

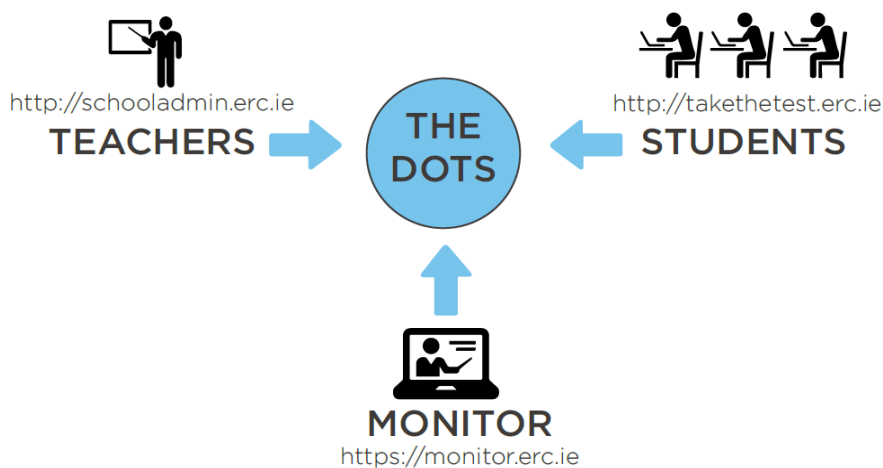
ERC's Development of Computer-Based Testing (DOTS)

The Centre **launched** its new computer-based testing platform (DOTS – Drumcondra Online Testing System) in **2016**. Currently, the following tests are available through DOTS:

- Primary Reading Test (third-sixth classes), normed in 2018
- Primary Mathematics Test (third-sixth classes), normed in 2018
- Triail Nua Dhroim Conrach sa Mhatamaitic do Bhunscoileanna (ranganna 3-6), normed in 2018
- Reasoning Test (sixth class-first year), normed in 2016
- Post-primary Reading Test (second year), normed in 2017
- Post-primary Mathematics Test (second year), normed in 2017
- Triail Dhroim Conrach don Léitheoireacht Ghaeilge (Gaelcholáistí) (second year), normed in 2015.

The DOTS system has various key components – a **test authoring** portal (how new tests are created within the system – used by ERC staff), a **test delivery** portal (what students see when they take a test), school administrator and **test administrator** portal (how school staff upload student data, set up test sessions and access reports). It has an **integrated payment system** for test purchases.

ACCESSING THE DOTS - DIFFERENT DOORS TO THE SAME SYSTEM



The new cloud-based system was **developed to support** the requirement in the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy in relation to **digital testing** and/or a test of digital literacy, **meet demand** from teachers, and **improve the test-taker experience**. Specific to concerns raised about reporting requirements outlined in the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, it significantly **reduces** availability of, and **exposure to, test content** which would lead to familiarisation of the material, or allow students to practice the test. Secure delivery of multiple test forms, all drawing from a large standardised bank of items, also address concerns about teacher and student familiarity with content.

Other benefits include:

- increased **flexibility** in updating tests.
- **reduced workload** for teachers, as all tests are scored within the system.
- **immediate** generation of test **results**.
- the possibility of developing **adaptive tests**, which can provide more accurate estimates of ability and assess a broader range of ability levels.
- the ability to **vary the test content** presented to students, thus reducing opportunity to copy.