

OTOLOGY AND INTERNET

OTOLOGY INTERNATIONAL (<http://www.otoin.org>)

Computer and Internet have revolutionized the world and to pace with time on completion of 4th year of Indian Journal of Otology after getting indexed in Mbase with excerpta medica, Amsterdam, Netherlands, we have decided to start first medical journal of India on internet. Perhaps this is the first online journal with name "Otology International" approved by Govt. of India. Also apart from making journal available on internet with full text as Otology International we shall be providing free membership, Poster session, Video clipping, free E-Mail and free Website alongwith announcement of courses, instruments available and situation vacant / wanted or any programme of interest to members. Your suggestions are welcome for publication.

The role of Computers and internet is variable in different areas of the world. While about 10 million people use web but in developing countries it is in primitive stage. Web, in India is a development of less than four years, having been launched in India on 15th August 1995. About 5 percent Otolaryngologist are using computer for various purposes mainly for record keeping and accounting and even less are using computer for web. This is our first issue of Volume 5 No. 1, which we are coming out on web as Otology International (<http://www.otoin.org>). Globally only few journals provide full text online. For popularization of otology in South-East Asia we are making an effort to provide free membership, online full text, links to related journals & libraries like NML (National Medical Library)/ MEDLAR etc. We wish to start various sections like Continuous medical education, Poster sessions, Patients Quiz, Online Conference, Telechat with free registration if possible. Otolaryngologist inclined to Otology are welcome for free membership. We shall be providing free Email address and website of 1-5 MB or even more to members depending upon the project and contribution in the field of Otology.

This issue has been worked together by Saudi

Arabian team & Indian Editorial Board and all articles are from Saudi. This issue is Saudi Arabia special. Prof. Zakzouk has worked hard for this issue. Since Internet is a new development in the field of Otology in South-East Asia and developing countries. I feel it is my privilege to write the first editorial of our journal on the web.

A few words on the Internet are due. The linking of two or more computers is called a network. Several networks linked together is called an internetwork. A network confined to a small geographical area such as a campus or a building is called a Local Area Network or LAN. A network linking computers within the area of a city is called a Metropolitan Area Network or MAN. A network linking computers over large geographical distances, e.g. between two cities, is called a wide area network or WAN. The Internet is a network of networks, connected to each other on a global scale. Each of the many millions of networks that comprise the Internet consist of one or more servers each. A server is a machine that acts as a common resource for many machines connected to the network.

The beginning of net was in 1960 with the cold war in USA. Rand corporation, America invented a

network for defense purposes and first test network was installed by National Research Laboratory in Great Britain in 1968 and in 1972 Ray Tomlinson invented the first e-mail program. In 1982 Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol was used which means TCP/IP and historic name internet was first used on 1st Jan. 1983 and the name server was developed at the University of Wisconsin.

Server is a program that handles client program. There are different kind of server, for example; an FTP server allows a file transfer Protocol. Client to

such as URL, HTML & HTTP. As already used many times, Web and Internet have become synonymous day to day language.

The web can be presumed as an aggregate of million of page and page is a type of file containing text, graphics and links, which directs and operates to another object, sound, video clipping (animation) commonly to another page i.e. a file (As we have links in libraries and other pages on home page). The pages linked together at the same computers on relevant topic are known as web sites.

TABLE : I
COMMON WEBSITES OF INTEREST TO OTOLOGISTS

Web Site	URL
Baylor College of Medicine Otolaryngology Department link page, comprehensive index of on-line otolaryngology resources	www.bcm.tmc.edu/oto/others/html
American Academy of Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery Archives of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery	www.entnet.org www.ama-assn.org/public/journals/otol/otolhome.htm
Annals of Otolaryngology, Laryngology and Rhinology Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery	www.annals.com www.mosby.com/mosby/periodicals/medicals/OHNS/hn.html
The Laryngoscope	www.laryngoscope.com
Medical Metrix	www.medmetrix.org/index.asp
Medline searching through the National library of Medicine, free as of 6/26/97	www.nlm.nih.gov/databases/freemedl.html

download data or a web server allows a web client to access the web sites located on the server.

In the last few years average computer has become quite powerful to handle multimedia to carry images, sound and even video clipping and threshold in carrying capacity (band width) has reached. India has got one of the cheapest internet tariffs i.e., Rs. 2500/- for the first hundred hours & local telephone line costing just one rupee with time no bar except matros is a great facility. Each District In India is slated to have access to the internet on the basis of a local telephone call by mid-2000. In India the internet is mainly used for Emailing but the use of web or World Wide Web is increasing.

