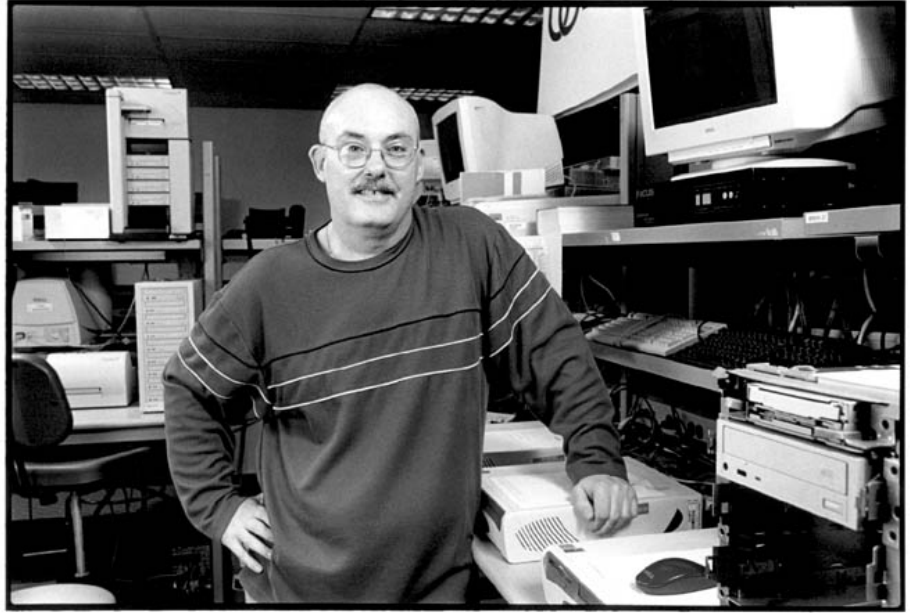


People At Work

Within a two-year period Ed had endured three neck surgeries to correct a herniated disk and chronic neck pain. He knew that going back to work as a physical laborer was no longer an option. Ed was interested in the Information Technology (IT) field, but with no related experience, training was a necessary first step. So he made his way to the IT training program at Vocational Guidance Services after being referred to VGS by Crystal Ulery of the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation.



After completing the Work Evaluation and Assessment program, Ed began his IT training with Instructor Glenn Bowers, and later with Instructor Scott Neidert. The six-month program was an exciting challenge for Ed. "The IT program was very stimulating—I was learning so much that I was constantly engaged," he explained. "Being committed and disciplined was my role, but the training provided a catalyst to a high level of motivation."

When VGS' Training Center opened in August, Ed continued his training in the new building. Ed noticed the "open and welcoming" environment in the Training Center from day one. "I'm glad I was able to spend some time in the beautiful new building," Ed said. "It's less congested and more organized; it provides an ideal setting for learning."

After completing the training and the program's month of job-shadowing, it was time for Ed to re-enter the workforce. IT Job Developer Judy Garver found a long-term temporary job for Ed working full-time at MCPC, a computer products and consulting company. After a few months on the job, he has learned that he's on the track to becoming a permanent employee.

"VGS offers excellent opportunities for people with disabilities. I gained a marketable skill and developed a positive outlook during my experience at VGS," Ed shared. "Now, I'm excited for my professional future and my new job is challenging and rewarding—I learn something new every day."