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IDE 601/IST 611 – Fall 02  
Assignment #2

*Task: Write a short report (two pages maximum) summarizing outcomes. Include the name and version of the software that was evaluated, profiles of all 3 evaluators, the descriptive information requested in Part I of the evaluation form, the calculated scores and averages from Part II, major conclusions along with a confidence factor, and reflections on the evaluation form and process; include completed forms as appendices.*

### **Alan's Math**

<http://www.patrickservices.com/software/amath.html>

Makes learning basic arithmetic fun. It introduces addition, subtraction, multiplication and division to the user in a flash-card type scenario. Easy interface for kids with fun sounds.

I chose to evaluate the freeware program, **Alan's Math**. I was able to put this program into a useful context because I have a child who took the NYS standardized tests last year and needed to prepare using math facts flash cards, etc. I found this to be a useful tool to that end and wish we had found it earlier.

Patrick Computer Services created this program. It would seem to be a program created specifically for a son, named Alan, by his father in 1996 to help in learning basic arithmetic facts. It is freeware, though the creator accepts donations for use of the program. The latest revision of the program, 2.0.11, was created in October 2001. The link provided for this assignment goes directly to the download site and installing the program from that point was relatively easy. The user does need to install some additional files, specifically the Visual Basic 6.0 runtime files, to use this program. However, the Patrick Services installation process makes this very easy to accomplish by including it in the process in addition to telling the user about it before hand. This is the only program requirement for downloading, installing and using the software.

I used the Software Evaluation form to complete this assignment. The additional evaluations were completed by 2 individuals: a middle aged woman, mother of 2, now adults, and grandmother of 3, ages 5, 8, and 10, and a late-twenties man, father of 2, ages 5 and 8. The woman's computer skills are slightly above a novice level, while the man is quite computer literate. The woman is a registered nurse, while the man works in food services/management. I, myself, have been using computers for over 20 years and have intermediate to advance level competencies in hardware and software. I have a bachelor's degree in psychology with a minor in education.

**Part I: Descriptive Information.** **Alan's Math**, was created by Patrick's Computer Services. It is downloadable freeware and there are no licensing requirements or restrictions. The subject area is, obviously, mathematics. There is no stated grade level, however, one can assume that this could be used as early as kindergarten/first grade with the addition and subtraction facts, and can be continued throughout the fourth grade with multiplication and division facts. It is a drill and practice routine that runs through a series of math "flash cards". The student is timed for a series of twenty problems and it tracks the student's answers, reporting the final results at the end of the twenty problems. There was no note of available reviews of the product by others.

## Part II: Software Ratings.

Eval\_1

- A. *Content & Educational Value*  
30
  - B. *Instructional Aspects*  
23
  - C. *Software Design & Technical Aspects*  
25
  - D. *Documentation & Supporting Materials*  
9
- Total: 87**

Eval\_3

- A. *Content & Educational Value*  
31
  - B. *Instructional Aspects*  
27
  - C. *Software Design & Technical Aspects*  
25
  - D. *Documentation & Supporting Materials*  
8
- Total: 91**

Eval\_2

- A. *Content & Educational Value*  
22
  - B. *Instructional Aspects*  
29
  - C. *Software Design & Technical Aspects*  
20
  - D. *Documentation & Supporting Materials*  
11
- Total: 82**

**Average Scores**

- A. *Content & Educational Value***  
**28**
  - B. *Instructional Aspects***  
**27**
  - C. *Software Design & Technical Aspects***  
**23**
  - D. *Documentation & Supporting Materials***  
**9**
- Total: 87**

According to the scoring directions of the Software Evaluation Checklist, each of the evaluators found the content and educational value to be strong. The instructional aspects and the design and technical aspects were also rated as strong. The documentation and supporting materials, however, were rated as weak by 2 out of the 3 evaluations. The checklist suggests that a total score of 80 or higher might indicate a “highly promising educational software package”. The total score possible is 108. The average score of the three evaluations is 87. I might not consider this very high, however, given the simplicity of this program and the objectives it is addressing, I have an adequate confidence level in its accomplishments in meeting those objectives.

Use of the Software Evaluation Checklist was fairly easy. Given the simplicity of the software chosen, the evaluators did find some of the questions on the evaluation to be somewhat vague and/or not applicable. Overall, I think it served its purpose.

I would suggest the software as a positive educational tool to assist children in learning arithmetic in a simple and fun manner. Certainly, the fact that it is free, makes it an affordable tool to help promote education at home and supplement a child’s readiness for exams such as the NYS standardize math tests.

