



News about information systems throughout MIT

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Physics Interactive Video Tutor Helps Students Master 8.01

• Laura Koller and Gayle Willman

It's a late October night, 1:00 a.m. You are a freshman, studying frantically for an 8.01 Newtonian Physics exam that's just a few hours away. You're stuck on the difference between angular velocity and angular frequency, and are sure there's going to be an exam problem like the one you struggled with in last week's problem set. If only you could ask the professor some questions, listen again to just a part of his lecture from three weeks ago, or chat online with other students who might be puzzling over the same concepts. For that matter, it would be great to try a few practice problems and get instant feedback, or to explore a relevant physics simulation.

It turns out that the help you need is as close as your nearest computer. As an MIT student, you have 24-hour-a-day access to a "virtual" professor. Renowned physics Professor Walter Lewin, one of MIT's acclaimed educators and a sometime lecturer of 8.01, is always available to answer your questions via the Physics Interactive Video Tutor (PIVoT), online at

<http://curricula2.mit.edu/pivot/>

PIVoT is a non-required adjunct to 8.01. This database-driven Web site cross-references a wealth of multimedia

content. It contains more than 50 hours of streaming digital video, including a complete set of Professor Lewin's 8.01 lectures, as well as help sessions in which he steps through problem solutions, explains difficult concepts, and poses brain teasers. According to Professor Lewin, "PIVoT is really great for me, because now I can reach out to many more students than I could ever before. In fact, they can watch my lectures and ask me questions, even in the middle of the night, when I'm sleeping!"

What's Included

In addition to the Lewin videos, PIVoT offers

- An entire online introductory textbook, *Physics*, 2nd edition, by Hans Ohanian, © 1989, W.W. Norton Publishing Company
- Multiple-choice practice problems that can be instantly scored and that offer hints if wrong answers are chosen
- A list of FAQs and answers
- Links to dynamic physics simulations found elsewhere on the Web.

Getting Around

Students can navigate through the content in a variety of ways, including an alphabetic keyword list, a course topic outline, and a search tool. They can also conduct threaded discussions and live chats with one another and with the 8.01 teaching staff using PIVoT's WebBoard discussion utility.

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PIVoT

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One of PIVoT's unique features is the Personal Tutor. When individuals turn this tool on, it follows their progress as they traverse the Web site and, based on the keywords and topics they are pursuing, suggests where to go next. This customized tutorial feature makes the PIVoT experience a truly personalized one.

Accessibility

The PIVoT team has embarked on a three-year collaboration with the National Center for Accessible Media (NCAM) at the WGBH Education Foundation to research Web accessibility for deaf and blind users. Sites like PIVoT pose special Web access challenges because of their complex scientific content. The research will explore ways to create video captions displaying symbols and equations for deaf users, narrated video descriptions for blind users, and best practices in overall site design for optimum Web access by all users. This research is funded by the National Science Foundation and the Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation.

To find out more about NCAM and its PIVoT Access Project, start at

<http://www.wgbh.org/wgbh/pages/ncam/>

On Campus and Beyond

PIVoT can be accessed by any student, faculty, or staff member working from a computer on MITnet. Two plug-ins are required: the RealVideo (G2 or higher) player and the IBM TechExplorer Introductory LaTeX reader. Download links are included in the PIVoT Help section.

Beyond MIT, PIVoT is being pilot-tested this fall at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and has also been made available to freshman physics students at Wellesley College. Starting in Fall 2001, PIVoT will be licensed to other colleges and universities.

Development

PIVoT was first used by 8.01 students in Fall 1999, while still in beta development. Dr. Alberta Lipson, Associate Dean of Educational Research, directed PIVoT evaluation activities that semester and will coordinate a final large-scale evaluation this fall, with results to be published next spring.

The research to date has indicated strong enthusiasm by 8.01 students who have used PIVoT to help master one of the freshman curriculum's most difficult courses. As one student remarked in a survey, "We see PIVoT as a great help.

Often on tough problem sets it's great, because students who really want to nail a problem will go the extra mile and check out PIVoT instead of giving up."

PIVoT has been developed at the Center for Advanced Educational Services (CAES) by staff from several of CAES's operating divisions: the Center for Educational Computing Initiatives (CECI), the Educational Media Creation Center, MIT Video Productions, and Streaming Media and Compression Services. The principal investigator is Professor Richard Larson, Director of CAES, and the project manager is Laura Koller of CECI.

