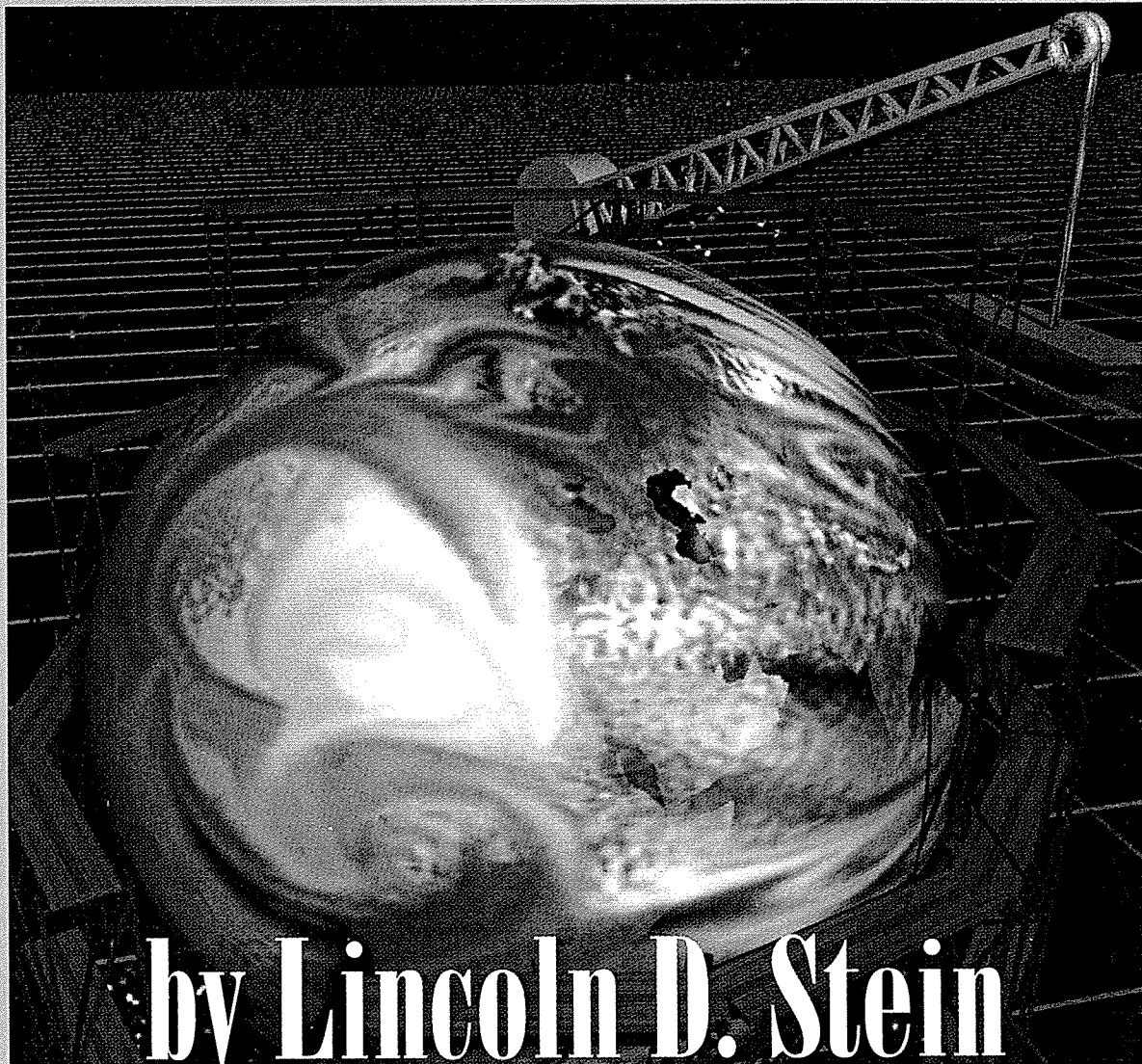# How to
Set Up and Maintain a
World Wide Web Site
The Guide for Information Providers

Includes:

- **HTML Tutorial and Pull-Out Reference Guide**

- **Web Style Guide**

- **Server Scripts**

by Lincoln D. Stein

The publisher offers discounts on this book when ordered in quantity for special sales.

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information sharing among collaborators, but interest in the system soon spread to other laboratories and academic institutions.

