
Lee Hancock, who is well known to medical librarians as the creator of the Internet Health Sciences Resource List, has collected and organized Internet and World Wide Web resources that are of interest to physicians, both clinicians and researchers. Fans of the Hancock List, which is available on the Internet at no cost, will appreciate the Physicians' Guide to the Internet. This book is an enhanced version of the list, describing each resource in detail and adding navigational information for those who are new to the Internet and the Web.

Dividing the book into two parts, the author begins by explaining the basics of accessing the Internet, and providing an overview of Internet clients and navigation tools such as e-mail, Telnet, FTP, Gopher, and the Web. Part 2, "The Guide to Medical Resources," constitutes the majority of the text and is broken down into a dozen sections on topics ranging from diseases and disorders to medical school and hospital Gophers. At the book's end, three appendices list commercial Internet software and access providers, and summarize mail server commands. A copy of NetCruiser software and step-by-step installation directions are included on a floppy disk that is packaged with the book.

One of the best-developed sections of the book, "Diseases/Disorders," includes thirty-one pages of information about topics such as AIDS, Alzheimer's disease, cancer, diabetes, and stroke. Among the resources listed are electronic mailing lists, newsletters and articles; databanks and bibliographic databases; Gophers; and Web sites. Another strong section is on medical specialties, and includes a variety of resources relevant to general practitioners and many of the major medical specialties. The most extensive listings fall under the "Mental Health" and "Pediatrics" headings, but "Anesthesiology," "Emergency Medicine," "Gerontology/Geriatrics," "Infectious Disease/Immunology," "Ophthalmology," "Pathology," and "Radiology" also contain at least five references. "Health Education/Information," "Health Care Reform/Economics," "Informatics/Computer," and "National and International Health Agencies and Institutions" are notable sections that point to resources that are related to some of today's most pressing concerns.

One of the first books published for physicians who are using the Internet and World Wide Web, Physicians' Guide to the Internet compares favorably with similar articles that list medical resources in the professional literature. However, because of the limitations of print-on-paper, the book is outdated with respect to the premier, free medical Web sites, such as HealthWeb, MedWeb, and the Virtual Library: Biosciences/Medicine, that filter and compile comparable resources. For example, HealthWeb, a joint project of twelve academic medical libraries, posted its first subject-oriented home page in early 1995; because of the lengthy nature of the traditional publishing process, it is not mentioned in the book. HealthWeb provides an annotated link to Internet Grateful Med, the National Library of Medicine's new gateway to the MEDLINE database. Slightly out-of-date, Hancock's book only refers to the much older Grateful Med software packages that do not reside on the Web.

The usefulness of any book that catalogs Internet and World Wide Web resources in the rapidly changing electronic environment is, unfortunately, limited by its own medium. However, physicians, who traditionally turn to print sources for information, will find Hancock's Physicians' Guide to the Internet an affordable and helpful guide to exploring the medical Internet and the Web.

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These two volumes are part of the Health Reference series and as such are compilations of information previously published by federal