



# **PLATO Learning Environment™ System and Configuration Requirements**

**Version 1.1**

**(for use with Academic Systems Algebra only)**

Aug 1, 2009

- Windows® Vista SP2
- Windows® XP Professional SP3
- Windows® XP Home Edition SP3
- Windows® 2000 Professional with SP4

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## About this document

*Disclaimer: The system requirements provided by PLATO Learning are intended to be a guideline based on current hardware and software technologies. Your actual performance may vary due to specific site software configuration parameters and other software you may be running. Due to advances and changes in these technologies, system requirements are subject to change without notice.*

This document provides guidance to PLATO Learning customers about the environmental specifications for accessing the PLATO Learning Environment™ (PLE™).

In general, most user experience on the Internet is with standard HTML web pages, which use simple text and graphics that do not consume much bandwidth. PLATO Learning has gone beyond HTML to provide much higher production values than HTML. Therefore, the system requirements for PLATO Learning courseware are higher than if you were simply browsing HTML web pages.

In addition, many other factors can affect your PLE performance, including the following:

- Proxy servers and caching
- Firewalls
- Switches
- Available bandwidth of your local network
- Quality of the bandwidth provided by your Internet Service Provider

All of these factors interact with each other and can impact performance. Any combination of these variables may affect your PLE performance.

If you need help to make sure your system is ready to run PLATO Learning software, PLATO Learning offers onsite, fee-based consulting services for your needs. When you use PLATO Learning's consulting services, our trained technical staff will work with your technical department to troubleshoot and remedy problems if they are encountered after the initial installation.

To find out more about PLATO Learning's fee-based consulting services, call 1-800-44-PLATO or e-mail [info@plato.com](mailto:info@plato.com).

## Document Change Log

The following table lists the most recent changes to PLATO Learning Environment version 1.1™ System and Configuration requirements:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Updates</b>
7/31/09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Added support for Internet Explorer 8.0</li><li>• Updated Vista service pack requirements to SP2.</li><li>• Updated Vista memory requirements.</li><li>• Updated XP Pro and Home service pack requirements to SP3.</li></ul>
06/26/09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Removed reference to PLATO® Life Science, Physical Science, and Earth and Space Science Courseware – 128Kbps per simultaneous workstation.</li></ul>
04/09/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Updated Processor Speed minimum from 500MHz to 1 GHz.</li><li>• Updated Content Cache statement.</li><li>• Updated Internet Connection Speed section.</li><li>• Removed support for Netscape®.</li><li>• Updated minimum Memory requirement from 256 MB to 512 MB.</li><li>• Removed support for virtual computing platforms.</li></ul>

# PLATO Learning Environment™ Version 1.1 System & Configuration Requirements

## Workstation System Requirements

Following are hardware requirements for workstations to access the PLATO Learning Environment. The system should function without error at an acceptable performance level when requirements are met.

Virtual computing platforms--including but not limited to Thin Client, NComputing, Citrix, and others--are not supported by PLATO Learning. Use of any virtual computing platform while using PLATO Learning products may produce unpredictable results. PLATO® Support is unable to answer questions or provide guidance for PLATO Learning products running on these platforms.

<b>Windows® Vista with SP2</b>	
<b>Processor Speed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 GHz processor or faster.</li> </ul>
<b>Memory</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>512 MB or more for Vista Home Basic.</li> <li>1GB or more for Home Premium / Business / Ultimate.</li> </ul>
<b>Sound card</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sound card and headset (required only if running PLATO Learning audio courseware).</li> </ul>
<b>Web browser</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internet® Explorer 7.0</li> <li>Internet® Explorer 8.0</li> </ul>
<b>Internet Connection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(See Internet Connection Speed on pages 4-5).</li> </ul>
<b>Windows® XP Home or Professional with SP3 Windows® 2000 Professional with SP4</b>	
<b>Processor speed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 GHz processor or faster.</li> </ul>
<b>Memory</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>512 MB or more.</li> </ul>
<b>Sound card</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Microsoft compatible sound card and headset or speakers (required only if running PLATO audio courseware).</li> </ul>
<b>Web browser</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internet® Explorer 6.0 with Service Pack 1.</li> <li>Internet® Explorer 7.0</li> <li>Internet® Explorer 8.0</li> </ul>
<b>Internet Connection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(See Internet Connection Speed on pages 4-5).</li> </ul>

All workstations also require the following:

- Hard disk space sufficient to run your workstation's operating system and web browser properly.
- Mouse
- Keyboard
- Monitor

## CONFIGURATION REQUIREMENTS

Before you can access and run PLATO® courseware, the following configuration requirements must be met. Please make sure you or your network administrator have met these requirements before you or your students access the PLATO Learning Environment™.

### Open Ports

If you access PLE from behind a firewall or other network security device that limits port access to the Internet, you must open the following ports for network data traffic. You will not be able to access the PLE unless these ports are open.

In addition, you should make sure that none of your security devices are set to automatically disconnect a user session prematurely. PLATO Learning suggests that you do not set any disconnect settings for less than 30 minutes.

<b>Port 80</b>	Standard HTTP port for web page access
<b>Port 443</b>	Must be open for HTTPS for an SSL connection (Secure Sockets Layer)

### Internet Connection Speed

PLATO Learning requires a connection to the Internet. Performance of PLATO products on this connection is dependent on:

- the courseware you are running..
- the number of computers simultaneously accessing the courseware (this is not the same as the total number of workstations).
- the available unused bandwidth of the connection.

