



SkillSoft Technical Skills Curriculum Review

INTRODUCTION

In order to assist faculty find their way through the Technical Skills curriculum, the Center for Teaching and Learning has identified a list of useful Skillsoft technical courses. These courses have been evaluated based on these five areas: Content/presentation logic, Visual appearance, Media use, Assessments, and Timeliness. The review includes the course title, number, components, duration, comments, description, date evaluated, and overall rating.

▲ This SkillSoft Technical Course may be used toward the CTL Faculty Development Workshop Certificate Program (WCP) for the Advanced Certificate.

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COURSE EVALUATION RUBRIC

Each course is rated by an overall number (between 1 and 5), which evaluates the course in five areas:
Content/presentation logic, Visual appearance, Media use, Assessments, and Timeliness

EVALUATION RUBRIC	
5 (Best)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very strong, logical content presentation • Clean, exciting graphical interface • Very easy to navigate • Highly interactive and engaging for the learner • Likely to include audio • Assessments are varied and fully test learners' knowledge • Deals with very recent product information (within 3 years)
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong, logical content presentation • Simulations and interactive features in most areas • Clean, exciting graphical interface • Very easy to navigate • Very interactive and engaging for the learner • May include audio • Assessments are varied and test learners' knowledge • Deals with very recent product information (within 3 years) • Very interactive and engaging for the learner
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logical content presentation • Simulations and interactive features are common • Clean graphical interface • Easy to navigate • Often interactive and engaging for the learner • May include audio • Deals with recent product information (within 3-5 years)
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate content presentation • Limited simulations and interactive features • Unexciting graphical interface • Sometime difficult to navigate • Not very interactive or engaging for the learner • No audio • Assessments inadequately test learners' knowledge • May deal with outdated product information (more than 5 years)
1 (Worst)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor and/or illogical content presentation • No simulations or interactive features • Unattractive/crowded graphical interface • Difficult to navigate • Not interactive or engaging for the learner • No audio • Assessments fail to test learners' knowledge • May deal with outdated product information (more than 5 years)

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INTERNET EXPLORER

Name of Course: Fundamentals of Internet Explorer 6 (non-audio) (63364_eng)		
Course Description: To provide an overview of the fundamental navigation, saving, printing, help, mail, and media features of Internet Explorer 6		
Date(s) Evaluated: August 24, 2005	Course Components: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Simulation <input type="checkbox"/> Audio <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: self-tests; pop-up questions; animated text	
<p>Overall Impressions (quality of instructional content as well as graphics and layout and design): Technical and design problems earned this course a below average rating. For this review, installation of Macromedia Shockwave Player required for simulations did not work properly and blocked access to several course sections. It was impossible to assess whether this problem will occur on other machines as well.</p> <p>Nevertheless, the course contains useful information on the basics of using Explorer 6, including: working with links and favorites, saving and printing web pages and using email and newsgroups. The course offers a moderate level of interactivity. Unfortunately, the interface design is cluttered and it takes time to get used to using navigational arrows on the course page itself rather than on the template bar (bottom of the designed screen) used in most Skillsoft courses. This is an unexciting but usable course.</p>		
Overall Rating: 1-5 (5 being the highest) 2 (should be a 3 if Shockwave works)	Time to complete Course: 200 mins	

Note: Estimated time to complete each course is listed in the course description. Course Components (course type) is located beside the list of topics within a course.

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INTERNET EXPLORER

Name of Course: Moving on with Internet Explorer 6 (non-audio) (63365_eng)		
Course Description: To understand the advanced and customizable features of Internet Explorer		
Date(s) Evaluated: August 25, 2005	Course Components: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Simulation <input type="checkbox"/> Audio <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: self-tests; animated text; pop-up questions	
<p>Overall Impressions (quality of instructional content as well as graphics and layout and design): This is a very good course how-to course on the use of many Internet Explorer 6 features, including toolbars, options and settings, preferences, security and privacy settings, and Content Advisor. The interface is clean-looking and animated text keeps the learner's attention. The user does have to get used to the fact that navigational arrows for content sections appear on the content screen and not, as in most Skillsoft courses, at the bottom of the course frame.</p> <p>I was unable to access the simulation sections of this course due problems downloading the Shockwave plug-in required. Even without the simulation portion this course does a good job of taking users beyond the basics of Internet Explorer.</p>		
Overall Rating: 1-5 (5 being the highest) 3	Time to complete Course: 160 minutes	

Note: Estimated time to complete each course is listed in the course description. Course Components (course type) is located beside the list of topics within a course.

