

Web resources

Internet searches are easier if you already know where to go

Ophthalmologists can save time by bookmarking a list of ophthalmic Web sites for future reference



Last year, I covered some of the Internet resources available to ophthalmologists who wished to further their education and knowledge. Just a year later, the information available on the Web has grown significantly, providing ophthalmologists with a seemingly endless stream of resources.

With hundreds of Web sites available, there is no difficulty in finding information. The difficulty, however, might just lie in sifting through it all, and getting to the heart of your search. "Surfing" and "browsing" are interesting, sure, but often ophthalmologists do not have the time to sort it all.

Fortunately, someone has already done just that. At the University of Iowa's Web site, <http://webeye.ophth.uiowa.edu/dept/Websites/eyeres.htm>, there are links to nearly 500 eye-related Web sites, including associations, private-practice ophthalmologists, online journals, ophthalmic companies, and

other universities. Cataloguers at Iowa have chronicled these sites, arranged them alphabetically, and provided direct links to all of them.

Links to associations

Available links include those for associations such as the American Academy of Ophthalmology (www.aao.org), which provides comprehensive data about the association, such as membership information, upcoming conferences, and audio and video broadcasts of pertinent information to ophthalmologists. AAO members can search periodicals, news releases, and seek guidance to improve their practices. In short, association Web sites are a means for the association to communicate with members and non-members alike in a quick and efficient manner.

At the American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery's Web site, www.ascrs.org, visitors can check out the happenings at the society without having to wait for a printed newsletter.

Other association Web sites are not practice specific, yet offer in-depth information beneficial to ophthalmologists. The site of the Glaucoma Research Foundation (www.glaucoma.org) features fact sheets and fre-

quently asked questions geared to patients, but useful to physicians and researchers as well.

Similarly, www.glaucoma-foundation.org is the Web site for The Glaucoma Foundation. Once again, this site is aimed at patients, but the site serves ophthalmologists also.

The Web site for the American Foundation for the Blind (www.afb.org) offers its service directory online. The site helps visitors locate organizations, many of them with local chapters that provide services to blind people and their families. This is especially helpful when you are looking for additional ways to serve patients.

University Web sites, such as the University of Miami's Bascom Palmer Eye Institute (www.bpei.med.miami.edu), offers ophthalmologists an insight into the school, its research, meetings, conferences, and other goings on in the South Florida ophthalmology sector. Other universities, such as the University of Michigan, Johns Hopkins University, and the University of Southern California feature similar sites.

Finding full-text articles

The wide range of journals available online is second only to the number of individuals seeking documents. The Archives of Ophthalmology's site, www.archophthalmol.com, features many full-text articles, abstracts,

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and other published research.

The site www.eyesearch.com is basically a guide and directory service for ophthalmologists. Here physicians can search for upcoming meetings, conferences, calls for papers, and even equipment for sale.

The Internet site www.pslgroup.com/dg/ophthal.htm is also an ophthalmologists' guide to upcoming meetings and events. Run by Doctor's Guide, this site allows the user to search medical conference databases based on location, disease, conference date, and key word.

The FDA's site, www.fda.gov, provides information on a wide variety of ophthal-

mologic subjects, including new trials, approvals, and tests. The FDA has an entire section devoted to LASIK as well.

Ophthalmic companies, too, have a great deal of information to offer via the Internet. Although the main mission of these companies is to sell their products, many of them also provide a good deal of professional information in the form of articles, research documentation, and links to other sites.

While the bulk of the links on the University of Iowa page are aimed at providing

medical information to ophthalmologists and patients, several links send the visitor to personal sites—journals and chronicles of patients living with eye diseases. Although these might not provide the ophthalmologist with in-depth medical information, they do offer insight into what is going through patients' minds as they deal with their conditions.

Lastly, you can sign up on mailing lists. Many of these sites will e-mail you articles and other information on a regular basis. You can often pick and choose the specifics

of what you want sent to you by indicating key words that interest you. While not as in-depth as searching the Web on a regular basis, mailing lists are a quick-and-easy way to have information deposited on your system without a lot of hassle.

One downside, however, is certain key words can trigger "peripheral" subject matter. For instance, the key word "Contact Lens" will trigger information about full contact karate, camera lenses, and many press releases where there is a "contact" person. Beware. **OT**

author info

H. Jay Wisnicki, MD,

editor of Tech Talk, is the head of the ophthalmology department at Beth Israel Medical Center in New York. He has a background in computers and electrical engineering. He serves on the AAO New Education Technology Committee and advises in other areas in health-care information technology.

Send comments and suggestions about Tech Talk to Dr. Wisnicki at OT@en.com.

Test finds glaucoma before severe damage

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Alameda, CA—InSite Vision Inc. introduces a test that looks for the presence of a gene associated with increased probability of developing primary open-angle glaucoma (POAG).

OcuGene is the brand name for the ISV-900 test, the commercialized genetic test that screens for the presence of the promoter region mutation and several coding region mutations of the *TIGR* gene. The presence of mutations in the coding region has been associated with a greater likelihood of developing the disease.

The inside of the cheek is swabbed to collect DNA, which is tested.

Patients with POAG who are detected with a gene mutation in the promoter region have a more aggressive form of glaucoma and have shown more visual field damage, according to the company.

"The information provided by OcuGene may help physicians to individualize treatment according to the patient's genetic make-up and perhaps to initiate treatment for those high-risk individuals who may otherwise be unidentified," said S. Kumar Chandrasekaran, PhD, chief executive officer of InSite Vision. **OT**