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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. The main area displays a concept map for 'What is COVID-19?'. The map is a hierarchical tree structure with 'COVID-19' at the top. It branches into 'originated in' (Guangdong Province, China), 'is a form of' (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus), and 'is identified by' (SARS-CoV-2). Other branches include 'causes for common cold', 'MERS-CoV', 'Dandy', and 'Pneumonia-like symptoms'. A 'WORD BANK' at the top lists terms like 'WHO declaring a public health emergency', 'Held not been doing extensive traveling', and 'Cause for common cold'. 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 and follow @perigean on Twitter.

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