WORLD WIDE WEB

The world wide web (www) was invented by CERN an Institute for particle physics by Tim Berners-Lee the first www client as well as server and defined standards

The key concept of the web use is hypertext, which refers to written information which, is non-linked in structure. From a key word operator, can locate its relevant text on innumerable sites. While some files may have different extensions (such as .cfm or .asp), their core is still HTML. The web pages are written in HTML. It is just a system for describing documents.

A www browser interprets the HTML - code and displays it. The computer used to access the web has got a specific program known as browser, which is for displaying HTML codes. They are used for browsing the www but also for FTP, USENET or Email. Common browsers are navigate or Internet Explorer.

General Directories are maintained by companies dedicated to Cataloging the web while specific directories are maintained by academic departments or commercial sponsors/experts, for example NML/Medlar. More than thousand search engine exist on web, make

searching quite easy but some time provide, information out of context. Probably every topic is covered on web and access to some are free like MEDLINE. I am providing addresses of some common websites of interest to otologists (Table I).

SEARCHING THE WEB

Whenever you want to search a reference on a specific topic or anything else like a job or medical equipment or a lost friend (might be common in India after sometime) require a search engine. While searching a broad subject the best place to look for is a search engine in the form of web directory, "Hindustan.net" is a common search engine for Indian websites. Searching depends upon mainly on your keywords and how you approach. Majority of search engines has some common features. Basic approach of relevance ranking is the most important of all. The relevance decreases as you go down the list and it is quite helpful but you may not be able to find out anything, even if a single word occur in a website you will have it and if no site contain all yours words then the best available will be presented to you as most relevant site.

There are many ways for effective search as already mentioned. Most important is multiple related keywords and next is Boolean logic and involves using AND, OR, NOT and () (Parenthesis) for example "Tinnitus" AND "CSOM". We can also use the "+" sign at place of and or "-" to exclude any topic, using the pipe (|) key results in one stage searching. Whenever one is in trouble the "help" link on the search engine will tell you the prompt or symbol for effective searching. Searches performed by medical libraries, who are Intellectual and trained in search techniques, are considered the "gold standard" for literature searches. However, studies have shown that after a relatively short period of training and practice, clinician searches can approach the quality of librarian searches.

MEDLARS (Medical literature analysis and retrieval system) is compiled by united states National Library of Medicine (NLM) which contain more than 9.0 million articles and is approached more than 20,000 times a day approximately. To facilitate searching National Medical Library developed an interactive soft-

ware package Grateful Med that can be down loaded. Though Access is free but registration is required and user fee are charged for most of the texts. A facility

TABLE II

Common Search Engines
mw.search.com (for medical sites)
Hindustan.net (for individual website)
www.yahoo.com (extremely popular)
www.Lycos.com
www.excite.com
www.infoseek.com
www.altavista.com
www.hotbot.com
www.askjeeves.com
Common Indian Sites
www.khoj.com
www.123india.com
www.cyberindian.com
www.SAIR.com
www.Indiaexpress.com
www.Indiatime.com
www.indiaconnect.com

lonesome Doc. allow use to require complete copies of medical articles for a nominal fee and even that too with collaboration of local library. Free Databases available from National Cancer Institute includes cancer net.

The name of some common search engines are given in table II.

There is a bandwidth of a server or a site to handle the incoming traffic, increased load lowers the speed and performances. So is always better to go offline more in cases of lengthy files and you can save connection and telephone costs, of course one still needs modem and Internet connection. There are two ways one can browse offline most browser like Internet explorer and Netscape have offline facilities. All browsers saves files in a temporary folder but offline browsing has its limitation older files keep getting replaced with new one while you are on internet and some important file may be lost. Here you require a software e.g. web leech or web snake. These softwares makes you able to download complete website onto your hard disc and in the same way they existed at their original

site and even you can upgrade or edit as other files of your hard disc.

As you know there are millions of pages (files) on web but it is quite easy to search a specific topic there are three modes.

Clinician with online consultation should give general remarks and request them for personal visit. We shall be trying to provide access to patients for their queries to our members of Otology International

(www.otoin.org). Our Online journal will provide better Graphics and colours pictures as it will be cost effective, which is quite costly in print journals.

We shall be publishing poster pertaining to the field of Otology, Audiology & Neurology or any topic of interest to our members with no restriction whether it has been presented in a conference or workshop.

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