

Central Office Overview

2016–2017 School Year

Summary

This document provides an overview of the new DRC Central Office software, which will eventually replace the Testing Site Manager (TSM). Central Office integrates the TSM and Device Toolkit into a single, centralized tool, and adds a number of new features. DRC clients should plan to fully transition from the TSM to Central Office after the 2016-2017 school year.

Prerequisites

Central Office requires a new installation and the system requirements are currently being verified.

Features and Benefits

The following table describes the features and benefits that Central Office provides for DRC clients. Some of these features will be available in the first release of Central Office in October 2016. Other features will be added (or enhanced) throughout the school year, as indicated in the table.

Feature	Description	Benefits	Available
Content Hosting	Host test content securely in the “Cloud” instead of on DRC servers	<p>Because the Cloud is geographically distributed, this feature removes the need to send test content long distances.</p> <p>For example, testers in California could receive content from servers in California.</p>	August 2016 Release
Central Services	Configuration capabilities and caching services available from a single, central location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easier management and better control of the test environment • Reduces the amount of test device configuration and setup effort, as well as the amount of hardware required, because you can use a single caching server for multiple testing programs • Easy access to the centralized software from the DRC Portal 	October 2016 Release
		<p>Centralized management of multiple testing programs from a single device</p> <p>For example, users can manage both WIDA, and a state assessment program from a single Central Office device and can administer their testing environment from a central dashboard.</p>	After the October 2016 Release

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Feature	Description	Benefits	Available
Enhanced security	A new security framework was added	Provides stronger security controls and prevents unwanted access	October 2016 Release
Flexible Installation	Multiple installation options are available to match a site's size and needs	Options are available to scale the configuration to the type of site: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central site configuration for large sites • Distributed site configuration for medium sites • Single tester site configuration for small sites 	October 2016 Release
Improved content management and downloads	Sites can download specific test content	Sites can download only the test content they need to reduce download times. For example, a site could download test content for only the administration they need.	October 2016 Release Note: Downloads based on other categories, such as grade level, will be available sometime after the October release.
Scalability improvements	New technology removes current scalability limitations	Improved support for load-balanced Central Office service pools, which allows scaling of services based on individual site needs.	October 2016 Release
Remote access and improved error log management	Log files are sent to DRC automatically without the site having to package and send log information	Improves the ability to manage test devices centrally rather than having to log into each device Increases support options for clients and reduces need for client's staff to provide troubleshooting information to DRC	October 2016 Release
Improved simulation tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced testing infrastructure assessment capabilities • Improved Load Simulation capabilities 	More realistic and accurate simulation of testing loads to help sites evaluate their testing environments and configurations	February 2017

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Response Caching and Central Office

For the initial release of Central Office, DRC has removed response caching (content caching is still available) because response caching introduces significant complexity around tracking and managing student test responses.

Several factors have reduced the need for response caching:

- Internet connectivity and reliability have improved over the last several years, greatly reducing the need for a failover solution such as response caching.
- The most common site-level issues now revolve around Wi Fi networks, which response caching does not address.
- DRC improved the way we process test responses, which reduces the reliance on response caching.
 - An updated streaming memory design handles large audio responses more efficiently.
 - New retry logic ensures that DRC INSIGHT attempts to send responses multiple times if DRC cannot be reached the first time.
- There is an increasing trend toward using computer-adaptive testing (CAT), which is not compatible with response caching.

Removing response caching can have numerous benefits for schools:

- Technology personnel no longer have to deal with responses “stuck” on the TSM.
- Schools have more flexibility resuming a student’s test session.
- Test administrators no longer have to clear responses out of the TSM to continue testing.
- Students no longer have to stay on testing devices connected to the same TSM.
- Simplifies load balancing of multiple TSM servers for content caching to increase scalability.

FAQ

The following are Frequently Asked Questions about Central Office.

When will the new Central Office features be available?

The first release of Central Office will be available late October 2016. At that time, clients will have the option to transition to Central Office or stay on the TSM. Other features, including Enhanced Simulation Tools, will be added or enhanced during 2017.

Do I have to transition to Central Office, or can I remain on the TSM?

Sites must make the transition from the TSM to Central Office after the 2016–2017 school year. DRC has not finalized the specific cutoff date for this process.