



Student Forums in English and Mandarin Attract Hundreds

John Lim and his team have devised a Cisco WebEx-based forum for Networking Academy students and alumni.

Forging Connections Through Online Forums



"Students are asking us to run these forums once a week."

John Lim, Senior Manager of Technical Advocacy, Cisco Networking Academy, Asia Pacific, Japan & Greater China

Keeping students engaged is a common challenge for teachers, so when Singapore-based John Lim, senior manager of technical advocacy for the Cisco Networking Academy® program, and his team; Liu Kang in China, Eric Kwok in Hong Kong, and Ananth B.S in India, began searching for a new education solution, they wanted something that would "get students really excited," says Lim.

The team had already produced a highly successful knowledge-sharing forum for Networking Academy instructors through the Cisco® WebEx platform. So Lim thought, "why shouldn't students have their own forum?" "The idea was to give them something to get them excited and give them a fresh perspective," he says.

Lim and his team launched the first students' forum in September 2009. It was an instant hit, with more than **207** connections across **22** countries for the inaugural online event. Lim points out that each connection could represent several individuals. "It's possible for a class of 30 students to connect together," he explains.

In April 2010 the project went bilingual with a seminar that was even more successful, attracting **593** connections for an English-language session and **515** for a Mandarin version. And participation keeps growing; in July 2010, an English-language forum yielded more than **850** connections.

Knowledge Sharing

In total, students and alumni from 23 countries have participated in the WebEx events. The majority of participants are from Indonesia, the Philippines, Australia, China, and India.

The forums enable knowledge sharing around a wide range of topics. The April 2010 agenda, for example, included Cisco Packet Tracer tips and tricks, information on how to secure Facebook and Twitter accounts, and four steps to setting up a home wireless network. Participants also completed a feedback and evaluation session, and the survey results indicate a high level of satisfaction, with 97 percent of respondents saying that they would recommend the sessions to other students.

Future Plans

This project is ongoing, with English and Mandarin WebEx forums planned quarterly over the next 12 months.

For More Information

To learn more about Cisco Networking Academy, please visit www.cisco.com/go/netacad.

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