PIVoT is funded by an anonymous donor, with generous matching grants from IBM, the Lord and the Stratford Foundations, SeaChange Systems, and resources donated by the MIT Physics Department, the Singapore-MIT Alliance, and the Office of Academic Services.

More on Distance Learning

For more background on PIVoT or to sample a video clip, go to

<http://caes.mit.edu/mvp/html/lewin.html>

If you have been thinking about incorporating technology into your courses, watch for the CAES workshop series during IAP to help you get started. ☺

MIT Libraries Now Subscribe to Books24x7.com

For some time, the Libraries have provided the MIT community with access to an impressive set of databases and e-journals through VERA (Virtual Electronic Resources Access):

<http://libraries.mit.edu/databases/>

Recently, publishers have also begun to put the full text of books (e-books) online. Responding to this trend, the MIT Libraries now offer free access to Books24x7.com, an online reference resource for technical information. You can get to this site from the MIT Libraries Web page or from

<http://libraries.mit.edu/get/books24x7/>

What's on the Bookshelf?

Books24x7.com lets you view over 600 e-books from leading information technology publishers such as O'Reilly, MIT Press, Sybex, and Peachpit Press.

The collection covers a range of topics, including networks and protocols, operating systems, office applications, programming, and Web development.

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- Bookmark specific chapters and annotate sections
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One-Year-Old Adobe InDesign Outperforms Aging PageMaker

• Robyn Fizz

Adobe Systems, known for a host of publishing software, including PageMaker, Photoshop, and Illustrator, released a completely new page layout program in the fall of 1999. InDesign 1.0 was meant to upend rival QuarkXPress, which in its turn had long since outclassed Adobe PageMaker.

InDesign 1.0 felt like a beta release – despite its modular architecture and integration with Photoshop and Illustrator, it was very slow and lacked some key features. Within six months, Adobe released InDesign 1.5, a major upgrade that holds its own against Quark.

Current users of PageMaker who have heard about InDesign may be wondering if it's time to make the transition. This article compares the two programs and looks at future directions.

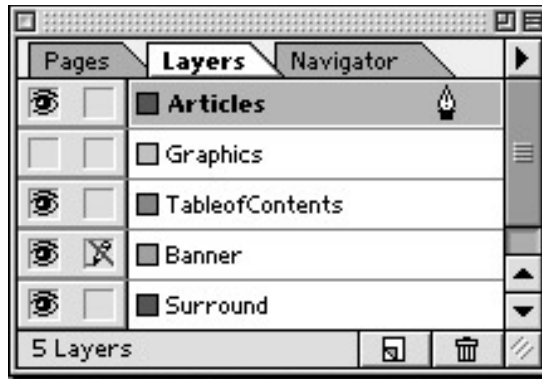
PageMaker Gets Repackaged

When a company releases an important piece of new software, built from the ground up, you might expect them to retire an older product with much the same functionality. But rather than retiring PageMaker, Adobe repackaged it as PageMaker 6.5 Plus and now markets it to business users. This Plus package comes with plenty of ready-to-use content, including templates, clip art, and photos.

Adobe has said nothing about pulling the plug on PageMaker, but the software has not been upgraded in a long time and further development is unlikely. While there's no reason not to continue using PageMaker if you are satisfied with it, think twice about buying it if you are newly in the market for a page layout program.

Where PageMaker Stumbles

PageMaker is fine for simple projects, but it has shown a painful tendency toward file corruption when used intensively to create complex documents over several days. This type of failure may have a lot to do with PageMaker's venerable history. Like an old home with many patched-on additions, PageMaker's code isn't as robust as it should be. If you plan to pound on your page layout software, InDesign is far more stable. Its modular design lets it support new standards and plug-ins with ease.



Layers let you view, hide, reorder, or lock areas or kinds of content in a document.

InDesign Pros and Cons

Before committing to InDesign, be aware of its steep system requirements. To run it efficiently, you need a fast machine with at least 128MB of memory. You may want to assign 40MB or more of memory to the program itself. Even then, InDesign is no speed demon, and print spooling times are sluggish at best. If your system is up to the task, though, there are many reasons to like InDesign.

The learning curve coming from PageMaker is minimal. The most obvious difference between the two programs is that InDesign abandons the windowshade metaphor, instead using frames to contain text or graphics. Since you can select a frame, its contents, or both, working with frames may take some getting used to.

