



- The Internet Shakespeare Editions has been recognized by Britannica.com and the BBS Education Web Guide for its quality, presentation and educational content. The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada awarded Best a grant of \$83,000 for further development of the ISE.

- Best has found that Web-taught courses stimulate discussion more than traditional lecture courses. Using class listservs (e-mail lists) Best's students can engage in class discussions. "In a traditional lecture class of 40, you're going to have five to eight students who participate in class discussion. On a listserv of 40, you have 30 who participate, 20 of whom are fully engaged," says Best.

- Best has collaborated with the State Library of New South Wales and UVic's McPherson Library to obtain copyright to scanned pages from the first printed Complete Works of Shakespeare, the First Folio of 1623. Using electronic transcriptions, users will be able to search for desired passages and view them on scans of the original pages. The ISE will be the only Website with these capabilities.

- The Internet Shakespeare Editions currently contains over 3,000 searchable pages.

SHARPEN YOUR KNOWLEDGE

- The ISE has an in-depth selection of links to other Shakespeare and Renaissance resources on the Web at <http://web.uvic.ca/shakespeare/Annex/ShakSites1.html>. Here are some of the top picks.

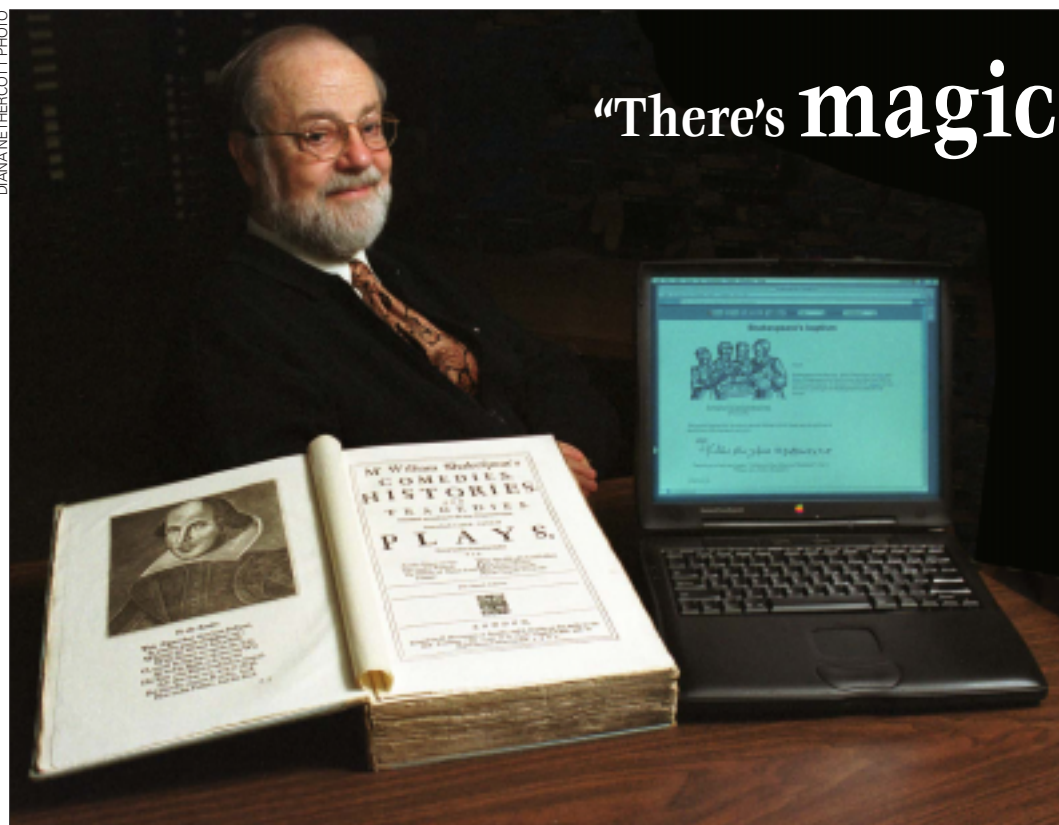
- The Elizabethan costuming page has many fine images of costumes. See the numerous layers that make up the Elizabethan dress or read about the make-up tastes of the time. www.dnaco.net/~aleed/corsets/general.html

- Webspeare is a gateway targeted to high school students with links to texts, study guides, discussion groups, and reference material as well as some fun stuff. http://cncn.com/homepages/ken_m/shakespeare.html

- The Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington D.C. houses the world's largest collection of Shakespeare's printed works. Check out its website at www.folger.edu and be sure to explore their past exhibitions.