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MICROSOFT EXPLORER AND OUTLOOK

Name of Course: Information and Communication – non audio (117011_eng)		
Course Description: To demonstrate how to use Microsoft Internet Explorer 6 to search and browse the Internet and to show how to use Outlook 2002 to send and receive e-mail messages		
Date(s) Evaluated: July 26, 2005	Course Components: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Simulation <input type="checkbox"/> Audio <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: self-tests, pop-up questions, animated text	
Overall Impressions (quality of instructional content as well as graphics and layout and design): This course is given with audio (see Information and Communication (117011_eng). It is an adequate course for learning the basics of web browsing and printing/saving web pages as well as somewhat more advanced features like setting preferences and favorites and managing mail and contacts in Outlook. The plain graphical interface uses line art and screen captures and, though a bit cluttered at times, is easy enough to navigate. Nothing too exciting here, but a solid course for beginners and for those who may want to fine tune how they negotiate the web.		
Overall Rating: 1-5 (5 being the highest) 2 Recommend Information and Communication (117011_eng), with audio, instead	Time to complete Course: 6:15 Hours	

Note: Estimated time to complete each course is listed in the course description. Course Components (course type) is located beside the list of topics within a course.

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MICROSOFT EXPLORER AND OUTLOOK

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Course Description: To demonstrate how to use Microsoft Internet Explorer 6 to search and browse the Internet and to show how to use Outlook 2002 to send and receive e-mail messages		
Date(s) Evaluated: July 26, 2005	Course Components: <input type="checkbox"/> Simulation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: self-tests, pop-up questions, animated text	
Overall Impressions (quality of instructional content as well as graphics and layout and design): This is an adequate course for learning the basics of web browsing and printing/saving web pages as well as somewhat more advanced features like setting preferences and favorites and managing mail and contacts in Outlook. The plain graphical interface uses line art and screen captures and, though a bit cluttered at times, is easy enough to navigate. Nothing too exciting here, but a solid course for beginners and for those who may want to fine tune how they negotiate the web.		
Overall Rating: 1-5 (5 being the highest) 3	Time to complete Course: 315 mins	

Note: Estimated time to complete each course is listed in the course description. Course Components (course type) is located beside the list of topics within a course.

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Microsoft Office Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook 2007

Name of Course: Microsoft Office Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook 2007 (239874_eng)		
Course Description:		
Date(s) Evaluated: July 8, 2007	Course Components: __ Simulation __ Audio _x_ Other: self-test questions, dynamic text	
Overall Impressions (quality of instructional content as well as graphics and layout and design): The course presentation of the updated features of Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook are good for both the novice and expert users of those applications; however the mentioned updates in Excel may seem foreign for some users not familiar with the use of formulas. Overall the presentation does a good job of identifying the new features and their usefulness. The interactive components, self-test questions and a test at the end of each section assist with reinforcing the content covered in the course. The interface is user-friendly.		
Overall Rating: 1-5 (5 being the highest) 4	Time to complete Course: 90 mins	

Note: Estimated time to complete each course is listed in the course description. Course Components (course type) is located beside the list of topics within a course.

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MICROSOFT OFFICE

Name of Course: Microsoft Office 2003: New Features for End Users (117529_eng)  This SkillSoft Technical Course may be used toward the CTL Faculty Development Workshop Certificate Program (WCP) for the Advanced Certificate.		
Course Description: To describe new features of Microsoft Office Word, Excel, and PowerPoint 2003		
Date(s) Evaluated: July 18, 2005	Course Components: <input type="checkbox"/> Simulation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Other: self-test quizzes and questions	
Overall Impressions (quality of instructional content as well as graphics and layout and design): This is an excellent course for those familiar with earlier version of MS Office who want to learn the new features introduced in Office 2003. The graphical interface is clear and attractive and considerable interactivity is supplied through audio, varied self-test questions, and animated graphics and text. The course covers new, useful writing and research tools, including smart tags, research library, and document workspace collaboration, as well as updates to Excel and PowerPoint. It does not review the basic functioning of the Office product suite. This information is available in the separately-constructed modules for Office 2000.		
Overall Rating: 1-5 (5 being the highest) 4	Time to complete Course: 140 mins	

Note: Estimated time to complete each course is listed in the course description. Course Components (course type) is located beside the list of topics within a course.

