Foreword

How to make better use of open source technologies in learning, teaching, and lab management systems is a matter that is widely discussed in professional meetings and at other formal and informal meetings of faculty, researchers, administrators, and managers of educational institutions, training centers and labs. Mostly the conversations would revolve around the challenges and difficulties encountered, and partial successes. Those with a success story would usually share his or her experiences to other groups of individuals. The value of Li Chao’s *Utilizing Open Source Tools for Online Teaching and Learning: Applying Linux Technologies* is greatly enhanced by the fact that it is perhaps the first truly comprehensive and authoritative book to appear on the difficult task of planning, developing, and administering the various components of an online teaching/learning system using only open source technologies. The book has importance that is not only timely but timeless, in that it covers all aspects of the application of open source technologies to online teaching/learning systems, and moreover it discusses many of the underlying instructional and foundational issues besides the nuts and bolts of downloading and configuring the latest systems and technologies. The book provides a wealth of guidance and valuable information on the technologies that are available and what they can do, with a special emphasis on Linux operating systems and related products, and how to develop and administer online teaching systems using them. To its author, whom I have had the pleasure of working with for many years, may every reader render due appreciation, for distilling the wisdom garnered from his experiences and much research that has gone into this work.

May I underscore that this book is not just theory – even though the author has gone to extraordinary measures to describe the methodological underpinnings – but rather based on much practical experience, what we actually use, the result of much trials and tribulations on the author’s part, and the ultimate lessons learned. What Li describes here in these pages actually works, and in many instances reflects the
best strategies and options that are available for the set of conditions or problems being considered.

I am glad to write the Foreword to this new, innovative, and highly relevant book, written by one of our most popular teachers.

Meledath Damodaran, PhD
Professor of Computer Science, Information Systems and Math
University of Houston-Victoria
Victoria, Texas, USA

Meledath Damodaran is a professor of computer science and mathematics at the University of Houston-Victoria. He is the coordinator of the Computer Science and Mathematics Programs at UHV. Prior to joining UHV in August 1991, he taught computer science at various universities for over 11 years. His research interests are in software quality management, parallel processing, and neural networks. He is also interested in software engineering, software project management, and computer science and computer information systems education. He teaches a wide variety of courses including operating systems, software project management, software engineering, programming language theory, computer security, database design, artificial intelligence, computer architecture, and information systems. Dr. Damodaran has also worked as a consultant to industries and governmental agencies. He was a Fulbright Scholar in 1992 and a Mellon Visiting Faculty Fellow in the Computer Science Department at Yale University in New Haven in 1989-90. Dr. Damodaran has also served as the president of Applied Computer Consultants, Inc. in Edmond, Okla., from 1984 to 1986. Dr. Damodaran received his doctorate from Purdue University in 1977.