
Web-Based Instruction

Badrul H. Khan, ed., Educational Technology Publications, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 1997. ISBN 0-87778-297-0. 463 pages. \$59.95 soft cover.

Distance education is a hot topic on many university campuses today, and one of the fastest growing areas within that discipline is the delivery of instruction and training via the Web. Web-based instruction (WBI) has taken many forms, from the simple posting of a syllabus to a full-fledged delivery of course materials including instructor/student interaction and online evaluation. A dedicated Web surfer can find many examples of WBI, but until recently reference material in print has been rare.

While developing a graduate course in educational technology focusing on WBI in 1996, Badrul Khan of the University of Texas at Brownsville found a lack of centralized information on the subject. With the encouragement of several colleagues, he began to compile information and solicit contributions for a manuscript that eventually became this book. Khan divides the work into five sections: introduction to Web-based instruction; Web-based learning environments and critical issues; designing Web-based instruction; delivering Web-based instruction; and case studies of Web-based courses. Over 90 authors from educational institutions in the U.S., Canada, England, Australia, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands contribute chapters concerning their various specialties. Assisting the reader's comprehension and helping to keep the 400 plus pages from becoming soporific are a number of tables, diagrams, illustrations and 'snapshots' of Web pages.

The subject matter appeals to a wide range of interests, ranging as it does from pedagogical discussions to production tips to listings of useful Web sites. Fair use and other copyright issues are addressed, and I found some of the best material I've seen on formative and summative evaluation of Web-based courses. Web-based conferencing systems for the development of on-line courses also find mention in the book, including the *Virtual-U Education System* (<http://kochab.cs.sfu.ca:8000>) and *Web Course in a Box* (<http://madduck.mmd.vcu.edu/web/web.html>.) Other topics include student motivation, faculty incentives, faculty and staff training, and interactivity. Practicing what it preaches, the book provides Web site

addresses and e-mail addresses along with traditional references at the end of most chapters. Faculty members, instructional designers, computer and media specialists and other support personnel should find this book to be a valuable resource in planning distance education projects over the Web.

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