



Lasting Economic Recovery Starts in the Classroom

How Cisco Networking Academy Integrates Economic Stimulus Opportunities

Cisco® Networking Academy® helps American workers learn critical IT and networking skills through its academies located in high schools, community colleges, four-year colleges, and nontraditional education settings. Developing in-demand technical skills in a timely, focused program helps American workers find and retain sustainable, high-paying jobs. With curriculum mapped to industry certifications, students are ready for the technical jobs that will be an outgrowth of an improved technical infrastructure across the nation.

The current economic crisis has been called the worst downturn since the Great Depression. Looking over the broad cross-section of programs and initiatives funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, one theme stands out: technological enablement. The nation is counting on these new “innovation economy” jobs to help foster economic growth and stability.

With Cisco Networking Academy curricula closely aligned to employer needs, and mapped to industry standards and certifications, students can take advantage of employment opportunities emerging from the modernization of information and environmental systems. Successful completion of a few courses can be all a student needs to acquire a certificate and find a job in an IT-reliant organization, or to gain enough technical knowledge to network a small business.

Where Economic Stimulus and IT Intersect

Major initiatives that depend heavily on IT and networking skills are included in the approved ARRA stimulus package and the proposed 2010 U.S. budget. These initiatives include:

- Modernizing healthcare information systems to better serve patients, caregivers, and providers (\$20 billion)
- Nurturing a green economy by supporting jobs related to energy efficiency and renewable resources (\$500 million)
- Extending broadband communications to underserved and unserved areas, and connecting schools, libraries, public computer centers, and other facilities to the Internet (\$7.2 billion)
 - Building a nationwide smart electrical grid that uses advanced technologies to transmit and distribute power more efficiently and intelligently, to conserve energy, expand generation sources, and reduce costs (\$11 billion)
- Bringing Social Security Administration IT systems up to date (\$500 million)
 - Safeguard information across the Internet and local networks through cybersecurity (\$355 million proposed budget)

Networking Academy: “Shovel-Ready” IT Education

As state governments and educators act to put economic stimulus funds to work as quickly and effectively as possible, they can look to Cisco Networking Academy for a well-established education program that teaches foundational and advanced IT and networking skills to a wide variety of students in a broad spectrum of educational environments.

“In a global economy, where the most valuable skill you can sell is your knowledge, a good education is no longer just a pathway to opportunity—it is a prerequisite”

—President Barack Obama, [Address to Joint Session of Congress](#), 2/24/09

Networking Academy may be the world's largest e-learning organization, with 9000-plus academies in more than 165 countries. Over 2.75 million students have enrolled in academy courses since the program began a decade ago.

Key Facts about Cisco Networking Academy

- In the United States alone each year, more than 128,000 students attend classes in 2200 academies. Academy courses are available in educational institutions in 97% of the congressional districts across the country.
- Networking Academy works closely with high schools, community colleges and universities, as well as federal, state, and local governments and nonprofit organizations to create successful educational partnerships.
- The program offers “shovel-ready” curricula that can be implemented in a variety of educational settings in a short time, at minimal cost.
- Curricula are flexible enough to meet the needs of a diverse student population. Networking Academy graduates are prepared to fill IT positions in industries ranging from financial services and healthcare to government and small business. Many students go on to pursue degrees in engineering, science, mathematics, and other fields critical to the country's economic progress and competitive stance. Other students use their skills to build their own businesses.
- Curricula and student assessments are delivered online, and classroom instructors are supported by 24/7 access to web-based assistance. Courses have been designed so that instructors spend less time dealing with classroom administration and more time teaching and coaching individual students.
- Students not only learn to design, build and operate networks, they also develop analytical and collaborative skills that they can apply on the job and in future educational endeavors.
- Networking Academy employs sophisticated assessment methodologies typically reserved for high-stakes testing such as the SATs and GREs. Technologies have been put in place to collect extensive data about student performance and apply it to improve the learning process.
- Networking Academy has become a widely acknowledged model for pedagogical innovation and best practices. In addition to hands-on labs, it provides an “e-doing” approach that reinforces classroom instruction and gives students confidence in their skills. Software tools developed especially for Networking Academy encourage exploration and experimentation by simulating real-world computer networking. Fun and compelling activities capture the attention of today's students and enrich their learning experience.
- The costs are low. First-time Networking Academy locations in the United States spend approximately \$5000 to \$10,000 on required laboratory equipment. The curriculum is licensed free to nonprofit educational institutions. For profiles describing Networking Academy implementations in each state, go to: www.cisco.com/go/netacadresourcecenter

Encouraging Outlook for IT Students

Despite a deep recession, the technical and business skills taught in Networking Academy courses continue to be highly valued. Networking Academy creates a pipeline of IT talent by providing:

- consistent instructional content that enables educators to align curricula across institutional levels and boundaries, creating clear education and career pathways for students
- an entrée to high-skill, high-demand, high-wage jobs in virtually every field that relies on IT for success

“Amid the worst job market in 25 years, IT is holding steady.” IT skills such as networking, messaging/communications, IT security, and IT optimization are listed as the most valued. Cisco certifications are among those identified as “earning highest pay premiums.”

—Network World [Industry Assessment](#), 3/30/09

[IDC](#), a leading provider of market intelligence for the IT industry, estimates that approximately \$101.2 billion in ARRA funds will be spent on all types of technologies over the next five years (3/09). The [Information Technology and Innovation Foundation](#) predicts that an infusion of \$30 billion into the nation's digital infrastructure in 2009 will generate approximately 949,000 jobs (1/09).

What Next?

Networking Academy education can add value to secondary and post-secondary curricula, and increase student opportunity for employment in a tough economy. Colleges and schools worldwide are taking advantage of the program to strengthen their course offerings and enlarge the technical talent pool in their communities.

To find out more about how Cisco Networking Academy can help prepare students to participate in the economic recovery, visit: www.cisco.com/go/netacad/us/econ

For general information about Cisco Networking Academy in the United States, visit: www.cisco.com/go/netacad/us

Links

- Address to Joint Session of Congress, 2/24/09, www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/remarks-of-president-barack-obama-address-to-joint-session-of-congress/
 - Network World Industry Assessment, 3/30/09, www.networkworld.com/news/2009/040609-10-tech-skills.html
 - IDC, www.idc.com
 - ITIF, www.itif.org
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