

a plus view NEWSLETTER

CompTIA A + Certified Computer Repair News & Updates
CES Industries, Inc. March 2003

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



It is that time of the year once again where the thoughts and focus of the A+ program turn towards the end of the school year and taking the A+ examination. Every year, instructors all over the world struggle with making the decision of what students should be encouraged to sit for the examination. This is a very difficult decision on both the instructor and the prospective testing candidate, mainly because of the difficulty of the examination. Before any student sits for the examination, the instructor **MUST** at least level the playing field for that student.

- 1. Preparation for the examination is crucial:** I hear this concern over and over during the year, how do I prepare my students for the examination? The answer to this question is simple. The CES A+ Certification Computer Repair Program contains ALL of the material that is needed by the student to pass the examination. The program consists of 7 Textbooks, an instructor's lecture guide, 8 videotapes, PowerPoint presentations, electronic textbooks and practice test questions. This material is to be used and most importantly GIVEN to the students to READ and understand.
- 2. Supplemental Material:** Textbooks and practice tests from third party providers should NOT be relied upon. Your programs simply do not have the time to spend on material that may be of little benefit to the student. Remember, that the major reason that most candidates fail the examination is due to the poor preparation for the examination. The other material focuses more on "teaching the test" rather than teaching the material.
- 3. The classroom as the repair depot:** The instructors that have the most successful programs are the instructors that do not allow their classroom to become a repair facility for their school. Most A+ classes simply do not have the luxury of unlimited time; therefore to spend time fixing old "junk" provides little if any additional training benefit for the students. If your program is blessed with unlimited time, then certainly, real world repairs would help the student develop and perfect their troubleshooting skills; however, reality dictates that a 45 minute period, five days a week, leaves barely enough time to complete the required curriculum.
- 4. Do not be afraid to ask for help:** Due to the dynamic nature of the computer industry, you as an instructor will always face new challenges. Don't face them alone. When you have a question, please ask us. A simple e-mail with your question, or concern will help your students to be better prepared to pass the examination and will help your program grow.
- 5. Follow the curriculum:** The 180-hour curriculum was designed specifically so that you, the instructor, will know that all the required material has been covered. It is strongly suggested that you do not try to re-engineer the curriculum. CompTIA has reviewed and authorized the curriculum under their CompTIA Authorized Quality Curriculum program. The hour-by-hour guideline is just that, a guideline, you can adjust it to fit your needs, but you cannot delete any item from it. We want to give your students the best chance of passing the exam.

Once again, I wish all of your students good luck in passing the examination, but remember, luck does not really have anything to do with passing the examination, being totally prepared does.

Mitchell B. Nesenoff, Ph.D.
A+ Certified
Network+ Certified
Microsoft Certified Professional

Mr. Ed's Tech Tips

March , 2003

For this issue of our newsletter, I wish to discuss some of the changes to our program, along with tips on a few of the issues that our technical support staff has received during the past few months.

A number of changes are happening in both the CES A+ Certification Computer Repair Program and with CompTIA, the governing body of the A+ examination. As far as the changes to our program, here are the highlights.

1. By now, you should have received your curriculum update for 2003. This update addresses such things as new questions, corrected some student answer sheets that were incorrect and added a few new multimedia components to the program.

2. The 925 Computer Assembly Video. A number of instructors who are actively teaching the program asked about the possibility of having a video tape that would address the initial assembly of the 925 student assembly computer. We decided that this was indeed a great idea, and that we would make the video utilizing the Video CD format. This will allow you to use the CD on the 975 A+ trainer without having to have a DVD player or a VHS recorder in your classroom. As with all of our software, we encourage you to make copies of the CD and provide them to your students. Keep in mind that since this disk utilizes the VCD format, using MPEG 2 encoding, the disk may or may not play initially on your computer. Since all machines are different, and support for MPEG video is a combination of the operating system, the installed Direct X support and the coder-decoders required by the MPEG standard, you may find that it is necessary to install some additional software on your specific computer. If you receive a message that Windows Media Player cannot create the required codec, or the codec required to display this disk is not installed, you will need to take the following actions.

- Double click on My Computer
- Right Click on the CD-ROM drive containing the 925 computer assembly video, and select explore.
- Double click on the folder called support
- Double click on the self-extracting zip file containing the video codecs.
- After the codecs install, REBOOT your computer and try running the video disk again. If you still receive the error message continue with the following steps.
 - Download directly from Microsoft, Direct X 9. Install direct X 9 and follow the on-screen instructions
 - Download directly from Microsoft Windows Media Player 9
 - Reboot your computer
 - Re-Install the codecs located in the support folder in steps a-d.
 - Run the 925 Assembly CD, it should run fine.

