Professional tools, trends, and insights for North American Construction

GOOD
CONNECTIONS®

ALPINE
AN ITW COMPANY

4

Alpine Embarks on a New Era of Information Sharing

2021 UPCOMING U.S. HOLIDAY CLOSURES

Memorial Day
Monday, May 31st

Independence Day
Monday, July 5th

Labor Day
Monday, September 6th

LEARN AT YOUR CONVENIENCE

ALPINE *academy*

- Power Edit in iPanel – April 23, 2021
- Introduction to Floor Trusses – May 21, 2021
- iPanel Tips & Tricks – June 25, 2021
- Component Catalog – July 23, 2021
- Deeper Dive into Floor Trusses – August 20, 2021

Register or log in here

All software training webinars are held
11 AM - 12 PM (EST)
(Sessions and time are subject to change)

If you have suggestions for a class or questions, please email us at **training@alpineitw.com**

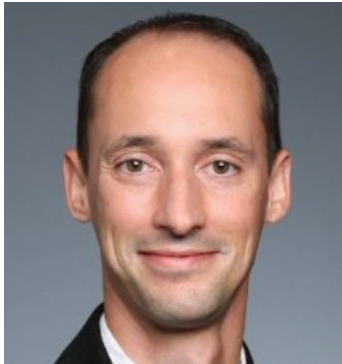House of Design's Robotic Automation – pg. 7

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Publishers Note:

Good Connections® is published by Alpine® for its customers, associates, builders, architects, building officials, and other professionals interested in the building components industry.

At Alpine, "Good Connections" refers to the quality products and services we offer as well as the connections we have with our customers and the components they provide to the building industry.

We appreciate story ideas, project photos, and other suggestions that you have to make this an even better publication. For more information, contact marketing@alpineitw.com.

©2021 Alpine, a division of ITW Building Components Group Inc.

Kevin Kraft is the Vice President and General Manager responsible for overseeing the Alpine® business for ITW. Previously he was the Engineering Director for ITW's Residential Construction Design Center in Lake Forest, Illinois. He led the research and development of innovative fastener and connector systems for the wood-to-wood construction market. He has also served as Research & Development Manager at the ITW Innovation Center in Glenview, Illinois.

Kevin Kraft
Vice President &
General Manager

FORGING AHEAD

This past year has certainly thrown many curve balls at all of us. When I reflect back on 2020, I continue to be impressed by the resilience of our industry, our customers, and the employees of Alpine. Construction has witnessed record high prices and availability of raw materials challenges, but in spite of this, we remain strong and continue to find ways to move forward. At Alpine, we have had to adjust how we work, the ways in which we support our customers, how we source raw materials, and how we manufacture and deliver our products. But we have found a way to persevere, to ensure we deliver for you. Despite the obstacles that we have encountered, we have ventured successfully into 2021 and are working hard to keep up the positive momentum. As we look forward, all the fundamentals look positive for a continued strong housing market.

Throughout the challenges we've stayed true to our philosophy of Customer Back Innovation to provide our customers and the industry with revolutionary solutions. In its simplest explanation, it means our innovation starts with our customers, allowing Alpine to solve our customers' difficult technical challenges. Alpine has continued to remain committed to providing innovative solutions to meet your needs. STITCHER® has helped component manufactures to complete bids faster and finish complex jobs in record time. Our new Alpine Portal has improved business intelligence and decision making, ensuring our customers' operations have tools to drive profitability. On the equipment side, our exciting partnership with House of Design has resulted in state-of-the-art robotic solutions to address the ever-growing labor challenges. All of these innovations are being developed with our customers' needs in mind to address the ever-increasing pressures they are facing in running their businesses.

Our ability to deliver on our commitments in 2020, could not have been accomplished without the dedicated and committed employees of Alpine. We are many things as a company, but we are nothing without the people who show up every day to go to work for our customers. Hands down, the greatest part of Alpine® is our employees and our customers, and I am fortunate to be working with this dedicated group.

There is plenty to be excited and optimistic about in 2021. As we start to see improvements in containing the spread of COVID-19 and a return to normalcy, we hope to meet many of you at BCMC in the fall and showcase our latest product lines. We are confident in our ability to adapt and support your businesses through this dynamic environment.

