

Academy Students win Gold, Silver and Bronze at Skills Canada!

The cream rises to the top, as do the Cisco Networking Academy students, who are firmly on the pinnacle of the Skills Canada competition.



Jean-François Bibeau



Christian Gallant

“A national winner – companies respect that. It will help with job applications later on, too.”

– Jean-François Bibeau,

Secondary School gold medal winner

Cisco Systems Canada Co., proud sponsor of the 9th Annual Skills Canada Competition, held in Waterloo Ontario, 2003, witnessed a clean sweep by the Networking Academy Students in the Secondary School category and Gold in the Post-Secondary.

Christian Gallant from Holland College in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island carried on the College’s winning ways by taking the gold in the post-secondary category; a student from Holland won the previous year. Gallant took the Cisco Networking Academy program. “It definitely helped me win. I had access to Cisco equipment, routers and switches at the college and had a lot of experience with them.” Part of the competition required Gallant to configure his network to communicate via the Cisco 2950 switches and 2600 series routers.

Winning the Provincials was only the beginning. Gallant spent many hours preparing for the Nationals. “It was a lot of work but it paid off in the end,” he says. Gallant won a small home office based Cisco router, CCNP Preparation Library from Cisco Press, Design Xpert Platinum Edition from Netformx, Fluke’s Microscanner and Network Maintenance Trouble-shooting Guide, HP Calculator and clothing.

Gallant says winning at Skills Canada was the major reason he was hired as the computer repair/network administration instructor and network administrator at Atlantic Business College. At his interview, “They sounded quite excited that I had gone and done this and received the award. I think it had a big influence in me getting this job.”

Past and present Networking Academy students won the Gold, Silver and Bronze prizes in the Secondary School competition. Jean-François Bibeau, from École

Catholique Garneau in Ontario took the top prize while Silver went to Michael Mullins, from Holy Hart of Mary High School in Newfoundland and Christopher Hart, Sardis Secondary School in British Columbia won the Bronze.

Bibeau, a grade 12 student, in fourth semester of the Cisco Networking Academy program, had to prepare hard for the competition. In fact, he and his instructor, Ernest Séguin, went to Waterloo early for extra preparation. Bibeau gives Séguin credit for supporting him all the way through. “Several skills learned in the program such as cable making, switch configuring and network trouble shooting were essential in winning the competition.”

The contest was a good experience. Bibeau says, “The first day was pretty much hardware, making the cables and building the computer, but day two was based around Windows 2000, the host and trying to get them to talk together with all the right accounts. It didn’t involve routers, just different switch configurations.”

Bibeau too, won \$9,000 worth of prizes. He is reaping additional benefits as well. He has his own small web design company and the championship gives him credibility with potential customers. “A national winner – companies respect that! It will help with job applications later on, too.”

Cisco Canada is a major sponsor of Skills Canada, a national, not-for-profit organization working to guide students towards recognizing trade and Technical careers as a viable and challenging career option for young Canadians. For more information, contact your provincial Executive Director at www.skillscanada.com.