

# Profiles in Collaboration: Creating a Music Technology Textbook At Distance

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Authors' Support Website for *Experiencing Music Technology*: [teachMusicTech.com](http://teachMusicTech.com)

### PART 1 OUR HISTORY OF COLLABORATION

History of collaboration on music topics ranges over 33 years on topics as diverse as Hypercard software, music on the internet, historical contexts, diversity/creativity, building music labs, mobile computing, tablets, enabling student learning, and identifying undergrad music technology competencies

Presentations and consultancies at many state and national venues, including individual colleges, state music conferences, NASM, NAFME, CMS

Most and more recently however have been at ATMI. We owe much to this organization and its members and we offer our deepest thanks to all this organization that supported our work

In the midst of this, we have devoted time to the authoring of the *Experiencing Music Technology* text: 4 editions in 5 versions: 1996, 1999, 2006 with a special revision in 2008, and the new 2023 version which was under active construction for over three years

This last effort was done completely separately from each other at a distance of 2004 miles (yes, I checked on Google Maps)

This new 4<sup>th</sup> edition is offered in two forms: print book, and an ebook that contains much additional material, including musician interviews, detailed project ideas, and an expanded section on technology in music instruction; an extensive support website also supports this new edition ([teachMusicTech.com](http://teachMusicTech.com))

We have come to believe that we have experience in collaboration and doing so effectively apart from each other physically. This short presentation (also done at distance) is about this most recent experience with all its trials and tribulations amidst a global pandemic; some tips are offered for others that might consider a future project like this, including a short section on why our collaborative work seems to work for us for these 33 years.

### PART 2 TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS

Trials and Tribulations in Publishing a Music Textbook or “The End is Just the Beginning” (see Kate Dwyer, NYT 26 Aug 2022)

- Distribution of work: Preparation (30%), Writing (40%), Publication (30%)
- Bankruptcy, then lawyers to get rights, then seeking new publisher, then new contract, then getting acclimated to new publishing world with not-for-profit publisher, then several editor changes, then finally done writing, then production & marketing. Whew!

### PART 3 DEALING WITH CHANGE

1. Explosion of “cloud computing” that supports not only sharing of created content but whole, working applications on laptop or mobile devices
2. Social computing and has grown exponentially and has come to define a whole new way to distribute and engage in music
3. Completely new approaches to music technology via mobile devices; new conceptions of how music instruction can be engineered—moving from older “labs” to more individualized settings
4. Consistent with more progressive educational thinking, teacher-centered approaches to using technology in pedagogical work has given way to more student-centered work which in turn has boosted emphasis on creative-centric approaches
5. Creation of new music is now more individually defined with powerful music production resources available to all and less reliance on larger corporate entities

6. Music XML file format has completely changed how music can be shared, exchanged, and edited
7. A renaissance of more analog music tools has emerged including a fascinating return to vinyl recordings and analog modular synths (physical and virtual)
8. Wireless solutions abound for all connectivity
9. Advances in audio music recognition and the development of music readers to replace sheet music
10. Power of mobile software in all music categories and in all phases of music production make tablets and smartphones more useful in music construction and performance

All of these and many not noted here provide some significant challenges for any author hoping to capture the music technology scene today. This has always been so but has escalated in recent years.

Because of many of these changes, the role of music across our many sociocultural environments has provided new, sometimes challenging implications for education. Our continued emphasis on PEOPLE in our work moves to a new level of creative, entrepreneurial, and community-based work that makes music technology education more important than ever. Music competencies that are defined and applied throughout the book are essential

## PART 4 TOOLS IN SUPPORT OF WRITING AND PUBLISHING

### A. Technology in Support of Writing a Music Technology Textbook

#### 1. Research Tools:

- [MediaWiki.com](http://MediaWiki.com), [commons.wikimedia.org](http://commons.wikimedia.org), & [creativecommons.org](http://creativecommons.org)
- *Adobe Stock* images, [Flaticon.com](http://Flaticon.com) and others
- *Graphic Converter* for MacOS
- [Rocketreach.com](http://Rocketreach.com) to find key contacts by industry, emails & who is in charge
- Bookmarking software (*Raindrop*)