BCMC 2021

Building Component Manufacturers Conference 2021 will be held from Tuesday, October 5th to Friday, October 8th at the CHI Health Center in Omaha, Nebraska. Visit Alpine® at BCMC to learn about our latest exciting innovations built for component manufacturers. **LEARN MORE**

INTEX Expo 2021

INTEX Expo will be held from Tuesday, October 19th to Wednesday, October 20th, 2021 in New Orleans, Louisiana at the Ernest N. Memorial Convention Center. Join Alpine's TrussSteel team at INTEX Expo to explore our state-of-the-art CFS truss system. **LEARN MORE**

NEW ORGANIZATIONAL APPOINTMENTS

Guillem Gali
Director of Operations

Guillem Gali joined Alpine as the Director of Operations in November 2020. Based out of Glenview, he is a key member of the Alpine leadership team and provides strategic direction for the Alpine® Operations for Connectors and TrusSteel.

John Croll
Solutions Delivery Manager

John Croll has transitioned to the role of Solutions Delivery Manager where he will be responsible for managing the onsite technical support, phone support, and training departments for Alpine's suite of software.

Eric Eversgerd
Regional Sales Manager

Eric Eversgerd has joined Alpine as the Regional Sales Manager and will be responsible for all of Alpine's software, connector plate and equipment sales activity in the East Region.

Ryan Foree
District Sales Manager

Ryan Foree has accepted the position of District Sales Manager and will represent Alpine's sales effort in the North Region. He will be responsible for sales activity in Illinois, Iowa and Missouri.

RETIREMENTS

Michael Martz

After over four decades in the component manufacturing industry, Alpine's Michael Martz retired in December 2020. Mike established unbelievable relationships with fellow employees, customers, prospects, and competitors that will extend into retirement. We congratulate Mike on a great career and wish him the very best in retirement.

ALPINE® EMBARKS ON A NEW ERA OF INFORMATION SHARING
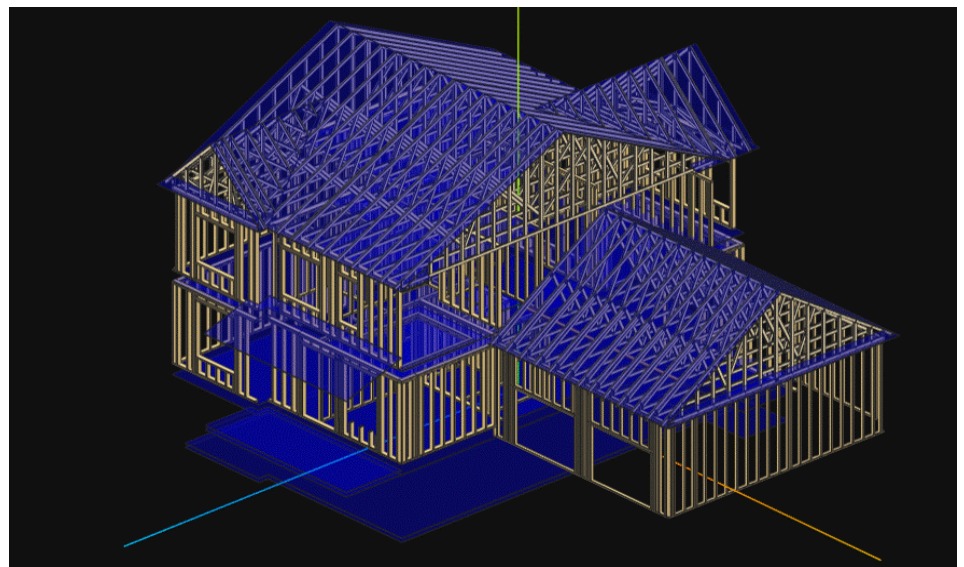
John Croll
Portfolio Manager

Component manufacturers (CMs) are continually challenged with improving communication with customers and collaboration between teams. It is essential for design and production teams to receive live updates regarding orders, project lead times, and ongoing trends to operate at full capacity. Sharing this information with customers can help build partnerships and provide a competitive advantage. There is no shortage of tools to help generate data. The challenge is ensuring the data ends up in the right hands, correct format, and in a timely manner. Although many software products provide effective interfaces for regular users to see needed information, they tend to fall short when it becomes necessary to share this information externally with customers or with individuals without software access.