Leah Pence wrote this as a participant in the SPARK program (Students Promoting Awareness of Research Knowledge), funded jointly by UVic and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada.



"There's magic in the web of it."
— Othello

INTERNET SHAKESPEARE EDITIONS

wanted to find new ways to engage his students in learning — hypertext was it.

"It allowed students to freely explore," says Best. "They weren't pulled by the nose but given a play space to find out what they wanted to learn more about."

As electronic media have evolved, Best has moved on to CD-ROMs and the Internet.

UVic's Innovation and Development Corporation (IDC), which helps UVic researchers develop the commercial potential of their ideas, provided guidance and start-up funding for the Internet Shakespeare Editions and assistance in developing the CD-ROM. The creation of the ISE was the first time the IDC was involved in implementing a non-profit organization.

To distinguish the ISE from other Shakespeare sites on the Web and ensure its scholarly value, Best has enlisted leading Shakespeare scholars to take part in the ISE editorial board.

But the site is not solely for scholars. The section of the site on Shakespeare's life and times is geared towards high school students and novice Shakespeare readers. The annex section encourages academic and non-academic interaction and allows users to hold discussions. "It democratizes the site," says Best.

Best also teaches online Shakespeare courses offered through UVic. He sees the Internet as a way to engage students because it allows them to become active participants with the texts. "The readers become 'users,'" says Best, "and the 'users' become creators of text who choose what they want to see." The creative mentality is part of what Best strives for in teaching — to provide students with choices, allowing them to be the directors of their learning process.

"The Internet gives students the opportunity to lift Shakespeare's plays off the page," says Best. The ISE will do that through a stage direction program, Scenario, and by developing a performance database with a wide selection of video, music and other background materials relevant to the interpretation of individual scenes.

The site developed from a computer program, Shakespeare's Life and Times, that Best created over 10 years ago in an early hypertext program, which allowed cross linking of pages and the incorporation of different media. Best

EDGE/WISE Teaching by playing: Scenario

Most computer games are strictly for fun. But for UVic English professor Michael Best they are optimal teaching tools.

One element of his Shakespeare's Life and Times CD that is to be released soon is a video-game-like program called Scenario. The object of the game: direct the best possible Shakespeare play. Players (a.k.a students) collect points (grades) by justifying their directorial moves with evidence from the text.

Scenario's set is a computerized and simplified version of Shakespeare's Globe theatre, complete

with balcony and exit doors. Students choose any one of Shakespeare's plays, select the necessary characters and "block" out the play scene by scene. Blocking involves moving the characters into the proper positions, incorporating props and sound effects as needed.

Best hopes that, by using the program, students will get a better sense of the stage. "Today, students have very filmic imaginations," says Best. "Films are increasingly visual and use less and less of the texts. This brings students back to

sense of stage and gives them power in directing."

As directors, students must make choices about ambiguities in the text, forcing them to develop their own understanding of the work.

"It really allows students to become involved in the active re-creation of the text" says Best.

The programming for Scenario is being undertaken by Half-Baked Software, a UVic technology group from the Humanities Computing and Media Centre whose educational software is being used internationally.

by Leah Pence

Best

Shakespeare's genius has reached across centuries and cultures and now, with the help of UVic English professor Michael Best, the Bard is extending his audience via the newest medium: the Internet.

"Shakespeare is a multi-media writer. He's the perfect example to use to show the power of the new media," says Best, who is creating what is fast becoming one of the leading Shakespeare sites on the Web: The Internet Shakespeare Editions (ISE) (web.uvic.ca/shakespeare).

Best created the Internet Shakespeare Editions in 1996 and is expanding it to contain full texts of all of Shakespeare's plays and poetry, including scanned images from Shakespeare's 1623 First Folio — the first printed edition of his works. The site is currently divided into four sections: the foyer, library, theatre and annex. The sections provide an introduction to Shakespeare's life and texts, commentary, records of performances, and informal discussion.

Unlike anthologies, the Web site allows for in-depth coverage of Shakespeare through links, graphics and on-line performances. Interactive aspects of the site are still being developed, but Best is insistent on giving users a complete Shakespeare experience, not just a two-dimensional text of the plays.