# Contemplating Distance Education — Go For It!

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The MidContinental Regional Medical Library recently sponsored "Grant Writing for $ucce$$" as a distance education course. Due to a scheduling conflict with the in-person class that had been offered, I attended the distance class using Polycom, a video conferencing technology, that worked incredibly well for me.

The Polycom product includes software and hardware that enables the user to remain at work and participate in a remote workshop by interacting through a microphone and camera on the computer. The Polycom hardware, when attached to my laptop, allowed viewing the live classroom, instructors and participants in Utah, plus the distant librarians as they participated from their locations. When distant librarians from around our region spoke and participated, their live "talking head" picture appeared on my computer screen.

## Just Like Being There

Taking the course using Polycom technology was nearly like being there! The instructors, Claire Hamasu and Randal Johnson, Ph.D., were easily understood and their PowerPoint presentations were clearly visible. Discussions took place similar to those in a regular classroom setting. The instructors included those taking the course long distance by asking for each librarian's input during various sections of the class and by allowing ample time for questions and discussion.
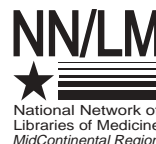
To assist in overcoming the distance barrier, librarians need to participate fully and be assertive in pursuing concepts that need further explanation. Networking with other colleagues was a bit hindered, compared to taking a class together in the same setting, but perhaps the solution here is to get used to the technology. When taking the class remotely, keeping up with the class in terms of content and understanding was especially critical. There were many opportunities throughout the grant writing workshop when concepts were clarified.

## Surprising Benefits!

One of the benefits of this technology is the ability to participate in the conference and yet continue with necessary workplace duties during the scheduled break times. Additionally, there was a savings in travel time and expense. A special thanks to the MCRML for providing the Polycom units which made this workshop available to distance education participants at no cost.

I highly recommend taking the course for those interested in pursuing grant writing. Many examples were shared about grant writing tips, project ideas, and other recommendations for successful grant writing. The workshop took a step-by-step approach, covering topics such as goals and objectives, basic grant writing elements, the problem statement, methodologies and activities, budgeting, and evaluation.

## NN/LM

**National Network of Libraries of Medicine**
*MidContinental Region*

# In This Issue

## Think about IT

Our institution's network and technology department completed installation of the software and hardware. Librarians should be familiar with their institution's policies regarding network and technology firewall issues. There may be a concern regarding network addressing and opening firewalls so that video conferencing can be transmitted. The MCRML amiably handled the testing of systems for functionality and this was completed prior to the day of the workshop. Our IT services department installed the Polycom software; however, our institution already has operational a permanent videoconference technology which they prefer to use.

Technology continues to enhance our ability to take educational workshops long distance. I highly recommend taking a class through video conferencing software. When the next distance education opportunity presents itself, go for it!

## Another Perspective:
## Distant Participants Enhance Live Class, Too

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Recently, I attended a grant writing class sponsored by the RML. I was especially interested in the topic because I had a valuable grant topic on my mind. The class was taught in person for me and by remote for several other class participants.

I especially liked having the "remote" participants because they had differing frames of reference, and I learned from the questions and comments they had. I enjoyed the mixture of people from varying experiences. There was enough variety and content that the class was interesting and useful. Occasionally the onscreen equipment would "trip" and need to be reset, but a technician was on duty to help with the logistics of the event. Overall, I thought the class was very successful.

# MCR Liaisons Attend Cultural Competency Workshop

On May 20, 2004, the National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NN/LM) offered its staff the opportunity to attend a workshop given by the National Center for Cultural Competence (NCCC), located at Georgetown University. It was gratifying to see that the majority of NN/LM staff from the different regions was able to attend. The staff of the NCCC provided sessions that reminded us that not only should we be helping our patrons to deliver culturally competent care, but we ourselves need to examine our own policies and procedures to make certain that cultural competence is part of the backbone of our own institutions.