IMPROVING COMMUNICATION & COLLABORATION

The release of the Alpine® Portal is moving the Component Manufacturing industry one step closer to improving collaboration, business analytics, and communication. The Alpine Portal provides CMs the ability to quickly share and analyze data. It is a secure, web-based platform that can be accessed from any device, anywhere. All you need is an internet browser. Users are able to publish interactive 3D models to maximize design time spent with customers while tracking valuable Alpine data.

SHARE INTERACTIVE 3D MODELS

Communication is enhanced with the ability to share interactive 3D models. Quickly and securely share

3D model uploaded to Alpine Portal and shared with any email address – toggle visibility of elements, view individual trusses, and snap 3D dimensions.

layouts with your customers by publishing 3D models directly from the IntelliVIEW® Suite. Recipients of the "share" link can view the 3D model using an internet browser, eliminating the need to install additional software.

They can easily interact with the model, controlling the visibility of specific levels and elements. This helps builders accurately visualize the components they are ordering and provides an important opportunity

ALPINE PORTAL

A SIMPLE, SECURE, AND INNOVATIVE TOOL TO PROVIDE CMs BETTER ACCESS TO DATA.

KPI driven dashboard updates in real-time. Track the volume of incoming business per salesperson, among many other possibilities.

for feedback before production. The Alpine Portal also offers a competitive advantage in bidding while helping eliminate costly errors and callbacks.

BETTER BUSINESS ANALYTICS

The Portal also offers a complete set of business analytic tools, allowing CMs to visualize relevant trends, track KPIs, and access their Alpine data in real-time from anywhere. A sales manager, for example, can easily track and visualize the volume of incoming business per salesperson by month. Leveraging Microsoft's cutting edge PowerBI technology, CMs can view their business data in a way that is meaningful and actionable. Relevant data, generated by IntelliVIEW® design software, is transformed into actionable business intelligence and presented to users with a simple, modern interface. Customizable dashboards can be created from scratch or from a template to display trackable KPIs with real-time data. Sales professionals will also have timely access to job information while on the road, and owners can keep tabs on their business from any mobile device. Alpine Portal Analytics puts information in the hands of those that need it, when they need it.

The Alpine Portal is a simple, secure, and innovative tool to provide CMs better access to data. Alpine strives to make CMs more efficient and competitive, and this new product is an innovative means to that end.

Contact your local Alpine® Sales Representative for a free demo or more information.

Improve Plant Production.
Maximize Labor.
Automate Your Truss Manufacturing.

Drive your truss plant into a sustainable future. House of Design, an ABB Robotics integration company, and Alpine, an ITW Company, have teamed together to bring you the latest in robotic solutions. Solutions that increase your plant's production throughput while helping solve labor concerns and improve employee safety. Contact your local Alpine Sales Representative to learn more.

Automated Roof & Floor Truss Systems | Roof Member Preplate | Chord Preplate | Connector Plate Picker | Splicing Station

We've Got Every Angle Covered.

alpineitw.com | 800.521.9790

ALPINE®

Exclusive House of Design Representative

ADDRESSING LABOR CHALLENGES WITH ROBOTIC AUTOMATION
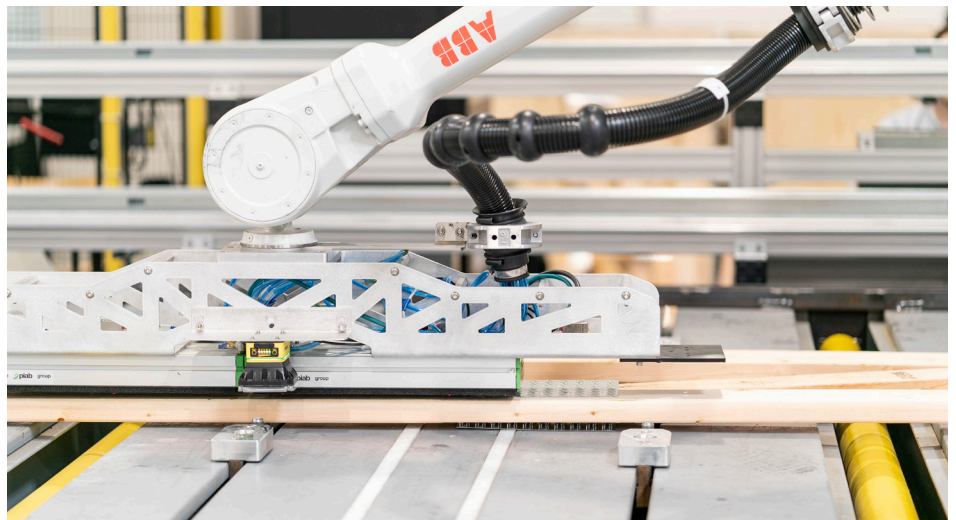
Shane Dittrich
CEO, House of Design

