing of all Level 2 learning material** after an exhaustive review and edit of all level 2 lessons and assessments.
- The addition of many **new images** to Level 2 material

- The inclusion of three new Number awards: **Pattern and Relationship**, **Space and Shape**, and **Data Handling**
- A **new way of navigating the learning material** via the learning path) which indicates the state of each lesson (passed, incomplete, not started)
- Allowing learners to **return directly to the lesson or assessment screen** they left after a break
- The introduction, at Level 3, of a **Portfolio** in which learners can do additional assessment activities

# Usability Testing Sept 28 2011

## Methodology

The test was conducted by Tom O'Mara (NALA Distance Learning Co-ordinator), Joan Butler (NALA Distance Learning Tutor Co-Ordinator) and Neil Carrick (Instructional Designer for writeon.ie) over a single day in the Computer Room of Dublin Central Library in the ILAC Centre. Three groups were invited to participate:

- independent learners (6),
- distance learners (3) and
- centre-based learners (6).

There were 9 female and 6 male participants. Their age profile was:

- Age 40-49: 3
- Age 50-59: 6
- Age 60-69: 6

The participants were recruited by sending an e-mail to all centres requesting volunteers, contacting tutors and asking for volunteers via a message on the writeon website for volunteers.

Participants were asked to carry out a series of specific tasks on writeon.ie, which were observed. This was then followed by a recorded questions and answers session. Participants were invited to express their opinions on a variety of areas of writeon and to ask questions.

The usability tasks were carried out on six internet-enabled laptops using the Internet Explorer 8 browser. A set of headphones and a mouse was provided with each laptop

.

We explained to the learners that the purpose of the session was:

- To test new aspects of the writeon site
- To discover how learners work on the site
- To listen to learners' experiences and comments
- To gather information to improve writeon.ie

We devised three separate, practical tasks to test the new aspects of the site and to observe how learners actually worked on the site.



- **Task 1**, designed to test learners' ability to register for Level 3, involved creating a new password, completing the log in procedure for Level 3 and selecting a Level 3 award to study. The purpose of this task was to test the procedure.
  
- **Task 2** was a test of learners' ability to move from a particular area or aspect of the site to start learning or complete an activity. We asked different learners in different groups to do one of the following:
  - Move to the Portfolio from the last summative assessment screen at level 3 and begin a Portfolio activity
  - Complete the last initial assessment screen at level 3 and carry on learning.
  - Complete the last initial assessment screen at level 2 and carry on learning.
  - You have completed the initial assessment. Now start a lesson (level 2).
  
- **Task 3** was designed to test learners' knowledge of some of the site's features and to see whether they could locate them easily. We asked learners to find the following areas of the website (in no particular order):
  - The Learning Journal
  - The Portfolio
  - The Help videos
  - The Forum
  - The Games
  - The Results Screen

After completing the task, each group of learners was asked to respond to a series of questions (the same for each group) in a round-table discussion to discover their experiences of using writeon and to allow them to comment on the website. A copy of the questionnaire used is available as Appendix 1 in this document. All answers were recorded in order to verify details later. All contributions to the discussion are considered confidential so any quotes included in this report are anonymous.

At the end of each session we advised learners that if they wanted to add comments later, they could do so by emailing NALA at [distance@nala.ie](mailto:distance@nala.ie) or calling NALA's Freephone number.

The findings in this report represent our observations of learners doing the set tasks, their responses to the questionnaire and also the comments they made during the round-table discussion.

## Observational Findings

The following general behaviour was noted:

- Many of the learners encountered problems getting new password. Some didn't read the explanatory text above the new password box. Others did, but were still unable to get a new password. Many tried to enter existing passwords or one of their own choosing.
- When problems arose or learners paused they received peer support. People were helping people next to them. Learners wanted to show people beside them what they know.
- A few learners had problems with the rollover box that brings up the start button for lessons and assessments.
- Most learners had trouble locating the link to the Portfolio, which is found in the Learning Journal.
- It was not clear to the learners working in the Portfolio that you return to the website by clicking on the button labelled 'log out'.
- The Portfolio was opening in the same window and not in a separate tab/window in Internet Explorer. This meant it was harder for learners to return to the main writeon website.
- When learners were asked to return to a previous screen or location, they tended to use the browser back button rather than a menu link to go back.
  