This region is committed to providing outreach to the wonderfully diverse librarians, health care providers and citizens who live in our six states. Participation in this workshop was yet another example demonstrating this commitment.

## What is Cultural Competence?

The NCCC defines cultural competence at the individual level as "having the values, skills, knowledge, attitudes and attributes to work effectively in cross cultural situations." Cultural competence encompasses a particular set of skills that helps us to be sensitive to people of diverse cultures and more adept in serving their needs. Our institutions need to value cultural diversity and should implement policies that support the efforts of staff to incorporate cultural competence in their programs.

## What should we do?

Outreach grant and award proposals are an excellent place to integrate cultural competency. Certain topics and questions should be addressed in an RFP. For instance, has the target audience been involved in the planning and development phases of the project? Is the staff performing the work knowledgeable about the cultural and linguistic needs of the target audience? Have members of the target community been employed at the institution making the proposal? Does the proposed budget include specific lines of funding for interpretation and translation services or the creation of alternative materials if needed?

Should the RFP come from the NN/LM MidContinental Region (MCR) in the future, these questions will be represented in the request. If you are writing a proposal for another institution or agency, but cultural competency issues are not integrated and part of the instructions, address them anyway. It will make the application stronger and increase the likelihood that your project will be funded.

## DHHS Guide to Title VI

Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act is the federal mandate that prohibits exclusion from participation in, denial of benefits of, and discrimination under federally assisted programs on grounds of race, color, or national origin. The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Guide further addresses discrimination affecting persons of Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

Anyone receiving federal funds is required to abide by Title VI. Even if a library does not receive federal funds, it is still bound by Title VI if another office in the institution does receive the funding. And, if not legally bound by the law, Title VI still remains a good standard for an institution to follow in order to develop a culturally competent work environment.

The DHHS Guide to Title VI can be found online at *http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/lep/revisedlep.html.* The guide is divided into eight parts. Besides outlining who is covered by Title VI (anyone who receives federal financial assistance from HHS), topics include: who is a Limited English Proficient individual, how can an institution determine the extent of its obligation to provide LEP services, selecting language assistance services, including the use of family members or friends as interpreters, and elements of an effective plan on language assistance for LEP persons.

While busy educating the parent institution about its obligation to follow this mandate, a librarian can also request that when the institution applies for grants that it includes a budget line that provides LEP materials for the library. In this way, the library becomes involved in helping its institution apply for grants and meet its federal mandates. (*Thanks to Judi Bergjold, Creighton University Health Sciences Library, for this great idea!*)

## Final Note

We can all benefit from making changes to our policies that incorporate cultural competency standards. With this knowledge, we can provide better services for our patrons and for our communities, and we create more open and enjoyable work environments when we recognize the value of each individual we encounter.

*—S. Champ-Blackwell*

### Resources:

National Center for Cultural Competence Home Page
*http://gucchd.georgetown.edu/nccc/*

Bridging the Cultural Divide in Health Care Settings: The Essential Role of Cultural Broker Programs
*http://gucchd.georgetown.edu/nccc/documents/Cultural_Broker_Guide_English.pdf*

Tools and Guidelines for Self-Assessment
*http://gucchd.georgetown.edu/nccc/selfassessment.html*

Office of Minority Health
*http://www.omhrc.gov*

National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health Care (CLAS Standards)
*http://www.omhrc.gov/CLAS/finalcultural1a.htm*

US Department of Health and Human Services Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons
*http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/lep/revisedlep.html*

# HAN-ding Information to the Public Health Workforce

There are as many ways to communicate health information resources to public health workers as there are different types of public health agencies and departments. Providing hands-on classroom type training is one method that works well, if you have the computer lab and you can actually get busy public health workers to attend the session.

For day-to-day exposure to such services as MedlinePlus, PubMed, and the Partners in Information Access for the Public Health Workforce web site, the NN/LM MidContinental Region (MCR) thought it would add yet another approach to inform and assist with health information access: HAN web sites.