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MICROSOFT POWERPOINT

Name of Course: Customizing PowerPoint 2003 Presentations (121956_eng)		
<p>▲ This SkillSoft Technical Course may be used toward the CTL Faculty Development Workshop Certificate Program (WCP) for the Advanced Certificate.</p>		
Course Description: To describe how to customize PowerPoint 2003 presentations		
Date(s) Evaluated: July 23, 2005	Course Components: <u>_x_</u> Simulation <u>_x_</u> Audio <u>_x_</u> Other: mentored exercise, pop-up questions, self-tests; animated graphics.	
Overall Impressions (quality of instructional content as well as graphics and layout and design): This course is a great way to gain and improve PowerPoint skills, including animation, multimedia, color, and background. It is highly interactive and presents a good mix of simulations, self-test questions, and a summary exercise that can be submitted to a Skillsoft mentor for feedback. The interface is easy to navigate and reasonably attractive. While the course provides how-to information, it does not deal with the aesthetic issues of what makes presentations most effective and attractive.		
Overall Rating: 1-5 (5 being the highest) 4	Time to complete Course: 120	

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Name of Course: Creating Basic Presentations using PowerPoint 2003 (121383_eng)		
Course Description: To explain how to create basic presentations using PowerPoint 2003		
Date(s) Evaluated: July 19, 2007	Course Components: <u>_X_</u> Simulation <u>_X_</u> Audio <u>_x_</u> Other: self-test questions, dynamic text	
Overall Impressions (quality of instructional content as well as graphics and layout and design): The course presentation of PowerPoint 2003 is a basic introduction on how to use the application to create presentation slides. The content is covered in a manner which persons having little or no experience can easily understand and complete the process of developing a presentation at the conclusion of the course. The simulations and questions reinforced the content covered within the course. The interface is user-friendly and easy to follow. I would only note that PowerPoint 2003 has been replaced with PowerPoint 2007.		
Overall Rating: 1-5 (5 being the highest) 4	Time to complete Course: 160 minutes	

Note: Estimated time to complete each course is listed in the course description. Course Components (course type) is located beside the list of topics within a course.

MICROSOFT PROJECT

Name of Course: Creating and Defining a Project (132490_eng)		
Course Description: To discuss the basics of project management and to begin creating a new project using Project Professional 2003		
Date(s) Evaluated: August 7, 2007	Course Components: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Simulation <input type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Other: self-test questions, dynamic text	
Overall Impressions (quality of instructional content as well as graphics and layout and design): The course gives an overview of project management and how Microsoft Project 2003 can be used to manage projects. This course could be beneficial to persons who are new to either project management or MS Project 2003. The content covers the beginning steps of using MS Project 2003 to create a project and manage its task, calendar and resources. It also covers how to create reports. The simulations and questions reinforced the content covered within the course. The interface is user-friendly and easy to follow.		
Overall Rating: 1-5 (5 being the highest) 4	Time to complete Course: 240 minutes	

Note: Estimated time to complete each course is listed in the course description. Course Components (course type) is located beside the list of topics within a course.

Visio

Name of Course: Creating Diagrams with Visio 2003 (132531_eng)		
Course Description: To introduce Visio 2003 and its features and demonstrate how to use it to create diagrams.		
Date(s) Evaluated: July 17, 2007	Course Components: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Simulation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Other: self-test questions, dynamic text	
Overall Impressions (quality of instructional content as well as graphics and layout and design): The course presentation of the Windows Visio covers using of the interface, help features, using templates, and creating a diagram. The simulations and questions reinforced the content covered within the course. The interface is user-friendly and easy to follow along with, that being said one of the simulation task is unclear and may confuse users when attempting to complete the steps.		
Overall Rating: 1-5 (5 being the highest) 4	Time to complete Course: 195 minutes	

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Windows Vista

Name of Course: Windows Vista User Experience (242954_eng)		
Course Description: To recognize the changes to the Windows User interface and new and enhanced Windows applications		
Date(s) Evaluated: July 17, 2007	Course Components: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Simulation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Other: self-test questions, dynamic text	
Overall Impressions (quality of instructional content as well as graphics and layout and design): The course presentation of the Windows Vista covers topics such as using the new interface and desktop features, collaboration tools, system tools and media tools. Both advanced and beginners will benefit from viewing this presentation. The interactive components, self-test questions and tests at the end of each section assist with reinforcing the content covered in the course. The interface is user-friendly; however some of the images of the desktop look distorted.		
Overall Rating: 1-5 (5 being the highest) 3	Time to complete Course: 120 minutes	

Note: Estimated time to complete each course is listed in the course description. Course Components (course type) is located beside the list of topics within a course.

