

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 2.2 is now available for downloading.

ABS enables anyone with routine 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 average 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 less 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 Customizable Security Guide, another PERSEREC product that can be viewed or downloaded from the Products page of this website. This 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. The demo briefings link to the Security Guide at www.rjhresearch.com/SecurityGuide/Home.htm. Organizations that install the Security Guide on their own network will want to change these links to reach the same topics on their own network.

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 probably 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

We maintain a mailing list of registered users so that we may advise you of all updates to the ABS program. All users are requested to register by sending an email to the project manager (address below). Include in this email your name, telephone number, and a brief description of the kinds of briefings/training for which you are using (or plan to use) the ABS software.

Because so many ABS users are also using the Customizable Security Guide for their briefings, registered ABS users will also be advised of any significant developments with that program. It was last updated in May 2006. Any suggestions for new material to be added to the Customizable Security Guide would be welcome. Send them to the project manager below.

Contact Project Manager

Support is a two-way street. We are available to support you if you run into problems

with ABS or need some capability tailored to your special needs. However, we also need your support to help us make this a better program. We need your ideas on how to make ABS easier to learn, easier to use, and more useful in meeting your needs. The ABS program was created and has evolved in response to requests and comments from users like you.

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.

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