

Microsoft IT Academy – Progress to Date

In the 4 months since the public launch of the Washington State Library's Microsoft IT Academy, we have on-boarded almost 400 public, tribal, and community and technical college libraries. As of the end of February 2014, 3 months after our launch, we have almost 5,500 people registered with an IT Academy site statewide, a number that has so far grown by a little more than 1,000 users each month.

All of the initial sites who were with us at the launch are now active, and we have added 8 additional sites, all public libraries except for one tribal and one community college library.

In the first 3 months since Microsoft's new eLearning platform went live with our 400-odd libraries October 31st, Elizabeth Laukea, the Microsoft IT Academy Program Manager has worked closely with the Microsoft team to work through the kinks of the new system. February and March have been more stable, with few libraries reporting issues with the eLearning courses. Elizabeth has been able to offer more hands-on, targeted support to those libraries struggling to integrate this new resource into their existing services and procedures, and to begin local and statewide outreach efforts.

In January Elizabeth attended a **TRAIN Consortium** meeting and presented this group of local, state and federal governmental agencies' Training Managers (centered in Pierce County and drawing from the neighboring region) with information about the IT Academy. Our message was simple, "You now have access to FREE Microsoft eLearning courses to train your staff to use Office and Microsoft's IT professional software." All Pierce County employees received an email message introducing the IT Academy and hundreds of them asked to be connected to their local public library for access to the IT Academy.

A February edition of the **Washington Workforce Development News** featured information on the IT Academy as a resource for staff, job seekers, and local business to gain valuable IT skills and training.

Word spreads; the IT Academy was mentioned in a **Providence Health Services** employee newsletter. Employees from the 9 communities where Providence operates were given instructions on how to could connect to the IT Academy through their local libraries.

The state's **Department of Enterprise Services** will create a tab in the new state government LMS to improve findability for IT Academy courses. We are working with individual state agencies' Training Managers to offer unique, targeted solutions for their employees' training needs. Agencies partnering so far:

Utilities and Trade Commission – They have provided information on their staff intranet about the IT Academy. We provided them with a unique enrollment code link to publish on their intranet so we can 'track' participation for their staff.

Department of Veterans Affairs – Presentation at staff meeting in early March. The IT Academy is a resource they can utilize for their own staff and for their veteran clients and families to increase job skills and employability.

Labor and Industries – Lisa Engvall from the LNI Library developed information for the LNI intranet to promote usage of the IT Academy to agency staff. In addition, their **Vocational Services Division** is publicizing the IT Academy to their clients returning to work after injury as a resource to increase employability, "Injured workers throughout Washington have a unique opportunity to improve their computer skills."

Employment Security Department – The IT Academy is listed as a resource on the Go2Worksource Training Resources page, which has a statewide audience of job seekers, unemployment insurance (UI) beneficiaries, and the general public. Users are directed to the State Library's list of participating libraries where they can locate their local library and link directly to their IT Academy page. Library card in hand they can be taking courses within minutes! Additional outreach activities are planned targeting those collecting UI benefits, among other things.

Department of Health – Email to all DOH staff from their Training Manager about the IT Academy. We will track this with a unique enrollment code for this audience.

Washington Counties Risk Pool – Email message about the IT Academy to all members, directing them to access the IT Academy through their local library.

Washington National Guard – moving toward presentations to Guard members during their training weekends.

Joint Base Lewis McCord – Working with the Military Workforce Development Manager at WorkForce Central, the Pierce County Library System, the Librarian at the JBLM base Library, and staff from the Stone Education Center (on base) to promote the IT Academy to transiting military and their families. Access to the IT Academy will be through local libraries (default is Pierce County Library System).

Ongoing Activities

Working to add the 20-odd libraries who are not yet IT Academy members – all but 3 of these are tribal or community and technical college libraries.

Providing more hands-on site administration for small libraries with limited staff resources to make the IT Academy viable for them. Pilot sites in this initiative have been Castle Rock, Kelso, Weller, Odessa, Sprague, Reardan, and the Spokane Tribal Library.

Creating promotional materials that can be localized for individual library use – bookmarks, fliers, course lists, access instructions are in the works.

Certification: working on a deal with Microsoft for a year-long Pilot Project where the State Library will use variance funds to purchase MOS exam vouchers, deliver them to libraries, who will re-sell them the public to recoup staff costs incurred to set up 'testing centers' and proctor exams.

Outreach, outreach, outreach!