



## Back to school with GSA University



Line Robichaud

**A**round the world, the gaming industry is rapidly adopting GSA's standards. These standards are helping usher in a wave of new devices and systems. However, as exciting as the standards are, they can be confusing unless users have concrete knowledge of how they work. This applies to engineers in manufacturers' R&D departments and in test labs, as well as executives who need a working understanding of the standards.

To help the industry become more knowledgeable about these standards, the Gaming Standards Association has created GSA University. We have designed a series of courses targeting both individuals whose goal is to obtain a 30,000-foot comprehension, or individuals who wish to attain an in-depth, nuts-and-bolts understanding.

I started working for GSA in May, with the goal of developing GSA University and its courses. For full disclosure and a quick background, I have been an active participant in GSA since 2003. During this time I held the positions of chair of the Transport Committee for 2005 and 2006 and then chair of the G2S Committee for 2007. I come to GSA with more than 18 years of experience in the software development industry, with my most recent focus being in the area of analysis and design of communication protocols. Prior to joining GSA, I was with Spielo/GTECH as a principal software analyst.

The GSA University classes are open to GSA members and non-members. Let's take a look at the curriculum that has been developed, and let's start with the 30,000-foot view.

Perfect for executives who go just a little cross-eyed when their IT department talks in acronyms like G2S, ISO, TCP/IP, LAN, HTML and 001110101, the Executive Awareness Program is exactly what it sounds like: a quick way for busy executives to raise their awareness. These four courses are designed for managers – such as general managers, product managers, slot directors and marketing directors – who do not want all the technical details of how the protocol works, but want to focus instead on what the protocol can enable gaming venues to do.

Each gives a big picture look at a specific protocol. "G2S010 - Executive Overview of G2S" presents what G2S does, how it works, and why it is poised to revolutionize the gaming floor. "S2S010 - Executive Overview of S2S" explains what S2S does and how it improves the back office. "T&S010 - Executive Overview of Transport & Security" provides an overview of the transport mechanisms available for communicating G2S and S2S messages. Finally, the "GDS010 - Executive Overview of GDS" describes the functionality provided by the various GDS specifications and how this will allow for new and innovative peripheral management.

And for those seeking more of a nuts-and-bolts understanding, the Certified Engineer Program consists of a technical series of classes about each protocol targeted to QA, compliance and software engineers. The first offering begins in December with a one-day course entitled "G2S110 - Overview of G2S" followed by a four-day course entitled "G2S210 - Basic Game Play with G2S". The Certified Engineer Program provides various

levels of certification. The first level gives a basic certification, and the second gives an advanced level certification. In the future, GSA University plans to offer specialization certifications that may include implementation, testing and deployment. To obtain certification, an engineer must pass a written test at the end of the session.

These classes are very technical in nature and are designed for engineers who want to know how the G2S protocol works. The only prerequisite is that attendees must have completed and passed the first level before advancing on to the next level.

The first course, "G2S110 – Overview of G2S" gives an understanding of the basic concepts required to comprehend the G2S protocol. Topics include:

- \* What is G2S? – Understand what G2S is all about, why it was developed and what it accomplishes;

- \* The G2S Machine Model – Get an overall sense of the G2S Model for an EGM;

- \* The G2S Connection Model – Understand how G2S allows for connections to be made between EGMs and hosts;

- \* The Communication Model – Understand how G2S communicates information between EGMs and hosts;

- \* Getting Connected – Understand the startup sequence when EGM and hosts establish and re-establish communications; and

- \* Sample G2S Applications – Understand how to use the machine, connection and communication models to implement new and innovative gaming applications.

The second course, "G2S210 – Basic Game Play with G2S" provides an understanding of the basic functionality that must be implemented in G2S in order to support game play. Topics include:

- \* G2SMessage (Point-to-point);

- \* The communication class (Point-to-point);

- \* Getting started with RadBlue tools; and

The G2S Classes: cabinet, game play, event handler, meters, note acceptor, coin acceptor, hopper and note dispenser.

Both the Executive Awareness and Certified Engineer courses offered this fall will be held in Las Vegas. The plan in 2009 is to offer classes around the world. In 2009, GSA University is planning to offer seven off-site training sessions: two in Europe, two on the U.S. East Coast and three on the West Coast. We are also discussing the potential of offering classes in Australia in 2010 and adding additional schedules based on demand. Additionally, through GSA's partnership with the Macao Polytechnic Institute, I will be training their instructors on all courses so that they can offer the classes in that region.

On-site training sessions are also available. These sessions can be customized and delivered exclusively to a company's employees' at the location of their choice anywhere in the world. Classes are available in English and in French.

Discounts are available for GSA members, based on level of membership. For more information, visit [www.gamingstandards.com](http://www.gamingstandards.com) or call 888-GSA-UNIV.

*Line Robichaud is educational director for the Gaming Standards Association.*