InDesign is fully integrated with Photoshop and Illustrator and shares many of their tools, commands, palettes, and keyboard shortcuts. A few prime examples of shared features include:

- *Layers*. These let you specify areas or kinds of content that you can hide, show, reorder or lock. For example, you can create multi-language versions of a publication by placing each text translation on its own layer.
- *Free Transform tool*. Use this tool to combine transformations, such as rotating and scaling, in one move.
- *Eyedropper tool*. This tool lets you copy fill and stroke attributes from one object to another or transfer type settings to selected text.
- *Text on a path*. Use this option to flow text along the path of any shape.

InDesign has other likeable features as well. You can undo and redo any number of steps. The powerful Find / Change command lets you search for

and replace text, styles, stroke and fill colors, character formats, and more.

You can now apply styles to characters as well as paragraphs – making up for one of PageMaker's most glaring oversights.

What's Missing in InDesign

PageMaker users familiar with the Story Editor for word processing won't find a similar option in InDesign. Nor does InDesign support features for long documents, such as generating tables of contents and

indexes. PageMaker has an abysmal table editor; InDesign doesn't have one at all.

Support on Campus

IS continues to offer limited support for PageMaker, rather than rival QuarkXPress, for a few reasons.

- PageMaker is easier to learn than QuarkXPress and is adequate for staff who need to produce fliers, brochures, and simple newsletters.
- Adobe has several technical support options which, at least anecdotally, are better than Quark's; in addition, there has long been a base of PageMaker know-how at MIT.
- Adobe products are offered at a significant educational discount.

Given PageMaker's likely demise, IS is trying to gauge community interest in InDesign. If you use or plan to use InDesign and would like to see some support options at MIT, contact Robyn Fizz at x3-0540 or <fizz@mit.edu>.

Meanwhile, IS will offer an InDesign Demo on November 6 from noon to 1pm in the N42 Demo Center. You can take more extensive InDesign courses through the Element K Web site described on page 7.

Academic Discounts

In July, the Douglas Stewart Company became Adobe's U.S. distributor for software bundled for the education market. The upshot is that NECX can't offer academic pricing on Adobe software. To get this pricing, you need to buy the software through a retailer that has a relationship with Douglas Stewart, such as PC/MacConnection or the Coop. While academic pricing does vary, you should easily save more than \$300 off of InDesign's retail price of \$699. ☺



IS Adds Support for Netscape Messenger with IMAP

• Phyllis Galt

Information Systems has recently added support for Netscape Messenger, and is evaluating an update of currently supported Eudora (see box below). Messenger is the e-mail component of Netscape Communicator 4.74. While it provides some key features for users who access e-mail from multiple locations, it does not have Eudora's robust feature set. IS does not recommend migrating from Eudora to Messenger without first carefully evaluating how you use e-mail.

IS supports Messenger with Internet Message Access Protocol (IMAP). IMAP lets you store and work with your e-mail on a central server or your own computer. Eudora uses Post Office Protocol (POP) for its current MIT implementation. POP stores your incoming e-mail on a central server until you check for it, at which time it gets copied to your machine and deleted from the server.

Note: Other e-mail programs work with IMAP, including certain versions of Eudora for the Macintosh. However IS does not currently support the use of Eudora, Outlook, or other e-mail programs with IMAP.

Eudora or Messenger?

You will probably want to continue using Eudora if you

- Read e-mail from one computer most of the time
- Have a significant investment in its features (e.g., online directory, spell checking, filters).

However, you may find Netscape Messenger useful if you

- Frequently access e-mail from multiple locations, on or off campus
- Frequently access e-mail from multiple computing platforms,

e.g., Athena public clusters and a Windows machine in your dorm

- Use a primary computer in one place and a second computer occasionally, e.g., a desktop computer at work and a laptop for travel.

If you are satisfied with Eudora, there's no need to switch to Messenger. Eudora will continue to be MIT's supported program for e-mail with POP.

Although it is possible to switch between Eudora and Messenger, IS doesn't recommend this. Not enough testing has been done to tell how reliable this combination is. You may end up with unintended results and have to spend time moving misplaced messages to their intended locations.

Getting Started with Messenger

If you decide on Messenger, use the Macintosh or Windows Netscape installer customized for MIT, available at <http://web.mit.edu/is/help/netscape/>

These installers configure Messenger with MIT-specific settings.

