



## Nevada Student and Graduate Profile

Ben Martin's visual impairment has not hindered his ability to excel in a career as an information technology (IT) professional. He has achieved his Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA®) certification and is currently living in Las Vegas working as a senior network engineer. "Through the use of technology, I have been able to accomplish my goals. I encourage anybody with an interest in IT, regardless of any disability, to let the Cisco Networking Academy® be their foundation."

Legally blind since birth, Ben says he always had a keen interest in technology. He recalls taking apart computers at a young age to see how they worked and took advantage of the technology offered at the schools he attended early in his education. Ben began taking the Networking Academy's CCNA course while in high school at Puget Sound Skills Center in Seattle, Washington. "Our class was responsible for the school's network and other offsite locations, and I became the point person to help maintain those networks."

After graduating from high school in 2003, Ben moved to Las Vegas to be closer to his father. He enrolled at the College of Southern Nevada specifically because they offered the Networking Academy. While taking the course, Ben worked part time in the college's networking lab where he says he gained hands-on practical experience working on Cisco technology. In addition, he participated in the regional SkillsUSA competition and placed second in the Internetworking contest.

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**"I use my Networking Academy knowledge and skills every day to either make my customers happy, or to make life easier for myself and my company." Ben Martin**

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In 2005, Ben completed both the CCNA course and certification and soon began working full time for Connecting Point Las Vegas as a senior network engineer. "I am responsible for day-to-day operations for six individual companies, all with different environments, equipment needs, and goals. While I report to my bosses, I also directly report to the company executives and owners whose networks I manage." Ben adds, "I use my Networking Academy knowledge and skills every day to either make my customers happy, or to make life easier for myself and my company."

While his visual impairment has its everyday challenges, Ben says when it comes to working in networking in general, the adjustments are minor. Though he cannot read text for extended periods of time, he does utilize the larger font sizes available on most applications. Most of the time, however, he simply relies on his high-powered magnifying glass which helps him to read serial numbers and product codes.

Ben plans to complete his associate's degree in applied science in computer internetworking and earn Cisco Certified Network Professional (CCNP®) certification. In addition, he aspires to become an attorney. "I've searched the term 'blind lawyers' online and have come across some cool applications being used in today's courtrooms, like real-time narration and programs that load documents into an earpiece. Technology makes anything possible!" For more information on the Cisco Networking Academy at Puget Sound Skills Center, visit: <http://www.seatacosc.org>. For more information on the Cisco Networking Academy at the College of Southern Nevada, visit: <http://www.csn.edu/>



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