

Challenges in the Design of a Hypertext Book in HTML: Lessons Learned

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This document is a very brief summary of a larger paper and presentation. It is not possible to discuss the issues presented two pages, so we will restrict ourselves to providing an annotated outline of the topics here, and invite you to download the larger document. More information about the hypertextbook Visual Design for Instructional Multimedia, including previews of most sections of the book, is available from <http://members.home.net:80/m4.multimedia/>. A complete version of the paper, presented earlier this year, is available for downloading as a PDF file [190 KB] from www.extension.usask.ca/Papers/Misanchuk/EDMEDIA99/EDMEDIA99paper.pdf.

Large-scale hypertext implementations designed to provide information are common enough (especially as websites); however, large-scale instructional equivalents are, at this juncture, more rare. The complete paper and presentation include the following:

- Description of the design and development of a CD-ROM-based hypertextbook, entitled Visual Design for Instructional Multimedia, which consists of more than 3,100 HTML, JPEG, GIF, and MOV files
- Morphology of the project through several stages, highlighting issues arising from developing the product with HTML rather than with a more hospitable authoring program
- Description of a number of things we learned from the "school of hard knocks"—some profound, some mundane—in the hope that by sensitizing you to some of the problems we encountered and decisions we made (and sometimes re-made), we can help you avoid some of the pitfalls we encountered.

Outline of the Paper and Presentation

Need for the Book

Content and Scope.

Structure

The “modified linear” design
Mainstream text and diversions

- reference citations
- examples
- elaborations
- navigation links

Diversions from diversions

Orientation and location cues

Process

Getting started

The distance factor

Working together and apart

The overall process

Work Methods

Pages on the Fly

Document First, Pages Later

Outline, Just Like Mr. Hankel Says

The Traditional Book Publishing Approach

Design Issues

Settling on a Visual Design

The impact of technology on design options and the design process.

The impact of usability testing and technology on navigation design.

Navigation Schemes and Screen Geography

Hypertext advantages with simple navigation.

Linking to the same page from different locations in the text

Image map menus vs. frames

Cues for different types of links

Academic Writing and HTML

Formality of language.

Editorial issues.

Web or CD-ROM versus Print for Distribution

Why not a printed book?

As long as it's electronic, why make it essentially linear?

Why HTML instead of another authoring environment?

Why then, a CD-ROM and not the Web?

Expert Review and Usability Tests