



## Passion and Persistence Help Grad Excel in His Career

*At the age of 17, Chris helped design a major public works project in Ohio. After earning several Cisco certifications, he landed a job as a Cisco network consulting engineer.*

“Cisco Networking Academy provided a great foundation of knowledge to build on, which was far more valuable in the industry than I ever realized at the time.”

Chris Riling, CCIE # 25581  
Cisco Network Consulting Engineer

When Christopher Riling was a Cisco Networking Academy® student at Sylvania Southview High School in Ohio, the City of Toledo's Department of Public Utilities asked him to assist with a core network redesign for part of the city. Although Riling was only a senior at the time, he had already earned a reputation for being skilled at handling Cisco® equipment.

Riling, who developed an interest in and aptitude for technology at a very early age, enrolled in the Networking Academy program to expand his skills and gain experience. He quickly completed the Cisco CCNA® course and earned his CCNA certification by his senior year. Since then, Riling has

earned his Cisco CCNP® certification and the prestigious Cisco CCIE® certification in routing and switching. “From the moment I heard about the coveted CCIE, I knew it had to be mine one day!” says Riling.

After earning an associate's degree in business computer networking systems technology, Riling had two challenges to overcome in his quest to find a job: his young age and the fact that he was born with cerebral palsy, which caused some people to question his ability to perform certain job functions. Fortunately, the skills and experience Riling gained through Networking Academy and working with the City of Toledo helped him secure a job as a network administrator at a mutual fund, and then as a network engineer for an Internet service provider in Toledo.

As a young IT prodigy, Riling is constantly searching for challenging work that will expand his skills and horizons, so it wasn't long before he set his sights on advancing his career. “I knew that Cisco was where I wanted to be, since they are the market leader,” he explains. “I went to Cisco.com and checked job listings at least once a week, and I probably applied for about 30 jobs, and did about 20 different interviews for various positions. I also got in touch with HR, and filled up their email boxes over the course of about two years until they finally helped me find the position I'm in now - a perfect fit! I think the HR people were very glad to stop hearing from me,” he adds. In his current position, Riling provides consulting and implementation support to help ensure that customers' networks are running smoothly.

Riling offers the following words of advice to anyone interested in an ICT career: “Education is what you make of it. I feel that personal drive and motivation play an immeasurable role in achieving success for anything in life.”

