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SU's first e-book documents institute construction

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Serving Syracuse
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SU's first e-book documents institute construction

Judy Holmes Senior News Editor

Standing at the end of long lines, snaking their way among stacks of books at bookstores is the legendary ritual students undergo at the beginning of each semester to buy their latest supply of textbooks. Imagine what campus life would be like if obtaining textbooks was as simple as clicking a mouse.

It's that simple for students in the School of Architecture who are enrolled in Architecture Technologies I, II or III, taught by associate professor Theodore Ceraldi. In association with the SU Library, Ceraldi has published the first e-book on campus. The book, "An Anthology of Building Technology," contains more than 200 images with text that documents a partial record of the construction process of the



An illustration from Theodore Ceraldi's e-book, depicting caisson operations at the work site of the Institute for Human Performance, is pictured above. (Photo by Theodore Ceraldi)

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Institute for Human Performance at SUNY Upstate Medical University.

Ceraldi took the photographs during the three-year construction period of the building, which was completed in 1998. During that same period, Ceraldi conducted Honors architectural technology classes at the site. "The construction site was our classroom," Ceraldi says. "The images document actual field conditions, installations and construction procedures that were observed and recorded during the classes."

The electronic textbook, which can be accessed by faculty and students either from the School of Architecture Web site or the SU Library Web site (<http://libwww.syr.edu/Digital/Collection/Ceraldi/title.htm>), contains

images of plans and sections of the building that are used in conjunction with the original construction documents, which are on reserve in the Architecture Reading Room, Room 102 of Slocum Hall. The book will eventually contain a glossary with links to other Internet sites.

"The beauty of the project is that the book can be changed," Ceraldi says. "I have more than 1,500 photographs of the construction site. We can change the images in the book, use the images to supplement lectures, or we can add new links. It's a dynamic text."

The book was done in collaboration with Barbara Opar, head of the library's fine arts department, and Susan Miller, slide collection supervisor. Miller oversaw the digitizing of the slides, a process that included image editing and proofing. Library staff member Edward Gokey did the copy editing, and Aaron M.

Bittel, a junior music education major in the College of Visual and Performing Arts, designed the Web site.

"The library is going digital in a number of different areas," says Lisa Moeckel, head of the library's Research and Information Services Division. "And we are exploring opportunities to do a number of digital projects both with vendors and with faculty members. Ted's project was the first in-house project to come our way. It gave us an opportunity to explore what is involved with digitizing these kinds of materials and organizing them on the Web."

Opar says the project was a great learning opportunity for the department. "We suggested the e-book format to Ted," she says. "He wanted to use the slides in a way in which they would be accessible to students and fac-

ulty. Once the site was completed, he realized there was more he could do with the book to make it more dynamic and interactive."

Bittel says computers are something of a hobby for him and although his primary interest is in music, he seeks out opportunities to apply his computer skills. A part-time job in the library's fine arts department, which he began two summers ago, gave him a creative outlet for both his music and computer knowledge. "I've been working with computers since I was very young—when programs were stored on cassette tapes and home computers had a fraction of the memory that most graphic calculators now have," he says. "Although I've done several computer-based projects for the library's fine arts department, the e-book was definitely the largest." ♦