IBM pioneers Internet-based software education product

Affordable new courses allow retailers in the U.S. and Canada to complete training via the Web

Raleigh, N.C., 23rd February, 1999 ... IBM today introduced IBM SUREPOS™ Application Client/Server Environment for 4690 OS (SUREPOS ACE) Internet Education, the first online training program from the IBM Retail Store Solutions organization. Through four Web-enabled courses, it provides retailers' technical staff with the knowledge and skills to implement and customize SUREPOS ACE. The first course will be available online starting in March 1999. This education is a landmark for IBM Retail Store Solutions customers in two ways.

Until now, most training courses were delivered in classrooms at IBM's Raleigh location. And for the first time, IBM Retail Store Solutions is offering technical education as a software *product* - rather than as a service offering. The education's product status makes it as affordable and easy to order as SUREPOS ACE software. Users simply pay a one-time fee per feature and receive unlimited access to all four courses in the curriculum.

Breakthrough technology for distance learning

IBM is developing and delivering the SUREPOS ACE curriculum with an award-winning technology product: Lotus® LearningSpace™. LearningSpace is a Lotus Notes® and Web-based courseware product that provides team learning environments in which students and instructors interact and collaborate in a "virtual classroom."

The flexible LearningSpace platform allows repeatable, self-study training; collaborative courses with interaction among all participants; and courses that use same-time video and audio. All courses take advantage of the Internet's rich graphics capabilities, and some incorporate hands-on exercises that users complete on the actual point-of-sale (POS) systems in their offices or labs.

All of these options provide the same enriching, enjoyable learning experience users expect from an IBM classroom course. The course does not simply tell users about SUREPOS ACE functions. It uses screen shots from the application to demonstrate various operations.

The Internet delivery system gives users remarkably easy access to course material. They simply dial in from work, home, or another remote location. Users can also proceed at their own pace, repeat training modules, and focus on the most relevant parts of the course. Best of all, employees do not have to miss work to attend courses at an IBM facility.

Detailed course offering

SUREPOS ACE Internet Education curriculum includes the following courses:

SUREPOS ACE versus 4680-4690 Supermarket Application Differences

This course provides students with knowledge of the IBM 4680-4690 Supermarket Application, with an overview of SUREPOS ACE and knowledge of the differences between the 4680-4690 Supermarket Application and SUREPOS ACE. Upon completion of this course students should understand the SUREPOS ACE application options, the functions the two applications have in common, and which functions are unique to each application. New functions provided with SUREPOS ACE will be highlighted. This course will be of value to anyone familiar with the IBM 4680-4690 Supermarket Application and who will have responsibility for planning, installing, tailoring, or supporting SUREPOS ACE.

SUREPOS ACE Planning

This course covers the functions and capabilities of SUREPOS ACE. Presentations and discussions of application functions and design alternatives supplement and reinforce the material learned during hands-on exercises. This course is recommended for anyone without 4680-4690 Supermarket Application experience who will be responsible for planning, installing, tailoring, or supporting SUREPOS ACE. Upon completion of this course, students should be able to use the SUREPOS ACE documentation to set application options to meet user requirements and perform 4690 Configuration to support the SUREPOS ACE functions. (This course does not include detailed coverage of the SUREPOS ACE Loyalty Program.)

SUREPOS ACE Loyalty Program

This course focuses on detailed functional and implementation knowledge of the SUREPOS ACE Loyalty Program. The course should be taken by anyone with the responsibility for planning and implementing the SUREPOS ACE Loyalty Program. Upon completion of this course students should be able to understand the SUREPOS ACE Loyalty Program function, plan the usage of the SUREPOS ACE Loyalty Program in a realistic environment, discuss implementation alternatives and customer responsibilities in monitoring and supporting a successful Loyalty Program.

SUREPOS ACE Programming Workshop

This course provides information and experience with techniques for extending SUREPOS ACE. Presentation modules on SUREPOS ACE internal design and extension techniques supplement and reinforce material learned during course exercises. Upon completion of this course students should be able to use recommended techniques and guidelines to extend SUREPOS ACE function. This course should be taken by IBM Business Partners and customers who will be responsible for maintaining or extending SUREPOS ACE.

Courses will be made available on various dates beginning in March 1999. They can be accessed with most Java®-enabled Web browsers. For some courses, a running SUREPOS ACE system is necessary for hands-on exercises. More information about these SUREPOS ACE courses and other education can be found at the Retail Store Solutions Education and Training Website at http://www.ibm.com/education/retail/ or by contacting your IBM representative.

Listening to retail customers

SUREPOS ACE Internet Education is the latest phase in IBM Retail Store Solutions' new education strategy, which was developed in response to a worldwide survey on customer training needs. Today, IBM Retail Store Solutions is developing a series of education programs delivered through personal computers, CD-ROM, and the Internet.

IBM Distribution Industry

IBM's Distribution Industry provides retailers, wholesalers and consumer goods manufacturers with consulting, focused on business transformation, IT strategy and planning, store operations improvement, and supply chain optimization; with services, such as outsourcing, managed operations, systems integration, and application development and design; with solutions; and with technology.

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