- The left-hand side menu was not easy for learners to locate when in its collapsed/hidden state.
- When the left-hand menu was hidden, many learners struggled in 'Task 3 to locate items in that menu (e.g. Forum and Results).
- One person described the way the menu worked as 'annoying'. Others suggested that the menu be there all the time or at least open when first on page, staying open until you choose to close it.
- When logging into Level 3, some learners assumed the list of available awards were hyperlinks to those awards.
- Computer/browser settings meant some had to scroll down to see 'Next' button on login screens and therefore missed it.
- Only a couple of learners used the audio during the tasks. Most preferred to read instructions and questions.
- Learners seemed familiar with the navigation and layout in lessons and assessments and proceeded from initial assessments to lessons and from screen to screen within lessons and assessments with apparent ease.
- Learners experienced no obvious problems completing exercises from a strictly technical or manipulation point of view. We were not concerned in the tasks in checking whether a learner answered a question correctly or not.

- Navigation around site proved a considerable obstacle for even though navigation within lessons was no problem for any learner. The problem is getting into the lessons in the first instance
- Learners had no problems using the mouse and some were content to use the pad on the laptop.
- For those learners doing the Portfolio part of Task 2 found it hard to locate the link to the Portfolio in the award application form that appears at the end of the summative assessment.
- Once in lessons, learners have no problems with interface or what they have to do.

Specifically, when looking at the writeon features developed since the last Usability Test, we noted the following:

- All learners were able to login to Level 3 and proceed to learning material
- Learners seemed able to move up and down the learning paths, but there was voiced confusion from some over what the striped square meant
- Learners recognised the feedback wheel, but not all read the feedback. Learners were divided almost 50:50 on whether feedback was helpful.
- Learners like ability to return to where they left off, so they can take a break.

## **Interview Findings**

In terms of content, the following points were made by learners in the interview stage of the testing:

- Learners felt that the learning material was pitched at the right level at Level 2, but L3 regarded as appreciably harder, particularly maths.
- Students find moving from L2 to L3 a real educational challenge. L3 not seen as easy stepping stone from L2. It should be noted that not all learners were familiar with Level 3 and only a few had completed awards at Level 3. One learner described L3 lessons as 'exhausting'. Another said that there was 'too big a jump' between Levels 2 and 3.
- One learner mentioned that she really needed to think when working on the site. She had to learn some aspects and also there was quite a bit of content that she had to refresh on.
- The technical subject matter (e.g. Computer Skills) was off-putting to some learners. They preferred to concentrate on the 'reading and writing'. Some had difficulty with specific phrases especially in technical subjects like computing

- Instructions clear - all 6 of group 1 agreed. But for others some question instructions unclear. It wasn't clear from the comment whether this was the technical instructions (e.g. move this here) or the actual question itself. Observing learners during tasks the individual exercises presented no problems from a technical or mechanical point of view: i.e. learner were able to tick boxes, drag and place objects etc.
- The Text-to-Speech (TTS) Voice was intelligible to all learners, but annoying to a couple.
- The TTS is used more at L3 when learners faced difficulty. The voice is used for 'additional support' said one learner. In Group 3, people said they were more likely to use audio in L3 for things that are harder to understand.
- Only a couple of learners used the headphones/speaker icons during usability tasks.
- Learners had no preference for L2 or L3 voice. It seems no-one noticed they were different.
- Navigation within lessons was reported as easy to manage. There was some confusion over the Print and Save to Learning Journal icons. One respondent felt that more should be made of Save to Learning Journal as an opportunity to practice exercises. It should be clearer that this facility exists.
- Text and images were well received: easy to read and images helpful.

## **Assessments**

- When asked if they knew the purpose of assessments, most learners nodded, but in further discussion it seemed doubtful that they did.
- The phrases 'initial assessment' and 'summative assessment' were largely unfamiliar. There was, at best, a hazy understanding of the way assessment worked on writeon. It wasn't clear whether learners understood the way assessment functioned: i.e. in checking prior learning and in asking you to repeat lessons for questions wrongly answered at summative assessment.
- There was minimal understanding of what results were and where they were recorded.
- One learner mentioned that the assessments 'checked progress' but didn't elaborate on what progress meant here.
- Generally assessment questions were perceived to be 'fair' (word used by Group 3), but assessment was seen as daunting if you failed summative assessment.
- In group 2 one person said assessments were 'stressful'. 'Easier when you're getting the questions right' was another comment.
- One person felt that assessment questions were asked in a different way, which she seemed to regard as unfair.