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WEB AUTHORING

Name of Course: Advanced Design Functionality of Macromedia Flash MX (69652_eng)		
 This SkillsSoft Technical Course may be used toward the CTL Faculty Development Workshop Certificate Program (WCP) for the Advanced Certificate.		
Course Description: To describe how to use Flash for advanced design functionality		
Date(s) Evaluated: July 7, 2005	Course Components: <input type="checkbox"/> _x_ Simulation <input type="checkbox"/> _ Audio <input type="checkbox"/> _x_ Other: self-test questions, dynamic text	
Overall Impressions (quality of instructional content as well as graphics and layout and design): Course presents excellent background information and how-to instruction about importing audio, video, and dynamic text using Flash MX. It also details how to integrate Flash elements into an HTML page. The graphical layout is clean and interesting, with strong colors, some photos, and several Flash objects. The learner is kept engaged with dynamic text and arrows, interactive self-test questions, and tests at the end of each section. Simulations at the end of each section give the learner hands-on practice and reinforce learning.		
Overall Rating: 1-5 (5 being the highest) 4	Time to complete Course: 180 mins	

Note: Estimated time to complete each course is listed in the course description. Course Components (course type) is located beside the list of topics within a course.

Prerequisites: The Macromedia Flash MX: Foundation learning path; familiarity with web terminology; experience of Microsoft Windows or Macintosh operating systems.

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WEB AUTHORING

Name of Course: Advanced HTML Design Elements (31592_eng)		
Course Description: To describe, and equip students to use, advanced HTML elements such as complex tables, frames and framesets, metadata and the META tag, and style sheets		
Date(s) Evaluated: July 1, 2005	Course Components: ___ Simulation ___ Audio _x_ Other: mentored exercises; self-test questions; flash objects	
Overall Impressions (quality of instructional content as well as graphics and layout and design): The course's most interesting feature is the mentored exercise at the beginning to pre-test the learner's existing HTML knowledge and again at the course's end to assess new knowledge. Using the email address provided (tested on July 1, 2005), the learner sends the exercise to a Skillsoft tutor who provides individualized feedback. The course also uses self-test questions at the beginning of sections to help learners pinpoint knowledge gaps and then throughout for interactivity. Course content is generally strong. However, emphasis on use of frames and framesets does not reflect the fact that most web designers today no longer use frames because pages cannot be bookmarked. Also, browsers more commonly support level 2 cascading style sheets than the course reports. Screen captures, simple color schemes, and line art make the course visually simple, but appealing, and easy to navigate.		
Overall Rating: 1-5 (5 being the highest) 4	Time to complete Course: 180 Minutes	

Note: Estimated time to complete each course is listed in the course description. Course Components (course type) is located beside the list of topics within a course.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of the Internet Concepts, Networking and Internetworking, and Working with HTML learning paths, or successful completion of the CIW examination 1D0 - 410: Foundations or the CompTIA IK0 - 001: i-Net+TM certification examination.

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WEB AUTHORIZING

Name of Course: Building a Successful Web Site (EBUS0105)		
<p>Course Description: This course is a "how to" guide to building an effective Web site, particularly for business. You'll learn step-by-step methods and processes to help you design or enhance your Web site. Web sites can be inviting, easy to use, and convenient or they can be boring, difficult to navigate, and confusing. They can be static or ever-evolving. The advertising adage, "You have five seconds to capture their attention," holds even more weight in the highly saturated Internet market. Alternatives are available at the click of a button. This course focuses on getting set up, designing effective customer interfaces, building Internet relationships, and adding customer value. You'll explore Web site design, online catalogs and intermediaries, and ways to add value using proven approaches to customer support.</p>		
Date(s) Evaluated: 6/15/05	Course Components: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Simulation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: job aides; self-tests	
<p>Overall Impressions (quality of instructional content as well as graphics and layout and design): This course focuses on the general issues to be considered when building and managing a website, for particularly for business. It is not a how-to course on web design tools and assumes the use of a technical web designer. It has a good balance of basic background information and specific design tips. The course easy to navigate and is highly interactive. It keeps the learner engaged with interactive questions intermingled with text, audio narration, sidebars, and simulated role plays. Audio narration can be on and off and multimedia segments can bypassed, thus giving the learner control over course pacing.</p>		
Overall Rating: 1-5 (5 being the highest) 5	Time to complete Course: 2.5 hours	Web development; online marketing

Note: Estimated time to complete each course is listed in the course description. Course Components (course type) is located beside the list of topics within a course.