U.S. manufacturing is faced with two challenges in today's market—an aging population and a shortage of workers, both challenging issues for component manufacturers. However, rather than focus on the negative, let's focus on the positive note that the demand for building components over the last 6 years has grown by 11% on average. The long-term forecasts for the industry suggest continued double digit growth rates for the foreseeable future. As we focus on the upside of these trends, it is important to take deliberate steps to meet the challenges of today while preparing for tomorrow. Skilled labor is hard to find, with 90% of U.S. contractors and manufacturers reporting concerns. This statistic is felt by everyone in the industry and is why leading companies are proactively exploring ways to address this problem and develop possible answers. Robot integrators House of Design partnered with Alpine®, an ITW Company, to help solve labor issues with automation.

PROVIDING LABOR SOLUTIONS FOR COMPONENT MANUFACTURING

ATTRACT THE BEST

One aspect of using robotics that is not often discussed is that it can serve as a way of retaining employees. Although a major concern among skilled labor is that "robots are going to take our jobs", we have found the opposite to be true. In the case of our truss products, robots alleviate some of the dangerous and undesirable work while creating more rewarding positions. Companies that invest in training current personnel to adapt to incoming robot installs are more likely to appeal to today's manufacturing worker.

House of Design's automated roof and floor truss systems are collaborative in nature, with both operator and

A 4600 ABB robot places a preplated member in the correct sequence and location on the table prior to quality check and pressing. Robots now do the material handling. Industry standard flipping is no longer required with automated systems.

robot filling key production roles. The robot is designed to support employees, not replace them. Robots take care of the heavy lifting, manipulate material, and complete repetitive tasks. Operators are now available for quality control checks, infeed and outfeed management, and plate magazine replenishment. These changes in the working environment will assist companies in attracting the best candidates in limited labor

House of Design's preplate station—preplating members for robotic assembly. A key to reducing safety hazards and pick errors.

pools. Using technology to appeal to younger workers is an important consideration for manufacturers, especially considering the rate of change the building component industry is bound to see over the next decade.

EMPLOYEE SAFETY

Addressing the safety aspect, there are many tasks that subject workers to risky scenarios. The building components industry is ideal for robotics based on these risks. House of Design and Alpine are addressing these safety issues through automation. For example, our truss system manages the layout and sequence of truss assembly, removing the worker from lifting members and selecting connector plates. Injuries associated with constant material

handling could be significantly reduced. Employees are not bent over and stooped all day. Our system also reduces the interaction with connector plates, helping improve employee safety. Lastly, we understand the danger in working around moving equipment, so we design our systems with proper security guarding and sensor technology. Our top priority is worker safety and ergonomics.

ROBOTS ARE A PART OF YOUR WORKFORCE

As demand continues to increase for new housing and interest rates stay low, manufacturers will need to look towards technology to address some of their labor challenges. As we speak with leading truss manufacturers, many are struggling to find new employees and often experience high

turnover. Robotic automation is not the only answer; however, robots can help fill in the 20-30% labor shortfall most companies are experiencing. Having automation in your arsenal will help some companies take advantage of the current demand trends in the building components industry. Not only can robots become a valuable "employee", they can also help improve employee retention and decrease downtime due to a reduction in injuries. Together we can help drive truss plants into a thriving and sustainable future.