If you are switching from Eudora, you can copy your existing mailboxes and messages for use in Messenger. You can also convert your Eudora address book for use in Messenger, but first be sure to review the documentation at

<http://web.mit.edu/is/help/imap/whatis.html>

Support

For complete details on Messenger and IMAP, see

<http://web.mit.edu/is/help/imap/>

IS also offers two related Quick Start classes: "E-mail with IMAP at MIT" and "Retrieving E-mail from Afar." For the schedule of classes, see

<http://web.mit.edu/is/training/>

Contact the Computing Help Desk if you need assistance with Messenger 4.74. During rollout, IS is providing "best effort" support for Messenger. ☺



This column presents announcements and news to help you make the most of information technology at MIT.

E-Mail Quota

Quotas now exist on the post office servers to guarantee service for the 24,000 users of the MIT mail system. Each user with an @mit.edu address has a 50MB quota for storage of e-mail. If you use Netscape Messenger with IMAP or Eudora with the Leave Mail on Server setting, check your quota periodically to make sure you are within limits. You can do this at

<https://nic.mit.edu/postoffice/quota>

You will need an MIT personal certificate to access this site.

Public Beta of Mac OS X

In September, Apple began selling the public beta of its new operating system, Mac OS X (pronounced "ten"). A major shift from previous versions, Mac OS X is made up of four basic parts:

- Darwin at the core includes the Mach kernel and a customized version of the BSD operating system.
- Quartz, QuickTime, and OpenGL make up an imaging layer that handles 2-D, multimedia, and 3-D graphics.
- Three application environments – Classic, Carbon, and Cocoa – run OS 9- and OS X-compatible software.
- A graphical user interface called Aqua features the Dock (for locating frequently used files, folders, volumes, and applications), updated icons, and a Finder window for navigating local and network file systems and available media.

IS is *not* providing support for this public beta version. Once Apple releases the final version, IS will test Mac OS X with MIT-supported applications and services, and will post updates about compatibility and support on its Mac OS Web pages. If you plan to try out the public beta version, IS cautions you not to do so on your primary computer or on any system running mission-critical services. You should also make frequent backups.

Apple has stated that the final version of Mac OS X will ship in early 2001. ☺

Eudora 5 and IMAP

The current IS-supported versions of Eudora do not function with the new IMAP e-mail service. IS is currently assessing Eudora 5, including its ability to be used with our IMAP service. While IS support for Eudora 5 could come as early as November, no firm date has yet been established nor has a decision been reached about whether this support will include IMAP. If you use Eudora and prefer not to switch to Messenger to take advantage of IMAP, it may be best to wait and assess the official IS announcement about Eudora 5 support.



IS Announces Linux Athena Support

• Jeff Merriman

Information Systems now supports Linux as a first-class member of the Athena environment. The fully supported Dell/Linux hardware configuration puts Athena on your desktop seamlessly and lets you take advantage of the same basic Athena services that are available for Sun Ultra and SGI Athena configurations. These fee-based services include installation, triage, and a hotline for on-site software re-installation.

Additionally, through Dell warranty arrangements, the Linux Athena configuration now has the lowest yearly maintenance cost of the three Athena hardware options. When you sign up for the Full Athena Service package through IS, you pay only \$55 per year for on-site hardware maintenance (in addition to the \$450 fee for Basic Services and access to restricted third-party software).

Recommended Hardware

The currently supported hardware for Linux Athena is the Dell OptiPlex GX 110/L. This 800MHz desktop machine has a Pentium III chip with 256K L2 cache, 256MB SDRAM, 15GB EIDE hard drive, 20/48X CD-ROM, and a 19-inch Dell Trinitron monitor.

For information about the full Dell specification (and other supported Athena configurations and fees), see

<http://web.mit.edu/acs/acquiring-athena.html>

This Web page also steps you through buying a Linux Athena workstation. NECX, MIT's computer purchasing partner, handles orders for the recommended system. The NECX part number is 154455; the price is \$1837.

IS strongly advises those interested in a Linux Athena workstation to buy the system available through NECX. It is configured with the required Ethernet, sound, and video cards and has been fully tested in the Athena environment.

Other computers, even if they run Linux, may not be able to run Linux Athena. If you run a custom installation

(such as a dual-boot setup) or use hardware other than the supported configurations, you will receive only best-effort support from Athena Consulting and Development.

