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SOME INFORMATION FOR AUTHORS

Papers are expected to be the equivalent to at least ten typewritten   pages in length. Posters may be as short as a single page.

December 1, 1999 - DEADLINE for receipt of titles and abstracts
February 14, 2000 - DEADLINE for receipt of final papers in HTML or ASCII   format.

The conference is free to all Internet users.

Those who are interested in obtaining more information should consult   the CONFCHEM website (http://www.ched-ccce.org/confchem/)

to the activities of the Committee and they were omitted from the expressions of thanks only due to an oversight on my part. I apologize for the mistake and express our appreciation to Professors Chipman and Gettys for their hard work.

Membership Changes: Addenda and Apologies

Harry E. Pence
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In the Spring, 1999 issue of the Newsletter, I recognized the contributions of three members of the CCCE who were retiring at the end of their terms. At that time, I inadvertently omitted two other committee members who were also retiring, Wilmon B. Chipman (Bridgewater State College) and Nancy Gettys (Univ. Of Wisconsin - Madison). Both of these individuals have made excellent contributions

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Using Multimedia III -

Font and Color Selection
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Although modern presentation software allows a lecturer   to use a variety of fonts and color schemes, using more than a few of these many options in a given presentation can   make it almost impossible to indicate emphasis to the audience. Emphasis is extremely important when communicating, especially when giving a classroom presentation. Doing   something different calls attention to what the students need most to know. To have this option, some standard pattern must have been established. If there is no normal pattern, it is   impossible to show an

emphasis.

In speaking, we can create emphasis by speaking slower, or louder, or with particular stress. Similarly, print media use different types sizes and sometimes even different colors to catch our eyes. A speech or publication that constantly varies is just as frustrating as a talk given in a monotone. To make emphasis possible, a presentation should be based on a limited set of fonts, type sizes, and colors that are chosen most of the time. The basic format should be repeated so often that the eye is no longer aware of it. Then a different font or color will have a real impact on the viewer when emphasis is required.

One of the most common mistakes for new users of presentation software is poor font selection. When slides were widely used, it was common to talk about the 6x6x6 rule. That is, no more than six words in a line; no more than six lines on a frame; and the text should be legible from six feet away. This still works on the computer. Do not clutter up the screen with every word in the lecture. Remember that what is perfectly legible on the computer screen may be difficult or impossible to read when projected into a large classroom. This is particularly important in classes that include students with vision problems.

Unfortunately, there are no firm general rules for selecting fonts. Room size and projector brightness can make large differences. It is important to use a font with strong descenders and ascenders (the vertical and horizontal lines). The advice not to use serif fonts, that is, the fonts with the extra decorations at the end of some vertical and horizontal lines, has a sound basis, but it is not just because of the extra decorations.

Many serif fonts, like Times Roman, have thin vertical lines. This makes them hard to read in a large classroom, with a poor projector, or in a lighted room. Despite this problem, Times Roman is a standard selection in many presentation packages. A heavier font, like Bookman Old Style (serif), Ariel (sans serif), or Helvetica (sans serif) will often give better readability. One way to give a font extra weight, is to use the boldface version. In general, avoid font sizes smaller than 24 point. If a smaller font is needed to include everything, it may mean that there is too much on the frame.

To produce a readable presentation, the other main requirement is a good color scheme. The important factor here is obtaining a strong contrast between the background color and the text color. Deep, strong background colors, like dark blue, dark green, or dark red, are typical choices, because the text will stand out sharply. White or yellow are good text color choices in these cases. Many other combinations are possible, and sometimes even suggested by the presentation software, but there are few combinations that match these for readability.

Sales presentations are commonly done with a dark blue or green background because these colors are considered to put the viewer in a receptive frame of mind. Bright red, the color of blood, is considered to be very aggressive, and so is rarely used by salespeople. On the other hand, an eight a.m. class will need all the energy possible, so bright red may be a good choice.

Be sure to avoid the color combinations that are difficult to read. Bright red text on dark blue background is usually a poor choice, since the human eye has difficulty focusing on these colors at the same time. Pastel backgrounds were once a common choice, because the available projectors were not very bright. There is little reason to use a pastel background today, particularly since it is hard to find a strongly contrasting color for the text. Another factor that decreases readability is to place the text over a picture or diagram. This may be done for a title section, but if the text is important, it is essential to make sure that the text stands out strongly against whatever background is provided by the image.

Never lose track of the fact that the primary consideration when selecting colors and fonts is readability. No matter how pretty the presentation may be, if the audience cannot read the text, the resulting lecture is a waste of time.

A Simple Strategy for Creating Web-based, Interactive, Multiple- Choice, Practice Examinations.

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INTRODUCTION

This article describes a simple, text-based HTML technique for creating multiple-choice Web ex aminations that allow students to review course materials interactively. Clicking on any of the answers to each examination question reveals whether that answer is right or wrong. The technique is particularly useful in converting class examinations into Web-