A turning point for the Web came in February 1993, when the U.S. National Center for Superconducting Applications (NCSA) released an early version of Mosaic, a Web browser for Unix machines running the X Windows system. Mosaic used icons, popup menus, rendered bitmapped text, and color links to display hypertext documents. In addition, Mosaic was capable of incorporating color images directly onto the page along with the text, and provided support for sounds, animation, and other types of multimedia. In mid November 1993, Mosaic was released simultaneously for three popular platforms: the Apple Macintosh, Microsoft Windows-based machines, and X Windows.

The Web took off explosively. In October 1993, eight months after the release of Mosaic for X Windows, the number of Web servers registered at CERN had increased to 500. A year later there were an estimated 4600 sites, with more being added exponentially. In August 1994, Web network traffic on the National Science Foundation's Internet backbone exceeded that for e-mail, the only service ever to do so. Recent estimates of the Web put the number of servers at more than 12,000, and estimate an annual growth rate of 3000%.

Guided Tour

A short walk through the World Wide Web will show you what it's all about. The screen shots that follow use a Macintosh-based Web browser called *MacWeb*, produced and distributed freely by EINet (a service run by Microelectronics and Computer Corporation). MacWeb was chosen for the screen shots mainly because it *isn't* Mosaic. Although Mosaic and the Web have become synonymous in the public perception, Mosaic is only the best known browser; many others are available both freely and commercially.

Figure 1.1: SIPB Main Page. We start our tour at the MIT Student Information Processing Board (SIPB), a Web site maintained by one of MIT's student organizations. The Web has no particular starting point, so this is as good a place to jump in as any. The first thing that grabs your attention is the Web's use of the *document metaphor*. The Web is organized as a series of pages, each with a distinctly book-like feel. You'll find paragraphs, headings, subheadings, changes of font and emphasis, indented lists, and embedded color graphics. The underlined words and phrases are *hypertext links*. These links, when selected, take the user to a different page or to a different location on the same page. In this case, we use the mouse to select the link named "IAP Course Guide" to learn more about what's going on during MIT's Independent Activities Period.
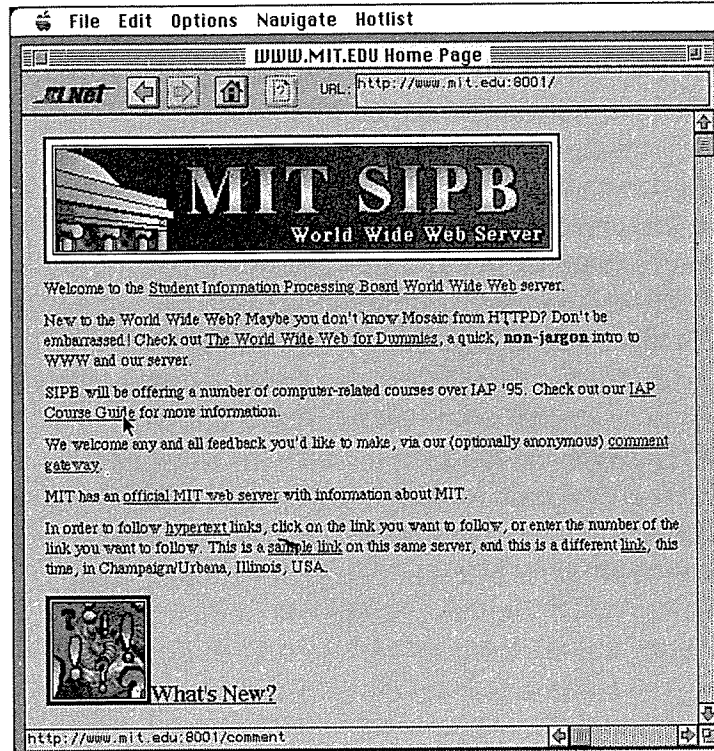
FIGURE 1.1 MIT SIPB Main Page

Figure 1.2: Freshman Fishwrap. This link takes us to another page, this one maintained by the *Freshman Fishwrap*, a student newspaper. Each page on the Web has a unique address, known as its *URL*, or Uniform Resource Locator. You can see the URL for this page in the box on the upper right-hand corner of this Web browser's window. URL formats are explained in great depth later, but for now just notice that the URL begins with the text `http`, indicating that this page is accessed using the Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP) and that the Internet address of the machine on which this page lives is `fishwrap-docs.www.media.mit.edu`. Also notice that this page lives on a different machine than the SIPB main page, which is hosted by `www.mit.edu`.

