

a plus view NEWSLETTER

CompTIA A + Certified Computer Repair News & Updates

CES Industries, Inc.

December 2003

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



GOAL: PASS THE A+ CERTIFICATION COMPUTER REPAIR EXAM

All of the following steps must be properly communicated to the students and the instructor at the inception of the A+ Certification Program.

1. At the start of class, review in detail the 180-hour curriculum. You must be committed from the start. It is a tough program, and without a solid commitment by the students and the instructor, you will not pass the exam.
2. Right at the beginning of class, confirm that there is enough time to teach all of the material. If there is not enough time, the program should be modified immediately.
3. Read all of the 7 CES A+ manuals. Read them carefully, and in detail. Do not skim through the material. Read each page and do not proceed to the next page until you understand completely the existing page. This means that you may, and probably will, read most of the material more than once. It is a long and tedious task, but well worth it.
4. All homework assignments and reading materials are designed to be read before they are reviewed in class, not after. The students must come to class prepared.
5. View all of the videotapes. Make sure you understand all of the materials covered on the videotapes. This means that you may, and probably will, view the videotapes more than once. It is a long and tedious task, but well worth it.
6. All of the Instructor Lecture notes must be utilized, either through lectures or hands-outs.
7. All students in class must have the opportunity to give at least one lecture in class. The Instructor Lecture notes can be used to assist the students.
8. The power point presentations must be utilized in class or at least viewed by all of the students.
9. Student must take all quizzes and unit tests. If you fail, take the test again and again until you pass. Do not continue in any lesson, until you have successfully completed the previous lesson.
10. The classroom is not a repair depository for all broken computers in the school, district, county, or state. This takes away from learning time.
11. The classroom must be under control at all times. Disruptive students must be removed immediately or segregated so that they do not corrupt the students on the A+ track.
12. The instructor must communicate (e-mail or call or fax) with CES Industries on a regular basis with any questions that arise and as to the status of the program. Do not wait until you have a list of questions, call for each question. The more communication between the instructor and CES the better chance for success. We suggest at least once a week. CES is here to help you. "Use and abuse us."
13. The Instructor needs to be on the A+ track and should study and plan on taking the A+ exam with the students the first year that it is being offered.
14. Do not use any outside A+ quick programs to augment your existing program, (Ex. A+ for Dummies). The material is distracting, often incorrect, and often lowers the comprehension rate so that the material might seemingly be easier to understand, however, those materials will NOT supply the students with enough knowledge to pass the exam.
15. "You got to be in it, to win it!" You have to sign up for the exam to have a chance to pass the exam.

Mitchell B. Nesenoff, Ph.D.

A+ Certified

Network+ Certified

Microsoft Certified Professional

Mr. Ed's Tech Tips

December 2003

Duck Season... Rabbit Season... Duck Season... Rabbit Season...

Here we go again. It is the time for the CompTIA A+ Test to change once again. As in the past, confusion still reigns supreme. The confusion being just what is actually happening with the examination. As training providers, we received preliminary information that the only areas that were going to be affected by the test change were the operating system technologies and a small amount of the core portion of the examination. The original estimate for the test change was a mere 15% of the content was going to change. On November 26th, the official date of the test change, we were notified that the change involves 75% of the content.

Before you all go and “pull the emergency cord”, let us look at this in perspective. It is almost physically impossible to change 75% of the content of the examination, since 75% of the technology that is the modern day PC has NOT changed. In the past two years since the previous change, the only area of the computing industry that saw any major changes in technology was that of digital imaging, which has nothing at all to do with the PC itself. True, if you are into digital photography you have seen the resolution of the cameras grow from a pretty pathetic 1 Megapixel resolution, to professional cameras that are now boasting 16 Megapixel resolution. Some in the profession are starting to say that film is really dead, or at least dying. Does this have any bearing on the A+ technician that is working on the computer? Certainly not. If the camera does not work, it is an issue for the camera manufacturer, if the communication between the camera and the computer does not work, it is an issue with software drivers, and of course most camera users do not connect the camera directly to the PC, but connect a card reader to the PC to read the digital media directly. Did CompTIA add digital cameras to the test, yes they did. Is it something to concern yourself with, the answer is a resounding no. The other area of the test to undergo any significant changes is the Operating Systems Technology Examination; The test now completely covers every operating system that Microsoft has ever released, with the exception of Windows 3.X. Again, is this an area of concern? Not really. If one looks at the changes objectively, rather than panics, one can see that the overall user interface for all versions of Windows is basically the same. If one knows and understands what “My Computer” does in Windows 95, they already understand what it does in Windows XP. So what if the look and feel is different between the conventional interface and XP's Luna interface, “My Computer” is still “My Computer”. The proper approach to dealing with the OS changes will be to teach the differences between the OS's and not try to teach each operating system as if it was an entity on to itself.

