

## Perspectives on ICT applications in medical education

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Out of the estimated world population of seven billion, about one third (2.2 billion) have become internet users by 2012 which comprises of 45% of Asians, 22% of Europeans and 11% of North Americans<sup>(1)</sup>. During the past five years, internet users in the developing world have overtaken those in developed countries<sup>(2)</sup>.

For most of us living in this digital age, seeking information at home or work has become part of our routine. The type of digital information requested, depends on the requirements of the receiver, researchers, clinicians and students who are becoming increasingly empowered with knowledge obtained through digital means.

With computing technology becoming integrated into most of the appliances and devices and the development of networking, internet facilities and mobile technology, new concepts such as social networking and cloud computing have emerged. Some of these technological tools such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs, RSS aggregators, mobile devices, open access archives and repositories have helped to make information seeking much more comprehensive and convenient<sup>(3)</sup>.

Information seekers visit search engines such as Yahoo and Google before proceeding to specific websites. Internet has been used as a supplemental resource to obtain health information<sup>(4)</sup>. In addition to storage tools numerous online resources such as websites, blogs and Learning Management Systems (LMS) are available for the use of health practitioners and students.

The lead article in this issue explores the possibility of implementation of LMS courses as continuing medical education activities for physicians<sup>(5)</sup>. Two articles in this issue deals with studies carried out on ICT literacy of undergraduate students<sup>(6,7)</sup>. Another article discusses how problem based learning (PBL) courses were introduced to a group of undergraduates encouraging them to seek information from printed and electronic resources<sup>(8)</sup>. One other use of internet resources is interaction between trainees and trainers. The last article presents how a blog was used for the interaction between a postgraduate trainee and supervisors<sup>(9)</sup>.

In conclusion this issue intends to present the current perspectives of the usage of information sought at various levels in the field of medical education that has helped to improve the knowledge of the medical community comprised of researchers, clinicians and students.

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