

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **The Center for Advanced Research and Technology Network and Database Design Students Build Their Own Computers**

Students entering the Network and Database Design lab at the **Center for Advanced Research and Technology (CART)** were in for a big surprise this year, they are building their own computers. Along the back counter in the classroom, brand new aluminum computer cases, still in their plastic bags, are neatly stacked. Locked up in the back room, rows of assorted boxes holding CPUs, motherboards, sticks of RAM, DVD drives, and flat-screen monitors are waiting to be opened.

On the first day of class CART students, juniors and seniors from Fresno and Clovis Unified high schools were informed that their first project of the year would be assembling the very computers they would be using for the remainder of the year. By the end of the week, the students had installed the CPU and fan, bolted the motherboard to the case, pushed in a 256MB stick of RAM, and hooked up the DVD drive.

Next week, the rest of the computer hardware will be assembled and then the process of installing the operating system and software will begin. Along the way, students take detailed notes documenting the process so that eventually they will be able to write a "how to" guide to meet the English teacher's curriculum requirements.

Brian Weisman, CART and Clovis West High School senior commented, "Everything is hands on. They don't just show us, they let us do it and even if we don't do it right, we still get another chance." Similar enthusiasm was shared by CART and Hoover High School senior Phong Thai, "I like to work with computers so I'm glad to learn more about them. I want to learn as much as I can about computers."

It's just one more example of the integrated, project-based learning that demonstrates how CART is on the cutting edge of educational reform. The teachers, Jerry England, a database design certified instructor; Halbert Bynum, a network certified instructor; and Richard Meland, an English teacher, all believe that already they have witnessed more "buy-in" from the students than in past years.

According to Jerry England, "Fifteen or more students have already asked us if they can buy the computers they put together at the end of the year – their enthusiasm is phenomenal... students are also excited that they will be installing Windows XP and learning to use the MS Office 2003 Suite of applications."

Students in the Network and Database design lab have the option of signing up for networking curriculum or database design curriculum provided by **Microsoft IT Academy**. Students who successfully complete the program have the opportunity to take Microsoft Certification exams at the end of the year. Every lab at CART provides English curriculum, and this year, the Network Management and Database Design lab is excited to offer additional curriculum and other certifications provided by the **Microsoft IT Academy** and the **Microsoft Enterprise Learning Library (MELL)**. Instructor Halbert Bynum feels that "the connection with Microsoft, a real player in the business world, makes the learning that much more powerful for our students."

The Center for Advanced Research and Technology, now in its fourth year of operation is proud of the success their unique program is seeing. "We have a terrific group of students and I'm excited about the projects we have planned for them this year," remarked instructor Richard Meland.

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