

Finding The Computer Training That's Right For You

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One of the most powerful social changes wrought by the ongoing "technological revolution" is the broad distribution of knowledge across the Internet and the proliferation of speedy, low-cost computers and digital devices. These advances have changed the face of education quite drastically, empowering more people in more places than any other form of information delivery.

On the other side of the coin is the employment market, which has seen a dramatic surge in "high-tech" careers over the past several decades. What's more, computer technology has invaded every area of life, and even fast-food restaurant employees need some familiarity with computers to hold their jobs. At every level and in most disciplines in the workforce, computer skills are not only required but are expected of every applicant.

Both individuals and companies need ongoing computer training today, the former for job market preparation and the latter to keep their employees on the cutting edge. Both can benefit from the proliferation of computer training that has occurred, over the last decade in particular. And whereas in years past one would have to take a dry, one-dimensional correspondence course or attend classes at possibly far-flung locations, today's training can take place almost anywhere.

Computer based training (CBT) and online computer training videos are two of the most effective ways of leveraging new technologies for good, old-fashioned learning. Complete "e-learning solutions" are now available in a variety of form factors, including CD, DVD, corporate intranet or online. No matter which method you choose, there are a variety of colleges, schools and private companies that offer CBT for achieving your personal or corporate training goals.

However, it is not the delivery system itself, but the content, which will separate the wheat from the chaff among these educational offerings. Some companies offer greater flexibility by working with you to customize your e-learning experience and develop "mission-specific" curricula. From some providers, training is available only in certain fields. Other companies offer a much wider choice of training, where you can choose from hundreds of topics such as IT, desktop "office suite" applications, productivity software, technical troubleshooting and graphics programs.

Self-paced CBT videos are a popular delivery format, and have been proven an effective way to acquire new skills, refine existing ones or prepare for various types of certification exams. Self-study training enables students to use their own desktop or laptop computers, and they are able to study anywhere and any time they so desire. This sort of convenience is an important ingredient to any continuing education, as students can take advantage of the education while holding down a job or attending to other responsibilities.

Self-directed computer training courses are, by definition, self paced, and each user learns at the pace of their own choosing. Faster learners can speed through the lessons while others - slower learners or students who have a minimum of free time - can approach the training at a different pace. It certainly behooves the training companies to "meet students where they are at," and provide opportunities for a variety of people with a different schedules and time constraints.

Companies that have taken the lead in CBT do not merely rely on their technological prowess to "wow" the students. Neither do they rely on the superior content alone, as neither the technology nor the curricula can provide the sort of interactive teaching that is the hallmark of a quality education. Therefore, leading CBT firms will include a variety of quizzes, "practice labs," self-assessments, simulations, interactive video segments, and other review and testing materials to bring the lesson plans into focus for the students.

CBT companies have contributed to the dramatic progress made over the last two decades in continuing education. With computer training in a variety of digital formats, and customized in the way that a student or company training manager needs, there are fewer and fewer obstacles to maintaining expertise in the American workforce. By leveraging high-speed Internet and the powerful media capabilities of modern (and low cost) computers, this training is available to more people than ever, contributing to the U.S. economy in a variety of ways.

High-technology occupations, as well as "everyday" jobs that are getting more and more computerized and have to interface with advanced systems of various kinds, are all going to require ongoing training because the hardware and software is changing so quickly. The rate of progress in these areas is actually increasing compared to previous technological transitions, and shows no signs of slowing down now or in the near future.

Training firms and CBT companies will be an important part of the solution in the U.S. as we grapple with the twin problems of maintaining a skilled workforce and providing the means by which new training and certification will occur.

Both individuals and companies can avail themselves of these training services because of the number of CBT firms entering the marketplace. Still, there will be a range of quality among them, so make sure to choose a company that has been in business for a while, has strong and positive references, is certified by major hardware and software manufacturers - and is able to customize just the training you need so you can reach and maintain the level of expertise you require.

K Alliance offers an elearning solution in the form of cd, intranet or online training video courseware. No matter which method you prefer, K Alliance has online courses to help you achieve your elearning goals.

Computer Software

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