



Cisco Networking Academy Program Background



Cisco's E-Learning Initiative Evolves

Cisco Systems, Inc., the worldwide leader in networking for the Internet, has a vision to change the way people live, work, play and learn. In the learning space, Cisco's vision is to lead the creation of e-learning environments that transform the way people learn. A prime example of e-learning is the Cisco Networking Academy Program.

The Networking Academy program is a comprehensive, eight-semester, 560-hour curriculum that teaches students basic and advanced networking skills and information technology fundamentals.

History

In 1993, Cisco embarked on an initiative to design practical, cost-effective networks for schools. It quickly became apparent that designing and installing the networks was not enough – the schools also needed some way to maintain the networks after they were up and running. A Cisco Senior Engineer developed training for teachers and staff for maintenance of school networks. He soon discovered the school staff lacked the time required to learn the material, so he moved to the next population of learners in the schools – the students themselves.

The success of student seminars led to requests from participating schools across the United States for Cisco to develop a curriculum that could be integrated as an elective course taught in a semester format. The formalized curriculum and support activities evolved into the Cisco Networking Academy Program.

The program, launched in October 1997, began in 64 educational institutions in seven states – Arizona, California, Florida, Minnesota, Missouri, New York and North Carolina.

In January 2001, the Networking Academy program has expanded to include optional partner-sponsored technology courses to give students an opportunity to learn additional technologies, such as UNIX, sponsored by Sun Microsystems, Inc. and Web Design, sponsored by Adobe Systems. These additional programs will be offered in Canada sometime in 2002.

A Success Story

Today, the Networking Academy Program is established in more than 8,400 institutions in 133 countries worldwide. In Canada the program, which was launched in 1998, is now offered at more than 320 high schools, colleges and universities from coast-to-coast.



The success of the Networking Academy Program is due in large part to Cisco's Education Ecosystem and e-learning philosophy. By partnering with educators to understand how learning occurs, Cisco is able to develop pedagogically-sound curriculum that empowers diverse learners to comprehend challenging technology material. More than 232,000 Networking Academy students around the world are pioneering this new way of e-learning.

Cutting-Edge E-Learning

The Cisco Networking Academy Program employs an innovative e-learning model, using a combination of Web-based, instructor-led learning and hands-on labs to teach students networking and information technology. Technology is not only the subject matter, but also the means by which a single program is consistently administered worldwide.

The Web-based Curriculum encourages new ways of learning; permits students to access content on demand from multiple remote locations; proceed through lessons at their own pace; and view video and visual explanations of technology. Instructors act as facilitators and mentors in the classroom environment.

Internet-Based Community provides a forum for shared intelligence among educators, allowing teachers around the world to compare best practices and most effective techniques for teaching specific lessons.

Frequent Online Testing enables Academy Instructors to assess student comprehension and retention to determine if learning is taking place and to make program refinements, as needed. These education management tools provide built-in accountability, a theme of growing importance for education institutions worldwide.

Virtual Classrooms provide interactive, Web-based opportunities to communicate with geographically dispersed learners. Additional training and support is provided to the Academy Instructors around the world via Virtual Classrooms or Web-based lessons.

Online Instructor's Guide is a comprehensive teaching resource which provides lesson plans for every lesson, as well as laboratory exercises for hands-on experience. The Instructor's Guide is constantly evolving to reflect recommendations from the Instructors and improvements in teaching methods.

Certifications

Two types of industry-recognized certifications for the Networking Academy program exist today – Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA) and Cisco Certified Network Professional (CCNP). The first four modules of the Networking Academy program prepare students to take the CCNA exam. Modules five through eight prepare students to take the CCNP exams.

Digital Opportunities

The strength of a country's economy depends on an educated workforce – workers with basic skills who can think critically and find creative approaches to solving problems. Those skills are important to sustaining a nation's continued growth. Internationally, in areas where there is little or no Internet infrastructure, the Academy program is teaching students IT skills, who are in turn, able to use these skills in business, where they can build computer infrastructures and eventually connect their countries to other developed nations.



Program Expansion

Silicon Valley businesses are noticing the success and widespread distribution of the Networking Academy program. In January 2001 Sun™ Microsystems agreed to sponsor a semester of UNIX curriculum and Adobe agreed to sponsor a semester of Web Design curriculum for the Networking Academy program. The Fundamentals of UNIX and Web Design courses will be offered as optional courses for students enrolled in the Cisco Networking Academy Program. These additional programs will be offered in Canada sometime in 2002.

Partnerships

Cisco has partnered with educators, businesses, worldwide organizations and community-based organizations to offer the Cisco Networking Academy Program in traditional as well as non-traditional educational institutions. A short list of partners include:

3M (Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Company)

ADTRAN, Inc

Fluke Corporation

Micron Electronics

Panduit Corporation

The Siemon Company

For more information about the Networking Academy program, please visit:

http://www.cisco.com/ca/networking_academy/net_acad.html