- The absence of feedback during assessments bothered many: i.e. not knowing immediately whether you had a question right or wrong or how you're doing as you're going along.
- Some learners felt the information on the end of the assessment was 'misleading' because it didn't make the need to go to the Portfolio and complete activities there obvious enough. Many learners were unsure when they'd actually completed the assessment process
- A couple of learners voiced confusion over the print/send instruction in award form. They were unaware that by clicking on the print button, you not only print the form but also send an electronic copy to NALA.
- Learners were generally not aware of the location and function of the Portfolio. The small number of learners who had used the Portfolio seemed to have had help locating it and had been told that they needed to go there by a tutor or someone else. The abbreviations used to designate the award areas in the Portfolio were also regarded as confusing.
- One or two learners felt communication from NALA on where they were in accreditation process was poor. One person didn't realise it was free to post forms to NALA. One person said didn't understand that you need to apply for minor awards before applying for major award.
- FETAC's role in setting learning outcomes and standards and in the awards process wasn't clear to learners.

Although the majority said it was doable, from general comments it seems reasonable to conclude that all learners needed some support.

### **Navigation/Orientation**

- Navigation within lessons seemed fine, but problems arose when navigating to and between different areas of the broader website.
- Around half of learners said they'd had problems logging in at some stage and most of the learners in test had problems with Task 1, selecting a new password.
- Learners wanted to be able to type in a password they had made up themselves or to choose a password that they could remember easily. A couple of learners stored a password on their phones for convenience.
- There was widespread use of back button to return to a previous screen or location.
- When working in the Portfolio, few realised that the log out button there returned you to the main website.
- The side menu, a main navigational feature, caused learners problems. They had particular difficulty in finding it when in its collapsed/retracted state. They

thought it had disappeared, rather than been 'minimized'. This made Task 3 more difficult for learners.

### **Website functions**

The Chat, Forum, Reading Texts and Games features of the site are rarely used. Those learners who did use them did so only occasionally. One learner suggested that the games needed to be updated, but another learner said he 'had no time for games'.

When asked if new features should be added to the site, learners suggested new games, including card games, games or exercises to help you use mouse pad and music.

### **Help/Support**

A number of learners had called the Freephone number or spoken to a tutor for support. One learner regularly called NALA with queries. Peer assistance was very evident during testing, with learners helping each other on tasks, and it seems reasonable to assume that this goes on in group sessions at centres. However, the learners seemed largely unaware of help videos and FAQs featured on the website itself.

### **Confidentiality of Information**

When asked whether they minded divulging their PPSN number on the site, there was a general acceptance that this request was in line with what other agencies required.

However some learners seemed uncomfortable and most agreed that NALA should reassure them about data protection issues. One learner, in particular, was very concerned about sharing personal information on a website, and had refused to divulge any personal information when completing a required assessment activity in Communications at Level 3 in the Portfolio with the result that he has so far been unable to gain that award.

### **Other General Comments**

The learners reported the following aspects of writeon as being very positive:

- Working at own pace and at any time (e.g. when children are in bed)
- Easy to navigate between levels

- Clear instructions and text
- The educational challenge
- Seeing your progress on learning path
- 'Getting the "man" to the top'
- Great resource and great support
- Being able to return to where you left off.

The following were identified as problems encountered:

- Problems uploading videos (file size issues)
- Timing out during uploading to Portfolio.
- Crossword: having letter already entered in another 'crossing' word.
- Big jump between levels 2 and 3.
- Knowing to save your work (in the Portfolio).
- Learning to use keyboard.

Participants suggested the following ideas for improvements to writeon:

- Need to explain how the calculator works
- Introducing a 'balloon' if you get stuck like MS Office Help system
- Introduce a Help icon that appears and acts as prompt when you're stuck
- Clicking on words (i.e. award name) at the foot of the learning path to start, rather than on the figure.
- Explaining the Portfolio and making going to it and saving work there clearer
- Making more of saving to Learning Journal: more people should realise it's there and how useful it is
- Include lessons on how to use keyboard
- Being able to copy results directly from the calculator in the lessons.

# Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions	Recommendations
<p>Many of the site's main features elude learners. This is particularly true with the Portfolio and the Learning Journal, but also applies to the Forum, the Chat feature and the reading texts and games.</p>	<p>Make an information video that graphically illustrates the features and functions of the site, including how to log in.</p> <p>Make the video appear every time a new password is requested, but include a skip video button so that repeat learners who can close it.</p> <p>Have the link to this introductory video accessible from all areas of the website.</p> <p>Improve the visibility of features by redesigning the left-hand menu (see further recommendations on this below) so that links to areas such as Portfolio and Forum are only one click away.</p>
<p>Left-hand side menu is difficult to locate, in its collapsed form, and therefore other areas of the site are difficult to find for learners</p>	<p>Although the left-hand side menu appears on screen when the learner first enters the site and remains there until the learner moves on to the learning path, it may be worth considering keeping the menu on screen until the learner chooses to close it. Also the menu should be highlighted as a critical navigational tool in the introductory video (see above)</p>
<p>Learners find it hard to locate certain features of the site.</p>	<p>Change the structure of the left-hand side menu so the Portfolio, Learning Journal, Forum and Games are all main</p>



	<p>menu (rather than sub-menu) items.</p>
<p>Selecting a new password/creating a new account is still a problem for many learner.</p>	<p>Change text on New Password button to make it clearer that you are creating a new learning account.</p> <p>Use real audio, rather than TTS, on the opening screens to make the initial logon process sound more friendly and Irish.</p>
<p>Learners find it difficult to recall their passwords</p>	<p>Change the sequence so that learners create username at same time as entering other information such as phone number, PPSN and date of birth which we could use for verifying lost passwords.</p>
<p>It is impossible for us to know the browser settings a learner has. In the usability test scrollbars appeared on the login screens meaning that learners could not see the 'Next' button without scrolling down.</p>	<p>Consider placing a Next button at the top as well as the bottom of these screens.</p>
<p>Learners are unaware of the location and function of the Portfolio and how to get into it. They are also unsure of what the abbreviations at the top of the Portfolio tabs mean.</p>	<p>The Portfolio is a major feature of Level 3 and will play an even more crucial role as awards are developed. It will also be extended to Level 2. Therefore we must make more obvious how to get to it and what its purpose is.</p> <p>We should remove the link from the Learning Journal and make My Portfolio a main item on the left-hand side menu.</p> <p>We should review the process at the end of the summative assessment and consider directing learners who have passed the summative assessment automatically to the Portfolio and directly into the relevant section (i.e. the one that corresponds to the award whose summative assessment they have just</p>

	<p>completed).</p> <p>The award application form should only become available once the learner has successfully completed all the relevant Portfolio activities for that award.</p> <p>The Portfolio should always open in a separate browser window or tab.</p> <p>The 'log out' button in the Portfolio should be renamed 'Return to writeon' or something equally clear. If possible, full award names should be given on each Portfolio tab or should appear in a text box when rolling over the abbreviations.</p>
<p>Forum and chat are used rarely.</p>	<p>Explain clearly in the introductory video the uses/benefits of Forum and Chat and clearly indicate where they're to be found. Even though they are used rarely, we should retain them as they are useful tools in assessing learners' understanding of learning outcomes for some Level 3 awards, and possibly Level 4.</p>
<p>Some learners are uneasy about sharing personal details with us.</p>	<p>As this is likely to become more of a requirement for logging in, we should make NALA's data protection policy available on the site, indicating clearly and simply how this information may be used in writeon and in NALA in general.</p>
<p>The usability study suggests that some learner concerns can be addressed by making simple changes to the wording on the site.</p>	<p>Ask Avallain to allow us to make more changes ourselves to the website (e.g, to pop-up messages, text and forms).</p>
<p>Learners find moving to Level 3 material from Level 2 a huge leap.</p>	<p>Consider introducing learning material on writeon that will help Level 2 and Level 3 learners prepare better for the challenges of Level 3. Perhaps create a special</p>

