

Opinion

The Perfect Source: When Is ONE More Than Many?

The film “The Perfect Storm” captured public imagination by showing the disaster resulting from the simultaneous occurrence of minor events that, by themselves, were far less powerful than their combination. But such a synergism need not result in a negative outcome. Something good or pleasant might materialize, like a sunny day in Seattle.

The Academy, long the worldwide leader in quality ophthalmic education, has an extensive array of products, mostly printed but increasingly electronic. Members often buy these with the intention of reading them, and after suitable aging in the “to do” pile, they get filed in the bookcase for future reference. When a patient encounter makes the need for more information obvious, the search is on to find something relevant. Even if the library is well-stocked, the chances are good that some important sources will be overlooked, sources that might improve the patient’s care. One can go to the open Internet to widen the search, but the reliability of the information is suspect. PubMed is another alternative, but reading a long list of abstracts takes time, too much time to attempt during an office day.

So the dream of Academy education leaders and staff long has been to make available an on-demand, just-in-time information source that could be accessed from a computer terminal in the office, even in an examining lane. The building blocks have been assembled

over many years. For example, to make Academy products’ content searchable, all content is being laboriously tagged using an international standard clinical reference terminology, SNOMED, which currently features 15,000 ophthalmic terms. Another component, The Ophthalmic Knowledge Base, was developed to identify the most clinically relevant topics a practicing ophthalmologist should know. Expansion is planned to include other clinically relevant topics for a total of more than 1,200. Another building block is the ability to quickly access breaking news that has been screened by experts, resulting in *Academy Express* and subspecialty-specific online information. The Academy has licenses to allow it to access third party information such as non-Academy ophthalmic journals and the *Wills Eye Manual*. Other components are in development, including a library of surgical videos, conversations with experts, and personalized curriculum tools.

All of these seemingly minor components are being assembled into a single online portal called the Ophthalmic News & Education (ONE) Network, launching very soon. The expertise to accomplish this feat, never before attempted on this scale, is supplied by the Academy’s corporate partners, Wolters Kluwer Health and Enforme Interactive. ONE activities will require a team of experts in each of 12 subspecialties, and the overall project leadership rests with Karl C. Golnik, MD, ONE

editor-in-chief, and Susanne Medeiros, managing editor of ONE.

Incredibly, access to ONE is being planned as a member benefit. That’s right, no nickel-and-dime fees to pay; your Academy dues will give you access. Just think of the possibilities! Enter a search term, be it a diagnosis, treatment, anatomic structure or symptom; combine search terms, and in seconds, links to trusted resources will appear on screen. For somebody like me, not having to rely solely on memory will be a welcome relief. And for ophthalmologists in developing countries, availability of the same information at no cost can at last be a reality. Mark my words: ONE will be greater than the sum of its parts, the perfect source for ophthalmologists.



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