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University of California Addresses Technical Training

- Karen Baker, Palmer LTER

The University of California (UC) has proactively addressed the issue of providing technical training to a wide group of faculty, staff and students in a single unified but cost-effective manner. It is difficult to supply a wide variety of technical training in computers and software packages due to individual seminar costs, to retraining requirements resulting from personnel turn-over as well as to constant new product shifts. Early in 1998 UC developed a cross-campus co-operative effort with CBT Systems, (<http://www.cbtsys.com/catalog/catalog.htm>), a major provider of interactive software for training in information systems.

UC has invested in web-based training with CBT in order to provide an alternative opportunity for staff education in computer courses ranging from introductions for beginners to technical courses for certification. CBT was chosen because it has a large number and wide range of types and levels of training modules as well as a standard friendly user interface. In addition the price, site license, and technical support are good. Although available at all UC campuses except for UCSF (ie UCSD: <http://www-cbt.ucsd.edu>, UCD: <http://cbt.ucdavis.edu>), it is handled separately by each location so both presentation and module availability varies by campus.

Currently, the training is available via web access from a PC. Availability on CD also exists while availability for MAC and UNIX systems is planned. Topics covered currently include Microsoft General, Office 97, Information Technology Core Concepts, Internet and Intranet Skills, Cisco, IBM, INFORMIX, Java, Lotus, Marimba, Netscape, Novell, Oracle, SAP, Sybase, C/C++, Internet Security, Internetworking, UNIX, and Centura with a range of 4 hour courses within each topic. The course modules for any one topic are structured for end-user, application designers, and/or system administrators. So for instance, the Microsoft modules available for the end-user, including old and new versions of software, include a section on Microsoft Applications with modules on Office 95, Office 97, Windows NT 4.0, Exchange 4.0, Exchange 5.0 and Outlook 97.

This is a multi-year pilot effort provided through co-operation between academic and administrative computing, telecommunications, human resources, staff education, medical centers and a variety of individual departments. If the approach proves useful, the campus programs may expand to include additional modules available through CBT.