

# TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

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## Voice Mail

## Doer's Profile



**Babs Bengtson**  
*Applied Research Laboratory  
Pennsylvania State  
University*

The Doer's Profile helps you expand your networking capabilities and keeps you informed about the interesting and exciting things your colleagues are doing in the field.

This month's profile features Babs Bengtson.

Bengtson is a training and development specialist at the Applied Research Laboratory of Pennsylvania State University, State College, Pennsylvania. Bengtson specializes in technical training on one-of-a-kind machines developed by ARL.

### Most exciting new development:

"The opportunities to use new technology for technical training. Before, multimedia meant using a flipchart and overheads. Now, we have electronic performance-support systems that are phenomenal."

**Biggest problem:** "Being able to communicate what value I can add to the organization and specific projects. For example, I do a lot of writing—proposals, manuals, and other materials. I feel that this is just as valuable as designing new software."

**Most recent accomplishment.** "I just had three books published by the National Technical Transfer Center to use in a curriculum. My work has been published as in-house materials, but this is the first time I've been published by an outside organization. I'm very excited."

**Are there differences between HRD and technical training?** "One, there's an unfair disparity in prestige and salary. The mindset is that

all technical trainers are from the plant floor and haven't been to college. People think technical trainers only know how to set up machines. But I've had to be more educated than when I was doing the 'touchy-feely' stuff. To design the training on a particular machine, I have to understand how it works. I have to be able to interact with subject matter experts and translate their knowledge into materials for trainees. I really have to stretch."

**Editor's note:** We reported in the "Doer's Profile" for February 1994 that our subject Katrina Myers was laid off from her job. We thought you'd like to know that Katrina is now employed as a course developer at IDX Systems in Burlington, Vermont. And as a result of her appearance in the "Doer's Profile," she has been asked to speak at a conference of the International Society of Fire Service Instructors.

give positive reinforcements to students who are achieving the goals set by the systems' authors. That is called "computer-assisted" learning—as opposed to computer-based training. There is a world of difference between the two terms.

In addition, the section on interactive video asserts that some companies are discouraged from using interactive video and CBT because of costs.

That isn't the case. PCs and laptop computers are proliferating throughout various businesses, used mainly as wordprocessors. Computers aren't used more to deliver training because of the lack of well-designed programs and the high cost of creating customized programs.

One solution to both of those problems is to create one's own computer-assisted learning using an authoring system.