

AleksIS User Sessions at didacta 2024

didacta is Europe's largest trade fair in the educational sector, frequented by representatives of school boards as well as political stakeholders. For software products aimed at schools, the didacta fair is, at least for the German-speaking part of Europe, the most important event to present their products to the (political) decision makers that are, in our case, basically the only group of people to decide for or against AleksIS as an open solution. School information systems are by far the most rapidly developed kind of software for schools at the moment, and the market is full of competitors. Therefore, it is of high importance for our project to use this chance to gather requirements and feedback from the target audience of AleksIS in order to strengthen our position as a serious competitor among the corporate offers. The AleksIS team has already participated successfully at this year's and last year's didacta, collecting a plethora of feedback that significantly shaped our current development prioritisation. The tasks written down in our funding project plan are therefore, in large parts, based on the suggestions that we got at this year's didacta fair (and our pilot school's ideas). In order to intensify our responsiveness to the needs expressed by the target audience, we plan to take part again at next year's didacta in Cologne, this time employing a more elaborate and structured plan to collect requirements and feedback. This becomes even more important due to the fact that in the time since didacta 2023, we have developed some of the much-needed features that are also included in the ongoing NLnet funding (e.g. timetable planning, revamped class register) that were requested in 2023. Therefore, feedback on these new features is crucial for their further development.

In particular, we intend to run repeated feedback and exchange sessions with users at a full-time conference stand. While being available to passers-by during the course of all five days of didacta, we will expressly invite managing teachers and other stakeholders at fixed times to discuss select features of AleksIS that we identified as being of special importance during the last iterations of didacta. Among these specific features are timetable creation, documentation of participation and/or absences, integration with existing solutions for timetable management and mobile-friendly UI/UX. Our team will invite contacts from previous years, and also publicly invite interested parties through social media, our website, relationships of schools we work with, and any channels provided by the trade fair, if any.

In essence, these feedback sessions will result in a comprehensive collection of both evaluating statements of recent developments and crucial input for the further development steps, as laid out in our project plan.