

INSIDE

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE	2
MRC BEGINS NEW HEALTH-CARE SUPPORT PROGRAM	2
INTRO TO E-BUSINESS	2
BOARD BIOGRAPHY	3
TRIBUTE TO SKILLSOFT	4
2005 ARPCT AWARDS	4

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2005 ARPCT Conference—A Must Do!

I would highly recommend that you consider attending this year's ARPCT conference at the Green Valley resort near Las Vegas, May 2-6, 2005. It is part of a larger SkillSoft annual user group meeting called Perspectives 2005. SkillSoft will provide hands-on training and leading learning expert speakers for a first-class conference. The best part is the registration fee has been reduced from \$595 to \$200 for the SkillSoft portion of the conference and just \$35 for the ARPCT portion. Meet others who can help you get more from your learning programs with less. Attend one of four half-day workshops on culture change, marketing programs, blended learning secrets, and proven ROI strategies. Perspectives is a customer program designed for SkillSoft customers.

Guest Speakers include Josh Bersin, Industry Analyst and Elliott Masie, Author and Industry Analyst. Don't miss it. I believe that by partnering with SkillSoft, it will be one of best ARPCT conferences ever.


For online registration, go to <https://secure.regbridge.com/SkillSoft/> and use the registration code MULT05 or send a check to Bob Leneway for \$235 with your name, organization and address.

For additional information, see <http://perspectives.skillsoft.com> or e-mail bob.leneway@wmich.edu.



Hotel Information:

Green Valley Ranch
2300 Paseo Verde Parkway
Henderson, NV 89052
Phone: 702 617 7777
Fax: 702 617 7778
www.greenvalleyranchresort.com

The hotel is located just 5 miles from the McCarran International Airport, Las Vegas, Nevada. Green Valley Ranch offers a complimentary shuttle service to and from McCarran Airport and the Las Vegas Strip. 

SkillSoft News

By: Bob Leneway

The conversion and upgrade of our EditU/ SkillSoft Learning Management Support System from Version 3.3 to Version 6.2 is now complete. With this conversion comes a significant increase in the amount and variety of content provided, as well as an upgrade in content itself. For local site administrators and their training group managers/instructors, the new version brings greater ease of use and reporting. Local site administrators are now able to create both new subgroups and new users for their organizations. This is part

of a new 5-year agreement with SkillSoft Inc. to annually allow up to 2,500 ARPCT member-sponsored users free access to a special EditU/SkillSoft library of learning content, including online learning modules, simulations, training briefs, 24x7 mentoring support and "live" web broadcasts on IT, business and management related topics. This donation is valued at over 1.5 million dollars over 5 years.

continued on page 3

President's Message

It is remarkable to see the extent to which ARPCT has embraced SkillSoft, and equally remarkable to see the commitment that SkillSoft has made to ARPCT. As I read the articles for this edition of Viewpoint I noted that SkillSoft has impacted every level of the organization: our individual students and program participants are clearly embracing the learning materials and on-line delivery; our programs are restructuring and embedding SkillSoft course curriculum; and our organization is now in receipt of a one-of-a-kind 5-year commitment to donate a full range of SkillSoft courses, support, and services to ARPCT member programs and participants. Moreover, SkillSoft has invited us to participate in their annual Perspectives Conference and benefit from their full range of presentations and offerings.

This is truly a remarkable corporate commitment to making a difference in the lives, education, and employment of persons with disabilities! On behalf of all of ARPCT, I wish to extend our sincerest gratitude and appreciation to SkillSoft Inc. and all the individuals who have fostered and worked for this essential relationship for ARPCT.

In January, annual membership registration and dues notices were sent out. Most programs and associate members have returned and re-registered; however, in compiling our 2005 membership list we note that some registrations are still outstanding. If you have not done so, please forward your registration immediately attn: Bob Leneway, ARPCT Treasurer (bob.Leneway@wmich.edu).

The ARPCT Board is also looking for nominations for a VP and Member at Large position. The positions are for a 2-year term, and we are seeking nominations from all members. If you would like to contribute to the membership, direction, and the future of ARPCT, please consider stepping forward or accepting a nomination. Nominations can be submitted to any Board member or through email to my attention: vaneerdent@douglas.bc.ca. Elections will be held at the close of next week's conference.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the conference.

