



## **WEB TEACHING GUIDE A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO CREATING COURSE WEB SITES**

**Reviewed by John C. Butler**

Sarah Horton

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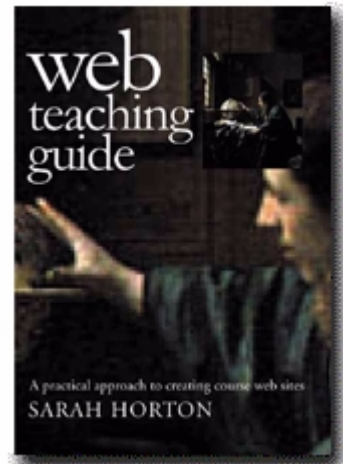
Paper ISBN 0-300-08727-6 \$15.95

This is a hard book to put into a niche. The author addresses her intended audience in the preface when she notes that "Web Teaching Guide is for educators who are considering adding a Web component to their classroom teaching. It is not a technical how-to guide." In fact, there are more statements about what the book is not than there are statements addressing what it is.

Like *Moby Dick*, this book can be read at different levels. Individuals with rather different technical skill sets can read this book and find things of value. Individuals with different levels of experience (or interest) in creating course Web pages will find topics that address their mixed needs. If there is a problem, it is that these different potential readers will not all benefit from the same sequence of presentation. On the other hand, this is probably not a book that should be read through from cover to cover. Many of my colleagues would probably never finish the text if they used that approach. In other words, a non-linear guide is needed. Such a guide, in fact is present at Web Teaching (Dartmouth College) although rarely referred to in the text.

For example, the so-called early adopters or "pioneers" have been doing their things for several years. Chapter 3, *Creating the site*, seems an ideal starting point for the person who has developed course resources but feels the need

to modify the site or wants to respond to suggestions from previous users but isn't quite sure what options are available. There are many very practical snippets dealing with compression, images, sound files, streaming media, among others. Each could become the focus of a separate line of inquiry depending on the needs of the individual. Individuals who have been through several iterations of their own pages will profit by starting with Chapter 5 *Site assessment*, where a number of practical suggestions are offered for undertaking a formal assessment.



What about colleagues who being told by their administrators that they should be developing course resources? This seems to be happening with an increasing frequency on many campuses. I am a great believer in the principle of "you show me your and I'll show you mine". Many of us got to where we are today by looking at how our peers were using the Internet. The World Lecture Hall has been published since 1994 and is a great way to identify resources (self-nominated) in more than 80 disciplines. A second step would be to start with Horton's Chapter 4, *Using the site*. Then, and perhaps only then, would I recommend starting at the beginning with Chapter 1, *Planning*, and Chapter 2, *Developing content*.

In the preface Horton makes the case for not including HTML (hypertext markup language) and pretty much avoids technical details throughout the book. Her resource, *Web Teaching, Links*, does include several good references to HTML

and some readers may elect to turn *Web Teaching Guide* into sort of a "how-to" book by combining her text with experience in producing Web pages.

"Hidden" through out the text are six Case Studies that focus on how (and why) your peers are using the Internet as a component of their face-to-face courses. In case you "miss" one you can easily locate then at *Web Teaching, Case Studies*. In fact, I would read them early on.

My comments about organization should be taken with a few grains of salt. I am confident that not everyone will agree and they should not be taken as detractors but personal preferences.

The book is well written with few superfluous words. It is full of questions that readers should be prepared to address IF they are serious about creating a course resource. I will keep this book on the shelf where I keep other Internet references and resources.