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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# DOD Awards \$1.5M to Perigean Technologies for Learning Assessment Research and Development

The new contract funds further development of Perigean’s revolutionary concept mapping-based learning assessment tool, Sero!

SPOTSYLVANIA, Va. June 2, 2020 - Brian Moon knows a thing or two about concept mapping. Used to visually model relationships between concepts, he co-authored a book on the subject and conceived an online platform that uses concept mapping as a learning assessment tool. Its name comes from the Latin root "sero," which means "to join together."

Now, the Army Research Institute has awarded his company a three-year, \$1.5 million-dollar contract to expand upon Sero!'s already extensive capabilities.

“This contract, our third with the Department of Defense in support of Sero!, will enable us to enhance our innovative software, and to evaluate its effectiveness with adult learners,” said Moon, who serves as Perigean's Chief Technology Officer. *(continue)*

The screenshot shows the Sero! interface with a 'Workspace' tab active. On the left is an 'Assignments' table:

Name	Due	Status
Trig	05/29/20	Graded 39/40
What is COVID-19?	-	Incomplete
Passage 4/A	06/02/20	Incomplete
Passage 4/B	06/02/20	Incomplete
Ideas for Presentation	-	Submitted
Remote work mapping	-	Submitted
How should we structure t...	-	Submitted
Asymptotes	05/29/20	Graded 17/20
Power equations	05/29/20	Graded 19/20
Estimating the slope	05/29/20	Graded 19/20

The main workspace displays a concept map titled 'What is COVID-19?' with a 'WORD BANK' containing terms like 'WHO declaring a public health emergency', 'Pneumonia-like symptoms', 'Has not been doing extensive traveling', 'Deadly', 'MERS-CoV', and 'Cause for common cold'. The map shows relationships such as 'originated in', 'is a form of', and 'is identified by'. Below the map is a 'Multiple choice' question: 'This is a multiple-choice question. Choose the correct answer from the options provided to fill in the map.' The options are 'Guangdong Province, China' and 'Wuhan, China', with 'Wuhan, China' selected.

Sero! interface screenshot



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Sero!'s new assessment authoring support will enable assessors to automatically generate concept maps from text using artificial intelligence, which could then be used to evaluate learners' knowledge of any subject. While Sero! has obvious potential for K-12 and higher ed institutions, the Army's interest points to broader applications in military and workforce training.

Perigean will partner with prestigious universities to pursue the research and development:

- The Michigan Institute for Data Science at the University of Michigan will provide support to advance a natural language-processing algorithm
- The Faculty Innovation Center and iSchool at the University of Texas at Austin will help evaluate Sero! in authentic learning environments

"Working with world-class partners at ARI, MIDAS, the FIC and iSchool offers a tremendous opportunity to push the state of science and practice in next generation learning assessment," said Moon.

Perigean Technologies provides cognitive systems engineering and expertise management services and solutions for government and commercial clients. To learn more, visit [www.perigeantechnologies.com](http://www.perigeantechnologies.com) and follow @perigean on Twitter.

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