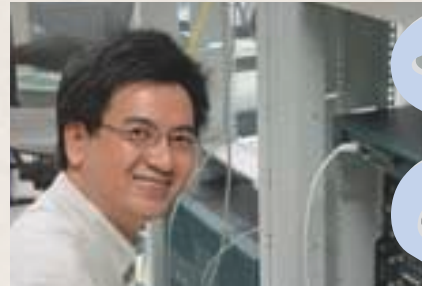


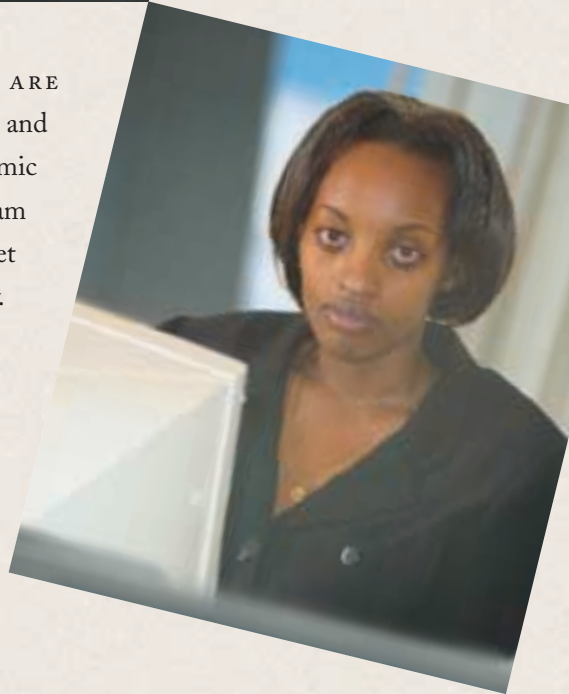
Most Likely to Succeed



Clockwise from top left:

- Christian Caramida, Romania;
- Norma Carrillo Rangel, Mexico;
- David Weinberg, Australia;
- Aingara Paramakuru, Canada
- Khor Kean Hock, Singapore;
- Patricia McCormick, Canada;
- Ahmed Zohdi, UK.

Below: Beth Murora, Rwanda



THE INTERNET AND EDUCATION ARE becoming the great equalizers among people and countries, eliminating barriers of socioeconomic status. The Cisco Networking Academy™ Program is providing students worldwide with the Internet technology skills essential in a global economy. Now in 149 countries, the program is offered in more than 10,150 academies and has produced more than 296,000 graduates. These men and women, and their employers, credit the training they received through the Cisco Networking Academy Program with benefiting their careers, their companies, and even their countries' economic prospects.

CLASS of 2003

Hot HIRES

Cisco Networking Academy graduates launch careers around the globe.



By **RHONDA RAIDER**

Launching Careers

In Romania, the Cisco Networking Academy Program has become a vital component of the nation's technology resurgence. In 1997, a 17-year-old Romanian student, Cristian Caramida, entered the Networking Academy program at his high school. Now he's regarded as one of the select few top networking engineers in his country, and has earned CCNA®, CCNP®, and CCIE® certifications from Cisco.

Caramida especially appreciated the hands-on nature of the Academy program—a hefty 40 percent of the curriculum. “You learn how to cable a router and how to enter commands—skills you can use straight away,” he says. For his first major employer, a large Internet service provider (ISP) in Bucharest, Caramida installed the first ATM/asymmetric DSL (ADSL) network in Eastern Europe. After that, he spent a period with Yellow Pages, the online telephone directory, gaining networking experience from an enterprise perspective. Next, he moved back into the ISP world, this time with a satellite provider. In 2001, Caramida joined his current employer, KPNQwest. As an IP network operation center specialist, he maintains the network, and works in sales support, helping propose solu-

tions for customers. Recently, Caramida developed a new service management application that collects metrics from networking equipment and organizes it into customer-focused management information. According to Caramida's boss, KPNQwest country manager Marius Panait, “Cristian built this application from start to finish, which required detailed knowledge of both Cisco networking and UNIX. When we looked at his qualifications, the Cisco accreditations told us that he had the solid knowledge to back up his experience and proved that he takes the subject seriously.”

