

A checklist for evaluating technical textbook supplements

- 1) Identify your publisher's representative: Publisher: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone No.: \_\_\_\_\_  
Book title: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Identify a publisher's technical specialist who can address technical questions.  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone No.: \_\_\_\_\_  
Title: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Contact Greg Simmons of Instructional Computing Services (simmons\_gc, 262-6991) to arrange for ICS consultants to help you evaluate: 1) the accuracy of the sales representative's claims, 2) the quality of the technical supplements, and 3) whether or not 'premium' content duplicates functionality we already have available in our course management system. We can also place any provided WebCT content on our server and help you evaluate it.
- 4) Obtain ALL publishers' claims and promises either IN WRITING or ON TAPE. (ICS can provide a release form with which you can require the representative(s) to allow your department to videotape their presentations.) Assume that anything promised to you during the "heat of the sale" will be forgotten, lost, or delayed UNLESS you have proof of the promise.
- 5) Ask the publisher's representative to grant downloadable access to the entire suite of technical ancillaries, including any so-called premium content (eBooks, test banks, etc.) for local installation and evaluation. (A publisher may claim that this is not technically feasible – don't believe it! If the publisher's own site can deliver content over the web, so can we! If they persistently refuse, ask them to document the explicit technical reasons for refusing.)
- 6) If the publisher will not allow a local installation, obtain written responses to the questions below, as you may be personally liable for FERPA violations in the event student information is lost or released. If you plan to post student grades and data to a publisher's server, be sure to have a FERPA Contract (currently being created) from the University Attorney's office signed by the publisher's legal representative.
  - a. Exactly what personal information about students is collected?
  - b. Are access logs collected? Can you access them to track student activity? How long are they preserved?
  - c. What security measures protect student information and records on the publishers' servers?
  - d. How and how frequently are student information and records backed up?
  - e. To whom and for what reasons is student information made available? Publishers' employees? Marketers? Partners? Advertisers?
  - f. For how long are student records and information preserved? How would you access them in the event of a grade challenge or 'incomplete'?
  - g. Can you download or transfer materials you create from the publisher's system? How?
- 7) You should have in your possession all technical supplementary materials (WebCT courses, Epacks, test banks, etc.) for local installation BEFORE THE ADOPTION. If not, do not expect they will be forthcoming. Do not accept materials created for texts other than the specific edition you are considering for adoption.
- 8) Access each and every ancillary component you are considering using, both as a student user and as a faculty user... obtaining student access to the publishers' materials can range from simple to almost impossible – not surprisingly, faculty access is usually much less onerous (you are the ones making the choice, eh?). Tell your rep that their requiring student access codes will result in significant demerits for their product.
- 9) If student ACCESS CODES are required, ask the publisher to provide a sufficient number of cost-free codes for the entire life of the adoption (presume the expected number of students plus a 5% excess). Obtain a promise (see #3 above) that all access codes be provided immediately on adoption- if you don't have the codes up front you can be confident that obtaining them later will be a nosebleed.
- 10) Determine whether the ancillaries require any special software on the students' computers (if so, then students may not be able to use public computer labs). Is the software available for Windows and Macintosh computers?
- 11) Are ancillaries in a generally accessible "standard" format? (Examples of acceptable formats: PDF, HTML, TXT, MPG, MOV, SWF)