Minimal Standard Athena

Those interested in keeping costs down may want to consider minimal standard Athena, a zero-cost option in terms of service fees. This requires you to install and troubleshoot your own system. For details, see

<http://web.mit.edu/acs/min-std-athena.html>

Questions?

If you have pre-sales questions about the Linux Athena system, contact a consultant at the MIT Computer Connection. You can reach one at <mcc@mit.edu> or x3-7686. ☎



Tech Tips

This column presents answers to frequently asked technology questions. For more Q&As, check the IS Stock Answers database at

<http://hdstock.mit.edu/stockanswers/>

Q When using a Kerberized application like Eudora over Tether, I sometimes lose the connection. When I reconnect to Tether and try to check mail, I get the message "incorrect network address." How do I resolve this?

A When you get a Kerberos ticket, it stores the current Internet Protocol (IP) address inside of it. If you get disconnected from Tether and then reconnect, you get a different IP address than the one that's stored in the ticket. When you try to get new mail with Eudora, the IP address inside your Kerberos ticket no longer matches the IP address that Tether last assigned you and you get an error message. For Windows, the actual error message is "POP command error KRR Kerberos authentication failure: Incorrect network address (krb_rd_reg)."

Macintosh and Windows users need to do different things to solve this issue.

Macintosh Users

To get rid of this error once and for all, upgrade to Kerberos for Macintosh 3.0. It notices when the IP address changes and prompts you to get a new ticket. To obtain Kerberos for Macintosh 3.0, along with installation instructions, go to

<http://web.mit.edu/is/help/kerberos/kerbformac.html>

If you have Kerberos for Macintosh 2.5.1 or below, you'll have to manually delete your old ticket and get a new one. Try one of these methods:

- If you are using Eudora, select Forget Password from the Special menu.
- If the version of KClient on the machine is 1.6.2 through 1.9, select the KClient Control Panel and click on the Logout button.
- If the application uses Kerberos 5 (e.g., Fetch 3.0.4b6sec, SAPgui), open the Kerberos Manager control panel, click on the listing for your Kerberos

tickets, and click the Destroy Tickets button.

Windows Users

For Windows there are three ways to delete Kerberos tickets:

- Run Leash or Leash32 and click the Destroy Tickets button.
- Create a batch file that destroys the Kerberos ticket. The batch file should contain this line:
`del c:\tmp\ticket.krb`
- On Windows 95 machines only, create a batch file that will destroy the Kerberos tickets and then launch Eudora. This file should contain the following two lines:

```
del c:\tmp\ticket.krb
c:\eudora\eudora.exe
```

You can create an icon that refers to the batch file.

Note: The Forget Password command does *not* work for any version of Eudora on a computer running any version of Windows. ☎



New Rates for Telephone Calls from MIT

• Lee Ridgway

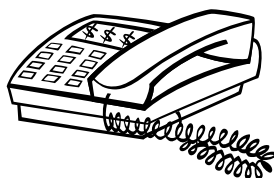
Information Systems recently negotiated new contracts that provide reduced rates on some telephone services for MIT. These include calls within Eastern Massachusetts, domestic long-distance calls, and international calls. The expected savings to the Institute and its telephone customers is about half a million dollars per year. Rates for installations, basic analog and digital phone services, and voice mail services have not changed.

The new rates took effect in June and July. Direct-dialed calls are now billed at

- \$0.04 per minute for eastern Massachusetts (617, 508, 781, 978 area codes)
- \$0.15 per minute for western Massachusetts (413), the U.S., and Canada
- \$0.15 per minute or higher, depending on the country, for international calls

Calls to directory assistance outside of MIT are now billed at \$0.60 per call.

Billing under the new rates is based on a full minute, with partial minutes rounded up. The same rate applies seven days a week, 24 hours a day, with no additional per-call charges. These charges cover MIT's cost of providing telephone calling services. Based on the new rates, MIT customers can expect an overall savings on charges for their calls.



For details on the new rates, see these Web pages:

- MIT Business Telephone Rates
<http://web.mit.edu/is/tel/mitrates.html>
- MIT International Long Distance Rates for Business Telephones
<https://web.mit.edu/is/tel/mitonly/international.html>

(Note the https in the URL; certificates are required.)

If you have questions about MIT's telephone rates, send e-mail to <telebill@mit.edu>.