Theory and Practice

In Melbourne, Australia, David Weinberg, age 25, parlayed his Cisco Networking Academy training into a coveted network designer position with telecommunications giant Telstra. As an undergraduate, Weinberg studied biomedical engineering. Realizing his true interest was networking, he returned to Swinburne University in Melbourne and earned a Master of Science Degree in Network Systems. “The major reason I chose Swinburne University was that its curriculum included the Cisco Networking Academy Program,” he says. “It teaches not only the

theory of networking but also provides hands-on experience through weekly labs. After completing the program, I felt competent working with routers and switches in a work environment.”

Weinberg is often asked to contribute to the network designs of his peers, largely because of the knowledge he gained from the program, including advanced routing concepts such as Border Gateway Protocol (BGP) and Open Shortest Path First (OSPF), switching concepts such as IEEE 802.1Q and Inter-Switch Link (ISL), and security concepts such as access lists, lock and key, and reflective access control lists (ACLs). “David’s CCNP skills have greatly contributed to making him a valuable member of the professional design team,” says Hans Chhabra, IT team manager at Telstra. “When it comes to selecting networking products for our customers, you need an in-depth understanding of various products and interface capabilities.

David possesses that understanding. I consider a CCNA a prerequisite for anyone starting work on my team.”

Weinberg plans to pursue his CCIE certification. “I am finding that the detail provided in the Cisco Networking Academy Program has prepared me to pick up new concepts quickly,” he says.

Rebuilding an Economy

Cisco’s Least Developed Countries (LDC) initiative has brought the Networking Academy program to 32 of the world’s 49 LDCs. Among the beneficiaries are Beth Murora and her country, Rwanda. Murora attended the Cisco Networking Academy Program in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, nearly 1000 miles away from her home. She was 27 at the time, a program officer with the National Rwandan Ministry of Women’s Affairs—and six months pregnant with twins. Even so, when Murora was offered a full residential scholarship for a Networking Academy program pilot project sponsored by Cisco, the United Nations Economic

Commission for Africa (UNECA), and the World Bank’s Information for Development Program (InfoDev), she heeded the call. “I could not pass up this opportunity, which would help me to help other women in Rwanda to develop technical skills and become employed,” she says. Murora is applying her training to establish an Information Communication Technology

“**B**y supplementing technical skills with skills such as problem-solving and teamwork, the Networking Academy curriculum provides its students with competencies, skills, and personal qualities needed to succeed in the high-performance workplace.”

—JULIE KAMINKOW, EDUCATION MARKET ANALYST, CISCO

(ICT) department in her ministry, which will promote IT to every government organization and present it as a career option for women. Women currently represent 70 percent of Rwanda’s population. Now Murora is meeting with community leaders to explain the value of ICT in meeting their needs. The next phase will be to implement LANs for these organizations, and every LAN will represent new jobs. “The women of Rwanda must be able to earn a living and support their children,” says Murora. “I intend to use the knowledge gained through the Cisco Networking Academy to help raise women out of poverty with the technical training to run organizations and develop businesses.”

Career Enrichment

For Patricia McCormick of Nova Scotia, Canada, the Cisco Networking Academy she attended at Nova Scotia Community College last year added a new dimension to her existing job as a librarian for Eastern Counties Regional Library. McCormick

already had 14 years of job experience, a Bachelor of Science Degree in Mathematics, and a Master of Library and Information Science Degree—but the field had changed.

“There still exists the stereotypical view of libraries as warehouses of books, where women in sensible shoes peer over horn-rimmed glasses,” she says. “But in reality, Internet access, online catalogs, and elec-

tronic databases have become key components to library services. As a result, there is a high-demand for librarians with training in information technology. It was this realization that led me to the Cisco Networking Academy. The labs were excellent at providing hands-on experience in wiring, configuring routers and switches, and troubleshooting networking problems.”

According to McCormick’s employer, Dave Cumby, acting chief executive officer of the Eastern Counties Regional Library, “Even in the three months since Patricia has joined us on a one-year Systems Librarian contract, she has demonstrated excellent training and a high-level expertise with TCP/IP as well as other Ethernet protocols such as SPX/IPX [Novell Sequence Packet Exchange/Internetwork Packet Exchange] and DLC [Data Link Control]. Credit goes to her Nova Scotia Community College and Cisco Networking Academy courses.”