Contact your Alpine® Sales Representative or visit AlpineITW.com to learn how to leverage this technology to improve your business today.
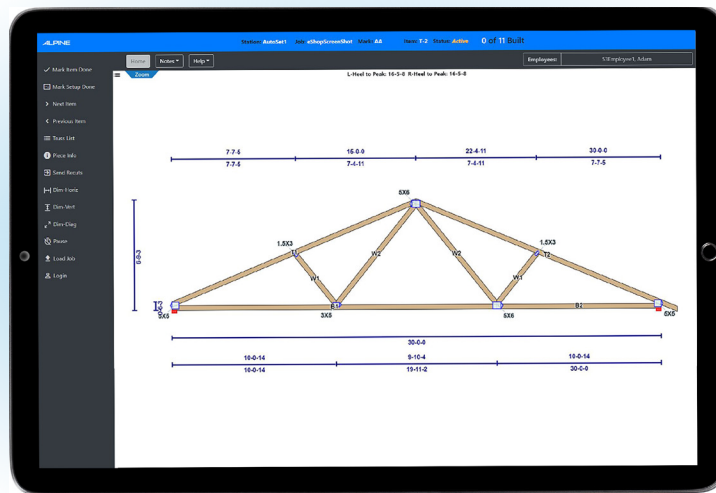
eSHOP SIMPLIFIES & MODERNIZES PLANT MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

John Croll
Software Portfolio Manager

Alpine's latest eShop Plant Management Software simplifies the user experience for shop employees and managers alike, while collecting robust production data to maximize operational decision-making. Plant Managers face difficult tradeoffs. On the one hand, they are responsible for consistently and efficiently producing high-quality components. They need to get every ounce of productivity out of an ever-changing labor force while keeping up with fluctuating demand and dates. On the other hand, managers must work to optimize their production facility, which requires accurate data about all their plant activity.

Quickly access your information from any device in real-time with eShop's web-based platform.

Having the information to compare shifts, stations, equipment, and employees—all while monitoring output over time—provides Plant Managers the ability to make necessary changes and investments.

Acquiring this data comes at a cost; any time shop employees spend logging production is less BDFT out the door. Plant leadership may also need to make significant investments in installation, support, and training on multiple software packages to cover all their production activity.

SEAMLESSLY INTEGRATE WITH PRODUCTION EQUIPMENT

eShop is designed to track production activity while minimizing disruption to shop employees. When using Alpine® equipment, eShop automatically logs cutting and assembly data back to the database.

Alpine is the only company to partner with multiple third-party equipment manufacturers to ensure other saws and assembly tables automatically communicate data with eShop during

operation, eliminating the need for costly double entry. This saves time, increases efficiency, and results in better data.

MODERN, INTUITIVE SHOP STATIONS

When tracking activity at manual cutting or assembly stations, eShop now has an intuitive web-based shop platform. Stations can be accessed from any device with a browser, including tablets, without installing software in the shop. This reduces shop IT requirements and increases flexibility. Users can quickly pull up their jobs, mark pieces or components complete, snap dimensions on-the-fly,

and much more. The goal is to simplify and enhance the shop employee's experience while accurately tracking throughput.

MANAGE ALL YOUR PRODUCTION ACTIVITY WITH ONE PLATFORM

eShop offers a full suite of production management tools to schedule and track both truss and wall panel manufacturing activity. The production data generated will be in one database, simplifying the reporting and analysis process. There is no need to install and learn multiple software platforms for different types of components-the same applications and interfaces are customized to

accommodate both. eShop's all-in-one platform makes it easier for the shop employees to adopt and reduces the amount of training required. eShop was created to provide CMs more control over their production processes and better access to information. The latest eShop enhancements help minimize IT complexity, and improve data collection and the user experience.

**Contact your Alpine®
Sales Representative or visit
AlpineITW.com to learn how to
leverage these tools to improve
your business today.**

**ALPINE
FIRST AWARD**

Nathan Mangoff
1st Alpine First Award Winner

In recognition of his commitment to Alpine, Nathan Mangoff was awarded the very 1st Alpine First Award! We thank Nathan for demonstrating an Alpine® First mentality and prioritizing the needs of the business over individual or functional goals.