# **APPENDIX**

## **Eval 1**

### **Part I: Descriptive Information**

1. Name of Rater/Date of Evaluation: Evaluator 1
2. Name/Version of Product: Alan's Math 2.0
3. Manufacturer/Publisher: Patrick's Computer Services
4. Ordering information: Freeware
5. License requirements/restrictions: N/A
6. Number of users per license/price: N/A
7. Computer requirements: must also download Visual Basic 6.0
8. Interoperability with other software: N/A
9. Subject area/grade level: various grade levels (addition thru division)
10. Type of educational software: Math facts game  
(e.g., drill and practice, exploration, exposition, game, simulation, test, etc.; indicate if there is a mixture of approaches; include appropriate comments in ratings.)
11. Availability of trial version: not necessary as this is freeware
12. Availability of existing reviews: none noted

### **Part II: Software Ratings**

**(0 - strongly disagree 1 - disagree 2 - agree 3 - strongly agree NA - not applicable)**

#### *A. Content & Educational Value*

1. The content is accurate. 2
2. The content is presented clearly. 3
3. The material is free from offensive biases and prejudices. 3
4. Content can be easily modified or customized. 2
5. The content has obvious educational value. 3
6. Students will find the content meaningful and relevant. 2
7. Teachers will easily integrate software materials into their teaching. 3
8. Use of this software is likely to improve student understanding. 3
9. Terminology is consistent and new terms are defined. 3
10. A broad range of topics is covered. 3
11. Activities and approaches are appropriate for specific topics. 3

Additional comments about content and educational value:

only problem I found was how you enter the numeric answer; backwards typing??

**(0 - strongly disagree 1 - disagree 2 - agree 3 - strongly agree NA - not applicable)**

#### *B. Instructional Aspects*

12. Objectives are clearly stated. 2
13. The level of difficulty is appropriate for the targeted users. 2
14. Content is appropriately sequenced. 2
15. Learner control is available when appropriate. 3
16. Feedback to learners is informative and timely. 3
17. A variety of representational modalities is used. NA
18. Summaries and reviews are included at appropriate places. 3
19. Learning activities are sufficiently supported. 2
20. Motivation is sufficient to keep learners interested. 2
21. The type of software is well matched with learning objectives. 2
22. The software uses media effectively (audio, graphics, video, etc.). 2

Additional comments about instructional aspects of the software:

Effective - it times the student, valuable when preparing for timed tests; it offers rewards for correct answers and explanation for incorrect answers; it gives a report after a certain number of questions.

### *C. Software Design & Technical Aspects*

23. The software was easily installed. 3
24. Online help is readily available. 2
25. The screen displays are easily understood and attractive. 2
26. The navigation mechanisms are obvious and functional. 3
27. The program operates smoothly without crashing or stalling. 3
28. Extraneous/repetitive information is kept to an appropriate minimum. 3
29. Exiting the program is easy. 3
30. Saving one's work or results is easily accomplished. 3
31. The system keeps adequate records. 3

Additional comments about the design of the software and other technical aspects:

I love the running log it creates showing everything the student has done including the actual questions and answers. Very effective in tracking performance and usage of the program.

### *D. Documentation & Supporting Materials*

32. There is an installation manual/guide. 2
33. There is an instructor's manual/guide. 1
34. There is a learner's manual/guide. 1
35. References to additional materials are sufficient. 2
36. Extra materials are not required in order to make effective use of the system. 3

Additional comments about documentation and supporting materials:

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## **Eval\_2**

### **Part I: Descriptive Information**

1. 1.Name of Rater/Date of Evaluation: Evaluator 2
2. Name/Version of Product: 2.0
3. Manufacturer/Publisher: Patrick Services
4. Ordering information: na
5. License requirements/restrictions: na
6. Number of users per license/price: na
7. Computer requirements: 406kb
8. Interoperability with other software: unknown
9. Subject area/grade level: 1
10. Type of educational software: drill and practice
11. (e.g., drill and practice, exploration, exposition, game, simulation, test, etc.; indicate if there is a mixture of approaches; include appropriate comments in ratings.)
12. Availability of trial version:
13. Availability of existing reviews:

### **Part II: Software Ratings**

**(0 - strongly disagree 1 - disagree 2 - agree 3 - strongly agree NA - not applicable)**

#### *A. Content & Educational Value*

1. The content is accurate. 3
2. The content is presented clearly. 1
3. The material is free from offensive biases and prejudices . 3
4. Content can be easily modified or customized. na
5. The content has obvious educational value. 2
6. Students will find the content meaningful and relevant. 2
7. Teachers will easily integrate software materials into their teaching. 3
8. Use of this software is likely to improve student understanding. 2
9. Terminology is consistent and new terms are defined. NA

