Unit One - Terms and Tech
Internet Resources for Health Care - Lecture Notes

The Internet

• Excellent resource for many things related to medicine and health care.
• **DON'T BELIEVE EVERYTHING YOU READ ON THE INTERNET!!!!!**
   · Anyone can say anything and make any claims – not regulated.
• Web sites are <u>always</u> created with a purpose in mind by some person or agency or entity.
• Anyone can put anything on the internet – there is no "Internet Police".
• Your job is always to distinguish between reliable and questionable resources.
• Not all websites are good sources of valid and reliable information.

Points to Consider

• Who wrote it/published it?
   · Educational institutions and government agencies have a vested interest in presenting high-quality, accurate information. However, other individuals or groups may not have the same values
   · Research and professional organizations may also be reliable.
   · Are they trying to sell you something???
• Is the information current, accurate, and complete?
   · Sometimes it matters if the information is current and sometimes it doesn't.
   · Sometimes the information found is accurate at the date it was written, but is not accurate now.
   · Undated factual or statistical information is no better than anonymous information – Don't use it!
• Is the information unbiased?
   · There is nothing wrong with commercial, advertising, advocacy, education, marketing, or personal internet sites.
   · All sites should make clear their purpose and bias.
   · It should not be hard to determine the goal or purpose of the site – if you can't figure it out, be wary!
• Quality of writing
   · The author of a website may not be Mark Twain or Ernest Hemingway, but the writing on the website should be grammatically correct, free from spelling errors, and at least of fairly high quality.

Accessing the Internet

• Only four things are needed to access the Internet:
  · <u>Computer</u>.
  · <u>Modem</u>: device that converts outgoing messages from a computer into a form that can be sent over telephone lines.
  · Access to a <u>service provider</u>.
  · <u>Browser</u>: software that allows user to view webpages.

Search Engines

• A database of Internet files.
• Usually consists of three parts
  · <u>Search program</u>: explores different sites and identifies and read pages.
  · <u>Index</u>: search program creates a main database that contains copies of all the information obtained.
  · <u>Retrieval program</u>: searches the database for specific information, lists sources and ranks with the most relevant sources first.
• Dependable search engines:
  · Google.com
  · Looksmart.com
  · AskJeeves.com
  · Lycos.com
  · Many others . . . .

Great Resources

• WebMD.com
• National Institutes of Health (NIH.gov)
• National Library of Medicine
  · http://www.nlm.nih.gov/nichsr/hsrsites.html
  • UU Eccles Health Sciences Library
  · http://medlib.med.utah.edu/
  • www.MEDLINEplus.gov
  · Consumer health information resources from the National Library of Medicine and the National Institute of Health.
• PubMed
  · http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?holding=uutahlib

Search Strategies

• To narrow down searches and gain access to the most relevant information, use these search strategies:
  · Identify key words.
  · Combine key words using math symbols.
    · Plus (+) symbol: must contain all words entered.
    · Minus (-) symbol: limit information (search+engines-car-automobile)
    · Quotation marks ("): exact phrase as specified.
  · Boolean operators.
    · AND, NOT, OR, NEAR (must be in capital letters).
    · Similar to math symbols.
  · Vary your search – use a variety of key word combinations until you find relevant information.
  · Use different search engines – no search engine has access to all the information on the Internet.
  · Evaluate the reliability of all information!

Summary

• The Internet can provide a wealth of information.
  · Obtain current health care information.
  · Learn about new medical innovations.
  · Research diseases, medications, therapies, and other health concerns.
  · Communicate with health care providers.
• A great example of how technology has enhanced health care!