

Barry Whitehouse – LPIC 1 - Desktop Support Technician Havering College of Further and Higher Education



What is Barry's role?

Barry is employed as a Desktop Support Technician at Havering College of Further and Higher Education. The role is typically providing 2nd to 3rd line support for hardware and software installation, diagnosis of desktop application, networking and infrastructure issues, comprising of approximately 2'500 desktop PC's and Various Apple Macs.

What is a typical day for a Desktop Support Technician?

The challenge, skill and fun in the role is the wide range of support calls ranging from IP Telephony issues, Desktop PC problems, Switch and port patching, supporting external clients with general desktop and network problems.

The role also carries the responsibility of covering for the network teams when they are busy, colleagues on annual leave or ill. This was Barry's introduction to Linux servers, and identified the need for further training. This is where the CompTIA Linux+ powered by LPI comes into its own as it's always surprising how much you remember.

What was Barry's background prior to being a Support Technician?

Barry's previous work experience couldn't be further from IT. From teenage years he worked in the family owned business of haulage / freight container storage and repair also cell phone supplier and airtime provider up to 1991. Regrettably competition, tough margins and a drop in demand forced the business to close.

For about the next 10 years Barry tried a number of different careers before deciding to make the leap into IT – this was about 2000 / 2001.

The first Certifications

Considering Barry was new to IT he embarked on the hard challenge of self-study with the CompTIA Network+. It took two attempts before Barry passed the Certification and then continued with the iNet+.



The benefits of Certification

The combination of these two Certifications earned Barry a job at Havering College of Further and Higher Education as a Desktop Support Technician. Since joining Havering College of Further and Higher Education Barry has also achieved: Microsoft's MCP & MCSA, Cisco CCNA, Apple ACSP & ACTC.



Why did Barry choose CompTIA Linux+ Powered by LPI?

Barry was always interested in Linux, although he would often get intimidated by what seemed a complex command line based OS but he knew that he had to dive in with "gusto" if he wanted to master the bare basics.

The real catalyst was attending a CentOS dojo event with a colleague (Gerrard Shaw). The College was considering a migration from OpenSUSE server to CentOS. Gerrard and Barry could see the value to ourselves themselves and their employer in studying for the CompTIA Linux+ powered by LPI Certification. Havering College of Further and Higher Education funded the exams and both Barry and Gerrard set themselves a year to complete it by self-study.

One key reason for choosing CompTIA Linux+ LPI was not only did they get the Linux+ Certification but also the LPI Certification which they knew was "one of the most respected vendor neutral Certifications" and on top of that it included the Novell SUSE CLA certification.

Barry saw the personal benefits to be Certified in Linux by the world's leading Linux Certification and learning an OS that had always been something of mystery to him.

Post Certification what benefits has Barry seen?

If Barry hadn't embarked on this journey Barry would not have learnt the basics of Linux administration and would not have been able to assist the network team in supporting their Linux servers when needed, which gives him a great sense of satisfaction as well as career progression.

As Barry studied, Barry was learning a lot about Linux and feeling a lot more comfortable and confident with Linux. Obviously there is still much more to learn but the Linux+ powered by LPI covers the majority of what Barry needs at the moment for basic Linux administration.

What Tips would Barry offer to future candidates?

The best way to learn is practical practise with an old laptop and a copy of two different distros (Barry used CentOS and Ubuntu). Barry preferred this over a Virtual PC as it forced him to try and fix problems he had created while practising instead of reverting to a snapshot.

For reading, Barry would recommend: CompTIA Linux+ Study Guide: (Second Edition) Exams LX0-101 and LX0-102 by Roderick W. Smith. It is a bit hard to process in places but there is a lot of information packed into the book.

Read the book in whatever way makes sense to YOU and which makes it more enjoyable to learn or you will find your enthusiasm start to disappear and it will become more of a chore rather than a good learning curve.

Find some of the good websites with sample question and answers on the relevant topics for the exam and keep hammering away until you are getting around 90% correct.

Don't try and study the contents of the book in a short space of time (unless you have a good memory and are working with Linux on a daily basis), Barry would spend about a half to 1 hour's worth of studying as soon as he got home from work and 15 to 30 minutes before he went to work. (Apparently mornings are best for memorising topics that you need to stick).

Keep doing the end of chapter questions as much as possible until you have nailed them all correctly.

Barry's colleague Gerrard pointed out during their studying, that he found it extremely useful to study the book backwards because it makes you think about the question and solution a bit more rather than just reading the book from start to finish "Parrot Fashion" and then trying to (some way) memorise the avalanche of commands you MIGHT need to know, which obviously for the exam you need to have a decent understanding.

Consider self-study, but is it right for you? As Gerrard stated "anyone who's done self-study after a full working day has my sympathy!"; Barry also supports this statement "A full day at work and then trying to study when you get home is a real strain so be warned!"

Barry's final thoughts?

Be focused and be motivated, set realistic goals. However the most important part is to enjoy learning Linux and enjoy the learning process, it is quite an eye opener and a challenge at times to say the least but well worth it.



LPI UK & Ireland

LPI UK & Ireland a division of FlexibleIT Ltd.
info@lpi-uk.co.uk



<http://www.flexableit.com>
0845 576 0501