Best regards,
Trevor Van Eerden
ARPCT President

Intro to E-Business Part One

By: Chris Ricard

The Millennium is here and it's amazing how the Internet has changed traditional business models in just the past few years. It has created challenges for many industries but it has also created endless opportunities for others, small and large businesses alike. Most notably, the Internet is an "equalizer". An owner/operator can have a website that rivals their largest competitor, and prospective customers will not realize you are working out of your bedroom in your PJ's.

This and subsequent articles are designed to de-mystify some of the technical jargon, outline costs and explain how easy it is to achieve website peace of mind. Let's go!

If you've been considering taking your business "online" you need to ask yourself a few simple questions before going any further:

1. First and foremost—Are your prospects and customers using the Internet to research or purchase your type of product or service?

continued on page 4

MRC Begins New Healthcare Support Program

By: Kim Feller

In January 2004, MRC, a charter member of ARPCT located in Minneapolis, Minnesota and a skills training provider since 1984, expanded its training options to include Healthcare Support. This course was developed to fill a business need in the Twin Cities metro area.

Healthcare Support is a 160-hour training course that combines MRC's employer driven Office Careers Training course with 80 hours of medical office training curriculum. Students begin training with 80 hours of Microsoft Word, Excel and

Access, as well as MRC's Customer Service, Job Seeking Skills and Employment Prep (Workplace, Study, Life and Financial Literacy Skills) coursework. Once they have the general skills mastered, the students begin working on Medical Terminology, Introduction to Billing and Coding, Medical Ethics and Confidentiality and HIPAA. Following successful completion of the training, students are placed into positions, which include Medical Receptionist, Medical Billing, Medical Call Center Specialist, and other related jobs.

In the first year of training, 69 students began training and 58 completed the program. Of the 58 graduates, 34 chose to utilize MRC's placement services. To date, 29 program graduates have been placed at an average starting wage of \$12.05 per hour, and the remainder are still active in placement services.

For more information, contact:
Kim Feller, MRC, Training and Education Services, kfeller@resource-mn.org, (612) 752-8102.



Board Biography Dorothy Kret

Dorothy Kret received her Bachelors' Degree in Education/Rehabilitation from the University of Arizona and earned her Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Administration from the University of San Francisco.

As a vocational rehabilitation specialist for more than 20 years, Dot has helped thousands of people with barriers to employment find and keep jobs. Her businesses, Dorothy Kret & Associates (DKA), which began in 1993, and ArchiveXpress, organized in 2004, were created to accomplish those goals.

DKA provides education, training, job development and supported employment services to individuals needing assistance to enter or remain in the world of work and has offices in Tucson, Phoenix, Douglas and Nogales, Arizona.



ArchiveXpress provides a full range of document imaging services (scanning, indexing and archiving) through offices in Tucson and Phoenix, creating jobs for people who have been trained through DKA to be high quality computer operators.

She currently serves the community through membership on the Board of Directors of Linkages, Handmaker and the Tucson Children's Museum, as well as two international rehabilitation organizations (ARPCT and INABIR). Dot and her husband, Michael Lex, have two sons, David (13) and Nathan (10).



continued from page 1

However, in the process, the number of ARPCT users granted "free" access has been reduced from 5,000 to 2,500. There are also certain vendor related topics, including Novell and Cisco, that we will no longer have access to without individual program member payment to these vendors through SkillSoft. We are currently negotiating discounts for programs in need of these special vendor related programs. A full list of the excluded programs can be found at the EditU site. If you have a need for these newly excluded programs, please contact EditU Administrator Bob Leneway at bob.leneway@wmich.edu.

In preparing for a recent report to the Commission for the Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), we found that a total of 40 of the 52 ARPCT programs now on EditU are also members of CARF. The total number of CARF users now benefiting from EditU is 1,729 out of a total 2,161 users during the past year or, in other words, almost 80 percent of enrolled EditU users come from a CARF accredited organization.

The top five EditU User Sites in 2004 included Vocational Guidance Services in Ohio 85 users, Michigan Career and Technical Institute 258 users, Woodrow Wilson Rehab Center in VA 136 users, Cerebral Palsy Research Foundation 106 users, and Warm Spring Rehab Center in TX, 823 users. They are all CARF accredited organizations.

Since we are already close to our total quota of 2,500 with 2,161 enrolled users, it is important that all non-active users be deleted by program administrators or an instructor from the local site before we run out of capacity. In 2003, we had 1,083 users; thus, at the current growth rate, we will soon run out of capacity. For that reason, we are also deleting non-used programs from the system, and asking

all programs to be current in their annual dues.

