

NEC Learning, Ltd.

Early provider of Microsoft-related technical training: Hands-on, Office-related technical training

NEC Learning, Ltd. is a training company that mainly provides personnel development, training services, and e-learning. The company's range of Microsoft-related technical training programs is among the industry's largest, and it is known for its fast technical response capabilities. NEC's technical response to Open XML was typically quick. It has already started the provision of training for developers of Microsoft Office Excel® 2007 and Microsoft Office Word 2007 using Microsoft® Visual Studio® 2008. How can it provide training content at such an early phase?

Providing a wide range of training programs for Microsoft Office System products



Akiko Yamazaki
Manager,
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"We are among the best trainers for IT professionals and developers in terms of course diversity and individual company training. We also believe we are the best in the industry for the quality of trainers who constantly acquire the latest technology and the scope of training programs covered. For Office products as well, we are capable of providing more

than 50 types of training programs related to Office 2007. We provide a wide range of training programs including literacy training for Word, Excel, and Access, as well as SharePoint server, Visio, or Project training for users, administrators and developers. For

SharePoint Server, in particular, we can provide various training content for more than dozen courses," Akiko Yamazaki, Manager of the IT/NW Training Headquarters, NEC Learning, Ltd. says confidently. The company certainly has a remarkable range of training programs for the Office System product lines. Upon our request, Ms. Yamazaki gave us a summary based on the topic of Office System products. The wide range of compatible applications means that it is no easy task to provide training for Office System products in a comprehensive manner, however. Client products alone include Word, Excel, Microsoft Office PowerPoint®, Microsoft Office Visio®, Microsoft Office Project, and Microsoft Office InfoPath®. The range of training programs grows much larger still when including server system product lines such as Microsoft Office SharePoint® Server, development tools such as Visual Studio, and related server products such as Microsoft SQL Server™. Extraordinary efforts are required to absorb each of the technologies and provide training. In this task, NEC Learning has led the way.

Using Open XML for more advanced training services

So why does NEC Learning continue to make such efforts? Ms. Mami Shiino, head of the IT/NW Training Headquarters at NEC Learning, Ltd., says the following:

"Based on actual customer opinions and other factors, we feel that what is required for recent Office training is to expand its scope from user training only to more advanced application training or training provided entirely from the standpoint of administrators or developers. We recognized the

strength of customer demand for solution training using the Office platform, especially with Office Business Applications (OBA), and we decided to provide programs for Office administrators and developers. As of December 2007, our company has two types of training content related to Open XML: Open XML itself and Excel and Word front-end development using Visual Studio 2008 (VSTO3.0). Both have developed into training services that encourage more developers to recognize a range of possibilities for Open XML."

Ms. Yamazaki and Ms. Shiino both play important roles as training instructors themselves. Ms. Shiino, especially, has researched the technical data relating to Open XML and Visual Studio 2008 in detail. She herself writes codes for sample programs and creates training content. This focus on technology is one of the reasons behind Ms. Shiino's ability to persuade.

Studying advanced technologies from Japan and overseas, and creating content

"We read Office technical documents both from Japan and overseas. If there is a good document written in a language other than English, we will find it and try to make out its content ourselves. Recently, I found a document in what I believe was French, and took a look at it. Although I read English, I cannot read French. However, source codes are common to all countries, so I can always properly understand the code sections. This is why the French document was informative," continued Ms. Shiino.

Although Ms. Shiino and Ms. Yamazaki are busy learning technology, they proactively participate in technical events for administrators and developers held in the UK when needed. They are making every effort to become the first to master the assimilation of data. They are developing a great amount of sample code based on technology acquired practically through such methods. They are also creating samples to check the technical content of actual modules rather than for use in training. This is probably why their training content is so user-friendly. The provision of timely follow-ups in areas that beginners may encounter creates a framework where it is hard to lose one's way. In one instance, an instructor gave a demonstration that failed to work. Many of the students questioned what they saw. However, that demonstration had deliberately been set up to fail. In this way, the instructor gained the students' attention, explained the causes of the failure, and provided students with learning experience where they could learn the correct method from the experience that they themselves implemented.



Mami Shiino
Assistant Manager,
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Enterprise Introduction

Company Profile

NEC Learning, Ltd.

NEC Learning, Ltd. properly combines the three pillars of personnel development consulting, training services, and e-learning solutions to provide personnel development solutions optimized for customer needs.

Such service menus include state-of-the-art training services backed by rich experience and expertise on all business types under the excellent teaching staff. Further, as training infrastructure, NEC Learning is proud of the great planning and development capabilities of the e-learning solution.

From development of business management skills to acquisition and enhancement of divisional technology skills, NEC Learning provides top-class training services capable of personnel development in all company areas.

Company Website

<http://www.neclearning.jp/>

Ms. Shiino talked about such ingenuity as follows. "Sometimes students have to make mistakes when learning technical skills."

In such cases, the instructor first shows an example of a mistake, and then provides explanations including methods for improvement. This enables the students to go back to their offices with the ability to respond correctly without hesitation when carrying out development. The amount of time available for training is limited. However, in order to encourage students to acquire technical capabilities during that limited time in an efficient manner, I believe it is most important for me to learn from the failures I myself have encountered and tell my students not to make the same mistakes."

Not all excellent engineers make excellent teachers. Different skills are required to teach technology to others in a way that is easy for them to understand. Ms. Shiino and Ms. Yamazaki are constantly focused on how to communicate technology to students in a straightforward manner. They may or may not be excellent engineers, but there is little doubt that they are excellent educators.

Increasing variation focused on courses linking Office products

"Based on our passion to communicate the unlimited capabilities of Office products to more people, we intend to continue expanding the variety of Office-related training for IT professionals and developers as well as courses to link Office products. We are already providing the kernel of a course to link Visual Studio 2008 and SQL Server 2008, which are scheduled for release in the future. We are also preparing many other courses (as of December 2007), which we plan to begin from February 2008. I hope you'll look forward to them," added, Ms. Yamazaki when talking on future prospects.

Company-centered Office System applications are expanding beyond simple stationary to include business system front-ends and solutions that integrate forms or workflow linked with databases, and it is becoming essential to provide a range of training content, such as that provided by NEC Learning Ltd., to engineers who develop or manage it. We sincerely hope that they continue to explain new technology simply and communicate its essence to many more engineers in the future.



Hands-On Training Classroom

The instructor first gives an explanation, then the students experience programming on actual PCs. The instructor provides support for any learner who requires it.

For information on Ecma Office Open XML, go to <http://www.microsoft.com/japan/interop/openxml/default.mspx>.

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