Bridging the Gap to Support Our Workforce Goals

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Why does this issue matter?

• “Creation, acquisition, and management of information is central to the new economy”
  – National Academies, 2001

• Customers’ expectations
• Managers’ expectations
• Changing workforce is a reality
The 30,000-Foot Perspective

• Workforce development: more than just filling positions

• Preparation for the job
  – New employees
  – Existing employees

• Information technology is BOTH part of the challenge, and part of the solution
What *are* our workforce goals?

Existing workforce / New employees

Knowledge transfer

Training *FOR* new technology

Training that *USES* new technology

Training to *THINK AND WORK DIFFERENTLY*
What is the IT Gap?

For Existing Workforce:

• Learning *new technologies* themselves

• Learning *new practices* to do the same or different things

• *Using technology to transfer knowledge*

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IT Gap for Existing Employees

Example: Advanced Metering Infrastructure

- From simpler, routine tasks like reading meters...
- To more analytical tasks like interpreting data to anticipate potential problems
- From knowledge gained over years of experience
- To marrying that knowledge with the power of technology
What is the IT Gap?

For New Workforce:

- First we have to find and attract good people
- Use IT to reach people where they are
  - Social media
  - Don’t forget traditional media, face-to-face
  - Websites such as Work for Water
What is the IT Gap?

For New Workforce:

- Rapidly build the knowledge base—How? Who?

- And vendors, too

It takes ALL of us!
Tools for Building the Bridge

- Traditional classroom training (In-person)
- Workshops / Educational Events (In-person)
- Hands-on field experience (In-person)
- Using Information Technology
  - On-line training (Remote)
  - Webinars (Remote)
  - Virtual reality
Bridging the IT Gap

• We face two simultaneous challenges:
  – Transferring knowledge that is staying the same
  – Learning the things that are changing

• IT is part of the challenge AND part of the solution

• What’s critical is a *culture of continuous learning*

• Education providers need to step it up

• There’s more than enough work for everyone
Thank you for inviting me

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