

## Product Description

The Automated Briefing System (ABS) was developed by the Department of Defense Personnel Security Research Center (PERSEREC). It was originally developed to automate security and threat awareness briefings for personnel with access to classified or other sensitive national security information. However, it can be used to automate briefings or training on any subject for which information is available electronically. This software is free of charge to all elements of the U.S. Government and to U.S. Government contractors. Version 2.3 is now available for downloading.

ABS enables anyone with good computer skills to develop automated briefings. *No programming is required.* The briefing or training is created by entering links to material employees are asked to read, along with questions designed to test that the required reading has been done and the key points have been learned.

As compared with many other types of computer-based briefing or training programs, ABS has the following advantages:

- **No Cost:** The program is free.
- **Quick and Easy:** A person who knows the subject matter to be covered, has taken some time to become familiar with the ABS program and has good computer skills can create an automated briefing/training session in one day. Programming skills are not needed.
- **Flexible:** Once a briefing/training session is prepared, it is simple to update it occasionally or adapt it to different target audiences. A briefing can also be exported from your ABS program and emailed to someone else who imports it into their ABS program.
- **Records of Employee Performance:** The software maintains a record of everyone who has taken the briefing/training and how they performed on the quiz, so employees can be held accountable for what they are supposed to have learned.
- **Customizable:** Several elements of the program are customizable by the user. For example, the title Automated Briefing System could be changed to SMART Corp. Briefing System and the Defense Security Service (DSS) seal can be replaced with the user's seal or logo.

The disadvantage of ABS as compared with other computer-based briefing or training programs is that the briefing developer has no control over the content. The briefing developer only enters into ABS the links to other materials that form the briefing content; the content on these other sites cannot be imported into the ABS program and edited or otherwise modified.

For those who prefer to develop their own PowerPoint or video briefings, the added benefit of ABS is to develop and present a test on the briefing, maintain automated records of those who took the briefing and passed the test on it, and print out certificates of completion.

ABS will be especially useful for two different types of organizations:

- Small organizations that do not have the time or expertise to develop original briefings or lessons and do not have the funds to pay someone else to develop them.
- Large organizations that prefer to develop their own PowerPoint or video briefings/lessons for a geographically dispersed staff but want to test their personnel to confirm they have taken the briefing/lesson and learned from it, and/or who want to maintain automated records of who has and has not taken the briefings/lessons.

ABS consists of two programs that are downloaded together -- the Developer Program for developing the briefing/training (links to the material to be read and quiz questions on that material) and the Presentation Program for delivering the briefing/training in either a web-based environment or a client-server environment. Installation of ABS on your computer creates two separate icons -- one for the Developer Program and the other for the Presentation Program.

### **Developer Program**

You use the Developer Program to create the briefing/training session. A "Briefing Profile" defines procedures to be used in each session. Each session involves a series of questions. You formulate and input the questions, add links to materials that respondents should read before answering the questions, and add feedback to be given for correct or incorrect answers.

In creating a briefing/training session, you have the following options:

- Ask respondents to link to the reading material and do the reading before starting the quiz, before each question, before a set of questions, or after the wrong answer to a question.
- Ask four types of questions -- true-false, multiple choice, fill-in-the-blanks, or short answer.
- Ask a fixed set of questions in a fixed order or randomly select a specified number of questions from a larger list of questions and present these in random order.
- Provide feedback to the respondent after each answer or only after all questions have been answered.

- Maintain records and print out reports on who has taken the briefing/training and whether he or she passed or failed the quiz. Also transfer these records to an Excel file that can be sorted, analyzed, and linked to other records such as personnel records.
- Set the program so that the briefing/training developer can print out all certificates of completion, or each employee can print out his or her own certificate.
- Export and import briefings so that they may be emailed and shared with persons in other offices or organizations that are also using ABS.
- Maintain a library of briefings and briefing questions.
- Maintain statistics on relative difficulty of each question.

ABS comes with several demo briefings that you can build on or modify. These are all security awareness briefings that are linked to the Online Guide to Security Responsibilities, another PERSEREC product that can be viewed or downloaded from the Products page of this website. This online Security Guide is a widely used, comprehensive, user-friendly, unclassified website of security and threat awareness information. It is intended to be customized and installed on an organization's internal network where it is available to all personnel as a reference work on their security responsibilities.

### **Presentation Program**

The briefing/training recipient logs on to the Presentation Program with name, User ID or employee number (if appropriate), and unit/office designator (if appropriate). The Presentation Program then delivers the briefing/training and, if the recipient completes it successfully and the program is set to do so, the program prints a certificate of completion.

The Presentation Program is designed to work in either a client-server environment (i.e., delivery will not be via the Internet or an intranet) or in a web environment (i.e., the briefing/training will be delivered via the Internet or an intranet). Either way, you will need assistance from your system administrator or webmaster to put the briefing/training on your organization's server in order to make it available to those whom the briefing/training is intended to reach. Information your system administrator or webmaster will need to provide this support is in the file *Presenting the Briefing*.

To download and install ABS, go to [Download Instructions](#).

### **Product Support**

The programmer who developed this software for PERSEREC is no longer available. As a result, PERSEREC can no longer provide technical support for this program, and this

software will not be updated. The project manager (address below) is available to answer non-technical questions.

Many simple quiz development programs are available for downloading from the Internet and can be used to test personnel on whatever they have been instructed to read. However, all of the simple programs we found have at least one disqualifying feature. Identifying data on persons taking the quiz and their scores are maintained on the server of the company that makes the quiz software available. This is unacceptable for security reasons. We found six self-contained quiz programs that can be downloaded from the Internet, but these are costly and more complicated than necessary. Also, every such program was developed by a foreign company, including companies in China and Russia. The website of one of the more promising programs has a chat function that makes it easy to ask questions. When we initiated the chat, we were very surprised to learn that we were connected to Moscow.

### **Contact Project Manager**

The project manager to contact is Richards J. Heuer, Jr., at the Department of Defense Personnel Security Research Center (PERSEREC). Please include ABS in the Subject line of any email dealing with this software.

E-mail [Richards.Heuer.ctr@osd.pentagon.mil](mailto:Richards.Heuer.ctr@osd.pentagon.mil)  
Phone (831) 583-2808