Let us take a look at the changes that have taken place on the examination.

Core:	Domain	Description of Domain Contents	% Of Examination
	1.0	Installation, Configuration and Upgrading	35%
	2.0	Diagnosing and Troubleshooting	21%
	3.0	Preventive Maintenance	5%
	4.0	Motherboard/Processors/Memory	11%
	5.0	Printers	9%
	6.0	Basic Networking	19%
		Total	100%

If we examine the above changes carefully, you will see that very little has changed from the 2001 objectives, the percentages have been adjusted to reflect reality, and the section on Diagnostics and Troubleshooting has been increased.

You may see some interesting questions in the upgrading section referring to the new active cooling systems that are becoming popular and some very “off the wall” concepts such as alcohol powered fuel cells for laptops, but this will be all the “strange” items that you will be responsible for. Keep in mind that even though not specifically mentioned, CompTIA still likes “Green” programs, and as such, you can guarantee questions about battery and toner cartridge recycling, system board and system unit recycling, etc. All of the changes that are reflected above for the core exam will be covered in detail, and will appear as an update to the CES Instructor's manual. I am expecting this material to become available around the 15th of January, 2004.

The Operating System Technology examination. There are changes here, as noted, mainly the inclusion of all of Microsoft's currently available operating systems.

Domain	% Of Examination
1.0 OS Fundamentals	28%
2.0 Installation, Configuration and Upgrading	31%
3.0 Diagnosing and Troubleshooting	25%
4.0 Networks	16%
Total	100.00%

Domain 1 - Operating System Fundamentals

- Identify the major desktop components and interfaces, and their functions. Differentiate the characteristics of Windows 9x/Me, Windows NT 4.0 Workstation, Windows 2000 Professional, and Windows XP.
- Identify the names, locations, purposes, and contents of major system files.
- Demonstrate the ability to use command-line functions and utilities to manage the operating system, including the proper syntax and switches.
- basic concepts and procedures for creating, viewing, and managing disks, directories and files. This includes procedures for changing file attributes and the ramifications of those changes (for example, security issues).
- Identify the major operating system utilities, their purpose, location, and available switches.

Domain 2 - Installation, Configuration and Upgrading

- the procedures for installing Windows 9x/Me, Windows NT 4.0 Workstation, Windows 2000 Professional, and Windows XP, and bringing the operating system to a basic operational level.
- Identify steps to perform an operating system upgrade from Windows 9.x/ME, Windows NT 4.0 Workstation, Windows 2000 Professional, and Windows XP. Given an upgrade scenario, choose the appropriate next steps.
- Identify the basic system boot sequences and boot methods, including the steps to create an emergency boot disk with utilities installed for Windows 9x/Me, Windows NT 4.0 Workstation, Windows 2000 Professional, and Windows XP.
- Identify procedures for installing/adding a device, including loading, adding, and configuring device drivers, and required software.
- Identify procedures necessary to optimize the operating system and major operating system subsystems.

Domain 3 - Diagnosing and Troubleshooting

- Recognize and interpret the meaning of common error codes and startup messages from the boot sequence, and identify steps to correct the problems.
- Recognize when to use common diagnostic utilities and tools. Given a diagnostic scenario involving one of these utilities or tools, select the appropriate steps needed to resolve the problem.
- Recognize common operational and usability problems and determine how to resolve them.

Domain 4 - Networks

- Identify the networking capabilities of Windows. Given configuration parameters, configure the operating system to connect to a network.
- Identify the basic Internet protocols and terminologies. Identify procedures for establishing Internet connectivity. In a given scenario, configure the operating system to connect to and use Internet resources.

As you can see there are a lot of changes to the OS portion of the examination, but, the changes are truly minimal. If you understand one operating system, you only need to study the differences between the systems. Keep in mind that each operating system belongs to a specific “family”, that is, Windows 9X and ME products are the DOS based products, and NT, 2000 and XP are NT based products. Once you have mastered the differences between the families, the similarities are easy to work with. CES will be providing the curriculum updates shortly. We are estimating the updates will be available sometime in the middle of February. Since no one should be anywhere near finishing the operating systems, the February date will not cause anyone any type of major problems.

