



ISSUE 1, VOLUME 2005

Welcome to the Cisco CCIE Candidate Newsletter, featuring topics relevant to networking professionals who are pursuing expert-level CCIE certification. In this issue we look at how Cisco CCIE certification exams are developed to help ensure relevance, fairness, and the best possible quality.

EXAMS DEVELOPED BY TEAM OF EXPERTS

Cisco Systems has a great deal of expertise when it comes to challenging networking scenarios. To develop the CCIE written and lab exams, technical experts from many areas in the company work together to determine which skills and techniques are most relevant. An exam development team with representatives from Cisco product, technology and support organizations is formed. The daily work of these people is a great resource for developing exam questions.

In highly-specialized areas such as secure VPNs, Cisco subject matter experts create test questions and review suggested solutions for accuracy. Other resources used in exam development are Cisco standard architectures, the resolution of support cases, technical bulletins, and best practice whitepapers.

CUSTOMER INPUT IS ACTIVELY SOLICITED

Input from Cisco experts is not the only important factor—customer input is vital. CCIE program managers present at Networkers conferences, attend Cisco Partner Summits, and meet informally with CCIEs in each region, to discuss technologies and gather input on topics to be added or removed from CCIE exams.

In addition, Cisco also distributes an annual survey to each individual identified as a CCIE, asking for feedback on exam content and other program features. Periodically, focus groups or other sessions are held to hear the thoughts of both certified CCIEs and candidates for CCIE certification. This interaction helps ensure the exams are influenced in a direct and meaningful way by the IT community outside Cisco.

CCIE NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTION:

The CCIE Candidate Newsletter is published quarterly. Manage your subscription by sending a message to ccie-promo@cisco.com and indicate “subscribe” or “unsubscribe” in the subject line or body of the message.

EXAM DEVELOPMENT IS A FORMAL PROCESS

Each of the Cisco CCIE tracks has a content manager who coordinates and consolidates the input from experts and customers into a coherent and comprehensive examination. The content manager is responsible for managing each exam version through its life cycle—from initiation and planning, through implementation and control, all the way to retirement.

The first and most important step is building an exam blueprint, and clearly identifying the skills and knowledge to be tested. Because time is so valuable during an exam, each question must focus on a relevant technical concept or ability. Both written and lab exam questions are then reviewed for technical accuracy and undergo a grammar and style check. The development team must consider that exams are given around the world to many people for whom English is not their native language.

Proctors are also closely involved in the development of lab exams. They are the first people to take the exam and help create supporting documentation, such as the grading guide. The proctors provide quality control and check that the questions and documentation meet their objectives.

After the exams have been reviewed, revised as needed, and released by the content managers, they are officially made available to customers. Multiple versions of exams for each track are created to prevent candidates from memorizing the exam. Each version has a limited life span and is eventually replaced to ensure the exam has not been seen by candidates before. The result is that, just about the time an exam is released, the team is often already developing its replacement.

More information on the content of CCIE written and lab exams is contained in the exam blueprints posted on the CCIE Website at www.cisco.com/go/ccie. Click on Exam Information or on the track of your choice. The Website also contains several sample questions for each track, taken from recently retired written exams.

Please contact our customer service team with any questions at ccie@cisco.com.

© 1992-2005 Cisco Systems, Inc. All rights reserved. Important Notices, Privacy Statement, and Trademarks of Cisco Systems, Inc.