Web-Based Directory Assistance

Given the high cost of directory assistance calls, you may want to look up off-campus phone numbers using a Web-based service. Sites to try include

- AT&T AnyWho
<http://www.anywho.com/>
- 555-1212.com
<http://555-1212.com/>
- Switchboard.com
<http://www.switchboard.com/>

MIT Policy on Personal Calls

MIT's policy regarding business and personal calls remains the same. To review it, see *Responsible Use of MIT Computers, Networks, and Telephones* at

<http://web.mit.edu/policies/13.2.html> ☉

IS Helps to Implement Student Information Policy

• Rich Garcia

Protecting student privacy is a hot topic on campus. Last December, MIT issued a revised Student Information Policy, recognizing the fact that many student records are now online. Starting from the requirements of federal law, the policy answers such questions as:

- What is public information and what is private?
- When can private information be disclosed, and to whom?
- What access should students have to their own educational records?

In the context of class records, anything relating to an identifiable student's participation in a class is part of the student's educational record and by definition private. Instructors, administrative staff, and sometimes other students in the class need to know who is on the class list, but the rest of the MIT community is not automatically entitled to this information, to say nothing of the general public.

Required class discussions and student work that are posted on the Web must also be securely restricted to the members of the class. Class e-mail lists, many of which let users add themselves and see the names of other members, need to be managed to prevent unauthorized new membership. Files in course lockers that contain sensitive information about individual students (e.g., graded homework assignments) need to be secured against access even by other students in the class.

Class Participation Lists

To develop an infrastructure that addresses student privacy concerns, IS launched a project informally called Grouper. Grouper provides a comprehensive system for managing class participation lists. One major piece automatically generates a list of students for each class, based on the information contained in the Registrar's database. An update is performed each night, so faculty can always get current lists reflecting the day's adds and drops. This eliminates the need to type lists by hand, as well as the need to use publicly viewable lists to which users can add themselves at will.

Grouper also permits setting access control to course lockers and was the stimulus behind the development of WebMoirra, the Athena list management service at

<http://web.mit.edu/moirra/>

Some further applications envisioned for Grouper include

- Electronic reserve of materials available through the Libraries
- Licensing for subject-specific software
- Greater facility for threaded discussions and chat rooms.

Getting the Word Out

IS has been working with the Committee on Student Information Policy to publicize what all of this means for faculty. Key issues and solutions are detailed in an article in the fall Insider, online at

<http://web.mit.edu/acs/insider/fall2000.html>

For the full text of the revised Student Information Policy, see

<http://web.mit.edu/policies/sip/>

You can send questions or comments to the Committee on Student Information Policy at <csip@mit.edu>. ☉

IS Offers Another Way to Learn Software: Web-Based Training

• Jeanne Cavanaugh

Technology is transforming the way that training is delivered to the workforce. Web-based training (WBT) consists of modular courses, available over the Web anytime of day or night, 365 days a year. It's also known as just-in-time training or online learning.

Web-based training is one more way to deliver course materials to a diverse community. Independent learners can not only take courses at their own pace, but can sample a wide variety of content for preview or refresher purposes.

Selecting a Vendor

MIT, in conjunction with the eleven other local schools that form the Boston Consortium IT Training Group, recently evaluated the marketplace to choose a WBT vendor for computer courses.

After nine months of testing and negotiation, the Consortium schools signed a letter of intent with Element K (formerly ZDU). MIT's license lets 1000 community members use Element K's Web-based training from Macintosh or Windows computers, at work or at home. The number of accounts can be increased if demand warrants.

For an overview of WBT options at MIT, see

<http://web.mit.edu/is/training/wbt/>

Element K

The Element K site offers a modular way to learn about popular office productivity software, such as Word, Excel, and PowerPoint; desktop publishing software, such as PageMaker, InDesign, and Photoshop; and Web publishing software, such as Dreamweaver. There are over 200 titles in the set of courses for which MIT has a license. Some titles have multi-lingual versions.

Even without an account, you can preview much of the information on the Element K site at

<http://www.elementk.com/>

Use the Experience Element K link from the home page to view a course catalog and try sample courses. You will not be able to take any courses until you are officially enrolled, but you may still be able to determine if this is a learning style that works for you.

Note: Many of the courses are for products not supported by MIT. See

<http://web.mit.edu/is/training/wbt/matrix.html>

for details on what topics are offered through Element K and the status of those products on campus.