Hands-On Curriculum

The hands-on emphasis of the Cisco Networking Academy curriculum garners widespread praise from both graduates and their employers. Aingara Paramakuru of Toronto, Canada, credits the program’s practical focus with helping him obtain a help-desk internship at Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment Ltd. “Not only was I able to gain the theoretical knowledge from the CCNA curriculum, I was also able to apply that knowledge through the practical labs,” he says. Using the advanced equipment in the Networking Academy labs, Paramakuru was even able to perform labs outside of the

scope of the CCNA program, such as WAN emulation using the ADTRAN Atlas 550. Paramakuru's employer put him to work immediately. "In a short time, Aingara has brought exceptional value to our organization through his contributions to our helpdesk and networking operations," says David Huang, IT manager for Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment. Among Paramakuru's achievements is configuring a redundant WAN (point-to-point serial and 56K Frame Relay links) connection on a Cisco router. "I was the only one qualified to configure the device, having previously configured Frame Relay in a back-to-back router configuration (Frame Relay emulation) as well as through a Frame Relay switch," he says. "My previous applications of Frame Relay concepts allowed me to configure the device quickly and ensure optimal functionality."

New Career Paths

Some graduates of the Cisco Networking Academy have used the program to transition to networking from other fields. Take Khor Kean Hock of Singapore. At 38, he was dissatisfied with his job as coordinator for a shipping company. He decided to pursue his dream of working in technology by enrolling in the Cisco Networking Academy Program through Singapore's National Trade Union Congress (NTUC). To accommodate his full-time job, Khor attended classes three nights a week and spent the other nights studying for the CCNA exam, which he passed on the first try. His efforts paid off when he secured a job as a network engineer with a Singapore computer company, where his main responsibility was network troubleshooting for his company's clients. In October 2002, Khor joined the IT department of Pan Pacific Hotels and Resorts as corporate systems manager. In his new position he's charged with maintaining a high-

with HONORS

quality IT environment for all users in the corporate offices and recommending software and hardware for corporate offices and hotels. In his first month he had already switched over his employer's domain name and set up a main server. "Many people are familiar with networks, but fewer people know how to configure routers," says Khor. "This skill makes me valuable." Adds his employer, Rex Demanser, "We are very reliant on Khor's expertise. He is extremely patient when teaching our team how to maximize our IT resources and has provided invaluable advice in ensuring that our systems are operational and secure." Continues Demanser, "Khor will be involved in helping us integrate our data from a variety of systems within Pan Pacific. This will ensure that we have consolidated information and data across the counties in which we operate."

Like Khor, Ahmed Zohdi of London, UK, enrolled in the Networking Academy program to make a radical career change—in his case, from catering to technology. Zohdi studied at the Academy at Westminster Kingsway College in London. Logging on from home while he continued working in the restaurant business full time, Zohdi managed to complete both semesters of the course in just six months. Upon graduation he landed a network engineer position with the Bank of America. According to his manager at Bank of America, Simon Legg, "When I tested Ahmed's networking knowledge, he passed with flying colors. My test is designed to sort out the people who've just passed an exam from those who've worked with the products and really understand them. Ahmed was definitely in the second category."

Student Becomes Teacher

Across the globe from Zohdi, in Mexico, Norma Carrillo Rangel attended the Cisco Networking Academy at University of

Tamaulipas, Tampico campus, when she was 21. Upon graduation, she was offered a position at the university as the project leader for the Excellence Center, where her responsibilities include providing networking support and proposing designs for the center's structured cabling system. For the latter project, she relied on the training she received in the Fundamentals of Voice and Cabling course offered by Panduit Latinoamerica as part of the Cisco Networking Academy Program. Rangel's chief accomplishments to date include participating in the reconstruction of the University's LAN and construction of the Cisco Networking Academy laboratory. She's come full circle, now teaching the CCNA course at the Academy.

Evolving Curriculum

To ensure its graduates continue to meet the needs of industry, Cisco has expanded the Networking Academy program to include optional, partner-sponsored courses by IT industry leaders in the Fundamentals of UNIX, sponsored by Sun Microsystems; the Fundamentals of Web Design, sponsored by Adobe Systems; the Fundamentals of Voice and Data Cabling, sponsored by Panduit; and IT Essentials sponsored by Hewlett-Packard. All courses are delivered through the Cisco Networking Academy Program.

With a nod to a changing workplace, the program also now includes essential "soft skills" identified by the US Department of Labor Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS). Says Julie Kaminkow, education market analyst at Cisco, "By supplementing technical skills with skills such as problem-solving and teamwork, the Cisco Networking Academy curriculum provides its students with competencies, skills, and personal qualities needed to succeed in the high-performance workplace." ▲▲

FURTHER READING

- Cisco Networking Academy Program: cisco.netacad.net