## What is a HAN?

The Health Alert Network is an ongoing program of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to create a nationwide communication system for public health workers in emergency situations. This network, when completely formed, will provide an integrated way to distribute health alerts and CDC prevention guidelines in order to strengthen preparedness in critical situations at the state and local levels.

In addition, HANs have great potential as a means to inform about available resources, distance learning opportunities and educational initiatives. The NN/LM MCR is in the process of contacting our region's state HAN Coordinators to familiarize them with our services and to help determine if a MedlinePlus, PubMed or Partners link from HAN Web sites will prove useful to public health workers who communicate in this fashion.

## How can HANs be used?

HANs, presently, come in many different flavors. Last November, during the American Public Health Association conference in San Francisco, a very interesting lecture was given by Jon Warkentin, MD, MPH, on the Nashville Public Health Alert Network. This network can be "customized" in very specific ways to send messages to very specific groups such as EMTs, childcare specialists, veterinarians, and any other group that may benefit from being a part of this communication network.

It is interesting to think that an information professional, such as a librarian, could be a member of this network. When a critical situation occurs, it is possible that a librarian could also be notified and in a position to provide current, authoritative health information for those public health workers needing to respond.

Dr. Warkentin also highlighted a new project of Nashville's Metro Public Health Department, NotiPHy Nashville. Not only does this web site inform public health emergency personnel, but the general public can use the link for NotiPHy Nashville to learn what emergencies are occurring and what to do when a crisis arises.

Imagine if the public comes to NotiPHy Nashville for local information and also finds a link there for MedlinePlus. It is another method for promoting quality health information to the public at a timely, perhaps critical moment.

## The HAN in Utah

In Utah, PubMed and MedlinePlus have found appropriate places on the Utah Department of Health's (UDOH) web site. In addition, the Public Health Liaison has had the wonderful opportunity to become part of a new Public Health Education and Training Consortium created by Sharon Talboys, Project Director, Training & Education Center, UDOH.

Although this consortium will look at many issues of importance to public health workers, of interest here is that Ms. Talboys is working closely with the Utah HAN Coordinator, Dean Penovich, to create a new system for its public health workers. In the future, the existing Utah HAN, or the Utah Notification and Communication System, will be partnered with a new Learning Management System (LMS). One scenario is that training opportunities, such as PubMed classes, will be posted on an automated training calendar as part of the LMS system. Any public health worker tied into the HAN system will be notified of the class and will be able to send a message stating they would like to attend.

## And so . . .

The NN/LM MCR continues to look for innovative ways to reach this particular group of health information consumer outside of our traditional teaching activities. This process is helped along any time

we can "piggy back" onto preexisting public health information structures, and HANs provide an excellent opportunity to reach the elusive public health workforce at their own "point of need."

*—M. Youngkin*

# Public Health Training Manual Now Available

For our Network members who work with public health workers, a new training manual is now available on the Partners in Information Access for the Public Health Workforce web site. *Public Health Information and Data: A Training Manual* (found at *http://phpartners.org/phid_manual.html*) was created by the NN/LM Public Health Training Workgroup to assist public health workers with health information access. Topics include staying informed about news in public health, health education resources, finding public health statistics and data sources, and supporting decisions with the best evidence. The manual is freely available for anyone wishing to use this material and would be exceptionally useful in a class or workshop.

*—M. Youngkin*

# RML Directors Meeting 2004

Annually, just before the MLA meeting, RML and NLM staff meet for a full day to update each other on current projects and discuss future initiatives. This year the agenda focused on consumer health information, scholarly communication and hospital libraries.