This page contains a graphic calendar with instructions to click on a day in order to see the corresponding class schedule. This is an example of a *clickable map*. Clicking the mouse on different parts of the image takes us to different pages. In this case, we click on January 9, marked "IAP Start."

Figure 1.3: IAP Schedule for January 9. This link takes us to a course schedule. The schedule itself is made up of more links, any one of which we could select to get a short course description and pointers to other courses of interest. Instead, we'll do some more exploring. We jump back to the main SIPB page (by clicking the browser's left arrow button a few times) and select the link marked "official MIT web server."
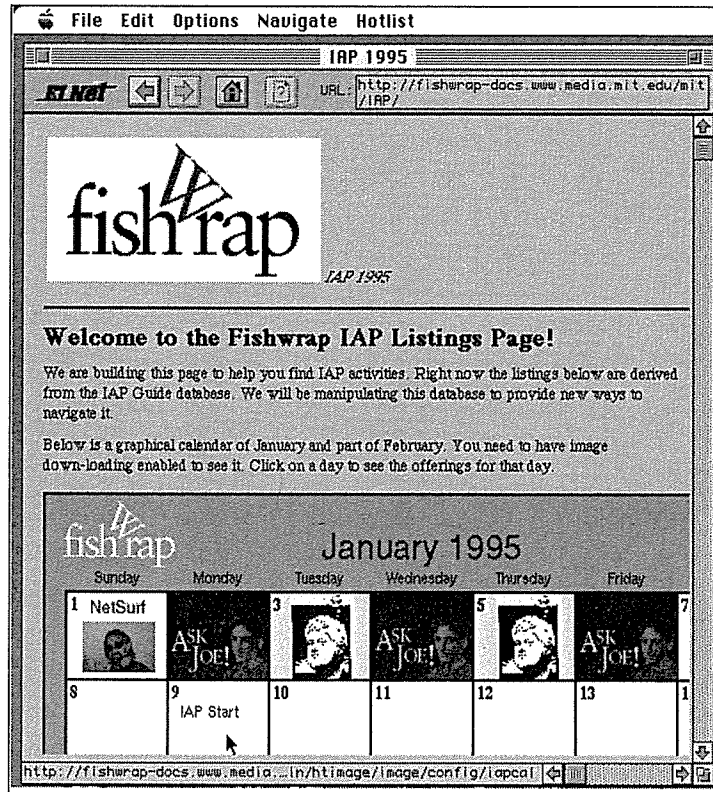
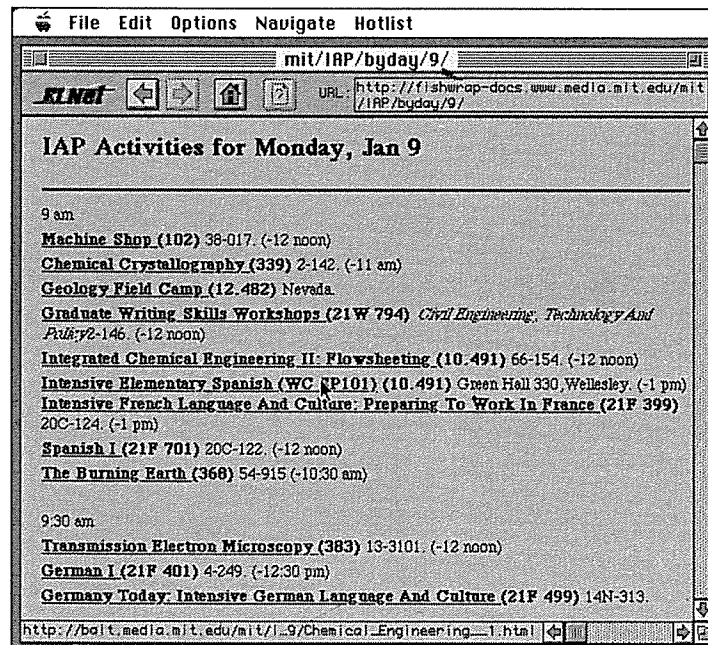FIGURE 1.2   The *Freshman Fishwrap*—Independent Activities Period

FIGURE 1.3   Independent Activities Period Schedule

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