	practice area.
The Learning Journal is under-utilised as a resource for practising exercises.	<p>Include a message in the introductory and help videos on how best to use the Learning Journal.</p> <p>Consider changing the icon in the lessons to make it graphically clearer what the Learning Journal represents. Currently it seems like it's something you file away and some learners have confused it with the print screen icon.</p>
Learners have problems with certain technical terms and concepts.	Introduce a glossary of terms for all lessons at all levels.
Assessment - learners unclear about how it works, how they are progressing and their results.	<p>Make feedback available during assessments.</p> <p>The introductory video should explain the purpose of and distinction between initial and summative assessments.</p> <p>Allow learners to submit award forms after they have completed all assessment, including the additional assessment activities in the Portfolio and make it clearer on the award application forms that an electronic copy is sent directly to NALA but that the learner should send a signed, printed copy to NALA in the post.</p>
Both usability studies conducted on writeon have thrown up interesting and arresting results. The first resulted in a redesign of the basic navigation and the introduction of new features. It is likely that changes will result from the current study too.	<p>Make usability tests more regular and involve a wider (age) range of learners. It would be good to involve some younger learners to see if they have the same or different issues to the older age group. Consider holding them outside of Dublin.</p> <p>Commission a usability study of exclusively Level 3 learners to gauge</p>

	whether material is suitable for Level 3.
With a new level added, with new awards added and new features in the past couple of years writeon has become a more complex website.	Regular usability testing will allow us to monitor learner behaviour and concerns. We should also continue to conduct training. However, we should consider the appointment of a webmaster with specific responsibility for the day-to-day monitoring and maintenance of the site content and performance.

NALA will now work with its Web development partner, Avallain to come with solutions that address the recommendations above.

It is anticipated that a new version of [www.writeon.ie](http://www.writeon.ie) that takes account of these changes will be live before the end of 2012.

### **Feedback**

If you would like to comment on this report or provide your own feedback on using [www.writeon.ie](http://www.writeon.ie), please send an email to Tom O' Mara, Distance Learning Co-ordinator at [distance@nala.ie](mailto:distance@nala.ie).

## Appendix 1: Usability Questionnaire

<u>Content</u>				
How did you find the material?	Right level	Too difficult	Too easy	Mixed
How are the instructions for the exercises?	Clear	Unclear		
What do you think of the length of the lessons?	Right length	Too long	Too short	
Did you understand the voice?	Yes -	No		
Did you have any problems with the voice?	Yes (specify)	No		
Do you have a preference between the voice at level 2 and the voice at level 3?	Level 2	Level 3	No preference	
Were you able to move forward and back in the lessons or tests?	Yes	No		
Are the buttons and icons easy to find and use?	Yes	No		
Have you read/used the feedback?	Yes	No		
Is the feedback in lessons useful to you?	Yes	No		
Is the text on screen readable?	Yes	No		
How did you find the words and language used on the site?	Understandable	Hard to understand	Some words/phrases difficult (with examples)	Too much to read
Are the images (pictures, diagrams etc.) useful?	Yes	No		
<u>Assessment</u>				
Do you understand why the summative and initial assessments are there?	Yes	No		
How did you find the questions in the assessments?	Just right	Too hard	Too easy	
Are the assessments the right length?	Right length	Too long	Too short	
Does the lack of feedback in assessments bother you (i.e. that you're not told which questions you got right or wrong and there's no feedback allowed)?	Yes	No		

Did you know you had to go to the portfolio to complete the final assessment?	Yes	No		
How did you find the assessment process?	Easy	Complicated but doable	Complicated & needed help	Too complicated
Have you found and used the Portfolio (at level 3)?	Yes	No		
Any concerns/problems with Portfolio?	Yes - specify	No		
Do you understand how the results are recorded?	Yes	No		
Do you understand when and how you receive your awards?	Yes	No		
<u>Navigation/Orientation</u>				
Did you have any problems with logging in: either today or at another time?	Yes	No		
How easy or difficult do you find moving around the website?	Easy	Difficult		
When you leave the site or move to another section are you always able to get back to where you came from or to where you want to be?	Yes	No - specify		
<u>Website functions</u>				
Have you ever used the chat functions on the website and how often?	Lots of times	Sometimes	Never	
Do you use the games and the reading texts on the site (in Edutainment section)?	Yes	No		
Is there anything we should add to or take away from this section?	Yes - specify	No		
Have you ever required support when using the website?	Yes - whom did you contact for support?	No		
Have you used the Help videos and FAQs?	Yes	No		
Would you have any concerns about providing PPSN numbers or other contact details on the site?	Yes	No		

<u>General questions (if time)</u>				
List any problems you encountered using writeon				
What aspects of writeon did you like best?				
Can you suggest ways in which we might improve the website?				
Does NALA offer enough support to people using the site?				