

Army IT Training Now on e-Learning

Leslie York

COL Allen L. Green III, Commander, CECOM's Software Engineering Center (SEC)-Belvoir, is one of more than 145,000 Army soldiers and civilians who registered on AKO for more than 2 million e-Learning training courses.

E-Learning is now the Army's primary means of satisfying information technology (IT) training across the entire workforce. On Jan. 8, 2004, the Army directed all of its organizations and major commands to use the Army's e(electronic)-Learning Program as the primary method for satisfying their workforce IT requirements. Policy and waiver process information can be found on Army Knowledge Online (AKO) at <http://www.us.army.mil>; My Education; Army e-Learning Portal Page.

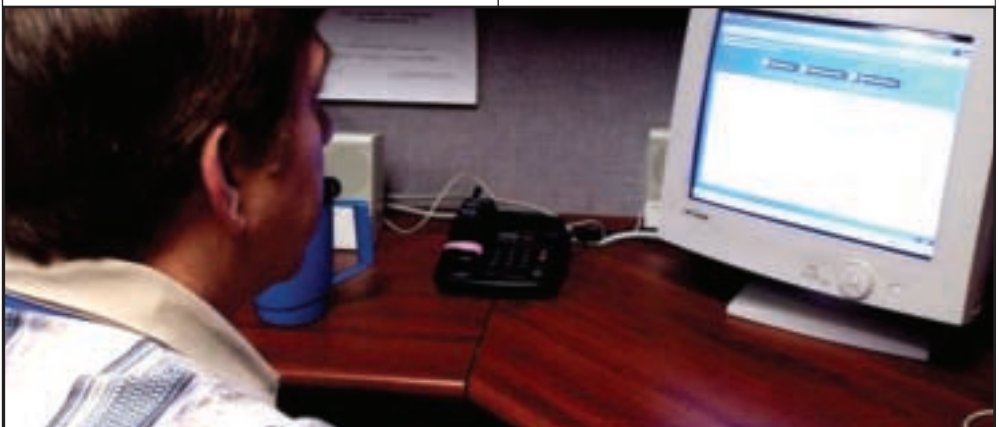
The Army has moved from computer-based training to an ever-expanding e-Learning technology environment. Today, every Active Duty Soldier, National Guardsman, Army Reservist and Army civilian employee can access a catalog of more than 1,500 IT, business, leadership and personal development courses online. E-Learning provides students with an entire range of learning tools including:

- State-of-the-art courses.
- Online subject-matter experts and mentors.
- Online meeting rooms and white boards.
- Chat rooms and threaded discussions with other students.
- A vast technical library of articles, white papers and recorded seminars conducted by the industry's leading experts.

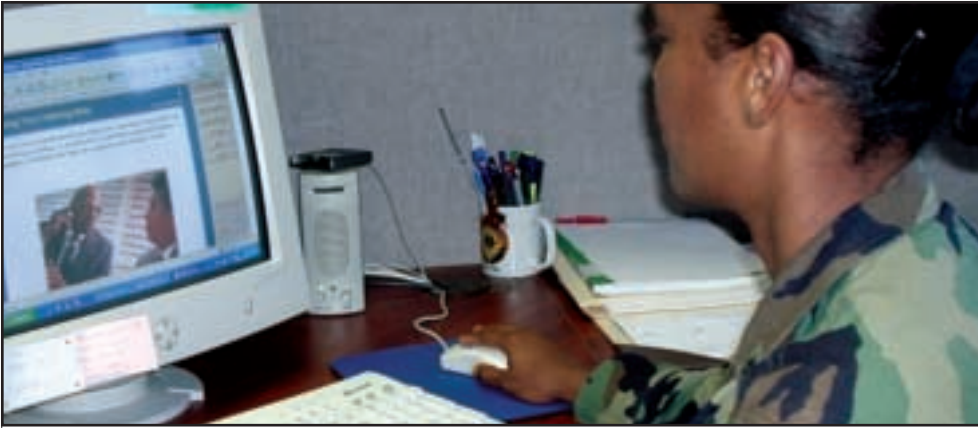
In 1999, the Army Chief Information Officer and G-6 acknowledged that the Army's workforce training in IT was not keeping pace with rapid technology that changes in a matter of months, not years. The challenge — how to effectively and economically keep the entire workforce current with the changes that

impact an individual's workspace. In addition to rapidly changing technology, the diverse IT skills the Army needs cover the entire gamut of the IT spectrum.

The answer — use the latest state-of-the-art Web-based, online training technology that students can access anywhere, anytime. The Computer Based Training Initiative was started in 1999 and quickly proved to be a success. It's the best distance learning technology available and it's free for all Army members. You can receive anything from just-in-time training to in-depth, comprehensive education on any subject in the e-Learning catalog. Courses are self-paced and can be accessed through the AKO portal from the office, home



Army civilian Acquisition, Logistics and Technology Workforce members can receive CLPs for completing selected e-Learning courses. Here, Robert Smith, a computer scientist at CECOM SEC-Belvoir, works on an e-Learning course. U.S. Army photos by Susan Padgett, CECOM SEC-Belvoir.



MAJ Susan Pooler, CECOM SEC-Belvoir, takes advantage of e-Learning's online training environment to enhance her professional Army Acquisition Corps skills.

or just about anywhere the Internet is available. More than 145,000 Army soldiers and civilians have registered and more than 2 million courses have been accessed.

The Army has a contract with SkillSoft (formerly SmartForce) to provide the Army with this online e-Learning environment. SkillSoft has formed a partnership with many leading companies in the IT software industry, including Microsoft®, Cisco Systems Inc., Oracle® and IBM®. Together they develop courses and training courseware to prepare students for IT certification exams, using their product plans, software and source materials to ensure that the e-Learning courses meet or exceed the same technical content as the courses offered by the commercial company. More than 40 certification programs have evolved from this partnership, including Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP), Avaya,

A+, Network+, iNet+, Server+, IT Project+, Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer/Administrator/Application Developer/Database Administrator (MCSE/MCSA/MCAD/MCDBA), Microsoft Office Specialist (MOUS), Certified Novell Engineer (CNE), Cisco and Oracle, just to name a few.

Besides the knowledge and skills you receive from taking online e-Learning courses, you also benefit from these advantages:

- The U.S. Army Human Resources Command Enlisted Promotions Branch says that promotion points can be awarded for military education completed on vendor-based e-Learning courses. Course completion with credit hours must be reflected in the Army Training Requirements and Resources Systems (ATRRS) prior to awarding promotion points. Promotion points are awarded

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under the same guidelines as correspondence courses— 5 training hours = 1 promotion point. Information was published in the December 2003 *Cutoff Score Memorandum*.

- Army civilian acquisition workforce employees can receive Continuous Learning Points (CLPs) for these courses as well.
- The American Council on Education reviewed and made credit recommendation for 6 course modules. Procedures and forms can be found on AKO at the **My Education; e-Learning Portal Page**.
- Students can download an ATRRS transcript listing completed e-Learning courses from AKO at <http://www.us.army.mil>; **My Education; go to ATRRS Online**.

The Army encourages military retirees to continue their education so they can ensure a smooth transition to the civilian workforce. SkillSoft offers a reduced rate to Army retirees and contractors who work for the Army. More information can be obtained by e-mail from Army@SmartForce.com. Take advantage of this great opportunity and enroll in the Army e-Learning program today. Register by going to <http://usarmy.smartforce.com> and click on **Register**. If you need any additional information or assistance, contact the Army e-Learning Program Office at cbt.help@secbmail.belvoir.army.mil.

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