



ARPCT

Accessible job training for people with disabilities

Established over 30 years ago to promote training and employment opportunities for people with disabilities in the field of computer technologies, the Association of Rehabilitation Programs in Computer Technology (ARPCT) has more than 60 member programs across North America. ARPCT develops partnerships among businesses, government and private rehabilitation service organizations, people with disabilities, and education and training facilities.

ARPCT has worked with Skillsoft for over 10 years. The materials are distributed to ARPCT's rehabilitation agencies to teach students the skills they need to help them find and prepare for employment. ARPCT President Dorothy Kret said, "There's no way all these entities could have the access we need to train the number of people we need to train without Skillsoft."

A flexible solution for diverse learners

Alex Tabony, Operations Manager for Computer Technologies Program (CTP), said that like many ARPCT member organizations, CTP works with a diverse client base. "Some of our clients have

never worked, some haven't worked in 10 years, others have been working for many years and are learning to deal with a new disability — because they have all sorts of work backgrounds, they need different types of education, types of classes and types of training to become employed," he said.

Tabony also emphasized the value of the breadth and depth of Skillsoft's course offerings, which relieves staff from the burden of becoming experts in various business and technology topics. "The focus of our work is on personal attention and coaching even though training is the mission of our organizations. It would take an enormous amount of work to replace what Skillsoft does for us."

Easy implementation

ARPCT uses the Skillport learning management system (LMS) with cloud hosting, which saves the organization the costs associated with deploying and maintaining an in-house LMS. Since member agencies — and its clients — use many different computer systems and network technologies, ARPCT needed an elearning solution that worked for the majority of computers, not just the newest and fastest.



Challenge

- Help people with disabilities working with ARPCT's member agencies effectively prepare for careers.
- Provide people with various career goals and backgrounds training for the work world.
- Find an online solution that works with many different computer systems and network technologies.
- Accommodate learners with severe disabilities.

Solution

- Skillsoft® IT Skills Courseware Collection™
- Skillsoft Desktop Skills Courseware Collection™
- Skillsoft Business Skills Courseware Collection™
- Skillport® LMS

Results

- More than 13,800 people have gone through Skillsoft training programs.
- Many individuals have gone on to find rewarding careers in technology fields.
- ARPCT users have suggested enhancements to Skillsoft — and the company has paid attention.

“Many of our organizations don’t have much in the way of technical support, so if there are barriers to implementing technology, it’s not going to happen,” Tabony explained.

Another major concern: accessibility. ARPCT members serve clients with severe physical disabilities—learning resources must serve people who have limited mobility, sight or hearing. Skillsoft devotes considerable time and effort to ensure that courseware and the Skillport LMS meets the requirements of Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998: courses have been designed to work effectively for learners who are blind, deaf or have poor motor skills.

ARPCT users have suggested enhancements to Skillsoft—and the company has paid attention. “Input from ARPCT users to Skillsoft designers has helped Skillsoft become one of the most accessible collections of online resources in the marketplace,” said Kret.

Individual success stories

“More than 13,800 ARPCT students across the U.S. and Canada have benefited from Skillsoft’s support and generosity. Their user-friendly system has given access and opportunity to people with disabilities who would otherwise not have had the resources to succeed. Our partnership with Skillsoft has been a long and successful one, and we look forward to working with them for many more years,” said Kret.

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Dorothy Kret
ARPCT President

Though the number of people who have benefitted from ARPCT’s partnership with Skillsoft is an important measure of success, the impact the program has had for individual learners offers a clearer picture of its rewards.

Pat became a quadriplegic in 2003 when a farm tractor rolled over on him. After two years of physical and occupational therapy, Pat enrolled in an employment training program at an ARPCT member agency in the nearest town—more than 30 miles away. He had access to the extensive Skillsoft courseware collection at the agency, as well

as from home when snow made the drive too risky. Through the program, Pat developed the knowledge and skills to succeed in a new career. Today, he works as a network manager for a major Michigan office furniture company.

At age 10, Emily was diagnosed with neuromuscular dystonia, a progressive disease that inhibits speech and mobility. At age 21, she started attending classes at DK Advocates in Tucson, AZ to prepare for the work world. Though Emily can’t speak and can barely walk, her diligence, positive attitude and intelligence affected those around her. She became adept at office functions through her Skillsoft coursework and was hired as an office manager for an auto repair business. Emily uses an augmented communication device to answer the phone and speak to people. She has become an invaluable member of her employer’s team.



For more information or to learn more,
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