Now for the “GOOD NEWS”. I have learned from well placed sources inside CompTIA that the day of the Adaptive Test is finally OVER. Yes folks, read that sentence again, NO MORE ADAPTIVE TESTS!!!!. From this point on, all tests will be delivered in the conventional, linear format. What this means to you is that a student will have a better opportunity to read each question, take time to make an informed decision as to what the answer should be, and even change their minds, if it is necessary. What it also means is that for those schools that test their candidates here at CES Industries, it will be necessary to call early to reserve test time, since each test now requires a seat assignment of 4 hours per examination. There is no way a student will take four hours to complete the examination, but to schedule the candidate the testing centers must block a four hour seat selection. Depending upon the number of seats a testing center has, this may result in having to reserve multiple days in order to complete all of your testing.

In the weeks ahead, you will be able to view our website under A+ Certification workshops and newsletters to see the latest changes, updates and commentary that I have been receiving. I expect this to be available in the next few weeks.

Until next issue, Ciao for now.

Ed.

To: CES Industries, A+ Certification Program

From: AC BELL, Thomas Edison HS

“TODAY’S YOUTH: BEATING THE ODDS THRU TECHNOLOGY...”

As a student just starting high school you don’t know what obstacles or goals you would have accomplished by the time you graduate. I went to Thomas Edison because of one reason because I liked electronics; little did I know it would change my whole life and career. I started in the A+ course in the tenth grade and from the beginning I loved it. I use to look at the trainers and labs and wonder to my self-wow these things are so complex and interesting, would I be able to build and trouble shoot this? As the course progressed my knowledge of pc and they’re robust architecture expanded. My instructor, Mr. Bell was a great/professional instructor. He taught me self-motivation, drive, professionalism, and the will to keep moving on. I soon began to develop a skill for computers as well as a passion to learn more and expand my knowledge about them. There were times when things seemed real rough and I would think to my self is all of this worth it? Am I working so hard for nothing? But then I would sit down and realize not many kids my age get this opportunity in their life to achieve status that is internationally recognized. There was not one day of rest for me; I studied day and night for my exam. My friends asked why I am working so hard, I told them it was determination and the fact that I was focused on my goals and where I wanted to go, and that was to be A+ certified. The A+ course was the most helpful out of everything. There were non-stop hands on experience as well as theory from the books. We built and configured the pc from scratch, as well as troubleshoot them, we also built and configured small networks and shared resources. The knowledge and experience I gained in this course got me started on the road to success. With all the support from my instructor and all the rigorous testing he put me through I was ready to take the test. June 9, 2000 I took the A+ test and I passed with nearly perfect marks. Imagine when the proctor walks in and gives you that paper and you see you only got 2 wrong on the whole test, makes you feel good right. I owe all my success and knowledge I gained to Mr. Bell. I graduated high school with a technically endorsed diploma and the A+ certification. I was still focused and motivated and I thought to my self-why stop here. I went to Computer Career Center and took the MCSE course that was right after I graduated. It was tough, but if I had not have come out of Thomas Edison’s A+ course I would have been lost in this school. As of today I achieved several other certifications, they are MCP, MCSE and MCSA. I am a network engineer/private consultant for a computer firm. Imagine, I accomplished so many goals and got my life on the right track at the age of 20. I owe all my success and knowledge to Thomas Edison and the A+ course as well as Mr. Bell for showing me what it takes to be professional, focused, determined and to be the best at what you do. Without that course I would of have never been where I am today.

“By the way, did I mention I’m only 20 years of age and my current salary is over \$42,000...”

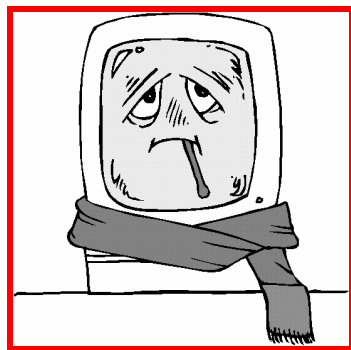
Mark Sulaiman

A+, MCP, MCSE, MCSA

MOSES

"Excuse me, Sir."
"Is that you again, Moses?"
"I'm afraid it is, Sir."
"What is it this time, Moses; more computer problems?"
"How did you guess?"
"I don't have to guess, Moses. Remember?"
"Oh, yes; I forgot."
"Tell me what you want, Moses."
"But you already know; remember?"
"Moses!"
"Sorry, Sir."
"Well, go ahead, Moses; spit it out."
"Well, I have a question, Sir. You know those 'ten things' you sent me?"
"You mean the Ten Commandments, Moses?"
"That's it. I was wondering if they were important."
"What do you mean 'were important', Moses? Of course, they are important. Otherwise, I would not have sent them to you."
"Well - sorry, Sir, but I lost them. I could say the dog ate them; but, of course, you would see right through that."
"What do you mean 'you lost them'? Are you trying to tell me you didn't save them, Moses?"
"No, Sir; I forgot."
"You should always save, Moses."
"Yes, I know. You told me that before. I was going to, but I forgot. I did send them to some people before I lost them though."
"And did you hear back from any of them?"
"You already know I did. What about the one guy who said he never uses 'shalt not'? May he change the words a little bit?"
"Yes, Moses, as long as he does not change the meaning."
"And what about the guy who thought your stance was a little harsh, and recommended calling them the 'Ten Suggestions,' or letting people pick one or two to try for a while?"
"Moses, I will act like I did not hear that."
"I think that means 'no.' Well, what about the guy who said I was scamming him?"
"I think the term is 'spamming,' Moses."
"Oh, yes. I e-mailed him back and told him I don't even eat that stuff, and I have no idea how you can send it to someone through a computer."
"And what did he say?"
"You know what he said. He used Your name in vain. You don't think he might have sent me one of those - er - plagues, and that's the reason I lost those ten things, do you?"
"They are called 'viruses,' Moses."
"Whatever! This computer stuff is just too much for me. Can we just go back to those stone tablets? It was hard on my back taking them out and reading them each day, but at least I never lost them."
"We will do it the new way, Moses."
"I was afraid you would say that, Sir."
"Moses, what did I tell you to do if you messed up?"
"You told me to hold up this rat and stretch it out toward the computer."
"It's a mouse, Moses. Mouse! Mouse! And did you do that?"
"No, I decided to try the technical support first. After all, who knows more about this stuff than you, and I really like your hours. By the way, Sir, did Noah have two of these mice on the ark?"
"No, Moses."
"One other thing. Why did you not name them 'frogs' instead of 'mice,' because did you not tell me the thing they sit on is a pad?"
"I did not name them, Moses. Man did, and you can call yours a frog if you want to."
"Oh, that explains it. Kind of like Adam, huh, Sir? I bet some woman told him to call it a mouse. After all, was it not a woman who named one of the computers Apple?"
"Say good night, Moses."
"Wait a minute, Sir. I am stretching out the mouse, and it seems to be working. Yes, a couple of the 'ten things' have come back."
"Which ones are they, Moses?"
"Let me see. 'Thou shalt not steal from any grave an image' and 'Thou shalt not uncover thy neighbor's wife.'"
"Turn the computer off, Moses. I'm sending you another set of stone tablets."





*It's Flu season
Be careful of viruses*

Twas the Night Before Start-up

Twas the night before start-up and all through the net,
not a packet was moving; no bit nor octet.
The engineers rattled their cards in despair,
hoping a bad chip would blow with a fire.
The salesmen were nestled all snug in their beds,
while visions of data nets danced in their heads.
And I with my data scope tracings and dumps,
prepared for some pretty bad bruises and dumps.
When out in the hall there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from my desk to see what was the matter.
There stood at the threshold with PC in tow,
an ARPANET hacker, all ready to go.
I could see from the creases that covered his brow,
he'd conquer the crises confronting him now.
More rapid than eagles, he checked each alarm
and scrutinized each for its potential for harm.
On LAPB, on OSI, X.25!
TCP, SNA, V.35!
His eyes were afire with the strength of his gaze;
no bug could hide long; not for hours or days.
A wink of his eye and a twitch of his head,
soon gave me to know I had little to dread.
He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,
fixing a net that had gone plumb berserk;
And laying a finger on one suspect line,
he entered a patch and the net came up fine!
The packets flowed neatly and protocols matched;
the hosts interfaced and shift-registers latched.
He tested the system from Gateway to PAD;
not one bit was dropped; no checksum was bad.
At last he was finished and wearily sighed
Twas the Night Before Start-up
and turned to explain why the system had died.
I twisted my fingers and counted to ten;
an off-by-one index had done it again . . .

Sent to us from Melissa A. Payne

If you would like to receive this newsletter also by
E-mail; please send us your E-mail address at

m.nesenoff@cesindustries.com

President	MITCHELL B. NESENOFF, Ph.D.
VP Engineering	EDWARD J. ERMLER
Graphics/Editor	KENNETH C. ROMMEL

RE M I N D E R

Mail your articles to:

CES Industries, Inc.

130 Central Avenue, Farmingdale,
New York 11735

Attention: NEWSLETTER Editor.

Tel: 631-293-1420 Fax: 631-293-8556

E-Mail: k.rommel@cesindustries.com