10. A broad range of topics is covered. 1
11. Activities and approaches are appropriate for specific topics. 3

Additional comments about content and educational value:

**(0 - strongly disagree 1 - disagree 2 - agree 3 - strongly agree NA - not applicable)**

*B. Instructional Aspects*

12. Objectives are clearly stated. 3
13. The level of difficulty is appropriate for the targeted users. 3
14. Content is appropriately sequenced. 3
15. Learner control is available when appropriate. 2
16. Feedback to learners is informative and timely. 3
17. A variety of representational modalities is used. 3
18. Summaries and reviews are included at appropriate places. 3
19. Learning activities are sufficiently supported. 3
20. Motivation is sufficient to keep learners interested. 2
21. The type of software is well matched with learning objectives. 2
22. The software uses media effectively (audio, graphics, video, etc.). 2

Additional comments about instructional aspects of the software:

*C. Software Design & Technical Aspects*

23. The software was easily installed. 3
24. Online help is readily available. NA
25. The screen displays are easily understood and attractive. 1
26. The navigation mechanisms are obvious and functional. 3
27. The program operates smoothly without crashing or stalling. 3
28. Extraneous/repetitive information is kept to an appropriate minimum. 3
29. Exiting the program is easy. 3
30. Saving one's work or results is easily accomplished. 2
31. The system keeps adequate records. na

Additional comments about the design of the software and other technical aspects:

*D. Documentation & Supporting Materials*

32. There is an installation manual/guide. 3
33. There is an instructor's manual/guide. na
34. There is a learner's manual/guide. 3
35. References to additional materials are sufficient. 1
36. Extra materials are not required in order to make effective use of the system. 2

Additional comments about documentation and supporting materials:

## Eval\_3

### Part I: Descriptive Information

1. Name of Rater/Date of Evaluation: Evaluator 3
2. Name/Version of Product: Alan's Math 2.0.11
3. Manufacturer/Publisher: Patrick Computer Services
4. Ordering information: <http://www.patrickservices.com/software/amath.html>
5. License requirements/restrictions: Freeware
6. Number of users per license/price: Unlimited
7. Computer requirements: None Specified
8. Interoperability with other software: No problems noted
9. Subject area/grade level: Math - Addition, Subtraction, Multiplication, and Division
10. Type of educational software: Drill and Practice

11. (e.g., drill and practice, exploration, exposition, game, simulation, test, etc.; indicate if there is a mixture of approaches; include appropriate comments in ratings.)
12. Availability of trial version: Full version is free
13. Availability of existing reviews: N/A

## Part II: Software Ratings

**(0 - strongly disagree 1 - disagree 2 - agree 3 - strongly agree NA - not applicable)**

### *A. Content & Educational Value*

1. The content is accurate. 3
2. The content is presented clearly. 3
3. The material is free from offensive biases and prejudices. 3
4. Content can be easily modified or customized. 3
5. The content has obvious educational value. 3
6. Students will find the content meaningful and relevant. 3
7. Teachers will easily integrate software materials into their teaching. 3
8. Use of this software is likely to improve student understanding. 3
9. Terminology is consistent and new terms are defined. NA
10. A broad range of topics is covered. 3
11. Activities and approaches are appropriate for specific topics. 3

Additional comments about content and educational value:

Content was presented accurately and efficiently.

**(0 - strongly disagree 1 - disagree 2 - agree 3 - strongly agree NA - not applicable)**

### *B. Instructional Aspects*

12. Objectives are clearly stated. 3
13. The level of difficulty is appropriate for the targeted users. 3
14. Content is appropriately sequenced. 3
15. Learner control is available when appropriate. 3
16. Feedback to learners is informative and timely. 3
17. A variety of representational modalities is used. NA
18. Summaries and reviews are included at appropriate places. 3
19. Learning activities are sufficiently supported. 3
20. Motivation is sufficient to keep learners interested. 2
21. The type of software is well matched with learning objectives. 3
22. The software uses media effectively (audio, graphics, video, etc.). NA

Additional comments about instructional aspects of the software:

### *C. Software Design & Technical Aspects*

23. The software was easily installed. 3
24. Online help is readily available. NA
25. The screen displays are easily understood and attractive. 3
26. The navigation mechanisms are obvious and functional. 3
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29. Exiting the program is easy. 3
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31. The system keeps adequate records. 3

Additional comments about the design of the software and other technical aspects:

### *D. Documentation & Supporting Materials*

32. There is an installation manual/guide. 1
33. There is an instructor's manual/guide. 1
34. There is a learner's manual/guide. 2
35. References to additional materials are sufficient. NA
36. Extra materials are not required in order to make effective use of the system. 3

Additional comments about documentation and supporting materials:

