

Inside . . .

You can view the Boston Broadside in PDF. Adobe's free [Acrobat Reader](#) is required to view PDF files.

- **Download** the current issue as a PDF file
- **Index** to current and past issues of Broadside

[President's Message:](#)

[Denise Dunne Bids Farewell](#)

[Director-Sponsor's Report: STC's 48th Annual Conference](#)

[Avid Takes Top Honors at Competitions2000](#)

[Review of e-Video: Producing Internet Video as Broadband Technologies Converge](#)

[Broadside Notes](#)

[Boston Broadside Sponsors](#)

[Society for Technical Communication, Inc.](#)

[STC-Boston chapter Web site](#)

[Broadside Back Issues](#)

Book Review

A Review of *e-Video: Producing Internet Video as Broadband Technologies Converge*

by **Bob Boeri**

H. Peter Alesso. Copyright 2000 by Addison-Wesley. \$44.95 US, softbound, 289 pages with companion CD-ROM. ISBN: 0-201-70314-9. Reader Level: Beginner to intermediate.

Review summary: ★★★★★

As we all know, the list of technologies that we must understand grows unceasingly, and often the list includes unfamiliar subjects that we must learn quickly. One such technology is video, especially when delivered over the Web as part of distance learning or product demonstrations. I have dabbled in various Web-delivered multimedia pieces and even have a presentation with handouts and some modest Web video demos on [my Web site](#). Still, I drive with training wheels and have mostly learned while doing. Until now, there have been very few introductory books available that cover Web multimedia, and I've seen none as good as *e-Video*.

e-Video is divided into four major sections: Opportunity, Production, Compression, and Delivery. Although these can (and must) get a bit technical to be useful, I found Alesso's style understandable. "Video Opportunity" explains the impact and opportunities for video on distance learning and e-commerce. The author discusses the nuts and bolts of file sizes, Internet transmissions, and the differences between dial-up and broadband connections. "Video Production" explains techniques for producing, capturing, and editing video. "Video Compression" covers the three major Web-streaming formats from Microsoft, RealNetworks, and Apple. Alesso even explains the underlying multimedia XML standard, SMIL, that is becoming the foundation for those formats. Finally, Alesso describes the delivery of network video, including future strategies for broadband and high definition TV over the Internet.

Having a companion CD-ROM is always good, and this one is a gem. It includes a well designed eVideo HTML "site" (on the CD-ROM) with download links for free software and a series of video lectures, including many "how-to" videos that explain the use of common Web video delivery systems, such as Real and QuickTime. Alesso also delivers a more general 10-minute video

that explains the process of preparing, capturing, editing, and delivering video over the Web.

How well does this book measure up? I shared the book with a work acquaintance who has a commercial video background, and I had trouble getting it back from him. Any shortcomings? Video technologies change rapidly, and some information (like PC configuration) is a bit dated. Still, Alesso corrects this by providing a companion Web site that duplicates some of what is on the CD-ROM, but the site also provides current information. Alesso practices what he preaches on his site, by providing slow, intermediate, and fast access versions of [demonstrations](#)). With mainstream publishing tools (such as RoboHelp Office 9) quickly adding support for video, understanding Web video is going from optional to required. To get a head start, I highly recommend this book.

©Bob Boeri. 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 Professional. You can reach Bob directly at bboeri@world.std.com.

May 1, 2001