Experiences using WebCT: Empower the Students and Burden your TA

Prof. Brian L. Evans, Dept. of ECE, bevans@ece.utexas.edu
Mr. Wade Schwartzkopf, Dept. of ECE, wade@ece.utexas.edu
http://webct.cc.utexas.edu/SCRIPT/EE313/scripts/serve_home
(username "guest" and password "guest")
Introduction

- EE313 Linear Systems and Signals, Fall 99
- Required sophomore course, 70 students
- Using WebCT, students used a browser to
  - Download assignments
  - Browse lectures
  - Check grades and relative performance
  - Participate in virtual office hours
Virtual Office Hours

- Advantages
  - Accessible from anywhere
  - All discussions are on public record

- Disadvantages
  - Computer chat less natural than face-to-face conversation
  - Difficult to read how well students understand with no facial expressions
Example Chat Session

TA>>> For the plotting questions, you can use Mathematica or Matlab. Both will give you correct answers if you use them correctly.

Melody Queen Klingler>>> Does the error in the code of Computer Ex. C2.1 (discussed on the hmwk pg) produce an incorrect plot, or will it just not run?

TA>>> Is that the one Brian describes on the web page?

Melody Queen Klingler>>> yes

->->->-> Jac S. Little connected at: Tue Sep 7 1999 20:32:09

TA>>> The matlab code won't run at all.

->->->-> David Paul Higley connected at: Tue Sep 7 1999 20:32:33

Melody Queen Klingler>>> Thanks.

TA>>> It includes syntax errors.

TA>>> Also, it calls function don't exist.

<-<-<-<- Jac S. Little disconnected at: Tue Sep 7 1999 20:33:00

TA>>> Furthermore, the matlab code is really hard to understand.

->->->-> Jac S. Little connected at: Tue Sep 7 1999 20:33:28 …

Jonathan Francis Wong>>> In mathematica, how can you run the program to get the solution for the problems?

TA>>> You'll have to be more specific. What program? What problems?

->->->-> David Paul Higley_#2 connected at: Tue Sep 7 1999 20:35:54

Jonathan Francis Wong>>> sorry, what's the code to produce an output for the function

Jonathan Francis Wong>>> prob 2.3

Jac S. Little>>> Does anyone want to come to another room and help with the proof problem (2.4)?
WebCT Chat Rooms

Welcome to WebCT Chat. Click on a room to enter it.

- Wade's Office
- Room 2
- Room 3
- Room 4

General Chat for EE813

General Chat for All Courses

Note: Conversations in the following rooms will be recorded: Wade's Office, Room 2, Room 3, Room 4. Room logs: Wade's Office, Room 2, Room 3, Room 4.
$y = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^{n} x_i$
Advantages of Using WebCT

- Handles administrative overhead created by student inquiries into grades and performance
- Students verify recorded grades
- Students discuss homework solutions with each other at any time.
- Instructors can hold virtual office hours
- Accessible from anywhere in the world: UT news groups and professors are on campus
Disadvantages of Using WebCT

- 40 hours per week for setup
  - Set up student usernames and passwords
  - Give instructions to students, e.g. enable style sheets on Netscape
- 5 hours per week on site maintenance