# Multimedia Classroom

By Elizabeth Barnett

Every business faces the challenge of bringing employees and customers quickly up to speed on new technologies without affecting productivity. Enter computer-based training.

"Ideally, teaching people one-on-one is the best method," says Roger Grant, president of Business Development Group Inc., a company specializing in the creation of computer-based training. "But the reality is that's very expensive and physically impossible if you have customers around the world. The next best is computer-based training."

Computer-based training (CBT) opens the door to all sorts of multimedia techniques: audio, visual and hypertext capabilities. Studies show that by reading, seeing, hearing and doing with CBT, learners retain more information in a shorter amount of time than with traditional classroom-lecture training, says Grant, whose company has created custom CBT for some of the biggest names in technology, including IBM, Citrix, Fujitsu, MCI Worldcom and Novell.

CBT offers advantages for both the learner and for companies searching for effective knowledge transfer. Learners can pace themselves, skipping material that's not relevant to them and spending more time with material that is. They can study when and where it's most convenient for them. They can save travel expenses and time away from the business. And they can obtain immediate feedback about their subject mastery through CBT's interactive questions and tests. Companies save money in distribution, trainer travel and materials expenses, and training facility and equipment costs. Companies can also save time in updating course materials through CBT's modular approach.

To augment BASIS technical documentation and training classes, we began employing CBT techniques this year. The demo CDs we've produced for the Advantage not only show you BASIS products but how they work. For this issue and our fourth CD, we've added new tutorials and sample programs. You can see and manipulate the code behind the programs. So far, we've featured the BASIS GUI tools because we know GUI is the development mode of 2000. And we've had great results: requests for the CDs have been overwhelming.



BASIS plans more. We think CBT will be crucial for BBj™, our next product generation. The BBj development model is focused on internets, enterprise computing and powerful data access and storage capabilities. BASIS must ensure that BBj developers know how to fully seize and manipulate these capabilities to their maximum. We plan to provide this knowledge to developers partly through a specialized, intensive training and certification program using CBT. We also plan more comprehensive reseller sales training using CBT.