POWER EDIT IMPROVES & SIMPLIFIES THE WALL PANEL REVIEW PROCESS

Diego Polanco
Product Owner

Every time a company is ready to manufacture a wall panel project, they need to ensure the design specifications are reviewed and approved by all parties involved. A large panel project can go through many changes from the original design specifications. A gap in communication between invested parties during the revision phase may create problems in production, especially in the execution of the project. In the end, these design revisions will be applied by panel designers, who must read, coordinate, and implement the changes prior to production. Currently, these changes are tedious and time consuming; a mistake here can manifest in production delays, problems in installation, and back charges from builders. Any tools which can help eliminate mistakes are extremely valuable to panel designers.
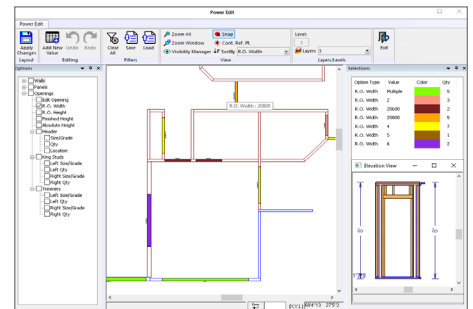
In the new IntelliVIEW® 20.02 software release, the iPanel wall design solution now features Power Edit. This simplifies the panel review process, letting designers visually identify specific wall properties and apply modifications efficiently. Designers can review properties such as wall geometry, panel specifications, and sheathing details. It is also common for rough opening (R.O.) sizes to change in the middle of the design stage.

Power Edit allows designers to review and apply changes to R.O. width, R.O height, finish height, relative height, headers (size, grades, and quantities), trimmers, and king studs. These properties are all easily identified with unique colors, helping designers better visualize their layouts. Users are also able to select multiple walls and/or opening properties and isolate specific values to work more efficient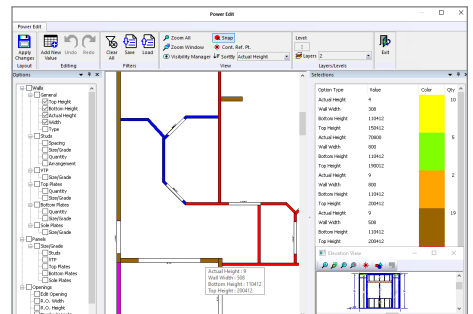ly. Power Edit helps designers navigate through different levels and layers. Designers can save filters on the most common properties to review in each project. After the walls, panels, or openings are reviewed, changes can be easily applied. Designers can apply changes to all relevant walls, panels, or openings in the layout.

Power Edit is a valuable tool for panel designers to review and apply design changes quickly. It increases the efficiency of the design and manufacturing process by minimizing problems in the execution of the project—most importantly, it reduces the time spent on reviews and revisions.

Contact your Alpine® Sales Representative or visit AlpineITW.com to learn how to leverage these tools to improve your business today.

Review and modify rough opening widths on a panel layout.

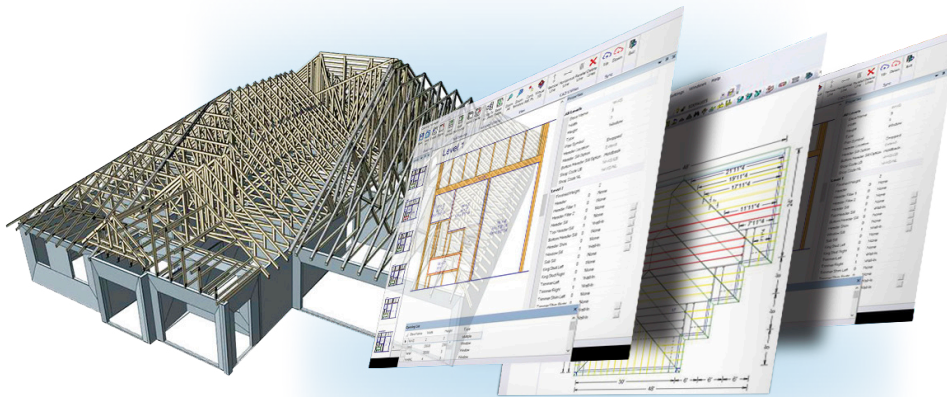Review and modify wall geometry on a panel layout.

Alpine Takeoff Tool
A smarter way to estimate

Quick & accurate estimating for better purchasing decisions

eShop 7.1
Fewer apps with more capabilities

Expanded web client station features for increased mobility, real-time information, personalized display and enhanced control

Streamlining Sheathing Review in Power Edit
Improved sheathing tools for easy review, changes and updates

Alpine Portal
Improved collaboration and communication

CAD Tools
Maximize designer efficiency with 3D Viewer, now accessible in the IntelliVIEW software

COMING SOON.

New Alpine® Academy website. Learn at your convenience.