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WEB AUTHORIZING

Name of Course: Internet Site Development (31847_eng)		
Course Description: To demonstrate how to write basic HTML code to create web pages that incorporate hyperlinks, tables, forms, image maps, and style sheets		
Date(s) Evaluated: July 1, 2005	Course Components: <input type="checkbox"/> _x_ Simulation <input type="checkbox"/> _x_ Audio <input type="checkbox"/> _x_ Other: self-test questions; self-test exams; rollovers	
Overall Impressions (quality of instructional content as well as graphics and layout and design): This is a solid course on the development and use of HTML coding in site development. It is appropriate for a novice as well as anyone wishing to refresh their skills because it explains the logic behind HTML as well as how-to information. A pastel color palette and line art give the course a clean, functional, though somewhat unexciting, visual appearance. A moderate degree of interactivity is introduced through various self-test questions and simulations in two of the four sections. The simulations give the learner a chance to try the HTML coding on a page. Though HTML 4 is still widely used some of the specific information no longer applies to newer coding versions, DHTML and XML		
Overall Rating: 1-5 (5 being the highest) 3	Time to complete Course: 235 minutes	

Note: Estimated time to complete each course is listed in the course description. Course Components (course type) is located beside the list of topics within a course.

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WEB AUTHORIZING

Name of Course: Style Sheets and Links (70152_eng)		
Course Description: To explain the use of style sheets and links in XML and to discuss different XML applications		
Date(s) Evaluated: July 5, 2005	Course Components: ___ Simulation ___ Audio _x_ Other: self-tests and multiple choice questions	
Overall Impressions (quality of instructional content as well as graphics and layout and design): This course provides solid information in a clear, logical, but unimaginative way. Interactivity is limited to self-test questions, only two exercises, and unit tests. This leaves the learner to click through screens of explanation and some HTML coding. The course has a clean, but bland look due to line graphics and a simple color palette. Students will require a lot of self-motivation to stay with this lengthy course.		
Overall Rating: 1-5 (5 being the highest) 3	Time to complete Course: 315 mins.	

Note: Estimated time to complete each course is listed in the course description. Course Components (course type) is located beside the list of topics within a course.

Prerequisites: basic understanding of the Internet, computers, and computing terms; experience with web-page development, HTML, and JavaScript.

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WEB AUTHORIZING

Name of Course: Web-based Interface Design (#ADPG02E)		
Course Description: To teach the principles of effective Graphical User Interface (GUI) design for web-based applications, including design elements and navigation methods.		
Date(s) Evaluated: 6/13/05	Course Components: ___ Simulation ___ Audio __x__ Other: imbedded self-tests	
Overall Impressions (quality of instructional content as well as graphics and layout and design): This course presents some good basic web design information but is dated in appearance and in some technical content. Information is logically organized but navigation is cumbersome, as one has to go through a central menu to move back and forth within a module or to advance to another section of the course. Graphics consist of unexciting stick figures and unimaginative color choices. Interactivity is limited to pop-up self-tests and short questions which are sometimes intrusive.		
Overall Rating: 1-5 (5 being the highest) 2	Time to complete Course: 4 hours	Web-design

Note: Estimated time to complete each course is listed in the course description. Course Components (course type) is located beside the list of topics within a course.

Prerequisite: GUI Design Fundamentals would be useful, otherwise a basic understanding of Graphical User Interfaces (GUIs) would be required.

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WEB AUTHORIZING

Name of Course: XML Web Services and Microsoft.NET (61990_eng)		
Course Description: To introduce the concepts of XML web services, publishing, and accessing.		
Date(s) Evaluated: 6/17/05	Course Components: ___ Simulation ___ Audio _x_ Other: self tests; interactive multiple choice questions; rollovers	
Overall Impressions (quality of instructional content as well as graphics and layout and design): Course presents explanatory and technical information on web services development in a straightforward manner. The clean layout is easy to read and navigate but line-drawn graphics are static and unexciting. Enough interactivity is provided through rollovers and multiple choice and mix and match questions to maintain learner interest. Self-tests are provided; final exercise offers a good, self-test review of basics.		
Overall Rating: 1-5 (5 being the highest) 3	Time to complete Course: 190 min	Web design; e-commerce

Note: Estimated time to complete each course is listed in the course description. Course Components (course type) is located beside the list of topics within a course.

Prerequisites: Microsoft .NET for Developers learning path; some knowledge of XML and XML namespaces; familiarity with the .NET platform; Internet and intranet skills, namely HTTP, HTML, and ASP; knowledge and/or experience in object-oriented development languages, such as VB, C#, C++, or Java; familiarity with VB.NET syntax.

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