Computer-Based-Training (CBT) Interactive Multimedia
presents the Last-Mile Technology of a Passive Optic Network (PON)

The Situation:

I was manager for the **Light Brigade's Media Production Department**. We had a month to produce our first interactive multimedia computer-based-training (CBT) program to launch the company's entry into the 'next generation' of training delivery tools. To ensure the widest audience for the CBT, the CEO decided to introduce the emerging Passive Optical Network (PON) technology at the West Coast Fiber Optic Conference.

PON technology promised to provide a reliable, cost-effective means to *finally* build out the 'last mile' of fiber optic cable through communities and into buildings.

Thus we had two key audiences.

1. First, we wanted to introduce PON to business people and public servants with little or no understanding of fiber optic technology, but who were in a position to use and benefit by this innovation - government agencies, communities and property developers.
2. Second, we wanted to teach basic and specific technical information to an audience of engineers, preparing them to design and implement applications for the technology.

The Solution:

With such a short time frame, I created a snug production schedule and hired freelance staff to create the videos and slides. After researching available computer-based-training production software I settled on Micromedia's Authorware. This application shared similarities with website development tools, so my web designer took on the responsibility of learning it and building our first CBT.

While he got up to speed on the software, I collaborated with the CEO on the CBT content and how to present both basic and highly technical information to the two audiences we wished to reach. We decided to offer two learning tracks that would effectively convey the information in a comprehensible manner to each audience.

1. To provide additional training value to the engineers, we would include instructional sequences that included testing modules at key points and links to technical resources.
2. To add value to the business side, we decided to include footage of an existing build and interview the property developer.

Each audience would, of course, have access to both tracks, which would give them a bigger picture as they continued to work in the industry.

I designed the modules for instructional track and wrote an outline for the business track. I identified sources for information, which included video, CG graphics, photo slides and a whole lot of interaction with a diverse group of specialized subject matter experts.

After I wrote the core scripts for each track, determined the visual elements and interactive testing points, my designer and I created the navigation paths. While he built the architecture I located or produced the media elements and prepared them for inclusion in the CBT.

The overall assembly went smoothly with executive sign-offs at critical junctures to ensure we were staying on time, on task and in budget. The CEO conducted the video interviews and produced other footage and photographs. The CBT designer did double duty and created the CG graphics in Flash and I just kept rewriting to whittle all that information into bite-sized pieces.

The Result:

We delivered a prototype of the PON CBT in time for the annual fiber optic trade show. It garnered considerable attention -- partly due to the depth of information about this cutting-edge technology and partly because of the product we created to deliver the information.

Overall, it was a successful launch of the company's 'next generation' teaching tool.