# Target audience and applications

In this section the target audience of ALAT will be discussed. A description of the target audience also allows for a discussion on the possible applications of ALAT. With these applications in mind a case is made on the possibility of future expansions of ALAT and what is needed to reach the new target audience.

## The ALAT target audience and applications

ALAT has been created in order to provide a new authoring environment for GALE. At this time GALE and GAT are mainly used in courses and projects at TU/e[[1]](#footnote-1). The first possible application of ALAT is to be the new recommended authoring environment in the adaptive hypermedia courses at TU/e. This means ALAT will be used by students with a technical background which are not yet experienced in authoring adaptive applications. ALAT provides the tools necessary to ease these students into authoring these applications while they learn the principles of adaptive hypermedia. This means that the main target audience of ALAT at this time consists of both students learning to author for GALE as well as engineers and experts with more extensive knowledge on adaptive hypermedia.

The ALAT authoring environment as it is now is created to be used by authors with at least basic understanding of adaptive hypermedia with the support of a GALE expert. This expert is to set up the templates needed to create adaptive applications. It might be difficult for users to start using ALAT without the expert on the background because as extending templates might be necessary to create the desired adaptation rules or concept blueprints. A solution to this would be to create an all-round and broad set of templates that covers all common adaptation techniques used in GALE.  
An effort has been made to make ALAT a usable authoring environment for more adept GALE users as well. Experienced GALE users can install ALAT on their own server and can create their own templates and default layout files. Even though experts might prefer writing their own GALE code, deployed ALAT applications could serve as a basis for further development. This is something which is not possible in GAT, because it deploys applications in the IMS VDEX[[2]](#footnote-2) format [Sm11], which is not easy for humans to read and edit.

## Possible future applications

As described earlier, ALAT will mainly be used by students and GALE experts at TU/e in the foreseeable future. This section will discuss what might hold ALAT back from different audiences and what solutions could possibly solve this problem. Because of the collaboration with “De Roode Kikker” throughout this project, adaptive educational hypermedia (AEH) is regarded to be the most prominent future expansion at this time.

Discussions on ALAT and AEH authoring with members of “De Roode Kikker” have resulted in an interesting analysis on authoring adaptive software in the field of education. AEH is an important possible future application of ALAT. This would result in educational hypermedia experts and possibly teachers as an additional target audience.

It is abundantly clear that academic users and educational hypermedia experts have different desires and needs when it comes to authoring adaptive applications. As opposed to academic users, the educational expert has no knowledge about the workings of GALE at all. Nor is this expert likely to be interested in this. The interface should match this by displaying information in a way that corresponds to the users’ way of thinking, rather than matching a resulting GALE domain model. This also holds for the terminology within the authoring environment. As these experts might use the authoring environment more fairly regularly, a slight learning curve is acceptable. However, the more advanced features should not confuse new users trying to use the main authoring features. A more extensive “advanced mode” could help prevent this confusion.

For teachers trying to play around with adaptive hypermedia the tool should be simplified even more. These users will probably use the authoring tool sporadically and will probably forget some of the gained knowledge authoring in between uses. A version of ALAT geared toward use by teachers and non-technical users should probably rely on a few concept blueprints for adaptivity. A new user interface should be designed to make authoring a process which is more visually appealing and is adjusted to the way teachers think about creating courses.

So the main factors contributing to the usability of authoring tools such as ALAT for teachers or educational hypermedia experts are: user friendliness, an appropriate level of complexity and an interface which lets users construct courses in a way that matches their ideas on course construction. Academic users will possible desire a more diverse set of adaptation rules and concept blueprints to experiment and learn with. Educational hypermedia experts and teachers will likely need a subset of rules and concept blueprints that apply to the field of application in particular. Especially for teachers, it is necessary to keep the amount of rules to a minimum in order to prevent information overload and a confusing number of possibilities.

1. Eindhoven University of Technology, the Netherlands [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. http://www.imsglobal.org/vdex/ [↑](#footnote-ref-2)