



# Army Offers Free Online Tech Courses

JOE BURLAS

**W**ASHINGTON, D.C. (Army News Service, Nov. 8, 2000) – Active-duty and reserve soldiers and Department of Army civilians can continue to take free online information technology courses thanks to a recently renewed contract between the Army and SmartForce, a commercial computer-based training company.

Since the Army first started offering the service in 1998, the course catalog has grown to offer training on more than 1,100 technical subjects.

“Rather than send people away from their jobs to half a dozen places for training, why not save time and money by having them sign up for online courses,” said Lt. Col. Tom Loper, the program’s project manager. “We opted to offer this education to both the civilian and soldier workforce. In an increasingly technology-based Army, these classes not only make students smarter at their jobs but give them more marketable skills for future jobs – inside or out of the military.”

The program is offered on the **Web at [www.armycbt.army.mil](http://www.armycbt.army.mil)**. The classes range from how to use word-processor, database, and spreadsheet programs for beginner through advanced users to 70 certification-preparation courses for systems administrators and computer programmers.

While all the classes are free for registered users, the program does not offer actual certifications. Arrangements for certification testing and as-

sociated testing fees - often costing several hundred dollars – must be made through commercial vendors. Links to those vendors are posted on the Army CBT Web page.

Additionally, many of the offered courses may qualify for college credit. Loper recommended those interested in getting college credit for SmartForce classes check with their local Army Education Services office to determine which qualify and what costs may be involved through a college or university.

Currently, the instruction is primarily text-based with some graphics and photos. SmartForce plans to offer streaming video for instructor lectures in the future when available bandwidth is large enough, Loper said. Online mentoring service is also offered on a limited basis.

To date, 70,000-plus registered Army users have used the SmartForce instruction.

To register or view the course catalog, visit the Army CBT Web site. Registration must be made on a computer tied into an Army-wide area network using a military domain address. However, once the registration is complete, students may log on with a student number and password at home, a local library, or on any other computer connected to the Internet.

**Editor’s Note:** This information is in the public domain at <http://www.dtic.mil/armylink/news> on the Internet.