## Consumer Health Information

Joyce Backus, representing the MedlinePlus Go Local team, reviewed the development of the infrastructure that NLM is building to facilitate participation in Go Local. She displayed a map marking the areas that would be covered by organizations that were approved following NLM's acceptance of any group meeting their criteria. Wyoming and portions of Utah and Colorado that fall in the Four Corners region are part of this first group. In all, 13 groups across the country are now working to add local health services to MedlinePlus. A Powerpoint presentation describing this initiative is available at *http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/golocalresources.html.*

Lisa Boyd, Consumer Health Librarian for the National Network Office at NLM, announced the availability of four consumer health information workshops to train public librarians. Each of these modules runs between three and four hours, and qualifies for MLA CE. Policy is still being established on who can offer the workshops for CE credit. The workshops are:

> *Prescription for Success*— an introduction to consumer health information

> *From Snake Oil to Penicillin*—how to evaluate health information on the web

> *PubMed Looking in all the Wrong Places*—an introduction to searching

> *Reference Rx*—information seeking behaviors of consumers

Contact Stephanie Weldon, Consumer Health Liaison, if you have questions about the classes.

The Public Library Community Resource Guide at *http://nnlm.gov/libinfo/community/* is a collaborative project of RML Consumer Health Coordinators. This is a web site that provides ideas on how public libraries can form partnerships with health organizations within their community to provide health information. A health sciences library is an example of a perfect partner. Here in the MidContinental Region, consortial groups among public and health sciences librarians are active in Colorado and Wyoming and are being established in Kansas and Utah.

On December 2-3, 2004 NLM and the NN/LM will sponsor the *Symposium on Community Based Health Information Outreach.* This symposium will focus on consumer health information outreach through community organizations and will be broadcast over the web. It is being organized by a national planning group lead by Wayne Peay, Director, Spencer S. Eccles Health Sciences Library and Maxine Rockoff, Director, New York Academy of Medicine.

## Scholarly Communication

An E-Licensing Working Group, chaired by Renee Bougard, Associate Director for the NN/LM South Central Region, is addressing two concerns identified by Network members in site visits last year:

- Restrictions of licensing agreements on document delivery to unaffiliated healthcare providers and consumers
- Challenges of negotiating electronic licensing agreements

As their first task, they are identifying state and regional resources that offer opportunities for libraries to participate in group licensing agreements or that assist libraries in negotiating agreements.

RMLs also described RML and Resource Library activities that are raising the awareness on the issues surrounding scholarly communication. Many libraries are feeling the impact of reduced budgets and higher journal costs resulting in journal cuts. This reduces access by their faculty, staff, and students to the information needed for research, education and patient care. Formal and informal presentations are being held to inform patrons about the causes of this situation and to suggest what they can do. The NN/LM information about this issue can be found on its E-journals and Open Access page, available at *http://nnlm.gov/libinfo/ejournals/.*

## Hospital Libraries

The Hospital Internet Task Force lead by Ruth Holst, Associate Director of the NN/LM Greater Midwest Region, is winding up its responsibilities. During the past year the task force has:

- Identified barriers that inhibit hospital libraries access to Internet-based information
- Interviewed librarians to identify strategies that overcome the barriers
- Held an open forum at MLA to share the work of the Task Force and to gather additional information

The list of barriers identified by the task force are included on the next page and online at *http://nnlm.gov/projects/hosplibit/.* A final report is now being prepared.

At a breakout session Directors and Associate Directors shared and brainstormed ideas of what RMLs could do to help hospital libraries thrive. Some RMLs have provided consulting services at hospitals, including holding focus groups to show the value of the library. Other

ideas discussed include: funding projects that help hospital libraries become more viable, encouraging libraries to lead strategic planning, talking about the value of the librarian when RMLs do presentations to outside groups, offering workshops such as "Measuring Your Impact: Using Evaluation to Demonstrate Value" (developed and taught by Betsy Kelly from MCRML and Maryanne Blake from Pacific Northwest Region), and more.

—*C. Hamasu*

# PubMed: Outside the Box

The database developers at NLM and the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI) are always looking for ways to improve their products, as evidenced by PubMed enhancements such as the Cubby, LinkOut, and the "email results" feature.

