Computing in the Web Age: A Web-Interactive Introduction (Plenum Series on Demographic Methods)

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This book reflects thirty years of experience in the applications of computer technology to literary research and instruction and in consulting work in office automation and system integration. In that time I have again and again found myself in the position of having to introduce students, both undergraduate and graduate, colleagues and clients to the fundamentals of computer hardware and software. Over the years, as computers became both central and commonplace in professional life, I have been aware of changing attitudes toward this technology. From attitudes that ranged from the disdain of platonic dialecticians for mere technology to intimidation bordering at times almost on terror, people have moved to incorporate this new technology into their frame of reference (humani nil a me alienum). The development of the microprocessor and its subsequent use for word processing marked one important watershed. The widespread use of word processors made it more likely than not that people would own their own computers, at least at work, and use them as part of their work-a-day activities. But while word processing provided some increased familiarity with computers, it did not lead most indivi- als much beyond a knowledge of the usual incantations needed to control the MultiMate or Nota Bene or Word Perfect golam and, as a result of unhappy experience, a begrudging acceptance of the need to make back up copies of important files.

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