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Turn About On Certification

By Richard Lowe

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On October 11th I was reading my email as usual when I opened one which stated something so unbelievable that I had to read it three times. I will admit the news was nothing compared to the events going on in the rest of the world (the September 11th terrorist attack and aftermath). However, it was very welcome nonetheless.

Microsoft has changed their policy on retiring certifications.

If you will remember, over a year ago Microsoft had announced that the Windows NT 4.0 certifications were being retired on December 31st, 2001. This meant that everyone who had slaved for months or even years to pass their exams had to rush to take the new exams for the newest operating system (Windows 2000).

Needless to say, this announcement caused quite a stir in much of the computer industry. There were hundreds of thousands of MCSE's, and all of them were effected by this decision. What made it even worse was the fact that most of us were not even upgrading to Windows 2000 anytime in the near future. Thus, we had to get certified yet we didn't really need to get certified to do our jobs.

There were quite a few announcements. The two regarding MCSE's state exactly what I had suggested in a previous article "Microsoft's ^@&^#&@ W2K MCSE Policy", so I was very happy indeed.

<http://www.internet-tips.net/Microsoft/W2KMCSEcertification.htm>

...on Windows NT 4.0, which designates the related certification as based on Windows NT 4.0. This designation applies to the following certifications:

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MCP, MCSE, MCSE+I, MCP+I, and MCP+Site Building. Thus, this MCSE would formally be called "MCSE on Windows NT 4.0."

...on Microsoft Windows 2000, which designates the related certification as based on Windows 2000, Windows XP Professional, or Windows Server .NET. This designation applies to the following certifications: MCP, MCSE, MCSA, and MCDBA (except for the latter, it's called "MCDBA on SQL Server 2000" instead). Here, this MCSE would formally be called "MCSE on Microsoft Windows 2000."

The bottom line is simple. Those of us who have the MCSE certification do not need to worry about losing it at the end of the year. It also makes

things much easier for me as an employer – now I will be able to look at a certification and get a little more information. Instead of just finding out someone is an expert on Microsoft operating systems, I will now find out exactly which operating system.

Microsoft also added a new certification, called MCSA, or Microsoft Certified Systems Administrator. This certification is great news, as it provides something between MCP and MCSE. Why is this necessary? The new MCSE for Windows 2000 is a very tough exam and it might take someone (especially those of us who work for a living) quite some time to get it done.

The MCSA certification requires three core exams and one elective. The certification is actually very well designed, and should serve as a useful guide for employers.

Why the change? Well, I think there are a number of reasons. The biggest reason? The terrorist attack and it's effect on the economy.

My peers and I have seen, in just a month, our budgets disappear, especially for things like upgrades and certifications. My boss put it very well to me last week, "if you have the choice between upgrading and laying people off, what are you going to do?" The answer is obvious. At my company, we have postponed upgrading until next year at least, which means we do not need to get certified.

Another big reason is that MCSE's have jobs, and I don't know about you, but I have trouble finding time to take the classes and tests to continue certification. It's hard enough just to keep the wife happy, write some articles, and maintain the job. So the certification, testing and learning will wait.

On top of that, Microsoft has been very unsuccessful in trying to force the computer industry to upgrade to Windows 2000 and beyond. Yes, my company did

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install Windows 2000 on all of our laptops, but we've found Windows NT 4.0 works very well on our other servers and workstations. We have no intention or need to upgrade our hundreds of systems for the next several years, unless there is a valid business reason.

Even more importantly, even though we may upgrade our systems to Windows 2000, we have no intention of installing Active Directory anytime soon. Why not? This is a huge change and we simply don't want to support it at this time.

Finally, the industry backlash on Microsoft has been huge, and the power of 400,000+ MCSE's and their supervisors should not be underestimated.

Personally, I am happy that Microsoft has made this change. Now I can concentrate on important issues like polishing our disaster site, upgrading our security measures, ensuring our backups work properly and making our systems work better for our users.

Richard Lowe Jr. is the webmaster of Internet Tips And Secrets at <http://www.internet-tips.net> – Visit our website any time to read over 1,000 complete FREE articles about how to improve your internet profits, enjoyment and knowledge.

IT Certification Exams: 3 Most Popular Mistakes

By Divya Chopra

Parallel to the growth of the IT Industry, the value and importance of IT certification exams has also gained significant momentum. More and more people are pursuing these exams and organizations are also encouraging their employees to take these certifications.

But one needs to be educated enough to make a proper choice whether to take the certification or not. And if you decide to take, then it is even more important to be clear of what it gives you and takes from you to be a certified professional. Below is a brief discussion about 3 most common mistakes, people make while deciding for these certification exams.

1. Are you expecting too much?

People have lots of expectations about IT certification exams. Some of them are appropriate while many of them are not. For e.g. if you believe that the certification itself 'will give you a job' then you are wrong. An IT certification exam like MCSE or CCNA, may 'help you get a job' but it alone can't give you a job.

Working professionals also expect huge raises on taking the certification exam. When they go to their boss or their organization, they get disappointed. A certification can definitely help you gain job stability

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or rise in career but don't expect too much. It also depends upon the organization you are working for.

2. I should take what others are appearing for

Large number of people bases their decision of choosing the exam on what other people like friends and colleagues are taking. Also, many people take the decision based on which technology is hot.

Stop and think again. Is this the certification I really want to take it? Is this the one which is worth the effort for me? Your friend's decision may be based on his/her organizational requirements but it may not be appropriate for you. The technology popular in the global market may not be popular in your country or your location. So, make sure that you are clear of the objective of your taking the certification. Don't be in a hurry to make this very crucial decision.

3. Earning a certification costs very little

Majority of people grossly underestimate the effort required to earn a certification. They just add the cost of exam or the cost of training aids they plan to take. But they fail to estimate the cost of precious time which goes into the planning, preparation and finally taking the test. Also, people don't calculate the cost if they fail to pass the exam in the first attempt.

Both of these factors cost a lot in terms of effort and money. Now, you know how to estimate the effort required.

Divya Chopra is the founder of CertLobby. CertLobby (

) ensures your success in

various IT certification exams by providing you the best available resources to prepare for various exams. The selected list of Practice Exams, Articles & Tutorials, Trainings & Bootcamps, and

Discussion Forums makes sure that you are using the best available options to be successful in your journey to be certified.



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