3. Low Level Format Utility. Included with your update package is a floppy disk, yes, a floppy disk, that can be used at the end of the school year to completely erase and zero out all of the tracks and sectors of your hard drive that the students have used to install the various operating systems. Keep in mind that using this disk is very deadly to any data that is currently installed on your computer. The data WILL be erased, so use this disk with caution. In addition, this disk requires that you take a few moments to properly set the BIOS for the type of drive that you are low-level formatting. Do not use the automatic settings for the BIOS since this by default enables the LBA or Logical Block Addressing system. It will not damage the hard drive but it will result in the formatting process taking well over 18 hours for a 40 Gigabyte drive. Before you start the disk formatting program, enter the BIOS setup program and change the drive type from LBA or Automatic to CHS or NORMAL, whichever type is displayed by your particular BIOS. Insert the floppy disk and restart your computer. The disk is self-booting and will walk you through the formatting process. Once the disk has been low-level formatted, make sure that you set the addressing back to LBA or Auto. Your hard disk is now factory clean, and ready to go for another year.

4. Instructors Manual, electronic edition. This CD provides you with the ability to search any question and any answer in the student books, unit tests and final examination. This can be a great asset to the instructor that is confronted by the student that states that I did not read that, the answer was not in the reading.

The new stuff- Some of you may already have visited the CompTIA website and have read that there are some major changes coming to the A+ test in the very near future. As far as I can tell at this moment, the changes will not effect any classes that are currently running and are due to graduate this coming June. Classes that continue on to next year, will, however be effected by the new changes.

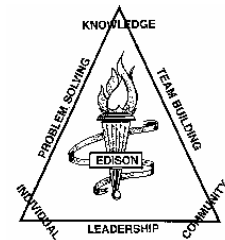
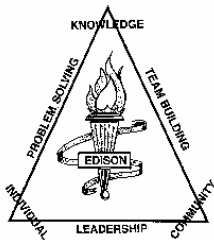
What was rumored in the past, now looks like it will be happening. I have long suspected that the major change to the test would be the inclusion of Windows XP operating system. It now appears that my suspicions were indeed correct.

Mr. Ed's Tech Tips Continued

From the draft documents placed on CompTIA's website, the new test will include not only changes in the core to reflect the more modern technology, but the inclusion of ALL of the major and popular operating systems found in today's corporate environment. These include the operating systems Windows 9X, Windows 2000, and Windows XP, both the professional and the home versions. It will also include the never should have been designed, or released Windows Millennium (Windows ME).

The current plan calls for the beginning of non-credit beta questions to begin appearing on the active test, with a complete rollout of the new test this coming August. As with anything technical, these dates may and often do change. More up to date information can be found at <<http://www.comptia.org>>www.comptia.org. Once the new test becomes live, the instructors manual and student manuals will be updated to reflect the new objectives. Until then, stay on your current time line and curriculum.

Edward J. Ermler
A+ Certified,
Network+ Certified
Microsoft Certified Professional
Certified Electronics Technician



ELEVEN EDISON H.S. STUDENTS PASS THE A+ CERTIFICATION EXAM June 2002

Eleven students of Mr. Bell's senior Computer Repair course pass CompTIA's (Computing Technology Industry Association) A+ Certification Exam to establish the accreditation of an internationally recognized computer repair technician. Mr. Bell is especially delighted with the success of one particular student. Among the many students over the years who have become certified through his program, none were females. Karen Forrest is the first in this male dominated field @ Thomas Edison HS. **GO KAREN...**

Karen, along with another student (Brett Fasolo) had demonstrated such outstanding charismatic leadership throughout the year that Mr. Bell encouraged them to join the SVA program. Mr. Bell feels Karen and Brett encompass the tools required to become teachers who can maximize successful results of others. The SVA program is a five-year internship-training program for nominated Vocational/Technical HS seniors to become teachers of their particular trade subject. Both Karen and Brett accepted Mr. Bell's challenge.

Mr. Bell thanks the efforts of his Supervisor, A.P. Jack Flaherty and the endless support from CES Industries.

A+ Certified Students

- | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| ➤ Karen Forrest | ➤ Gurpreet Singh | ➤ Michael Nieves |
| ➤ Brett Fasolo | ➤ Rashpal Singh | ➤ Jason Chablal |
| ➤ Roger Rodriguez | ➤ Sharvin Sarabjit | ➤ Joel Pesquera |
| ➤ Shonnel Pumarol | ➤ Miguel Zhirdon | |



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Training covers computer repair and prepares students to pass the A+ certificate exam conferred by CompTIA, which certifies the competency of entry-level computer technicians.

Training and equipment was purchased from CES Industries based in Farmingdale, N.Y., which provides technical assistance and support, equipment and instructors. "Basically, it is a turnkey lab with all of the information and equipment needed to teach the A+ program," said Ed Ermler, vice president of CES.

The CES-trained instructors prepare the inmates to meet the skills requirement set by CompTIA, including how to troubleshoot, repair, modify and upgrade hardware, understand various operating systems and provide help-desk skills. It is a 180-hour program, which is the equivalent of a school year, said Ermler.

Ideally, the inmates will work on computers that are outdated or in need of repair, said Williams. While simple in theory, computers must be inventoried and all information must be deleted, particularly confidential information, from equipment donated by government agencies. Also, prison staff must make sure computers are not used to conceal contraband and parts are not used as weapons, he said.

The corrections department enrolled the program's training instructors in its four-week mandatory course on corrections procedures and how to manage student inmates. Trainers learn the anatomy of a setup and about confidence games played by inmates, as well as conflict resolution and generally what to expect from the inmates.

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