#### 2. Writing and Graphics Tools:

- [Online Chicago Manual of Style \(www.chicagomanualofstyle.org\)](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org)
- Microsoft *Word* 365 for all our writing; biggest deficiency, lack of find and replace across multiple *Word* files and tools to manage a complete set of book files.
- *Scrivener* ([literatureandlatte.com](http://literatureandlatte.com)), a unique writing tool developed by a writer that manages writing in snippets. Snippets can be rearranged easily and can link to source documents, tables, and images.
- *Adobe Creative Cloud* with *Acrobat Pro*, *Photoshop*, and *Illustrator* and more ([adobe.com/creativecloud.html](http://adobe.com/creativecloud.html)) with education subscription.
- *OmniGraffle* ([omnigroup.com](http://omnigroup.com)) for Mac, one of the best line drawing, chart tools for creating any type of illustration and use for the majority of the illustrations in our textbook.
- [Flaticon.com](http://Flaticon.com) for icons/images
- Image file recommendations: screen shots at 150 dpi, others at highest resolution possible; color now preferred with ebooks; avoid dark backgrounds for best print quality (may have to invert colors for white background); submit EPS to publisher.
- Apple *Preview* or *Acrobat Reader Pro* for quickly viewing, proofing, and editing images, PDFs, and more.
- *PDF Index Generator* ([pdfindexgenerator.com](http://pdfindexgenerator.com)), an inexpensive tool to aid in the development of a book index; it aids in identifying key terms from PDFs of the completed manuscript, and then using these indexes of terms to tabulate the page numbers where they occur; valuable tool for us, but not the magic you'd like to reduce this time-consuming process.

#### 3. Preparation/Publication Tools:

- [AirTable.com](http://AirTable.com), a web-based relational database that we used to catalog all our photos, permissions, and contacts with the free account
- Collaboration Tools: *Word* 365, *Dropbox* or equivalent, *Zoom*, *FaceTime*
- Web Development Tools: *Joomla 4* and [a2hosting.com](http://a2hosting.com)

## PART 5: SUMMARY TIPS FOR WRITING AND PUBLISHING

Tips for Planning, Researching, Writing, Editing, and Publishing a Music Textbook

Dave's tips

- A mantra I've shared with students for years is spot on: "Things take longer than they do!"

- Use tech tools to their fullest but take care in trying to learn new tools that may become sink holes of time.
- Image tips. Think color images now that ebooks accommodate color; transform screenshots to white background/dark foreground; use the highest resolution possible for photos; and use the EPS format for the final submission.
- To keep technology costs under control; look for freemium solutions and don't be bashful about reaching out to the software and hardware industry for demonstration hardware, software, images, and feedback. Make full use of Creative Commons and open-source solutions as well.
- Research the interactive features of the newest e-textbooks in advance to find innovative ways to enhance presentation of tools and content.  
Note that [RedShelf.com](http://RedShelf.com) and [VitalSource](http://VitalSource) are the two vendor sources for ebooks used by Oxford University Press for *Experiencing Music Technology* 4<sup>th</sup> edition and they feature among other interactive features: Text to Speech (TTS), eReader Personal Display Options, and other Assistive Technologies
- Backup, backup, backup! (Automate if possible)

#### Peter's tips

- Develop good working relationships with the editors and their support staff; hope they don't move on during your publication. Production for print and for ebook may be outsourced by publisher: try to understand this process and seek some level of control on how this is done
- Prepare for changes; publishing is in a constant change of flux
- When you finish writing, you are only about half-way there, "the end is just the beginning"
- Don't forget: Indexing is terribly time consuming in a technology book and with multiple authors. AVOID farming out index to what might be a knowledgeable other. YOU know your book content best.
- Take care to create a way to deal effectively with permissions and tech change while writing
- Understand in detail how shared storage (Drobox) or shared applications (Adobe Acrobat, Word, or BBEdit) work, e.g., determine if they support multiple authors working on same file and what happens if one author deletes a file.

### PART 6: THE HUMAN SIDE

1. We acknowledge our different styles of creative thinking and working as well as bringing very different strengths and weaknesses to our writing and thinking about the story of technology and music
2. Structure is loose but there is a structure
3. We work voluntarily together. We believe in many of the same things professionally and we genuinely like each other as people. We are friends.
4. We recognize our family and professional lives and concomitant time commitments vary greatly and flexibly adjust as needed.
5. We are dependable. We follow through.
6. We trust each other and we are vulnerable—ask for help from each other.
7. We goof around a bit and share parts of our personal lives.
8. We share a vision of a finished result – not always the same at the end then it was at the start.

#### Future Discussion: What Does the Future Hold?

1. eBook changes going forward: first PDFs, then interactive, then rental, what's next?
2. Improved eBook/etextbook compensation for authors
3. Ebooks useability: (improvements needed in bookmarking, note taking, printing permissions, links to outside sites and return, special needs readers)
4. Revisit self-publishing: Is this viable for music textbooks?
5. Viability of textbooks in any form? How best to merge the benefits of textbook design and content with web search?
6. What fair systems of author compensation from corporate publishers are possible? Low-budget publication requiring authors to do artwork, indexing and more with fewer or lower compensations?
7. Task force to study professorial advancement for those writing multiple kinds of publications?