



## Cisco Networking Academy gets **A+** from **Bell Nexxia**

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*– John Pallin, Director, Customer Enabling, Bell Nexxia*

What started out as a cool high school credit course has changed Alexei Volinski’s career path forever.

“I never thought seriously of information technology as a career,” says Volinski, 22. “All I really wanted to do in high school was find a reason to buy myself a PC.”

Volinski is a hardware manager at Bell Nexxia’s Internet Protocol (IP) Provisioning Team in Toronto. He joined the company’s Ottawa office while still in high school and has never looked back, thanks to the Information Technology (IT) training he received at the school’s Cisco Networking Academy Program.

The four-semester, 280-hour program teaches students in Canada and around the world the fundamentals of networking. Students learn how to design, build, and maintain networks capable of supporting today’s national and global organizations. Combining online learning and

testing with instructor-lead training and hands-on laboratory exercises, students apply what they learn in class by working on actual networks.

While still at Rideau High School in Ottawa, Volinski learned the skills needed to prepare him for the world of networking, positioning him for immediate openings in a talent-hungry job market or for engineering and science-focused post-secondary studies.

“The sooner young people learn about the world of IT, the quicker they can enhance their careers,” says Volinski’s boss John Pallin, Director, Customer Enabling at Bell Nexxia in Toronto. “That’s what makes the Cisco Networking Academy so extraordinary.”

Volinski admits he only signed up for the Networking Academy program because it looked like fun. Why not learn something new, he thought.



He entered the program in grade 12, learning networking basics first and progressing later to hands-on work. He learned the history of local-area and wide-area networks, how to configure routers, how to set up a computer lab, and how to build and manage a network. The course covered all the networking concepts he might need in a future IT career, from pulling cable to such complex concepts as subnet masking rules and strategies. Some of his fellow students developed such advanced networking skills that they often acted as in-house technicians to solve the school's computer problems.

It was definitely far more than Volinski had ever imagined when he signed up for that cool high school course.

"I found the whole course extremely interesting and challenging," he says. "It teaches you advanced skills. And it's a course you can't take lightly. It's very intense: we were tested every week."

Volinski's perseverance certainly paid off. Within a year of starting the program, he was hired for a six-month co-operative placement at Bell Nexxia's Ottawa office. His boss was so impressed that Volinski was called back for a summer posting and soon after moved to Toronto for a full-time position at Bell Nexxia.

"The course gave me a solid foundation to jumpstart my career," says Volinski. "There are lots of IT opportunities out there and the Cisco Networking Academy helped me develop the knowledge and skills to take full advantage of those opportunities."

Based on Volinski's success, John Pallin is hoping to hire another Cisco Networking Academy co-op student in the near future.

"These students are ahead of many people who have years of technology training," he says, adding the company has joked about having the new co-op student train some of Bell Nexxia's long-standing employees. "The Cisco Networking Academy is an ideal starting point. The program gives students basic router training and they continue to develop their skills on the job. It's the perfect foundation for a future networking career."

For more information on the Networking Academy Program, visit

[http://www.cisco.com/ca/networking\\_academy/](http://www.cisco.com/ca/networking_academy/)