However, to date, these improvements have largely followed the traditional database model: users are expected to sit down at a computer somewhere to do their work. In addition, users have been expected to work within the constraints of the database: users enter PubMed, do their search, and then print, save, or email their results.

As computing advances, users become more sophisticated, and PubMed becomes more of a standard resource in health information research, developers at NLM/NCBI and elsewhere are thinking outside of the box—taking PubMed to places and in directions that it may not have otherwise gone.in new directions.

## PubMed for PDAs

As users become more and more mobile, it only makes sense that one of their primary resources should go mobile, too.

PubMed on Tap (PMoT) is an application for Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) that retrieves MEDLINE® citations directly to the PDA through a wireless connection to the Internet. PDA users with wireless access can search PubMed anytime, from anywhere, using several PubMed search limits and a history of previous queries. PMoT also includes the ability to email citations or save them to the Memo Pad, a clustered results option where results are displayed in a hierarchical structure based on common terms in the subject headings, title, and/or abstract, and as well as links-out to full-text web sites.

## PMoT Search Screen

## PMoT Results Screen



PubMed on Tap is available for both Palm and PocketPC devices with wireless connectivity. The free download, documentation, user forums, and more are all available at
*http://archive.nlm.nih.gov/proj/pmot/pmot.php.*

## PubMed for Handhelds

PubMed on Tap is an actual application that has to be installed on a handheld PDA. Developing a specific PDA-oriented search application allows the integration of a variety of features. However, not all mobile users need or want another application on their handhelds. Plus, some mobile PubMed searchers are not using a Palm or Pocket-PC based machine; they may be carrying a web-enabled cell phone, a Linux laptop, or other mobile computing device.

For these users, there is PubMed for Handhelds, a web-based product available at *http://pubmedhh.nlm.nih.gov/nlm/.* PubMed for Handhelds allows any device with a web browser easy access to searching. The search screens are designed to fit on the small screen of a mobile device, and entering information is made easier through the use of pull-down menus and options with radio buttons.

Through PubMed for Handhelds, users can search PubMed directly or using the clinical queries filters; browse abstracts from a particular journal; or search using the evidence-based PICO structure (Patient/Problem, Intervention, Compare to, Outcome).

Both of the unwired mobile versions of PubMed have benefits and drawbacks. However, both are specifically designed to free the user from their desktop machine and enable access to needed information, wherever the user may be.

## Beyond PubMed

One of the great things about publicly available data is just that—it is available for clever and enterprising individuals to work with and enhance. Many groups have worked to stretch PubMed's capabilities in new and interesting ways.

## Automated Search Alert Services

A frequently requested PubMed feature is the ability to have regular search updates sent via email. Although the Cubby provides the ability to easily update a saved search, many users want this information automatically pushed to them, which the Cubby cannot do.

There are several entities that provide variations on this service. A free service called BioMail, available at *http://www.biomail.org*, allows users to enter and save PubMed searches, which are then run twice a week, weekly, twice a month, or monthly. New search results are sent to the user's email account.

For less sophisticated or casual searches, BioMail includes an "Indexed References Only" option that uses the MeSH headings to enhance a keyword search. For expert searchers, any traditional PubMed search can be run, including those using subheadings, field tags, and other advanced strategies.

BioMail is a General Public License product whose development and maintenance are supported by a grant from the National Library of Medicine.

PubCrawler, another free service available at *http://www.pubcrawler.ie*, provides a service similar to BioMail. With a free registration, users enter the search to be executed, how often the search will be run, and other preference information. PubCrawler runs the search and delivers the results to the email account of your choice.

One of the main benefits of PubCrawler is that it will also search the GenBank databases for genetic information, something that BioMail does not do. PubCrawler also has a "Neighbor Search" option which allows users to make use of PubMed's "Related Articles" feature to scan for other articles closely related to a selected article.

PubCrawler was developed and is maintained by the Department of Genetics at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland.

