



Vermont Student and Graduate Profile

About halfway through her computer systems program at Community College of Vermont (CCV) at Burlington, Melissa Choiniere changed majors. Even though she wasn't exactly sure what it entailed, Melissa switched to the network administration program in 2003 because she felt it was more rigorous and had more interesting classes, including the Cisco® Networking Academy® CCNA curriculum.

She "absolutely loved the program" and by 2005 when Melissa graduated with her associate of applied science degree in network administration she knew she had made the right decision. Networking Academy provided her with solid foundational knowledge she continues to use in her current studies at Champlain College where she is earning a bachelor of science degree in computer and digital forensics.

Melissa will graduate in May 2008 and is looking forward to establishing herself in the computer and digital forensics field.

Melissa's interest in computers and information technology (IT) began when her brother gave her an old IBM PC. It booted up with DOS and, as she recalls, was "massive." She picked up computer technology pretty fast and, from there, her interest in IT grew. Melissa drew upon that interest years later to get through her Networking Academy days, which included commuting 45 minutes to CCV and working nearly 40 hours a week at a local grocery store to put herself through school.

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Melissa particularly enjoyed the labs and routers in the Networking Academy, acknowledging "I'm more of a hands-on person. I have to do it myself or I won't get it. I really learned a lot more that way." She also liked her classmates and her teacher, Jane Donahue-Holt, whom Melissa says "was absolutely wonderful and very knowledgeable. If I had trouble, she would come over to help, explain what happened, and what to do next time."

Melissa attributes her success to working hard and trying her best at everything she does. "I'm not satisfied with just getting by. I'll keep at it until I learn it and can apply it. I want to get the 'A' instead of being satisfied with the 'C.' She applies this same desire to excel in her current studies at Champlain College where she is working on her thesis for her degree in computer and digital forensics.

Little has been written on the importance of storing digital forensics information and Melissa is excited to contribute both to the literature and the case for establishing forensic databases at the police department, state, and national levels to facilitate the sharing, integration, and analysis of information.

Melissa's advice to others who may be interested in the Networking Academy is to "Prepare yourself for a lot of hard work. It's very enjoyable, but you have to be able to put the time in to be successful at it." Hard work notwithstanding, Melissa says, "All the information is worth it and the rewards are definitely there at the end."



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When she is not working or studying, Melissa enjoys a variety of hobbies and interests. Her outdoor interests include hiking, biking, swimming, and white water rafting. Her indoor interests include a passion for cooking and experimenting with new recipes, spending time with friends and family, reading, and constant learning. "I always want to learn something new. ... I love learning!" Melissa says enthusiastically.

For information on the Networking Academy at Community College of Vermont at Burlington:

http://www.ccv.edu/degree/network_admin



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