Promotion and Tenure
Guidelines for Consideration
Of Electronic Materials

Parallel with current educational, cultural and societal trends, a growing number of faculty are engaged in scholarly work culminating in the creation of materials such as multi-media modules, CDs, web pages, and other electronic materials. These materials are used to enhance course delivery and scholarly research, and to support professional service.

The detailed evaluation of electronic and multi-media materials remains a departmental function, as set forth in the UTC Faculty Handbook and individual departmental bylaws. The purpose of these guidelines is to recognize the value of electronic and multi-media materials, to suggest evaluation criteria for the variety of scholarship and creative work, and to acknowledge the value of electronic materials in instruction, research, and service in higher education. Appropriate consideration of this scholarly work has the potential to reinvigorate senior faculty and to support junior faculty as they work toward tenure and promotion by rewarding faculty for risk-taking and innovation.

As with all scholarship, standards have emerged that may be used to assess the quality of the work. In "*Preparing for Promotion and Tenure Review: A Faculty Guide*," Robert Diamond suggests the following "Basic Features of Scholarly and Professional Work."

> The activity requires a high level of discipline-related expertise.
> The activity breaks new ground, is innovative.
> The activity can be replicated or elaborated.
> The work and its results can be documented.
> The work and its results can be peer-reviewed.
> The activity has significance or impact.

(Diamond, Robert. *Preparing for Promotion and Tenure Review: A Faculty Guide*. Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing Co., 1995, p. 21.)

The conventional process for evaluation of faculty work should also apply to electronic materials. Areas of evaluation may include but not be limited to quality of content, potential effectiveness as a teaching-learning tool, and ease of use. (See http://taste.merlot.org/projects/peer_review/criteria.php) Faculty are encouraged to solicit evaluation of such materials by colleagues when a means of external review is not available. In the absence of peer review, the following standards are suggested as a guide for evaluating electronic scholarship.

Electronic Materials Evaluation Standards
(Suggested ratings scale: Poor/Fair/Average/Good/Excellent)

To what degree does the material accomplish its stated objectives?

Are good principles of communication or instruction applied to the development of the material? Is the content organized? Is there a logical, understandable flow?

To what degree is the treatment of the subject matter effective? Are appropriate production techniques used to focus on the critical components of message design?

Is the text clear and understandable? Is the language appropriate for the program treatment, subject matter and audience level?

To what degree do the following elements contribute to the quality of the material--music selection, special effects, talent selection, graphic design, lighting, animation, set design? Would the program still achieve its objectives without these elements? Do these elements improve or enhance the program rather than cover up poor program design?

Does the material include ease of access to help screens, ability to review previous sections and accommodate inappropriate responses, ease of entry/exit. Is any supporting documentation clear, concise and easily understandable?

To what degree does the program accommodate different responses? Does the computer respond appropriately to user input?

Are graphic elements consistent, readable and legible? To what degree does the effective use of type and color contribute to the program design?

What is your overall evaluation of this material?

Examples of Electronic or Multi-Media Materials

Archives and databases

>   Digital archiving projects (e.g., editing, including organizing and
>   research, special library collections)
>   Electronic indexes and/or databases

Articles and Books

>   Electronic journal articles (e.g., peer reviewed, non-peer reviewed,
>   "vanity" publication)
>   Electronic books

Course Delivery

>   Electronic syllabi (e.g., web pages, Blackboard)
>   Content-rich web pages (e.g., course pages)
>   Content-rich courseware (e.g., Blackboard, CD)
>   Hypertext and hypermedia on the web
>   Online exams (e.g., Blackboard)
>   Electronic reserves (e.g., library, coursepack on line)

Learning Modules

>   Self-paced learning modules
>   Multi-media modules and courses (e.g., web, CD-ROM, video)
>   Video tapes (i.e., writing and producing)
>   Content-rich audio tapes (i.e., writing and producing)

Scholarly Discourse

>   E-mail discussant (similar to serving on a discussion panel)
>   Moderator/editor of a listserv or electronic bulletin board
>   Moderator/editor of electronic conferencing