Other entities provide similar services. Some database vendors such as Ovid provide update services for users of their products, and other online entities such as Amedeo (*http://www.amedeo.com*) or JADE (*http://www.biodigital.org/JADE*) provide variations on the search alert service theme.

## Vivisimo: Clustered Results, Search Insights

The Vivisimo Corporation quickly saw PubMed as a data source for its "clustering" products. ClusterMed, available for trial online at *http://vivisimo.com/clustermed*, takes a PubMed search and then groups the results into clusters based on MeSH terms, title/abstract/MeSH, title/abstract, author, affiliation, or date.

For example, a quick search on "libraries [MeSH]" brings back 100 results clustered under subheadings such as "National Library of Medicine," "reference," "electronic library," and more. Clicking on a cluster shows the articles in the cluster; another click takes the user into PubMed. From here, a related articles search may open up even more possibilities.

ClusterMed provides a quick organizing scheme for what can sometimes be unwieldy search results, as well as highlighting common aspects among results that may lead a researcher in a new direction. The free trial product can be a handy tool when you are stumped on a search or need some ideas for subheadings and alternate terms to explore. When you run a sample search, the hierarchical structure provides a new way of looking at the information that can lead to new insights.

## PubMed Outside the Box, Librarians Outside the Box

Your institution may not have a wireless network that would enable you to take advantage of PubMed on Tap or PubMed for Handhelds; patrons may still want your Table of Contents service instead of having an automated search service email their updates; and you may not have an immediate need for a high-end commercial service like that offered by Vivisimo.

However, looking at these kinds of products and the things innovative people are doing with traditional resources can help us think of new ways to approach our own traditional services.

—W. Davison-Turley

## NLM Technical Bulletin
## 2004 May-June Issue No. 338

*http://www.nlm.nih.gov/pubs/techbull/mj04/mj04_issue_cover.html*

## Technical Notes: - e1

HSTAT Now Available on NCBI Bookshelf

Toxics Release Inventory Expands Reporting Years

NLM® Customer Services Satisfaction Survey

PubMed® Preview/Index Page Has Been Enhanced

New Book Added to NCBI Bookshelf

"Number of Titles" Web Page Updated

"Milestones in NLM® History" Web Page Available

Subheading Searching in PubMed

UMLS® Basics Classes

Genetics Home Reference added to the NLM Gateway

Space Life Sciences Data Hiatus

## Index Medicus to Cease as Print Publication - e2

NLM ceases publication of the Index Medicus with the December 2004 (Volume 45 No. 12) issue.

## HSTAT Moves to the Bookshelf - e3

The NCBI Bookshelf will be the new home of the Health Services Technology Assessment Texts (HSTAT).

## PubMed Central® New Journals Participating and New Content Added - e4

New Journals Are Participating and Content From Already-participating Journals Has Been Added.

## NLM Technical Bulletin Index Redesigned - e5

Updated and easier to use.

## DOCLINE® Version 2.1 Adds Visual Cues for Free Full Text Articles - e6

New features in DOCLINE.

## NLM Adopts 2003 Amendments to Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules - e7

Implemented in February 2004.

## IndexCat: Index-Catalogue of the Library of the Surgeon-General's Office, 1880-1961 - e8
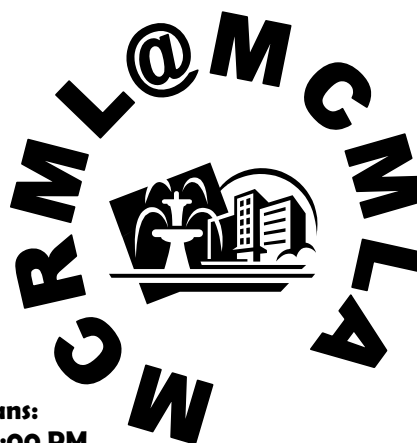
## PubMed® for Handhelds Offers Searching via PICO - e9

New feature to search MEDLINE/PubMed.

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