Foreword

Creation of online computer labs for use in computer science and information systems courses is a matter that is widely discussed in professional meetings and at other formal and informal meetings of computing faculty. Mostly the conversations would revolve around statements of wishful thinking, difficulties encountered, and partial successes. Occasionally, one meets someone with a success story, sharing his or her experiences to an eager group of individuals. The value of Li Chao’s *Strategies and Technologies for Developing Online Computer Labs for Technology-Based Courses* is greatly enhanced by the fact that it is perhaps the first book to appear on the difficult task of planning and developing an online computer lab in support of IT courses. The book has importance that is not only timely but timeless, in that it discusses many of the underlying issues besides the latest systems and technologies. To its author, who 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.
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 actual experience, what we actually use, the result of many trials and tribulations and the ultimate lessons learned. What Chao describes here in these pages actually works, and in many instances reflects an optimal strategy for the set of conditions being considered.

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

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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 (1992) and a Mellon visiting faculty fellow in the Computer Science Department at Yale University in New Haven (1989 to 1990). Dr. Damodaran has also served as the President of Applied Computer Consultants Inc., in Edmond, OK (1984 to 1986). Dr. Damodaran received his doctorate from Purdue University (1977).