In general, PLATO recommends the following bandwidth:

- PLATO® Academic Systems Algebra® Courseware – 128Kbps per simultaneous workstation.

Your actual performance may vary due to specific site software configuration parameters and other software you may be running.

To optimize your internet connection, PLATO highly recommends the use of a Content Cache Server. A Content Cache will reduce the amount of bandwidth required and will improve the performance of the PLATO products.

CONFIGURATION  
REQUIREMENTS,  
*continued*

## Content Cache Server

The PLATO Content Cache Server represents the latest generation of caching, content acceleration designed especially for schools. The PLATO Content Cache Server is the ideal choice for networks with dedicated Internet or WAN uplinks as low as 10 Mb/s with moderate Internet, Intranet and web application use.

The PLATO Content Cache Server:

- Maximizes delivery speed of PLATO Learning content to learners while reducing 65-80% of bandwidth consumption.
- Supports more PLATO Learning users without adding bandwidth.
- Minimize ongoing infrastructure and bandwidth costs.

A member of the PLATO Learning Engineering staff will work with your technical team to identify the appropriate deployment option and configure the server(s) to integrate with your existing network configuration in order to maximize content delivery speed to your learners' desktop. Ongoing appliance monitoring and management is easily accomplished via the web administrator GUI or an SSH client.

## Filtering Software

We recommend that you do not use web filters to scan the content of PLATO Learning courseware. Filtering PLATO Learning content may dramatically reduce performance. If your network uses a content filtering system, we recommend that it be configured to trust all content from our domain. We take great precautions at our data center to insure that all content delivered is free from viruses and inappropriate material. Any filtering at your location is redundant and will significantly reduce the overall performance of PLATO Learning courseware.

## Browser Cache Size

The default cache size of the web browsers on your workstations may be adequate; however, your cache size setting can make a difference in the performance of your system. In general, you may find that increasing the cache size setting on your browsers improves system performance.

**CONFIGURATION  
REQUIREMENTS,**  
*continued*

**Enable JavaScript and ActiveX Controls**

**Internet Explorer** web browsers must have ActiveX® controls and JavaScript enabled to run the PLATO Learning Environment™.

Most browsers have these features enabled by default. However, they may be disabled if someone has changed the default settings in your web browser.

Follow the instructions below for your web browser and version:

**Internet Explorer Version 6.0 (SP1) and higher.**

1. Start Internet Explorer.
2. Click Tools > Internet Options
3. Click the Security tab.
4. Click the "Default Level" button, and then click **OK**.

*Note: If the "Default Level" button is not active, then your browser already has the correct settings. You do not need to make any changes.*

CONFIGURATION  
REQUIREMENTS,  
*continued*

### Popup Blockers

Popup blockers must be disabled or configured properly in order to run PLATO courseware successfully

For more details, go to <http://support.plato.com/1955>

Popup blockers or stoppers are typically used to prevent extra popup windows (usually advertisements) from opening in your browser. Popup blocking software disables JavaScript™ popup ads, but it also disables legitimate web site functionality that uses JavaScript. PLATO web-based courseware depends on JavaScript to run

The procedures to disable or configure popup blockers are all different, depending on the software. Look for help files in your popup blocker for instructions, or look for menus or buttons on toolbars (such as Yahoo!® or Google®) that allow you to uninstall or disable the blocker.

### Enable Cookies

We require that you enable cookies on all workstations that will be running the PLATO Learning Environment™.

Web browsers have cookies enabled by default. If you find that cookies are not enabled for the browser on your workstation, you can enable them by following the instructions in your web browser's Help file. (Start your web browser, and then click "Help" on the menu bar at the top of the screen.)

CONFIGURATION  
REQUIREMENTS,  
*continued*

## Download & Install Plug-ins

Accessing PLATO Learning courseware requires the use of plug-ins on your workstation. You can download and install the required plug-ins when you log in to use PLATO Learning courseware or download them direct from vendor web sites.

For more details, go to <http://support.plato.com/3936>

Downloading and installing the plug-ins may take a fair amount of time, depending on your connection speed and number of installs. We recommend that you download and install plug-ins before students try to run PLATO Learning courseware. When users download plug-ins, they must have administrative privileges to the workstation and close all open programs.

If you have trouble downloading or installing plug-ins, try the following:

- Check the rights on Windows® workstations. Windows users must have **administrative privileges** to the local workstation or be set up as power users in order to install plug-ins. Please see your network administrator if you need help.
- If you have a proxy server, check to see if it requires anonymous authentication to allow plug-ins to be installed. (Once the plug-ins are downloaded, anonymous authentication can be disabled.) Please see your network administrator if you need help.
- Check to see if desktop security programs or forced policies are limiting access to workstation operating systems. Please see your network administrator if you need help.

## Flash Player

The Adobe® Flash® Player plug-in is required to run PLATO Learning courseware. You can download the latest version of Adobe Flash Player here: [Adobe Flash Player](#)

## Adobe® Reader®

Online documentation for PLATO products requires Adobe® Reader® 7.0 or higher. You can download the latest version of Adobe Reader from <http://www.adobe.com/support/downloads/>.