

# Boston BROADSIDE

November/Decem

Vol. 59, No

Newsletter of the Boston Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication

## Inside

- ▶ [Cover Page](#)
- ▶ [Mentoring: A Gentle Alliance](#)
- ▶ [Letter from the Editor](#)
- ▶ [President's Message](#)
- ▶ [Infoneering: Beauty and the Beast](#)
- ▶ [Creating Interactive PDFs](#)
- ▶ [Benefits of Electronic Learning](#)
- ▶ [Climbing the Ladder](#)
- ▶ [What You Put in...](#)
- ▶ [Book Review: Web Site Design Goodies](#)
- ▶ [Announcements and Activities](#)
- ▶ [Call for IOCC Judges](#)
- ▶ [Scholarship Applications](#)
- ▶ [STC Board of Directors Report](#)
- ▶ [Society Highlights](#)

## Book Review

### Designing Better Web Sites: A Review of Web Site Design Goodies

By **Bob Boeri**

*Joe Burns, Ph.D. Copyright 2002 by Que. \$29.99 US, softbound, 379 pages with companion Web site. ISBN: 0-7897-2485-5. Reader Level: Beginner to intermediate.*



**Review summary:** ★★★  
(out of a possible 5)

So you've mastered Dreamweaver, FrontPage, or GoLive, and you're ready to begin building a new Web site or contributing to an existing one. Whoa! There are many tutorials and references to teach you HTML, JavaScript, Flash, and a host of other Web standards and technologies. Far fewer books take a step back and suggest how to use all these capabilities with an eye toward effective Web design. Drawing on his experience teaching over a million Web developers, Burns uses his book to provide some good guidelines about site design. He also gives tips on applying the "goodies" that we have all come to love (or hate) on the Web.

Burns starts with three common-sense design principles:

## Resource

- ▶ [Index of issues](#)
- ▶ [Boston Broadsid Sponsor](#)
- ▶ [Society of Technical Communication Inc.](#)
- ▶ [STC Boston Chapter](#)
- ▶ [STC Boston Calendar](#)

- ▶ [Chapter Membership Reports](#)
- ▶ [Broadside Online Staff](#)

- Your Web sites are for visitors (not for you).
- There are no incorrect design choices (depending on your site's purpose).
- Web content is the most important part of your site.

The [current issue](#) is also available in PDF.

Copyright © STC Boston  
2001

In each chapter, Burns applies those principles and provides guidelines for critiquing sites, along with example critiques that illustrate the main points of that chapter. This book does not deal only in principles, however. It also lists very specific design problems and ways to solve them, such as how to deal with images that are not rectangular. Burns also provides tips on selecting an Internet Service Provider and ways to promote your site. I found his tips uniformly helpful and a refreshing return to the basic principles of design.

I did find two areas where the book did not provide as much substance as I would have liked:

- his treatment of XML and XHTML; and
- information about Web site development on the server side (where XML often is processed to deliver customized HTML views to Web browsers).

Overall, this book is a valuable and reasonably priced addition to your technical library. If you want to try before you buy, then visit Burns' Web site at <http://www.htmlgoodies.com>. You can even read Chapter 2, "Before You Write a Word," a good sample of the rest of Burns' delightful book.

***Bob is an Information Architect at Forefield Inc., a financial knowledge management firm in central Massachusetts. After hours, he writes columns and software reviews for EMedia Magazine and EContent. You can reach Bob directly at [bboeri@ieee.org](mailto:bboeri@ieee.org).***