Administrative Training on Version 6.2

SkillPort Administrator Training Sessions are conducted from 1:00 pm to 2:30 pm Eastern EVERY Thursday. The free training includes an introduction to Creating Users and Groups, Building Custom Curricula Views, Assigning Courses to Users and Groups, Building Custom Evaluation Forms, Adding Tabs and Shortcuts and Customizing your SkillPort Color Scheme.

To attend, simply log onto:

<http://skillssoft.webex.com/skillssoft>

Meeting Name:

SkillPort Administrator Introduction

Password:

training

Conference call information for voice:

Phone Number:

888-276-4201 or 574-948-0302

Conference ID:

754557678 (skillport)

The WebEx and conference lines are open at 12:50 pm Eastern time. If you have never used WebEx before, it is a good idea to log on a little early to make sure everything runs smoothly. If you experience problems when joining WebEx, please contact WebEx support at 1-866-229-3239.

Bob Leneway, EditU Administrator
Western Michigan University
ARPCT Treasurer



continued from page 2

2. What are your goals and objectives for going online? i.e. Generate enquiries, enhance image, make sales, cut costs, expand markets, educate prospects or offer another method of customer service.

If you answered yes to the first question above and have a few good ideas for the second ... great!! Now you need to think about a BUDGET (more on this later) and integrating the website into your overall business plan.

Where to start? For many, the thought of taking their business online is a little overwhelming ... stay cool. First of all, start out by reviewing your goals and objectives for taking your business online. From here, don't re-invent the wheel! Put your detective hat on and see what your competitors are offering on their website in terms of value-added features, resources, product and service offerings, pricing, promotions, etc. Make note of what you like and don't like.

From this exercise, you should be able to formulate what page headings you would like to have on your website: products, services, about us, links, contact us, portfolio, FAQ, testimonials, gallery, etc. Once the page heading is drafted, start composing the text and gathering the photos that will appear on each of these pages. Look at the big picture, i.e.: where

you want your website to be and what it will offer in the future. But start small to get a feel for the web; then you can add features later on.


Once you have a draft of the text and some photos compiled, keep on surfing. Not just the competition but any website. See what type of website layouts you like and color schemes (unless you already have corporate colors) that catch your eye. Make note of these websites and the elements of each that you like. Believe it or not, you're probably halfway to completing your site! In addition to being halfway there, you'll save time and MONEY when you finally visit a website developer.

One last word before signing off. I mentioned budget above—consider this: your website is a long term investment in your business. You can compare the cost to placing a few display ads in your local paper, creating and printing a professional brochure, or doing a few promotional mail outs to building a basic website. Dollar for dollar, a website, if created and promoted properly, will provide an excellent ROI and will grow with your business!

That's enough for now and should keep you busy until next time, where we will delve into some of the technical aspects of going online, like hosting packages, domain names, webmail, development programs,

ballpark costs for all, etc. I promise to make it as painless as possible and use plain English. Smooth surfing ...

Chris Ricard
www.theweb-factory.com
New Westminster, BC


* This article was provided to ARPCT as a courtesy from Chris Ricard who has been an entrepreneur since 1994. He splits his time as a partner in M7Action, designing equipment for outdoor enthusiasts, as owner of The Web Factory, providing website hosting and design services, and as a Business Advisor and Teacher with the Douglas College Self-Employment program. 

2005 ARPCT Awards

The 2005 ARPCT Outstanding Achievement Awards will be presented at the next International ARPCT Conference Awards in Las Vegas on May 4th, 2005.

Awards will be given for:

- Outstanding ARPCT Member Program of the Year
- Outstanding ARPCT Member of the Year (for an individual)
- Outstanding ARPCT Business Advisory Council Member of the Year
- Outstanding ARPCT Student of the Year

We look forward to seeing you at the 2005 Awards Conference! 

A Tribute to SkillSoft

The use of the SkillSoft courses has meant a great deal to our project and the participants we serve. I have one man with MS who sent a letter recently thanking us for the ability to study from home and prepare for certification tests. Please extend my thanks and the thanks of my friend Dean, to any and all who have been instrumental in keeping SkillSoft as an option for our disabled participants, many

of whom would have no access to such high quality training.

Mike McMurtrie, PWI Project Director
SL Start Inc, Spokane, WA

** Note from the Editor: I received this letter from Mike and have included it here, as it is such a clear testament to SkillSoft's value to our programs and the individuals who receive access as a result. Please be reminded that we want to hear your stories and clients' stories about SkillSoft.* 