

Enhancements Will Benefit Agency, Employees

By Bill Walker
 Information Technology Customer Service Organization

Defense Contract Management Agency employees who have not participated in eTools training for a while may be surprised by its new appearance.

The agency's Information Technology Customer Service Organization is updating its training technologies in order to provide employees with effective, efficient and enjoyable training experiences through use of commercial off-the-shelf software.

"Our mission is to provide world-class distributive learning systems that allow for flexibility and agility," said Marlean Jones, the program manager leading ITCSO's training effort on new and updated eTools.

As part of this effort, the ITCSO has established a training academy. The newly minted academy delivers training that is timely, easily understood and applied. It embodies an "anyone, anytime, anywhere" training philosophy.

One of the most familiar methods for training DCMA employees is by desktop computer, referred to as computer-based training, or CBT. Authorized users can access CBT modules on the DCMA Web site at their convenience. CBT modules are presented as segments, lessons, tasks or topics, allowing users to retain small bits of information, rather than becoming overloaded with large chunks of data.

As highlighted in a recent *DCMA Express* story, CBT is also a very "green" solution; online training



Shown here is the ITCSO Training Academy logo. The Academy follows an "anyone, anytime, anywhere" philosophy.

reduces unnecessary travel and saves taxpayer dollars by eliminating expenses associated with face-to-face training.

Previously, DCMA IT used Adobe Breeze™ to conduct CBT. Keeping pace with technology, Breeze is being upgraded to Adobe® Acrobat® Connect™ Pro. Connect™ Pro has been recognized as a leader in Web conferencing and received a *PC Magazine* 2008 Editors' Choice Award as "the most complete all-in-one Web-conferencing solution."

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— Marlean Jones



Members of the ITCSO are in the process of enhancing DCMA's eTools and commercial off-the-shelf applications. From left: Jordan Holt, Margaret Schroeder, Sheri Bell, Danielle Schulze, Marlean Jones, Tammy Ashburn, Cindy Johannessen, Cynthia Armstrong and Jacky Cheong. Not pictured: Azreen Rahman.

Connect Pro has already worked well for DCMA. Recently, ITCSO eBusiness used it to conduct training on the workspace portal and demonstrated how DCMA's available reporting tools could increase productivity. Participants positively reviewed the training tools and the online experience.

Following this overwhelmingly positive response, eBusiness plans to use Connect™ Pro for training DCMA users on Microsoft Office 2007™, in addition to advanced courses in workspace portal, metrics manager and more.

Another powerful product in the training team's toolbox is Adobe® Captivate™. *Skunkworks* is utilizing Captivate's™ extensive features to create a more interactive experience

for users. Real-life simulations encourage users to actively click through an application, mimicking their day-to-day work. This results in a more enjoyable and engaging experience, enabling users to retain more information. DCMA users can even preview a simulation by visiting <http://telework.dcma.mil> and clicking on "Telework Training."

This foray into simulation is a natural extension of *Skunkworks*' use of videos — begun a few years ago — to increase the agency's ability to train users quickly at minimal cost. Videos and simulations quickly provide users with relevant information in visually engaging formats, while reducing dependency on lengthy user manuals and documentation.

All training is based on proven instructional design and interactive learning techniques. As with every CBT session, users who tune into Connect™ Pro and Captivate™ can even follow along with embedded audio and subtitles for visual and hearing-impaired employees.

DCMA users are invited to explore all the distributive learning opportunities available to them at <http://home.dcma.mil/dcma-it/ITCSO/Training/index.htm> or by logging into <http://portal.dcma.mil>.

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