Registering for an Account

Element K accounts are distributed on a first-come, first-served basis. You need an MIT e-mail address to register; to do so, go to the registration link on the IS Training site at

<http://web.mit.edu/is/training/wbt/>

You will be notified within a week that your account has been activated. You can then take courses from start to finish, focus on topics within a course, or take a skill assessment to gauge your competency.

If your account remains inactive for six weeks after registration, IS will send you a reminder. If there has been no activity after three months, you may be asked to relinquish your account so that someone else can use it.

Also, if you explore Element K and find it is not compatible with your learning style, contact IS Training so that your account can be reassigned.

Feedback

The Element K option supplements, but does not replace, the computer training that IS already offers. IS views Element K as an experiment, and will solicit feedback from those who use it.

If you have questions or comments about Web-based training, contact Jeanne Cavanaugh at x3-0852 or <cavan@mit.edu>. ☺

Enhanced WebBarton Improves Search Functionality

• Pat Flanagan

By this time next year, the MIT Libraries plan to have a new vendor product through which to offer Barton, their online catalog. In the interim, they have released an updated version of WebBarton, available at this handy shortcut URL:

<http://libraries.mit.edu/barton/>

(If you are using an older bookmark for WebBarton, the Libraries request that you update it.)

Improvements

Though popular and easier to use in many ways than telnet Barton, the original WebBarton did not offer some of the functionality available with telnet. An updated version, released in September, offers many enhancements. Frequent users of WebBarton

may have noticed the changes, but for those who have not, here they are:

- Keyword searches with result sets of less than 500 automatically sort by author. Previously, items appeared in the order in which they had been added to the database, a random organization not useful to researchers.
- You can now sort keyword search result sets of less than 1000 items yourself. There are two ways to do this: Simple Search lets you sort by title, author, or publication date after the search is done. The sort option appears along with the search result set. With Advanced Search, you can choose a sort before or after the search via a pull-down menu near the bottom of the search screen.
- The ability to limit a search result to items of a certain date or date range, a specific material type, or a specific language has been improved. In keyword searches, you can choose the black Limit button, to the left, before or after the search. You can now easily set one or more of these limits from pull-down menus. Previously, you had to go to help screens to identify the correct codes for languages and material types.
- Browse searches, unlike keyword searches, result in an alphabetical list of headings rather than in a result set. The searched heading – or its closest match – is now highlighted.
- You can now also sort in browse searches, but only once a heading has been chosen. For example, a browse subject search for “business ethics” produces a heading: business ethics (226). If you select this heading, the sort option will appear.
- Search history, available through the History button, now provides clickable links so that you can re-execute searches easily. Note that browse searches do not appear in the search history. ☺



If you don't know where to get help for your computer, network, or telephone problems, dial one of the help lines listed to the right.

If you prefer to use e-mail, you can send your questions to the corresponding e-mail addresses on the far right. (When logged into Athena, you can also use the olc command to send questions to Athena's online consultants.)

For a complete list of services offered by Information Systems, see <http://web.mit.edu/is/services/>

For help with...

Dial...

Or send a message to...

Administrative applications	2-1177	business-help@mit.edu
Athena Computing Environment	3-4435	olc@mit.edu
Computer and printer repairs	3-0815	hardserv@mit.edu
Computer pre-sales consulting	3-7686	mcc@mit.edu
Disabilities and computing	3-7808	atic@mit.edu
Macintosh computers	3-1101	mac-help@mit.edu
PC computers	3-1102	pc-help@mit.edu
Telephone repairs	3-4357	5help@mit.edu
UNIX/VMS (by subscription)	3-1103	unix-vms-help@mit.edu
Voice mail	3-3677	vmail@mit.edu



Surf Sites: Distance Education at MIT

As the lead article on PIVoT shows, technology can bring customized education to students. Since learning works best as a social experience, not delivered in isolation from teachers or other students, many MIT distance learning courses feature both interactive classes and Web-based course materials.

Distance education facilities in Building 9 help to make this happen. Together, the organizations listed on the right offer a full range of distance education services, including a broadcast studio, electronic classrooms, and video production and digitizing.

Center for Advanced Educational Services

<http://caes.mit.edu/>

<http://caes.mit.edu/mvp/html/caes.html>

Center for Educational Computing Initiatives

<http://www-ceci.mit.edu/>

<http://caes.mit.edu/research/current.html>

Educational Media Creation Center

<http://web.mit.edu/emcc/>

MIT Video Productions

<http://caes.mit.edu/mvp/>



MIT Information Systems



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